Collection Development, Cultural Heritage, and Digital Humanities

THE MUSEUM AS EXPERIENCE

LEARNING, CONNECTION, AND SHARED SPACE

Edited by

SUSAN SHIFRIN

ARC HUMANITIES PRESS

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

> Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living.[1]

IN 1932, AS the first William James Lecturer at Harvard University, American philosopher and educator John Dewey (1859–1952) shared his reflections on the experiential engagement between art and viewer. In 1934, these reflections were published as *Art As Experience*, considered by many to be Dewey's most influential writing on aesthetics.

In his discussion of the "live creature" subject to such experiences, Dewey writes:

> works [of art] are products that exist externally and physically. In common conception, the work of art is often identified with the building, book, painting, or statue in its existence apart from human experience. Since the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience, the result is not favorable to understanding … . When artistic objects are separated from both conditions of origin and operation in experience, a wall is built around them that renders almost opaque their general significance, with which esthetic theory deals. A primary task is thus imposed upon one who undertakes to write upon the philosophy of the fine arts. This task is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience.[2]

This description of the generic work of art extracted from "operation in experience" could just as well take as its subject the museum venue itself. Isolated from the ways in which "live creatures" *live* (verb, not adjective) museum spaces and experiences, a wall is built around museums too. They have been viewed historically as elite, exclusive and excluding, and impersonal—as antiseptic to intimacy.

And yet it is precisely the intrusion of humanized experiences into museum spaces that has revised this historical vision in the past few decades. Museum experiences—cultivated by curators, educators and marketers alike—have come into sharp focus as the reason for being of these communal spaces. Professional organizations such as the American Alliance of Museums have called upon their members to reconceive museums as community cornerstones and promoters of physical and emotional well-being. The once silent, hallowed spaces have come alive with the boisterous sounds of school children, the laughter and jovial conversation across groups of elders, the sounds of music, community art-making, and communal assembly, all representative of new experiential interactions between Dewey's "live creatures" and museums no longer walled off from them. Typically, volumes of essays within the fields of art history, museum studies, and museology that have addressed museum functions have tended to focus on collecting, communicating, exhibiting, and educating. In this volume, we have chosen instead to focus on the relatively unexplored territory of "experiencing." We examine the kinds of human experiences and interactions that have converted the once unapproachable

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1 John Dewey, *Art As Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1934), 36.

2 Dewey, *Art As Experience*, 204–5.

Figure 0.1. Visitors in Woodmere's gallery viewing *Amelia* in *Freedom's Journal: The Art of Jerry Pinkney*. Photograph by Darryl Moran. Courtesy of Woodmere Art Museum.

museum to a space of enlivenment and enrichment; and of experiences, moreover, that take place most constructively and even transformationally in a museum context. All the contributors to this collection have sought to bring experiential models to life in their essays: models of education, of sensory engagement, of celebrating cultural history, of confronting the past as a vehicle for changing the present and envisioning a different future, and of bridging the divides that were only deepened by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in 2020. Several of the essays reflect on what may be perceived as more traditional experiences, such as those of teaching and learning within a museum setting. Others overtly and insistently challenge museums and museum professionals to overcome their adherence to a comfortable *status quo* (comfortable for some, that is) and to lead the way as change agents in revamping and re-envisioning a new role for museums of inculcating diversity, equity, inclusiveness, accessibility, and civic responsiveness and responsibility. This volume is additionally unique in its juxtaposition of experiences within museum walls and outside of museum walls; and in its trajectory from pre-COVID pandemic sensibilities to post-pandemic necessities and inventions.

To borrow a metaphor from Hildy Tow's chapter in this volume and from the artist Jerry Pinkney whose work inspired it: this is a collection of essays that envisions an "arc of promise" extending from museums such as those originally described by Dewey, which isolate themselves and the objects they contain from the experiences that are in and of the world; to museums fully engaged in facilitating evocative, provocative, and very human experiences; museums that enact the promise, as Bryan Stevenson puts it, of "[getting] proximate."[3]

That having been said, this volume does not by any means present an homogeneous set of perspectives. While the experiential through-lines of performativity, embodiment,

3 Ruth Hobday and Geoff Blackwell, *Bryan Stevenson: On Equality, Justice, and Compassion*. I Know This to Be True series (San Francisco: Chronicle, 2020), 36.

caring, community and—inevitably––COVID-19[4] are threaded in between the overarching thematic sections of the book, there are through-running tensions as well. For example, some of the essays conceptualize diverse viewers' distinctly different, very personal experiences as fundamental to fully realized encounters with museums' spaces, collections, exhibitions, and programs. Other essays advocate for museums' responsibilities as "corrective" and directive, to provide strong narrative frameworks as a form of redress and re-education, filling in deeply ingrained deficits of cultural knowledge and understanding that have given rise to social inequities and injustices.

Tracing the Through-Lines

To one degree or another, all of the essays in this volume evoke the power of museum experiences that are at their core performative. Part One opens with an essay by Garreth Heidt that documents the experiences of one American middle school's students as they (quite literally) moved and performed their way through learning in the spaces of—and around the objects on display in—a neighbouring college art museum. The performative requisite of "learning by doing" introduced by Heidt is picked up in subsequent essays in Part One. Klare Scarborough and Miranda Clark-Binder, in their essay on the implementation of Lasallian practices of teaching and learning within the walls of another American university art museum, cite Dewey's insistence that "genuine knowledge and understanding are the 'offspring of doing.'" Florence Gelo explores medical students' and residents' performative engagements with works of art inside museum galleries that shape and hone the students' capacity for self-reflection, for empathetic listening, and ultimately for full and deep engagement with their prospective patients. Additionally, Gelo attributes to museum spaces themselves the potential to grant visitors "shelter" and respite along with opportunities for self-care and renewal.

Essays in Part Two encompass a range of performative experiences viewed within Megan Bayles's and Patricia Maunder's essays as in and of individuals' bodies. Bayles writes about museum visitors' changing patterns of self-identification with foetal and other human specimens on display in American science museums and other cultural spaces during two different centuries. As she describes it, "[v]isitors' own bodies become not only the means by which they take in the content of the exhibit, but also produce that content. Their own bodies become experimental and experiential sites." Maunder focuses on museum visitors experiencing individual "awakenings" stimulated by the revelatory performance of touch. She specifically prioritizes bodily engagement as an experiential means to an end: that of developing relationships with visual imagery in the absence of, or in tandem with, sight, of facilitating fully sensory experience.

Jessica Ruhle's essay views performative experiences in relation to gatherings of bodies where the intent is specifically to build community. Ruhle explores the various ways in which congenial, welcoming art museum spaces and purposeful, empathetic

4 The global pandemic that began (officially) in 2020 not only delayed the completion of this volume but also reshaped and reformed its content.

staff facilitators can create the conditions for visitors living with dementia and their care partners to rediscover the joys of community, connection, and validation. Ruhle writes "relationships matter and extending a radical welcome to museum visitors with dementia can establish a mutually loving community that is not fostered by simple inclusion in a standard public tour." She further describes this optimum experience as "the intangible connection of *relationship*."

The chapters that make up Part Three focus on museum experiences whose meaning derives from their siting in particular places: locations alternatively fraught with histories of racism and violence, infused with previously buried architectural and archaeological structures' significance, or echoing with the muffled voices of long-forgotten mothers and babies. To borrow another phrase from Stevenson, "the power of place" in each of these chapters is brought to life through the revisiting and revoicing of silenced, forgotten, or eclipsed identities, all inextricable from their "places."

Ball and Sullivan write about their work to restore the unwed mothers and babies of South Australia's nineteenth-century Destitute Asylum from historical erasure, "We understood that performance could, in the words of De Groot, contribute to meaning by reinserting the body, making the empty landscape of the past live again." Thomas Otten's essay sets forth the mission of a museum in development, MiQua, to reframe and renew archaeological fragments and architectural monuments in the Archaeological Quarter of Cologne as relics of a distant past that his museum is charged with bringing back to life for visitors. In his essay, Otten envisions them as memorials to that past but also as iconic *loci* of association, imagination and interpretation.

In a way that speaks to both of the other essays and is also quite different, Stevenson reflects in one portion of our interview on a continuing project of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in which the descendants of African Americans who were lynched are encouraged to collect soil at the lynching sites and then transfer it to the EJI's National Memorial for Peace and Justice. As Stevenson describes it,

> People dig that soil, it can be really emotional and really overwhelming for people and they are surprised by it. But I tell them that's because there is power in that soil. That soil contains the sweat of those who were enslaved, it contains the blood of those who were lynched, it contains the tears of those who were humiliated during segregation. And it contains the potential for life that you have given it when you bring it into our space, because we can turn that soil into a monument, an emblem, an icon that represents a different future.

He is perhaps calling out a different kind of embodiment here, a different kind of performance, a visceral experience through one's own body of others' bodies and lives (in essence, through their relics). The "power of place" here also entails bodily re-placement, from the place of lynching to a place of memorialization and restoration.

In the Time of COVID

The essays in Part Four reveal some of the intractable impediments and the often serendipitous triumphs shaped by a pandemic that from 2020 on, irrevocably reformed institutions' missions and altered people's lives across the globe. All three essays are

centred on experiences around art-making, whether through performative acts of making, themselves, or through viewers' engagement with the work and vision of a particular artist. In each case, the potency of the accounts and experiences lies not only in the lifting up of community members but also in the performative nature of museums' "pivots" from pre-pandemic to post-, and their radical commitments to revitalizing their constituents' connections and experiences even in the uncharted territory of enforced physical distancing and isolation.

Nikki Sullivan writes the following in her essay about her institution's programmatic pivot during COVID and its altogether unexpected consequences. "These kinds of opportunities for connection, which were way beyond our original [pre-COVID] vision, and which might well not have happened had it not been for COVID, enabled us all to learn so much more about each other's communities, to develop empathy for people and issues with which we might have had little or no previous contact… ."

Kristin Tollefson's narrative follows a related trajectory, but one uniquely enriched (and complicated?) by the fusing of two separate missions, both of which had previously ground to a halt due to COVID. Those parallel missions—one, a special community-based museum outreach project intended to engage older people through the power of touch; and the other, a gallery exhibition of Tollefson's own work—shifted back into gear through a deeply experiential collaboration that merged the two. As a result, Tollefson's work as an independent artist was brought into service in precise alignment with her work as Director of Education and DEI Advancement at her museum. Tollefson incorporates the voices of her fellow artists and collaborators in her narration of this project, whose lessons she describes simply as "Start where you are. Embrace creativity and give generously of time, materials and care. Use the assets of organization(s) to support individual(s) in thoughtfully considered physical and virtual spaces. … Continue the conversation."

The post-COVID hybrid educational experiences about which Hildy Tow writes in her essay revolve around programming created for public school students in connection with her museum's exhibition of the art of Jerry Pinkney, an award-winning American artist internationally acclaimed for his children's book illustrations bringing to life the experiences of African Americans, particularly the experiences of enslaved people and those who lived under segregation (as Pinkney had himself early in his life). The artist had said when asked about how museums should talk with children about slavery and segregation, "You can't have that arc of promise if you don't show where you came from. You can't move ahead until you know your history and how it started."

The programs described by Tow and the ways in which school children experienced them suggest a deeply purposeful if modest implementation by one museum of the kind of socially-engaged actions for which Stevenson called during our interview. At stake, according to Stevenson? The dire need to redress the deficits of knowledge and understanding that have permitted slavery in America to beget a tradition of lynching, and for the tradition of lynching to beget an epidemic of mass incarcerations that disproportionately affects Black Americans: each "begetting" a new iteration of slavery's legacy of white supremacy. In other words, Stevenson concurs in Pinkney's insistence on "[showing] where you came from" in order that we be able to "move ahead."

As Tow records, the students, when asked if they, themselves, believed in Pinkney's metaphor of an "arc of promise," responded in ways that revealed their own awareness of the power of his art and their experiences around it to signal change. "When asked if they saw an 'arc of promise,' many said it was clear that the two sets of images they had been viewing with museum docents represented change and progress, and that they'd like to believe 'more change was possible.'" Indeed, they wondered if the exhibition had been precisely designed to "make 'us see the differences.'"

Why Experience?

A range of answers to this question lies within each and every chapter of this book. Several contributors provide us with answers that are particularly direct and powerful.

Reflecting on the college museum that hosted the innovative learning and teaching experiences Heidt describes in his essay, he assesses the museum's role in this way: "the … Museum saw itself as more than a repository for valuable artifacts where the learning was unidirectional, from object to person … . Instead, it saw itself as part of a dialogue, a space where 'knowing was doing,' where learning was relational, embodied, and alive … a space for participatory experiences where students encountered artwork and in doing so, encountered themselves."

Reflecting on the role of the museum as a sanctuary of sorts for people living with dementia and their care partners, Ruhle views it through a lens of social justice and equity: "when museums prioritise this audience and offer opportunities for appropriate engagement and participation [read experience], the institutions make a public statement about the societal value of older adults and individuals with cognitive differences."

And Stevenson, asked to reflect on why museums should prioritize their roles as creators and conveyors of experience, responds

> When you live through something, when you experience something, it just has a reality that it can't have when it's imagined. I am much better prepared for the moment that I am in because I've been surrounded by people who have taught me really important things about struggle, … about being honest, … about perseverance, … about resilience. They've shown it to me and that experience has become really powerful as a form of modeling. And so if we can create museums that provide experiences that model things for people, that help them live, help them navigate complexity, help them overcome, help them get past trauma and struggle, then I can think of nothing more important we can do.

It is our hope that our readers will engage with this collection of essays as one set of models intended to inspire rethought responses to this moment and the many unpredictable moments to come: models of outside-the-box teaching and learning, purposeful and persistent acts of inclusion, of restoration, of empathy, of community building, and of caring. We are just at the start of this conversation, and there are many more voices in many more places around the world from listening to which we can all benefit. All rooted in experience. And all within (or without) museum walls.

Susan Shifrin
January 31, 2023

Part One

EXPERIENCING EDUCATION IN THE MUSEUM

Chapter One

EXPERIENCE TO ENCOUNTER: THE MUSEUM AS PERFORMATIVE SPACE

GARRETH HEIDT

FEW VISITORS TO art museums walk in expecting to find thirty-plus middle school students acting as their own docents, leading their peers through discussions of what they see and wonder about in works of art from abstract expressionism to wood turnings, to sculptures by Rodin. But for close to ten years, we led seventh and eighth grade students through patterned close-viewing and dialogical sharing exercises culminating in small-group, kinesthetic responses that have moved parents and college professors alike. This essay will recount the process and products stemming from these patterned, experiential learning activities. Grounded in research on embodied cognition, the phenomenology of looking, on teaching with objects, and on multi-modal learning, the essay will also detail the manner in which the teachers involved in this project—at both middle-school and college level—prepared students for these visits and how this preparation led to some of the most memorable and meaningful moments in these educators' and students' lives.

For most visitors, walking into an art museum is an exercise in self-control. We enter a headspace of quiet observation as the works around us "speak," and we, in turn, listen or walk on. The space of the art museum is designed for just such encounters, from the sacred groupings of The Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia to the eclectic collections of Baltimore's American Visionary Art Museum, the art museum has primarily been a space devoted to the primacy of the gaze and its silent, contemplative learning, often with the didacticism of a docent or audio-led tour. While many museums are engaging in activities that shift this perception, introducing more participatory interactions with the artwork to promote understanding and meaning-making, many visitors still perceive the experience of an art museum through the traditional, more passive, receptive lens.

In contrast, we herein reveal an almost decade-long practice of participatory, kinesthetic experiences with art exhibitions that offered an alternative to the traditional quiet, contemplative, ruminative pattern. Our process was grounded in the model of looking put forth by David Perkins in *The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at*

Garreth Heidt teaches English Honours courses at the high school level in the Perkiomen Valley School District of Pennsylvania. He has also co-created a course in Innovation and Open-Source Learning, "NOVA Lab," for high-school students. He blogs infrequently at www.pvhsnovalab.com and www.onlyconnects.wordpress.com. His publications include "From Sound to Sight" in *SchoolArts* (April 2015) and "Designerly Thinking: A Tool for Citizenship in a Democratic Society" in *Technology and Engineering Teacher* (December/January 2021), which he co-authored.

Art, as well as research in dialogic learning, and the cognitive sciences, most notably the concept of embodied cognition.[1] Influenced by the progressive pedagogies of Dewey and other, more contemporary theorists, we designed opportunities for students to engage with artwork in ways that honoured their own agency as inquisitive, intelligent actors. These opportunities allowed them to see artwork in ways that altered not only their perception of the museum, but also their own understandings of themselves. In essence, we had our learners doing things, not just observing them, and we had them reflecting on their "doings" in various ways.

While this chapter is not a primer on embodied cognition, it does rely heavily on embodied cognition's basic premise that "the brain, while important, is not the only resource we have available to us to generate behavior. Instead, the form of our behavior emerges from the real-time interaction between a nervous system in a body with particular capabilities and an environment that offers opportunities for behavior and information about those."[2] In other words, the behaviour of human beings, most specifically cognition—the act or process of knowing—is not, as Descartes's "*Cogito*" implied ("I *think*, therefore I am"), housed solely in the mind. Instead, cognition is a whole-body construct. Pfeifer and Bongard point to this when they define "embodiment" as "the idea that the body is required for intelligence" while more aphoristically Maturana and Varela note something similar when they write "all doing is knowing, and all knowing is doing."[3]

Thus, the work described within this chapter is not only grounded in theories of looking and knowing, but is motivated by a pedagogy that insists students must act and *do* things in the museum beyond ruminating if they are to construct understandings of the works they encounter. What follows is the story of how and why we engaged hundreds of students in diverse activities that challenged their own understandings of the museum as a place, and also challenged administrators, teachers, and professors to reassess their traditional notions of the museum as a learning space.

Background

In 1994, my school district sought to prepare itself for the twenty-first century in a proactive way. With the leadership of our Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Professional Development as well as two facilitators from The Future Search Network

1 David Perkins, *The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at Art* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 1994).

2 Rolf Pfeifer and Josh Bongard, *How the Body Shapes the Way We Think: A New View of Intelligence* (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2007), xvii, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/2910/099b7a7c555af9f14bfb2bc20e9475d0588f.pdf.

3 Pfeifer and Bongard, *How the Body Shapes the Way We Think*, xvii; Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, *Autopoesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living* (Dordrecht: Riedel, 1980), cited in Lawrence Shapiro and Steven Stolz, "Embodied Cognition and Its Significance for Education," *Theory and Research in Education* 17 (2018): 19–39, https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1477878518822149.

(futuresearch.net), our district reshaped itself around a communal vision of the graduate of 2010. Recognizing that the world required—and our parents wanted—more creative, inventive thinkers, the district's response was to develop a class focused on exploring the connections among the arts in the middle grades. Over several years we developed a course called "Creative Expressions through Performance," or CE for short, in which student learning was centred on outcomes related to the cultural connections among the literary, performing, and visual arts.

As it evolved through several years of implementation, CE became a class that engaged students in reading the world, its texts ranging far beyond literary work. Students explored ways to observe, understand, and create music, art, and works of literature by discovering the connections bridging the disciplinary gaps among the language arts, visual arts, and musical/performing arts. Crucial in this work was the understanding that students were not mere consumers of culture, but that they were active producers of culture, hence the word "performance" in the class title.

Early in the 2000s, I accepted an invitation to work with the Associate Director for Education at the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art on the campus of Ursinus College, an educational landmark in our school district.[4] A primary goal of the collaboration was to explore how the museum could help expand student learning within the arts through deeper, learner-centred methods than were usual for the traditional art museum. Additionally, we sought to empower middle school students to become peer docents, engaging their fellow students to connect with works of art that might otherwise have seemed unapproachable to them. This method also required students to be more mindful of what and how they see, and it helped them develop the self-awareness and empathy necessary to listen fully, deeply, to others.

Within the first two years of our collaboration, we had settled upon a pattern for the student museum experience that incorporated learning targets and standards, which was flexible enough to accommodate any exhibition, and took a learner-centred approach to understanding through critical observation, inquiry, performance, and reflection. Over the next eight years, hundreds of students would visit the museum and engage in an experience that was unlike anything they'd done before, and unlike anything most people associated with the experience of visiting a museum.

Methods

The most common experience middle school children have of a trip to an art museum is one of quiet, often "boring" attention to static objects that are either mere representations of things (for example, "Oh, that's a bowl of peaches. Thanks, Cezanne.") or are so abstract as to elicit the clichéd "I don't get it" or "I could do that" responses. Thus, their perception of a trip to the art museum, if they have one at all, is one that speaks to things generally inimical to their own existence: silence, isolation, sustained observation,

4 In the interest of full disclosure, the editor of this volume served as Associate Director for Education at the Berman Museum during this time; my professional work with Susan Shifrin spans the better part of two decades.

immobility, all with a lack of ostensible purpose. Rather than reinforce this perception in students, we created an experience that broke down the act of viewing artwork into timed sections, creating learning space for individual observation, small group sharing, and large group/full-class performances. Throughout a common two-hour session, students would never be held in a directed activity for longer than fifteen minutes. This constant switching of activity not only kept students accountable to work within constraints (a proven accelerator of creative thinking) it also kept them fresh and attentive by constantly moving their focus and shifting their responsibilities at developmentally appropriate times.[5] A basic time flow for a trip to the museum is included in Fig. 1.1. All of the students' visits to the museum were prefaced by an overview of the exhibition they would explore. Months before the classes arrived at the museum, my partner teacher and I would meet with the museum's educator to understand the scope and intent of the upcoming exhibition. Once it had been installed, we would meet at the museum to walk through the exhibition and begin developing the students' visit.

Several weeks prior to the visit, students would begin classwork intended to familiarize them with the pattern of activities in which they would engage at the museum. These lessons tied into the class's living curriculum and were designed to build a working vocabulary specific to the type of artwork students would be viewing. For example, when students viewed an exhibition of photographs, they learned about and practised their own skills in framing, the rule-of-thirds, the grounds of an image, lighting, and focus. For exhibitions of sculpture, students developed a vocabulary of form, space, shape, rhythm, movement. Many of these terms would be familiar to them from their art classes, and their use in these museum trips was an opportunity to engage with these terms in an authentic experience beyond the walls of school.

A second piece of preparation for these visits was practice in a method of self-driven, deeper learning through close viewing—a modified and patterned version of the model laid out by Perkins. (Figs. 1.2 and 1.3 clarify how we adapted Perkins's work for our students.[6]) The week prior to the trip, students experienced numerous and escalating practice sessions to develop a rhythm and timing for the museum visit as well as an understanding of how the separate viewing activities flowed together and built upon each other.

A single visit to the museum would engage any student in viewing all the works in the exhibition, settling upon one piece of work with which to engage more deeply, making observations about what they saw, what they thought about what they saw, developing questions and wonderings about the artwork, and finally discovering (through conversation) what more others saw that each individual student did not see. This pat-

5 Thomas Oppong, "For a More Creative Brain, Embrace Constraints," Inc.com. https://www.inc.com/thomas-oppong/for-a-more-creative-brain-embrace-constraints.html.

6 While we used this with our students, the model works for anyone, regardless of their background. Indeed, Perkins' later work in Visible Thinking (http://www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines) and with Harvard's Project Zero in general (http://www.pz.harvard.edu/who-we-are) clearly breaks *The Intelligent Eye's* model into more discrete tools for the classroom, most notably the "See, Think, Wonder" routine (http://www.pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines).

Directions for the Berman Museum Trip: Example for a Photography Exhibition

1. As you enter the museum, please put your coats and any bags into the coat room, immediately to the right as you come into the museum.
2. Proceed into the main gallery and sit in a circle in the middle of the museum.
3. Mr. Heidt will give you some general instructions reminding you of your practice sessions in close viewing.
4. Spend the next 15 minutes exploring the exhibition. Please do this individually. It's important that you try to see as much of the exhibition as possible.
5. Take your time to read all the panels and to take in what they add to the works on display.
6. Look for three photos/works that speak to you most, for whatever reason. Jot down the names of these photos/works in your journal. Take in the facial expressions, posture, body language, surroundings and setting of the story they create.
7. When the chimes sound, return to the first of your photos/works. If someone else is there, then go to your second choice. You want to get to a work that will be yours, more or less, individually.
8. When the chimes sound again, begin completing column one, "What do you See?" Continue this column until the chimes sound again.
9. On the second chime, shift and work on the second column.
10. Third chimes=third column.
11. After the third chimes, return to the main gallery.
12. Groupings to share what you see. (Groups of 5). Each individual will share their observations in the first 3 columns, and will request insights for the fourth column (What more do others see?) to help them build perspective.
13. If your person could speak a single line to summarize her life as you see it in her face. What would it be?
14. Writing assignment.

Figure 1.1. Basic Time Flow and Directions for Berman Museum Trip: Example for a Photography Exhibition. Created by author.

Perkins' Model	**Our Implementation** (See Fig. 1.3)
"Giving Looking Time" (p. 36) – Slow Looking Down (building persistence, patience, and commitment to looking.)	Students browse a limited exhibition, choose one work of art, and spend no less than 15 minutes with that work.
Initial viewing of a single work—focusing, naming, experiencing – Slow Looking Down (building persistence, patience, and commitment to looking.)	Column one on our chart: – What do you see?
"Making Looking Broad and Adventurous" (p. 47): – Deepen the experience—"Expanding Perceptions" and "Looking for..." (p. 52)	Columns two and three on our chart: – What do you think? – What do you wonder? What questions do you have?
"Making Looking Clear and Deep" (p. 59) – "The Analytical Eye (p. 64)	Columns three and four: – What questions do you have? – What more do others see?

Figure 1.2. Comparison of Close Viewing Models. Created by author.

terned activity in viewing moved students from observation to inference making, to inquiry/question formation, to teaching and engaging in dialogue with others. (Refer to the comparison in Fig. 1.2 and the activities in Fig. 1.3.)

While our modified version of Perkins's exercises was instrumental in helping students engage with artwork to build understanding in themselves and others, two additions to the process helped drive the experience into deeper and more diverse cognitive realms. First, with the help of the Philadelphia Chapter of The National Writing Project, we developed a kinesthetic response to the artwork in which students, working in groups, created moving tableaux of repeated gestures and sounds which, when performed, resulted in a sort of constrained, repetitive dance, with each member of a group adding a gesture and sound in succession.[7] The design of these moving tableaux required students to collaboratively create a synthesis of the ideas and observations they'd made on their close viewing charts; an act that engaged students in most of the

7 Shirley Brown, a former teacher and assistant principal in the Philadelphia School District, teacher-educator and member of the National Writing Project, served as a temporary educator at the Berman Museum during this time.

Title of Piece _____

Name _____

Artist _____

Period/Date _____

What do I see? (8 mins) — List only those things you can truly see. Forms, lines, shapes, positive/negative space, shades, tones, colors.

What do I think, feel about this piece? (7 mins) — List how the object effects you, your emotional reactions. What in nature does it seem to remind you of? List as many things as you can.

Try to write a sentence or so about the posture (body position) you would make if you were going to respond to or some form or part of a form in the art.

What questions do I have? What do I wonder? (7 mins) — Please go beyond just, "What the heck is it?" Come up with questions about the use of elements of art and design? Ask questions of yourself and why you view it as you do.

What more do others see? (5 mins) — Teach others about what you see. Ask them for one thing new they have seen. Write down your partners' responses.

Figure 1.3. Close Viewing Recording Sheet. Created by author.

"4 C's of 21st Century Learning": Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaborations, Communication.[8]

Additionally, we added time at the end of each museum visit for written reflection in order to cement the learning and experience in the learners' minds. The Intelligent Eye makes a clear case that looking at art, if it is to be more than the fuzzy, open, often transitory thinking most people are used to and instead help promote connection and add depth to experience, must include time for reflective thinking. Perkins is not subtle about this, indicating that "reflective intelligence is a control system for experiential intelligence. By cultivating awareness of our own thinking [metacognition], asking ourselves good questions, guiding ourselves with strategies, we steer our experiential intelligence in fruitful directions."[9] Students had options to reflect through poetry, dialogue, or through a traditional "reflection compass" format of responding to prompts like: Something happened. What happened? So what? Now what? (For a selection of writing prompts, see Fig. 1.4. a–c)

Research and Philosophical Foundations

The partnership between the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art and Perkiomen Valley Middle School East lasted for nearly a decade (2004–2013) and was premised upon emerging and developing research on human cognition and learning. David Perkins's belief that artwork offered a particularly fertile context for developing thinking dispositions was a north star for this project. The characteristics of these dispositions, which Perkins defines as "a felt tendency, commitment, and enthusiasm," gave us direction in terms of developing each museum visit.[10] They offered us, as well, a way to assess the success of our students' experience in an informal, formative manner.

The act of learning through critical observation is not new. Such close viewing constitutes a crucial part of science and art classes. It is, however, something with which many teachers are not familiar, especially when applied to the humanities, even though the impact of such careful attention to what we see is undeniable. For example, Professor Shari Tishman declares that "examining objects closely is an excellent way to motivate and sharpen student thinking."[11] Museum educator John Hennigar Shuh's description of the importance of critical observation is similarly hard to ignore: "being able to see the world clearly and to ask good probing questions of it is as important in a whole variety of non-academic life situations as well."[12] Both Tishman's and Shuh's articles

8 "Introduction to the 4 Cs," Common Sense Education. Partnership for 21st Century Skills, April 1, 2020, https://www.commonsense.org/education/videos/introduction-to-the-4-cs.

9 Perkins, *The Intelligent Eye,* 15.

10 Perkins, *The Intelligent Eye,* x.

11 Shari Tishman, "The Object of Their Attention," *Educational Leadership* 65, no. 5 (2008): 44. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb08/vol65/num05/The-Object-of-Their-Attention.aspx.

12 John Hennigar Shuh, "Teaching Yourself to Teach with Objects," *Journal of Education* 7, no. 4 (1982): 12.

POTENTIAL WRITING PROMPTS

A) Sketching and writing

First: Using your pencil and the paper provided in your folder, take about 5 minutes and sketch a view of the object you have studied.

Second: write a list of 10 words that are purely descriptive of what you see in the object. Underneath the sketch, follow the format below and write a poem about it.

Title: Use the actual title of the object

Stanza 1: Lines 1–3: One word/line, write a descriptive word about the object.

Stanza 2: Lines 4–6: Ask this object three short questions
(Look at your Close Viewing—column 2.)

Stanza 3: Line 7–9: Have the object reply to your questions in short, descriptive phrases. You need not use the word "I" when speaking as the object.

Stanza 4: Line 8–?: End by completing this sentence:
"I know now... " Or "I knew from this…"

Example from an exhibition of quilts

Worn
Faded
Threadbare

Where have you been?
Whose child's warmth did you keep?
What have you heard?

In houses and hearts
of children with sweet breath
who murmur lullabies in their sleep
I know now that a baby's warmth is
born of many hands working
Together.

Example from an exhibit of Rodin's sculpture

The Three Shades

Reaching
Bending
Aching

What have you done?
Are you tired?
Is this your end?

Nothing but lying;
The weariness of life;
An agony of longing.
I knew from this that our bodies
Are full of words
We cannot speak.

Figure 1.4. (a) Sample Writing Prompts for Responding to Art. Created by author.

B) Short Poetry

Return to the piece you studied with your Close Viewing sheet. Reread the first and fourth column. *Look again at the questions you asked and the simile you created* at the bottom of column two. Keeping those observations fresh in your mind, write a poem in the format presented below.

(The format below is from the book *Image to Word: Art and Creative Writing)*

A. Give the piece a new title, make it metaphorical (Something that suggests what the piece is like) or descriptive

B. Describe what the piece is doing (Action phrase—use an "ing" word)

C. Write a simile (…like _____")

D. Finish by giving the piece another short title

Example: (This is an example from an exhibition of colorful, abstract brush strokes)

A—Seascape

B—Green seaweed swaying in the currents

C—like people doing a slow, sad dance

D—A Wave Goodbye.

Figure 1.4. (b) Sample Writing Prompts for Responding to Art. Created by author.

C) Interview with an Object

You are the top arts reporter for the *New York Times.* Write an interview with the object you have studied. You are to ask it questions about its creation and how it got to be what and where it is. The trick here is that you are also the object. You must answer the questions as the object.

The interview should last for 8 minutes of writing. It should look like an interview. Please keep it focused on what you can see and on the examination of how the object "shows" that.

As the interviewer you should:

- Ask questions that are designed to uncover how the object came to be.
- Ask about what it's made of.
- Ask about why it is where it is.
- Ask about facial expressions, postures, (if it is of a person)
- Ask about shapes, cracks, internal objects (if it is abstract)
- Ask about why it is situated where it is.

As the object, you should always reply by trying to draw on what you learned in your close viewing exercises and sharing with your peers. So you'll want to use your Close Viewing Sheet.

Format:

- Use your initials as the interviewer
- Use an abbreviation of the object's title, or some other name you have given it to refer to it.

Example (2 minutes of freewriting):

GH (my initials): So, *Hands*…I notice that you represent two right hands, not a right and a left hand. Why is that and how is it possible?

Hands: Well, I guess you can say we're not from the same person.

GH: Ah! Interesting. I did note that one hand is smaller, almost more frail than the other. Can you give us some insight on that?

Hands: Sure, think about it. All hands tell stories. Stories about work done, about strength, about care and hard work. So many things could be made through hands, too, or could be prayed for with hands. Without hands we've really no way to build things. So…What story do you think my hands are telling?

Figure 1.4. (c) Sample Writing Prompts for Responding to Art. Created by author.

promote the use of objects within a constructivist pedagogy and provide ample, practical evidence to further Perkins' argument that critical observation should be part of our students' educational experience, whether in or out of a museum.

But further, the evolution of the student experience into one that culminated in student performance and reflection was supported by theories of experiential and participatory learning as well as the cognitive science supporting embodied cognition.

From a pedagogical standpoint, aside from the background vocabulary students engaged with prior to visiting the museum, this was a project that relied on a patterned, authentic, learning experience. Perkins's work provided the essential pattern for the museum visits, helping us shape and guide the learning from initial browsing, to close viewing of one work, to deepening the experience, to engaging in an inquiry-driven discourse with the artwork, to finally sharing it verbally and kinesthetically with others. Over the course of almost a decade it was clear that Perkins was correct, as students' "felt tendencies, commitment, and enthusiasm" revealed an engagement with art that was, for many, a transformative experience.

Experience Becomes Encounter

While Perkins's model works well as a structural and pedagogical descriptor for the museum experience we created, the depth of the students' viewing and the inclusion of the collaborative, kinesthetic response as the culmination of the experience added a philosophical depth to their work that pushed it past mere experience, transforming it into something more like an "encounter." The distinction is not merely semantic. Instead, its nuance is founded in the work of Austrian Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in his book Ich und du (I and Thou).[13] The difference between experience and encounter is central to the impact of all my pedagogical decisions.

> At its heart are two distinct modes of engaging with the world. The first, the *I-it* mode, is the mere experience of an object of observation or utility (the "it") by a subject (the "I"). This mode is clinical and scientific, detached and observant—think of a virologist watching a petri dish. But in the second, the *I-you* (*thou*) mode, both objects enter into a transformative relationship. The "I" engages the "you" as an entirety, the universe in and of itself … Buber classifies such a relationship through three elements, the third of which is the fact that this one person (the *I*), without forfeiting anything of the felt reality of his activity, at the same time lives through the common event from the standpoint of the other.[14]

In essence, the students' work within the exhibitions amounted to a dialogue between themselves and their chosen artworks. The pattern of looking based upon Perkins' work, the kinesthetic responses as developed collaboratively, their personal reflections … all these depended upon an ability to imagine the artwork as a wholly present "*thou*." Danielle Carter implies as much in her article "Participatory Practices in the Museum

13 Martin Buber, *Ich und du*, 1st ed. (Leipzig: Insel, 1923).

14 Garreth J. Heidt, "Touching the Sturgeon," in *Writing from the Inside Out* (Annandale-on-Hudson: Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking, 2011), 5.

Space: A Dissection" when she recounts a presentation made by student docent Lena Porsmo Stoveland. Stoveland "argued … that the life of the object was a participatory one," implying that it had a history beyond its creation, a life of interaction and meaning created *with* and not merely *by,* the people who used, preserved, and revered it.[15]

Just so, through our process of critical observation and interaction, what was merely an act of observation and cultural consumption became an experience at the pedagogical level. Further, through the cognitive leaps necessary for engaging in the kinesthetic responses and written, imaginative reflections, we elevated the experience to an encounter, allowing the students—as Buber notes—to live through the common event from the standpoint of the other.

Perhaps Buber's language points to the existence of yet a third level of understanding that our museum experience captured—that of the embodiment of cognition. For beyond the experience, beyond the philosophy there is a deep, biophysical reason to elevate the experience to an encounter. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*'s entry on Embodied Cognition delineates four "examples of phenomena that have motivated embodied cognitive science."[16]

1. We typically gesture when we speak to one another, and gesturing facilitates not just communication, but language processing itself (McNeill 1992).
2. Vision is often action-guiding, and bodily movement and the feedback it generates are more tightly integrated into at least some visual processing than has been anticipated by traditional models of vision (O'Regan and Noë 2001).
3. There are neurons, mirror neurons, that fire not only when we undertake an action, but do so when we observe others undertaking the same actions (Rizzolatti and Craighero 2004).
4. We are often able to perform cognitive tasks, such as remembering, more effectively by using our bodies and even parts of our surrounding environments to offload storage and simplify the nature of the cognitive processing (Donald 1991).[17]

Incidentally, our students' participatory interactions with artwork checked all these boxes. In developing their kinesthetic responses, students had to create gestures (no. 1 above) inspired by the artwork, an act that was largely initiated by the "action-guiding" nature of vision (no. 2 above). In addition, the other cognitive tasks associated with the students' visits—the reflections and written responses—were augmented by the embodiment of their understanding. Most striking is the realization that extends out of no. 3 in the list above—that through observation of the artwork itself, whether rep-

15 Danielle Carter, "Participatory Practices in the Museum Space: A Dissection," *Art Museum Teaching* (May 12, 2017), https://artmuseumteaching.com/2017/05/11/participatory-practices/.

16 Robert A. Wilson and Lucia Foglia, "Embodied Cognition," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford University, 1997–), published December 8, 2015, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/embodied-cognition/.

17 Wilson and Foglia, "Embodied Cognition," section devoted to "Embodied vs. Traditional Cognitive Science."

resentational or abstract in nature, mirror neurons were firing as students observed or imagined their relationships with the artwork. This is clearly revealed in the last two sections of the video "The Expressionist Gesture," which I created after one of the school's early visits to the Berman Museum.[18] While this video captures the entirety of the close viewing process, the later parts reveal students practicing and performing their collaborative kinesthetic responses as well as their individual gestures and sounds in ways that exemplify an embodied understanding.

Outcomes and Conclusions

Through their critical observations and their recording of those observations; through the dialogues with their peers to learn what more others saw; and through their gestures, words/sounds, and performances, the students encountered artwork in ways most never had before. While novel experiences such as this embed learning in our memory more deeply than routines do, that, in and of itself, is not reason enough to espouse such a method. Indeed, the greatest learning here, as it often is in life, is not the products produced. It is the process and experience themselves.

The critical observations promoted student agency. It is too often the case that in schools, students' observations are silenced, buried under the "correct" perspectives of the teacher or instructor. Here students were not only prompted to talk about what they saw—not an uncommon occurrence in the methods of any museum educator—but then to adopt a stance of educator themselves when they introduced the piece of art they observed to the other members of their group (each of whom had viewed a different piece of art). We learn most when we strive to make our own understanding clear to others. Through our close-viewing process and the creation and performance of their kinesthetic responses to artwork, students were given the opportunity to share their understandings with their peers and the world.

Furthermore, those creations also required students to engage in collaborative, creative, critical, work that needed a good deal of open dialogue and communication. To watch the negotiations, arguments, concessions, and consensus-building that would go into one twenty-second-long response of this sort was to watch students engage in authentic learning, and the kind of difficult creative problem-solving that is ever more important in our ever more complex world.

The museum's role in opening students' minds and providing the space in which we might challenge students' own ideas of how learning could happen was formative in the rest of their experience in this class. Recognizing the role their body played in both understanding a novel situation as well as working towards a collaborative solution shifted the way they came to approach much of their subsequent learning. Their teachers came to see their students not merely as consumers of cultural knowledge,

18 Garreth Heidt, "Expressionist Gesture 2005," YouTube video, 8:19, September 30, 2019, https://youtu.be/8mrobQ2EWdQ .

but also as producers of it: as what Alvin Toeffler had labeled "prosumers."[19] This shift in the teachers' perspective allowed us to take more risks within the classroom and pushed our work ever further towards more embodied, inquiry-driven, learner-centred methods.

Coda

That a single space could provide such a transformative experience is not unique. But that an institution like an art museum was willing to transform itself so that its patrons could do the same? That mattered. It meant that the cultural institution of the museum saw itself as more than a repository for valuable artifacts where the learning was unidirectional, from object to person: more than merely a place where one goes to have a cultural experience. Instead, it saw itself as part of a dialogue, a space where "knowing was doing," where learning was relational, embodied, and alive … a space for participatory experiences where students encountered artwork, and in doing so, encountered themselves.

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19 Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: Bantam, 1981).

Chapter Two

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN A UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM: EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNAL SPACES

KLARE SCARBOROUGH and MIRANDA CLARK-BINDER

> "The idea of strikingly different figures coming together to dance is fascinating. Quite frankly, the painting excites me, and makes me want to dance."[1]

JOHN DEWEY'S CONSTRUCTIVIST philosophy emphasized the value of democratic communication and shared experiences in the educational process. He argued that teaching and learning were interactive social endeavors, involving both active and passive elements.[2] For Dewey, the ideal educational experience was democratic as well as communal, encouraging experimentation as well as reflection, and allowing for the free flow of communication among all participants.

Museum educators have long acknowledged the role of informal learning environments in democratizing the educational experience.[3] This is particularly evident in university museums, which offer unique opportunities for teaching and learning with original objects. By holding class in a campus museum, professors can facilitate unique

1 John, student reaction paper for Prof. Jayne Yantz, ARTH 150. (All of the students' names have been changed for privacy purposes.)

2 John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: McMillan, 1916), especially 176, 317.

3 Rika Burnham, "If You Don't Stop, You Don't See Anything," *Teachers College Record* 95, no. 4 (Summer 1994), 520–25.

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interactive experiences in which students construct meaning according to their own backgrounds and interests.[4]

At La Salle University Art Museum (LSUAM) in northwest Philadelphia, the galleries are in frequent use by faculty seeking to enhance or supplement their course material with out-of-classroom learning experiences. LSUAM supports La Salle University's practical approach to education and the Lasallian motto of "together and by association," which highlights the importance of community in the educational experience. Within the context of a Lasallian teaching museum, the artworks thus serve primarily as objects of communal inquiry, prompting social interactions and group discussions, as well as individual emotional responses. This essay examines the informal educational process within LSUAM's galleries, drawing from a recent faculty survey along with student reaction papers, providing readers with a visceral understanding of experiential education today.

La Salle University Art Museum

Advancing a mission of experiential education, LSUAM serves the needs of faculty and students as well as the general public, including over five thousand pre-K-12 school children annually from the surrounding area. With six permanent galleries of Western art from the Renaissance to the present, LSUAM provides a forum for displaying and interpreting historical and cultural artifacts, and also for encouraging the exchange of information and ideas among educational groups. Located in the lower level of an academic building, LSUAM is particularly focused on the La Salle community of faculty and students. In fiscal year 2019, there were 128 class visits by faculty in seventeen different disciplines.

The art museum's founder Brother Daniel Burke, originally an English professor, sought to create a museum environment that addressed the Lasallian emphasis on practical and experiential education. He opened the art museum galleries in fall 1975, but he began the collection a decade earlier, with an initial aim of providing authentic materials and teaching tools for the art history program.[5] Through gifts and targeted purchases, he gradually honed the "study collection" to become more encyclopedic, and to serve the needs of faculty and students from many different disciplines.

For Brother Burke, the art museum also offered an intimate setting where individuals could interact with artistic and cultural objects. He wrote that LSUAM provided the "opportunity to widen the educational experiences of our students with the beautiful as well as the good and the true, those transcendent values that have their overflow-

4 Anna Hammond et al., "The Role of the University Art Museum and Gallery," *Art Journal* 65, no. 3 (Fall 2006): 20–39.

5 Daniel Burke, "Lasallian Values: The Transcendent Values of Art," *La Salle Magazine* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2001–2002): unpag.; John J. Keenan, "La Salle's Underground Miracle: The Art Museum Turns Silver," *La Salle Magazine* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2001–2002): 4. See also Victoria Donohoe, "'La Salle's Big Leap': College's Fine Collection Placed on Public View," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 23, 1975.

ing fullness in God."[6] He also recognized the "miraculism" of the viewer's experience of art, and he stated, "If you think of God as being all true, all good and all beautiful, then paintings are little hints of God that expand the soul."[7] He was interested in the viewer's aesthetic response to a work of art, a response that was potentially spiritual and transformative.

Aside from frequent use by faculty in teaching their classes, LSUAM also serves as a site for ritual and communal experiences, most of which are open to the general public. Various academic departments regularly schedule events in the galleries, including poetry readings, induction ceremonies, scholarly lectures, social gatherings, etc. Additionally, every couple of years, LSUAM hosts a group of Tibetan Buddhist monks from the Drepung Gomang monastery in India. Over the course of a week, they work in the Renaissance gallery, creating a sand mandala featuring a specific kind of Buddha. With Christian religious paintings on the walls, the setting lends an appropriate sense of spirituality and holiness to the viewers' experiences.

Since its founding, LSUAM has provided faculty with a safe space in which to experiment with innovative pedagogical approaches involving experiential education. Continuing the progressive innovations of the seventeenth-century founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, St. John Baptist de la Salle, who sought to educate poor children in relation to their social needs, faculty have naturally integrated the twentieth-century educational philosophies of John Dewey and others. Over the years, many professors have recognized the intrinsic value of taking their students out of the traditional classroom setting and into an informal learning environment.[8] LSUAM provides an important alternative, as a dedicated space for exhibiting and studying original artworks.

Teaching and learning experiences at LSUAM contribute to the building of authentic community, which is a crucial part of education. As Christian Brother Luke Salm wrote, "The value placed on association in brotherhood … [can] transform an impersonal education institution into an authentic community where persons meet persons, where mind speaks to mind and heart speaks to heart, where the learning experience is shared with persons who can call each other friends." He noted that, for the Lasallian Christian Brothers, "community is a sign of God's presence among us. Consequently, building genuine community is an important—some would say a defining—element of a La Salle education."[9]

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6 Cited in Keenan, "La Salle's Underground Miracle," 4.

7 Cited in Tanya Barrientos, "The Brother's Work of Art is a Fine Little Art Museum," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 23, 1997; and on cover of *La Salle Magazine* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2001–2002).

8 For the intrinsic value of museum experiences, see John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *Learning from Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (Lanham: Altamira, 2000), especially 19–21.

9 Luke Salm, "Lasallian Values in Higher Education," *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 6, no. 2 (2015), unpag. https://axis.smumn.edu/2018/01/02/lasallian-values-in-higher-education/.

Experiential Education—Teaching and Learning in the Galleries

In *Democracy and Education* and later in *Experience in Education*, Dewey promoted a democratic approach to education that did not rely on traditional methods of authoritative control, but which valued the importance of shared experiences in which individuals are "co-operative or interacting parts."[10] He cited the importance of experimental science and the laboratory model in demonstrating that genuine knowledge and understanding are the "offspring of doing."[11] Following Dewey's theories about the nature of experience, more recent theorists such as David Kolb have described experiential education as an active engagement of the student through "learning by doing" activities as well as reflective observation.[12]

Like many other museums, LSUAM functions as a kind of learning laboratory, particularly for the faculty and students at La Salle University. In 2019, we surveyed the faculty who regularly use the collection, along with some of their students, to explore the dynamics of experiential education within the galleries. While the survey was part of our ongoing program evaluation, we sought to capture details about how professors and their students actually interacted with each other, and also with the artworks on display. The responses highlighted the fact that the faculty used the collection to teach in different ways—often facilitating student engagement and group discussion, but also encouraging individual reflection. The responses revealed a range of pedagogical approaches and goals, including an interest in materiality, active learning, provocative discussions, and out-of-classroom educational experiences.[13]

Our survey began by asking faculty why they brought their students to LSUAM. What was the added value of teaching and learning with original artworks? Several professors remarked, first of all, about the educational impact of material objects as concrete evidence of the past. Students in a Chinese history course, for example, "get to see in tangible form the material culture of the people we are studying at a particular time."[14] Students in an American history class come to understand that "the primary sources they use … have a tangible material reality, not just a flat reproduced form."[15] Students in an art history course "observe artworks firsthand in order to fully experience the objects. Elements such as texture, scale, and colour cannot be adequately reproduced

10 John Dewey, *Experience and Education*, Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series (New York: Collier, 1938/1976), 53.

11 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 321–22.

12 David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1984); see also A. W. Bates, *Teaching in a Digital Age: Guidelines for Designing Teaching and Learning* (Vancouver: Tony Bates Associates, 2019), especially Chapter 3.6. https://opentextbc.ca/teachinginadigitalage/.

13 Klare Scarborough and Miranda Clark-Binder, "Experiential Education in the La Salle University Art Museum," (online survey for La Salle University faculty, September 19, 2019).

14 Charles Desnoyers, response to faculty survey, September 23, 2019.

15 Jonathan Wilson, response to faculty survey, September 21, 2019.

in the classroom. In our image-laden, twenty-first-century world, visual literacy is an important skill that our students must master."[16]

Several faculty pointed out the importance of teaching and learning with material objects within a society saturated with digital images. One history professor noted "by seeing the actual pieces of art up close, they [students] perceive more detail and nuances than by seeing it on a screen. The art museum experience permits students to make original discoveries and interpretations. One of my students last year relied upon his knowledge of construction materials to discover an element of a sketch that the rest of us had not perceived."[17] Another professor recently taught a course entitled "Art in the Age of the Copy" in which "students were given a digital image of a work in the LSUAM collection, asked to make some assumptions about it, and then told to go to the art museum and see if their assumptions held true."[18] In these examples, students brought their personal knowledge to bear in their interpretation of artworks.

Other faculty use the collections on display as a way of provoking discussion about historical as well as contemporary issues. A public health professor, who brings her classes to LSUAM to explore the intersection of art and public health, stated that "the students explore how artists communicate current issues, feelings, perceptions and life that depicts many of the issues we discuss and continue to face in public health. Our sessions at the museum afford them the opportunity to view original artwork in person and have discussions about what is displayed and how it connects to topics covered in class."[19] A professor in a doctoral psychology course wrote that "the art museum visit provides a method of evoking students' emotional reactions about culture, power, and privilege in a way that [classroom] discussion cannot. Also, art is a type of cultural expression that we can view and talk about."[20]

Teaching in the art museum offers many opportunities for enhancing the student's learning experience beyond the classroom. One English professor commented that "there is no better way to show students how culturally important the concept of fertility is in a Ghanaian play set in the nineteenth century than to have students touch the worn-down sections of a [unaccessioned] Ghanaian fertility idol—and no more entertaining moment than seeing their reactions when they realize, after the fact, what the fertility idol they just rubbed is meant to do!" For her students, "the physical presence of a work of art often enables them to see the past as something real and concrete rather than an abstract idea of how things used to be. In doing so, students are better able to make sense of the conceptual ideas we are examining in the literature we read."[21]

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16 Mey-Yen Moriuchi, response to faculty survey, October 1, 2019.

17 Barbara Allen, response to faculty survey, October 1, 2019.

18 Susan Dixon, response to faculty survey, September 29, 2019.

19 Candace Robertson-James, response to faculty survey, September 23, 2019.

20 Kelly McClure, response to faculty survey, October 1, 2019.

21 Claire Busse, response to faculty survey, October 3, 2019.

Faculty and Student Interaction—Choice and Control

Dewey's educational theories stressed the social and communal role of education, which he described as the "reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience."[22] In Dewey's ideal classroom, the teacher facilitates activities that give students some control over their learning experience, allowing them to make their own discoveries and create their own meaning. As museum educators have noted, the notion of choice and control is a major aspect of the informal learning experience in museums.[23] When faculty take their students out of the classroom and into the galleries of LSUAM, the students often engage in group discussion and in self-directed activities, contributing to more personal relationships among the participants.

Several faculty remarked in the survey on the impact of moving their students out of the classroom and into the museum environment. As one history professor noted,

> students are liberated from the bare block walls of Olney/Hayman's classrooms and suddenly are surrounded by an entire spectrum of visual stimuli. Even students who have visited the museum before seem to gaze anew in wonder at what surrounds them. Since I usually ask them to gather in close when viewing the details of a painting, they are in a much different spatial situation which, in my view, stimulates interaction and discussion. The variety and subject matter often strike them as curious or unsettling and stimulates questions and discussions. Many students remain in the museum to have a further look around after the class is over.[24]

Faculty who engage in one-on-one conversations and group discussions in LSUAM reported that their students are generally more open and forthcoming than in the classroom. One art history professor observed that "students are definitely more talkative, curious, and energized in the museum. Many times they're curious about a detail that seems funny to them. If we can share a laugh about how sour a widow looks, or about a guardsman urinating in a corner of a Dutch genre painting, that humor lowers their defenses and makes it easier to cement our teacher-student bonds on a more personal level."[25] A psychology professor commented, "students are more reflective in the art museum. The student-teacher relationship is also expanded because we get to interact peer-to-peer as learners in the museum."[26] Another art history professor remarked, "there is something easy and perhaps more laid-back to the LSUAM compared to the classroom. Having class in the LSUAM takes me, the professor, out of the standard 'in front of the class' position as we all move through the museum together. I also get to

22 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 89; see also Dewey, *Experience and Education*, 51–56.

23 Falk and Dierking, *Learning from Museums*, especially 85–87, 185–87; Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, "Gallery Teaching as Guided Interpretation: Museum Education Practice and Hermeneutic Theory," in *From Periphery to Center: Art Museum Education in the 21st Century*, ed. Pat Villeneuve (Reston: National Art Education Association, 2007), 152–57; and Susan Longhenry, "Reconsidering Learning: The Art Museum Experience," in *From Periphery to Center: Art Museum Education in the 21st Century*, ed. Pat Villeneuve (Reston: National Art Education Association, 2007), 180–87.

24 Desnoyers, response to faculty survey.

25 Catherine Holochwost, response to faculty survey, September 30, 2019.

26 McClure, response to faculty survey.

interact with them one-on-one and in small groups. Students are less intimidated asking questions in this scenario."[27]

Some faculty employed pedagogical approaches which clearly emphasized the element of choice. As one history professor explained, "when I bring students to the art museum, I try to arrange for a variety of activities—individual and group. I think it's important for students to look and notice things on their own and to respond to questions individually. As students observe the same objects, they often have informal conversations with each other. It also gives me the opportunity to check in with students as they wander the galleries. I learn more about the students' thought processes and individual interests this way."[28]

However, other faculty preferred to have a museum educator guide the students through the galleries. One public health professor commented, "I am not knowledgeable about the various artwork and would not feel comfortable leading or facilitating such a conversation. I am better able to chime in or call attention to a particular course concept as the sessions are led by other art museum staff."[29] A philosophy professor who has often invited LSUAM staff to speak to her classes remarked "we have had great exchanges and discussions as a result."[30] With this kind of learning experience, the lesson is guided from beginning to end, offering students an authoritative lecture about art history, with opportunities for questions, but with much less choice.

The Nature of Experience—Active and Passive Elements

Dewey noted that the nature of experience included both active and passive elements "peculiarly combined," such that "We do something to the thing and then it does something to us in return."[31] With experiential learning, he argued, "The senses—especially the eye and ear—have to be employed to take in what the book, the map, the blackboard, and the teacher say … The senses are then regarded as a kind of mysterious conduit through which information is conducted from the external world into the mind; they are spoken of as gateways and avenues of knowledge."[32] Dewey's educational theories about the nature of experience carried over into his aesthetic theories, which posited that for the artist, expression was interwoven with reception. He wrote "The artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works."[33] Informal learning experiences in art museums highlight the interplay of active and passive elements by encouraging

27 Siobhan Conaty, response to faculty survey, September 30, 2019.

28 Moriuchi, response to faculty survey.

29 Robertson-James, response to faculty survey.

30 Cornelia Tsakiridou, response to faculty survey, September 27, 2019.

31 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 163.

32 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 166.

33 John Dewey, *Art As Experience* (New York: Capricorn, 1934), 48; see also Philip M. Zeltner, *John Dewey's Aesthetic Philosophy* (Amsterdam: Grüner, 1975), 58–77.

viewers to engage their senses, to move around objects and spaces, and to be receptive to their environment.[34]

Several faculty noted in the surveys that bringing students to LSUAM lends itself to active looking as well as active learning, offering potentially transformative educational experiences. One art history professor observed that teaching and learning in galleries involves a more active engagement with her students than in the classroom.

> In the classroom, students are often (although certainly not always) passive receivers of information in front of one big brilliant image projection. In the art museum, they are quieter, at least initially, as they focus on the works of art. But then they begin to start conversations with those standing next to them, other students who are attracted to the same image for some reason and whom they might not be talking to in the classroom. For me, I think it is a much more focused and impactful experience, where I can really talk to them one on one, in front of the work of art, and get at why they like something, what they think it is communicating to them. I can often find out a lot about students in the Art Museum."[35]

She continued, "I usually assign a worksheet with tasks to complete (look at this, find that), but in contrast to the classroom, the students often come away from these experiences energized and intrigued by what they have seen."[36]

Several faculty also commented about their students' aesthetic and emotional responses to artworks, referencing Brother Daniel Burke's idea of the "miraculism" of the viewer's experience, and the idea of original paintings as hints of the divine, expressing transcendent values. One faculty member remarked, "I can't tell you how many times students come to me and show me their favorite painting, or one that disturbs them, or one that makes them think about social issues from a new perspective. One of the best results I find in taking my students to the art museum involves watching them find joy and revelation in looking at beautiful and powerful works of art."[37] Another faculty member observed that "there is sometimes a kind of awed response to some of the more dramatic religious works that might qualify as Brother's idea of 'miraculism'; at the same time it often seems that students have a kind of 'eureka' experience when they see the humanity reflected in works hundreds of years old." A third noted that "Some students are mesmerized by works of art, photograph them and discover a love for art in themselves that they had not seen before."[38]

A public health professor concluded that the experience of teaching and learning in LSUAM can having a lasting positive impact, expanding and even deepening the students' engagement with the subject matter taught in the classroom. She notes that "our discussions [in the galleries] are definitely rooted in the connection of the art and course concepts. After our visit, students identify artwork to write about as they discuss the

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34 Elliott Kai-Kee, Lissa Latina, and Lilit Sadoyan, *Activity-Based Teaching in the Art Museum: Movement, Embodiment, Emotion* (Los Angeles: J. P. Getty Trust, 2020).

35 Dixon, response to faculty survey.

36 Holochwost, response to faculty survey.

37 Conaty, response to faculty survey.

38 Tsakiridou, response to faculty survey.

artwork's connection to a specific public health issue. They then propose a policy connected to a theme displayed in the artwork." She adds "these experiences have definitely altered students' learning experiences. I have had students express their interest in the intersection of art and public health as a result of this experience. For instance, I have a student who now works with an agency that uses art as a mechanism of voice and expression with individuals with dementia and their caretakers."[39]

Student Reaction Papers

This section highlights a few of the reaction papers that students have written as part of their class visits to the art museum. Several faculty have experimented with their assignments, asking students to select a painting and provide a written response, in some cases prompting them with questions and requiring a sketch of the artwork. These assignments were by nature solitary activities, encouraging students to assess feelings, memories, and associations in front of a work of art. However, the experience itself was communal, as students gathered together before some of the same artworks, holding their clipboards, writing reaction papers, and sharing observations.

When an "Introduction to Art" class visited in fall 2019, the professor handed her students an assignment for a short hand-written reaction paper. She asked her students to "wander through the galleries until you find something that captures your imagination and interest." In her instructions, she provided a bullet list of questions prompting the students to write about their experiences, including "What attracted you to the work you selected? How does the work make you feel? Does the work bring up any memories or relate to you personally? What elements of style have influenced the way you feel about this object?" Afterwards, the students were asked to make a quick sketch of the artwork, then note if they had learned anything through their drawing.

After receiving their assignment, the students separated and wandered off into the galleries. Some of them walked with classmates, while others eagerly explored on their own. Throughout the class, the instructor roamed through the galleries, occasionally checking in with her students, but mostly encouraged them to examine their responses to the artworks around them.

Four of the students ended up in the twentieth-century gallery, in front of a large abstract painting titled *The Yellow Guy,* by Irving Kriesberg. This artwork features a large white bird encircled by six diversely coloured figures who appear to be dancing. The students who selected this painting gathered in front of the canvas holding their clipboards, making occasional remarks to each other, then standing mostly silent as they focused on their writing assignment. A few excerpts from their reaction papers follow.

> The idea of strikingly different figures coming together to dance is fascinating. Quite frankly, the painting excites me, and makes me want to dance … Even though all of the elements clash, the depiction of pure bliss can be made out.[40]

39 Robertson-James, response to faculty survey.

40 John, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

> This work makes me feel happy and kind of scared at the same time. The colours that the artist used are very fun, but at the same time, the animals are somewhat scary to look at … It seems as though the artist is making these animals have humanistic features … He is also making them look as though they are dancing, which personifies them. It is a mix of happy and evil at the same time.[41]
>
> It reminds me of my childhood drawings of characters from a [television] show or simple drawings in general. This artwork makes me feel intimidated because of the huge bird that is larger than the other creatures around it.[42]
>
> This painting makes me feel happiness with a little bit of fear because it looks like all the figures are having a good time, but the white bird looks like it is going to hunt one of them. The bright colours of this painting really caught my attention and attracted me to it. Also, the shapes of the figures appear to be stretched out and make it appear as [if] the figures are dancing … After drawing this artwork, I noticed even more details than before.[43]

In the nineteenth-century gallery, two students stood in front of Henry Ossawa Tanner's large painting *Mary* (see Fig. 2.1). In their reaction papers, they both responded to the artwork's somber tone and theme.

> This painting of Mary drew my attention immediately when I entered the room because of the sadness … The gathered blankets on the floor next to her with the 'halo' formation over it make me think about motherhood, the agony at the thought of losing a child. Here Mary almost seems to know that she will lose her son Jesus.[44]

> Although it is somber because of the lighting in the room and the expression on Mary's face, there is still an element of joy because Jesus has been born … After drawing this, I realized how open the room is, but all I saw at first was Mary and Jesus. The lighting also conveys where the artist wants us to look and creates a contrast from light to dark.[45]

Nearby in the same gallery, one student sketched a very neat drawing of a sentimental Victorian painting entitled *The Letter*, by Maria Brooks; another wrote a brief reaction paper outlining their responses to the serene autumn landscape depicted in *Delaware Water Gap* by James Lambdin; and a third student wrote a detailed two-page paper, answering every question on the assignment, focusing on a colourful modern landscape painted by an unknown artist in the style of the French Nabis. Other students were scattered through the rest of galleries, writing about artworks from a range of different time periods.

The students were especially interested in the main hallway, which displayed contemporary art in juxtaposition with non-Western objects. Two students stood together in front of Ernesto Yerena's *Our True History*, writing about the woman's intense and intelligent gaze, and reflecting on their own families and cultural roots. Three other stu-

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41 Charles, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

42 Jerry, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

43 Bob, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

44 Laura, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

45 Helen, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

Figure 2.1. Students in front of Osawa Tanner painting in galleries of LaSalle University Museum. Photograph courtesy of Miranda Clark-Binder.

dents selected non-Western objects, including a Burmese Mandalay Buddha, a Chinese Ming Dynasty Lion-Dog, and a Nigerian *Ibeji* (twin) statuette.

At the end of the hallway, a student admiring the large *Dancer* by Charles Searles wrote enthusiastically about their cultural heritage. "This painting reminds me of my mother dancing, and the patterns remind me of my African roots … I absolutely love to dance so this picture really grabbed my attention by the movement going on … Then the painting was so open, I felt invited to start dancing in the museum."[46]

In this "Introduction to Art" class, the professor's assignment prompted the students to engage with artworks on emotional as well as analytical levels, with regard to elements of style. In upper level art history courses and more specialized courses in other disciplines, the assignments were often more rigorous. Some faculty have also involved their students in game-like activities within the art museum. Others have asked their students to write ekphrastic poetry, or to split into groups and conduct scavenger hunts through the galleries. These are just a few of the many varied educational opportunities and interactions within LSUAM.

Conclusion

Dewey wrote that "while all thinking results in knowledge, ultimately the value of knowledge is subordinate to its use in thinking. For we live not in a settled and finished world, but in one which is going on, and where our main task is prospective, and where retrospect—and all knowledge as distinct from thought is retrospect—is of value in the solidity, security, and fertility it affords our dealings with the future."[47]

46 Donald, student reaction paper for Yantz, ARTH 150, October 18, 2019.

47 Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 177–78.

LSUAM has been a site for critical thinking, spontaneous interactions with original artworks, and pedagogical experimentation since its opening by Brother Daniel Burke in 1975. As it approaches its fiftieth anniversary in 2025, LSUAM remains committed to its Lasallian mission of experiential education. LSUAM continues to provide a safe communal space where faculty and students come together, construct and share meaning, and reflect on their experiences. And sometimes they even dance.

Postscript

With the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020, LSUAM's galleries became quiet and empty of visitors. LSUAM continued to serve La Salle faculty and students, pivoting quickly to provide virtual educational Zoom programs in lieu of in-person visits. These programs offered different kinds of teaching and learning experiences which, in some respects, extended the communal function of the galleries. Without the presence of material objects, lessons often involved a museum educator presenting a slide show with information and images designed to complement course material, followed by questions and comments from faculty and students. Though the environment was more controlled than in the galleries, these virtual learning experiences offered faculty and students opportunities to interact with one another and to learn together, outside of the ordinary virtual class framework.

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Chapter Three

FINDING EMPATHY IN ART: HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

FLORENCE GELO

ANOTHER DAY AS chaplain in an urban community hospital. A young mother births a nine-pound (4 kg) baby girl while twelve relatives camp joyously in the family room. A five-year-old boy, thrown from his bicycle as he raced to deliver his father's lunch forgotten on the kitchen counter, is carried into the emergency room needing stitches. New admissions are high, with many requests for pastoral visits. At 11 a.m., the trauma pager erupts. Within minutes, I arrive at the trauma centre, and the nurse directs me to a cubicle where two women wait, seated. As I enter, a gurney follows me, on which a young man lies motionless. Within moments, the two women are beside their son and grandson, respectively—victim of a shooting on this a mild, cloudy Wednesday morning. The young man's mother is rigid yet trembling, yearning for yet dreading the arrival of her son's body. Her grief engulfs the tiny cubicle.

Usually, at the end of such intense encounters, I sought self-care, spending time alone in the chapel or leaving the hospital. Often, I would make the quick jaunt to the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA), only a fifteen-minute drive.

The art museum featured thirty-minute "spotlight" tours. Each tour provided an opportunity to look more closely at a single work of art, to learn about the artist's style and about the history of the work and the artist. On one such visit, the guide selected a painting by John Singer Sargent, *Landscape with Women in Foreground* (Fig. 3.1). The quiet space; the community formed by viewers; the focused attention; the solitary, animated voice of the guide; the two women arm in arm in a muted landscape—all this allowed me to "enter" Sargent's serene country landscape and restore my emotional well-being. There I experienced the power of art to nurture and heal, and I saw how art might help to teach "close looking," allowing meaning to emerge.

After each visit, I left the museum calm and refreshed, a feeling I carried as I drove back to the hospital and resumed my work. I experienced the power of experiencing art to facilitate emotional growth and healing.

After several years of visiting the museum as an act of self-care, in 2001, the year of the September 11 terrorist attacks, I began training as a docent at PMA. As a docent, I created and guided museum tours, always with a focus on creating a welcoming, inclu-

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Florence Gelo has over twenty-five years' experience as a humanities educator. She directed and produced the short film "The HeART of Empathy: Using the Visual Arts in Medical Education," for which she received the Family Medicine Through the Visual Arts Award in 2009. Gelo holds a Doctor of Ministry and national certification in psychoanalysis.

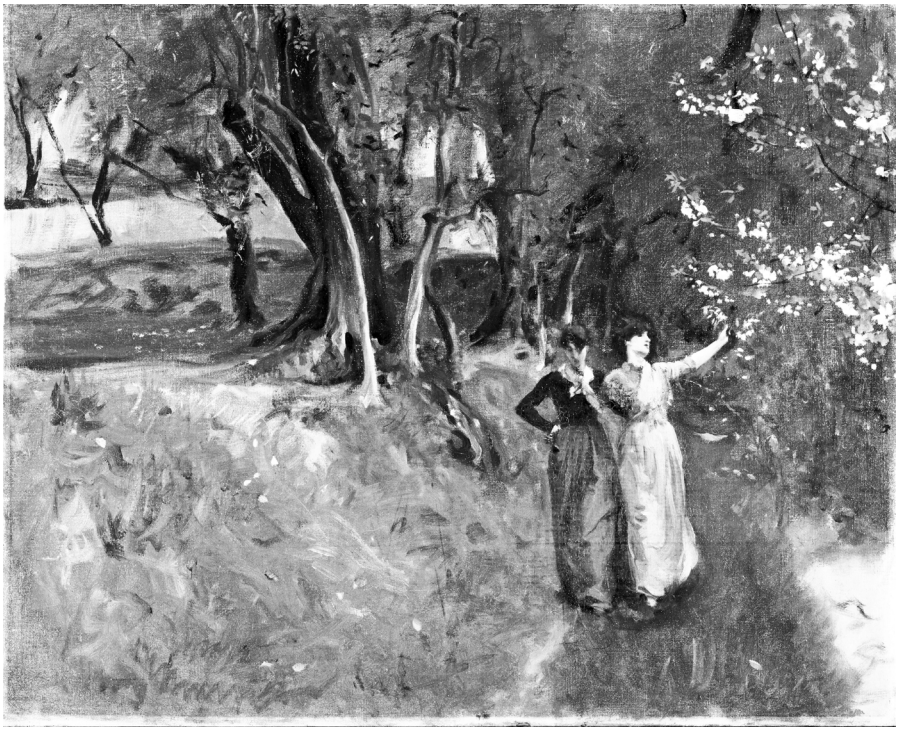

Figure 3.1. John Singer Sargent, *Landscape with Women in Foreground,* ca. 1883, oil on canvas, 25 × 30½ in. Philadelphia Museum of Art: 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Gift of Joseph F. McCrindle, 2002, 2002-49-1. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Figure 3.2. Pacecco de Rosa (Francesco de Rosa), *The Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1640, oil on canvas, 78 × 120¼ in. Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with the John D. McIlhenny Fund, 1973, 1973-253-1. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

sive, and engaging environment. I later began facilitating "spotlight talks," where participants were fewer and the environment more intimate and participatory. I also trained as a facilitator for a museum program called "ArtTalk," which provided art "tours" by telephone to people living in long-term residential care facilities and those who were homebound. Each participant received a loose-leaf binder of approximately fifteen colour prints of paintings from the museum's collection. The group would meet by phone to look closely at and discuss the images. The power of these "tours" was evident immediately. Participants commented enthusiastically on the paintings, asking questions and talking about the thoughts and feelings each image evoked in them.

At the end of the three-week program, participants provided feedback. The feedback was extraordinarily positive; participants often became devotees, participating in every "ArtTalk" offered as personal health allowed. To a hospital chaplain encountering the chronically ill, it was evident that "ArtTalk" became a form of spiritual care.

A decade later, my enthusiasm for these two programs would inform my decision to develop one using museum visits to help medical students learn about themselves as clinicians and develop empathy as well as self-care skills.

The Museum Experience: Medical Students

A medical student's initial encounters with patients can be as intense as those of a chaplain, as I described above. Some patient encounters push students toward an emotional newness, hurling them towards the far edge of experience. Such encounters can create attitudes and emotional predispositions that advance or hinder learning. A museum gallery can offer a sheltered place for self-care, respite, and renewal, and the contemplation of art can allow students to cultivate an inner self, integrating thoughts and feelings and helping them to function holistically as physicians. At the same time, close study of art can even help medical students develop clinical skills.

At first, I began taking medical students and family medicine residents to the museum to observe works of art. Several recent articles in medical literature had described or quantified the value of teaching observation to augment clinical skills. Some focused on the use of art to enhance clinical skills for students in other health professions, including physician assistants and occupational therapists. Irwin Braverman, dermatologist and educator at Yale University School of Medicine, published an article on the value of sustained and directed looking in enhancing visual acuity and pattern recognition.[1] Other medical researchers investigated the power of art images to teach observation[2] and to enhance both clinical skills and humanistic abilities, such as recognizing human suffering.[3]

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1 Irwin Braverman, "To See or Not to See: How Visual Training Can Improve Observational Skills," *Clinics in Dermatology* 29, no. 3 (May–June 2011): 343–46.

2 Johanna Shapiro, Lloyd Rucker, and Jill Beck, "Training the Clinical Eye and Mind: Using the Arts to Develop Medical Students' Observational and Pattern Recognition Skills," *Medical Education* 40, no. 3 (2006): 263–68.

3 Stephen W. Russell, "Improving Observational Skills to Enhance the Clinical Examination,"

The nursing literature abounds with articles about the use of art in nursing practice. Most influential in my learning was the research published by Britt-Maj Wikström, Professor of Art, Health, and Empowerment at the University of Akershus, Oslo, Norway, and the Karolinska Institutet Solna, Stockholm, Sweden. Though her study populations varied from children to adults, Wikström's work focused on using the arts in nursing to facilitate expression, generate narratives, and teach empathy.[4]

Other educators have also explored the dialogue between the arts and development of observational skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy.[5] Having served as both a hospital and a hospice chaplain, then training medical students and family medicine residents, I was drawn to using the arts to help students and physicians in training "picture" the unseen realities of illness and dying that demand sustained looking and authentic responses from healthcare and spiritual care providers. The growth of art-based learning in medical education has resulted in the recognition of the value of a medical school partnership with museums.[6]

Medical Clinics 102, no. 3 (2018): 495–507; Charles L. Bardes, Debra Gillers, and Amy E. Herman, "Learning to Look: Developing Clinical Observational Skills at an Art Museum," *Medical Education* 35, no. 12 (2001): 1157–61; Sheila Naghshineh et al., "Formal Art Observation Training Improves Medical Students' Visual Diagnostic Skills," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 23, no. 7 (2008): 991–97; Craig M. Klugman, Jennifer Peel, and Diana Beckmann-Mendez, "Art Rounds: Teaching Interprofessional Students Visual Thinking Strategies at One School," *Academic Medicine* 86, no. 10 (2011): 1266–71; Sona K. Jasani and Norma S. Saks, "Utilizing Visual Art to Enhance the Clinical Observation Skills of Medical Students," *Medical Teacher* 35, no. 7 (2013): e1327–31; Linda Friedlaender, "Enhancing Observational Skills: A Case Study; Collaboration between a University Art Museum and Its Medical School," in *Museums and Higher Education Working Together: Challenges and Opportunities*, ed. Ann Boddington, Jos Boys, and Catherine Speight (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 147–57; Pamela B. Schaff, Suzanne Isken, and Robert M. Tager, "From Contemporary Art to Core Clinical Skills: Observation, Interpretation, and Meaning-Making in a Complex Environment," *Academic Medicine* 86, no. 10 (2011): 1272–76.

4 Britt-Maj Wikström, "A Picture of a Work of Art as an Empathy Teaching Strategy in Nurse Education Complementary to Theoretical Knowledge," *Journal of Professional Nursing* 19, no. 1 (2003): 49–54; Wikström, "Nursing Education at an Art Gallery," *Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 32, no. 2 (2000): 197–99; Wikström, "Work of Art Dialogues: An Educational Technique by Which Students Discover Personal Knowledge of Empathy," *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 7, no. 1 (2001): 24–29; Wikström, "Works of Art as a Pedagogical Tool: An Alternative Approach to Education," *Creative Nursing* 17, no. 4 (2011): 187–94.

5 Kathleen Leitao, "Seeing the Forest and the Trees: Increasing Nurse Practitioner Students' Observational and Mindfulness Skills," *Creative Nursing* 20, no. 1 (2014): 67–72; Linda Honan Pellico et al., "Looking Is Not Seeing: Using Art to Improve Observational Skills," *Journal of Nursing Education* 48, no. 11 (2009): 648–53; Dawn Freshwater and Theodore Stickley, "The Heart of the Art: Emotional Intelligence in Nurse Education," *Nursing Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (2004): 91–98; Kirsten Jack, "Putting the Words 'I Am Sad' Just Doesn't Quite Cut It Sometimes!: The Use of Art to Promote Emotional Awareness in Nursing Students," *Nurse Education Today* 32, no. 7 (2012): 811–16; Wikström, "Work of Art Dialogues," 24–29.

6 Nancy C. Elder et al., "The Art of Observation: Impact of a Family Medicine and Art Museum Partnership on Student Education," *Family Medicine* 38, no. 6 (2006): 393–98.

I revised "Death, Dying and Bereavement," a course that I had been teaching in the medical humanities, to include works of art to help students develop emotional awareness of "self" and "other." Fourteen medical students enrolled in this elective. The museum waived admission fees, offered support from a museum educator who provided educational materials for and co-facilitated engagement with selected works of art, asking only that we respect gallery space and other visitors. We visited twice for two and a half hours over the course of one semester (ten weeks). The art pieces observed were selected because their content facilitated storytelling and invited students to explore their emotional responses to visual depictions of loss and their own perspectives on loss. The experience allowed students to understand how their perspective affected their response to others. Overall, students determined that they had participated in a program that was important, especially given their lack of firsthand experience with death and dying. One student noted that this course was the first time she had been asked to use an empathic voice to support a person who was suffering.

I later designed and taught a course entitled "Training the Physician's Eye: Enhancing Clinical Skills through Art Observation" in which medical students practised a special kind of seeing to improve clinical skills by looking at works of art. The goal was to improve their visual acumen, promote inquiry and critical thinking, and develop caring skills to enhance patient encounters. At the museum, students practised visual observation and meaning-making from observing the nonverbal (a key skill to understanding what patients are telling us but not saying). The intent was for students to increase emotional awareness, to recognize suffering in others, to gain confidence in regulating their own suffering, and to increase competence as well as empathy in the doctor-patient relationship.

Students often remarked that guided looking allowed them "to see more than they had ever seen in a work of art." *The Massacre of the Innocents*, a painting by Pacecco de Rosa (Francesco de Rosa) at PMA (Fig. 3.2), depicts an event described in the Christian Bible in which Herod, the Roman-appointed king of Judea, fearing the arrival of the baby Jesus as a threat to his power, ordered the slaughter of all male children in Bethlehem under the age of two. Jesus, a Jew, was prophesied to become the long-awaited king of Judea, the "messiah" who would rescue Israelites from Roman persecution.

While viewing this painting, students noticed the colours, the soldiers, their beards, the activity, and the energy of the painting before they noticed the pain. When I asked them to look closely at the faces and asked, "What do you see?," the students began, not immediately but over time, to be able to talk about the pain. "Some of the mothers have their hands outstretched as if they could make a difference, as if they could hold back the sword or the soldier that wields it." Seeing the expression on the face of one mother, a student imagined a mother asking, "Why are you doing this?" "You can definitely sense the feeling of helplessness at her dead child who's openly bleeding on the ground." And another remarked, "I'm looking at the [woman] at the top. It seems … she doesn't know what to do. And the other ones too … they're putting their hands out … they're trying to stop but there's this inability to know how to save your child … it seems like it's almost inevitable." The students were able to recognize emotional pain in others, which is the beginning of empathy, another major element

for quality care that requires visual skills. To be fully present to a patient, a physician must understand emotions and feelings that a patient may express nonverbally. Careful looking at art is one method to develop such skills.

I intentionally began to structure lessons to develop other skills during this process. Students were asked to look, look closely, and look again for several minutes. Patience was required. I then asked students to name what they saw. Consistently, rather than merely *naming*, students *interpreted* what they saw. They would call a round blue object sitting atop a head a "hat," and a line from a hand to the ground a "cane"; I would then ask them to describe only what their eyes could see—for instance, not a "hat" but rather a tube-shaped object curving down on the sides. Medical students must learn to describe and analyze what they see while resisting the tendency to quickly name and interpret; they must appreciate specificity and avoid hasty conclusions, allowing time to gather information to reach accurate conclusions. All these visual skills are critical in the clinical care of patients.

Students were also expected to describe to the group what they saw, using clear, descriptive language, to ask questions about the painting, and also to listen closely and try to understand what others said. Listening is another important skill that enables empathy. At times, students had differing opinions and responses to a painting, providing an opportunity to teach respect for differences. Sometimes there is no one "right" answer, and students saw they could learn from each other if they approached an encounter with an open mind and heart.

Students were also prompted to identify their own as well as others' emotional responses to art. The importance of being able to name feelings became increasingly evident when students studied Vincent van Gogh's painting *At Eternity's Gate*.[7] In this image, students perceived the pain and sorrow of a grief-stricken man, as the artist most likely intended. Others, invited to use their imaginations, suggested the man might be puzzled or frustrated, or might even be laughing uncontrollably.

How a person perceives the feelings of others through visuals differs from one viewer to another, depending on the person's unique beliefs and experiences.

> we do not merely see the visual representation of a girl who covers her face with her hands, but … we see this representation of gestures as an expression of grief or sorrow. We recognize that she undergoes an experience of intense emotional turmoil. She is not merely sitting there, but the way in which she sits there shows us how she feels. Thus, the painting moves us; it is as if the image reaches out towards us and touches us. The expressivity of the girl is something that we do not only see immediately, but it is also something that we feel. Or rather, it is something that we recognize through feeling.[8]

The journey to empathy begins when students notice how the work of art makes them feel.

Equally important is to help students understand that not only do we each react to images with differing thoughts and feelings, we also each have a personal *response*

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7 Vincent van Gogh, *Treurende oude man* (At Eternity's Gate), 1890. https://krollermuller.nl/en/vincent-van-gogh-sorrowing-old-man-at-eternity-s-gate.

8 Gustav Jørgen Pedersen, "Empathy and Aesthetics: Edvard Munch and the Paradox of Pictorial Thinking," *Kunst og Kultur* 101, no. 4 (2018): 208–23.

Figure 3.3. Violet Oakley, *Untitled [Portrait of a Woman]*, n.d., charcoal and pastel, 20¼ × 12½ in. Courtesy of Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA: Gift of Ofelia Garcia, 2011.

to those thoughts and feelings. Some of our own emotional responses we find acceptable, while others we are reluctant to reveal. Understanding this requires repetition. Students may experience a wide variety of emotions—some for the first time. As the instructor, I encouraged students to experience all their feelings and thoughts, knowing they are part of the human family and that experiencing a particular feeling does not demand acting on that feeling.

For example, a student viewing Violet Oakley's *Untitled* [*Portrait of a Woman*] (Fig. 3.3) at the Woodmere Art Museum (Philadelphia) might see herself in the woman depicted; or a student might see his or her own mother or aunt, or a family member who died recently, and learn to feel loss and pain without becoming overwhelmed by or denying those feelings. Learning these skills while viewing art in a museum provides a safe environment where students can recognize, tolerate, and process such feelings.

As a practical matter, close looking takes time. The class met at the museum in small groups of five to ten. Sessions could be intense, lasting three hours, with students standing or sitting in front of each painting for fifteen minutes. I instructed the students to look, and look again, before describing their observations. Sessions were ideally scheduled either on a day when the museum was closed to the public or during less crowded daytime hours. Scheduling also depended on the availability of museum educators to co-teach.

The Museum Experience: Family Medicine Residents and Persons Living with Dementia

ARTZ Philadelphia brings together persons living with dementia and their care providers to look at and talk about art while building a supportive, enriching community for participants.[9] As a member of the behavioral science faculty in the Drexel University

9 ARTZ Philadelphia is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and well-being of people living with dementia and their care partners through joyful interactions around arts and culture, https://www.artzphilly.org/.

College of Medicine family medicine residency program, I believed this program could help third-year family medicine residents, completing their community medicine service-learning experience, to increase their comfort in patient interactions. Through participation in ARTZ Philadelphia, they learned more about dementia symptoms and management, explored their own emotional self-awareness and mastery, and furthered their skills in compassionate care.

I was especially drawn to this organization after I experienced an unfortunate situation with a care provider for a client of mine who was dying of Alzheimer's disease. His wife could not accept his terminal diagnosis. She searched for a doctor who could provide her even a glimmer of hope. Eventually, she found a specialist who appeared receptive. At their meeting, he asked a myriad of questions about her husband and she provided an exhaustive account of his illness and treatment. The physician then told her, "I think we can find out the cause of this illness." Enthusiastically, thinking he was offering hope for a cure, she asked, "When can we do that?" The doctor replied, "during the autopsy. I can definitely find out." Unintentional cruelty, but cruelty nevertheless! Because this physician was evidently unaware of the wife's feelings of desperation, he could not respond empathically. Unfortunately, when a physician dismisses, ignores, or cannot recognize the presence of pain in another, they contribute to that person's distress.

ARTZ Philadelphia provided medical students with immersion in the lives of persons living with dementia and their care partners through a partnership program with the Drexel University College of Medicine. The organization's "ARTZ at The Museum" program provided opportunities for museum and classroom experiences that allowed students to witness and appreciate intimate and tender moments, normally unseen, in the lives of those who are relegated to the margins, moments that escape students' attention in practise settings.

Residents need to feel comfortable with a patient. Developing comfort is necessary to allow resident physicians to interact as equal partners with those for whom they care. The program enabled the formation of partnerships—often demanding that residents step out of the doctor role, which can be a defensive posture for those who feel uncomfortable or underconfident in engaging with people with dementia.

ARTZ Philadelphia-sponsored museum visits, co-led with the organization's founder and executive director,[10] were part of a pilot program that took second- and third-year family medicine residents out of the office or hospital setting for a required community medicine rotation. Assigned readings first exposed students to the literature on clinical and person-centred, arts-based interventions to treat people living with dementia. Two community-based experiences then allowed students to interact with patients with dementia to increase their knowledge and clinical skills, empathy, compassion, and inclusiveness toward these patients.

10 Susan Shifrin, the editor of this volume, is the founder and executive director of ARTZ Philadelphia.

Students first visited a memory care unit where they learned about the ARTZ Philadelphia program, participated in facilitated art-based group activities, and met with ARTZ Philadelphia and care facility staff. Next, they visited an art museum to observe and interact with people living with dementia and their family care providers while participating in facilitated conversations about works of art. Residents reported being "curious" and "apprehensive" or "nervous about meeting care partners" and "people living with dementia." Most were initially hesitant to participate. Yet one student remarked after the program, "I get … how looking at art together was a way to connect to patients on a more emotional level … as people." Another: "I always thought that people with dementia were passive or incapacitated in ways. It was interesting to see that one man… trying to use words about the painting…and even though his words didn't line up … I understood him."

Residents' feedback suggested that the rotation opened their eyes. One expressed surprise and a touch of humility about looking at art with the patients: "They saw things in those paintings that I completely missed. In a way I feel the dementia allowed for the participants to view the art with a "free" mind—rather than being analytical about the paintings. They spoke from their hearts and found meaning within themselves rather than looking for the "right answer" to the meaning of the paintings." Another said that the program served as "a good reminder that patients are whole people."

Visits to the memory care unit and museum lasted two to three hours each. The instructor scheduled post-visit sessions in which students were encouraged to notice and question preconceived notions they might have brought to each visit and challenged them to grow by supplementing their textbook and classroom learning with firsthand experience. The program was designed to build students' trust in themselves as learners by immersing themselves in an unfamiliar culture and "seeing" and responding to what they saw.

Residents were thus able to develop relationships with and participate as "echoers" for community members with dementia in these programs, establishing a dynamic of "being present with" and "learning from" prospective patients. All students and residents participating in ARTZ Philadelphia began cautiously, then ultimately embraced the unique and stimulating gallery environment.

Although residency program directors perceived the art museum experiment as valuable, the rotation was discontinued due to competing educational priorities.

The Museum Experience: Students Preparing for Medical and Healthcare Professions

When the pilot program for family medicine residents at Drexel University College of Medicine was discontinued, ARTZ Philadelphia and the Sidney Kimmel Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University launched the "ARTZ @ Jefferson" program to provide the opportunity for repeated interactions between healthcare students and people living with dementia. "ARTZ @ Jefferson" combined study and classroom learning, art observation, group participation, and discussion. The program was designed to allow people living with dementia and their care partners to mentor students about their lived experiences.

The program incorporated all the educational elements needed to develop the skills we call empathy—learning to see, to describe, to work collaboratively with others, to recognize emotions in oneself and others, to communicate with relative comfort, and to be open and curious. Through their recurring interactions with program mentors, students were engaged in humanistic learning. They learned the importance of preserving the dignity of people living with chronic illness; of understanding and appreciating the care provider's burden; of appreciating alternative modes of communication, not necessarily reliant on verbal exchange; and of creating and maintaining supportive community.

The "mentoring" that students received in the ARTZ Philadelphia program was as precious as a jewel. The persons living with dementia and their care partners became "living human documents" enabling holistic education for students through these sacred encounters. Conversing one-on-one over time, students cultivated empathic relationships with their mentors. The museum provided the context for students to engage with a sense of safety, ease, and comfort—a prerequisite to an encounter in which all who are present become human first. Immersion in the mentoring program offered students the opportunity to develop vital skills foundational in their training and practice as health professionals.

Students first met for a one-hour session with their ARTZ Philadelphia mentors in an art gallery for a group conversation about works of art, facilitated by ARTZ Philadelphia's director. After this session students were each assigned an ARTZ Philadelphia mentor. This joint meeting served as the first of several encounters. Students maintained written journals for reflection and critical thinking after each meeting with their mentors. Journals were submitted to instructors at the end of the course.

Simultaneously, in classroom sessions, small groups of students, through facilitated peer interaction, explored their feelings, thoughts, and uncertainties about encountering someone living with dementia. Listening curiously and respectfully to others' experiences and points of view was strongly encouraged, promoting self-awareness, growth, and integration of the knowledge they had gained in their patient encounters.

This program modeled for health professionals the importance of inviting and valuing a patient's perspective—to imagine what it might be like to walk in that person's shoes—and, when seeing patients, to build rapport by communicating understanding and compassion. One student was surprised by the ease, a sense of freedom, with which the care partners and persons living with dementia interacted with each other in contemplating a painting together. Another commented on the "effect of a pleasant environment to encourage interaction." One student noticed her own reaction "to beauty … when guided to do so."

Students learned that they could communicate compassion and respect not merely by acting as a polite professional but by actively listening and responding to persons living with dementia, knowing that success in treatment rests largely in gaining the person's trust. As one student said: "I can see that powerful seeing … looking into a person's eyes … making contact with the person and not their illness … which might be disturbing to us … is giving care." These students learned to use curiosity and imagination in their care encounters with persons living with dementia and their loved ones. In their

clinical training ahead, these students would be better equipped to encounter persons living with dementia with openness to their experience, feelings, and concerns.

Conclusions

The museum-based experiences described here were invaluable to students and physicians-in-training. The opportunity to observe works of art in a museum gallery allowed learners to observe without time limits, to look for meaning beyond merely describing content, to use their imaginations, and to engage in creative dialogue and self-expression. Works of art can promote self-awareness and cultivate emotional intelligence as viewers symbolically witness the human struggle with illness, suffering, and death.

Perhaps most important, the vibrancy, beauty, and expressive nature of art allowed students to merge heart and mind, crucial to developing and enhancing clinical skills. In a safe, nonjudgmental environment, students could notice their own emotional and attitudinal responses to depictions of suffering, and risk sharing those responses with others. A relationship between a patient and healthcare provider requires trust and the ability to interact with curiosity, respect, kindness, and empathy. The museum became the context for students to learn about themselves as healers and healthcare providers to others.

Though the programs faced challenges such as student schedules, transportation, and funding, museum-based programs are clearly worth repeating and expanding to other medical and healthcare specialties. A trained art educator or a healthcare or spiritual care professional is helpful although not required to facilitate an art-based program that teaches clinical skills. What is needed is a relationship with a museum that shares the mission of the program, institutional support to offset museum costs, a facilitator skilled in facilitating small groups, and the ability to select narrative art works that match the intentions of the program.

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Part Two

THE MUSEUM AS EXPERIENTIAL SPACE

Chapter Four

KNOW THYSELF: IDENTIFYING WITH THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY'S *YOU! THE EXPERIENCE*

MEGAN BAYLES

AS A CHILD, my family's frequent trips to Chicago were punctuated by visits to the Museum of Science and Industry (MSI). Of course, my parents, sisters, and I saw Colleen Moore's Fairy Castle, the gallery of airplanes, and watched baby chicks hatch in the genetics exhibit. But for me, there was only one must-see: the "dead babies in the jars." Each time we went to the museum, I bided my time until we found them, at which point my sisters and I would stand on the carpeted ledge on the wall below their inset display case, pressing our noses to the glass to study each wrinkled, grey specimen in order. At each jar, we would ask our parents, "Is that a real baby?" "Was I ever that little?"

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, when I was visiting, the foetal specimens were exhibited as *Prenatal Development*. Performance and disability scholar Catherine Cole describes and analyzes that exhibit in much greater detail than I remember from my childhood visits. Reading Cole's account of visitors viewing the exhibit, though, I wonder if it was I she was watching:

> Apparently one of the museum's most popular installations, it [*Prenatal Development*] was always mobbed. The display drew viewers right up against the glass, their faces within inches of each formaldehyde-filled jar. Specimens with shriveled gray flesh, closed eyes, and tiny limbs crossed in burial poses fascinated visitors who waited in line to dwell at length upon each of the 40 fetuses and embryos … A hush descended, even as the surrounding atmosphere was abuzz with sirens and screaming children … Groups of children were the most vocal of visitors, exclaiming "disgusting," "gross," "sick" or "grody," especially when uterine tissue or the embryonic sack was shown.[1]

Now, as then, these objects hold a special place in the museum and in the experiences of its visitors. Cole's description of the popularity and impact of the specimens was written long before the opening of *YOU! The Experience*, the exhibit that now houses the foetal specimens at MSI, but the popularity and affective responses to the exhibit remain true. In fact, these specimens, unique in the museum, have always held a particular power.

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1 Catherine Cole, "Sex and Death on Display: Women, Reproduction, and Fetuses at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry," *The Drama Review* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 47–48.

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The curation of the human medical specimens housed at MSI, which were originally showcased by the Loyola Medical School at the A Century of Progress International Exposition in 1933, also known as the Chicago World's Fair, reflects an expectation on the part of the museum and its curators that visitors will experience the exhibit through the lens of identification—understanding the object of the exhibit to be visitors' own bodies. Further, in both their original exhibition context and their current one, the curation explicitly invites visitors to gain self-knowledge via these specimens, though they do so in different ways. Whereas the 1933 exhibit prompted such identification in the rhetoric around the exhibit, including its title *Know Thyself*, the current exhibit, *YOU! The Experience*, goes further, not only providing many rhetorical identificatory prompts, but also centralizing the visitors' bodies via interactive technological components exhibited alongside the specimens.

Analyzed together, I argue these two exhibits of the same specimens demonstrate a change in the curatorial belief in the power of the objects themselves to produce identification. Drawing from existing scholarship on the role of objects in museums and on science museum visitors themselves, this chapter tracks the perceived and demonstrated shifts in both the display of these human specimen collections and the ways that the display attempts—and sometimes fails—to construct identificatory experiences for visitors.

A Century of Progress

The human specimens now in the collection at MSI were originally showcased by Loyola Medical School at *A Century of Progress International Exposition* in 1933. It marked the first time a medical school in the US had showcased human anatomy to the public. That exhibit was a wild success—both the specimens themselves and the mode of display, pioneered by the exhibitors, were spectacles. Named for Plato's dictum, *Know Thyself* was the most popular scientific exhibit at the fair. *The Loyola News* tracked the popularity of *Know Thyself*; by the second year of the fair, it attracted an estimated 420 visitors each hour, or four out of every five fairgoers.[2]

Divided into two sections, "The History of Human Development" and "The Architecture of the Human Body," *Know Thyself* boasted some eighty embryological specimens and two adult cadavers that had been frozen, then sliced into forty-seven 1-inch (2.54 cm) cross-sections. Dr. J. M. Essenberg, Loyola Medical School Anatomy faculty and the man behind the exhibit, obtained and prepared the body slices from two unclaimed bodies, presumably from the Cook County Morgue. Dr. Helen Button, an obstetrics resident at Cook County Hospital, collected most of the foetal specimens. The cadavers—one sliced vertically, the other sagittally—showed "every organ of considerable size," the major anatomical structures were made more distinct via a dying process pioneered by Dr. Otto E. Kampmeir from the University of Illinois Medical School and executed by

2 Sal Dimicelli, "Medic Embryo Exhibit Fair's Chief Display," *The Loyola News*, October 23, 1934.

medical student Virgil La Fleur.[3] The embryological and foetal specimens ranged in gestational age from a few weeks post-conception to full term and included traditional wet specimens (specimens suspended in formalin, a solution of formaldehyde and water), as well as transparent specimens known as Spalteholz preparations, which make the internal organs and structures visible.[4]

As a framing command, the exhibit's title *Know Thyself* implied that the specimens on display were being presented as inherently the same as the visitors' bodies. Notably, though, outside of the title, the exhibit text did not emphasize visitor identification. The dearth of label and wall text is characteristic of object-based curation, which is not commonly utilized in US science museums today and is certainly not present in the current exhibitionary home of the Loyola specimens. The label text included labels of anatomical structures, diagrams to orient the viewer within the body, drawings to illustrate embryological structures invisible to the naked eye, and the size, approximate gestational age, sex, and "other interesting details" of the embryological specimens.[5] *The Loyola News* reported that "The specimens in gross anatomy as well as in the embryological exhibit are so prepared that the layman cannot only gather information concerning the makeup of the human body, but he can also appreciate the complexity and delicacy of human creation."[6] Much of the reporting of the exhibit's success, though, echoed the identificatory frame. Clearly proud of the success of the medical school's exhibit, *The Loyola News* reported a change in location: "At the beginning of the 1933 Fair, the exhibit was placed in a remote upstairs corridor in the Hall of Science, but at two o'clock the opening day a riot call came from that obscure nook. The people had found *the exhibit showing how they were made* so interesting that it took two hours for the two hundred policemen to disperse the crowd and prevent the collapse of the flooring because of the extraordinary weight."[7] (emphasis added)

The rhetoric of identification is echoed, too, in the paper's first account of the exhibit's popularity. "Loyola's demonstration showing the people what they were and what they are at the present time attracted crowds which stood 10 feet (3.05 m) deep before the cases. Floyd Gibbons, writing in *Cosmopolitan* for November, describes the dense crowds about the exhibit, interested in their personal embryology and anatomy."[8] The presumption is that the throngs of fairgoers are not only overwhelmingly interested in the spectacle of anatomy on display, but that their interest is in their own bodies, or rather, in the notion that the bodies they're viewing are the same as their own bodies, and that by viewing the specimens, they are learning about their own biology and origins. These journalists, though, do not cite any evidence from the fairgoers. Likely,

3 Ernest Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit at Fair Draws Throngs of Visitors, Records Show," *The Loyola News*, October 24, 1933, 5.

4 Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit," 5.

5 Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit," 5.

6 Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit," 5. (Gross anatomy refers to that which is visible to the naked eye.)

7 Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit," 5.

8 Weizer, "Medical School Exhibit," 5.

then, they were writing about their own experiences viewing the exhibit, or else they observed fairgoers talking about the exhibit in these terms. For these visitors, at least, the specimens themselves, with very little prompting, evoked the experience of identification.

YOU! The Experience

In 1939, shortly after the closing of *A Century of Progress*, Loyola University Medical School loaned (and eventually donated) forty-one of the embryological and foetal specimens, as well as both sliced adult cadavers, to the Museum of Science & Industry. They have been on continuous display since that time. Over the course of their time at the museum, these specimens—particularly the foetal specimens—have been exceedingly popular. MSI's curators report anecdotally that they are often regaled with visitors' memories of visiting the foetal specimens as children, or the surprise of having encountered the body slices in one of their previous homes: a stairwell. Additionally, visitor studies conducted at MSI have demonstrated the "high holding power" of the foetal specimens. One such study, conducted in 1998, showed that visitors spent an average of six minutes with the foetal specimens, with 59 percent of them stopping at individual specimens for closer examination.[9] Beverly Serrell's studies of museum visitor time use discusses the difficulty exhibit designers face in trying to keep visitors in any given exhibit for more than twenty minutes; for the foetal specimens alone to hold six minutes of interest, then, is notable. Several incidents have been observed by MSI staff in which, during power outages and false fire alarms, visitors have neglected to evacuate the building until they have finished viewing all the specimens in the exhibit.[10]

Since 2010, the specimens have been housed in the permanent exhibit, *YOU! The Experience*. For returning visitors to the museum—including those who remember seeing the foetal specimens as children—seeking out the specimens in *YOU! The Experience* may be one draw to the exhibit.[11] Though the Loyola specimens served as the impetus for the exhibit's design and practical implementation, they are relegated both spatially and conceptually to the wings. Several plastinated cadavers, purchased from Gunther Von Hagens's Institute for Plastination, are treated differently from the Loyola specimens; they are spatially centred in the exhibit, and placed alongside the other built exhibit components.[12] The MSI practitioners expressly designed the exhibit bearing in

9 Kirsten M. Ellenbogen and Susan G. Foutz, "Institute for Learning Innovation: Prenatal Development Exhibition Front-End Evaluation," Visitor Study Prepared for the Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago (Archives of Science and Technology, Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, June 15, 2004), 3.

10 Barry Aprison, "The Prenatal Exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry," *Visitor Behavior* 12, no.1 and no. 2 (1997): 25.

11 The MSI curators told me several times that in science museums, the presumption is that you get to see visitors twice: once when they are children, and once when they bring their own children.

12 Gunther Von Hagens is most famous for *Body Worlds*, his exhibits of plastinated *cadavers*. Plastination is a process pioneered by Von Hagens in which the fluids and tissues of a cadaver are

mind the potential discomfort and emotional impact of their small collection of wet specimens, concerns that are empirically unfounded, as they have not been borne out in the museum's own visitor surveys.

YOU! The Experience is the only exhibit at MSI that is specifically about human bodies. One of the two entry points of the exhibit opens onto "Your Future," a section featuring a wall of centenarians' photos, with quotes from them about their longevity printed underneath; a giant board upon which museum visitors scrawl a collective "bucket list" of things they'd like to do in their lifetimes; a machine that takes photos of visitors, asks a few questions, then uses computer software to age the image; and an oral history booth set up to record visitors' stories. The other entrance opens onto "Your Vitality," the most abstract of the eight exhibit areas. There, visitors are greeted by a "laugh garden" in which screens show the faces of laughing individuals; in response to visitors' laughter, the faces on the screen laugh harder. Beyond that, interactive exhibit components invite visitors to learn about the roles of happiness, sleep, and relaxation in overall health and wellbeing.[13] "Your Movement" features a human-sized hamster wheel, as well as a huge screen on which a "virtual coach" guides visitors' projected silhouettes through a tai chi sequence, a basketball lesson, or a hip-hop dance routine. "Your Appetite" investigates the science behind the adage that you are what you eat and features a map of Chicago with information about "food deserts." "Your Heart" is an enormous image of a human heart made of LED lights hanging on the back wall of the exhibit; visitors can grip a handle that measures their heart rate, which is mirrored by the pulsing of the LED lights. "Your Mind" includes interactive games about advertising and emotions: creating compelling ad content on touchscreens, guessing the emotion of another visitor based on facial cues, or composing a self-portrait to demonstrate how you see yourself.

Displayed in wings that flank the central area, the Loyola specimens are spatially separated from the rest of the exhibit. "Your Beginning" is a round, dark room. In the

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replaced by polymers. Von Hagens maintains that the cadavers are all sourced from volunteers, though there have been several allegations that he has illegally sourced bodies, including from executed incarcerated Chinese people, and displayed bodies without express consent. Von Hagens's plastination enterprises, especially *Body Worlds*, have been the subject of much journalistic and academic interest. See T. Christine Jespersen, Alicita Rodriguez, and Joseph Starr, eds., *The Anatomy of Body Worlds: Critical Essays on the Plastinated Cadavers of Gunther Von Hagens* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2009) and John D. Lantos, ed., *Controversial Bodies: Thoughts on the Public Display of Plastinated Corpses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); there are many news articles about the allegations of illegal and unethical sourcing of cadavers, including Neda Ulaby, "Origins of Exhibited Cadavers Questioned," National Public Radio, August 11, 2006, https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5637687; and Luke Harding, "Von Hagens Forced to Return Controversial Corpses to China," *The Guardian*, January 24, 2004, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jan/23/arts.china. For a museum-specific investigation into the ethics of putting *Body Worlds* on exhibit, see Jeffrey N. Rudolph, Diane Perlov, and Hans-Martin Sass, "Body Worlds, An Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies: Summary of Ethical Review," California Science Center, https://www.mos.org/sites/dev-elvis.mos.org/files/docs/press-kits/Summary%20of%202004-05%20Ethical%20Review%20%20CA%20SCI%20Center.pdf.

13 There are not particularly expansive definitions of "health" or "wellbeing" in the exhibit, leaving space for warranted critiques that are outside the purview of this chapter.

middle of "Your Beginning" stands a large screen, with another smaller touchscreen on a pedestal in front of it. Sliding the arrow on the touchscreen makes the transparent body on the large screen appear increasingly pregnant, shown alongside quotes from various people about their experiences being pregnant. Behind that—almost hidden from view from outside the wing—foetal specimens line the wall in illuminated glass cases, in ascending order of gestational age. An archway at the end of the sequence funnels visitors into a room where they can watch an animated and narrated version of the gestational process unfold on video. The specimens are displayed in glass containers nestled within the back wall, with continuous glass covering the front. Visitors tend to start on the left, at the smallest specimen, and move along the specimens as they are displayed, left to right, in chronological sequence. The display demands intimacy; museum-goers file along the wall, faces pressed to the fingerprint-smudged glass, examining especially the tiniest specimens. The low lights—designed explicitly to limit damage to the specimens—have the effect of significantly changing the ambience of the two wings. The darkness seems to prompt visitors to be quieter in what is otherwise a quite loud museum. I have observed the exhibit many times; visitors nearly always engage the specimens in the same way, standing close to the glass, encouraged by the specimens' size to search out the foetuses' tiny features, remarking to their companions when they find them. I have watched many visitors pause and stare at the final foetal specimen, whose gestational age was thirty-seven weeks, five days—full term. They often vocalized surprise at seeing a specimen that looks so much "like a baby," sometimes wondering aloud whether or not it is "real," despite the museum's wall text confirming its status as a human specimen.

Opposite "Your Beginning" is the other wing, "Medical Innovations." Notably, "Medical Innovations" is the one section not assigned the identificatory "you," implying that it is the least relatable, or perhaps that visitors will feel the least connected to that section. Visitors there are greeted by floor-to-ceiling glass cases containing body slices. Next to these, a small demonstration studio is visible behind glass; iStan®, a patient simulation mannequin, lies on a faux operating table. Behind the body slices, a set of screens showcases different imaging technologies—alternate modes of seeing inside the body. Deeper into the wing, various prosthetic technologies are on display, and one is set up to demonstrate how a prosthetic hand communicates with the nervous system. Visitors can place their hands under a device that detects their veins. In the farthest recesses is an area where visitors are given information about different issues in medical ethics, then electronically polled for their opinions.

Wet specimens are not merely visual objects; there is another, more visceral, affective or emotional experience that often accompanies viewing them. MSI's attention to this distinction is evidenced in their spatial separation from the rest of the exhibit. Though there are practical considerations for this spatial arrangement, it also reflects the museum's concerns around visitor responses to these types of objects, and whether those responses are in alignment with responses to the rest of the exhibit. The wings that house the Loyola specimens are less exposed to vibration and light and are more easily climate controlled. Equally important, though, the placement of specimens off to the sides makes it possible for people to skip those parts of the exhibit, or instead to

have "an intimate or reflective encounter."[14] In other words, these specimens are not only treated with a particular level of conservational care, but they are also housed in ways that consider visitors' potential sensitivities regarding viewing human specimens. Both sets of specimens have large wall text panels posted with the histories of the specimens. A disclaimer hangs on the wall near the foetal specimens, informing visitors that the foetuses all died of natural causes.[15]

This kind of attention to visitor sensitivities is particularly notable because American museums, unlike European museums, have only general guidelines about the ethical display of human remains. Further, most of what the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) has to say about the ethics of such displays is relevant for ethnographic exhibits rather than medical-scientific ones. The AAM rather broadly indicates, "*the unique and special nature* of human remains and funerary and sacred objects is recognized as the basis of all decisions concerning such collections" (emphasis added).[16] It has fallen to the staff of science and medical museums, then, to determine how best to treat human specimens, given their necessary place in these institutions. Museum professionals, including those at MSI, perceive visitors to be particularly sensitive to viewing human remains. Only a few visitor studies have been conducted to assess visitor responses to human remains on display in United States museums, including the National Museum of Health and Medicine's 1999 assessment of visitor response to their collection of human remains.[17] MSI did a front-end visitor assessment of *Prenatal Development,* the foetal specimens' previous exhibitionary home, during the initial planning stages for *YOU! The Experience*. Both studies indicated that visitors were generally comfortable with viewing human specimens and that many very much enjoyed doing so. Respondents did indicate strong desires for contextualization of these objects, however, including the histories and origins of the specimens. MSI visitors particularly liked the spatial separation of the foetal exhibits, both for implicitly providing an option to skip that portion of the exhibit and because they felt it showed greater care and respect for these specimens. Broadly, the respondents in both studies felt that human specimens held high educational value.[18]

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14 Tom Hennes and Patricia Ward, "How the Body Became a Museum Exhibit," Chicago Humanities Festival, Winter/Spring 2010, podcast, http://chicagohumanities.org/events/2010/the-body/2010-how-the-body-became-a-museum-exhibit (site discontinued).

15 Correspondence between Dr. Helen Button, who collected the specimens, and MSI staff indicates that "while they appear normal, a pathologist would be able to identify each one as being the product of an [natural] abortion due to genetic incompatibility" (memo from MSI archives, 1989), though in another letter, Button indicates that many were miscarried due to malnutrition, a common occurrence during the Great Depression. Science and Technology Archives, Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago.

16 American Alliance of Museums, "AAM Code of Ethics for Museums," 2000, https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/.

17 Lenore Barbian and Lisa Berndt, "When Your Insides are Out: Museum Visitor Perceptions of Displays of Human Anatomy," in *Human Remains: Conservation, Retrieval and Analysis,* ed. Emily Williams (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2001), 129–34.

18 Ellenbogen and Fountz, "Institute for Learning Innovation."

Notably, anxieties about the wet specimens in *YOU! The Experience* do not translate to the plastinated specimens. Rather than being relegated to the wings, plastinates are interwoven throughout the exhibit. The plastinates bridge the wet specimens and the interactive technologies because they function as if they are not bodies, but models, something facilitated by the fact that they look—and mostly are—plastic.[19] They are tidy and clean, shiny and colourful. The polymers that have been injected into the tissues of the cadavers are bright reds, clean whites, and deep blues. Plastinated specimens serve as a spatial and metaphorical bridge between the exhibit's wet specimens and built interactive technologies. In this way, they connect the two wings of the exhibit that house the historical wet specimens, offering a visual transition from the wet specimens, as they share both the structures of the human body and the sleek visual appearance of the interactive machines.

Though the Loyola specimens hold high visitor appeal, and despite the metaphorical centring of the specimens in the design process, the built interactive components of the exhibit that invite visitor participation and input occupy most of the exhibit space and are spatially centred. As such, visitors supply almost all the bodies in the exhibit. Per the exhibit title and subtitles, *YOU!* explicitly invites visitors to identify with the exhibit; visitors' personal experiences are central, redefining the purpose of the exhibit to that of making people more aware of their own lives, having the exhibit converse with and about "you"—ideally in a way that crosscuts visitors' ages, health statuses, etc. The exhibit encourages visitors to participate in very personal ways, expressly encouraging them to think about all aspects of the exhibit—from laughter to sleep to diet to aging—in terms of their own "experience of life" via highly narrativized interactive components. I interpret this discrepancy between the desire to centre the human specimens and the emphasis on interactive technologies that, in fact, centres visitors' bodies, to reveal an anxiety about what the specimens can—and, perhaps more importantly, cannot—communicate to visitors.

Interactive Technology and the Visitor Body

Museum scholars have noted the paradoxical shift in the status of museum objects. Museums once packed walls and display cases full of collections of historically significant objects; museums today house an astonishing quantity of objects, but fewer and fewer of them find their way to the gallery.[20] Steven Conn, alongside Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and other museum scholars, argues that museums don't often view objects as being capable of reliably speaking for themselves: "the place of objects in museums has shrunk as people have lost faith in the ability of objects alone to tell stories and

19 Catherine Francis Belling, "Being Non-Biodegradable: The Lonely Fate of Metameat," in *Controversial Bodies: Thoughts on the Public Display of Plastinated Corpses*, ed. John D. Lantos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 20. The plastination process leaves about 30 percent of the biological material intact; the rest is replaced with polymers.

20 Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia, 2010).

convey knowledge."[21] It is often hard to distinguish who or what is talking, given the many voices surrounding objects in the museum: wall text and labels, guide brochures, docents, audio tours, and so on. Of central concern in the case of the specimens at the centre of this chapter is the ability—or perceived ability—of bodies, as museum objects, to tell stories.

Human medical specimens work with—and against—the contextualization of museums and medicalization because they are unruly objects, out of bounds or unrecognizable in their original forms/contexts. While there are, of course, discernible and familiar aspects to them, often the visuals are overwhelming and disorienting. Human specimens don't always look like the models or drawings that are used to teach most of us about biology. This does not appear to discourage museum visitors. Rather than shy away from objects or exhibits that are visually chaotic, confusing, or that defy familiar narratives, visitors in science and medical history museums demonstrate being quite compelled by human specimens on display—even, as noted in visitor surveys, wanting more, though this evidence of public pleasure and curiosity, too, prompts some degree of concern and anxiety on the part of institutions and museum practitioners. While visitors convey wanting to see more (and "weirder") objects, this must be balanced with museum missions, intentions, and an avoidance of displays that might seem disrespectful to human remains. While contemporary museums seek to distance themselves from forms of display such as circus sideshows and dime museums,[22] it also seems clear that the objects that are most successful and compelling to visitors are those that demonstrate or reveal the complexity and messiness, the extraordinary nature of bodies. But this kind of mess—and this kind of relationship to objects—is not the bailiwick of the science and technology museums.

Evidenced by several other exhibits in science museums in the United States, including the Houston Health Museum's *You: The Exhibit* and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry's Life Hall, exhibit designers and museum practitioners are increasingly focused on a personal/personalized exploration of bodies and away from biological universals. *YOU! The Experience* acknowledges—even highlights—the fact that though bodies share a great deal in common, they are also all unique, particularly when it comes to the lived experience of having a body. Notably, MSI is the only one of these museums that has integrated actual human specimens into an exhibit of this type.[23] The continued display of their historic specimen collection speaks to its continued epistemological (and emotional/nostalgic) value while the vast array of interactive components in the exhibit

21 Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 7; see also Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 31.

22 Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). Dime museums were a US cultural formation popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries particularly popular among working class people. Dime museums often blurred the lines between education and entertainment, as well as between "real" and produced spectacles.

23 The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry has a *Prenatal Development* exhibit that consists of foetal specimens, but it is not integrated with the other exhibits in its Life Hall.

may indicate the limits of those objects and their functionality in terms of identification and experiential learning. *YOU!*'s treatment of bodies is the result of institutional anxiety about the display of human specimens, but also about the limits of human specimens' ability to communicate the desired message of the exhibit. That is, the exhibit manifests the gulf between the presumed experience of interfacing with human specimens and that which can be produced by technology.

In *YOU! The Experience*, exhibit design eschews the model of the body as a machine. However, the exhibit itself embraces machines as integral to the experience of the exhibit and the knowledge it constructs. The exhibit is not about knowing bodies *as* machines, but *through* machines. These technologies produce the exhibit as an immersive environment for visitors. Upon entering the exhibit area, visitors are invited to engage at every turn—not only by looking, but also touching, pushing, playing, moving. Visitors' own bodies become not only the means by which they take in the content of the exhibit, but also produce that content. Their own bodies become experimental and experiential sites. Further, they exemplify MSI's approach to education through interactivity, with a focus on individualized experiences. Many of these interactive components also produce experiences that request input from the visitor. On a practical level, this enables the museum to collect information from visitors, as well as to gauge how and how much various elements of the exhibit are being engaged.

Arguably, though, all aspects of a museum exhibit are "interactive." Former MSI curator Barry Aprison wrote of the display of foetal specimens in *Prenatal Development,* the precursor to *YOU! The Experience*, "The exhibit is interactive without interactive technology. There are no computers or mechanical devices. The experience is real and immediate."[24] In other words, Aprison's observations of visitors' interactions with the foetal specimens are of active engagement rather than passive observation. The overwhelming presence of interactive technologies in *YOU! The Experience* privileges embodied experience. The interactive technological components of *YOU! The Experience* are there to concretize otherwise intangible—and often invisible—aspects of embodiment. They demonstrate and produce various aspects of bodies that are not conveyed by the exhibited specimens, including appetite, cognition, lifestyle, and movement. These are beyond the purview of the visual knowability of bodies.

US science museums have always encouraged visitor participation and interaction. This is largely tied to the way that they choose to present science. As Alison Griffiths notes, "at least in the world of museum education, interactivity—premised on a constructivist (learn by doing) versus a behaviourist/didactic (learn by being taught) model of learning—connotes agency, a more dialogic model of visitor-centered learning… [and] opportunities for visitor feedback."[25] In this model, visitors make meaning through

24 Aprison, "The Prenatal Exhibit," 25.

25 Alison Griffiths, *Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums and the Immersive View* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 185. For more on constructivist museum models, see George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (New York: Routledge, 1998). For more on interactivity and education, see, among others: Paola Rodari, "A Game of Democracy: Science Museums for the Governance of Science and Technology," *Journal of Science Communication* 9, no. 2 (2010): 1–3;

their own associations. In keeping with the general trend in American science museums, MSI's goal has been not to display the history of science but to illustrate *principles* of science, particularly their application to industry.[26] Visitor interaction has contributed to this present-tense sense of producing and participating in science, rather than observing it from afar. Historian Jay Pridmore writes of MSI, "In the early years, curators piqued the interest of youngsters and adults alike with strange and sometimes exotic sights … Such demonstrations-in-motion, especially those which invited the visitor's active participation, encouraged people to think about strange and marvellous things, and ask questions of their own."[27] Through participation, visitors can see themselves as practitioners of science, as knowledge-makers.

The notion of interactivity and learning is the preeminent characteristic of the "post-museum," wherein the authority of the museum is theoretically subsumed by visitors' own meaning-making.[28] David Gruber argues, however, that rather than eliminating museum authority, in many of these post-museum exhibits, "scientific knowledge can be seen or applied only if and when visitors adopt scientific authority and regulated ways of seeing. Indeed, the post-museum, in requiring user engagement and playfulness, seems likely to prepare scripted performances or position visitors' own bodies as the objects of scientific inquiry."[29] Considering *YOU! The Experience* within this framework, and its use of visitor bodies as the central bodies through which the exhibit functions, reveals something about its desired and purported outcomes. The exhibit was explicitly designed to showcase and celebrate the extraordinary nature of the body, with a goal of inciting in visitors a desire to treat their own extraordinary bodies with more care, in turn leading to greater health.[30] Rather than say that explicitly, though, the exhibit—in keeping with Gruber's argument—relies on visitors aligning themselves with the subverted authority of the museum in considering what health means and how to accomplish it.

The two different exhibitionary contexts for the same set of objects analyzed in this chapter reveal a shift in the curatorial understanding of the power of the objects themselves. While both exhibits explicitly name an experience of identification in the exhibit text, they are drastically different in the ways they attempt to produce that experience for visitors. Changes in museums' relationship to objects broadly speaking, and to the Loyola specimens specifically, mark both a decreased faith in the ability of these objects to convey knowledge—despite evidence that visitors find them very compelling—and a shift in the way meaning-making and knowledge production are understood. That is, while the original display for these specimens, *Know Thyself*, functioned on the linkage

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David R. Gruber, "Medicalization of the Post-Museum: Interactivity and Diagnosis at the Brain and Cognition Exhibit," *Journal of Medical Humanities* 37 (2016): 65–80.

26 Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?*, 159.

27 Jay Pridmore, *Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago* (New York: Abrams, 1997), 35.

28 Gruber, "Medicalization of the Post-Museum," 65.

29 Gruber, "Medicalization of the Post-Museum," 66.

30 Patricia Ward, in discussion with the author, September 7, 2011, and in Tom Hennes and Patricia Ward, Chicago Humanities Festival podcast.

among seeing, knowing, and identification or self-knowledge, the current exhibit, *YOU! The Experience*, shies away from this linkage, instead relying increasingly on knowledge production that comes not from seeing but from doing.

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Chapter Five

MUSEUM CONSTELLATIONS: HOW DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY PROGRAMS BUILD AND STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

JESSICA RUHLE

LIKE CONSTELLATIONS, MUSEUM experiences consist of multiple individual elements that connect into something larger than their unique parts. While the design of each museum constellation varies widely, its components likely include one or more works of art, museum visitors and an assortment of museum staff. The museum experience provides the invisible, but crucial, connection among the various components. Guided tours for people with dementia are special constellations whose purposeful creation reaches beyond the joys of looking at and talking about works of art to the intangible connection of *relationship*.

Creating a Space for Inclusion

Museums often identify as existing for the broader community. Institutions celebrate the multitude of ways visitors may experience their spaces and the range of audiences attracted to their exhibitions and programs. Increasingly, museums are establishing programs to engage visitors experiencing memory loss, as well as their care partners. By offering this type of engagement, museums create opportunities for social interactions at a time when individuals may feel increasingly isolated and disconnected from others. For individuals experiencing memory loss, a dementia diagnosis adds extreme complexity to a person's life in the form of medical appointments, medications, and often-overwhelming worry. Alongside the loss of memories, dementia can limit, or end, favourite social and cultural experiences. In part, this limiting can be due to shifts in cognition. However, perhaps the larger factor in isolation is the social stigma that can come with a dementia diagnosis. Museum visits counter-balance this shift by establishing normalizing experiences and a safe community. Additionally, participants may renew past interests or explore a new environment.

Jessica Ruhle joined the Yellowstone Art Museum (YAM) as Executive Director in 2022. Previously, Ruhle served as Director of Education for the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, where she led "Reflections: The Nasher Museum's Alzheimer's Program," as well as all of the museum's K-12 and adult educational programs. She holds a master's degree in Museum Education from The George Washington University.

The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City established the "Meet Me at MoMA" program for visitors with Alzheimer's Disease in 2006.[31] Delighted by the success of their tours, MoMA staff presented at museum conferences and published broadly about their work in the years after. The Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University began offering tours for visitors with dementia, "Reflections" tours, in 2013. Originally modelled after "Meet Me at MoMA," tours are conversation-based and groups remain small with a maximum of twelve to fourteen visitors. Tours last ninety minutes, and typically include an hour in the galleries and thirty minutes of either a live musical performance or an art-making exercise. Most importantly, Education staff intends for the "Reflections" tours to serve equally the visitors with dementia and the care partners. Both cohorts of participants are primary to the experience and the tours are constructed to engage each individual through shared conversations about art. Discussions that start with the works of art can grow into deeper considerations of life and meaning. In engaging in these discussions, the participants also build their connections to one another, creating new bonds and strengthening significant relationships. The growing isolation and loneliness of dementia is dangerous and common. People with memory loss withdraw from social interactions for a variety of reasons and that withdrawal accelerates the symptoms of dementia; ultimately, isolation is "associated with reduced survival."[32] By contrast, the community created and fostered by museum-based engagement supports and strengthens social connections and reduces isolation.

Art is a powerful tool for people with dementia because the object of the discussion is directly in front of the viewer. There is no need for abstract thought, although it may occur. A successful conversation does not require past knowledge, or recollection of memories. There is no struggle to recall, no expectation or pressure to remember past teachings and learnings. Instead, the viewers simply relate to the art they see. The emphasis is on the present experience. Based on the needs of the group, conversations can focus primarily—or exclusively—on the visual elements of the artwork, rather than on cultural and historical references.

Admittedly, this discussion format is possible with any museum tour, which raises the question of why people with dementia should not simply participate in general adult tours. Absolutely, all staff giving public tours should welcome all visitors and be trained to create welcoming spaces for all types of participation. However, having tours designed for visitors with memory loss is key because it creates an explicit space for those who feel uncomfortable joining general programs. An Australian survey investigating the barriers to socialization after a dementia diagnosis found that 57 percent of people with memory loss had a fear of being lost in public spaces and 48 percent of

31 Francesca Rosenberg, "The MoMA Alzheimer's Project: Programming and Resources for Making Art Accessible to People with Alzheimer's Disease and Their Caregivers," *Arts & Health* 1, no. 1 (2009): 93–97.

32 Martin Orrell, Rob Butler, and Paul Bebbington, "Social Factors and the Outcome of Dementia," *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 15, no 6 (2000): 515–20.

individuals said they had difficulty communicating with staff in public settings.[33] When museums establish programs specifically for visitors with memory loss, attendees can participate comfortably because they trust in a welcoming space knowing that others in the group are aware of their condition and that all participants are at ease with it. Explicitly inviting guests with dementia into a museum space is especially important for first-time or infrequent museum visitors who might be surprised by the institution's ability to predict and understand their needs as an audience. The importance of a well-prepared and engaging staff was made clear by feedback from a tour participant who shared, "The warmth and smiles of the [guides] does not go unnoticed or unappreciated. It is wonderful to come up the steps and through the doors to be greeted by friends." Another guest commented, "Perhaps the greatest impact of that one hour was the warmth and kindness Bill sensed from our guide." Relationships matter and extending a radical welcome to museum visitors with dementia can establish a mutually loving community that is not fostered by simple inclusion in a standard public tour.

Enhancing Quality of Life for Visitors with Dementia and their Care Partners

> "The [art] and music were wonderful, but even better was the chance to be out with others who are in the same, or similar, situation as we are."[34]

Tours that are developed intentionally for guests with memory loss also create a comfortable space because everybody participating experiences similar symptoms. In the Australian survey, 25 percent of individuals with dementia expressed a belief that other people seem uneasy as a result of their diagnosis.[35] Yet, when everybody on the tour lives with dementia, any forgotten vocabulary, extended pauses, or repetition of thoughts happen in a safe space. Tours are free of judgement or shame. Instead, the experiences are unrushed and full of encouragement. This atmosphere allows the care partners to be more at ease, which is felt by the visitors with memory loss as the calm of the care partners relaxes them and gives them a sense of security.

In her 2016 research review, Christina Smiraglia found over twenty studies that indicated "the two most common outcomes of [museum-based dementia] programs were increased socialization and improved mood."[36] Feedback from guests at the Nasher Museum aligns with this research. Bill, a museum visitor with dementia, said, "Everybody's got all these problems and today we were laughing and having a good time and we will come back next week remembering about today." It is important to recognize that these outcomes benefit the care partner as well as the person with dementia.

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33 Alzheimer's Australia "Living with Dementia in the Community: Challenges & Opportunities," 2014, https://www.dementia.org.au/sites/default/files/DementiaFriendlySurvey_Final_web.pdf.

34 Direct quotation from Nasher Museum visitor with dementia.

35 Alzheimer's Australia, "Living with Dementia in the Community: Challenges & Opportunities."

36 Christina Smiraglia, "Targeted Museum Programs for Older Adults: A Research and Program Review," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 59, no. 1 (January 2016): 39–54.

Figure 5.1. Tour participants in conversation during a "Reflections" program. Courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University.

Priscilla, who brings her husband Jay on museum tours, said in 2017, "I am deeply grateful for all you do. [The] group is so comfortable, and friendly. It makes such a difference when I don't have to be on my guard when Jay loses his filter, and I lose my cool." For all program participants, socialization and improved moods are the very real intangibles in the constellation of museum-based programs.

Although memory is not required for these experiences to be successful, recollections can still emerge as individuals with dementia consider and discuss the artwork. Edwin was a regular visitor on "Reflections" tours for years. He visited the museum with his daughter Lee. Edwin's quick smile and easy demeanour suggested that he enjoyed the tours, but he seemed more interested in the opportunity to be with others than the artwork. Edwin would respond to questions posed directly to him about the works of art, but rarely contributed spontaneously in the galleries. Instead, he was most vocal during the less structured parts of the day—as the group gathered before the tour started, or over lunch. In those moments, Edwin's conversations rarely included memories. His sociable nature was not lost, but his memory was at a point where he could discuss only the current moment—the weather, the meal he was eating, or other topics directly in front of him.

Then, on a tour, Edwin's group stopped at a seascape in the museum's permanent collection. This work depicts a raging sea with large waves crashing against a jagged, rocky shoreline. Atop one of the waves is a small boat. As the visitors discussed this work,

Edwin surprised the group with a detailed description of what the people on the boat would be facing in the scene depicted. He outlined the ship's best chances of surviving the storm and, when asked by others how he knew so much about boating, Edwin began to talk about his youth growing up in a shore town, as well as subsequent years spent as a sailor in the Navy. The detail with which he spoke was unusual for Edwin and his daughter was visibly delighted at the opportunity to hear her father talk about his formative experiences and share expert information with the group. Engaging with works of art in a facilitated museum experience can create occasions for an individual with dementia to access memories they might not recall otherwise. This moment provided Edwin the opportunity to relive formative life experiences, it provided his daughter a closer connection with her father, and it gave the group new insight into Edwin. Edwin gave meaning to the artwork, but greater meaning arose from the moment shared together.

In the shared museum experience, these moments of recollection are key to both the person with dementia and to their care partner (Fig. 5.1). The person with dementia feels a renewed sense of connection and worth due to the opportunity to communicate a part of themselves. Often, their care partner will express surprise and delight at this brief connection with a loved one. Family members express pleasure at watching a person who is quiet and withdrawn at home become talkative in the galleries. One wife said about her husband, "He's never been much of a talker, so I judge the success of any experience by how much he wants to talk about it. After a 'Reflections' tour, he always wants to talk about what we did and saw." For the partner managing the stress of being a primary care provider for an individual who gradually resembles a former self less and less, these moments offer powerful reminders of someone's personality and, even, humanity.

In the same way that museum experiences can reconnect a friend or family member with a person with dementia, the time spent together on a tour can establish, or strengthen, the relationship between a professional care provider and the individual with memory loss.[37] Residential care staff or in-home care providers who accompany individuals on a "Reflections" tour are equal participants in the experience. Connecting over a work of art can form new bonds in this critical relationship. As with family care partners, conversations on museum tours can provide professional care partners with more information about an individual and serve as a reminder of their personhood.

These moments are spontaneous and museum staff cannot always plan stops that will guarantee recollections. Yet, when this happens, the opportunity to share validates the person with dementia and deeply encourages the care partner.

Beyond observations during the tours, care partners frequently share that a family member will continue to discuss the artwork after their visit, sometimes for days. This indicates that, even with their dementia, short-term memories form and are retained temporarily. Bill, a regular visitor to the Nasher, demonstrated this frequently and would spontaneously ask his wife Gail, "Is today a Nasher day?" Jack, husband and care partner

37 Teri Howson-Griffiths and Gill Windle, "Arts and science combine for dementia care," *Arts Professional*, last revised June 15, 2017, https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/arts-and-science-combine-dementia-care.

to Patsy, likewise noticed her ability to recall museum visits. He shared, "I usually make decisions about where we go, food to eat and other things, but every time I ask Patsy if she would like to go to the Nasher, she emphatically says yes." This repeated wish to tour the galleries suggests both the pleasure Bill and Patsy took from the museum visits and that they recall the experiences, even at a time when their capacity to remember overall was deteriorating steadily.

Not all tour participants will remember their time spent at the museum. However, without recollection of the museum tour, visitors with dementia still report experiencing residual emotions—feelings experienced beyond their initial cause—after a museum visit.[38] A 2014 study of this occurrence affirms that "findings indicate that patients with Alzheimer's Disease (AD) can experience prolonged states of emotion that persist well beyond the patients' memory for the events that originally caused the emotion. The preserved emotional life evident in patients with AD has important implications for their … care, and highlights the need for caretakers to foster positive emotional experiences."[39]

Thoughtfully constructed museum programs can create experiences that result in prolonged positive emotional responses, regardless of an individual's ability to remember.

Deepening Connections through Art-Making and Music

In addition to the time spent in the galleries, many tours for people with dementia—including those at the Nasher Museum—incorporate art-making. At the Nasher, visitors may explore a single technique such as screen-printing or watercolour, or they may enjoy a single medium such as clay. Local artists may join the tour to lead the hands-on component and share their own expertise. These opportunities enable participants to express themselves visually and can be playful and exploratory. Too often, after a dementia diagnosis, individuals may stop exploring new experiences and interests. Art-making on the tours pushes against that tendency to withdraw from experimenting with the unfamiliar. After an art-making tour that focused on photography and encouraged participants to take their own pictures, a visitor shared about her husband, "He hasn't wanted to make a decision about anything—not even what he wants to eat—for a long time. But, when we had the Polaroid cameras, I asked him if there was something he wanted to photograph and he knew right away what and where he wanted to take a photo. I was thrilled!"

It can seem counter-intuitive to describe individuals with memory loss as learning new skills, and yet we see it happening at the museum when art making prompts a visitor with dementia to uncover new interests.[40] Laura recognized her husband Harold's joy making art on tours and—outside of the museum—enrolled him in watercolour

38 Carolyn Halpin-Healy, "Well-Chosen Objects Support Well-Being for People with Dementia and Their Care Partners," *Journal of Museum Education* 42, no. 3 (July 2017): 224–35.

39 Edmarie Guzman-Velez, Justin S. Feinstein, and Daniel Tranel, "Feelings Without Memory in Alzheimer Disease," *Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology* 27, no. 3 (September 2014): 117–29.

40 Jeremy Kimmel and Paul M. Camic, "More Than Reminiscence: Museum Object Handling, Dementia and New Learning," (lecture, Museums Association Conference, November 6, 2015).

Figure 5.2. Reflections tour incorporating music.
Courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University.

classes. Harold was a life-long bird enthusiast and he combined his love for birds with his new pursuit of painting. After Harold developed this new skill and produced a body of work, a local library exhibited his bird paintings and celebrated Harold at an opening reception. Beyond Harold's own enjoyment and growth, his new painting skills taught those around him—his wife, museum and library staff, and visitors to his exhibition—about the ability of people with dementia to continue learning and evolving.

The art-making may also provide the care partners with a better understanding of how a participant's skill set has changed. Sometimes a family member or friend may find that the abilities of their loved one have declined beyond what they realized. It can be disheartening to find that an individual has lost a skill such as the use of scissors or how to hold a paintbrush correctly, and yet it is important information for the care partner. A benefit of the shared museum experiences is that the museum staff and visiting artists can assist in identifying new ways for a participant to communicate; perhaps the individual rips the paper or paints with their hands. After an art-making tour, one attendee contacted the museum to say "Thank you again for this wonderfully kind service you provide with sensitivity to both the capabilities and limitations of this special target audience." The care partner feels supported and not alone, even as new challenges are identified. Like art, music can connect people with dementia to their deepest memories. Scientific research reports the use of music as an effective tool for working with those with memory loss.[41] At the Nasher Museum, music is part of many of the "Reflections" tours (see Fig. 5.2). Musical artists perform in the galleries and connect their songs

41 Nicholas R. Simmons-Stern, Andrew E. Budson, and Brandon A. Ally, "Music as a Memory Enhancer in Patients with Alzheimer's Disease," *Neuropsychologia* 48, no. 10 (2010): 3164–67.

directly to the theme of the tour, as well as to the visual art on display. They engage the visitors in conversation about both the music and how it relates to the surrounding art. Frequently visitors will physically react to the music, either through movement or by joining the musicians and playing alongside them. After one tour that included music, a guest shared, "[The] integration of music and art was a win. So much so that my husband initiated conversation about what we heard and talked about it to our daughter [whom] we saw when we left the museum." The music connected him to the art and he was able to share a moment in the present with his daughter due to the experience.

The story of Charles powerfully conveys the profound impact of music. Charles participated in a tour during a Joan Miro exhibition at the museum. From the Catalan region of Spain, Miró (1893–1983) was an artist known for combining elements of surrealism and abstraction in his paintings and sculptures. To complement the tour of work by a Spanish artist, the visit included a performance by a Spanish guitarist. When the group was first introduced to the musician, Charles shared that he played drums as a young man. The musician had a drum with him and invited Charles to play. Charles accompanied the guitarist and his performance deeply moved many group members, including Charles's wife. After the tour and music finished, she disclosed that she had known nothing about his earlier life as a musician; this was a second marriage for Charles and his wife, and his drum playing was something he had not yet shared. In the days after their tour experience, she learned from family members that Charles and his cousins performed together in a band as young adults. At a time when she felt that she was losing touch with her husband, Charles's wife learned something new and surprising about his past. As with the artwork, music unexpectedly allows visitors to reveal more of themselves to those who love them most. At all levels of cognition, art, music and humanity together produce experiences that surpass the impact of the individual components.

A shared lunch in the café extends this feeling of community and allows care partners an additional opportunity to connect and support one another. This lunch is a valuable piece of the museum experience as it solidifies community. Unstructured time spent over a meal strengthens the invisible connections the museum experience seeks to establish.

Programs for People with Dementia as a Catalyst for Empathy Building

Beyond the positive impact on the tour participants themselves, "Reflections" tours profoundly impact museum staff and university students (Fig. 5.3). The staff facilitating the tours consists of community members and Duke University undergraduate, graduate, and medical students. Tour guides report a greater appreciation for the abilities of individuals with dementia, while discussions of art allow staff and students to grow beyond their preconceptions of older adults. Increased empathy and better understanding of people with cognitive differences are not limited to the educators guiding the tours. Broadly speaking, a measurable decrease in prejudice towards people with cognitive loss can be observed among museum staff at institutions that offer these programs.[42]

42 Carolyn Halpin-Healy, "Report from the Field: Multi-Cultural Dialogue and Transformative

Figure 5.3. The author with a tour participant during a "Reflections" program. Courtesy of the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University.

Ultimately, the positive ripple effects of the tours extend well beyond the tours themselves.

A growing body of research outlines the benefits of museum-based experiences to medical students specifically. A 2015 study declares, "Such activities may positively influence students' formation as compassionate, clinically adept physicians able to care for persons whose diagnoses, dispositions, and dire prognoses may be difficult to bear."[43] For medical students as well as other undergraduate and graduate student staff members, this experience of working with people with dementia affects their perspectives as they prepare for careers in research, museums, and medicine. These students will step into their chosen professions better understanding the individual with dementia as a whole person. For communities, it means that more community members across a wide variety of professions will possess a more empathetic understanding of people with memory loss, and, hopefully, cognitive differences more broadly.

It is equally important that university students who participate in museum-based programs for people living with dementia will take with them the expectation of museums as spaces that engage the full community. As emerging professionals, and as the next wave of museum consumers and supporters, students involved in these tours recognize the power of the arts and museum-based experiences. They can advocate for these programs to be broadly available in communities that have not already embraced arts programming as an important intervention.

As our population ages, diagnoses of dementia grow exponentially. While medical researchers work to find a cure, neuroscientists work to understand the cognitive function of the brain when viewing art to understand neurological responses to arts-

Learning in *Arts & Minds* Programs at The Studio Museum in Harlem," *Museum and Society* 13, no. 2 (2015): 172–87.

43 Marcia D. Childress and Donna Chen, "Art and Alzheimer Dementia: A Museum Experience for Patients May Benefit Medical Students," *Neurology* 85, no. 8 (August 2015): 663–64.

based interventions more fully. There is growing support for neuroscience research to take place in non-laboratory spaces, such as classrooms, museums, and libraries, as the emergence of mobile brain/body imaging (MoBI) technology allows scientific research to extend beyond traditional laboratory walls. Museums provide real life settings in which scientists can observe brain activity when individuals connect with works of art, museum staff, and other visitors. Various teams have used MoBI technology to consider the experience of general museum audiences, but the research has not yet looked specifically at visitors with dementia. The freedom allowed by mobile technology creates exciting opportunities for neuroscience and museum educators to collaborate on interdisciplinary research to begin to understand how the brain of an individual with dementia responds to museum-based engagements. Ultimately, the development of neuroscience research in museums may help museum professionals to explain more fully the positive impacts routinely observed in tour participants. This work may also support the empathetic aspect of these programs as interventions can be tailored more specifically to the experience of visitors with dementia based on what is learned from research efforts.

As doctors and neuroscientists work towards solutions for families living with dementia, it is the responsibility of our communities and our cultural institutions to do the same. When museums prioritize this audience and offer opportunities for appropriate engagement and participation, the institutions make a public statement about the societal value of older adults and individuals with cognitive differences. For people with dementia in a museum-based program, the combined elements of intellectual engagement, group socialization, and comprehending compassion generate a constellation effect in which individuals can shine brightly and to their fullest.

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Chapter Six

AWAKENING OUR SENSE OF TOUCH

PATRICIA MAUNDER

Seeing might be believing but when you touch you know!

BLESSING OFFOR, A Nigerian man who lost his sight as a child, reached up to touch the right side of the monumental sphinx at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia and exclaimed, "Wait, what's this? What am I touching? Oh, my, these feel like ribs!" A flashlight shone up onto the sphinx's body revealed that indeed, there were the carefully anatomically correct and beautifully carved ridges of a set of ribs. Gene Magee, a lead docent, was amazed: "I've given tours in this gallery for twelve years and never knew the sphinx had ribs!"[1] The news spread rapidly to other docents who came to see for themselves—the low lighting and subtlety of the carving had made this significant detail easy to miss. The touch of a blind visitor had taught sighted docents something new.

In this moment any doubts about the revelatory nature of touch were dispelled and a new energy swirled, with the realization that the launch of an ancient Egyptian touch tour was a not just a considerate offering by the museum *for* the visually impaired but a joint adventure of discovery and enlightenment *with* those that see in different ways. An exemplar of the credo "Nothing About Us Without Us" could not have been better demonstrated.[2]

Introduction

As the parent of two daughters, one born blind in 1986, and an adopted son born in 1983 who lost his vision through a deteriorating eye condition, I became immersed in verbally describing, guiding, and interpreting what is, essentially, a visual world. Although keen

1 Blessing Offor, interviewed by Greg Johnson, "Penn Museum Visitors 'See' History as Part of Tours for the Visually Impaired," *Penn Current*, October 11, 2012, 10.

2 The concept that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy, Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990.

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to expose my children to a wide range of cultural experiences, unless we went to a petting zoo or the Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia (specifically geared for children), most venues we visited lacked accommodations and adaptations for people with vision loss. We often called ahead and asked to have at least some memorable tactile or sensory encounter. Those experiences mixed with my own background as an art educator catapulted me down both the practical and academic paths of discovery about touch and the remaining senses.

This essay asserts that engaging with touch is beneficial for all and calls upon museums and cultural institutions to consider greater accessibility of objects in their collections. It begins by providing a theoretical framework about the sense of touch and its critical role in human development. It then describes a pop-up exhibition of tactile art along with visitors' reactions. Thereafter, the essay shares how this experience inspired a professional move into the role of accessibility consultant, and the design of sustainable touch tours with and for people with vision loss. In particular, it highlights "Insights into Ancient Egypt," an "Access Program" at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Renowned British physical anthropologist and scholar Ashley Montagu claimed touch to be the "mother of the senses" and "the foundation upon which all other senses are based."[3] Highlighting the findings of scientists and psychologists, he demonstrated the profound need for the tactile experience and its lasting impact on the healthy development of both humans and animals. In the decades since Montagu's ground-breaking work, there has been a steady flow of research and documentation about how touch affects our lives. Tiffany Field, Director of the Touch Research Institute at the Miller School of Medicine, University of Miami, emphasizes the critical need for touch in the growth, development and emotional bonding between children and their parents/caretakers and considers the basic psychophysical properties of touch from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood.[4] In *The Power of Touch: Handling Objects in Museum and Heritage Context*, contributing authors include historical, scientific and empirical evidence that "demonstrate[s] the importance of touch in ascribing meaning—both in the past and present—and display[s] how it can be used to facilitate learning in museums and in a variety of cultural and heritage institutions."[5] Much has been written about the dysfunction in interpersonal communication that results from the lack of touch, dubbed "skin hunger." "Affection Exchange Theory" describes the fundamental role of touch in interpersonal relationships, while therapies addressing medical and psychological issues are well documented by Mariana Caplan.[6] This field of study cer-

3 Ashley Montagu, *Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin,* 3rd ed. (New York: Harper Row,1986), 3–4.

4 Department of Pediatrics website, accessed November 7, 2019, http://pediatrics.med.miami.edu/touch-research (article no longer available).

5 Elizabeth Pye, ed., *The Power of Touch: Handling Objects in Museum and Heritage Context* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast, 2007), excerpt from back cover.

6 Kory Floyd, "Human Affection Exchange I: Reproductive Probability as a Predictor of Men's Affection with Their Sons," *The Journal of Men's Studies* 10, no. 1 (Fall 2001); and Mariana Caplan,

tainly warrants a breadth of inquiry as we learn about the plasticity of the human brain, synesthesia of the senses and how our skin, hands and entire bodies work in concert to inform our interpretations, memories and life experiences. Touch can be "passive" (being touched) or "haptic" (interactive touch).

In the everyday use of our hands, we take so much for granted. We unconsciously use our fingertips to tap and swipe our phones, squeeze the toothpaste tube or hold a cup of coffee. Yet, in these seemingly straightforward actions there are a plethora of cues and sensations. In swiping the phone's surface we experience slight pressure, smoothness, and immediate visual or vocal feedback; in squeezing the toothpaste tube we use more intense pressure and employ tactile knowledge about how full or empty that tube is; in holding the coffee cup the sensation of warmth combines with the senses of smell and taste to affirm a pleasant experience—yet how present are we? When we slow down the touch and sensory experience with mindfulness and awareness we gain so much, with some surprising revelations.

In 2008, a group of educators and artists designed and presented *Touch: An Art Experience for the Senses*, a Philadelphia-based exhibition and research project.[7] Carol Cole, whose work is reminiscent of ancient and tribal forms, combines found objects with handmade paper, textured paper pulp, and paint. She contributed several intriguing pieces, as did Rosalyn Driscoll, whose sculptural forms of wood, paper, rope, steel, and cloth, often entwined with rawhide, offered a malleable and diverse tactile experience. Visitors to the exhibition included local artists and museum staff, students from The University of the Arts and Overbrook School for the Blind, and other members of the public, both sighted and visually impaired. Those with sight were encouraged to either wear a blindfold or close their eyes while exploring the work, not in any way to mimic blindness, but instead a methodology to use the hands and fingers to fully engage with their tactile sense. Responses to this unusual exhibition were recorded in a "Touch Journal." A visually impaired visitor commented, "The texture of each work was greatly appreciated and very meaningful. I was so happy that this exhibit encouraged interaction." A sighted painter wrote, "I found that my fingers, mind and body were hungry for more—starved for touch. My hands told me what my eyes could not and everything was highlighted and sensual. I fell in love with the smooth and cool surfaces. It was startling and amazing and I wanted more." A student museum educator stated, "Touch challenges the visitor to think and feel differently and draws forth an opening of the self to the work in a way rarely experienced. I hope museum exhibits follow suit and exhibit objects this way."[8] What became evident from observation, discussion and written responses was that there is an "awakening" of sorts, a sense of discovery and an intimate "knowing" about sculptural forms with a new appreciation for their properties of form, shape,

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To Touch Is To Live: The Need for Genuine Affection in an Impersonal World (Chino Valley: Hohm, 2002).

7 *Touch: An Art Experience for the Senses*, curated by Trish Maunder, Mary Pat Coyle, and Jordan Jacobson, at DaVinci Art Alliance in Philadelphia, April 2008.

8 Visitor comments submitted anonymously at *Touch: An Art Experience for the Senses*, DaVinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia, April 2008.

weight, texture, temperature, and material—the reinterpretation of what might have previously been considered an inanimate and silent object as an active, living force. An object's utilitarian function, artistic, or aesthetic value may be seen, heard, or described, but it is the sense of touch that establishes it as a tangible entity, a handleable man-made or natural creation. Direct interaction with or manipulation of an object, be it vegetable, animal, or mineral, yields instant feedback and a direct connection to its properties and physical history with a tangible connection to its maker.

Carol Saylor, a Philadelphia based sculptor who happens to be deaf and blind, was a recent participant in "A Sense of Place," a touch and sensory tour at the Wharton Esherick Museum, the home and studio of the artist for whom the museum is named.

> I had the feeling of light and nature with the large double doors, and industrial windows set in the massive timbers and rough stonework. I love the overall sense of the organic shapes of the work, the little three-legged stools and piano-shaped tabletops and the wonderful sensual satiny smoothness of the oil finishes. My favorite animal sculptures were the small horses and jockeys with their wonderful sense of movement. Wharton's work has inspired me with new ideas to get back to work in my own studio.[9]

Ruth Larkin, a sighted tour participant, commented, "I was delighted to be able to touch things because they seemed to invite it, it felt more intimate to focus on touch. I felt like I was interacting with a segment that itself had a character, a personality. It was like figuring out a puzzle … 'Who are you? What's that rough bit on you?' I liked visiting someone's space and imagined feeling all those surfaces every day if I lived there. I feel like I understand Esherick's relationship with wood better and I better appreciate his craftsmanship and cleverness with functional objects."[10]

Museums and cultural institutions offer themselves as the perfect pairing for touch experiences that can, as exemplified here, inspire new ideas and deeper connections. However, while acknowledging that universal design principles of equity, flexibility, intuition, and perception benefits everyone, exhibitions that allow the public to touch treasured artifacts demand a huge paradigm shift in the museum world. Even for people with vision loss, touch-based programs are a relatively new concept and not commonplace. Fortunately, awareness about how museums can design and offer rich experiences for more diverse audiences is expanding.

An initiative for a touch tour or a touch component of a collection or special exhibition will often come from an education department or accessible program coordinator after attending a conference where discussions around disability are on the agenda or where blind and visually impaired presenters propel inclusionary access into focus. Wherever the idea begins, there are museum staff whose professional considerations are key from the outset. Conservation and curatorial staff must command the early dialogue. No matter the positive intention about such a venture, the viability of creating a

9 Carol Saylor, in comments provided to the Wharton Esherick Museum and shared with the author, May 21, 2018.

10 Ruth Larkin, in comments provided to the Wharton Esherick Museum and shared with the author July 23, 2018.

tour rests with the professionals who know an object's historical value, physical vulnerability, and its exhibition or conservation schedule.

Case Study: "Insights into Ancient Egypt"

In 2012, the head conservator at Penn Museum approved a selection of objects from the museum's collection for inclusion in a touch tour for blind and visually impaired participants initiated by the museum's department of community engagement.[11] With grants secured from local philanthropic organizations, the next step was to hire an accessibility consultant to fulfill the mission—to design, coordinate and oversee tours and reach an audience of 200 people over a one-year period. I was delighted to take on the position.

Nine people with varied visual acuities across different age ranges were invited to make up three focus groups; they joined two lead docents of the Egyptian galleries and myself to co-create the tour. A cluster of approved objects in the Sphinx Gallery generated a great deal of excitement, connecting us to ancient Egypt, the preeminent civilization of the Mediterranean world. Made of basalt and red granite, the objects were strong, stable, and manifest with stories and learning.

The ninety-minute tour was designed and tested between April and September. It launched at the beginning of October and ran twice a day on Mondays through mid-December, with up to ten visitors with vision loss and their sighted companions attending each session. This intense ten-week time frame was deliberately conceived to foster a dynamic energy and community dialogue. The museum is closed to the general public on Mondays. The reality of providing a rich sensory experience for those with vision loss while hundreds of school students were on the premises was simply not an option. Safe navigation in a quiet gallery space with little ambient sound was a primary goal in creating a comfortable and welcoming environment.

Top of the agenda in designing the tour was seeking approval for visitors to touch the objects without wearing gloves, or at the very least with food prep. gloves, which protect objects from the hand's natural oils yet still transmit some level of texture and temperature, unlike nitrile gloves, which not only make hands sweat but remove sensitivity altogether. As a blind man commented during a discussion at conference, "Wearing gloves is like looking at a piece of art while wearing sunglasses."[12]

Penn Museum's conservator gathered colleagues' opinions and considered the informed response of another conservator whose parents, both blind, told her that wearing gloves to touch stone objects "would be like smearing petroleum jelly on one's glasses," and that "the sensation would effectively be blurred." The ideal compromise was reached: visitors would remove rings and wipe their hands with sterilizing wipes before touching each artifact.

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11 Renamed "Learning and Public Engagement" in 2019.

12 Unnamed participant, "Art Beyond Sight: Multimodal Approaches to Learning" conference, Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 16–18, 2009.

Five objects were selected. They included an ancient stela which served as a tombstone for King Qa'a, the last pharaoh of the first dynasty; a portion of a temple wall with life-size sunken relief carvings of the ancient creator gods Atum and Shu; and the smoothed, red granite head (broken from a statue) of the pharaoh Tuthmosis III. The last two objects were both dedicated to Ramesses II and his thirteenth son, Merneptah: a tall column from a temple; and the museum's signature piece, a monumental, twelve-ton, red granite sphinx, the largest in the Western hemisphere and the third largest in the world. Excavated from near the Ptah Temple in Memphis in 1913, this magnificent artifact was installed in the Lower Egypt gallery in 1916.

It was essential that focus group members got to know each piece well, not so much historically—the purview of the museum docents—but in more tangible and interactive ways. They determined that while historical and descriptive information—its dimensions, material and colour—is important and welcome, the faster the physical engagement the better. As one focus group member pointed out, "waiting is boring."[13]

Spending time with each object was intensely engaging, physical and intimate. We became familiar with their nuanced shapes and forms, textured and smooth areas, and we noted broken, cracked, and restored sections that added new layers of interest. We reached behind an object to relate to its full form, stretched up to touch a hieroglyph, or bent low to examine a pedestal. Having the time to enjoy this level of detail and the opportunity to share these thrilling revelations with our visitors became a driving force for us all.

Research shows that sighted people view works of art for between thirteen and two-tenths and forty-four and six-tenths seconds per object.[14] Compare this to time spent touching an object which may be between five to fifteen minutes—in the case of the Penn Museum's sphinx, visually impaired visitors claimed they would be happy to explore it all day!

One visitor was so overcome she had to sit down and take a breath. "I can't believe that I am touching something this old."[15] While reaching up for her first encounter with the sphinx another visitor chuckled as she gasped, "Oh my goodness, look how big this paw is and oh, look, there are lines here that I think denote the claws … that's awesome! I can see how the muscle of the front leg goes up and the belly goes down and under, and wow, here's the haunch that goes up like a dog—like my dog. Oh, here's the back leg, it's just huge. This sphinx is SO big." She touched areas pitted from years of exposure to wind and sand. "Ah, I love this," she said, "it helps you understand exactly how old it is."[16]

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13 Focus group participant, "Insights into Ancient Egypt" exhibit development, Penn Museum, September 2012.

14 Jeffrey K. Smith and Lisa F. Smith, "Spending Time on Art," *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 19, no. 2 (July 1, 2001): 229–36.

15 Elsie Watson, interviewed by April Saul, "A Touch of Antiquities," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 22, 2012, https://www.inquirer.com/philly/health/science/20121022_Blind_students_get_to_touch_antiquities_at_Penn_Museum.html.

16 Becky, visitor to "Insights into Ancient Egypt," Penn Museum, October 2012.

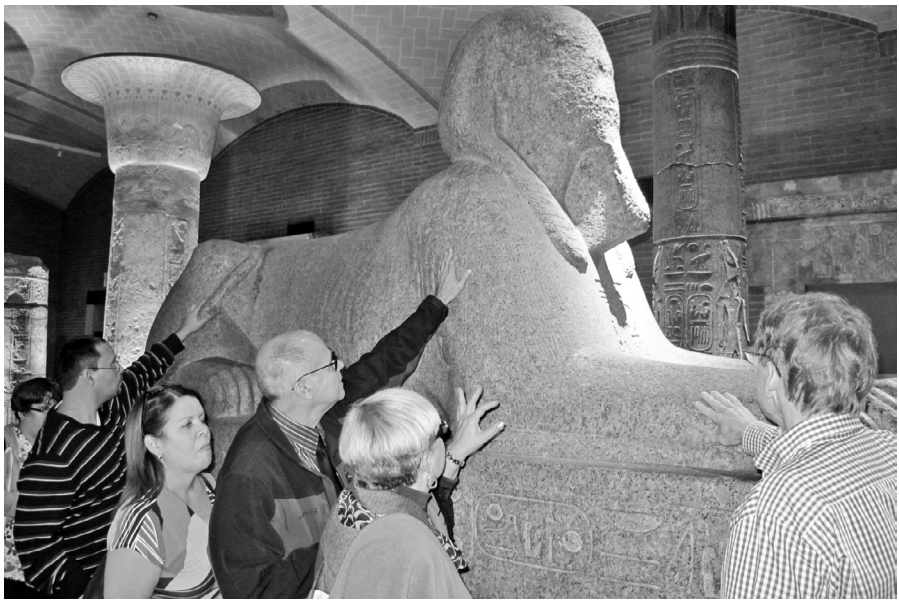

Figure 6.1. Visitors with vision loss touching sphinx, 2012.
Photograph courtesy of the author.

The sphinx's placement on a high pedestal made its upper body and head beyond reach, so it was prudent to make an accessible smaller scale model. Local sculptor, Maria Mosette Kretschmann, was engaged to create it. Using photographs and drawings for reference the replica was meticulously constructed using foam and plaster and overlaid with materials matching the colour and texture of red granite.[17] The original sphinx had weathered, unclear features so the replica followed suit. During tours, visitors flocked around it, several commenting they had imagined a sphinx in an upright position and were surprised it had a horizontal pose, reminiscent of a large dog or cat. They noted the flaps of the headdress and its "ponytail" at the nape of the neck. They walked around the whole form, following the curved tail to the top of the replica's back, mapping out what they would encounter on the larger scale of the original artifact (see Fig. 6.1).

Indeed, the magnificent exemplar of ancient Egypt was the highlight of the tour and although everyone had heard of a sphinx, few had truly envisioned one, let alone touched one. There was so much to revel in. Its placement on a huge rectangular pedestal in the centre of the gallery made it easy for those with vision loss to walk around independently and safely while tracing their hands along the series of royal cartouches and hieroglyphs carved into its base.

17 Maria Mosette Kretschmann, "Touch Tours-All Process!," *ICONSUMEITCONSUMESME* (blog), http://mariamosette.blogspot.com/2013/11/touch-tours-all-process.html.

Docents assisted as visitors explored its anatomically correct, leonine form, including the carved folds of skin on its hind quarters, its giant tail curling up and to the right, and, of course, its discernable ribs. Written and verbal responses were collected via evaluations at the end of the tour and the universally positive comments were inspiring and rewarding for all involved:

> Not many people either sighted or visually impaired would ever have the opportunity to place their hands where craftsmen's hands toiled thousands of years ago. The docent placed my hands on the sphinx and asked if I knew what part I was touching. I realized it was the huge front paw of the lion. I made my way around the sphinx finding the remaining paws along with the massive tail. The base was chiseled and etched with such great precision. This was truly a great opportunity. To a blind or visually impaired person seeing is believing what one describes. However, touching is reality.[18]

The following comment by a visitor affirmed this notion even more: "This Touch Tour was THE most memorable museum exhibit I have ever encountered—with every touch I could feel the energy [from the artifacts] emitting into my body, energy created up to five thousand years BEFORE! I've seen Egyptian exhibits before. The columns, with their hieroglyphs always intrigued me as I looked from afar. I learned more in this short hour-and-a-half about the Egyptian culture than I did in school, past museum exhibits, and books combined—and it is forever embedded in me."[19]

Vision is so often taken for granted with an assumption that information can be gleaned only by looking at and appreciating an object. Conversely, the intense experience of touch yields deep and long-lasting connections that enter the body in much more wholesome and fully realized ways, for both the sighted and visually impaired.

During the touch tours at Penn Museum, those of us hosting them came up with innovative ways to make them even more engaging and interactive. Using one's own body to relate to objects and even maps is a simple yet creative way of building images and scenarios for people who are blind. To make sense of the unusual topography of ancient Egypt, visitors were asked to extend an arm out and down in front of them, palm uppermost with fingers splayed open. With the other hand they touched the shoulder of their extended arm to imagine it as Upper Egypt in the south of the country, and traced a central line down their arm, past their wrist (Cairo) to the triangular form of their outstretched fingers symbolizing the tributaries of the Nile Delta as it spreads out and drains into the Mediterranean Sea. This interactive experience of the river flow from south to north was so well received by blind and visually impaired visitors that Museum docents adopted the technique with their visiting student groups.

Tactile line drawings in the same orientation of a character and of selected hieroglyphs were offered to participants, and where relevant, small replicas consolidated the shape and form of an image before encountering the authentic object.[20] A 6-inch (15

18 Rita Lang, visitor to "Insights into Ancient Egypt," Penn Museum, October 2012.

19 Tina, interviewed by the Center for Vision Loss, "Penn Museum Touch Tour," *VISION* 3, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 5.

20 This refers to embossed images that were created using "Swell Touch Paper" from The American Printing House for the Blind.

cm), three-dimensional resin statue of the falcon sun god Horus helped visitors locate the bird's rounded eye, carved wing fold, feathered legs, and clawed feet before exploring the profile image of the much larger form on an ancient tombstone. To create a kinesthetic and tangible connection to the similarly embossed hieroglyph below the falcon, visitors bent an arm and extended it across the body with the palm facing inwards, thumb uppermost.

The temple wall piece with its life-sized carvings of Atum and Shu offered an opportunity for visitors to "strike a pose" and "stand like an Egyptian." They relished the challenge to their balance and hilarity ensued as they twisted their heads, legs, and feet to the right while trying to keep their torsos facing forward. Then, with verbal or "hand-over-hand" guidance, visitors used their fingers to trace the carved outline of both figures, exploring the shapes and textures of their headdresses, oval eyes, thickened eyebrows and lips, large ears, and curved beards. Even their subtle rounded cheeks were discernible through touch. This method of transferring information from an internalized physical experience to an externalized tactile one was also much appreciated by visitors who were quickly able to orient to images that otherwise would have been more complex to recognize.

The head of Tuthmosis II provided contrast between the low relief carvings on the wall piece and a three-dimensional iteration of an Egyptian figure. The pertinence of this tactile transition was not lost on our visitors, who found the sequential flow into a fully embraceable, and relatable form helped build a deeper understanding of the varying techniques used by ancient Egyptian artisans and the characters they portrayed. A visitor commented: "It's interesting that this is made from red granite, the same as the wall piece. This feels much smoother, so they (artisans) probably used special tools to achieve that. I love being able to put my hands entirely around the head and feel everything—the eyes, eyebrows, chin, ears, and nose, especially the nose, which even has lines outlining the flare of the nostrils."[21]

While preparing to touch the large, seated statues of the pharaoh Ramesses II and the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet, visitors sat up tall and straight with hands on their knees to imbue themselves with the strength and power of these mighty figures and help them recognize and relate more readily to the figure they will touch. For visitors who cannot see, preparatory experiences prior to touching are vital in making tangible and visceral connections to an external entity. While touching Ramesses II, Austin Seraphin, a man blind from birth, who had been working with the team as a "docent" and guiding others to touch (Fig. 6.2), commented, "It's incredible to see all the amazing detail, things like the feet and the hands, the fingernails and all the exquisite detail in the hieroglyphs that you only really pick up by touch; and to be able to guide other people to those exact points and show them is really cool. When you touch these things, you really bond with them."[22]

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21 Becky, visitor to "Insights into Ancient Egypt."

22 Austin Seraphin, personal communication to author, October 2013.

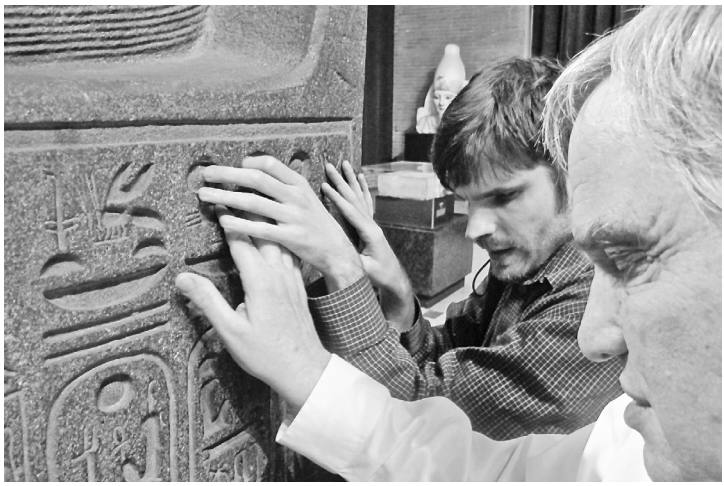

Figure 6.2. Seraphin guides visitor's hand, 2013. Photograph courtesy of the author.

In 2014, after two successful years of tours and programs at Penn Museum it had become clear and apparent that the blind and low vision community had not only thoroughly embraced the experience but were hungry for more inclusionary cultural opportunities and were prepared to collaborate to achieve them. Stepping away from my position at Penn Museum and with the maxim "Nothing About Us Without Us," I co-founded Philly Touch Tours LLC with Austin Seraphin and created a mission to do just that. With our close relationships and respect for the educators, docents and colleagues at Penn Museum, we offered and were supported in the development of Philly Touch Tours's "Signature Program," a handling workshop and sensory tour of the Rome Gallery. As before, focus groups of people with vision loss were an integral part of its development, with principles of best practice we had honed together leading the way.

In the Rome Gallery, visitors stand to emulate the stance of a Pretorian guard carved into the marble stela before them. The transference of this internal knowledge of body form through mirroring is profound in its connectedness. Aside from being a seemingly lighthearted activity, this kinesthetic interaction stays with the visitor as a strong memory of their visit to the museum and a desire to know more: "We were well prepared to approach and tactually examine valuable pieces and learn about the nature of life for the various groups of people during this remarkable period. I came away from the tour with a renewed appreciation for learning without vision as well as for the resourcefulness of human beings in ancient civilizations. Everything came alive for me!"[23]

Philly Touch Tours's firm belief and practice is reflected in its mantra: "Seeing might be believing, but when you touch, you know." We truly champion the conviction that when you touch, you connect, you relate, and you understand.

23 Unnamed visitor, "Insights into the Roman World" tour, Philly Touch Tours/Penn Museum, 2017.

Figure 6.3. Hands reach to touch a marble portrait of a woman, 2014. Photograph courtesy of the author.

As museums shift the paradigm to create inclusive and accessible exhibition environments that are welcoming for everyone, the words of accessibility consultant and researcher Sina Bahram sets the stage. "Accessibility is making sure folks can open the door. Inclusion is inviting people to come inside and enjoy what you have to offer."[24] I leave the final statement in the capable hands of Blessing Offor, the man who excitedly located the ribs on the iconic sphinx: "License to touch the artifacts is unbeatable. It's like full immersion; if you want to learn a language you just have to jump into the culture and environment. If you really want to learn about this stuff, you have to go touch it. Even for someone who can see, I think it's way more valuable to actually be able to put your hands on something!"[25]

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24 Prime Access Consulting (blog).

25 Offor, interviewed by Greg Johnson.

Part Three

THE MUSEUM AS A SITE OF RE-EXPERIENCING

Chapter Seven

"A POWER IN THE PLACE": DISRUPTING THE SILENCE AND MEMORIALIZING LEGACY

AN INTERVIEW WITH BRYAN STEVENSON[1]

Susan Shifrin (SS): Let's start by talking about your trajectory from a young lawyer representing people on death row, to founding the Equal Justice Initiative, to founding the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.[2]

Bryan Stevenson (BS): I'm a product of Brown v. Board of Education. I grew up in a community where Black children could not attend the public schools. There were no high schools for Black kids when my dad was a teenager in that county, and I remember the impact of lawyers coming to our community and making them open up the public schools. That changed everything for me and for lots of Black kids. I got to go to high school, I went to college, and when I reflect on that, I'm struck by the fact that if you had had a vote on whether to end racial segregation in education, we would have lost that vote. Black people were less than 20 percent of the population, and many were disenfranchised. So it took a commitment to the rule of law to end this problem, to open these opportunities. And it was that use of the law to protect the rights of disfavored, vulnerable people that really shaped my thinking as a college student.

When I was in law school in the early 1980s, there was this emerging crisis around mass incarceration and the resumption of the death penalty. It was that that brought me to the Deep South. Meeting people on death row affirmed the instinct I had that this basic human right was being threatened by these political systems, and I wanted to get [out] in front of that. So that's what shaped my career, it's what led me to start the Equal Justice Initiative in Alabama, a state that didn't have a public defender system, that had

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1 This interview took place on July 6, 2021. Bryan Stevenson is a public interest lawyer who has argued multiple cases before the US Supreme Court. He is the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama. He is also the founder of the EJI's Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice, both of which opened to the public in 2018. Stevenson's work has been recognized with awards including the MacArthur Foundation's "genius prize" and the National Medal of Liberty of the American Civil Liberties Union. Stevenson holds degrees from Harvard Law School and the Harvard School of Government, along with numerous honourary doctoral degrees from universities both in the United States and abroad.

2 The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, EJI works with communities that have been marginalized by poverty and discouraged by unequal treatment, and is committed to changing the narrative about race in America. Excerpted from https://eji.org/about/.

a high rate of death sentencing, a high number of executions. I felt called to be with the condemned in this way.

It was about fifteen years ago when I began thinking about our work and realized that the intervention by the courts that created the opportunities that I have didn't seem as viable [then] as it did when I was young. I began to fear that we might not be able to win Brown v. Board of Education today. I don't know that our court is as committed to doing something that disruptive anymore, particularly on behalf of a marginalized, disempowered group of people. [This] was really a crisis for me and I realized that what enabled the Court to do what it did in the 1950s and 1960s wasn't just the advocacy within the Court, but it was also things going on outside the Court. The civil rights movement created an environment where legal change and reform was possible. And the absence of that kind of movement made me worry.

That's when we started doing things outside the Court. I believed that we needed to educate this country on the legacy of slavery. This history that we've never really encountered was not something that people understood. The debates we were having—racial bias in the death penalty, voting issues, bias against the poor, housing, policing—all of these issues seemed to be disconnected from this larger historical understanding [that] I think is essential for evaluating and talking about them. And so that's when we decided we were going to begin talking about slavery.

Living in Montgomery, Alabama, that was pretty dramatic, because in Montgomery at the time there were probably sixty markers and monuments to the Confederacy. This is a community that loves talking about mid-nineteenth-century history. Jefferson Davis's birthday is a state holiday here. Confederate Memorial Day is a state holiday. That disconnect from the trauma and tragedy and pain and anguish of slavery and this romanticization of those who tried to perpetuate and defend slavery and sustain white supremacy was for me just soaked with ignorance and confusion. We felt the need to begin dealing with that, and that gave rise to the research and the work that then turned into the cultural efforts we're making [to this day].

SS: *You've talked about the disruptive influence of the Supreme Court in the past, which as you've said is no longer something that we can rely on. In this context of disruption, could you describe the kinds of experiences that you envisioned for people coming to the National Memorial and the Legacy Museum, particularly given that they are both situated in a place that may seem anathematic to what you have created?*

BS: I think that's a great question and I do believe that our judges, our legislators, our policymakers, most people in America have a very shallow and incomplete understanding of our history as it relates to these issues. You're just not going to be as effective as a decision-maker on questions of racial bias or even questions of policing or voting if you're not informed, and so that has become a priority [for us]. Public history became the tool of choice for me because, you know, education is optional when you get out of school, a lot of people choose to remain ignorant. What appealed to me about public history is that it is, in itself, disruptive and will force some people to see things that they might not otherwise see.

This really became clear to me in 2013. We finished our first report early in 2013; it looked at the domestic slave trade.[3] While some people had a basic understanding of the transatlantic slave trade, very few in this country understood anything about the domestic slave trade and what happens in the nineteenth century when we have this massive influx of enslaved Black people from the North to the South. We banned the transatlantic slave trade in 1808. They were coming from the North, they were being moved within this country. These are people largely born in the United States and I don't think people understood that.

Enslavement became the centre of the US economy during the nineteenth century. We found out that Montgomery, Alabama was one of the most active slave trading spaces in America.[4] That is not something that local historians acknowledge and talk about. Then we discovered that our street, where our office is, was a main thoroughfare where enslaved people were trafficked, paraded up the street from the Alabama River, which is just 200 metres from here, and the slave auction site was just up the street. All this knowledge really began to make an impact on the way we saw our location. We learned that our building was on the site of a former warehouse where enslaved people were held and detained. It changes your relationship to a community once you have that history.

One of the things we wanted to do was to confront the iconography in Montgomery that celebrated the Confederacy. We wanted to put up markers about the domestic slave trade. We got a lot of pushback from the Alabama Historical Association, but when we put these markers up in December of 2013, hundreds of people came out. This is a majority Black city where Black residents have never been able to see something that acknowledges the history that brought them here. These are Black people who are the descendants of enslaved Black people who were here, and the emotion that surrounded that unveiling was quite a revelation for me. That's when the power of public history and art came together in a way that really resonated.

When we issued our report on lynching in 2015, we wanted to replicate that marker project and that's what created the Community Remembrance Project where we're now putting up markers all across the country.[5] Local residents want to claim this history, they want to talk about this history. It's a way of disrupting the silence that has defined our communities for too long when it comes to race. Then the idea emerged that we should just put a marker at every lynching site [across the country]. We realized that this would take a really long time, and that's when we had the idea of creating a memorial that would allow us to bring this history together and to concretize it. That was the genesis of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

And I did believe that it had to be in Montgomery. People said, well if you're going to build a national memorial, put it in Washington. I said no, you need to come to this community that proudly identifies as the cradle of the Confederacy. You need to come to the

3 https://eji.org/report/slavery-in-america/.

4 Montgomery, Alabama is the site of the Equal Justice Initiative's headquarters, as well as the city in which both the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice are located.

5 https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/.

Figure 7.1. Jars of soil on display. Photograph courtesy of the Equal Justice Initiative.

place where slave trafficking and lynching were epidemic. I just think that that sort of positioning is really important if you're going to tell these stories.

I went to Berlin to see the Holocaust Memorial. We have built Holocaust memorials all over the world and the museum we have in Washington is incredibly powerful. But you are safe when you're in that space in ways that you don't feel safe when you go to Auschwitz, or when you go to the places where these atrocities took place. And so when I went to Berlin, I was completely blown away by the Holocaust Memorial, knowing that I was in a space where Jewish people had been abducted and slaughtered and taken away. That relationship to place is really important. There is a power in the place to make history real, to make it resonant.

We do a project where people collect soil at lynching sites because of this idea that there's a power in place. People dig that soil, it can be really emotional and really overwhelming for people and they are surprised by it. But I tell them that's because there is power in that soil. That soil contains the sweat of those who were enslaved, it contains the blood of those who were lynched, it contains the tears of those who were humiliated during segregation. And it contains the potential for life that you have given it when you bring it into our space, because we can turn that soil into a monument, an emblem, an icon that represents a different future. (See Fig. 7.1.)

You know, when you go to the Holocaust Memorial [in Berlin], there are no words, it's just this very abstract structure. They trust people to come into that space with a knowledge of the Holocaust that allows them to have a meaningful experience with those structures; and I had that knowledge. When we built the National Memorial, I realized that we could not trust people to come into our space with a knowledge of

lynching. That was the reason why we felt we also had to create a museum—a narrative museum—to help tell the story that surrounds lynching, that contextualizes racial terror lynching, that explores slavery.

And, again, [I believe] it is necessary that people make the journey [to Montgomery]. You may have to drive past some confederate flags, you may have to see some of the iconography that people in this region have grown up with, you may have to get past the politics of the region that may not be aligned with your own and it will make you uncomfortable. But I don't think we should go to a memorial that is dedicated to the tragedy and trauma of lynching, or to a museum that addresses the legacy of slavery, and expect to be entirely comfortable.

SS: *Your description of the project in which you encourage people to go to lynching sites and bring that soil back, and of why it's so essential to you that people travel to Montgomery makes me think of something you've written about: of being "proximate" with people on death row, with "the other," people we don't understand. How do we come to achieve some sort of justice? Not at a distance. It seems that this is something that is at the very foundation of the museum and the memorial.*

BS: When I made this decision that we had to begin exploring history and talking about these issues outside the Court, we spent almost a year going into the Black Belt and just talking with people, being in proximity to people in Marengo County and Wilcox County and Lowndes County and Greene County. The conversations were so powerful, because people would be talking about being born on plantations and their language was rich with an understanding of this history. It's after those conversations that we felt we had to do a report on slavery. It came out of that and I believe that you hear things you won't otherwise hear, you see things you won't otherwise see when you commit to getting proximate. I think the idea that emerges from proximity is this idea of witness, and I do think it's important that we be witnesses to this history. When you stand in these places, you experience things that are critical to understanding.

SS: *The history of museums is more often than not the history of exclusion and classism, the history of luxury as opposed to the history of the working person. To this day, people go into museums and feel inadequate or intimidated, or less-than, because that's the legacy. So even in founding the Legacy Museum, you are pushing back on those exclusive, excluding experiences. In insisting that people come to Montgomery and that they experience the whole of Montgomery, you are insisting that painful histories confront each other. I asked early on what you imagined or wanted people to feel in the museum. I'd like us to go back to that.*

BS: Well, first of all, I do think it's important for us to recognize that museums and many cultural institutions in this country have been complicit in creating a community, a society where people are encouraged to feel good about the stratification, good about the lack of diversity, good about slavery, good about lynching, okay with segregation—all of these challenges—because they're being comforted with beauty and these kind of classical ideas that are disconnected with the suffering of millions of people, of the working

Figure 7.2. Entrance to new Legacy Museum. Photograph courtesy of the Equal Justice Initiative.

poor, of people of colour. And I think that has to change because you're not going to be engaged with these struggles if you are not in some way aware that there is a struggle going on.

I built our spaces because I just didn't see them in this country. I went to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg. It was really powerful to see a place that told the story of Apartheid with an emphasis on the pain and suffering of those who were victimized. I realized there were no museums in America that do this and that failure to reckon honestly … The closest we have is the Holocaust Museum, which is a museum about suffering and struggle, but suffering and struggles that took place someplace else. People are a little more comfortable going there because they don't feel directly implicated, and I knew that when we started talking about slavery, lynching, and segregation, people were going to be implicated.

When we were fundraising, we had a lot of donors who were saying, "well who is the architect, and who is this and who is that?" We had to finally say "look, we are not doing it that way." We're not going to have curators that have experience in these other kinds of spaces. In the same way that I've been a lawyer and I have to create an argument reaching out to a jury, that model of advocacy is the same model we're using when it comes to educating people about this history.

In Fall 2021 we're actually dramatically expanding the Legacy Museum.[6] It's going to a space that's four times the size, we have a whole new set of exhibits and content. In working on this new museum, I've really been thinking about "museum as experience" because this museum from the very beginning until the very end is about a particular kind of experience.

You'll walk into a space that presents the transatlantic slave trade. It's a directional museum. You have to move forward. And you walk through a wall of water, you get into

6 A relocated, expanded Legacy Museum opened on September 29, 2021, https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/news/2021-09-28/eji-opens-new-legacy-museum-montgomery.

Figure 7.3. Evolution of slavery. Photograph courtesy of the Equal Justice Initiative.

a space where you see what happens on the African continent during the 400 years of enslavement. You walk onto a beach where you see sculptures and we talk about the two million Black people who died during the Middle Passage who were buried on the Atlantic seabed, who've largely been forgotten.

Then you go from there into the domestic slave trade, and you walk through our [presentation of] the evolution of slavery. (See Fig. 7.3.) And then you go era by era, from slavery to lynching to segregation to the issues of mass incarceration today. It is very much a journey, an experience.

It's a story that we are telling. It has a start, a middle, and an ending. At the end of the museum, we have pictures of young children and we just straight up say that we built this museum with the hope that one day these kinds of children will live in a country where they are not burdened with the legacy of slavery, where they do not have to overcome bigotry, bias, and discrimination.

I believe that a cultural institution creating an experience that has a purpose represents something very different than cultural institutions that don't create experiences and that don't have purpose in that way. When cultural institutions have purpose that is aligned with the needs of everybody in society, not just the elite, not just the wealthy, [they are fulfilling an important mission]. We say "everybody" because we actually think it's in everyone's interest to reckon with this history, whether you're white or Black, whether you're rich or poor, whether you're a citizen of the United States or a citizen of some other country. There is a need for us all to reckon with this history and in that regard, we see this as a museum for everybody with a very specific purpose: to confront racial injustice, to overcome racial hierarchy, to eliminate bias and bigotry, to address the multiple ways in which people have been othered, and create a world where that kind of "otherization," that kind of exclusion and abuse is no longer tolerated.

SS: *There has been a lot of discussion about the need for museums to open themselves up to varied experiences, to not predetermine what one individual's experience must be. In your conceptualization of a museum and a memorial that is so experiential and so reliant on experience, you have determined that perhaps there has to be—as you said—a direction for people who come to this new museum.*

BS: I think that there's a need for a corrective. We are trying to respond to a dangerous deficit in our collective understanding about the role of race in American society. You know, when I give talks about this, I talk about how slavery doesn't really end in 1865 because the real evil of American slavery wasn't the involuntary servitude and forced labour. It was the ideology we created that Black people aren't as good as white people, that Black people are less human, less evolved, less capable; and that narrative of racial hierarchy, that was the evil created by slavery. So the Thirteenth Amendment doesn't address that. Juneteenth doesn't address that. And as result, slavery doesn't end, it evolves. It turns into a century where Black people are pulled out of their homes and they're beaten and they're drowned and they're burned and they are lynched on courthouse lawns, and the trauma created by that terrorism then leads six million Black people to flee the American South. People don't even understand how we have the demographic geography that we have, they don't get that the Black people in Chicago and Cleveland and Detroit and Oakland and Los Angeles went to those communities as refugees and exiles from trauma, from terror in the American South. If you don't have that understanding, then you're not going to fully appreciate what's going on in those communities. And so we do feel that we have to respond to this deficit.

I come from a faith tradition that recognizes that it doesn't lead to redemption, it doesn't lead to recovery if you deny, if you don't acknowledge that you have to repent, that you have to confess to get to redemption and salvation and all that good stuff. Abuse survivors have learned in the last quarter-century, half-century that you can't just not talk about that abuse, it doesn't allow you to get to a healed place if you are required to never acknowledge [it]. What we now realize is that we have to talk about it, we have to work through it. We have to get on the other side of it to actually get healthy, and I feel collectively, as a society, we have to do the same thing. We've practised silence for so long in this country when it comes to the legacy of slavery, we have practised avoidance and denial for so long that [at EJI] we're not comfortable creating a cultural experience where avoidance, denial, and silence are options.

SS: *This is a kind of augmentation of your notion of how critical it is to be in the place. My guess is you may have visitors from other countries who are more open to making the journey and making it fully than you do visitors from this country.*

BS: I've actually been genuinely encouraged by who's come to the space. Even within the Black community, a lot of us have felt like that's too painful, can't talk about that, can't deal with that. But I've seen older Black people come into our memorial and have these moments of clarity and awakening. It's emotional and you'll see people wrapping their arms around those monuments and sometimes weeping because for the first time they're seeing lives lost [being] acknowledged.

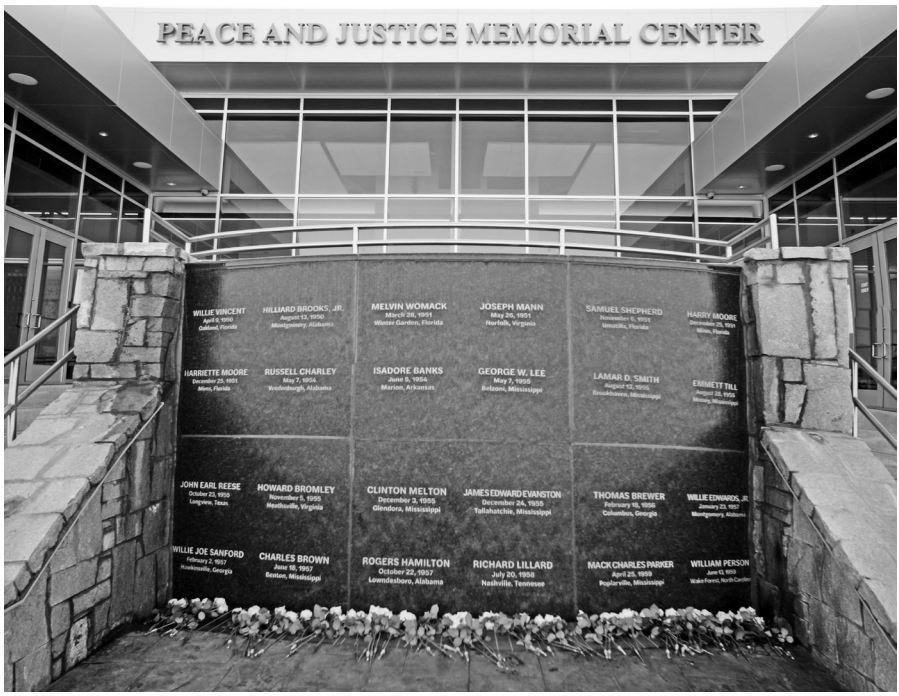

Figure 7.4. Memorial to post-1915 victims of lynching.
Photograph courtesy of the Equal Justice Initiative.

I was driving down the road just a couple weeks ago and there was a beautiful "Story Corps" presentation from the daughter of a man who was lynched here in Montgomery.[7] We created a dedicated monument for victims of lynching after 1915, and in 2019 we had the dedication for that monument. We invited the family members and they all came. This young woman talked [in her "Story Corps" interview] about her mother describing the day when her father left. She said she would watch everything he put on, the colour of his pants and his undershirt, and she would watch him get dressed. He left that day and these men abducted him and they threw him into the [Alabama River]. Her mother had to identify the body, which they didn't find for a long time. She could identify it because she knew the colour of every stitch of clothing this man had on. When this young woman got married, her mother told her "Don't ever let your husband leave the house without knowing what he's wearing." That legacy was so evident in this woman's life and, you know, she became emotional at the end, but she was able to say that those people who killed [her] father did not win, they did not succeed. And then she said "[This man] is on monuments," and she was referring to the monument that we

7 https://storycorps.org/stories/almost-65-years-after-fathers-lynching-two-daughters-are-still-looking-for-justice/.

have. (See Fig. 7.4.) That memorialization has the power to restore the dignity and the value of a human life. And that's what I've seen within the Black communities, people embracing, recognizing our power to actually restore, to give meaning and honour and significance to these lives that were crushed by bigotry and violence.

For many of our white visitors, what we've seen is a kind of reckoning. People will say "I just didn't know." I've seen that happen, when people are visibly shaken by what they're learning, what they're understanding, and it's like discovering something that you didn't know you needed to discover. But I think people leave changed and that's the goal. And while we envision these sites for everybody on the planet, we especially want people who are directly implicated by this history. People who live in this country, people who are Black, people who are white, people who were immigrants, people who have lived the reality of exclusion and discrimination, to come to the sites because we think they will be able to take something with them that will better prepare them to create a world where bias and discrimination don't exist.

SS: *You've spoken about envisioning the new museum as a corrective. One goal of this collection of essays is to provide models for those who are coming up in the profession, for people who go to museums, to think differently about them.*

BS: Well, I do think if a museum has the power to educate, to inspire, to challenge, it can play a central role. In our civil rights era [section], we emphasize white resistance to integration because I think if you only focus on Black courage and heroism to advance civil rights you understate the larger problem, which was all of these elected, empowered white people who were adamantly opposed to integration. While Dr. King and others were singing "we shall overcome," the majority of white people was saying "no you won't." We have a whole exhibit of governors and chief justices of state courts and the ugly things they are saying throughout this era. We think people need to understand this in order to appreciate many of the issues that we are seeing today.

We have an image in our contemporary section, a picture of a little girl during the Baltimore uprising just a couple of years ago. She's making a sign and she's like five years old, and what she's writing on the sign is "Black kids matter." I just want people to think about what it means to live in America today where five-year-old, precious, little Black girls feel the need to write the words "Black kids matter" on a sign and go someplace and have to hold that sign up. When you see that and understand that, you begin to have a different relationship to what's happening in our country, and I think this is what we can do with cultural spaces.

We're actually opening an art gallery, our first foray into fine art. When you see Glenn Ligon's series "The Runaways" after having walked through an exhibit that presents the actual iconography that dominated the era of slavery, where the word "runaway" is used to describe a Black person who's escaped, it just has a different power, it has a different meaning. We have Gordon Parks's "I Am You" series, and the photographs that he takes about this effort by Black people to overcome segregation in the 1950s and 1960s––I think it just has a different meaning when you've actually been through a space that has documented the intense resistance to integration. That's the power of art and the power of a cultural space to create something dynamic that not

only tells a story but responds to the moment. That's what I hope becomes more of a norm in the American museum.

SS: *Let's go back to where we started, the path you followed to this moment. As you move forward, how does the work of the museum, the memorial, your work in disrupting the status quo of the justice system: how do those things travel together?*

BS: I'm more persuaded now than I've ever been that narrative work is going to be essential to how we create justice in this country. Our institutions of justice, many of them, are failing because they don't have narratives that have fostered a healthy relationship with the communities that they're trying to serve. If you're a police officer who thinks of yourself as some kind of warrior and the people you police as the enemy, then you're going to engage in the violence that we see. If you're someone who thinks of yourself as a guardian, as a caretaker, as a supporter of people in the community, you'll have a very different relationship. If our courts and our legislators and policymakers think that we can put crimes in jails and prisons, we're going to create very harsh punishments for these crimes. If you realize that you can't put a crime in prison, that you put people in prison and that people are not crimes, then you're going to have a very different relationship to what it means to be just, to be fair.

And so the narrative work that we're doing at the Museum and the Memorial is, for me, directly linked with the justice work we're doing in the courts. I don't think that work will get easier if we don't do this narrative work, and the narrative work doesn't exist in a vacuum. We want people to leave our sites motivated to do things that advance justice in their own communities, that correct the problems in their own communities, that seek to remedy the legacy of these issues that they have now experienced in this very dramatic way. And that's where, for me, it's very connected--the work we do in courts with the work we do outside of courts is the only way forward if we're going to get to the kind of just society that so many of us want.

SS: *So that's another model in itself. One of the things that arts organizations have experienced during the pandemic is the presumption that their work is mere icing on the cake rather than potentially providing essential—at times life-changing—services within communities. What I hope people who read our volume will take away from this interview is that the work of museums can and should be inextricably intertwined with social justice.*

BS: Absolutely. I think art institutions, museums, we undermine the power of the content of the creative, of the artistic when we shy away from the obligation to be engaged in social justice, to be engaged in the struggle for full affirmation of human rights and human dignity. Our cultural institutions have to be more engaged, more aware, more committed and more searching of the ways in which that intertwining that we're talking about is made real.

SS: *Brian, let's conclude with this question: why is it important for museums to focus on experience?*

BS: When you live through something, when you experience something, it just has a reality that it can't have when it's imagined. I am much better prepared for the moment that I am in because I've been surrounded by people who have taught me really important things about struggle, important things about being honest, important things about perseverance, important things about resilience. They've shown it to me and that experience has become really powerful as a form of modeling. And so if we can create museums that provide experiences that model things for people, that help them live, help them navigate complexity, help them overcome, help them get past trauma and struggle, then I can think of nothing more important we can do. And so I feel really privileged to be in a place where we maybe have a chance of creating that kind of experience that empowers and energizes and inspires.

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Chapter Eight

THE ICONIZATION OF A MONUMENT: THE MIQUA IN COLOGNE, BETWEEN INTERPRETATION AND IMAGINATION

THOMAS OTTEN

THE MUSEUM PROJECT MiQua combines the *in situ* presentation of archaeological monuments and objects with story-telling of two thousand years of history in the heart of the City of Cologne.[1] The conceptualization of the museum entails multi-perspective access to the site. On the one hand, the understanding of the place as a memorial site, with the three-dimensional remains of the architecture and buildings, the finds, their reconstruction, and the understanding of the development process of the urban structure and organism over the times; on the other hand, the understanding of the place as a site of memory (*lieu de mémoire*). People, images, and stories contribute to the iconization of the place, to it being a place of imagination. This requires a whole new approach to the interpretation and presentation of monuments.

The Memorial Site

The future MiQua in Cologne is being built on a site that has played a significant role in the respective images of the ancient, medieval, and modern city for two thousand years. Archaeological monuments and fragments transmit this two-thousand-year history in a dense stratigraphy that is linked to rich historical source material. With the Roman Praetorium and the remains of the medieval Jewish quarter, some of Cologne's most important archaeological monuments are grouped on this site.[2] In connection

1 MiQua stands for "Museum in the Quarter." https://www.dreso.com/de/en/projects/details/jewish-museum-miqua-cologne#:~:text=MiQua%20stands%20for%20Museum%20in,%C2%A9%20Wandel%20Lorch%20Architekten.

2 The basic historical and archaeological literature on the different phases of settlement is well researched with overarching works; for example, for the Roman period: Werner Eck, *Köln in*

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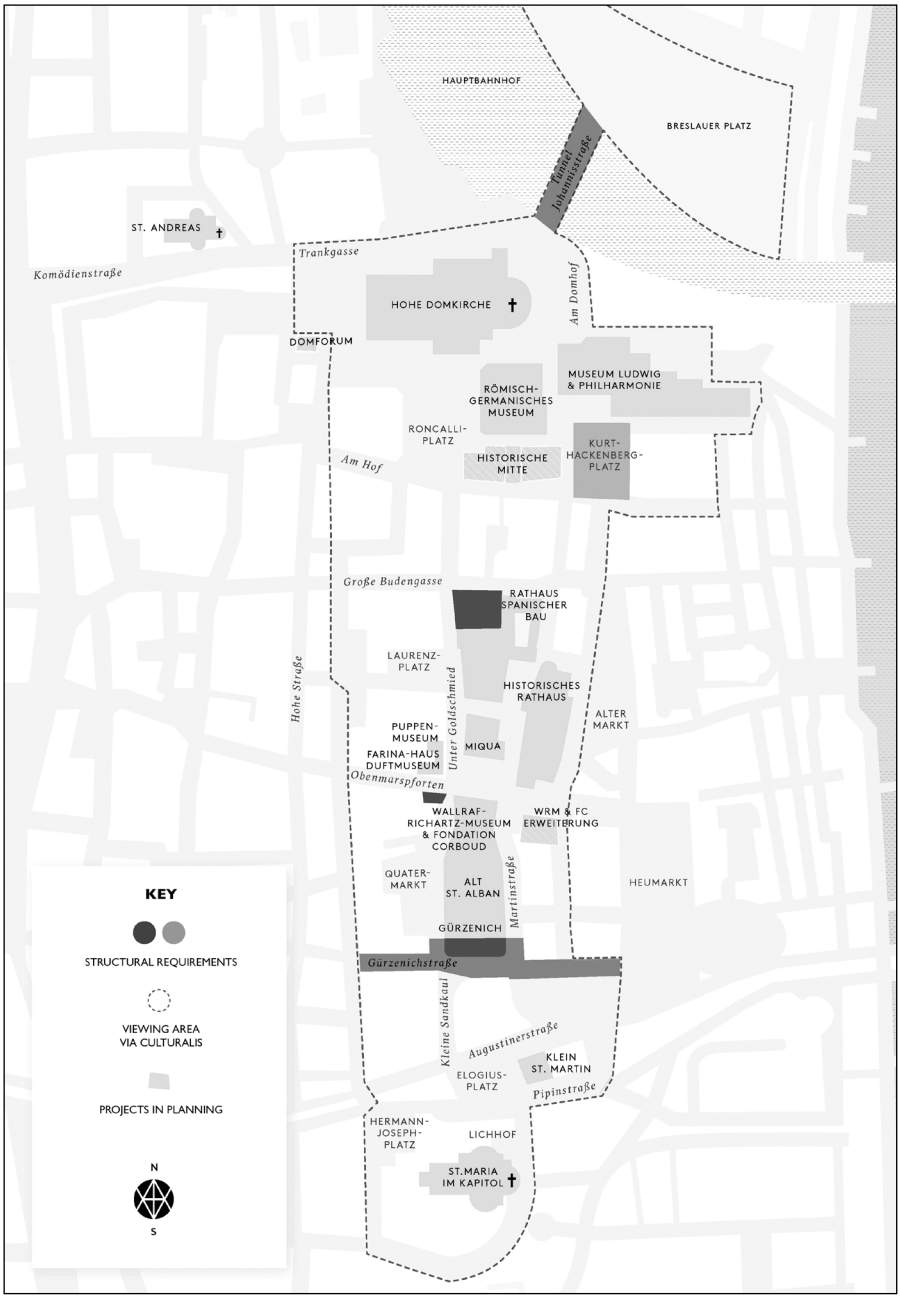

Figure 8.1. Map of the Via Culturalis in Cologne.
Courtesy of MiQua: LVR-Jüdisches Museum.

with the urban development of their respective periods, they also stand for important institutions, such as the town hall, which was built in the middle of the Jewish quarter from the twelfth century onwards. The town hall consequently continues the tradition of the administrative seat on the site of the former palace of the Roman governor in the Middle Ages.

In the modern cityscape, these institutions blend into the immediate and wider neighbourhood and embody the modern idea of the Via Culturalis.[3] (See Fig. 8.1.) This refers to a cultural axis that runs north–south through the centre of Cologne. It begins in the north with the cathedral with its treasury and building lodge, the historic squares surrounding the cathedral, the Ludwig Museum, and the Roman-Germanic Museum, as well as the Philharmonic Hall. In this area on the southern Roncalliplatz, the idea of the Historic Centre will later find its place, with the extension of the Roman-Germanic Museum and the Archbishopric. To the south, the residential quarters of the historic old town and the flanking Alter Markt are joined by the town hall with the Spanish Building, the historic town hall with the tower and Renaissance dormer, as well as the Wallraf Richartz Museum & Fondation Corboud, MiQua, the Doll Museum, and the Farina House with the Fragrance Museum located on Rathausplatz. The next building complex, to the south, includes the church ruins of Alt St. Alban with the Gürzenich. The Via Culturalis finally ends south of Augustinerstraße with the church tower of Klein St. Martin and St. Maria im Kapitol. In conjunction with the underground development of the important archaeological structure of the Ubier Monument, it thus also precisely marks the perimeter of the Roman city, following the underground preserved course of the eastern Roman city fortifications and their southeast corner.

The museum project of MiQua. LVR-Jüdisches Museum in the Archaeological Quarter of Cologne, the centrepiece of the Via Culturalis, so to speak, has been in planning since the early 2000s.[4] The full museum name already reveals that a museum is being created

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römischer Zeit, Geschichte der Stadt Köln 1 (Cologne: Greven, 2004); Werner Eck, *Spurensuche: Juden im römischen Köln*, Beiträge zur rheinisch-jüdischen Geschichte 1 (Cologne: Gesellschaft zur Förderung eines Hauses und Museums der jüdischen Kultur, 2011); Felix F. Schäfer, *Praetoria: Paläste zum Wohnen und Verwalten in Köln und anderen römischen Provinzhauptstädten* (Mainz: Nünnerich-Asmus, 2014); Matthias Schmandt, *Judei, cives et incole: Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte Kölns im Mittelalter* (Hannover: Hahn, 2002); Zvi Asaria, ed., *Die Juden in Köln von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* (Cologne: Bachern, 1959); on the history of excavations and the results of modern excavations: Katja Ullmann, "Südöstlicher Praetoriumsbezirk und jüdisches Gemeindezentrum in Köln: Römische, mittelalterliche und neuzeitliche Baubefunde," *Kölner Jahrbuch* 36 (2003): 309–406; Sven Schütte and Marianne Gechter, *Von der Ausgrabung zum Museum-Kölner Archäologie zwischen Rathaus und Praetorium: Ergebnisse und Materialien 2006–2012* (Cologne: Stadt Köln, 2012).

3 The Via Culturalis is a phrase first coined by Oswald Mathias Ungers to describe an urban space that aims to make the layers and levels of time from two millennia of urban and cultural history visible and tangible in public space: *Via Culturalis Cologne: Stadt, Kultur, Geschichte. Ein Handbuch für den öffentlichen Raum* (Cologne: Stadt Köln, Die Oberbürgermeisterin, 2019).

4 Thomas Otten and Christiane Twiehaus, *An Encounter with Two Millenia: The Updated Concept for MiQua. LVR-Jewish Museum in the Archaeological Quarter Cologne*, Beiträge zur rheinisch-jüdischen Geschichte 6 (Cologne: MiQua-Freunde, 2018).

here whose clear classification defies the usual norms. In addition, the site selected for the museum, the Rathausplatz in Cologne, was ordained by the location of the monuments described earlier in the urban space—monuments whose existence remained fixed in the city's memory for centuries, and this, initially, independent of the archaeological uncovering of their fragments.

Cologne's Archaeological Heritage

Given that the urban space as an overall organism is also defined to a large extent by the staging of the monuments, a multi-layered preservation of this urban archaeological ensemble is of the utmost importance. The question of how to deal with these monuments arose immediately during the first large-scale excavations by Otto Doppelfeld in the 1950s.[5] The governor's palace of the Lower Germanic province, one of the most important public buildings of the ancient city, is located in this area along with the multi-phase remains of the Praetorium (see Fig. 8.2). The findings related to the last, Late Antique building phase were remarkably coherent and the extent of the surviving foundations significant, leading to an initial decision by the City of Cologne towards the end of the 1950s to make the archaeological monument permanently accessible. From then on, a new cultural institution of Cologne was permanently anchored with the Praetorium under the Spanish Building of the City Hall, accessible from a small side entrance in the Budengasse.[6]

While the Roman heritage of the city was and is always present in the broad consciousness of Cologne's population, the extent to which monuments of the medieval Jewish quarter and the Christian goldsmiths' quarter of the Middle Ages were intact was a surprise when they were uncovered by Otto Doppelfeld. On the other hand, they have always had a formative influence on the cityscape, because the structure of the quarter can still be seen in today's cityscape as well as in the names of the surrounding streets: Judengasse, Obenmarspforten and Unter Goldschmied.

The Praetorium under the Spanish Building of the City Hall served for over sixty years as a test case, so to speak, for the modern concept of MiQua: a museum space that, with the help of archaeological artefacts, allows broad public access to the past and brings it to the attention of civil society and visitors to the city. The Praetorium was given an almost iconic role through its presentation and staging, bolstered by the impressive architecture of the Spanish Building erected as a protective building. A filigree, double-arched stretched ceiling, which rests on a few mighty pillars, grants the viewer extensive perspectives and insights.[7] Presented with minimal teaching aids,

5 Otto Doppelfeld, "Die Ausgrabungen im Kölner Judenviertel," in *Die Juden in Köln von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Zvi Asaria (Cologne: Bachern,1959), 71–145.

6 The excavations were the occasion for one of the most successful popular books on archaeology in Germany: Rudolf Pörtner, *Mit dem Fahrstuhl in die Römerzeit: Städte und Stätten deutscher Frühgeschichte* (Berlin: Deutsche Buch-Gemeinschaft, 1961).

7 During the years 1954 to 1956, head architect (the so-called "Oberbaurat") Theodor Teichen and director of city building, Franz Löwenstein built the Spanish Building. See Peter Fuchs, *Das Rathaus*

Figure 8.2. The archaeological remains of the Roman Praetorium in Cologne. Courtesy of MiQua. LVR-Jüdisches Museum.

almost no textual description nor interpretation, the monument's impact can effectively assert itself in this ambience.

Only the mighty foundations of the final, Late Antique construction phase of the governor's palace have been preserved. To deduce the original architecture from these foundations requires a considerable three-dimensional imagination on the part of the viewer. Pictures and models can to a certain extent support this mental leap. The fragmentation of the monuments thus equally challenges the viewers as well as those constructing the narrative, the cultural creators, to an enormous degree, for a use of history by cultural tourists that works with different perspectives of the past.[8] From an epistemological point of view, this construction of the narrative is the rediscovery of a culture, through which we become aware that the narrative is based on what more or less accidentally went into the ground and got preserved there. In this respect, this also only reflects a section and a selection of the original "living culture."[9]

zu Köln. Geschichte, Gebäude, Gestalten (Cologne: Greven, 1994), 151.

8 Valentin Groebner, "Touristischer Geschichtsgebrauch: Über einige Merkmale neuer Vergangenheiten im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 296, no. 2 (2013): 408–28.

9 Hans Jürgen Eggers, *Einführung in die Vorgeschichte* (Munich: Piper, 1959), 255–70.

The Urban Context

In 2010, the City of Cologne decided to expand this ensemble of monuments and combine it with the monuments underneath the Rathausplatz to create a museum complex. This included the construction of a new museum building on the Rathausplatz. The framework for this was provided by the Regionale 2010, a structural funding program of the government that also enabled large-scale urban development projects in the field of cultural heritage.[10] The modern excavations of the early 2000s in preparation for the museum building, mainly from 2007 onwards, raised awareness of the quality of the medieval and modern findings even more. Complex urban archaeological findings reveal the entire two-thousand-year history of the city in microcosm, including the astonishing, equally long-lasting continuity of the city's administrative centre.

The decision to build the museum was essentially motivated by two aspirations: one, the desire for a complete valorization of the monuments, and two, the idea of an urban reorganization of this central location. The reasons for the first motive have already been outlined with the presentation of the Via Culturalis. The archaeological objects and monuments also have an impact in their fragmented state, but they need a suitable framework in order to be understood in their interplay with the more recent surrounding buildings and urban institutions: not only as museum exhibits, but also as part of a historically developed urban organism.

Without such a framework and appropriate mediation, the monuments would only be accessible to the initiated, they would barely be decipherable beyond their aesthetic and haptic appearance. The presentation of fragmented archaeological monuments in an urban context and public space is not always a success—neither in Cologne than elsewhere—as many examples show. If the necessary framework is missing, they remain foreign bodies and are hardly noticed any more.[11] In the worst cases, they are exposed to neglect, which ultimately robs them of their aesthetic impact. The social reception of monuments left uncontextualized in this way—their historical classification, their function in the cityscape—remains random and subjective.[12] The situation in

10 Jens Grisar, ed, *Dokumentation der Regionale 2010 in der Region Köln–Bonn* (Cologne: Regionale 2010 Agentur, 2012).

11 Martin Müller, Thomas Otten, Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt, eds., *Schutzbauten und Rekonstruktionen in der Archäologie: Von der Ausgrabung zur Präsentation*, Xantener Berichte 19 (Mainz: Von Zabern, 2011) with numerous examples of a national and international perspective.

12 In the years between 2014 and 2018, a series of public colloquia was dedicated to this topic organized by the Working Group on Archaeological Monuments in the Rhineland: Archaeological Memory of the Cities, with the support of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation in Cologne. The colloquia essentially followed two lines, current topics dedicated to the practical preservation of monuments and the discussion of systematically oriented questions: Henner von Hesberg, Juergen Kunow, Thomas Otten, eds., *Die Konstruktion von Gedächtnis: Zu einer Standortbestimmung von Archäologie in der Stadt,* Schriftenreihe des Arbeitskreises Bodendenkmäler der Fritz Thyssen Stiftung 1 (Worms, 2016); *Denkmal—Erinnerung—Wertstiftung: Aspekte der Validierung im europäischen Vergleich*, Schriftenreihe des Arbeitskreises Bodendenkmäler der Fritz Thyssen Stiftung 2 (Worms, 2017); *Mit der U-Bahn in die Vergangenheit: Erinnerungsorte im Massenverkehr*, Schriftenreihe des Arbeitskreises Bodendenkmäler der Fritz Thyssen Stiftung 3 (Worms 2019); *Bildmacht des*

Cologne shows a wide range of treatments (or the lack thereof), representing a special dialectic of the interaction of the city with its monuments: a mixture of well-thought-out modern concepts (an example of whiich would be the incorporation of the church ground plan of St. Kolumba into the modern museum architecture of the Kolumba Art Museum),[13] outdated concepts, and obvious neglect. The latter is evident, for example, by the fragments of Cologne's Roman city wall, which can be seen above ground at various points in the city in varying degrees of preservation and in various states of conservation.[14] In the case of the MiQua, the city decided to go down the path of an overarching museum concept and, as a guideline for the architecture of the museum building, to foreground its functions of protection and preservation, presentation and mediation of the monuments.

The newly emerging MiQua museum architecture naturally also impinges on aspects of urban planning, especially in an area that is predominantly characterized by public buildings, museums, sacred buildings, and other institutions with a long tradition. In this respect, there were and are different expectations of this space. There have also been communal sensitivities (triggered, for example, by ongoing difficulties with other large-scale building projects), which in part led to discussions about the project being controversial and gave voice to differing positions on how to deal with the urban space.[15] The idea that the already existing framework of cultural institutions could have effectively conditioned expectations proved to be too positivistic. It was the urban planning concept of the Via Culturalis which developed simultaneously with the museum project that inspired a particular approach to urban design and the integration of the museum.

The museum fits into this framework with its independent architectural language and appropriately sized dimensions. With the neighbouring buildings, the Spanish Building of the City Hall in the north, the Historical City Hall in the east, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in the south, and the private building block of Farina in the west, MiQua develops the public space of the Rathausplatz into a well-scaled array of cultural institutions. The street, Unter Goldschmied, will remain a traffic axis in the future; the museum's western façade toward the street continues the building line of the pre-existing historical structure and buildings. The area in the south on Obenmarspforten Street

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Denkmals: Ikonisierung und Erleben archäologischer Denkmäler im Stadtbild, Schriftenreihe des Arbeitskreises Bodendenkmäler der Fritz Thyssen Stiftung 5 (Regensburg, 2021).

13 Marc Steinmann, "Die Ausgrabung in Kolumba," in *Schutzbauten und Rekonstruktionen in der Archäologie: Von der Ausgrabung zur Präsentation*, Xantener Berichte 19, ed. Martin Müller, Thomas Otten, Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt (Mainz: Von Zabern, 2011), 355–68.

14 In 2017, an association was founded to preserve, care, and advocate for the Roman city wall, along with its fragments below and above ground. See: http://roemermauer-koeln.de; Carl Dietmar and Marcus Trier, *Mit der U-Bahn in die Römerzeit* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer, 2005), 34–38; Thomas Fischer and Marcus Trier, *Das römische Köln* (Cologne: Bachem, 2013), 121–47.

15 Various initiatives against the museum project that arose in the course of the architectural competition and in the period thereafter also put forward urban planning arguments, such as the loss of one of Cologne's few squares, a cubature of the museum building that was perceived as too large, the shading of the town hall arbour and the associated limited usability of the forecourt for weddings, and much more.

will be closed for traffic in the future, to provide a generous space and meeting area between MiQua and Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud through the recessed museum façade. A heavily used pedestrian route flows in this area between the site of the old town towards the Rhine and the busy shopping streets of Hohe Straße and Schildergasse. The renaissance dormer of the town hall is given a further square-like framing, the special feature being that the museum building here takes up the historical building lines of the medieval to early modern quarter. This can be seen as a restoration of the disturbed city layout caused by war damage and subsequent demolition of the building fabric.[16] With regard to the function of the town hall square, it can be said that the museum building gives it the qualities it previously lacked: an address, appropriate scale, and prominence. The impact of the archaeological monuments through the museum presentation is evident here in the quality of the urban space and its use and design. The vitality of the surrounding urban organism, a lively urban life, and the ensuing economic opportunities are therefore fundamental conditions for the feasibility of this museum project.

Two further features of the architectural design ensure both the communication of the new building with its surroundings and its functionality. On the one hand, there is the museum's skin: open-pored natural stone and spolia veneers that visually quote the stone monuments of the past, which also link to the façades of neighbouring buildings, while at the same time allowing targeted views of the archaeological monuments from the outside. On the other hand, the hall-like museum building—by dispensing with a ground floor area—provides opportunities for a variety of visual cross-references between the archaeological level in the basement and the exhibition areas on the upper floor.

With the ongoing and long-term urban planning perspective of the Via Culturalis and as citizens can witness the building of the MiQua progress, an increasingly positive attitude has emerged towards the establishment of this new museum facility in Cologne.

Staging the Museum

Due to the *in situ* preservation of the monuments, the conception of the interpretive framework of the permanent exhibition was already predetermined.[17] The tour opens up the entire subterranean area and is guided via visitor walkways that were fitted into the archaeological findings in a long work process. During the tour, visitors are oriented

16 The decision not to rebuild the building structure in front of the town hall, which had been heavily destroyed during the war, but to demolish it and design it as an open square was a conscious urban planning decision in the 1950s: one could also say a conscious decision against repairing the architecture of the Prussian period in the Rhineland.

17 Otten and Twiehaus, *Encounter*, 6–18.

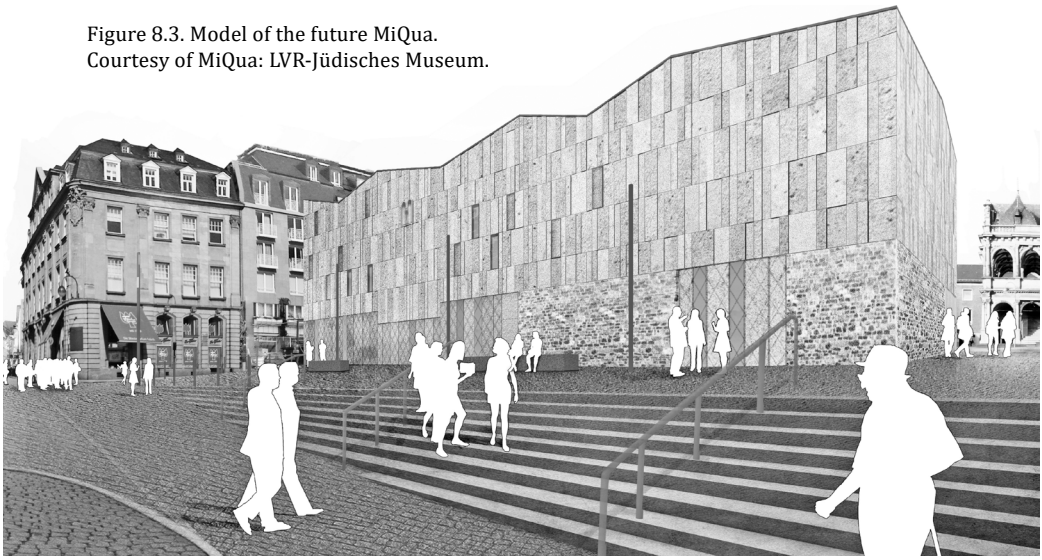

Figure 8.3. Model of the future MiQua.
Courtesy of MiQua: LVR-Jüdisches Museum.

in the archaeological level and in relation to the ground plan of the city via models and plans. Finally, the highest priority of the museum as it has been conceived is to preserve the archaeological monuments as comprehensively as possible. All explanations, didactic contents and media are tailored to this purpose. This also applies to the presentation of the objects—the excavation finds—that can be shown without exception at their immediate sites of discovery and thus contextualized. The authenticity of the site and the perception of the monuments are thus always preserved, their impacts undiminished. Significant for the presentation of the original archaeological building structures and their experience by the visitors is the minimization of modern museum architecture. This is understood as a fitting framework for the archaeology, not as a competing, technical or artificial environment. (See Fig. 8.3.)

With this project, the archaeological work already in Cologne—the excavation of the cathedral, the exposed church foundations at Kolumba, the Ubier Monument and the Roman burial chamber in Weiden, to the west of Cologne—will enjoy a significant boost to their mission of protecting, preserving, and presenting the city's archaeological heritage effectively and in an appropriate context.

The Site of Memory

Viewers' understanding of the museum with its monuments as a *lieu de mémoire*, as an authentic locus for the history of the city, requires the support of a narrative that visually presents people and their story through images, symbols, and objects. This narrative contributes to the iconization of the MiQua, to its function as a place of imagination. This means a whole new approach to the interpretation and presentation of the ensemble of monuments.

Three examples from how the future MiQua has been conceived will illustrate this. The monument of the Late Antique palace affects viewers through the massive physical bulk of its foundations and the rooms that are created in the underground part of the museum. In combination with three-dimensional analogue and digital models and reconstructions, onlookers will get an impression of the magnificence and impact of the ancient architecture, the built expression of Rome's political power on the Rhine. For this palace was the seat of Rome's governor in the Lower Germanic province.

Information on the construction history and furnishings of the palace, and on the typology and function of the Praetorium is provided in an accompanying exhibition. The real storytelling, however, consists of the stories of the governors and their officials who had a political impact over the four centuries of Roman presence on the Rhine.[18] A selection of them will be presented in a gallery of governors with their respective life stories and career stages before and after their time in Cologne, because then as now it was the people who shaped history. The intention is to contribute in this way to a better understanding of the history of the city of Cologne.

The medieval period will also be brought to life through a gallery of archbishops and mayors in their roles as rulers of the city. Selected examples of biographies of these personalities who were crucial in the history of the city show the balance of power in central to late medieval Cologne. In the early and central Middle Ages, the archbishop was initially the city ruler, while increasingly patrician and bourgeois powers later gained in importance. After the Battle of Worringen (1288), the archbishop played only a subordinate role in the city. His secular power was limited to individual privileges, such as "the Jewish regal"—an intertwining of the church and the Jewish community—which will be an important component of the exhibition around the medieval Jewish quarter. Among the citizens of Cologne, the established patrician families initially had power and influence. In the late Middle Ages, however, merchants and craftsmen with their civic associations, the so-called "Gaffeln" that emerged from the guilds, asserted themselves. The special effects of this part of the exhibition will be the visualization of the life stories of some of the political and social actors of this time—at the original site of their activities—thus history becomes directly tangible and comprehensible for the visitors. Because these individuals will be familiar to locals and visitors elsewhere in the city, in places, in names, in monuments, and in company and family histories—they will bring the past to life today.

Finally, another powerful part of the narrative revolves around those symbols and objects that have been lost to history. The autobiography of Luise Straus-Ernst exemplifies the impact of the loss of such symbolically charged objects. Straus-Ernst's biography is representative of the fates of many other Cologne Jews; she emigrated to France, was deported to Auschwitz in the last months of the war, and killed there. The first wife of the painter Max Ernst and an art historian, artist, journalist, and author, Straus-Ernst wrote her autobiography *Nomadengut* while in exile in France. In it, she describes four

18 Schäfer, *Praetoria: Paläste zum Wohnen und Verwalten*; Eck, *Köln in römischer Zeit*; Rudolf Haensch, *Capita provinciarum:Statthaltersitze und Provinzialverwaltung in der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Kölner Forschungen 3 (Mainz: Von Zabern, 1997), especially 705–60.

objects "that accompany me everywhere, that are symbols of a past that has remained alive and that create my own atmosphere in the places where I stay for a little while. I want to tell about these things." Within the exhibition, these four lost objects are represented through her words in an empty space. The loss of the objects and their significance for Straus-Ernst at the time become associatively tangible for today's museum visitors through her precise descriptions of them.

This chapter has highlighted the iconization of a monument charged with significance through its existence within the imaginative space between that which is concretely graspable and explicable, and what is lost or eludes concrete description. For the particular type of museum represented by MiQua, the associative component described last—the life of Luise Straus-Ernst—is perhaps the most resonant of the specific character of the museum and a new kind of museum experience: still a place of learning, but above all a place of memory and remembrance.

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Chapter Nine

A LABOUR OF LOVE: (RE)BIRTHING THE BABIES OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S DESTITUTE ASYLUM

CORINNE BALL and NIKKI SULLIVAN

THEATRE AND DRAMA scholars Mark Fleishman and Nadia Davids argue that performance is integral to the work of the museum, and to the politics of meaning-making as a community concern.[1] With this in mind, this chapter frames two memorial recitations at the Migration Museum, South Australia as performance, and as performative. We examine how our desire to recognize, remember, and memorialize stories from South Australia's past grew from our creative museum practice (as well as our identities as mothers) into an emotional, embodied experience for staff and visitors that mirrored the processes and relationships of childbirth: our memorial performance became a shared "labour."

We examine this shared labour by drawing on Jerome De Groot's work on performance, empathy, and how historical engagement affects the public's consumption and understanding of the past.[2] We reflect on meaning-making in the memorial recitations as a collaborative process that forged emotional and generational ties and connected history to the present. We seek to answer Fleishman and Davids's question: "what does theatre bring to the process of memorialization that the museum doesn't already

1 Mark Fleishman and Nadia Davids, "Moving Theatre: An Exploration of the Place of Theatre in the Process of Memorialising District Six Through an Examination of Magnet Theatre's Production Onnest'bo," *South African Theatre Journal* 21, no. 1 (2007): 149–65.

2 Jerome De Groot "Empathy and Enfranchisement," *Rethinking History* 10, no. 3 (September 2006): 393.

Corinne Ball has been a curator at the History Trust of South Australia's Migration Museum since 2013. She has curated over a dozen museum exhibitions as lead-curator and co-curator, written numerous short articles and blogs about South Australian history on various platforms, and has presented at state, national, and international conferences about South Australian history, migration, the Destitute Asylum, and disability history. A migrant to Australia from the UK, Corinne lives and works on unceded Kaurna land.

Nikki Sullivan is an independent curator who currently works in LGBTIQ+ community health. Until recently she held positions at the History Trust of South Australia as Manager of the Centre of Democracy, and Curator at the Migration Museum. In addition to co-authoring this essay, she has contributed a single-author essay to this volume, "Crafting Community, Connection, Compassion in a Pandemic."

achieve through other means?"[3] Recalling their further assertion that memorials dealing with living memory must be more than exhibitions and photographs, we theorize our performances both at, and as, an intersection of embodiment, memorializing, and affect. We propose that our work adds important layers to existing interpretations of the history of the Destitute Asylum, and contributes to what Vanessa Agnew, cited by Jerome De Groot, calls "the democratization of historical knowledge."[4] Finally, we briefly draw on the work of Russian philosopher and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin and the founder of postcolonial studies, Edward Said, to show how time and space became further linked in our performances: layered with connectivity, interwoven with intersubjectivity, and tangled with ancestors and descendants, pasts, presents, and futures.

The Social Experiment of South Australia

The British colony of South Australia was proclaimed in 1836 and introduced a radical new form of colonization where land was to be sold rather than granted, enabling the free passage of labourers who could then bring the uncultivated land into production. The new colony was thus removed from the scourge of the convict system, being instead envisaged as a balance between owners of capital and owners of labour. The migration of a desirable class of colonists was encouraged: the *Adelaide Observer* opined in 1844 that in South Australia "every man will find his fitting place and vocation; and the business of life, its joys and sorrows, will be borne and encountered with becoming cheerfulness and manly fortitude."[5] Basic poor relief in return for labour on government works was promised as part of the social contract of assisted passage, although the authorities were mindful that only "fit objects of public charity" were to be given relief. This relief was "not intended to render the condition of those receiving it one of ease or enjoyment, but is limited to an extent merely compatible with their actual support."[6]

The peaks and troughs of labour demand, the time-lag in communications with Britain, intra- and intercolonial issues of exploration, settlement and supply, the mid-century gold rushes, and the sheer messiness of life meant that the colonial authorities were soon dealing with an increasing problem of destitution that stubbornly refused to go away.[7] While cases initially numbered only in the dozens, then low hundreds, within

3 Fleishman and Davids, "Moving Theatre," 159.

4 Jerome De Groot "Affect and Empathy: Re-enactment and Performance As/In History," *Rethinking History* 15, no. 4 (November 2011): 589.

5 "The Labour Market," *Adelaide Observer*, June 15, 1844, 4.

6 Colonial Secretary A. M. Mundy, "Instructions to the Emigration Agent," *South Australian Register*, September 9, 1848, 3.

7 Many scholars have written, and continue to write, about the appalling cost of European invasion to the Indigenous peoples of what became known as South Australia. By the 1880s, the beginning of our period of focus in this paper, there were separate missions established outside of the metropolis for the "care" of Aboriginal people—the population of the Destitute Asylum was always predominantly white European. Very occasionally a "Lascar" or "Mohammedan" will be seen recorded in the registers, but very rarely indeed.

fifteen years, when the European population had surged to 60,000, further measures had to be taken. In the early 1850s a government-funded Destitute Asylum was established to house poverty-stricken, destitute, and infirm citizens. It also provided "lying-in" accommodation (birthing and postpartum maternity care) for unmarried, widowed, or deserted pregnant women. In 1878 a purpose-built Lying-in Home was opened and between 1880 and 1909, 1678 babies were born there. Over a hundred of these babies were stillborn.

The Migration Museum opened in 1986 and occupies the last remaining buildings of the Destitute Asylum, including the former Lying-in Home. The Home houses a permanent exhibition that tells the story of the site called *In This Place*.

Abjected and Rejected

As hinted above, from the outset there was concern that only "fit objects" received public charity, and as numbers grew it becomes clear that those in the "labouring classes" who were unable to find their "fitting place and vocation" in the colony or meet life's sorrows with the necessary "cheerfulness and manly fortitude" were less than desirable citizens. Inhabitants of the Destitute Asylum ("inmates" in the parlance of the day) were constructed as abject "others" to be disavowed, contained, constrained, and kept out of sight. Older men were emasculated by their inability to work and contribute, and women and children abandoned by their husbands and fathers were left exposed by the absence of their menfolk.

At the very bottom of this social hierarchy of misery came the "fallen women," unmarried, working-class mothers who did not, could not, or would not, meet prevailing christian notions of modesty and moral hygiene. Regardless of the fact that many were young people we would now consider to still be children, preyed upon or neglected while under the care of the State Children's Council, these young women were cast out of their families and communities where they would usually have expected to give birth.

Yet these abjected others were integral to the colonial project, and the British nation state that both formed and framed it. Anne Curthoys, Marilyn Lake and many other feminist historians have explored the intersections between women and nation building, and challenged the masculine mythologizing so prevalent in Australian identity and history.[8] Women's work, both in the domestic sphere of house and home and through their literal labours in producing new generations of labouring stock were, from the outset, an unacknowledged but vital part of the continued (and desired) progress of (re)production in South Australia. The unruly and problematic bodies of the fertile destitute haunted the colonial project, an effect emphasized by the Asylum's placement literally a stone's throw from the main locus of colonial power, Government House and the Parliament.

It has long been acknowledged that colonial history is sanitized. This happens in museums, as museum studies academic Viv Golding argues, through the erasure and/

8 Marilyn Lake, "Nationalist Historiography, Feminist Scholarship, and the Promise and Problems of New Transnational Histories: The Australian Case," *Journal of Women's History* 19, no. 1 (2007): 180–86.

1880 REGISTER OF INFANTS BORN

No.	Name of Infant.	Date of Birth.	Mother's Name, &c.
1	Purchase Robert	January 1st	Mary Ann Purchase see No 438/79
2	Clarke Charlotte	January 5th	Bridget Clarke see No 409/79
3	Rhue John	January 7th	Louisa Rhue see No 447/79
4	Roberts William	January 8th	Margaret J Roberts No 466/79
5	Leonard Ann	January 9th	Mary Leonard No 440/79
6	Cusack William	January 27th	Mary Cusack No 8/80
7	Manner Alfred Alex[r]	February 11th	Pauline Manner No 463/79
8	Souter Wm Marshall	February 14th	Annie Souter No 444/79
9	Gray Elizabeth	February 21st	Margaret Gray No 47/80
10	Richardson (Stillborn)	February 29th	Elizabeth Richardson No 66/80
11	Thomas Fred[k] Geo	February 29th	Elizabeth Thomas No 85/80
12	Braslin Ann Maud	March 4th	Sarah Braslin No 5/80

IN THE DESTITUTE ASYLUM.

Putative Father.	Nationality.	Religion.	Date of Leaving.	Where gone to. 1b1561—22/3/80
Robert Nutchins Butcher, Mt Gambier.	E	R.C.	Feb 4th 1880	Taken by Mother
Henry McCraig Horse Clipper	I	R.C	Jan 31st 1880	Taken by Mother
John Hood, Groom	E	Ch of Eng	March 11th 1880	Taken by Mother
James McCardle Laborer	E	Baptist	Jan 28th 1880	Taken by Mother
Thomas Crocker Bellows Maker, Wright St	I	R.C.	Jan 28th 1880	Taken by Mother
John McDermott Hawker	I	R.C.	Mar 3rd 1880	Taken by Mother
Alexander Vogler Laborer, Edelberg	Ger	Luth	Mar 8th 1880	Taken by Mother
William Redman Baker, Adelaide	E	Ch of Eng	Mar 22nd 1880	Taken by Mother
Keith McCray, Seaman, Glasgow	S	Presbyn	April 15th 1880	Taken by Mother
Henry Rowe				
George Johns	E	Bapt	May 13th 1880	Taken by Mother
George Higgins Clare	I	R.C.	April 2nd 1880	Taken by Mother

Figure 9.1. Page from *Register of Infants Born in the Destitute Asylum Lying-in Home* (GRG29/15, Unit 1). Courtesy of State Records of South Australia.

or containment of voices, experiences, bodies, and emotions that threaten its authority. But, as she writes, in the affective museum "things and people … might be brought closer to our 'skins'," an approach that embraces poetics and brings back what has been excluded, repressed, disavowed, and constrained. Golding continues, "the … poet's voice [can] break historical silences and open up possibilities for museums to have an impact on future lives, notably by pointing to embodied knowledge(s) and multisensory experiences."[9] We will now describe our museum's role in bringing close the disavowed women and babies of the Destitute Asylum's Lying-in Home.

Bringing the Past to Life?

Since opening in 1986, the Migration Museum has always had a gallery that tells the story of the Destitute Asylum site and buildings. The most recent iteration, *In This Place*, was developed from 2015 to 2016 by curator Corinne Ball, Migration Museum Director Mandy Paul, and curator Dr Nikki Sullivan. As with previous versions, the team consciously sought to emulate the work of feminist historians such as Miriam Dixson and Patricia Grimshaw in telling the stories of those who have been excluded from previous heroic and colonizing narratives.

As part of the archival research for *In This Place*, Corinne and Nikki transcribed the names from the Asylum's *Register of Infants Born at the Lying-In Home* (see Fig. 9.1).[10] After compiling this list, we reflected that the final total of 1,678 children seemed like a much larger number than we had expected, so the team workshopped ways to visually represent this mass of bodies in the exhibition. After spending so much time doing research for *In This Place*, we found it had become important to us as women, historians, and mothers to acknowledge the physical and emotional labour of the birthing women who had occupied the building we worked in every day. For us this commitment recalls sociologist Gaynor Bagnalls's assertion that the relationship between people and heritage sites is based as much on emotion and imagination as it is on cognition.[11]

We worked with our exhibition architect, Mulloway, to design a simple installation that could function as both a space/place of reflection and a visual way of representing the number of children born. When designing the memorial, we knew we wanted the babies' names to be "unbound" from the register, we wanted to disrupt the uniformity, stasis, and regulation of their recording by the institution. Each name and birthdate were written on a separate card that was attached by cord to a wire frame on the ceiling, and thus each card could move independently as air circulates in the gallery.[12] It was important that the names weren't all in one block and thus homogenized: by giving

9 Viv Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," *Feminist Review* 104 (2013): 80–99.

10 *Register of Infants Born in the Destitute Asylum Lying-In Home,* GRG29/15, Unit 1, Destitute Asylum Board, State Records of South Australia.

11 Gaynor Bagnall, "Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites," *Museum and Society* 1, no. 2 (2003): 96.

12 An unanticipated but delightful aspect of this design is being able to interact with the babies by blowing gently upwards and making the cards move in response.

Figure 9.2. *The Babies Memorial* installation at the Migration Museum, designed by Mulloway Studio. Photograph by Andre Castellucci. Courtesy of the History Trust of South Australia.

them each a card we attempted to give them each an individual identity. We chose a cursive font that mimicked handwriting, and this gave the names a flow rather than a cognitive readability. This was to contrast with the fixedness of the register pages and also of more formal memorials with their carved, regulated letters in straight lines. The babies who were stillborn were given a black edge to the bottom of their card, akin to a mourning notice from the period (Fig. 9.2).

Mandy reflected on the impact of this installation in a 2016 interview about the exhibition, explaining that while "the memorial is clearly not about fact, you can look up and it gives you the volume, the numbers and you can see how many were stillborn because of the little black lines. And we know that it's actually a really emotional point for many people. And for those of us who have had babies, even being in a building that had that many babies born in those circumstances makes you feel a certain way."[13]

Primagravida—Our First Labour

The "unboundness," disruption, and flow we strived for in the memorial was echoed and literally given voice in two recitations of the memorial names. We became convinced that our exhibition and memorial had to have more than physical form. As Fleishman and Davids argue, performance is integral to the work of the museum, and to the politics of meaning-making as a community concern. They cite analytic philosopher Richard Rorty, who writes "human solidarity is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers, as 'one of us' rather than as 'them.'"[14] In other words, the kinds of affective connections engendered in and

13 Michelle Toft, *The Writings on the Wall: Communicating with Visitors in the Exhibition Space* (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 2016), 19.

14 Fleishman and Davids, "Moving Theatre," 153.

through performance and *poesis* can, as we will argue, undo the work of abjection in which the Destitute Asylum once played such an integral role.

The first recitation event ("Remembering the Babies") took place on Mother's Day, 2016, and saw the curatorial staff responsible for *In This Place* read out the names and birthdates of the 1,678 Lying-In Home babies, in what we described in our advertising copy as "an immersive performance art event." Little did we realize the effect this memorial performance would have on our audience or ourselves, as (and after) it unfolded.

One of our main aims was to create a deeper feeling around our memorial installation so that our visitors might be able to reflect further on the Home's babies and their mothers, and experience empathy for these long-abjected persons. We understood that performance could, in the words of De Groot, contribute to meaning by reinserting the body, making the empty landscape of the past live again.[15] Professor Laurajane Smith, who examines heritage as a cultural process of meaning and memory-making, writes that "it is this ability to feel, particularly when dealing with contentious or dissonant issues, that is often central to the development of critical and progressive insights into the past and its meanings for the present."[16] Consequently, we looked to performance to demonstrate what De Groot calls "the uncanny, peculiar, odd way in which we relate to the past," and also importantly, to disrupt "the controlling and disciplining claims of an all-encompassing, authoritative historical mainstream."[20]

The end result was an emotionally and physically grueling experience for both the presenters and the audience. Reading the 1,678 names took almost two hours, and in many ways reflected the physical processes of childbirth, with its ebb and flow, its insistent rhythm, and its emotional crescendo. The three presenters dressed in black, with rosemary sprig buttonholes, to relieve the starkness and to invoke "rosemary for remembrance." The reading took place in the *In This Place* gallery, with no formal stage, just three chairs in front of the heritage fireplace, and the audience facing us, with the babies' memorial directly above their heads. As we read, the room seemed very quiet, even though there were over fifty attendees.

The litany of names was cyclical, with Reader A (Mandy) declaiming five names and birthdates in calendar order, then Reader B (Corinne) reading the next five, then Reader C (Nikki) the next five, in a relentless chain. There were no pauses and no interjections, for the whole time, about one hundred minutes. This unbroken chain was not intentional; rather, the readers were immersed in the process and almost physically unable to stop.

Corinne reflected afterwards:

> I was intensely aware of my turn coming around very quickly—there was a mini-release and pause as soon as I handed over to Nikki, and then when she handed over to Mandy my tension and anticipation rose as I kept a strict eye on the list and listened for the exact moment to take the next turn, in time and on the beat. I was very aware of the numbers passing, noticing when we reached 500, and intending to say something to the crowd

15 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 587–99.

16 Laurajane Smith, "Visitor Emotion, Affect and Registers of Engagement at Museums and Heritage Sites," *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* 14, no 2 (December 2014): 125.

> when we reached halfway or 1,000, but the momentum of the list (like the momentum of the stages of labour) was too great to resist.

After the event, when we had sore muscles and dry throats from our recitations, we received feedback that told us our performance, the "re-enactment" of the Lying-In Home register, had been successful as what scholar (and fan) of historical re-enactment Vanessa Agnew calls "affective history."[17] She defines this as historical representation that both takes affect as its object, and attempts to elicit it. These types of historiographic performances are, says Agnew, less concerned with events, processes, or structures than with the individual's physical and psychological experience during the performance.

One attendee, Kate, recognized the physical labour we undertook, writing "congratulations to you on the performance yesterday. 'Remembering the Babies' was a great idea, beautifully and simply executed. You must all be exhausted today. I thought the event had a real solemnity to it … I loved sitting and listening to all those names and wondering about their destinies … You read my aunt's name beautifully."[18]

Our impact was also more than personal. De Groot argues that "[t]he embodiment of the past in the contemporary offers an empathic, emotional and … queer version of both then/now, leading to a possible reclamation and a revelation of the power structures that seek to discipline and fix identity." Re-enactment/performance can, he writes, "counter the monumental fictions of the State."[19] Our event attempted to disrupt the previous hegemonic power structures that have shaped both the lives and experiences of the women and babies of the Lying-In Home, and the colonial state from and for which they were abjected. It achieved this aim, we argue, through a performative re-inscription of the literal space of abjection/incarceration, and through its proximity to the more traditional, martial memorials directly outside the museum, at Government House. These remembrances of war are typical of what Fleishman and Davids refer to as "static remembrances" that contribute to the monumental fictions of the State.[20]

As feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed has argued, "[a]ctivities performed in certain spaces at certain times may 'reorientate' bodies in space and work to subvert taken-for-granted ideas about gender, race and class … [R]e-orientation forces movement, and … as one shifts position, that which lies behind—the background—comes to the fore. In this activity, categories we do not usually inhabit are recognised: this causes discomfort, but at the same time it opens up our world to new kinds of connections."[21]

One visitor explained how our event's "queering" (destabilizing, upsetting) of systems of power and privilege had a very real transformative effect on her family story, and on the emotional connections between those attending the event and their ances-

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17 Vanessa Agnew, "History's Affective Turn: Historical Re-Enactment and Its Work in the Present," *Rethinking History* 11, no. 3 (July 2007): 299–312.

18 KW, personal correspondence with authors, May 10, 2016.

19 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 593.

20 Fleishman and Davids, "Moving Theatre," 153.

21 Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006) in Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 94.

tors. Madelena attended with her teenaged daughter and elderly mother, whose own father was one of our Lying-In babies. She came to hear her grandfather's name, and "looked across at my seventy-nine-year-old mother when her dad's name was called. It was a very emotional moment, and for my daughter it was also touching: this was her great grandfather that she hadn't ever met but now she knew a bit about. It was a grounding moment for mum, myself, and my daughter. The curators used their voices beautifully and cleansed some of the tarnish of the past. It's lovely that my grandad now has a legitimate place in an illegitimate history."[22]

Even those who could not attend felt a connection to the event, demonstrating the power of live performance, even when it cannot be directly witnessed. Graeme emailed from New South Wales, asking "will you please confirm that my mother's and uncle's names were read out on Mother's Day? I wished I could have been there."[23]

We came to understand our first "performance" of the babies' names as a form of poetics, an attempt to inject a dynamic sense of shared humanity, life, and respect into our museum space, and to create something that supplemented and complemented our memorial installation. The endless litany of the baby names had an epic form, which, we hoped, further disrupted the established story of the Destitute Asylum. Citing Bachelard, Viv Golding describes the power of poetics, "an imaginative 'awakening' that the 'exuberance and depth of a poem' may bring about in audiences."[24] Imagination and poetics, she writes, "provide a 'tool to dissect' racism and sexism and give a language and voice that can undermine prejudice."

This important ethical work demands physical, emotional, and intellectual labour, from those designing and programming content, and from visitors, and this was certainly the case in both our performances, but particularly in the second, which we will discuss shortly. Poetics, Golding writes "moves us to reflect on the ethics of colonial encounters, the stories we tell about self and others, and to relate this to our lived experiences today and in the global future."[25] In connecting with the women who laboured and the babies who were born in the space in which the performances took place, the audience members—our birthing partners—were moved (not just cognitively, but also viscerally) by the ethical dilemmas that constituted colonial relations and that continue to resonate today.

Golding's further assertion that the value of poetics "lies in its potential to open disciplines and spaces up to voices that have been historically excluded" is also poignantly demonstrated in and through our event.[26] Poetics, as our performances showed, provide opportunities to challenge colonialist narratives, notions of nation, and so on. When deployed in such ways as our reading, poetics also challenges the dehumaniz-

22 Madelena B, personal correspondence with authors, February 23, 2017.

23 Graeme W, personal correspondence with authors, February 15, 2017.

24 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994) in Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 81.

25 Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 81.

26 Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 81.

ing construction of "others" in dominant narratives as lacking, or otherwise unfit, as an anonymous homogenized "class."

All three of the readers experienced an embodied affect during the recitation, and we knew that some of our audience had too. However, we were also aware that some visitors had, understandably, felt unable to "stay the course" of our birthing process, and those that stayed the whole time found it to be a feat of endurance. (Of course, this discomfort ironically reflects literal labour and delivery). One respondent identified for us what was lacking: "while the reading was a solemn occasion that sought to honour those babies and their mothers, it lost some opportunities to reflect on the possibility that each mother's experience was different, and that some occasions were happy, others exhausting, and some tragic."[27] After some months of reflection and reading, we realized we wanted to hold another event in which we used more actively engaging performance techniques. We wanted something "more."

Our Second Labour

In early 2018, we planned another reading of the babies' names, timed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the last birth in the Lying-In Home in June 1918. We were somewhat apprehensive about doing the lengthy performance again, knowing how taxing it was, and how it was a challenge for the audience to stay focused over such a lengthy period of contemplative time.[28] We began to think about ways to make the performance shorter, while still remembering the women and their babies, and how we might make it a more participatory experience for our audience.

At this point in our narrative, we would like to acknowledge the labour of Bec Pannell, who is part of our education team and a well-known South Australian theatre director. Bec was able to midwife us through the process of workshopping the recitation and develop a strong vision of an event that would involve the audience in more participatory elements, while still honouring the babies and celebrating the achievements of the labouring, destitute women.

Bec suggested that we take the chronological list of babies and break it up into discrete years, which would be read with varying style, pitch, rhythm, and emphasis. This time-play was a vital part of our second labour, recalling what De Groot highlights as "the unique but repetitive quality of performance, the ways in which the dramatic moment (or dramatized moment) interacts and intersects with time, linearity, temporality."[29] Some year blocks were read by just one person, some by two or three of the curatorial team. Voices got quieter or louder during the recitation of names, with some names to be read "with joy," while others with a sepulchral and sombre sadness. These "dramatized moments" layered on top of each other to form our poetic.

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27 RP, personal correspondence with authors, no date.

28 This once again recalls the literal experience of birthing, when one's first delivery is an unknown, but the second time around, one can at least recall to some extent the physical experience, and make perhaps different, or more informed, choices.

29 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 592.

These moments became performative as they snowballed together. Cultural theorist Moya Lloyd has traced the evolution of performativity from J. L. Austin's "words that do things" through to Judith Butler's assertion that to succeed, performatives must repeat or recite a "prior and authoritative set of practices." A successful performative speech is more than the sum of its parts: it "exceeds the instance of its utterance" and as Lloyd says, has a past, present, and future iterative context.[30] Our event was performative in its repetition, its call on drama, the way its moments, each baby's name, recalled our long human history, the brief span of a life, and the vast potentiality of each person.

We suggest that this time-play could be thought of in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, a concept he developed for literary theory that fuses space and time. As Bakhtin describes, in the chronotope, time becomes "thickened," artistically visible as a force and narrative structure in itself. Things don't just "happen," they unfold and refold along a timeline. Space in the chronotope becomes almost an actor itself, and is charged and responsive to movements of time, plot, and history.[31] The two combined in a museum, already a repository of history, have a narrative power and force beyond the ordinary.

Our recitations combined hundreds of individual strands of space/time, through the births represented in our recitations, our transcription of the *Register of Infants Born*, even the Lying-In Home building itself, which is tightly enmeshed in time as the marker of lifetimes and lifecycles *and* museologically as a historical object. The *Register*, our "source of truth," has further "thickness" because it was also the tool that was used to manage women's experiences of time at the Lying-In Home—mothers were legally mandated to remain at the home for a six-month period after they gave birth. Mimicking a more active labour, physical motion was deployed during this second performance to muddy space/time: small movements around the gallery space were choreographed to give the audience a shift of focus and a moment to take a group pause.

While scripted and rehearsed, there was a delight in the challenge of the second recitation, and it was a much less "in your head" experience, more collaborative within our group and with the audience. Interestingly, as Viv Golding points out, "one voice cannot speak for all subalterns" and this is relevant to our approach. We did not seek to tell "the historical truth" from a position of authority, but rather, to break open that logic through the use of multiple voices—polyphony—and the contrapuntal.[32]

We can also use Edward Said's notion of the contrapuntal to think about our performance. Originally a term from music, the contrapuntal ("counterpoint") in literature provides a duality of viewpoint, is syncopated, almost disruptive, and further adds

30 Judith Butler cited in Moya Lloyd "Performativity and Performance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, ed. Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 23.

31 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Towards a Historical Poetics," in *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*, ed. Brian Richardson, James Phalen, and Peter Rabinowitz (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002), 15. Fans of *Doctor Who* might think of this as the Time Vortex: in fact, the chronotope is the very definition of "wibbly wobbly, timey wimey" stuff!

32 Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 86.

depth.[33] Our recitation provided a counterpoint to the *Register of Infants Born* and used the contrapuntal as a methodology. We spoke quietly, then shouted names, we put questions in our voices, awe, laughter, spoke in monotone, and even sang a year block. Breath was actively employed by the readers as a tool to bring the audience into the mood. On occasion, the stillborn babies' names were whispered as another counterpoint, forming pauses. We waterfalled our voices, rapidly overlapping from name to name and shifting speaker with each name.

In short, we deployed changing rhythm, repetition, tonality, staccato, silences, dialogic exchange, stillness, and movement to "insert points of difference into established routes through what counts as knowledge in museums."[34] Our polyphony was further deepened by inviting the audience to add their voices in a collective chanting of year blocks facilitated by projection on the gallery screen, which was stage-managed by Bec.[35] As people joined in, they became visibly more engaged with the names, more animated, and also more focused. We laboured with them as our voices moved down the list: we rebirthed the women, the stories, the experiences together. The audience's labour was integral to our contrapuntal disruption of colonial narratives and the abjection of the other that such narratives at once engender and rely on. Together, the work we did produced uncanny effects as it brought to light the abjected persons that the colony disavowed yet could not exist without. The bodies of the Lying-In Home women and babies are forever tied to the regulatory norms of colonial South Australian society, and serve, as Butler notes, as the "constitutive outside of the domain of the subject" (the colonial state).[36]

The most powerful demonstration of empathy and affective response noticed during this second recitation was a visitor quietly making the sign of the cross and whispering (a prayer?) every time a stillborn baby's name was read out or chanted. Given that, in Catholic theology, unbaptized babies are in limbo, we theorized that this woman was interceding on their behalf—for her, in that moment, those little souls were utterly real and of desperate importance.

Conclusion

Jerome De Groot suggests that the broad appeal of performance can be helpful in democratizing historical knowledge. This is particularly relevant when considering the role of our audience in the production of meaning—the performances would not have been the same had there not been others present. To us, this claim of democratization is also relevant in another sense: in the fact that the performance shared histories of people who have largely been forgotten, some of whose existence may not have ever been known to

33 Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), 51.

34 Golding, "Museums, Poetics and Affect," 104.

35 It was clear the audience became more comfortable with it the second, third, and fourth times we did this. They had been warned before the performance, and of course had the option to not participate vocally.

36 Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 3.

more than a couple of people (the stillborn babies). De Groot asks how does/can performance, as a hybrid museum practice, "challenge, upset, undermine, unsettle and solidify conceptualizations of the past?"[37]

We answer by framing our recitation events, which challenged visitor (and staff) conceptualization of the Lying-In babies, as what Nikki Sullivan has elsewhere called "transmogrifying (un)becoming(s)."[38] Throughout our performances, visitors were asked to consider the babies *and* themselves, as if magically connected across space and time: this reforms one's concepts of self and other. In Bakhtinian terms, our recitations gathered "eventness," which Bakhtin describes as happening when an occurrence in the present moment becomes more than the automatic result of prior moments. Only a moment with "eventness" can have real weight, and this weight can actually constitute a force of its own in the chronotope. The eventness comes from the tangle of human relationships and people at work during our performances; the children whose names we cited, and their mothers, who were un-named at, but integral to, the event; the audience (those who stayed, those who moved in and out of the space, even those who were present in thought but not body); the generational past(s), the present(s), the future(s).[39] Our two recitations were dialogic processes that strengthened this meshing of space, time, bodies, and embodiment at the Destitute Asylum, demonstrating that performance, per Schneider, is "an activity that nets us all in a knotty and porous relationship to time. It is about the temporal tangle, about the temporal leak, and about the many questions that attend Time's returns."[40]

History, as the saying goes, is written by the victors: it is a story written later, not necessarily "true." In this vein Jerome De Groot references history, be it professional or amateur or fictive, as "at base a rehearsing of things that have been asserted to have occurred, a performative (in the loosest sense of the word) echoing and misrepresentation."[41] We suggest, then, that museums can and should harness this "misrepresentation" by performing history in ways that are not didactic, but rather *affective*. Our events were not about us speaking *for* the othered women and babies, or representing them, but rather about our participation in an imaginative process of (un)becoming *with* them, of breaking the bounds that previously held them, and of moving them from invisible to valuable in the minds of our visitors (they have been valuable to us for many years). To us this is an essential ethical practice that acknowledges connectivity, intersubjectivity, and the entanglement of not just people, but of pasts, presents, and future. As De Groot asks, "what is the writing of history if not the attempted revoicing or reclamation of an expe-

37 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 587–99.

38 Nikki Sullivan, "Transmogrification: (Un)becoming Other(s)," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2013), 552–64.

39 Gary Saul Morson, "The Chronotope of Humanness: Bakhtin and Dostoevsky," in *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, ed. Nele Bemong, Pieter Borghart, Michel De Dobbeleer, Koen De Temmerman, Kristoffel Demoen (Ghent: Academia, 2010), 94.

40 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 592.

41 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 594.

rience that cannot be touched but might be reconstructed, represented, rethought?"[42] History is always performative, and acknowledging and harnessing this in a museum setting can be transformative, indeed emotionally transmogrifying, for all involved.

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42 De Groot, "Affect and Empathy," 594.

Part Four

WITHIN (AND WITHOUT) MUSEUM WALLS

Chapter Ten

BOTH WAYS: GROWING ART AND COMMUNITY THROUGH TOUCH

KRISTIN TOLLEFSON

> "(S)ometimes the transactions between small and large multiply, have repercussions."[1]

HUMANS DEPEND ON touch. Growing research demonstrates its beneficial effects: skin-to-skin contact has been shown to accelerate growth in premature infants, and hand massage reduces the stress-induced cortisol in those with dementia. Touch given and received with care and kindness has the capacity to stimulate brain receptors that activate the lymphatic system, which boosts the body's natural defenses, augments well-being, and increases the capacity for compassion.[2] An arm around the shoulder from a friend or a hug from a loved one communicates without words an array of affirmations including safety, connection, trust, and collaboration.

At the end of 2020, our radically physically distanced world was starved for contact. The global pandemic's enduring mandate to remain physically distant was compounded by the darkest days of the year. Concerns about the impact of touch deprivation had been voiced within a month of orders to shelter in place. And yet, nearly ten months later, many around the world were still living apart, aware of the growing contradiction of forced separation imposed by a global public health crisis and the fundamental need for physical contact.

Some of the most palpably affected by absence of touch were seniors living alone or in assisted living facilities. Formerly connected to vibrant lives through social groups and the circulation of family and friends, these actively engaged bodies and minds were ordered to quarantine, with in-person human interaction mediated by masks, gloves, and plastic sheeting. Conditions that already posed risks for this age group, including

1 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 169.

2 Dacher Keltner, "Hands On Research: The Science of Touch," *Greater Good Magazine*, September 10, 2010, https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research.

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depression, anxiety, irritability, and dementia saw a dramatic uptick during this time. The worst situations saw rapid deterioration of physical health or even death, the cause of which was attributed to "a failure to thrive."[3] These factors illustrated with painful clarity the interrelationship of mental health, social-emotional health, and physical health and the way the body engages with the world.

That touch and its life-giving power would be at the centre of a conversation unfolding within an art museum points to other kinds of conflict and change. Throughout history—and significantly over the past 150 years—museums have been institutions designed to separate and classify both contents and visitors. Hierarchies of carefully maintained power that serve to elevate a select few to the exclusion of all others had cultivated a system that placed an outsized emphasis on the visual, and all but dismissed the other senses.

> [T]he hope of many museologists was that the museum would have a civilizing and educational effect on the general public. For this to happen, however, visitors could no longer be permitted to run around and grab everything—they must learn to control their bodies as they enlightened their minds. The formation of the modern state required that visitors to a public museum be both awed by the splendor of this emblematic state institution and impressed with a sense of its inviolability. The perceived importance of fostering respect toward the cultural and political authority museum pieces were understood to represent was a major factor in the exclusion of touch from the museum in the mid-nineteenth century.[4]

Today, many museums are consciously dismantling and unlearning institutional power structures such as these. Significant shifts in understanding about the role of the body in relation to accessibility to art has opened diverse sensory pathways for learning, including touch. New museums have embraced the opportunity and responsibility to invent themselves and fold these forms of engagement into their evolution. This has been true of the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA), where I inhabit a multifaceted role as Director of Education and DEI Advancement and artist. BIMA is a regional art museum in the Puget Sound region of Washington State that features contemporary art and craft, including artists books, metal, wood, jewellery, and other forms. From its inception, every aspect of the museum —artists, architecture, audience, and more—was considered with a reverence for engagement, touch, the maker's hand, and tactile experience at its heart. BIMA's inclusive mission extends this approach beyond the physical to the conceptual, inspiring "curiosity, wonder and understanding" by connecting people and art in ways that are inextricable from the sensory world.

Participatory engagement of the whole person in the museum is an invitation that extends throughout our exhibits and programs, and grounds the ideology of the muse-

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3 Emily Paulin, "Is Extended Isolation Killing Older Adults in Long-Term Care? Five Months of COVID-19 Lockdowns Have Created a Mental Health Crisis," AARP Web site, September 3, 2020, https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/health/info-2020/covid-isolation-killing-nursing-home-residents.html.

4 Constance Classen, *The Deepest Sense: A Cultural History of Touch*, Studies in Sensory History (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 177. Kindle.

um's education department. We strive to create opportunities to observe, share stories about, and make art in all spaces in the museum—activating the galleries, auditorium, and classroom—and beyond, through collaborations and outreach opportunities. Over the years, the department had grown from a single person to three: a dedicated School and Families Program Manager who oversaw our robust youth-focused initiatives, and a new Creative Associate role that would be supported by the addition of an AmeriCorps member to our education team.

Although our work with all ages had always been guided by a conviction that engagement brings transformation, data specifically indicated that social engagement was a fundamental need for seniors in our region (Kitsap County). Initial collaborations with Mary Jane Knecht and the Creative Aging programs at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington engaged people with early-stage memory loss and their care partners in conversation, questions, recollections, and personal anecdotes prompted by curated film clips around a theme. We began hosting a facilitated "Mindfulness Meditation" series and launched "Look Again," a monthly, guided, gallery-based looking and talking series aimed at providing people with memory loss and their care partners a space to convene around art, conversation, and community at the art museum. Walking in the gallery, the candid questions and curiosity unfiltered by formality were as galvanizing as the conversation over coffee and pastries that followed. Friendships were forged over shared experiences with dementia, and the candor, humour, and care that infused these connections grew relationships that extended far beyond the museum.

Establishing the Creative Aging Associate as the lead for this collective of programs would promote existing connections with organizations such as the senior centre arts and culture lectures and the senior-focused Island Volunteer Caregivers (IVC), increase our capacity for outreach to assisted living facilities and other county-wide resources, and spearhead further innovation. Our commitment was firmly in place to foster "positive aging": efforts to "'replace the ageist cultural narrative … with one that recognizes age as a season of learning, creativity and vitality,' … [correlating] positive thinking with wellness and longevity. It emphasizes the importance of being active and finding joy in life."[5]

In March 2020, we were a month away from launching an exciting pilot that would support this very approach: a workshop series taught by and for seniors. Hiring experienced teaching artists from the senior community would provide opportunities for student interaction and the potential for additional income. Providing quality art materials and the setting of our light-filled classroom and galleries were also key, components that underscored our commitment to offering generously of the museum's time, resources, and care. Co-creating the offerings with those who would participate ensured that we remained relevant and representative of the community we were working with, another aspect of empowering this historically underrepresented group. Our intentions and actions revealed transformative ways of thinking about and living what a museum does, and who is invited to participate. Even as the museum closed to the public that month

5 Marjorie Schwarzer, *Museums and Creative Aging: A Healthful Partnership* (Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, 2021), 9.

Figure 10.1. Wire garland crocheted by author as "growing line" for exhibition of "Both Ways" project. Photograph courtesy of author. See in colour at https://www.instagram.com/bothwaysproject/.

and we sheltered in place, the essence of this potential for authentic work with our senior population remained. How could we continue to espouse the qualities we were living into, these eloquent guiding principles of community engagement: giving ownership and holding space, creating opportunities, and providing resources and tools?[6]

Stepping into radical engagement with community energized me and infused my thoughts in the months during which we shifted our museum education programming to originate from and be received by people at home. As we quickly adapted our in-person, all-ages in-gallery art-making program "Art in Action," to a series of homemade videos, we kept equity at the forefront of our minds. What activities might be accessible to new art learners? What materials might be available to people in isolation? How could we bridge the gap in human connection created by being physically remote by helping participants build kinesthetic skills? The videos were reaching a range of audiences in new ways, taken from their home on the museum's YouTube Channel and packaged as part of a local television program geared toward seniors, called AgeWise (Seattle Channel). We began to consider what other ways we could open up access to the arts, including the potential for distributing supply kits that would promote the hands-on experience of making.

Similar questions began to surface in my thinking outside the museum, with regard to my independent practice as a maker. Prior to the pandemic, I had been invited to show an installation of my work at METHOD Gallery in Seattle, which had been rescheduled for January 2021. Creating a physical exhibit unlikely to be widely seen in person was poignant. I struggled with how to reframe my original proposal, which expanded upon crocheted and beaded wire elements begun during an artist residency the year before. Isolation had me wondering whether what I originally wanted to say with this

6 Lauren Benetua, Nina Simon, and Stacey Marie Garcia, *Community Issue Exhibition Toolkit* (Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, 2018), 29. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a8e0a68f9a61e43fb3eb0e2/t/5d0d7ca1321ce60001d7f4a5/1561164964894/Community-Issue-Exhibition-Toolkit-FINAL.pdf.

work was worth moving beyond the idea stage. Social justice, systemic racism, and critical conversations around equity in the arts were the conversations I was steeped in now. I stepped back to listen and learn.

Over the ensuing months, I embraced an alternative approach, one that brought me closer to the fundamentals of engagement that had sparked me in the museum context. I would use the gallery opportunity to expose and unify threads that ran through all of my creative work, both in and out of the studio. I forced myself to question my story and demanded that I work harder to articulate my truth. "Some of the most pervasive and least examined aspects of craft are its sensuous qualities, especially its appeal to touch," posits David Howes in *The Craft of the Senses*.[7] Craft, making, and labour had always been central to my work, as had the tensions between the hand and the mind and the ways that these forces narrate our lived experiences with the creative gesture. My practice embraced a range—from jewellery to studio sculpture and public art commissions, and even education and activism—and through it all, I was leaving evidence of and creating opportunities for the sensory to coexist with the conceptual. How could this installation reveal the interdependence of care and making, of mental and physical, and help shape a new and integrated way of thinking about my art practice, all within the context of this installation?

It was during a virtual studio visit with artist-gallerists Paula Stokes, Paul D. McKee, and Mary Coss that the answer to this question further crystalized. Throughout our conversation, we wondered together how art and this installation might viscerally engage with and for people. Could it honour or invite touch even with the overarching constraint of distance? I mentioned the feeling of growing urgency around isolated seniors and the ways the museum was approaching a solution. Paula, a glass artist, Paul, a multimedia artist skilled in fabrication techniques, and Mary, a sculptor who had been developing an interactive project with a retirement community, enthusiastically advocated for braiding these ideas together. What if the most powerful version of this exhibition opportunity was an accumulation of parts: a community art project centred in the handmade object, an exercise in rekindling experiences of touch with people for whom lack of physical contact was a public health issue, a collaboration that made a shared space for artists, educators, social service organization, museum, and gallery, art that could not exist without the hand but also existed virtually?

Focusing the project on bringing the sensuous qualities of materials and process to artists who were most in need of touch as a form of community-based engagement coalesced the idea into a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

> Interpersonal touch allows us to think through our hands, to communicate and interpret emotion by the feeling of skin on skin. Craftwork is also a form of manual thinking. As we craft, we use our hands to express ourselves, to make decisions, and to problem-solve … Like social touch, handicraft reduces stress and, ultimately, brings us a type of sensual

7 David Howes, "The Craft of the Senses," April 2, 2011 (occasional paper, *Centre for Sensory Studies*, Concordia University, Canada), https://centreforsensorystudies.org /occasional-papers/the-craft-of-the-senses/.

> pleasure. Instead of the gratification of a loving caress or a friendly pat on the back, it's the delight of [the material]… .[8]

And so the seeds were planted for the radical inclusion of *Both Ways*, a title borrowed from poet A. R. Ammons.[9] I began the intensive process of hand crocheting a wire garland adorned with metal leaves and beads (Fig. 10.1). The growing line would suggest otherworldly botany along with familiar qualities of jewellery and children's games. Its size and shape were key: at 91 feet long (27 m) and 8 inches (20 cm) wide, it would be massive enough to serpentine through the gallery, occupying space and encouraging physical interaction. My partner, sculptor Dan Webb, built a zig-zagging custom, wooden trestle system that elevated the garland 30 inches (75 cm) off the floor in the gallery, jutted up the wall, and followed the sill of windows so the work could be experienced from outside the gallery at all hours.

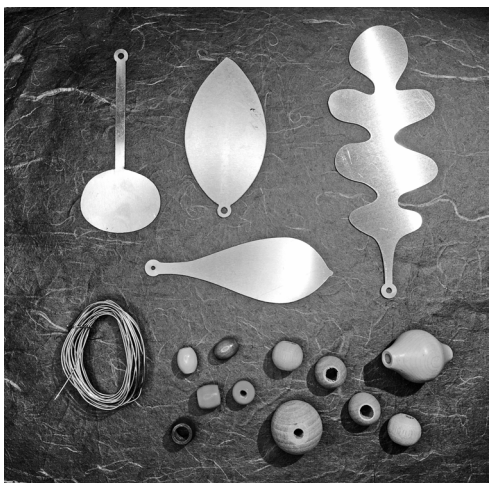

Figure 10.2. Component pieces of art kits distributed to community artists for "Both Ways" project. Photograph courtesy of author. See in colour at https://www.instagram.com/bothwaysproject/.

Concurrently, Anika Tabachnick, who had stepped into the role of BIMA's AmeriCorps Program Associate in the midst of the pandemic, was in their third month of service. As a way to connect home-bound seniors with art making supplies, they had advocated for the creation and distribution of art kits in collaboration with Island Volunteer Caregivers (IVC). When I received an individual artist's grant from the local arts and humanities council, the funds went toward the purchase of more of the wood beads, wire, and metal leaves that had been used in the garland construction. These sensuous, tactile materials would be packaged as elements of our first round of art kits, along with a guide that introduced the vision for *Both Ways* and asked for the seniors' involvement. (See Fig. 10.2.)

The guide invited participating artists to use the provided parts creatively and welcomed them to incorporate additional materials of their own. Artists were also encouraged to email photos of themselves with their creations (for publication on a dedicated

8 Ainsley Hawthorn, "Is Craft Booming in COVID Because We're Starved for Touch?" *Psychology Today* (blog), May 23, 2020, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-sensory-revolution/202005/is-craft-booming-in-covid-because-were-starved-touch.

9 A. R. Ammons, "Coming Right Up," in *The Really Short Poems of A. R. Ammons* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), 135.

Figure 10.3. "Selfie" taken with creation by Hannah J., one of the community artists for "Both Ways" project. Photograph courtesy of author and artist. See in colour at https://www.instagram.com/bothwaysproject/.

Instagram feed and for inclusion in a looped slide show on a video monitor in the gallery) and to share back their finished work as an addition to the larger installation in the gallery. As an offering of exchange for their creative labour, they were given the opportunity to hold on to a selection of the kit components for their own use, and they would be kept informed of the project as it unfolded. Anika coordinated the distribution of over thirty-five kits of parts to participating artists in assisted living facilities and living on their own with the support of Lynn Murphy, IVC's Life Enrichment Coordinator, and a team of IVC volunteers.

A few weeks later, finished pieces began to appear. Emailed photos arrived first, many featuring masked artists with their work and others focusing on the work itself. A garland assembled out of synthetic flowers was laced intermittently with dark wood beads and subtle glints of metal. One artist held her creations triumphantly in outstretched hands. Another was pictured lying on the floor, her smiling face tucked close to the bloom she had fashioned out of repurposed plastic food containers, pen caps, beads, and metal leaves (Fig. 10.3). A third posed formally with a tree branch adorned with fabric and printed paper text adhered to the leaves. An oyster shell garnished with beads inside and a clever safety pin clasp adhered to the back was rendered both tactile and wearable.

A deeper layer of the project was revealed when the physical objects were collected from the artists. Each piece was as spectacularly unique as the individuals who made them. I was struck by the visceral and unexpected choices of materials, marks, and methods. My internalized understanding of what it means to be an artist and who gets to make art were challenged by the representations of willingness and abandon brought to this collective action. The objects portrayed inarguable evidence of this delight, and this group of dynamic co-conspirators demonstrated what a radical gesture the hand could make. It was a pure example of "making special," a proposal offered by Ellen Dissanayake that suggests there is a uniquely human impulse toward qualities and behaviors that unite us creatively across cultures.

> [Making special] explains how a concept of art can comprise such variety, even contradiction. Art may be rare and restricted, as modernists believed, or liberating and problematizing, as postmodernists argue. It may be well or poorly done; it may be an individual original creation or a manifestation of a codified historical or regional tradition. It may require talent and long specialized training or be something everyone does naturally much as they learn to swim or cook or hunt. It may be used for anything, and anything can become an occasion for art. It may or may not be beautiful; although making special often results in "making beautiful," specialness also may consist of strangeness, outrageousness, or extravagance. As making special is protean and illimitable, so is art … Making special emphasizes the idea that the arts … have been physically, sensuously, and emotionally satisfying and pleasurable to humans.[10]

Seeing the work created by these artists who joined in *Both Ways* was like taking part in a conversation that lived outside of the appearance of a conversation, but still retained all of the qualities, including a democratic space for engagement: "in which people enter a world of creative speculation and together construct the conversation, reflecting on their own lives as well on the works of art they consider … Conversation seeks equilibrium and inclusiveness … everyone is encouraged, but not required, to participate. Everyone's questions, opinions, and ideas are respected. Everyone listens as well as speaks."[11]

Elevating the many facets of this conversation, the following are the words of some involved.

Hannah Stratton-Jones, *Artist*

> The most meaningful aspect of the project was having tactile objects for designing…to move around & even 'ask' them where they could fit in … it gets very personal between actual objects & myself. I definitely experienced a rediscovery of previous work … delightful, especially while processing the tactile qualities and engaging the role of the 'senses.'
>
> Although the connecting with community happened on a small scale, it was satisfying. The IVC people were very enthusiastic & cheered.
>
> With regard to our arty efforts, not much community was available during COVID lock-down, and you also were very motivating & helpful.
>
> I studied Art Education for five years at the University of Oregon (early 1960s) … no degree due to a severe illness. I have spent the following decades seeking better health and raising two children, so it was lovely to dip into the art process realm again. I truly enjoyed it.

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10 Ellen Dissanayake, "The Core of Art: Making Special," *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 1, no. 2 (Fall 2003), 26, https://neilgreenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Dissanayake-on-Art-16856-16986-1-PB.pdf.

11 Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee, "Conversation, Discussion, and Dialogue," in *Teaching in the Art Museum: Interpretation as Experience*, ed. Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee (Los Angeles: Getty Museum, 2011), 81.

Note: Hannah and I connected personally through this project over people we have in common. Hannah discovered and made mention of the fact that her daughter and I were classmates in high school. The spark of this mutuality made me feel connected beyond my own isolation.

Anika Tabachnick, *AmeriCorps Creative Aging Associate, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art*

[T]he diversity of interpretations and artworks made by participants presented with the same materials … [and the] collective installation was such a poignant culmination of this project … [S]eeing these objects that have so obviously been caringly crafted come together into a tangible expression and documentation of that physical interaction between hand, wire, and wood was deeply meaningful.

Personally, I am attracted to artwork where the tactile nature of the materials used, and relationship between body and material is abundantly present. I find artwork, and particularly collective or community installations that allow for this documentation of individual interactions and interpretations of collective themes and materials incredibly inspiring. Taking part in *Both Ways* supported my creative and community building practices … facilitating moments of personal connection and supporting opportunities for those I work with to access some of the experiences they may have lacked during the height of the pandemic.

… I would have liked to have the opportunity to learn more about the individuals involved. How did they connect to the project? What did they learn through their creative engagement with the materials? I would have liked to deepen this connection, and I think that in how this project was used as a jumping off point for current programs emerging from BIMA's education department, it has built into deeper community engagement and longstanding relationships.

Lynn Murphy, *Life Enrichment Coordinator, Island Volunteer Caregivers*

One of the strongest aspects of this project was the diversion it created, a bright light, something different to focus on. And what arose out of it was an opening for a sense of fun. The materials themselves were uplifting, the sensory pleasure of touching the smooth wood beads and the cut metal leaf elements. The dexterity required was attainable for most and there were many who took the project to much more personal places.

Some of the participating artists are "creatives" who jumped right into the project while others expressed initial trepidation, but even the ones who just strung the beads on the wire benefitted. There was lovely sensory learning, and the piece of the community engagement that was so successful was this feeling of participating in something larger than they were, something that reached outside of their constrained living circumstances toward something that felt as if they were making a difference. I've witnessed creativity as such a powerful force … it also stimulates cognitive abilities, and in this way gives back far beyond the completion of the project.

We've been happiest when we've been able to be in person at the museum, and this project reminded us that there is something to look forward to, a time when we'll be able to be together in a group, with art. It would be great to bring art and the social element together in as many places as possible for our participants, who have benefitted in very specific ways.

Paula Stokes, *Artist and Co-Founder, METHOD Gallery*

[The most meaningful part of the project] for me was how Kristin transformed her initial proposal into an act of creativity that included the work of others. Together with the Island Volunteer Caregivers, she bridged obstacles of social distancing to bring her art kits to folks who were very isolated. Through inclusion she offered hope and light.

My work in hot glass nearly always includes at least one set of another's hands to make it. I identified strongly with this work [and the collaborative element] as my most recent project necessitated the work of many individuals. In my native language of Irish there is an expression which I think sums up Kristin's *Both Ways* project, not just through the practical act of making each section, but through the physical manifestation as an intertwining garland[:] "NÍ NEART GO CUR LE CHÉILE—THERE'S NO STRENGTH WITHOUT UNITY."

The tactile process made an impression. Though each section had the same basic materials, each one was like a unique fingerprint of its maker. I am a strong believer in community engagement and participation in art. When people are connected to something bigger than themselves there is a sense of pride and ownership in the work. *Both Ways* was a beacon of light in the dark of winter and in the midst of a time of great global, national, and local anxiety. I hope that it continues to grow and evolve, and [I] look forward to seeing it in a different context other than a gallery setting. I would love to see it outside somewhere.

Sheila Hughes, *Executive Director, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art*

Seeing the *Both Ways* project blossom from concept to execution provided a little piece of beauty in the middle of a very difficult year, and really broke open the ways in which we could imagine the Museum as a new kind of catalyst for community connection. It instantly deepened our sense of partnership with a key senior service agency but more than that, it connected us directly in art, life, and conversation to the clients themselves. Seeing the extraordinary forms that were created by a simple take-home art kit was stunning—they were alternately elaborate, artistic, detailed, personal, absurd, and intentional. The hand of the maker and the dreamer was so apparent. The pandemic was a double-edged condition—it both brought extraordinary poignance and relevance to the isolation that some individuals were experiencing but also forced a realization from us that for many, isolation is a constant state …

Figure 10.4. Detail of "Both Ways" project installation. Photograph courtesy of author. See in colour at https://www.instagram.com/bothwaysproject/.

The conversation continued as the garland, adorned with hundreds of leaves and wooden beads, became entwined with contributions of the inspired collaborators, each piece touched with care and handled again. (See Fig. 10.4.) It continued to resonate, inspiring me to design and fabricate jewellery pieces to weave into the work after it had been installed in the gallery, energized by the unbridled exuberance of the community of artists involved, underscoring the exchange inherent in conversation. The project continues to have consequential and lasting reverberations: one artist found renewed hope to live as a result of their intentional connection to a community outside of themselves. It is staggering to consider the simple origin of such power in a handwork exercise and a group of isolated individuals.

In the end, the lessons learned through *Both Ways* are simple and transferable. Start where you are. Embrace creativity and give generously of time, materials, and care. Use the assets of organization(s) to support individual(s) in thoughtfully considered physical and virtual spaces. Elevate the cognitive, physical, and aesthetic value of touching and making special. Continue the conversation. With persistence and creativity, touch helps create an enduring environment that embraces the many intersections between joy and challenge.

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Chapter Eleven

"THE ARC OF PROMISE": AWAKENING THE HEART THROUGH ART

HILDY TOW

THE ART OF Jerry Pinkney has played a vitally important role in the lives of children. The artist is internationally known and greatly admired for his illustrations and various commissions for the United States Postal Service, National Park Service, and *National Geographic*. He selects his projects by asking the question "is this story worth telling?" This chapter explores the uniquely powerful experiences elicited by Pinkney's visual storytelling from the children, families, and teachers who participated in the programs developed for Woodmere Art Museum's 2019 exhibition *Freedom's Journal: The Art of Jerry Pinkney*.[1]

Freedom's Journal spotlighted Pinkney's projects around American history, African American enslavement, and the struggles for civil rights. The exhibition generated programs that enabled students from Philadelphia's public schools to contemplate together uncomfortable and painful issues not often addressed head-on in their curricula. Numerous recent efforts by United States legislators to impose restrictions on how American history is taught—specifically how the history of slavery and segregation is taught—underscore the importance of Pinkney's work in assuring students this opportunity for open discussion. Denying students these truths limits their capacity to interpret the struggles and accomplishments of the nation's past, but also the challenges involved in navigating the complexities of their own lives. The heightened racial turmoil of 2020 in the United States made all too clear the relevance of *Freedom's Journal* for students in today's world, and we at Woodmere were called to re-examine the opportunities provided to us by the exhibition as we designed school and family programs for online learning during the COVID pandemic, which itself had left students' opportunities for learning under threat.

1 Woodmere Art Museum, *Freedom's Journal: The Art of Jerry Pinkney* (Philadelphia: Woodmere Art Museum, 2019), https://issuu.com/woodmereartmuseum/docs/onlinecatalogue_freedomsjournal_fin.

Hildy Tow is an artist and educator. As the curator of education at Woodmere Art Museum, she has developed a variety of school and studio programs that use works of art and the art making process for learning across all disciplines. She has taught in Philadelphia public schools, regional art centres, and has led several teacher workshops. Tow holds a master's degree in studio art from New York University and a Post-Baccalaureate Certification in art education from Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia.

Freedom's Journal brought together over one hundred illustrations spanning forty years of Pinkney's career.[2] The exhibition title was inspired by Pinkney's illustration of the same name, in which a portrait of Harriet Tubman in her later years is shown floating over an image of people travelling the Underground Railroad. In the centre of the painting, Pinkney inserted a collage element containing the masthead from the first African American-owned and -operated newspaper published in the United States, *Freedom's Journal*.[3]

The Arc of Promise

During the planning process, the artist characterized this exhibition as embodying his life's journey, a personal and artistic journey into American history, the experience of being African American, and the importance of serving as "a strong role model and [showing] my children the possibilities that lay ahead for them."[4] His thoughts about the exhibition itself and what exhibition visitors would experience were captured in a videotaped conversation between the artist and Dr. Crystal Lucky, Associate Dean of Baccalaureate Studies, College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of English at Villanova University. During the conversation, Jerry reflected, "the show represents to me … a larger picture of the world we live in today … [it] tackles the hard pieces of African American and African experience, slavery, the Middle Passage, and then the struggle after that … This all comes out of a need for me to understand myself and to find my place in this country… ."[5] He wanted exhibition visitors to confront "slavery's place in our history, how it affects us today."[6] Just as importantly, he wanted them to perceive as he did an "arc of promise":

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2 The idea for the exhibition emerged during a visit to the artist's studio by Woodmere's Director and Chief Executive Officer, William Valerio. While there, he noticed a framed print of the cover of the July 1984 *National Geographic*, depicting Harriet Tubman surrounded by other Black figures as they walk together into freedom after crossing a bridge to Canada. Pinkney had made this cover illustration for the ground-breaking article "Escape from Slavery: The Underground Railroad," written by Philadelphia's eminent historian Charles L. Blockson. This was the first time *National Geographic* had published both a cover image and an article by an African American artist and writer, respectively, in a single issue.

3 This New York City newspaper was published from 1827 to 1829 to counter racist commentary in the mainstream press. Pinkney's art work was created as the opening illustration for a series of stories and songs around the theme "Let My People Go," for a chapter in the book *From Sea to Shining Sea: A Treasury of American Folklore and Folk Songs*, compiled by Amy L. Cohen (New York: Scholastic, 1993).

4 Norman Rockwell Museum, "About Jerry Pinkney," February 22, 2022, https://www.nrm.org/2021/10/remembering-jerry-pinkney-american-illustration-master/.

5 *Arc of Promise*, Part 1, produced by Woodmere Art Museum, YouTube video, 00:35–1:33, January 15, 2019, https://youtu.be/ZpV7ao4gebo.

6 Woodmere Art Museum, *Arc of Promise*, Part 1, 4:34–4:57.

> You have to talk about Africans ripped away from their homeland, the Middle Passage with no free will, to landing in this country, trying to make a new life under being enslaved, and the sense of, at that time, still adding to this country's history and culture and being; the importance of cotton, the importance of needing the cotton to be picked by enslaved people and at the same time propelling this country forward and keeping Black folks down. But the resilience is where we must start with children … the resilience of coming out of being captive, being enslaved, being victims, to a sense of contribution. There is this beautiful arc of promise. You can't have that arc of promise if you don't show where you came from. You can't move ahead until you know your history and how it started.[7]

Woodmere's Educational Programs

The Museum's educational programs are intended to develop a range of experiences for audiences of all ages that deepen visitors' engagement with each exhibition. For school audiences, this means facilitating students' emotional engagements with the visual stories being told. It is essential that students feel they are in a safe space where they can actively connect their own voices with their emotions while witnessing the art on display. Students are always encouraged to trust their eyes and responses when exploring an artwork. Docents reinforce the importance of attentive listening and observation, the sharing of ideas, solving problems cooperatively, and demonstrating respect for differing points of view.[8]

The artist's words resonated with us as we were developing these programs around *Freedom's Journal*. "One of the things I'm always interested in is to see how a person visually reads a story. One of the intents I've always had in my work, and am very curious to see, is what happens after people leave the gallery and what story they have to tell through my storytelling … I always ask that the viewer invest their own story into my image."[9]

Our approach, inspired by Jerry's words, was to engage students with close looking activities that enabled each to "invest their own story into [the] image." Slow and careful looking prompted each student to reach for first impressions that led to emotional engagement and, ultimately, a relationship with the work. What follows provides a window into Woodmere's educational approach with school children during their interactions with Pinkney's illustrations for the two story books *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* and *I Want To Be*.

Minty… is the fictionalized story of Harriet Tubman as an eight-year-old girl living on a plantation.[10] Much of the story is fact-based. Tubman was enslaved by the Brodas

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7 Woodmere Art Museum, *Arc of Promise*, Part 1, 5:07–6:43.

8 Woodmere works with approximately 10,000 children each year who are attending school and family programs, 80 percent of which serve Philadelphia School District (PSD) children attending schools in economically disadvantaged communities.

9 Jerry Pinkney, conversation with author, January 15, 2019.

10 Alan Schroeder and Jerry Pinkney, *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* (New York: Penguin, 1996).

Figure 11.1. "Don't lie to me." Illustration by Jerry Pinkney from *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, 1996. © Estate of Jerry Pinkney. Courtesy of the Jerry Pinkney Family Estate.

family, who operated a plantation on Maryland's Eastern Shore in the early 1800s. She was named Araminta, nicknamed Minty, and became known as Harriet Tubman only after she escaped to freedom.

During one experience, students were invited to compare two images (see figs. 11.1 and 11.2). They worked in pairs to list what they observed in both paintings, then shared their observations with others. This activity enhanced their ability to work as a group and to discover details they might have missed on their own. It also allowed students to note changes from what they had seen in illustrations earlier in the book. For example, in "Don't Lie to Me," students noticed two new characters they had not seen before: a woman in a blue dress, standing, and a man sitting at the table.

Students remarked that there were only two table settings of plates, cups, and utensils, confirming the likelihood that the little girl was the server and the man was the woman's husband. Gradually they saw that the pitcher on the table had fallen and was spilling liquid over the tablecloth. That brought attention to the little girl's hand, its thumb very close to the handle of the overturned pitcher. They concluded she was responsible for the spill. They noticed she was looking up toward the woman. They also noticed she was barefoot.

Students described the woman's pose, her arms raised with one directed toward a cupboard and the other gesturing towards the little girl. They were asked to imitate the woman's pose and to describe what they imagined her to be saying and feeling. Some thought she was telling the little girl to look for something in the cupboard; others thought she looked serious, might be angry, and was telling the little girl to clean up the mess.

Figure 11.2. "No, Missus!" Illustration by Jerry Pinkney from *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, 1996. © Estate of Jerry Pinkney. Courtesy of the Jerry Pinkney Family Estate.

Asked how old they thought the little girl might be, they responded that she looked about seven or eight years old because of her size. When asked if they thought this story was taking place a long time ago, in the present day, or in the future, students looked carefully at the clothing the adults were wearing. They noted the woman's long dress, the white "puffy" sleeves of the man's shirt, and his long sideburns. Some older students who noticed the large size of the fireplace recalled seeing movies where fireplaces would be burning right near kitchen tables while people ate, likely to provide heat before people had furnaces to heat their homes; and that the candlesticks were being used for lighting since they probably did not have electricity, all clues that this story took place a time long ago.

As students began looking at the second image (Fig. 11.2), they agreed the woman had a very angry expression on her face. They commented how big she looked in comparison to the girl. Some students noticed the woman's figure extended from the very top of the page to the bottom. Both her arms were raised, one hand appeared to be in a fist. The woman's other hand was holding the rag doll with which they had seen the little girl playing in an earlier illustration. Students described the woman as "scary" and "threatening." Her eyes were turned on the girl while the man sitting at the table looked "worried" and was trying to clean up the liquid dripping down towards the floor.

Docents asked the students to assume the persona of one of the characters in this second image and enact what they might be saying. Students worked in pairs, one imitating the girl's pose and the other imitating the woman. Those who acted the part of the little girl stood on one leg, arms reaching upward, hands open wide, eyes focused on

the doll. When asked what the girl might be saying, they responded by yelling (quietly) "give her back to me, please," "don't hurt my doll, give it to me, she's mine," "I'm sorry." When asked what their bodies were feeling in that pose, they described feeling strong, heart beating fast, scared, desperate, and focused on snatching the doll and running away. Everyone agreed the little girl felt scared for her doll. Those imitating the woman expressed feeling "powerful," "angry," "wanting to punish and make sure the little girl knew who was the boss," "happy being mean." When asked what the woman might be saying, students responded by saying, "Who do you think you are? I'm the boss …," "Get out of my way or I'll throw your doll away," "Don't you tell me what to do!"

The white and brown skin colours of the characters were details that often went unremarked by the students. When asked if they thought the difference in skin colour was an important element in the story, several responded that they wondered if the girl was enslaved.[11] When asked what they saw that made them ask that, students noted the girl's bare feet, that she was serving the food, and that the story took place a long time ago. They repeated the woman was very angry, was the one in charge (even her husband looked "worried" and "scared"), and they felt she was threatening the child. Students expressed feelings that ranged from thinking the little girl was being brave to some expressing worry because they knew she was in serious trouble. Some of the students commented she might be sold.

At this point, the docents read the relevant text from Schroeder's narrative:

> Minty's eyes widened. It was her rag doll, Esther.
>
> "Here," [Mrs. Brodas] told her husband, "take this and throw it in the fire."
>
> "No, Missus" Minty screamed. She lunged forward, but Mrs. Brodas was faster. With a flick of her wrist, she hurled the doll into the open fireplace. Minty kicked and screamed, but Mrs. Brodas held her back until the doll was nothing but a pile of white ashes.
>
> "That'll learn you," she said. "Now get out of here. And don't forget—you're a field slave now."
>
> Minty ran out, choking back her tears.[12]

Looking at the two images, students pieced together the narrative, what had happened before, what was happening now. Older students observed that the fireplace took up almost half of the painting in "Don't Lie to Me" and imagined that the artist was "foreshadowing" the role of the fireplace in the next scene. After listening to the text, students realized that the painting portrayed the moment before Mrs. Brodas threw the doll into the fireplace.

The docents asked the students to recall the feelings they had had when imitating Minty's pose and to consider what might have happened in the moment before the doll was thrown into the fire. Students replied, "the girl thought she could save the doll, that Mrs. Brodas would back down" or "the girl felt strong and determined to save the doll

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11 Students often used the word "slave." This provided an opportunity for docents to discuss the power of language and how the term "enslaved" or "enslaved people" emphasizes the humanity of a person and distinguishes their identity from their circumstances.

12 Schroeder and Pinkney, *Minty*, 9.

Figure 11.3. "For a long moment …" Illustration by Jerry Pinkney from *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, 1996. © Estate of Jerry Pinkney. Courtesy of the Jerry Pinkney Family Estate.

no matter what." Some students thought the image presented a moment of hope; others felt it was a moment of desperation. This prompted a conversation about the differences and similarities between hope and desperation. Docents asked if these two emotions could co-exist. Some thought it was possible and gave examples of feeling hopeful and desperate to get on a team or secure a part in a play, adding that their circumstances were very different from Minty's.[13]

By the next set of images (see Figs. 11.3 and 11.4), Minty had become a "field slave."[14] Told by the overseer to check the muskrat traps in the nearby river and gather them into a bag, Minty freed them, unaware that the overseer was watching.

In the next image they examined (Fig. 11.3), students noticed Minty standing by a horse with three dogs nearby, and Mrs. Brodas and the overseer in the background.

13 Many students quietly contemplated the question and were reassured by docents that it was "okay not to have an answer and to think about it."

14 Students were asked about their understanding about what it meant to be a "field slave" and their knowledge about slavery in America. Docents presented information about enslavement in the context of what the students had seen in the artworks and Minty's story as an African American enslaved little girl in the early 1800s and pre-Civil War. Two eighth grade classes were able to meet with the artist. This allowed students to learn about Jerry's life growing up in Germantown (a section of Philadelphia not far from where many of them lived) and during segregation, as well as his journey becoming an artist. When discussing Freedom's Journal and specific images such as Minty as a field slave, one student shared that her great grandmother had been enslaved and worked in the house, where she was treated very well. Jerry's response was to say he was glad she was treated well, "but it's important to remember she was not free."

Figure 11.4. "Come here, girl." Illustration by Jerry Pinkney from *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, 1996. © Estate of Jerry Pinkney. Courtesy of the Jerry Pinkney Family Estate.

Students commented that Minty's head was turned backward towards the two adults and observed them looking forward at Minty. They sensed Minty was aware the two adults were talking about her. Several students observed that the close positioning of the horse's body to Minty's appeared protective; they felt a connection between the two. The docent pointed to an imaginary diagonal extending from Minty and the horse to Mrs. Brodas and the overseer, demonstrating the artist's compositional underscoring of the connection the students had discerned.

Students then pointed out a dog looking up towards Minty, his gaze directing their eyes to her hands and thus to the fact that they were tied with a rope. As they continued looking, the students commented that Mrs. Brodas's eyes looked wide and angry. They noticed the overseer's hand pointing to Minty. Without knowing the text, students realized Minty was in trouble and likely to be punished. Older students guessed this meant she would be whipped.

The next image (Fig. 11.4) depicted the aftermath of Minty's whipping. Students noticed she was lying on cloths on the floor of a cabin they assumed was Minty's family's home. Minty's mother seemed to be cradling Minty's face in her hands. Her father was nearby, holding a candle. When asked about the colours in this painting, students noted that the red, yellow, and orange of Minty's and her mother's bandanas "pop forward," attracting their attention. They also remarked on the tall shadows along the back wall, adding to the power of the scene.

Students perceived that Minty's family was trying to soothe her. When asked what they felt the artist was conveying about her family, the students used words including

"love," "pain," "caring," "sadness." Students commented on the family's physical closeness, the trust in Minty's eyes, her father's concerned expression spotlighted by the candle, the sadness and discomfort of her siblings, and the affection shown by her mother. Some students asked why there was a stick in Minty's mouth; others suggested that her mother was trying to distract her from the pain.[15] Students were quiet and emotional as they absorbed the scene and the horror of a whipping.[16]

The image speaks to Pinkney's insistence that people understand the "enslaved were individuals that had feelings that one could connect to, not only the hardships and the burdens of slavery, but the idea of family … Oftentimes there were intact families. Minty, Harriet Tubman, came from an intact family. That was important for me to show as an African American. It also challenges this idea that the Black family is fractured. Part of my goal is to challenge that … My family's legacy is that of slavery and the South. That legacy is also about strong family bonds."[17]

Pinkney's image reflects an uncomfortable, painful situational truth about enslavement while engaging students' ability to empathize with the characters and the family's situation. In the artist's words: "My interest was to give some sense of Minty's noble spirit and open a window to understanding the day-to-day, sun-up to sundown life of the slave, by individualizing the hardships in overwhelming circumstances."[18]

Further Along the Arc of Promise

We asked students to look at images on the wall across from *Minty …* from the 1993 story book *I Want To Be*.[19] Students commented on the bright and vivid colours of Pinkney's watercolours and that the people in the images looked happy. They intuited that these images were telling a present-day story based on the characters' clothing, the students' own familiarity with the games the children were playing, the depictions of homes, playgrounds, and places like their own neighbourhoods. When asked the girl's age, they remarked she looked about seven, eight, or nine years old, probably the same as Minty.

Students were told this story was about a girl who was asked what she wanted to be when she grew up. Pinkney's images illustrate her wandering through her neighbourhood pondering this question. Students were asked to connect textual excerpts with specific images. For example, they connected "I want to be tall but not so tall that nothing is above me. Up must still be somewhere, with clouds and sky" with the painting of

15 Some students shared memories of distractions used by a grandparent or parent when they had been hurt and were in pain.

16 During a conversation between Jerry Pinkney and the author (January 15, 2019), the artist talked about a discussion between the little girl who was his model for Minty and her mother, the model for Minty's mother. He conveyed how emotionally difficult it was for him to listen to the model's mother expain to her daughter that she needed to have a stick between her teeth was to help relieve the pain while she applied salve to the wounds made by the whipping.

17 Woodmere Art Museum, *Freedom's Journal*, 55.

18 Schroeder and Pinkney, *Minty*, 3.

19 Thylias Moss and Jerry Pinkney, *I Want To Be* (New York: Dial, 1993)

the child standing at the top of a slide, her arms reaching upward towards the clouds in the sky. They connected the words "I want to be all the people I know, then I want to know more people so I can be them too. Then they can all be me. I want to be a new kind of earthquake, rocking the world as if it's a baby in a cradle" with a close-up portrait of the young girl's face in front of portraits of people, young and old, and from different ethnic backgrounds.

We asked students to compare the children in *I Want To Be* with images of Minty. Often the immediate response was "these are completely different," "the children in these images are not enslaved," "they are free to roam their neighbourhoods, play in gardens and playgrounds, they are skipping, running, flying kites, and hanging out with friends." They also noted the difference between the cabin in which Minty's family lived and the houses they saw in *I Want To Be*.

We explained that this exhibition was designed to reflect the artist's concept of an "arc of promise," the artist's way of looking back into American history from the perspective of an African American man. Docents shared the following statement by Pinkney: "How do you talk about these dark moments in American history? You explain it or discuss it with a sense of hope and accomplishment and belief. *I Want to Be* by Thylias Moss does that. Through poetry, her book talks about possibility. After the Emancipation Proclamation, after Jim Crow and the civil rights movement, it was then that young people could dream and have hopes about what they might want to be."[20]

This triggered a poignant conversation about whether students envisioned an "arc of promise." Students began by sharing observations such as the "huge" differences between the lives of Minty and of the children in *I Want to Be*. They wondered if this was intended to make "us see the differences." Gradually, students expressed sadness and anger about how Minty had been treated, "how cruel it was to be enslaved." Younger students offered "the children in the story were free and [Minty and other enslaved girls in the exhibition weren't]." Middle and high school students often noted the immorality of slavery. When asked if they saw an "arc of promise," many said it was clear that the images from *I Want To Be* represented change and progress from the conditions of Minty and others, and that they'd like to believe "more change was possible."

Melding Music with Pinkney's Visual Art

One of the public programs created in conjunction with the exhibition was a performance by the Philadelphia-based Arpeggio Jazz Ensemble in which music and voice brought to life the story of *I Want To Be.* This program was designed to create a different set of experiences connected with Pinkney's visual art, allowing for its impact to be felt in new and expanded ways. Music, composed and arranged by the ensemble's director and bassist Warren Oree, captured the joyful spirit of a child having the freedom to imagine and aspire to all the possibilities life can provide. The concert took place in the

20 Woodmere Art Museum, *Freedom's Journal*, 60.

galleries surrounded by the artworks on display in *Freedom's Journal* and was videotaped.[21]

When Woodmere began conducting online school programs in the fall of 2020 as a result of the COVID pandemic, Pinkney's illustrations for *I Want To Be* were inserted into the video and used for the Museum's online *Art & Storytelling* program for young children. It was also made available to six thousand families for a Black History Month celebration in 2021 by the Philadelphia School District's Office of Early Childhood Education, further expanding the reach of Jerry Pinkney's work and the impact on those who experienced it.[22]

During the first session of *Art & Storytelling*, children watching the video were introduced by Warren Oree to the different instruments and musicians they would see and hear. He suggested that both music and visual art are languages that express feelings, stories, and ideas. After the students had viewed the video once, sections were repeated to enable them to listen specifically for sounds the instruments made to accentuate certain words. For example, the low, deep notes of the upright bass made the sound of "strong" when the vocalist claims "I want to be strong but not so strong that a kite seems weak"; the loud burst of a saxophone made the sound of "big" as the vocalist says "I want to be big but not so big that a mountain, or a mosque or a synagogue seems small." Everyone chimed in for the chorus of "I Want To Be." Warren asked the students to describe the feelings the music conjured in them. Most said the music made them feel happy, they wanted to dance, "it was upbeat." When asked if they could extrapolate colours from the music as they listened, responses included that the music made them feel as if they were "in a kaleidoscope," it seemed "like the colours of sunshine." The students were asked about their own aspirations, what they "wanted to be." Most identified particular professions. One student expressed the aspiration to be "a good guy like my dad."[23]

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21 Performers included Suzanne Burgess, vocals and narration, Frank Butrey, guitar, drummer Greg "Juju" Jones, Warren Oree, bass, saxophonist Larry Price, and percussionist Doug Pablo Edwards. Because of restrictions related to the pandemic, there was no audience present in the galleries.

22 *I Want To Be*, produced by Woodmere Art Museum, YouTube video, 13:50, May 11, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0CdHNWVPIE.

23 The Museum's annual celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January of 2021 took place online instead of in person as usual, due to the continuing pandemic. It featured a screening of the video *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman*, made for the *Freedom's Journal* exhibition: a musical interpretation of the story illustrated with Pinkney's paintings. The program closed with Pinkney's illustrations for *I Want To Be*, representing the artist's belief "that all things are possible." Musicians played Sam Cooke's song "A Change is Gonna Come" to accompany the images. Hundreds of children and their families tuned in and later commented through the "chat" on how moved they were by the program, leaving such responses as: "wonderful and inspirational," "this is absolutely beautiful and inspirational," "what a wonderful gift to all."

Conclusion

In the digital catalog for *Freedom's Journal*, Woodmere's Director and CEO William Valerio notes that "artists [are] … generally driven by something that means something to them personally. What makes it art … in a museum context is that it has an impact that matters to other people as well."[24] Pinkney's art calls forth our compassion for others' experiences and emotions, and demands that we reflect on the larger and often uncomfortable truths of our histories. In exploring Pinkney's works with students, we witnessed their emotional responses and compassion for the characters, their desire to further investigate the stories they encountered, their openness to questioning, and their capacity for kindness and empathetic listening. Their knowledge was being built not only by facts but through an experiential, emotional involvement with Pinkney's visual storytelling, in which students, teachers, docents and families created meaning together.

Freedom's Journal is an exhibition that keeps on giving. It has provided visitors in person and online with intimate and emotional experiences. It has engaged and continues to inspire thousands of Philadelphia students with stories that resonate in their own lives. And while encounters with artworks in *Freedom's Journal* are one part of students' learning about slavery in America, we have heard from teachers about many more ways in which the exhibition opened doors to engaging students in learning about the history of enslavement in this country. Students developed connections to the characters in the stories and the circumstances of their lives, and further historical exploration continued in the classroom. It is clear that teachers and students want a way to talk about the complexities of our past and of this current moment. Jerry Pinkney's work and the experiences it has generated across multiple iterations show us that we have the means to hold these conversations, to ensure that his arc of promise comes to fruition.[25]

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24 Woodmere Art Museum, *Freedom's Journal*, 34.

25 All of us at Woodmere were deeply saddened by the loss of Jerry Pinkney on October 20, 2021. We had been working with him on a new retrospective of his illustrations focusing on the roles of music and voice in American life and history. The exhibition will open in the fall of 2025.

Chapter Twelve

CRAFTING COMMUNITY, CONNECTION, COMPASSION IN A PANDEMIC

NIKKI SULLIVAN

IN LATE 2019, the Centre of Democracy (CoD) began developing a community engagement project entitled *Stitch & Resist*.[1] The initial aim of the participatory project was to "create meaningful bridges between personal interests and larger sociopolitical issues," and in doing so, to encourage and support active citizenship.[2] This would be achieved through craftivism workshops in which participants would create political messages in cross stitch while discussing social issues and, where appropriate, developing civic actions. Two days before the project launch, the declaration of a major emergency was made in South Australia in response to the COVID pandemic, and everything we'd spent months planning was suddenly in jeopardy. Our only option was to "pivot," but how? Over the following months we worked (primarily online) with facilitators from our partner organizations and community groups to develop bespoke strategies for working with and supporting their clients, members, and communities.[3] Underpinning

1 The Centre of Democracy (CoD) is a joint project between the History Trust of South Australia (HTSA) and the State Library of South Australia (SLSA). It consists of a gallery that opened in 2017, and a public engagement program, much of which takes place outside the walls of the gallery. The CoD staff was made up of a very small team, consisting of the manager of CoD, a public programs coordinator (three days per week), and an SLSA staff member who was allocated one day per week to carry out collections-based research. Like the other three museums for which the HTSA is responsible, CoD draws on and displays objects from the State History Collection in order to showcase the people, ideas and movements that have shaped, and continue to shape, South Australia, particularly with regard to democracy.

2 Ioana Literat and Sandra Markus "'Crafting a Way Forward': Online Participation, Craftivism and Ravelry's Pussyhat Project Group," *Information, Communication & Society* 23, no.10 (2020), 1414.

3 The organizations and community groups with whom we partnered work with refugees, asylum seekers and multicultural communities (Welcoming Australia; Successful Communities, Multicultural Communities Council of South Australia), LGBTIQA+ youth and elders (Queer Youth Drop In; ECH; headspace; Feast; Stitchers & Knitters Group), Aboriginal women (Knucky Women's

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the various approaches that emerged was the question that became the lifeblood of *Stitch & Resist*: "How can we continue to resist injustice, engage in the everyday practice of democracy, and take care of our wellbeing in the midst of a pandemic?"

While COVID-19 clearly posed all sorts of challenges both personally and professionally, it also engendered affordances that we, as museum professionals, could not have previously imagined. It allowed us to slow down; to really listen to and learn from community members whose needs were diverse, shifting, and in some cases, urgent; to focus on processes rather than outcomes; to be more flexible and responsive than we were used to being; to conceive of "success" in different and more expansive ways; to create safe spaces for sharing, discussion, and compassionate listening in a context in which public fears and levels of stress were mounting exponentially; and to genuinely build, nurture, and reap the benefits of connection, community, and compassion. In short, the transformations that *Stitch & Resist* underwent as a result of the pandemic enabled us to become "facilitators of civic engagement, agents of social change and moderators of complex issues, built around relevance, reflectiveness and responsibility."[4] This chapter offers examples of the strategies developed in conjunction with communities, discusses some of the lessons we learned, and reflects on the ways in which our experience of "crafting community, connection, compassion in a pandemic" might shape future practice.

Craftivism as a Mode of "Doing Democracy"

I took up the position of manager of CoD in late 2018 and from the outset sought ways to make active citizenship more relevant to more people. A few months into the role, I visited an exhibition at the Museum of Australian Democracy in Canberra and, while there, picked up a very modest-looking but incredibly powerful book entitled *Craftivism: A Manifesto/Methodology*.[5] In it, Melbourne-based fibre artist and activist Tal Fitzpatrick describes craftivism—a portmanteau term, craft plus activism, coined by maker and writer Betsy Greer—as a means by which to transform one's anger at the injustices that are everywhere in our world into something else, something that "prompts people to engage in complex conversations, … that uses humour and irony to make people consider a different point of view, … that inspires the kind of love and generosity that gets people to open their hearts and change their minds, … that provides practical solutions

Centre), Vietnamese women (Vietnamese Women's Association of South Australia), Arabic-speaking communities (Arabic Language and Culture Association of South Australia), D/deaf communities (Deaf Can Do), unions (SA Unions), gamers (BrainHackr), rural communities, bushfire-effected communities, and communities seeking support around mental health and wellbeing (Wellbeing SA, headspace; Just Listening Community); embroiderers (Embroiderers Guild of South Australia), those facing homelessness (Shelter SA), and individuals looking to live sustainably (The Adelaide Remakery).

4 *21st Century Roles of National Museums: A Conversation in Progress*, White paper prepared by Office of Policy and Analysis, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 2002), 18.

5 Tal Fitzpatrick, *Craftivism: A Manifesto/Methodology* (Melbourne: Blurb, 2018).

to local problems."[6] Craftivism, adds Fitzpatrick, can engender individual capacity-building and at the same time "strengthen social connections and enhance community resilience."[7] This understanding of craftivism seemed to my colleague Britt Burton and me to map perfectly on to what we believe the role of socially engaged museums to be: to inspire engagement, debate, and reflection; provide meaningful, nourishing experiences that enhance health and wellbeing; and create better places to live.[8] And Greer's claim that "the creation of things by hand leads to a better understanding of democracy because it reminds us that we have power,"[9] that power is literally in our own hands, just reaffirmed that craftivism was a perfect vehicle through which CoD could fulfil its mission.[10]

But why needlework? To some, needlework, with its historical associations with feminine subservience may seem like a strange choice of medium for political engagement.[11] After all, in her 1792 *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft conceived the two as antithetical, arguing that teaching girls to sew and "shutting them out from all political and civil employments … contracts their faculties more than any other [practice] that could have been chosen for them, by confining their thoughts to their persons."[12] But while this may have been the intent of those who, like author John Taylor, located women's value in their needles as opposed to their tongues, there is little doubt that needlework has, throughout history, been appropriated by women and other "others" to subversive ends.[13] (See Fig. 12.1.) Think, for example, of the embroidered banners made by suffragists and unionists, and of the abolitionist, AIDS memorial, and peace quilts created in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and now collected by museums internationally.

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6 Fitzpatrick, *Craftivism*, 2.

7 Fitzpatrick, *Craftivism*, 3. Disconnection, as many studies have shown, can lead to low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, dementia, and in turn, to poverty, homelessness, addiction, and so on. See, for example, Richard M. Lee and Steven B. Robbins, "The Relationship between Social Connectedness and Anxiety, Self-esteem, and Social Identity [Editorial]," *Journal of Counseling Psychology 45*, no. 3 (1998): 338–45, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.45.3.338.

8 Museums Association (website), "Museums Change Lives," 2017, 5, https://www.museumsassociation.org/app/uploads/2020/06/28032017-museums-change-lives-9.pdf

9 Betsy Greer, ed., *Craftivism: The Art of Craft and Activism* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2014), 8.

10 Fitzpatrick and Literat and Markus conceive craftivism as a form of DIY (do-it-yourself) citizenship.

11 For a more detailed discussion of this see Rosina Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

12 Cited in Naomi Clifford, "Women and the Needle," *Books and Talks* (blog), https://www.naomiclifford.com/portfolio/needlework-1/.

13 In 1631, John Taylor wrote *The Needle's Excellency: A New Booke Wherein are Divers Admirable Workes Wrought with Needles, Newly Invented and Cut in Copper for the Profit of the Industrious* (London: James Boler, 1631).The book included a poem that read: "And for countries quiet, I should like/ That Women-kinde should use no other Pike/ It will increase their peace, enlarge their store/ To use their tongues less, and their Needles more." Kristin Phillips, one of the participants in *Stitch & Resist*, created a piece that reproduced Taylor's words, along with her refrain: "FUCK THAT."

Values-Based Practice

One of the first people with whom we shared our initial ideas about *Stitch & Resist* was a colleague from Wellbeing SA with whom we had worked on previous occasions[14] We told her about the connections we'd begun to see between craftivism and the principles associated with the Slow Movement and she pointed us in the direction of resources that explore the relationship among mindfulness practises (such as hand stitching), self-care, and wellbeing.[15] As art historian Katia Olalde Rico has noted, one of the characteristic effects of needlework mentioned in condemnatory and positive accounts of its practice alike is what positive psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi refers to as "flow"—that is, a meditative-like state "in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter."[16] In that state of deep concentration, one experiences a profound sense of calm that allows the self to "reboot." And, as well-being coach and avid knitter Betsan Corkhill argues, flow switches off "self-monitoring" and allows speech

Figure 12.1. The piece in the background, "Use Your Needle Not Your Tongue," and the "Women Know Sexual Violence" tin were both designed and stitched by Kristin Phillips. See the project website: www.stitchandresist.com Photograph by Rudi Deco. © History Trust of South Australia. Used with permission.

14 Wellbeing SA is a state government agency that focuses on prevention and promoting and supporting the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of South Australians.

15 See, for example, Claire Wellesley-Smith, *Resilient Stitch: Wellbeing and Connection in Textile Art* (London: Batsford, 2021); Claire Wellesley-Smith, *Slow Stitch: Mindful and Contemplative Textile Art* (London: Batsford, 2015); and Emma Louise Swinnerton, "Mindful Stitch: Generating Dialogue In and Around the Threads of Wellbeing," *Fields: Journal of Huddersfield Student Research* 1, no. 1 (2015), http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/23102/. What has come to be known as the "Slow Movement" is a growing global phenomenon whose momentum is maintained by diverse individuals and organizations. Said to have begun with Carlo Petrini's protest against the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in Piazza di Spagna, Rome in 1986, the movement, in its multiplicitous articulations, advocates a cultural shift towards slowing down the pace of contemporary life, mindfulness, sustainability, and much more.

16 Katia Olalde Rico, "Stitching the Social Fabric Against Violence and Oblivion: The Embroidering for Peace and Memory Initiative Revisited through the Lens of Caring Democracy," *Artelogie* 15 (2020), http://journals.openedition.org/artelogie/4526; Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Classic Work on How to Achieve Happiness* (New York: Harper Row, 2002), 4.

to become freer and often more in depth.[17] It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that flow engenders feelings of "togetherness," both within the self and in relation to others and to the world.[18]

Our colleague from Wellbeing SA also spoke of, and inspired us to learn more about, empathic listening and the role it might play in creating change, connection, resilient communities, and hand stitched works that lend voice to those who all too often remain unheard. In their work on civics education, Molly Andolina and Hilary Conklin note that while there has been much emphasis of late on the importance of providing opportunities for the voices of those who have historically been marginalized to be heard, very little has been written on the concomitant need to cultivate empathic listening as a necessary competency for civic engagement.[19] Listening, writes professor of politics Andrew Dobson, is a "democratic deficit," and yet it can positively impact on four democratic objectives, namely "enhancing legitimacy, helping to deal with deep disagreements, improving understanding, and increasing empowerment."[20] Listening, in the sense outlined by both Andolina and Conklin and Dobson, then, is a practice of care, it builds bridges, fosters understanding, empathy, connection and community, and empowers individuals and groups. Empathic listening has the potential to create radical social change through "a revolution of human relationships."

Another colleague connected these ideas to political scientist Joan Tronto's book *Caring Democracy*, which begins with the premise that (at the time of writing) Americans were facing a caring deficit, a claim that resonates with Dobson's identification of a "democratic deficit."[21] Tronto argues that in the market-driven context of neoliberalism we have little time to focus on the care of others or ourselves, and this, in turn, leads not only to diminished lives, but also to a disinvestment in political systems and political engagement. Contemporary life, as Tronto conceives it, and as many of the pieces created through *Stitch & Resist* suggest, is driven by values that ultimately are bad for people and the planet. Arguing that we need to make care the centre of democratic life, Tronto offers a vision of democratic caring as a practice that

> Requires … citizens … to accept that they bear the political burden of caring for the future. That future is not only about economic production but also about caring for the values of freedom, equality, and justice. That future is not only about oneself and one's family and

17 Betsan Corkhill, *Knit for Health and Wellness: How to Knit a Flexible Mind and More* (Bath: Flat Bear Publishing, 2014), 34.

18 See Olalde Rico, "Stitching the Social Fabric," 3 and also Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 41.

19 Molly W. Andolina and Hilary G. Conklin, "Cultivating Empathic Listening in Democratic Education," *Theory and Research in Social Education* (2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2021.1893240.

20 Andrew Dobson, "Listening: The New Democratic Deficit," *Political Studies* 60, no. 4 (2012): 860.

21 Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). It seemed to us, reading the book, that the situation Tronto described was by no means unique to those living in the United States.

> friends, but also about those with whom one disagrees, as well as the natural world and one's place in it. That future requires that we think honestly about the past and accept some burdens and responsibilities that have been deflected or ignored, realizing that if all such responsibilities are reconsidered, democracy will function more justly.[22]

Through these and subsequent conversations with colleagues from a wide range of community groups and organizations, and our immersion in the writings and projects they shared with us, *Stitch & Resist* began to take form. Key to the project and its success was an emphasis on slowness, voice, empathic listening, change-making, and democratic caring.

Pivoting

Our initial (pre-COVID) plan was to roll out the project via CoD-run workshops open to the public; closed workshops (safe spaces) run by partner organizations in which their clients and members could address issues specific to them; and a suite of resources available on the project website www.stitchandresist.com.[23] The aim of the workshops and resources was threefold: to create safe spaces for self-expression, discussion and compassionate listening; to foster and support civic engagement; and to contribute to building and nurturing connection, community, compassion and wellbeing. Our vision was informed by the "Five Ways to Wellbeing" framework developed by the New Economics Foundation in the United Kingdom. The "Five Ways to Wellbeing" are a set of evidence-based connected actions that have been shown to improve and promote per-

22 Tronto, *Caring Democracy*, xii.

23 Jocelyn Dodd and Cerie Jones, *Mind, Body, Spirit: How Museums Impact Health and Wellbeing* (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2014), 20. We very much agree with Dodd and Jones's claim that "working in partnership is critical for museums to address health and wellbeing." The resources on the *Stitch & Resist* site were designed to assist others who may want to run similar projects and/or to invite people from around the world to contribute to the project.

Figure 12.2. "7 Languages," designed and stitched by Knucky Women's Centre women and Belyuen Primary School students, contributes to the revitalization of the seven Aboriginal languages that were once spoken in the region. Photograph by Rudi Deco. © History Trust of South Australia. Used with permission.

sonal wellbeing. They are: be active, connect, take notice, keep learning, and give.[24] Each of these activities is at the heart of *Stitch & Resist*.

Of the groups and organizations with whom we partnered, most of those who work directly with clients and/or members agreed to run workshops, whereas others offered to assist with resources, messaging, recruitment, and promotion. The arrival of COVID presented a range of challenges for *Stitch & Resist*, not least of which was the cancellation of all workshops. During the first month of lockdown, we and our colleagues in partner organizations established new mechanisms for working from home, one of which was the use of Zoom. While we were initially concerned that being unable to meet in person sounded the death knell for the project, our access to Zoom, along with the increased flexibility that working from home afforded many of us, meant that in fact partner organization facilitators were able to meet regularly and to talk at length. At the suggestion of a number of our collaborators, we set up a private Facebook group where the facilitators could post ideas, share stories that inspired us, show off our own works-in-progress, report on our communities, put out calls for assistance, or just reach out for a chat or a check-in. We also set up a *Stitch & Resist* Facebook page that facilitators encouraged community members to follow. Through this we also e began following and connecting with craftivist groups internationally and sharing information about our project. Through this we attracted works from across Australia and, indeed, throughout the world. In the early days of the pandemic we worked closely with Tal Fitzpatrick to refocus the project so as to ensure its continued relevance in a context that, for most, was unprecedented. We wanted, on the one hand, to find ways to respond to the fact that some of the measures designed to "flatten the curve"—lockdown, social distancing, remote working, the cancelation of events and closure of businesses, home schooling, government payments such as JobKeeper, limitations on travel, and so on––would exacerbate existing issues such as housing and homelessness,

24 Jodi Aked, Nic Marks, Corrina Cordon, and Sam Thompson, *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, report prepared by Centre for Wellbeing, New Economics Foundation (2008), https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/five-ways-to-wellbeing-1.pdf.

domestic abuse and violence, the many difficulties faced by asylum seekers and refugees, social isolation, racism, and more. But at the same time, we were mindful that many of the issues with which individuals and communities were struggling were present before the arrival of COVID, and would no doubt remain long after its departure. While COVID was undoubtedly having a massive impact on people both locally and internationally, discussions with collaborators made it clear that it did not, and should not, define us. (Fig. 12.2) And so, as I wrote earlier in this chapter, the question that became integral to *Stitch & Resist* in a context that was rapidly changing and unpredictable was: "How can we continue to resist injustice, engage in the everyday practice of democracy, and take care of our wellbeing in the midst of a pandemic?"

Unforeseen Benefits and Lessons Learned

As autumn moved towards winter, it remained unclear how long the pandemic would last and when, or whether, we might be able to reschedule the workshops we had originally planned. Keen not to lose momentum, the facilitators group began discussing the possibility of running online workshops. At the same time, we considered other ways to maintain connection and share ideas and works with community members who didn't have access to, did not want to, or could not use digital technologies. A couple of groups set up buddy systems. One, many of whose members are over fifty-five, wanted to ensure that those who couldn't attend online meetings had regular contact with others, were kept in the loop, and could be supported in ways that worked for them. Some buddies uploaded photographs of works made by participants who weren't comfortable using web portals and social media platforms, and others helped their friends to develop the skills to do so themselves.

From the outset, we wanted to ensure that the project was as inclusive and sustainable as we could make it. To avoid inviting people to participate in an activity which could prove prohibitively expensive, we put out a call on social media for unwanted cloth, thread, hoops, and needles, and were inundated with donations. The materials we received, along with those we purchased, were sent by post to project facilitators who then redistributed them to community members throughout the fifteen months that the project ran. The packages—which also often included patterns—were welcome arrivals in lives that were sometimes monotonous, lacking the pleasures that face-to-face encounters bring. Many recipients reported on the delight they felt as they unwrapped parcels of coloured aida cloth and variegated threads, of the sense of connection they experienced just knowing they were part of something that was not "all doom and gloom," something bigger and more expansive than the spaces in which they were confined. And this sense of connection, community, and compassion grew as they worked the messages they shared via SMS, email, and social media platforms. Work-in-progress (WIP) Wednesdays—a Facebook campaign that Tal Fitzpatrick suggested we create—was something that many participants looked forward to as it gave them a regular opportunity to "check in," to show off their stitching, to voice their concerns, to reflect on the issues raised through the works of others, and to offer and receive words of support and encouragement.

Some of the communities served by our partner organizations were harder hit by the pandemic than others. Many people in casual employment lost jobs and many of those on temporary visas found themselves ineligible for government support. For them, feeding their families and communities and keeping roofs over their heads took precedence over stitching. Facilitators who worked with these communities regularly shared stories about the challenges their communities were facing and sought emotional and material support from other members of the facilitators group. Individual facilitators responded in a number of ways, including putting out calls in their communities, collecting, and/or donating wool for a refugee group that was making beanies, and sewing machines, overlockers, and other materials for a sewing project designed by Congolese women and the team at Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS). These kinds of opportunities for connection, which were way beyond our original vision, and which might well not have happened had it not been for COVID, enabled us all to learn so more about each others' communities, to develop empathy for people and issues with which we might have had little or no previous contact, and to forge deep and genuine relationships that will undoubtedly nourish both the individuals involved and the communities to which they belong long after *Stitch & Resist* has drawn to a close.

Working with others whose motivations and whose understanding of participation and of solidarity were different from our own also engendered opportunities to broaden the scope of *Stitch & Resist* and strengthen its potential for inclusion. About halfway through the project, the facilitator of one of the groups who had been meeting fortnightly online to participate in "lesbian conversations" expressed her concern that not everyone in the group wanted to stitch. While this could have been viewed in terms of "failure," the discussion that ensued led to the realization that participation can take many forms: some people may contribute ideas and inspiration, others, messages or phrases, and others still, patterns, designs, or artwork. This idea came as something of a relief to other facilitators who felt that a small number of stitched pieces meant that their communities were not participating to the extent they had hoped they would. It gave us pause to rethink "success" and "impact" and the ways in which we measure these things. It also resulted in facilitators bringing messages from their communities to the facilitators' group for stitchers from other groups to stitch, thereby creating (cross) connections none of us had anticipated. As we stitched the words of others and learned more about the experiences that informed them, empathy, compassion, and connection evolved alongside beautiful works; indeed, the two were woven together.

During lockdowns, craft, as media reports regularly attested, became increasingly popular. At the same time, the *Stitch & Resist* Facebook following grew, and the project was promoted through radio interviews, newspaper articles, blogs, and webinars with international attendance, as well as by word-of-mouth. All of these things contributed to a steady flow of contributions to our online gallery, almost a quarter of which came from overseas: Canada, India, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, United Kingdom, the United States. These works and the stories that accompanied them reminded us that the situations in which we found ourselves were shared by others; that geographic and social distance need not be a barrier to connection, community, compassion; that together we are stronger.

Face-To-Face Encounters

Figure 12.3: "Stitch & Resist" promotional material, designed by B. Leideritz. See the project website: www.stitchandresist.com. © History Trust of South Australia. Used with permission.

The gradual lifting of restrictions in South Australia in late 2020 meant that we were finally able to run workshops for the general public, although a few had to be cancelled when infections spiked and restrictions were temporarily tightened.[25] Attendance at most of the workshops was at capacity and participants ranged from fifteen to seventy-five years of age and came from a range of cultural, linguistic, political, and class backgrounds. Most identified as women, some as non-binary. Some came alone, others in pairs or groups, but no one left without having made new connections. After a brief introduction to the project and its relationship to CoD, and some tips on how to cross stitch, Britt and I worked with participants to choose cloth, patterns, and thread, and, in some cases, helped them design their own patterns. For the remainder of the workshop, we moved between tables, answering questions and helping solve stitching problems as they arose. Through this process we listened and contributed to conversations that covered a diverse range of topics: health, travel (restrictions), better times (and worse times), football, family, food, working-from-home and jobs lost and gained, the environment, incarceration, Black Lives Matter, home schooling, and what the future might bring. Together we laughed and we lamented, and we wove a kind of togetherness that was all the more precious for having been threatened by a virus that still seemed like the stuff of sci-fi movies or Armageddon.

In late 2020 and early 2021, we also attended workshops hosted by partner organizations such as Wellbeing SA, Queer Youth Drop-in, and headspace. (See Fig. 12.3.) In October of 2020, during Mental Health Week, we ran four workshops on Kangaroo Island,

25 Attendance at workshops was free of charge and all materials were supplied to participants, although some chose to bring pieces they were already working on. They were held in metropolitan and regional centres. Due to COVID restrictions, places were limited and participants were required to book through Eventbrite. A significant proportion of participants attended more than one workshop. All workshops ran for three hours and participants took their works-in-progress home with them. Most, but not all, completed their pieces and uploaded them to the *Stitch & Resist* online gallery. All those who did, also displayed their work(s)—either digitally or in their original form—in the *Stitch & Resist* exhibition that was held at The Mill, Adelaide, July 2 to August 6, 2021. A downloadable pdf of the exhibition catalogue is available at https://stitchandresist.com/stitch-resist-the-exhibition/.

a small island off the coast of South Australia that, during 2019 and 2020, had been ravaged by the largest bushfires in its recorded history.[26] Two months later, the island, whose economic wellbeing is heavily reliant on tourism, was hit by COVID. The October workshops, hosted by Wellbeing SA, were well-attended by participants of diverse ages and backgrounds. For many, it was the first time they had gathered in a group in many months, and introductions were as heartfelt as the reunions that took place. In two of the four workshops, no mention was made of the bushfires, even though concern for the environment came through strong in many of the pieces that were begun and discussed there. In a third, talk of the bushfires and their devastating effects interspersed discussions of boarding school, domestic violence, local wines, community arts projects, and the unequalled talents and generosity of the women from the local bowls club who had provided platters of homemade goodies and decorated the tables in Christmas colours. In only one of the four workshops did the devastation that had impacted on the lives of almost everyone on the island take centre stage.

Britt and I reflected on this with our colleague from Wellbeing SA, herself an island resident. We wondered whether we should have played a more active role in facilitating conversation around wellbeing in the wake of the bushfires and the midst of a pandemic, but had been wary of "pushing our agenda" rather than listening to the needs, interests, experiences of participants at each of the different workshops, holding open space for them to emerge. We wondered too if the workshops had—as seemed to be the case—provided a positive experience for those who attended but we were loath to compromise the oft-times fragile bonds that had begun to be woven by asking people to fill in evaluation sheets, as if this was some kind of transaction that could be measured. We discussed the hesitancy expressed by a few of those who arrived thinking the workshops would be "less political" than they perceived them to be, and the ways in which we and other participants worked with those attendees to create an environment in which they felt comfortable, able to be themselves and to participate. The pieces they made, we explained, did not have to be "political": a cross stitched smiling sun could be just as effective in conveying or engendering hope as a strongly worded demand for ecological sustainability. During those workshops, we discussed the idea that "the personal is political," and explored the many forms that active citizenship can take: in particular, those like craftivism that can be gentle and healing. But we also learned from discussions during the workshops and feedback received afterwards that the success of the workshops should not, and indeed could not, be measured in terms of the number of works created, the "quality" and "impact" of the discussions—how would one even begin to measure such things?—or even the way participants felt as they left. What we have heard and seen is that in and through the workshops, the discussions, the weaving together of stories, lives, interests and threads, connections have been formed, communities have been (and continue to be) strengthened, that crafting has come to play an

26 Forty-six percent of the more than million-acre (400,000-hectare) island was burnt, wildlife—including endangered species—were severely affected, homes were destroyed, and lives were lost. Kangaroo Island is known as Karta Pintingga in the language of the Kaurna people, the traditional owners of the land.

important role in the personal lives, friendship groups, and change-making activities of many people, and that these processes are ongoing.

Our ideas about what constituted "a political message in cross stitch"—a phrase we had used in the initial stages of *Stitch & Resist* to describe the craft-specific project outputs—were also challenged and ultimately broadened in and through the relationships we formed with young, queer people who attended workshops hosted by the Queer Youth Drop-in and headspace. Reluctant to commit to large, time-consuming pieces, many chose the simplest pattern we had—a heart containing a pride flag of their choosing. These small pieces could (in most cases) be completed during the three-hour workshop, giving participants a sense of achievement. They also provided an opportunity to talk about identity, and, of course, difference. At the first workshop we ran at the Queer Youth Drop-in, one of the regular attendees had brought along a badge they were making using plastic aida.[27] They very generously walked us through the steps of creating a cross stitch badge. Having used badgemaking on previous occasions as a way to connect with young people, we jumped at the chance to incorporate what we had learned into subsequent workshops with queer youth.[28] While only a couple of these ended up in the *Stitch & Resist* online gallery and exhibition, many were made and worn with pride.

Mutual Humanization: Together We Are Stronger

There is so much more that could be said about *Stitch & Resist*, the things we learned, and the ways in which it continues to reshape our actions, identities, relationships. But I would like to end this chapter by expressing my gratitude to all those who actively participated in the project, who connected with ideas and people they might not otherwise have encountered, who took notice of what was so generously offered, learned, and gave of their time and their selves. This sentiment is not mine alone; it is something I have heard time and again from so many of those who attended workshops and/or connected to the project in other ways. In her account of the need to educate for empathy in literacy learning and civic engagement, Assistant Professor of Urban Teacher Education at Rutgers University Nicole Mirra offers an understanding of empathy as "mutual humanization or the idea that we cannot fully realize our own humanity until we recognize the full humanity of those who differ from us."[29] *Stitch & Resist*, I would like to think, has played a role in this process, and in doing so has contributed to repairing the social fabric of which we are all a part.

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27 Plastic aida resembles aida cloth and is sometimes referred to as plastic canvas. Designed for cross stitch and needlepoint, plastic aida has a grid-like structure with holes through which the needle is passed. Because it is stiffer than cloth it is an especially good medium for children and beginners.

28 Nikki Sullivan and Craig Middleton, *Queering the Museum* (London: Routledge, 2020), 91–94.

29 Nicole Mirra, *Educating for Empathy: Literacy Learning and Civic Engagement* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2018), 10.

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