

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTION OF INTERPRETIVES

Connecting With Artists

AFRICAN VIDEO COLLAGE

Still image from video by Moyo Okediji.



Seven video segments running simultaneously show the Akire painters mixing and applying paint, as well as carrying out integral steps like singing and praying.

Midway through the African gallery, visitors enter a niche that is literally carved out of the central platform that divides the gallery. This niche is intended to create an intimate area conducive to an art experience that incorporates sounds and visuals. The alcove features two large paintings on canvas by Nigerian artists from the town of Ile Ife who are part of a group known as the Akire painters. On a wall adjacent to the art are seven small (about six-by-eight-inch) embedded video monitors that display continuously looping footage of these artists at work. An outside editor helped the museum group the footage—which was shot by DAM native arts curator Moyo Okediji—

Still image from video by Moyo Okediji.





Sounds of the Akire painters singing and praying resonate in this alcove, which includes the group's paintings as well as the video collage, titled *Beyond the Brush: The Akire Painters' Process*. The video segments are grouped into three phases: preparing, painting, and praying.

into three phases: preparing, painting, and praying. "I think collage is an accurate word. It's not meant to be didactic or documentary; it's meant to evoke the process," says master teacher Heather Nielsen of the interpretive area, which is titled *Beyond the Brush*. "Also, given the importance of the performance elements—singing and praying—to the artmaking process, it was important to include a soundtrack."



Still image from video by Moyo Okeji.

DANIEL SPRICK FOCUS AREA

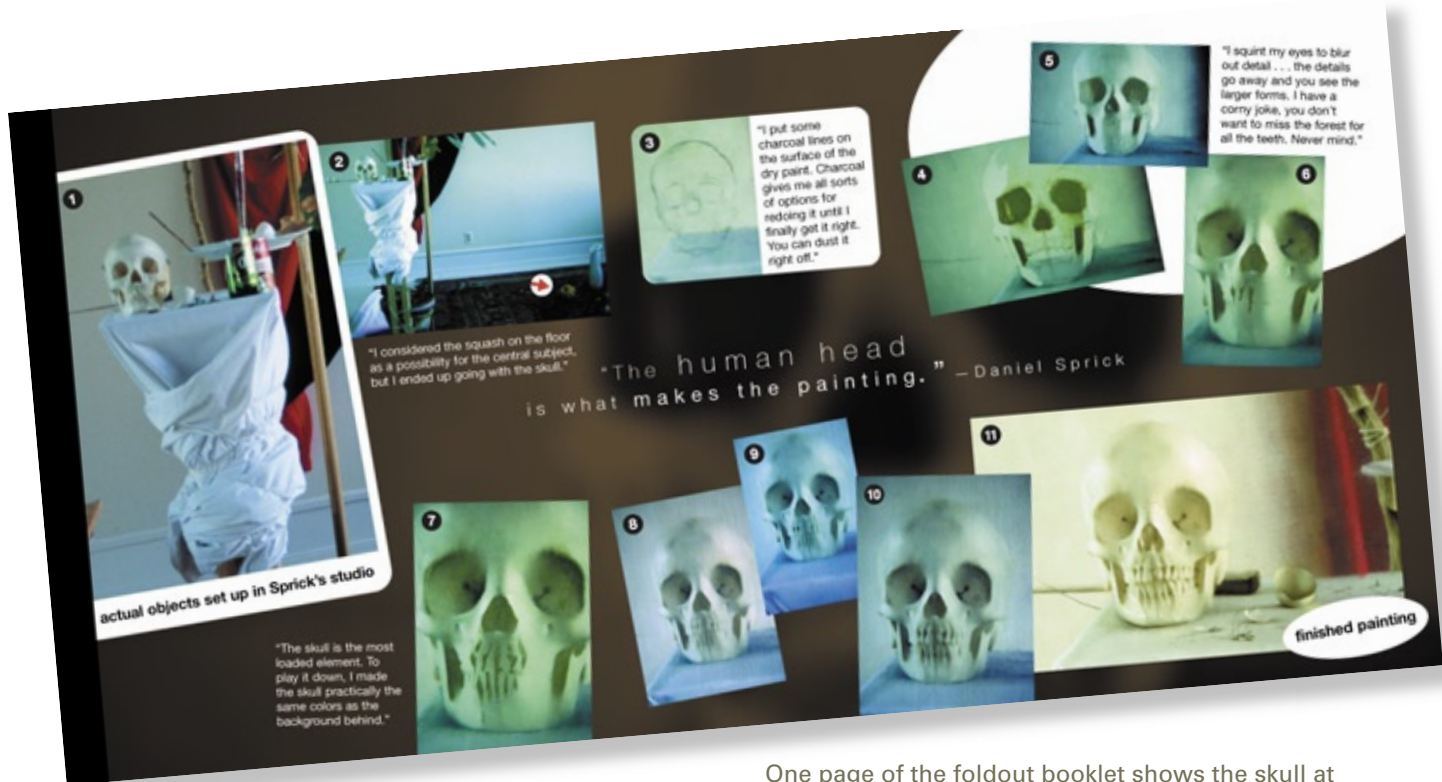


The artist's voice permeates the interpretation around *Release Your Plans* by Daniel Sprick (left).

Through the FAQ cards (below), Sprick directly answers frequently asked visitor questions about the painting and his process.

The Daniel Sprick focus area in the western American art galleries is one of the museum's most elaborate efforts to get inside the mind of the artist. The painting itself, *Release Your Plans*, hangs in an alcove with a sofa. To the viewer's right as he or she is seated on the sofa are a foldout booklet that focuses on different parts of the painting in progress and twelve FAQ cards that hang on rings in two sets of six for easy browsing. (The cards are double-sided prints sandwiched between two pieces of non-glare acrylic.) Each card contains a question that is answered in the artist's own words on the back. The foldout booklet is divided into four sections that focus on four different parts of the painting (the skull, wall, rug, and table). Each section folds out to display a series of photos showing the painting at different stages of Sprick's process. Except for captions, all the words are the artist's.





One page of the foldout booklet shows the skull at different phases as it was painted.

To the left of the entrance into the Sprick mini-gallery is a sign that invites visitors to "Explore this painting from the artist's point of view. Discover touchscreens and a 14-minute video about Daniel Sprick's *Release Your Plans* in the Monfort Gallery, straight ahead."

The next part of the Sprick area is a separate room devoted to the video, projected quotes, touchscreens, and a display of objects seen in the painting (some of which are the same ones the artist used as props).

The room's shape reflects the building's quirky architecture, and the design of the interactive area and its elements takes full advantage of the sharp angles and slanted walls. Whereas the first area—the foyer, if you will—still feels like part of the main gallery, this mini-gallery, with its low lighting, is distinctly set apart. The low light level makes it easier to see the video and the isolation keeps the soundtrack from spilling into other spaces, but the sense of separateness also helps promote a more contemplative mood. The

From the main gallery, visitors get a glimpse of the projected video through the doorway to the mini-gallery.





On a triangle wall in the mini-gallery, Sprick's words form sentences as they're spoken in the video playing to the left (above). Cut-outs in another wall hold objects from the painting plus touchscreens that display Sprick's thoughts about those objects (right).



video projection is quite large—about the size one would find on an old-fashioned slide screen—and loops continuously with no obvious beginning or end (the visitor doesn't have to do anything to make it start). There's a box on the wall with transcripts.

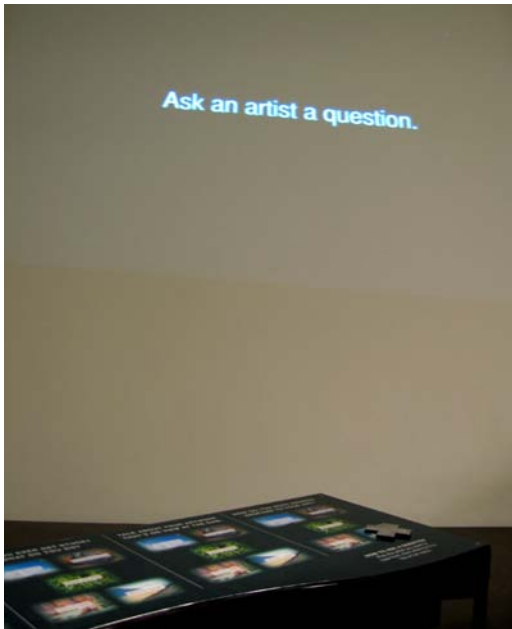
On a triangular section of wall next to the video are projected quotes (pulled from the video) that come together and disperse as the video plays. To the right is a wall with cutout niches in which are placed actual objects from the painting—a table wrapped in cloth, a

red rose, a skull, a candelabrum, and a soup can. Three touchscreens on this wall, when activated by viewers, display quotes from the artist related to the objects.

On the wall that's now behind the visitor, there's a self-portrait of the artist and a touchscreen with quotes from the artist about using himself as a subject.

In the center of the room, a large black leather ottoman provides seating for at least four people at a time, who can face in any direction.

SELECT-A-CHAT



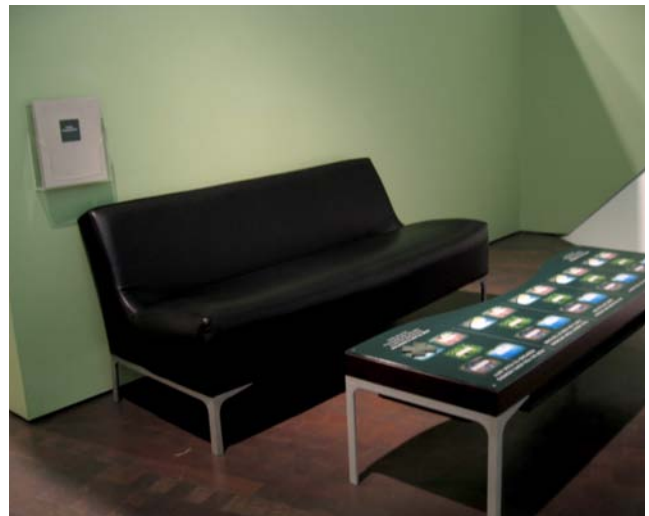
Visitors “ask” a question by moving an X-shaped sensor on the table. A one-to-three-minute video “answer” is projected on the wall.

Tucked into yet another of the Hamilton Building’s sharply angled corners, Select-a-Chat enables visitors to listen to one of five videotaped artists in the western art collection answer questions about his or her work. The artists appear as projected images that are partially visible from well across the gallery. When no one is activating the video, a continuously playing, soundless attract loop alternates short clips of the artists with photos of their work and the prompt, “Ask an artist a question.”

To ask a question, visitors sit on a black leather sofa. In front of them, a coffee table with a graphic overlay shows the artists’ names and photos of their work, together with five questions (the same five questions for each artist). A sensing technology embedded underneath the table is activated when a visitor slides an X-shaped sensor onto the question he or she wants to ask:

- What does it feel like to be an artist?
- How do you start?
- Do you ever get stuck? What do you do?
- Talk about your artwork that’s on view at the DAM.
- How do you hope viewers respond to your art?

After the visitor places the X, a one-to-three-minute video of the artist answering the question will play. Speakers discreetly positioned to the visitor’s left provide the soundtrack. A video transcript is available in a box by the sofa.



The graphic on the table shows five possible questions and five possible artists to ask.

MARCEL DUCHAMP FOCUS AREA



Particularly bold graphics help draw visitors into an unusual niche off the third floor lobby (above). Three panels project out at an angle from the wall (below).



An area off the lobby on the DAM's third floor houses Marcel Duchamp's 1935 *Boîte* (Box) and a wealth of interpretive material related to this paradigm-changing object. A portable museum, the *Boîte* has fold-out floors and walls that display 68 miniature reproductions of Duchamp's life's work—his early paintings, groundbreaking readymades, and works of art in unprecedented forms. The box and its sprawling contents are protected under a Plexiglas cover on top of a case whose jagged angles mirror the geometry of the Hamilton Building, which is more acute the higher one goes in the museum.

On a wall across from the *Boîte* are three wall panels (known as “idea banners”) that swing out from the wall. The banners tackle three different ideas relevant to the artist and the work on display and are titled “‘Borrowing’ as Art,” “Idea as Art,” and “Everyday Object as Art.” Under the banners are “collection connection” handouts that trace the ideas illuminated in the wall panels, starting with Duchamp and carrying through to other artists in the DAM collection. These handouts were inspired by the Modern and Contemporary Art Department’s belief that nearly every work of art in the modern and contemporary art galleries is rooted in the ideas embodied by the collective work of Duchamp, which is displayed in miniature in the *Boîte*. Each handout ends with a Make Your Own Art section that visitors can try at home. As seems apt when writing about an artist who drew a moustache on a postcard of the *Mona Lisa*, the tone of the handouts is fairly irreverent (one is titled “You Say Urinal, I Say Fountain”).

A bright red, floor-to-ceiling graphic of pointing fingers alerts visitors in the lobby to the activity area. The graphic repeats at a smaller size to indicate the handouts, where there’s also a written invitation to “Take one home.” Above and to the left of the area, visible from the lobby, are the words “Spotlight on Marcel Duchamp.”

Finally, the Duchamp nook contains a seating area composed of four chairs and a low table on which are placed books, a framed photo showing the artist with his chess set, a quote where he equates chess playing with art, and a chess set for visitor use.

UNPACKING DUCHAMP’S MINI MUSEUM

Idea as Art



50 cc of Paris Air
Marcel Duchamp

Artwork in Miniature: An empty medicine vial labeled “50 cc of Paris air”



Story of the Original: While in Paris in 1919, Marcel Duchamp was looking for the perfect souvenir for a friend “who had everything money could buy.” He stopped into a pharmacy and asked for a vial of medicine. But it wasn’t the contents Duchamp was after. He asked the druggist to empty the vial and seal it up again. Inside, an intangible gift was captured: 50 cubic centimeters of Paris air! It was the perfect gesture from a man who had rejected “retinal art”—art that appealed only to the eye—in favor of that which engaged the mind instead.

Radical Idea: Art can be simply an idea. It doesn’t have to be something you can touch.

In Duchamp’s Own Words: “I discarded brushes and explored the mind more than the hand.”

Three “idea banners” connect directly to a component of the artwork and help tease out what was so radical about Duchamp’s work.



Your Art Is My Art

"BORROWING" AS ART

"Collection connection" handouts show the ways that Marcel Duchamp inspired other artists in the modern and contemporary collection. Each six-panel handout starts by explaining a key idea embodied in Duchamp's *Boîte...*

...goes on to show how this idea manifests itself in another nearby artwork ...

... laid the foundation for Roy Lichtenstein to do this ...

LICHTENSTEIN



Roy Lichtenstein's *The Violin* (1976), on the third level.

Building on ideas from *L.H.O.O.Q.*, later artists began to "borrow" and revamp as they saw fit. By the time Roy Lichtenstein came around, even modern masterpieces were ripe for the picking. Lichtenstein took cutting-edge art from Duchamp's time, like cubist paintings of violins (below), and translated them into his comic-book style (above).

PICASSO



Pablo Picasso's *Violin and Grapes* (1912), in the collection of New York's Museum of Modern Art. Mrs. David M. Levy Bequest. Picasso meant for this work to hang lengthwise. We've turned it on its side for comparison.



3rd
LEVEL

... and for you to do this.

Make Your Own "borrowed" Art

1 Get your hands on anything with a printed image on it. If you're in the museum, why not head down to the Museum Shop and buy a postcard?

2 Deface it. Send it to a friend, hang it on the wall, give it as a present, mount it in an art show, etc. Preen yourself on your own irreverence and audacity for the rest of the day.

EXAMPLE An example: buy the aforementioned museum postcards, deface as you wish, then mount an art show inside a porta-potty, in an uptight colleague's cubicle, on the telephone poles in a cookie-cutter housing development—anyplace that could use a little high culture.



at
HOME

...and ends with half-serious suggestions for how to make your own Duchampian art at home.

WESTERN STUDIO BROWSING OBJECTS

In the western studio—a space off the main galleries that houses several interactive areas, including Select-a-Chat and the postcard activity—objects provide an unexpected and tactile entry point to thinking about the creative process. A wall unit of shelves and drawers is filled with touchable objects, each with a tag identifying which artist in the collection used or uses it and how. Some are actual items used by the artist and others are replicas. DAM educators pored through their files, searching for examples of things to display, with an emphasis on the surprising, the quirky, and the improvised. They then sent letters to living artists asking for ideas and got back some actual gifts. Interviews with artists yielded offers of additional material. Examples of objects on view are credit cards used for pushing ink and scraping away mistakes and a slow cooker to keep wax at optimum temperature for shaping into models. Tiny metal signs affixed to the drawers and shelves provide brief instruction and reassurance such as “please pick up,” “okay to touch,” and “open.”



A hang tag on each touchable object tells which artist used it and how, and shows the related artwork that's on view in the gallery.



Cow, 1921, Georgia O'Keeffe

This painting is on view near

Photo of O'Keeffe's studio by Todd Y
courtesy of Evans Gallery.



Georgia
O'Keeffe

Georgia O'Keeffe preferred glass palettes because she could scrape their smooth surfaces completely clean after each use, even if the paint had already dried. O'Keeffe was a tad obsessive about her paints—she also used a separate brush for each hue.

This palette did not belong to Georgia O'Keeffe.

Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait (detail), 1918, Alfred Stieglitz.

OCEANIC PROJECTIONS



A changing series of large-scale (roughly six feet high by eleven feet across) projected images provides a sense of place and helps visitors put Oceanic art in context. The images gently undulate like water. Each sequence begins with a large map of the South Pacific region—basically, from California to Japan—and then zooms in on a specific place. Visitors next see an image of artwork in the gallery that’s from that locale. This then morphs into three or four more images of the artwork being made or used. “It’s similar to the African video collage [described above] in that it’s non-didactic, but it’s executed quite differently,” says Heather Nielsen, master teacher for native arts.

A constantly morphing projection in the Oceanic gallery gives visitors a sense of context and geography without being overly didactic.

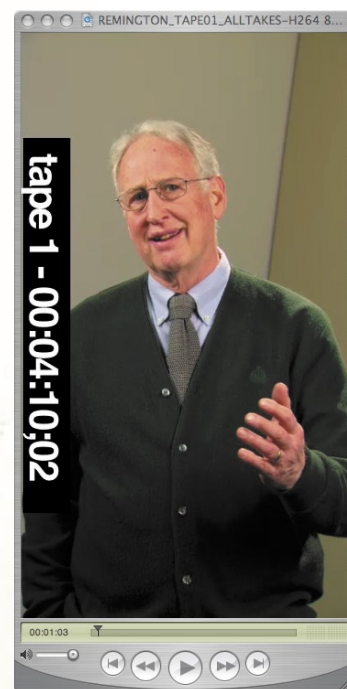
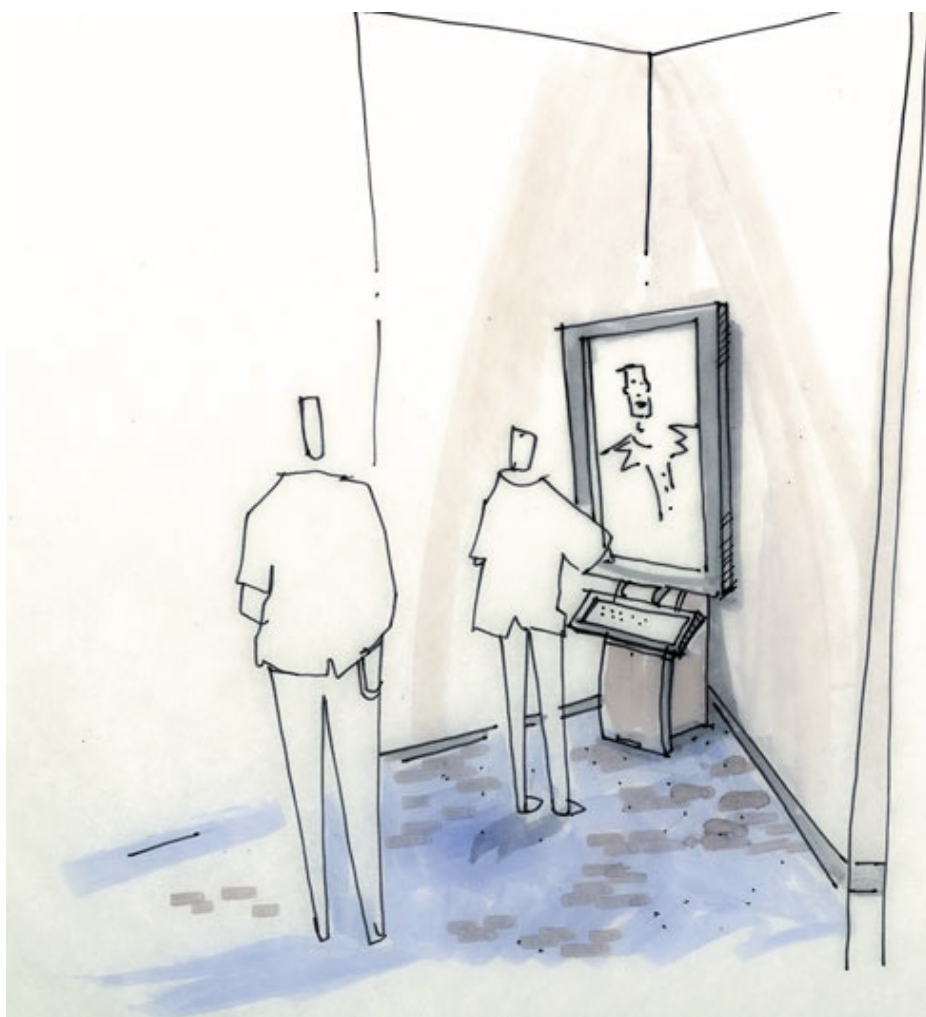
REMINGTON INTERACTIVE VIDEO

This interactive experience is still in active planning and development. “We want to capture the infectious enthusiasm of [museum director] Lewis Sharp speaking as an expert on Frederic Remington’s bronzes,” says Bruce Wyman, director of technology. “We’re portraying Lewis at life size using a high definition video display with incredible detail and quality. However, rather than just having a constant video loop, we’re making the technology ‘aware’ of the visitor, so that the video Lewis can respond accordingly. When nobody is nearby, Lewis will wait patiently, idling away the minutes, occasionally beckoning to nearby visitors. When someone approaches, he’ll come to life and begin to speak to the visitor, encouraging them to choose one of five questions.” The

topics visitors can choose from will include bronze-making technique, the collaborative efforts involved in casting, and why Sharp considers the Denver Art Museum’s cast of *The Cheyenne* to be Remington’s best work (and perhaps even the finest bronze cast in the nineteenth century).

If Remington (who died in 1909) were alive, the museum might have designed an interactive in which visitors queried him directly. However, using Sharp as the spokesperson brings a different kind of “expert” voice into the gallery (although he’s supremely knowledgeable about Remington, Sharp’s current job is as a museum administrator, not a curator).

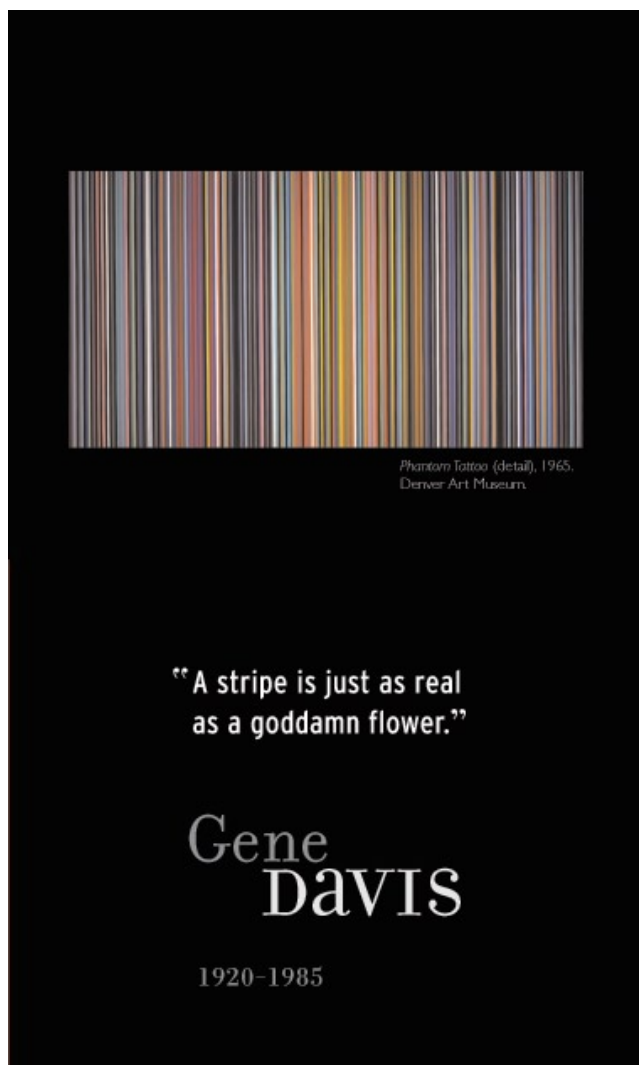
Illustration by George Bird.



Sensing technology will make a lifesize video of DAM director Lewis Sharp respond to the visitor’s presence.

HUMAN CONNECTION LABELS

Used in one form or another in all the galleries in the new building, these laminated brochures focus on an artist or process. Each heavily illustrated label is specific to an object and usually includes lots of anecdotes and quotes from the artist. Headlines and text written in “chunks” allow visitors to read in any order and to skim. The current format of these hand-held labels grew out of human connection labels created for the reinstallation of the museum’s European and American collections in the late 1990s, which was made possible by the generous support of The Getty Grant Program. (The European and American labels are described in *Enriching Visitor Experiences*; see the resource section of this report.)



In the human connection labels made for the modern and contemporary collection, photos and quotes help give a sense of the artist's personality.

MARQUESAN CLUB

Symbol of Status



When the Oceanic team didn't know the artist's name, the human connection labels focused on his or her techniques to help visitors see the hand of the artist in the object.

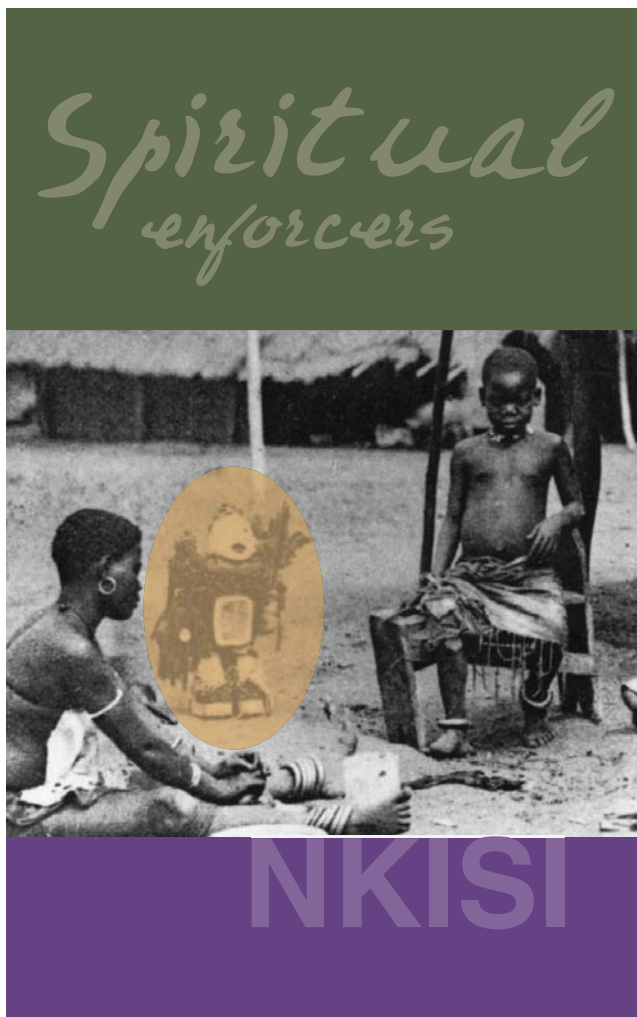


Photo by Donald Gruener.

A Fine Finish

The sculptor used sharp tools to carve the club from *toa* wood—also known as ironwood—then sanded it smooth with sharkskin, soaked it in taro fields to achieve a rich brown color, and finished it with coconut oil.

Headlines and text written in “chunks” allow readers to read in any order and to skim.



There has been a terrible wrong between us
If it is ended, come and swear rightly
If not, let the spirits come and destroy us
—prayer



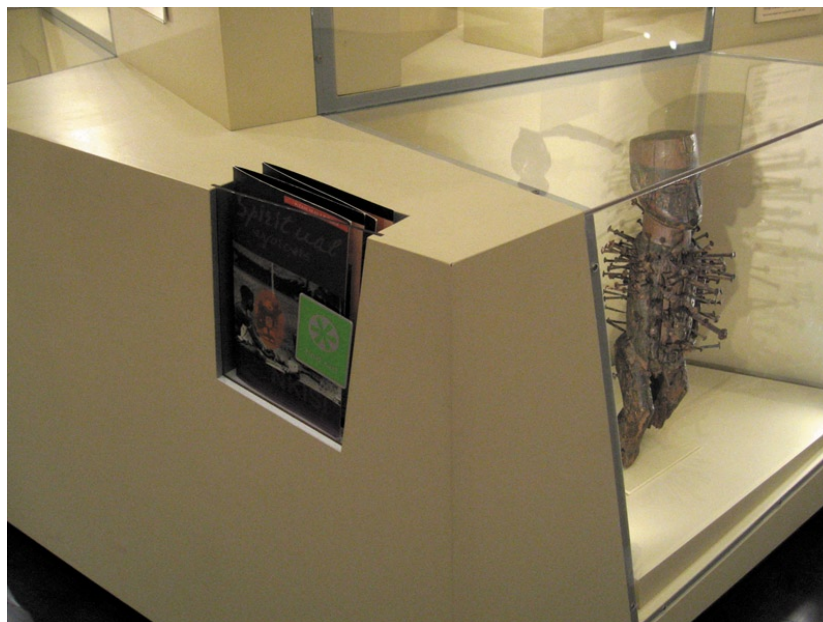



Photo by Robert Visser, Eliot Elisofon.

Striking a Deal

Some nkisi are covered with nails or other sharp objects, each concealing a message or agreement. When a deal or treaty is made, both parties will lick a nail and hammer it into the wooden figure. Each party is bound to honor the terms of the agreement.



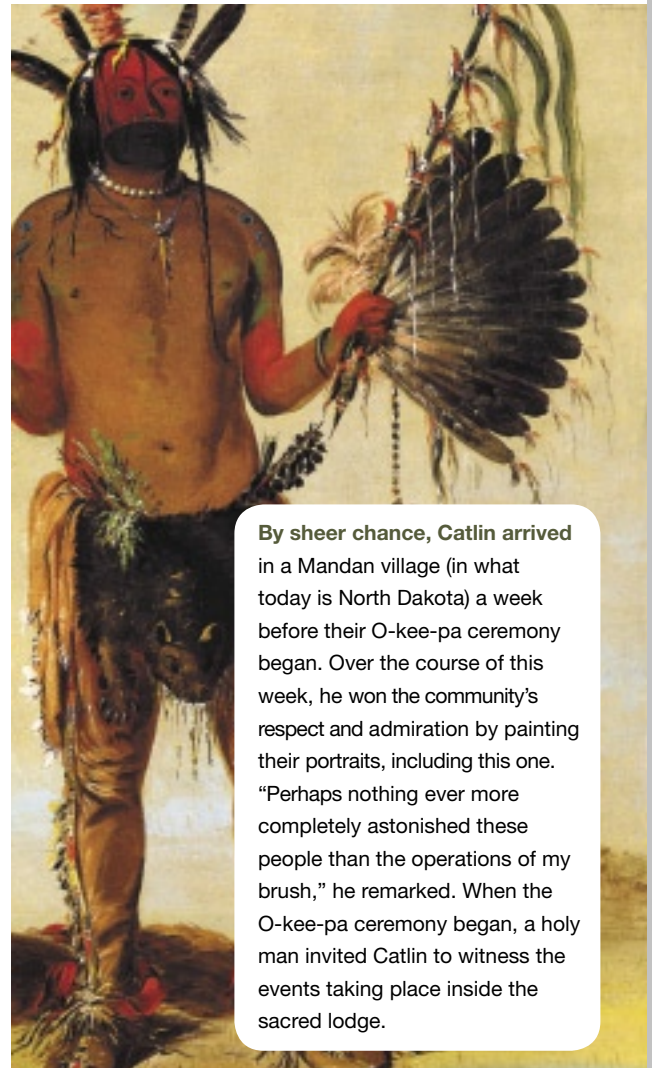
Visitors find the labels more easily when they're next to the art, but this can be a challenge in some installations. In the African gallery, label boxes were built into the exhibit cabinetry for an integrated look (left).



What's the story behind this painting?



Catlin was one of the few non-Indians to witness the ceremony shown in our painting.



By sheer chance, Catlin arrived in a Mandan village (in what today is North Dakota) a week before their O-kee-pa ceremony began. Over the course of this week, he won the community's respect and admiration by painting their portraits, including this one. "Perhaps nothing ever more completely astonished these people than the operations of my brush," he remarked. When the O-kee-pa ceremony began, a holy man invited Catlin to witness the events taking place inside the sacred lodge.

Designers customize the look of human connection labels for each gallery. This human connection label about George Catlin comes from the western gallery.

Why aren't all casts the same?

By alternately hounding and collaborating with foundry workers, Frederic Remington knew he could get the cast he wanted. The notoriously hands-on sculptor practically lived at the foundry during the making of the cast that now sits in this room (cast #3).

But Remington couldn't spend an equal amount of time on every cast. Some casts of *The Cheyenne* were made without his supervision; others were even made after his death.



Some Things to Compare

Texture Remington was a perfectionist about his textures. He wanted his buffalo fur to look different from the horse mane. He strove to make the smoothness of horse hair clearly different from the smoothness of human skin.

Detail Remington often sharpened or changed details from cast to cast.

Position You might be surprised by how many differences you can find between two casts from the same mold: fingers, hoofs, and more.

Color You might not always notice it, but bronzes do have color. Chemicals added after casting give the metal its patina (coloring). Remington sometimes even used several colors on a single sculpture.

Expression A small change in the mouth or brow can have a huge effect.

Naturalism At the end of the day, Remington wanted a sculpture that looked convincing down to the smallest detail.

One of the benefits of human connection labels is the ability to show side-by-side comparisons. Here, visitors can compare two bronzes cast from the same mold with varying degrees of supervision from western artist Frederic Remington.

QUOTE LABELS AND SUPERGRAPHICS



A “supergraphic” artist quote at the main entrance to the African gallery sets the stage for thinking about African art in a new way.

Found in the modern and contemporary galleries (and in a few other spots as well), quote labels are extended object labels that include a quote, usually from the artist.

Supergraphics is the museum’s term for very large graphics, typically applied in vinyl directly on the wall. The African galleries and the Marcel Duchamp focus area in the modern and contemporary galleries

use this format to display quotes that help visitors connect with the art on display and the artists who made it. Quotes include:

“The time to view Africa as an exotic far-off land has passed.”

—Fernando Alvim, Angolan artist

“A person can’t be beautiful without a fine character.”

—Mende proverb

“I discarded brushes and explored the mind more than the hand.”

—Marcel Duchamp

Engaging Visitor Response

JOURNALS

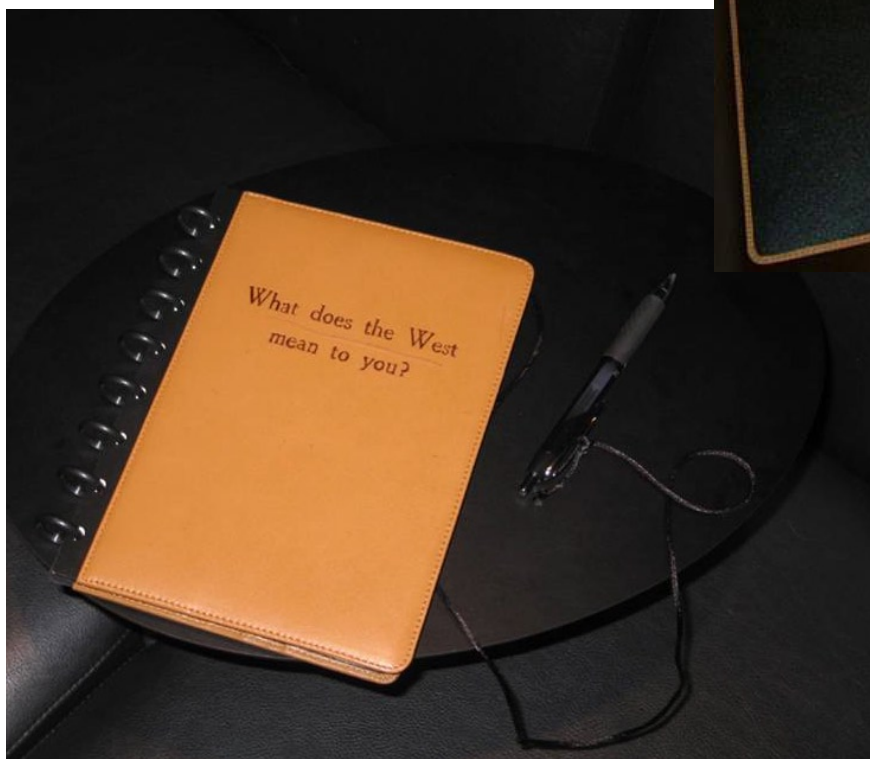
All the collection areas in the Hamilton Building have at least one journal for visitors to write, draw, and doodle in. The journals vary in appearance (leather-bound ones are used in the western galleries) but almost all incorporate a Levenger system so pages can easily be added or removed to edit out graffiti, make “good” responses (those that spark further response) more noticeable, or even to move adult responses to the front to underscore that the journals are an adult activity. Visitors can remove their pages and take them home without leaving little bits of torn paper.

Response journals invite visitors to share personal opinions, feelings, and stories with the museum and with other visitors. Materials that look like they’re intended for adults encourage adult participation. It helps to keep thoughtful adult responses prominent with a notebook system (right) that allows easy moving and removal of pages.

The journals all contain a specific prompt, such as:

- Tell your Pacific story.
- What is beautiful to you?
- Of all the photographs you’ve ever taken, tell us about the one you’re most proud of.

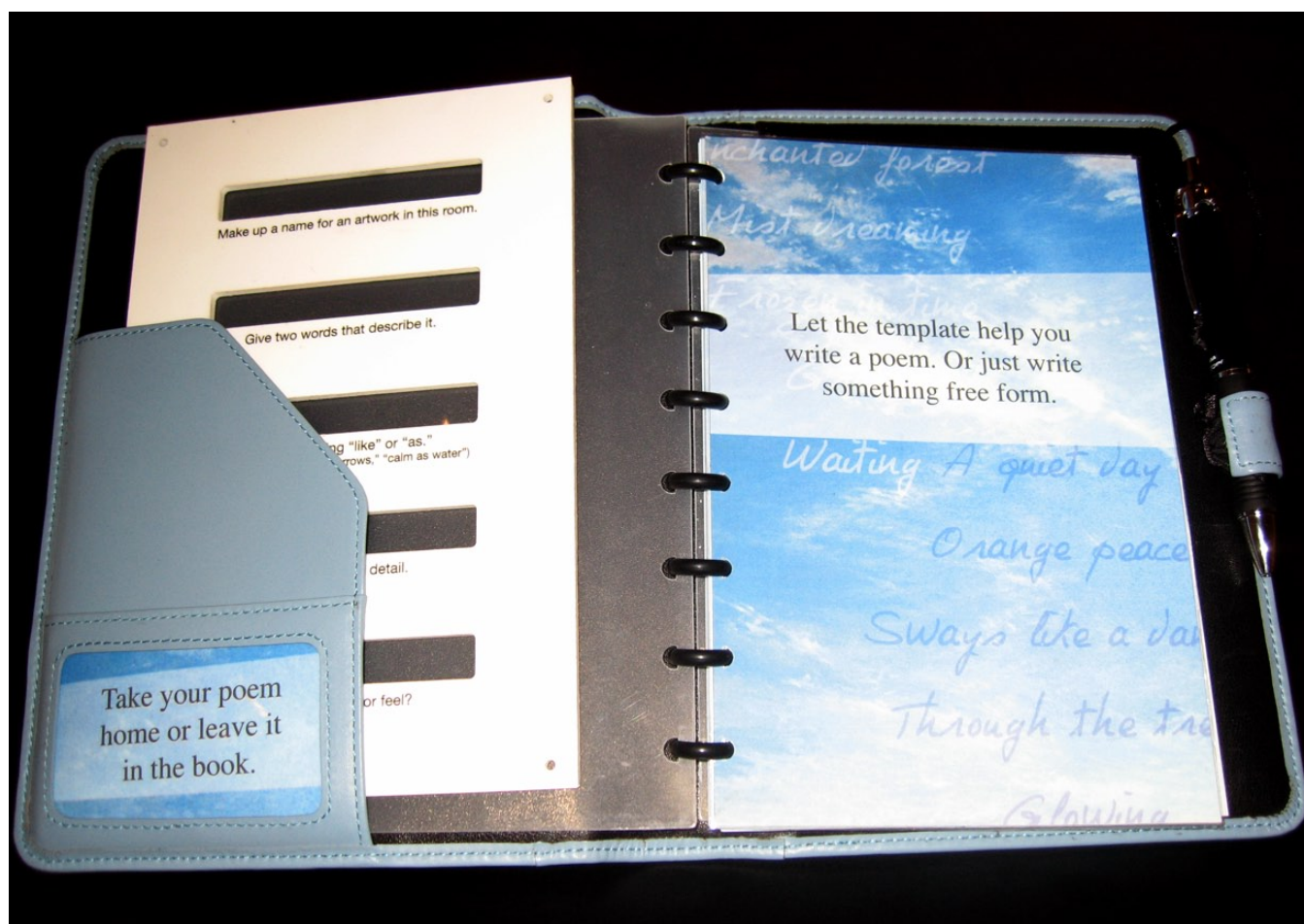
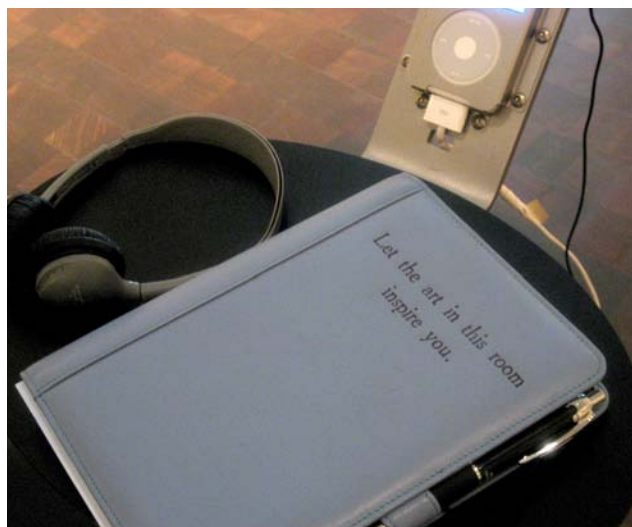
The museum prefers to use pens (a more “adult” medium than pencils and one that signifies lasting value), but the downside is that in the galleries pens must be attached for conservation reasons.



GUIDED POETRY JOURNAL

"Let the art in this room inspire you" is what it says on the blue leather cover of this journal in the western galleries. Inside, visitors are invited to "Let the template help you write a poem. Or just write something free form." The journal pages are printed with a cloudswept blue sky as a background.

Visitor testing yielded helpful hints to make the poetry activity more comfortable for adults: don't lead with the word "poetry" (right) and clearly state options like keeping your poem or doing your own thing (below).



QUESTION CARDS

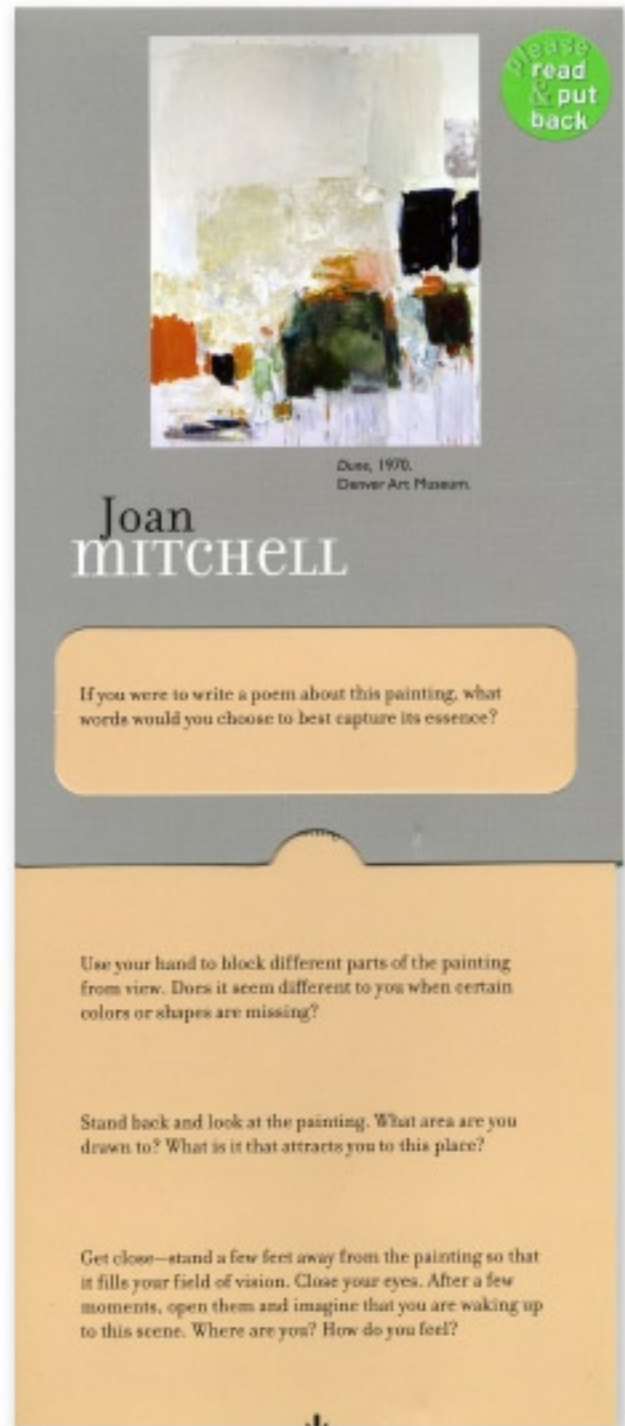
Placed on tables throughout the modern and contemporary gallery are six different cards with works of art on the front. Each card contains five questions that a visitor reveals one at a time by sliding them down from a holder. Specific to the object pictured on the cover (which can be seen from the seating), the questions are a deliberate mix—some appeal to logical, rational thinkers while others are more imaginative or narrative. Some questions encourage visitor response (without a visitor actually having to write it down); still others encourage intense looking. A few examples:

If you found this painting on the cover of an album, what kind of music would you expect to hear?

Place yourself in this painting. Sit on the shapes. Dip your feet into the water. Look around. How do you feel?

Take an inventory of the different textures that cover the surface of the painting. What variations do you notice?

Stand back and look at the painting. What area are you drawn to? What is it that attracts you to this place?



Open-ended questions suggest personal ways to experience and respond to non-representational art.

Engaging Visitor Creativity

AFRICAN STUDIO

Tables and stools at different heights signal that both adults and kids are welcome in the African studio, located in a corner of the African galleries. Here visitors can create their own artworks using rubbing plates and stencils based on actual patterns and forms in the gallery. The designs on the rubbing plates and stencils are derived from specific objects on display and relate to the work of two contemporary African artists in the museum's collections who incorporate traditional motifs into their own work. Each stencil and rubbing plate has an image of the object, a detail from the object, and basic ID information. There's a wall on which to post your work when you're done, or you can take it home with you. The space was

designed for maximum flexibility: everything can be moved, covered up, and changed to accommodate live programming on weekends or different projects in the future. Even the quote by artist Tola Wewe on the wall above the posting area—"Your artwork is like your fingerprint."—remains relevant through changing activities.

"We've made it possible for visitors to do in a simple way what these artists are doing in a very sophisticated way," says master teacher Heather Nielsen. "We are both tapping into their own creativity and giving insight into a specific process used by these particular artists."



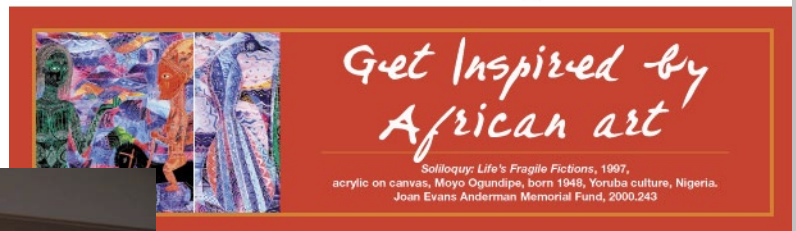
Posting areas offer ideas and let visitors "leave their mark" at the museum.



A banner and wall graphic invite visitors to "Get inspired by African art." Two sizes of furniture reinforce that both adults and kids are welcome.



Visitor artwork posted
in the African studio.



Rubbing plates and
stencils (above and left)
show how their imagery
derives from works of
art in the gallery.

WESTERN POSTCARD ACTIVITY

The western postcard activity is part of the western studio area, which also contains Select-a-Chat and the browsing objects. The postcard-making station consists of two tables with chairs, art supplies, and preprinted postcards with a blank front side. The postcards come in three different styles: one in sepia tones shows a cowboy, a second exemplifies nineteenth-century elegance, and the third has a 1950s touristy look. Visitors decorate these with heavy-duty self-inking rubber stamps derived from the art on view (there are people, places, buildings, animals, even the corner of a decorative frame). There are also colored pencils and pens for embellishments and writing a message (the pens and the stamps are attached to the table to prevent them from migrating into the galleries). Actual postcards of the West are displayed on a Plexiglas panel that invites visitors to "Send a greeting from the West." To the left of one table is a display rack for hanging work. A vending machine built into the wall sells stamps and a mail slot makes it possible to complete the experience on the spot.

"The theme of greetings from the West applies on two levels. A visitor is in the western American art galleries and also in an institution geographically located in the American West. So every visitor, just by virtue of being at the museum, has some level of personal experience in the West," says master teacher Lisa Steffen.

This area tends to be high maintenance. Stamps need to be re-inked, postcards have to be collected and mailed, pencils must be sharpened (although small handheld sharpeners are provided), and the stamp machine has to be replenished. Steady use means it also requires tidying up on a regular basis.



Self-inking rubber stamps with images from art on view nearby allow visitors to make their own customized postcard, then mail it in the gallery.



CROPPING L'S

This low-tech and deceptively simple activity provides visitors with L-shaped pieces of metal that they can move around on a board to visually “crop” or re-frame selected photographs. Instructions state “With each shot, a photographer makes choices. Move these tools to frame different parts of the photograph. What should be included? What should be left out? How do your choices change the overall feel and impact of the photograph?” This activity has received unanimous praise from visitors and has prompted the museum staff to think about other activities that

bridge the themes of connecting with artists and personal creativity. Staff also noticed that visitors wanted to carry the L's with them outside the activity area and use them to look at the artworks on the wall. A possible next step is a portable gallery looking device that adults check out and use wherever they like.

In a photography gallery visitors can consider artists' choices by visually re-framing selected photos that are on view nearby.



Multiple Voices

CONVERSATION LABELS

The conversation labels in the western gallery feature snippets of an ongoing discussion among curatorial staff about the art on view (in this case, a selection of works on paper). The labels are introduced with a banner that includes a photo of Mindy Besaw, Ann Daley, and Joan Troccoli talking. The conversation takes place in a transcript-like format via extended object labels placed throughout the exhibit. Visitors “follow” the conversation as they walk from one object to the next.

“This falls under our multiple voices initiative because you have not an unexpected voice but an unexpected way of hearing that voice,” says master teacher Lisa Steffen. “It’s like being a fly on the wall. You pick up their enthusiasm and love for the artwork as well as their senses of humor. It also helps communicate better than a standard label that these are the opinions of human beings, not the voice of divine authority etched on the gallery wall.”



A standing banner introduces this unusual label approach and the participants in the “conversation.”



AD These two Colorado landscapes are very close to each other. Mount Sopris and Red Mountain are both in the Glenwood Springs/Aspen area.

MB You can really see the similarities.

AD Mechau is playing. He’s doing a vertical mountain in a horizontal space, taking a different approach. Unlike Ethel Magafan. She’s done a more traditional format for a mountain. Ethel Magafan and her twin sister Jenne were Mechau’s students.

JT It’s a good compare and contrast.

The conversation format offers an unexpected way of hearing the curatorial voice.

CATLIN CUBES

George Catlin's *The Cutting Scene, Mandan O-kee-pa Ceremony* is hung just to the right of a corner. The wall perpendicular to the painting contains four human connection labels. Each human connection label has a question or topic on the cover that is answered or discussed inside:

- What is happening in this painting?
- Why does this painting look sketchy and unfinished?
- The O-Kee-pa Ceremony
- What's the story behind this painting?

Farther to the left on that same wall are built-in cubbyholes that hold eighteen acrylic cubes (two sets of nine) about the size of large children's blocks. Text in the middle of the cube shelf reads: "Why is this considered one of the most controversial paintings in the museum?"

in the museum? This small painting sparks a lot of discussion. To find out why, pick up a cube and read all the sides. Each cube explores one issue. Each side of the cube contains one point of view."

Each cube has a question on one side and an image (like a detail from the painting or a photograph of someone quoted on the cube) on another. The questions are:

- Why is this painting important?
- How do American Indians feel about Catlin today?
- What were Catlin's motivations?
- Does this painting exploit a sacred scene?
- Was Catlin a racist?
- Is this painting factually accurate?
- Did Catlin sensationalize?
- Is this a good painting?
- Was Catlin a sympathetic or prejudiced observer?

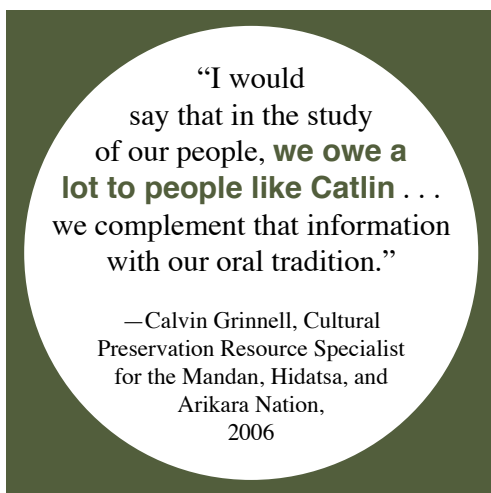


A shelf of "multiple perspective cubes" gives visitors many points of view about the nearby painting.



After each question it says, in smaller type, “It depends on who you ask.” The other four sides have opinion quotes from a range of different expert voices and sometimes a fact to put it all in context. Visitors can go between the cubes and the handheld labels, use one or the other, or (as always) choose not to engage in any of the activities. Nearby on a small table is a leather-bound journal with an image of the painting and the word “Thoughts?” on its cover, so visitors can record their own reactions.

Each cube has an image, several opinions, sometimes a fact, and a topic question. The question is followed by “It depends on who you ask.”



Cubes break up the text into smaller chunks so it looks less intimidating.

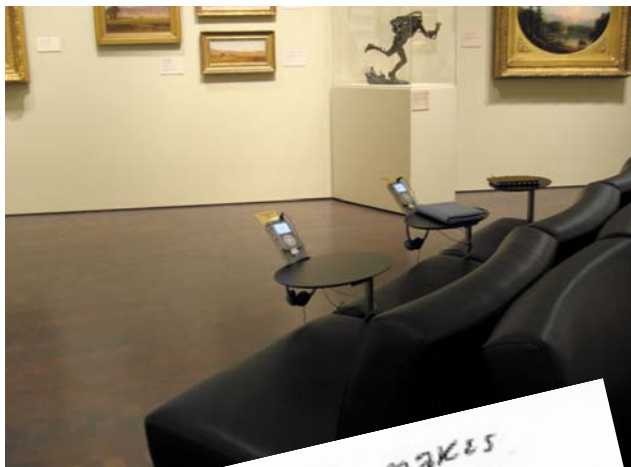
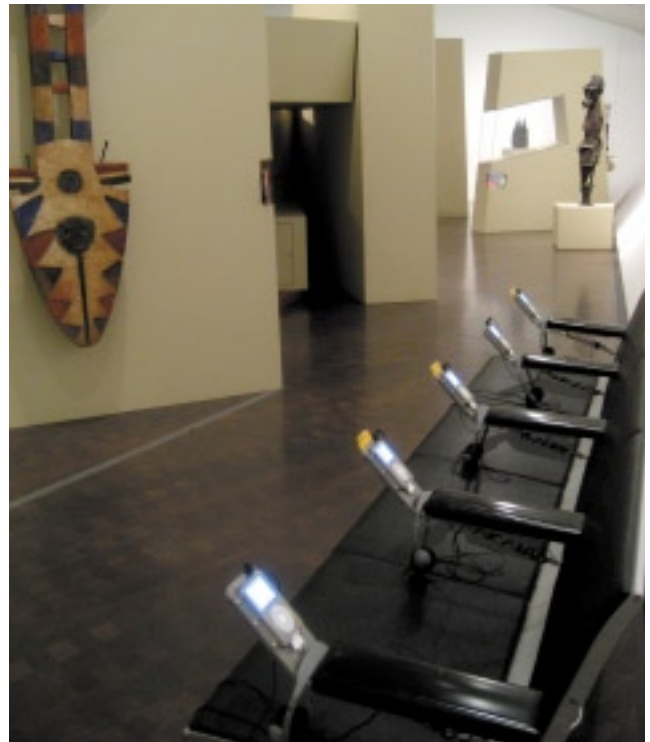


IPOD STATIONS

iPods installed in the western and African galleries provide an unexpected way to enhance the museum experience. A visitor sits in a chair to which an iPod is permanently attached and puts on the headset. There's a "Never used an iPod before?" card for people who need instruction, but other than that the experience is self-guided.

In the African gallery, a prompt on the wall beckons visitors to "Experience African art with music." Four chairs are set in a row with their backs to the wall. Visitors sit down and select from six playlists:

- Historic African Music
- 20th-Century Hits
- American Roots and Rhythm
- Modern Tracks
- Local Artists' Recordings
- Music from Selected Countries



In the western gallery, six chairs are set back-to-back in the center of a small gallery. Each chair also has a small round table attached since the seating area doubles as the place for journal writing. (One or more of the following journals may be out: guided poetry journal, "What does the West mean to you?" or "Suggest a song for these iPods.")

The western playlist is organized by mood:

- Contemplative
- Epic
- Happy
- High and Lonesome

By selecting from a variety of songs on iPods, visitors can consider what resonates for them as they look at the surrounding art.

Western music makes
we feel more relaxed.
It sounds like the drums
in the background are
heart beats. The new building
rocks!
Warming
Energetic
Spiritual
Tradisional

QUOTE CARDS

Mounted on a wall in the western gallery, the quote cards activity plays with the idea of unexpected voices as well as the idea of using emotion as a filter through which to experience art. The prompt says "Pick a mood." Underneath are seven slots with cards labeled "calm," "inspired," "proud," "forlorn," "happy," "philosophical," and "cynical." A different graphic treatment is applied to each word. A visitor can see one card at a time; as a card is pulled the next one slides into place, vending-machine style. A visitor selects a card, turns it over to find a quote, and either takes the card home (the URL for the museum's website appears on the bottom as a way to remind people later where it came from) or "recycles" it in a slot on the wall. The quotes are from artists, western writers, pioneers, and poets and provide a range of perspectives on the West.

Quotes about the west come from a range of time periods and a range of people—authors, pioneers, politicians, and of course the occasional artist.

INSPIRED

The thing I love so much about working in Denver is that you can look out the window, down any street, and see western romance and reality in a head-on collision.

—artist Karen Kitchel, 2004

www.denverartmuseum.org



APPENDIX 2: LIST OF HAMILTON BUILDING ADULT INTERPRETIVES BY COLLECTION

Modern and Contemporary Art

Human connection labels

Quote labels

Question cards

Duchamp focus area (with introductory panel, idea banners, browsing books, collection connection handouts, supergraphic quotes, chess game)

Response journal: "Of all the photographs you've ever taken, tell us about the one you're most proud of."

Response journal: "Share your experience with James Turrell's *Trace Elements*."

Cropping L's

African Art

Video collage

Human connection labels

Response journal: "What is beautiful to you?"

Supergraphic quotes

iPod station

African studio

Oceanic Art

Human connection labels

Response journal: "Tell your Pacific story."

Oceanic projections

Western American Art

Daniel Sprick focus area (with video, projected quotes, objects from the painting, artist quotes on touchscreens, foldout booklet of in-progress photos, FAQ cards)

Remington focus area (with interactive video and human connection label)

George Catlin focus area (with Catlin cubes, human connection labels, and response journal)

Select-a-Chat

Postcard activity

Studio browsing objects

Response journal: "What does the West mean to you?"

Guided poetry journal

iPod station with "Suggest a song for these iPods" response journals

Quote cards

Conversation labels

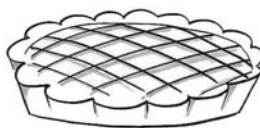
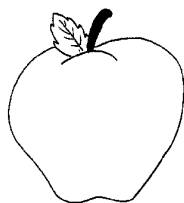
*In addition to installed adult interpretives, each gallery also has options designed for family visitors (e.g. a sound board and video nook in African, a 3-D puzzle in Oceanic, roadside bingo and other looking games in western).

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE OF A “FOOD FOR THOUGHT” WRITE UP

Thoughtful Reflection on a Gallery Survey

Gallery Music Devices
November 2004

Food for Thought



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Study coordinated and summarized by
Heather Nielsen, Master Teacher, Native Arts and
Lisa Steffen, Master Teacher, Western American Art
November 2004

Evaluation Plan

goal: Formative testing will determine the relative successes and shortcomings of three types of audio delivery systems. It will inform the decision of which of these systems to use for the music stations in the new African and Western galleries.

objectives: the testing will determine:

- The relative attracting power of the 3 systems for visitors
- How visitors' expectations about content are influenced by the type of equipment
- The relative ease of use of the 3 systems for visitors
- Visitors' relative comfort with the 3 systems

target audience: Visitors age 16 and over.

test logistics

- Cued observations and interviews. Visitors will be asked a couple of questions before using each of the three audio systems. As they use the prototypes, observer (not interviewer) will record any notable behaviors. When finished using all three, visitors will be asked several more questions about their experience.
- Since there are no African or western galleries on view, the study will take place in the Places gallery on the 6th floor, with visitors positioned to face a wall of western landscapes.
- Continuous random sampling strategy to select interviewees. Data collector will be stationed near the prototypes and the first eligible visitor to approach will be asked to participate in the study. When interview is completed, the data collector will await the next eligible visitor to enter the area.
- If the visitor intercepted is accompanied by others, ask if one of them would be willing to participate
- Visitors who refuse to participate will be noted on a log.
- No more than 20 interviews will be conducted. If a very strong trend is evident, fewer may be needed (a total of 12 interviews were collected).
- Data collector will record participants' responses as close as possible to verbatim (no tape recording).

analysis

Study coordinators generated take-aways (tentative conclusions based on what they heard and observed) and used them to develop a set of actionable next steps.

Thoughtful Reflection...

Take-Aways

1. Upon seeing the electronic devices, there's a general expectation—for all three—that they will deliver information about the art. The choice of equipment does not provide a solution to this.
2. Visitors' expectation was that you would carry these devices around. This behavior was also observed, happening intuitively between interviews.
3. One repeated, favorable comment was that it “looks simple” (in reference to the tablet).
4. The iPod carries a distinct attraction for its novelty/hipness, despite complaints concerning ease of use and visibility.
5. There's a preference for touch controls (no stylus).
6. Control symbols referred to as intuitive were compared to those on a VCR.
7. No users asked for step-by-step instructions.
8. Technical and equipment problems had the effect of turning people off, frustrating them, abruptly ending the experience (i.e. accidental shutdown, songs getting stuck loading, devices reverting to sleep mode, earphone comfort, extraneous controls).
9. Tablet PC was used in place on the table in front of user—no one picked it up to use. Almost all users of the handheld units were sitting forward in their seats

Actionable Next Steps [Recommendations]

Bottom line: Find solution in either the PDA or tablet PC models, with respect to the specifics outlined below:

1. Send a clear message that the equipment offers music, not information.
- 1b. Also may need a text/graphic invitation to the experience—sit, get comfortable, listen, experience rather than do, open-ended connections—to get visitors in the right frame of mind so not disappointed or confused.
2. Consider ways to make the tethered audio area (furniture and graphics) look appealing—playful, fun, comfortable, place to relax and linger (i.e. mustn't appear studios or like a “station”).
3. Consider how to make the equipment at a glance appear simple to use (does size play a role in this?).
4. Consider ways to up the novelty/hip factor—style matters.
5. User control should be as direct as possible (e.g. touch controls rather than stylus).
6. Make visual vocabulary clear and intuitive (VCR symbols are widely recognizable).
7. Re-consider the need for, or extent of, step-by-step instructions (can “instructions” be built into the interface more seamlessly, e.g. “Play” appearing with the symbol?).
8. Make sure equipment comfort and operation is reliable. Eliminate user access to controls they don't need.
9. Make sure position of a stationary device or size/weight of a pick-up device lends itself to sitting back comfortably while using.

Things to Explore and Discuss:

Continue to explore how to provide a mobile music experience. It fits better with visitor expectations and would create a more organic, personal experience of listening and looking. Note that while a mobile solution was initially preferred, we concluded that there's not a practical solution with current technology without offering it museum-wide.

Other findings of interest:

- Several visitors positively reacted to the concept itself (unprompted).
- The equipment is attractive to young kids, who gravitated to it when it was unattended.

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Images



Windows-based PDA



iPod



Tablet PC



All 3 devices



Visitor-initiated use of PDA between interviews. They intuitively approached the art with the music.

Script

DAM Visitor Interview – Gallery music station (Western/African)
11-18-04

Survey # _____	Interviewer: _____
Day: T W T F S S	Date: _____
Time start: _____ M/F 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 60+	

Excuse me, hi, my name is _____ and I work here at the Museum. I'm testing some equipment that is being proposed for our new building and your opinions and feedback will be most helpful.

(indicate devices) If you would take a look at these please. We're considering these 3 types of devices to use in the new museum.

1. Which are you most likely to use, and why?

iPOD

tablet PC

PalmPilot [PDA]

2. What would you expect to be able to do with each of these? [*point to each one*]

iPOD

tablet PC

PalmPilot

3. I am going to show you a scale. How would you rate your comfort with technological devices such as a computer, cell phone, digital camera, DVD player? [*show scale*]

terrified

not very

somewhat

quite

completely

We're testing which of these devices visitors like using for listening to music.

Try the one you were most likely to use, then try the others to compare.

Consider how you like using each device, regardless of how much you like the music selections.

Try to use them on your own, but I'll be nearby if you have questions or problems.

4. After trying all 3, which did you enjoy the most? Why?
iPOD tablet PC PalmPilot

5. Which was the easiest to begin using? Why?
iPOD tablet PC PalmPilot

Which one was the easiest to navigate, for example to move from one song to the next or to a different category?
iPOD tablet PC PalmPilot

6. The museum is going to choose one device, which would you like to see us go with?
iPOD tablet PC PalmPilot

What makes that one the best choice?

You've been very helpful, thank you!

WHERE TO GET THE RESOURCES MENTIONED IN THIS REPORT

The following DAM reports are available by visiting the museum's website, www.denverartmuseum.org. Click on "Discover the DAM," then "Museum Resources."

Denver Art Museum Interpretive Project, 1990

This 160-page report contains a qualitative analysis of the DAM's adult visitors, along with reports on 13 interpretive experiments. Funded by the Getty Grant Program and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Enriching Visitor Experiences: The Reinstallation of the Denver Art Museum's European and American Collection, 2001

This short report details the development of the installed interpretives in the European and American galleries, including early versions of human connection labels. Funded by the Getty Grant Program.

Family Programs at the Denver Art Museum, 2003

Funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, this 134-page report covers family programming in the museum's North Building.

Visitor Panel Study of Poetry Writing Activities in the Special Exhibition Frederic Remington: The Color of Night, 2004

These DAM panels provided valuable insight about adults' reluctance to engage with certain kinds of interpretives in an art museum setting. Study prepared by Daryl Fischer of MUSYNERGY.

Recommended articles on object-oriented learning.

Stapp, Carol B. "Defining Museum Literacy." In *Patterns in Practice: Selections from the Journal of Museum Education*, ed. Susan K. Nichols (Washington, D.C.: Museum Education Roundtable, 1992).

Williams, Patterson. "Object Contemplation: Theory into Practice." In *Patterns in Practice: Selections from the Journal of Museum Education*, ed. Susan K. Nichols (Washington, D.C.: Museum Education Roundtable, 1992).

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Written by Laura Caruso
Designed by Amy Schell



Visitor interacting with *Leg and Armchair* by Carolyn Braaksma.