

THE HIPSTER'S GUIDE TO THE GALLERY: THEMATIC TOURS AT THE
GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

By

Victoria Nichole Eudy

B.F.A. in Visual Communications, Truman State University, 2008

B.A. in English Literature, Truman State University, 2008

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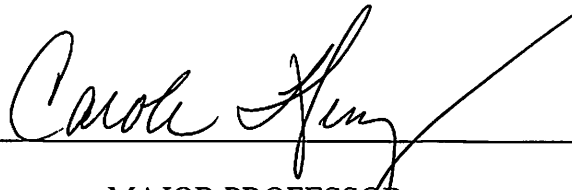
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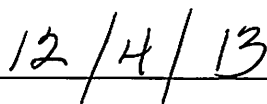
By

VICTORIA N. EUDY

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol King", is written over a horizontal line.

MAJOR PROFESSOR

A handwritten date "12/4/13" is written over a horizontal line.

DATE

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On an afternoon in July of 2006, I went to the Tate Britain for the first time. Instead of finding the typical gallery map, I came across a number of novel avenues with which I could explore the museum (Fig. 1). They ranged from the “Rainy Day” collection to the “I Come Here All the Time” to the “I’m Here For the First Time” collection. I was intrigued and struck by the informality and playfulness of this approach. My experience with museums until this point had been frequent, but I hadn’t ever deeply questioned the nature of their environment. It wasn’t until the summer of 2012 during an introductory course on museum education that I was able to give voice to what it was about these tours that continues to intrigue me years later.



Figure 1: The Tate Collections

My applied project idea has been influenced greatly by the Tate Collections, which I rediscovered during Henry’s *Introduction to Museum Education* course. The Tate Britain’s self-

guided thematic tours were designed to bring relevance back to the museum in order to compete with its counterpart, the Tate Modern. Collection titles and themes include the “I’ve Just Split Up,” “Happily Depressed,” “First Date,” and “I Haven’t Been Here in Ages,” tours to name a few. In the creation of this project, the Tate Britain challenged notions of the traditional art museum experience by inviting a broader audience to unearth personal relevance. For my final project in Henry’s *Introduction to Museum Education* course, I chose to apply the similarly thematic approach in the development of the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class,” tour which focuses on utilizing the Georgia Museum of Art’s permanent collection to tap into a common predicament amongst the average college student – the decision of whether or not to attend class after a long day.

This Applied Project documents the piloting of tours similar to the Tate’s at the Georgia Museum of Art on the campus of the University of Georgia - serving as both an academic and public museum. The Georgia Museum of Art, or GMOA, houses a permanent collection of over 8,000 works, including the original gift of “100 works of American art to the people of Georgia through its flagship university,” by Alfred Holbrook in the mid 20th century (Manoguerra, 2011).

Education is at the heart of Holbrook’s mission – bringing art to the people. But, as Elliot Eisner and Stephen Dobbs remark in their 1998 article “Silent Pedagogy: How Museums Help Visitors Experience Exhibitions”:

We find it puzzling that those who have devoted years to learn how to perceive art, should assume that those who have had so little background in the arts will somehow ‘rise up’ to the level of great art simply by moving into its presence. (p. 7)

In other words, those who spend the most time studying art are often the first ones to assert that the viewer does not need to know anything about what he or she is viewing to understand it. The profundity of this assertion haunts me. I find this claim empowering, and on a fundamental level, it continues to drive my research and dedication to art and museum education. Similar to the Tate Collections, during the course of a thematic tour designed for the Georgia Museum of Art, I aim to allow the disposition of the viewer to run its course with the museum's artworks with captions as a facilitator, and to show that the 'permanency' of a permanent collection is a physical, not an intellectual concept. Though the works may be static, interpretations may be as dynamic as the fluidity of life stages of the visitor.

This is not to say that the museum itself is not inherently sacred, or worthy of reverence. However, I would argue that there is nothing inherently 'elitist' or untouchable about the museum experience, or an appreciation for the artifacts it displays. No one, if given the choice, would choose to spend his or her life as a tourist of the human race. In other words, it is natural to want to feel connected – to each other, to our environments. The search for meaningful and 'connected' experiences is a universal crusade that is mitigated and guided by the offerings of museums. The mindful museum experience ties us to the universal notion of humanness. Museums are contemplative spaces.

Today's technological revolution makes the authenticity of these mindful museum experiences even more important. As new tools emerge - whether they be philosophical, technological, or otherwise - it compels museums to use them to encourage engagement by existing and emerging audiences. Though the 'tool' with which I have implemented this project is hardly a novel technology, yet calls upon the current culture of curation propagated by the ease of access and organization of personally relevant information and 'artifacts' (e.g. Pinterest,

Instagram, Facebook, etc.) with which one is able to curate from a seemingly endless supply of information and interfaces. In a small way, this is what this project aims to do - expand the realm of museum appreciation to those to whom the experience may otherwise be dismissed as being tangential to their lives and interests.

What follows is the overview of a project that documents an attempt to encourage engagement and attendance of undergraduates from the University of Georgia to the Georgia Museum of Art, and the literature that supports the approach. As an introduction to current literature, I have provided a brief historical review of museum education that presents the issue of making art accessible to the public as one that is the culmination of centuries of often paradoxically elitist tendencies behind the development and presentation of artifacts. In terms of recent literature, major contributors to the evolution of this project are the writings of John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2012), their Contextual Model of Learning, and the work of George Hein (Hein, 1998).

This historical and contemporary review culminates in an overview of the current culture of curation as a response to the emergence of the technological advances of the early 21st century. Although this project was not piloted with the assistance of technology, the future of the project is inevitably tied to the implementation of social media and mobile technology, which is elaborated upon as the project overview comes to a close. Though the culture of curation is a byproduct of technological advances, it is also changing the way individuals, especially younger adults, navigate information. The emerging culture that curates information daily and effortlessly is prevalent in the thematic nature of the tours. The tours are, in a sense, an informal exhibition of information and artifacts that are designed to have personal relevance to the young adult's (undergraduate's) life and personality. After a brief consideration of the Tate Collections, the

general design of the tours are explained through the use of a case study which examines the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” tour as a general model before the piloting of the tours at the Georgia Museum of Art’s student night and university courses in art appreciation and docent education are discussed. The project overview concludes with suggestions for the future of the tours, addresses issues of sustainability and includes a general reflection on the process of the project’s development.

Chapter 2

Museum History, Education and Contemporary Issues

The origin of the museum itself plays no small part in the understanding and defining of contemporary issues of visitor engagement and education within the modern museum. An understanding of the history of the museum experience also gives voice to the visitor who either overtly or implicitly understands the aura of inaccessibility of the art museum. Through an understanding of the history of museum education, practices, and visitor experiences, one realizes that the fight for relevancy is a continuous one, not a new phenomenon. It is here one finds the origins of the alleged exclusivity of museums.

It is with the aforementioned in mind that the work of authors such as John Falk and Lynn Dierking (2012) become indispensable to a contemporary understanding of the visitor experience. Their progressive attitude toward the museum experience tears at the elitist and exclusive undertones of the traditional museum. In doing so the authors promote meaningful access by the public to what had been seen by some as intellectually and emotionally frozen galleries. It is here that one encounters progressive measures within the archetypical museum, and is given a roadmap to public inclusion and engagement.

Operating under the teachings of Falk and Dierking, I included a discussion and overview of the current culture of curation with which digital interplay becomes paramount. One's ability to organize personally relevant information within a matter of seconds by nature seems to call into question certain aspects of the role of the traditional museum visit - both before, after, and during the actual visit itself. Likewise, the use of digital media is inextricably bound to such a

culture. Not only do I see these digital tools and everyday curatorial methods as serving as the theoretical foundation to tours already produced, they also underlie the potential next phase of the thematic tours which I will outline further on in this document.

The Origin of Museums: The Rich and Eccentric

As stated previously, contemporary issues of museum engagement may be seen as qualifying concerns based in the history of the development of the modern museum itself. The origins of the ancient museum go back as early as the fourth century B.C.E with Plato's *mouseion*, a Greek term meaning "a place or home for the museum," and Aristotle's Lyceum (Ripley, 1978, p. 24). Both Plato's *mouseion* and Aristotle's Lyceum held the virtue of knowledge at their core. They were "Institutions of the Muses," where students poured over literature, studied music, poetry, mathematics, and the arts (p. 24). The most famous of these *mouseions* was the Museum of Alexandria, established during the third century B.C.E (Lee, 1997).

More so than Aristotle's Lyceum or Plato's Academy, this palatial Hellenistic establishment more closely resembled the modern museum in the political sense. Similar to the evolution of the British empire, during which the public was bombarded by artifacts from foreign countries, as Rome continued to thrive displays of wealth were increasingly put on public display (Ripley, 1978). At this time, as author Arthur Efland (1990) remarks, "culture became highly fashionable...and the possession of art objects of high quality began to characterize their owners as men of refinement and culture" (p. 9).

The Museum of Alexandria's legacy continued well into the seventeenth century, when the National Convention in France proclaimed the king's *Cabinet du Roi* and the *Cabinet*

d'Histoire Naturelle for the people (Lee, 1997). They named it the *musee* as a nod to the republic of Rome via their flagship center of learning as was in keeping with the era of the Enlightenment. In doing so, France established the first modern museum in 1793. However, this was only after hundreds of years of variations on the museum experience in non-traditional settings.

After the destruction of the museum of Alexandria, the advent of Christianity in Europe meant a re-appropriation of the collection, and places of Christian worship became the centers of intellectual and cultural life (Ripley, 1978). The 'collections' of the Christians were a place of contemplation, reflection, and a way of inciting devotion. Eventually, owing mainly to the efforts of Pope Sixtus IV, the church's collection of primarily medieval art made its way exclusively into the homes of the elite in Italy, France, Spain and Germany. From here, the development of the 'cabinet of curiosities' takes the stage. Early 'curators' of these cabinets found themselves in one (or perhaps both) of two groups - the rich and the eccentric. It is here that the development of taste begins to find itself almost exclusively in the hands of the elite and prosperous. In addition to the owning of a collection as a staple of wealth and taste, visits to these cabinets became a standard experience on the grand tour, a cultural pilgrimage of the young elite (Ripley, 1978).

In the 18th century, Sir Ashton Lever took it upon himself to dedicate his collection to the formation of the British Museum, boasting the most impressive collection of its time. The development of this museum is in tandem with industrialization, colonialism, and nationalism. Starting off, the museum was ill equipped and unorganized. But then as the British Empire began to grow and prosper, so did the museum. This success in industrialization gave the British Museum the benefit that other museums did not. Owing to financial crises and the War of 1812, museums in the 'new world' largely failed, while the British Museum continued to expand its

collection and pioneered the science of curation and defined the culture of the museum experience (Ripley, 1978).

Industrialization and Museum Growth in the 19th Century

Arthur Efland (1990) describes the nineteenth century as being an “era of confidence and progress” but also “one of contradictions” (p. 49). During this time museums served more as places for the burgeoning bourgeoisie to ‘see and be seen,’ and were idealized as centers of political and social control by governmental and legislative forces. In theory, they were to alleviate the ailments faced by a city whose population had exploded in tandem with industry. The pastoral had given way to urban growth, and with it, disease, pollution and chaos ensued. Museums, along with libraries and churches, were viewed as cultural refuges, which could treat the ailments of the times. Considering this, it makes little sense that these places that were aimed at benefiting society remained difficult to even enter (Bennet, 1995).

As author Tony Bennet (1995) explains, “Museums continued to be characterized by...exclusiveness during the period of their articulation to the institutions comprising the bourgeois public sphere” (p. 27). Moreover, admission was, for all practical purposes, mainly limited to middle-class men. The collections were poorly arranged, with little or no instruction as to how to appreciate let alone understand the works on display, and the ‘guides’ barely warranted their name. At this time, security was instituted to keep the masses from wandering aimlessly around the museum, to provide direction both physically and mentally. This often meant rushing visitors from one exhibit to the next, and often provided inadequate if not entirely wrong information about the displays if questioned (Bennet, 1995).

This was hardly the democratic utopia of culture that many had hoped. Even their facades gave the impression that these establishments were the palaces of the rich, who had only “just vacated” (Ripley, 1978, p. 38). Needless to say, the museum was failing to provide the social, economical and political influence that it theoretically meant to impress upon its visitors. Author Tony Bennet (1995) explains, instead of museums:

...functioning as institutions of homogenization, as reforming thought had envisaged, they have continued to play a significant role in differentiating elite from popular social classes. Or perhaps it would be better to say that the museum is neither simply a homogenizing nor simply a differentiating institution: its social functioning rather is defined by the contradictory pulls between these two tendencies. Yet, however imperfectly it may have been realized in practice, the conception of the museum as an institution in which the working classes- provided they dressed nicely and curbed any tendency towards unseemly conduct - might be exposed to the improving influence of the middle classes was crucial to its construction as a new kind of social space. (p. 28)

Thus, the museum finds itself situated and oscillating between being public space for growth and contemplation and an exclusive ‘club.’ An intermediary between the institution and the public would prove to be a necessity if the masses were to readily appreciate what museums had to offer, and that intermediary was, and continues to be, education.

Fin-de-siècle culture in Europe coincided with an influx in nationalism, urbanization, industrialization, and owing to the expansion of empires, a realm of ‘artifacts’ whose housing became a major aim of the museum itself. By the turn of the twentieth century, the United States had established itself as an international power, and like its European counterparts, began to make improvements in the evolution of museum as well (Hein, 1998). The term ‘docent’ first

appeared in J. Randolph Coolidge Jr's 1906 article "The Educational Work of the Museum: Retrospect and Prospect" published in *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011, p. 19). The work of docents as liaisons began to bridge the work of the curatorial staff directly to the visitors. Unlike the hectic and visitor unfriendly early days of the British museum, the museum experience now offered an experiential dialogue which would foreshadow the progressivism of the 1920s and onward.

Museum Education in the Early 20th Century

At the turn of the 20th century, museum education remained secondary to the primary purpose of the "collection, preservation, and display of exemplary works of art" (Costantino, 2004, p. 404). The "Progressive Era" of museum education was marked by an increased interest in experimentation with different forms of visitor engagement including gallery talks (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). Federal and private funding financed the expansion and experimentation of programming, leaving the educational work of museums to "grow unevenly and often without design" (p. 25). Nevertheless, the expansion of museum education and increased funding correlated with an expansion of public demand and public school involvement.

The advent of World War II challenged the social relevance of the museum, and brought about an element of social consciousness in programming at the forefront of concern. The 1940s and 50s are seen as an era of "volunteerism and experiments in programming" (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011, p. 28) in which the number of volunteer museum educators and visitor attendance increased rapidly. It was also during this time that the terms "game" and "discovery" began to be integrated into gallery activities (particularly with children) and literature concerning museum education. Compared with its imperialist roots, the museum, specifically museum education,

took on a more playful role. By the 1970s, the museum's concern for social relevance reached a new high in response to the shifting cultural environment of the 1960s (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011).

“But are they learning anything?” This question foreshadows the flowering concerns surrounding ideas of accountability and standards of the 1980s. Reaganism and ensuing neo-liberal concerns in the federal circuit began making their way into the operational policies of educational settings, the museum included. The museum's relationship with the public education system had always been a prevalent concern in considering the educational programming of museums, which tended to mirror the educational approaches of the times. However, the shift from the loose, playful attitude of the 1970s into the accountability-based approach of the 1980s was a considerable shift in the world of museum education.

During this time, the museum itself was in crisis. Elliot Eisner and Stephen Dobb's 1980 article “An Uncertain Profession: Educators in American Art Museums” described the conundrum of the “considerable confusion over the specific role of museum education within the larger institutional framework” (p. 79). Though the article elucidated some major issues with museum education, the implicit text stated that the role of education in the museum was becoming increasingly more important to the public and the museum itself. Together they championed the restructuring of the educational field in the museums in the later half of the 20th century, and tied the curriculum closely to its public school counterparts, whose immersion into Discipline Based Art Education had imposed new standards and direction for public art education (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011). As the century came to a close, constructivism would play a considerable role in shaping the philosophy behind museum education.

Constructivism as an Epistemology

Constructivism as an epistemology concerns the active participation of learners to create knowledge through experience, thereby forming their reality through their personal “lens of their expectations and values” (Schweitzer & Stephenson, 2008). This philosophy goes against the earlier behaviorist and cognitivist theories of knowledge pioneered by individuals such as Pavlov and Skinner who believed that learning happens through conditioning and can be better understood by focusing on the processing of information rather than the construction of such. In other words, they viewed knowledge as something outside of the passive learner to be attained.

Constructivism places the learner at the center of the process, and is a philosophical proponent of the embodiment of knowledge through experience (Schweitzer & Stephenson, 2008). Thus knowledge is not transferred, but created (est donc le vrai Piaget, Qui & Papert, 1982). This idea is rooted in the literature of cognitive psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner (Villeneuve & Lowe, 2007). When applied to museum education, this opens up a realm of possibility in which the museum becomes a place in which the individual arrives at their own conclusions based upon personal experience about the artifacts instead of arriving at a single canonical “truth.”

Progressivism, an educational philosophy pioneered by John Dewey in the early twentieth century, is considered by Hein to be the antecedent of constructivism insofar as it considers prior knowledge and experience to be the roots of learning (Hein, 1998). Education was to “connect immediate and past experiences, and to apply these to future experience” (Hein, 2012, p. 37). At the root of constructivism is an understanding of the individual learner’s process of meaning making. He or she makes meaning by drawing from a number of elements of experience including but not limited to prior knowledge and situational affectedness. This

approach situates the learner, as opposed to the content or subject matter of the museum, at the center of the learning process (Hein, 1998).

Constructivism in the Museum

The works of Falk and Dierking (2012) along with George Hein (1998) are critical in understanding the paradigm of constructivist museum education that continues to permeate education experiences within museums today. Though in theory, a meaningful visitor experience has always been at the forefront of concern for museum educators, it has been rooted in the result of political, societal and economic change in which the subjectivity of experience and individual interpretation were not always of utmost concern - at least not in practice. The shifts of educational practice within museums may very well have left three generations with entirely different perceptions of the aims and goals of museums, who visits them, and how to conduct themselves once inside.

Constructivist theory as a vehicle of art education situates the educator not as the purveyor of a didactic practice, but rather as a guidepost toward personal relevance, interpretation, and a mindfulness which underscores the transformative experience. Within this philosophy, the museum educator's role becomes that of a "collaborator with museum visitors in the construction of meaning" (Henry, 2010, p. 11). One avenue is through that of inquiry, or the "generating and answering [of] pertinent questions in a dialogic manner," which, according to Villeneuve and Lowe (2007) "represents an investment in the future," as this process allows visitors "and others to become independent enthusiastic life-long learners in our complex and rapidly changing world" (p. 194).

However, ‘constructivism’ is currently not what it set out to be in the 1990s, nor will it be ten years from now. The information and the sources of that information from which the viewer ‘constructs’ his or her knowledge has exploded since the time of the theory’s conception. Today a technologically based revolution has produced a workforce who produces, processes, and consumes data much like how workers in the Industrial Revolution physically produced and consumed goods. Though the current revolution has been in the works for decades, the proliferation of online connectivity and the subsequent consumption from a seemingly unending wealth of information (not all of it is good) augments how and with whom we communicate, socialize, and view as being reputable sources of information. Individuals find themselves ‘curating’ their experiences, re-appropriating it into their scope of being, and sending them back out into the world via various ‘web 2.0’ interfaces (Smith, 2012).

Similar to Falk and Dierking’s Contextual Model of Learning (2012), in his *Learning in the Museum* (1998), George Hein outlines the critical aspects of the prior knowledge, or connections to the familiar, within a constructivist museum experience for the visitor as their connections to the familiar, associations with place and orientation, and conceptual access to the museum setting. These factors serve either to impede or foster the meaning making process. Hein (1998) suggests that close attention on the part of the educational museum to these factors (familiarity, comfort level) is a “path of seduction,” luring the visitor to “explore more deeply” what the museum or an exhibition has to offer (p. 176). Yet he also recognizes that luring visitors to a deeper level of understanding may also be achieved via the enticement of a challenge. Hine contends:

The trick is to find just the right degree of intellectual challenge to leave the learner slightly uncomfortable but sufficiently oriented and able to recognize the challenge that

she will accept it. This central dilemma of all learning, alternatively called the problem of match, cognitive dissonance, disequilibrium (the Piagetian term), or, to emphasize the social aspect of learning, the Zone of Proximal Development...needs only reach with the guidance of a “teacher” needs to be emphasized in every exhibition. (p. 177)

Although “teacher” here is a term not explicitly defined, it may very well be attributed to the responsibility of a number of roles including, but not limited to, that of the obvious museum educator *de facto*, the docent, exhibition labeling, and other forms of interpretational material or devices. To use Vygotskian terms, I would argue that the “teacher” in this instance is any device which actively calls upon the visitor’s zone of proximal development, and allows him or her to engage and expand their realm of understanding beyond its previous boundaries.

Arguably one of his most widely known theories, Vygotsky’s theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is considered to be one of the foundations of constructivist theory which has been applied across a broad spectrum of learning situations (Chaiklin, 2003).

Vygotsky defines this theory as being:

The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 33)

In keeping with the constructivist museum education approach laid forth by George Hein, Chaiklin (2003) argues that the emphasis here lies not in an understanding of the capabilities of the social factor (adult guidance or collaborative peers) in engaging and expanding the ZPD, but rather that, according to Vygotsky, it is most important to “understand the meaning of that assistance in relation to a child’s learning and development” (p. 43). Thus, the learner, rather

than the ‘teacher,’ remains at the center of the learning experience. The teacher provides the scaffolding needed by the learner in order to move through his or her ZPD (Astor-Jack, Kiehl Whaley, Dierking, Perry, & Garibay, 2007, p. 218). Astor-Jack et al. (2007) argue that what constitutes a scaffolding device is not limited to the traditional notion of a teacher, but expand this concept to include “exhibitions with advanced technologies” (p. 219) as being capable of moving oneself through their ZPD.

Meaning Making and the Contextual Model of Learning

Falk and Dierking (2012) used a constructivist approach to determining the museum visitor’s experience through a framework which explores three main aspects of the museum ‘meaning making’ experience: the personal, sociocultural, and physical contexts which affect each individual who enters the institution. Together, these variables represent the authors’ Contextual Model of Learning, which aims at understanding the museum visitor from every stage of their visit, including both before and after he or she enters the museum (Fig. 2).

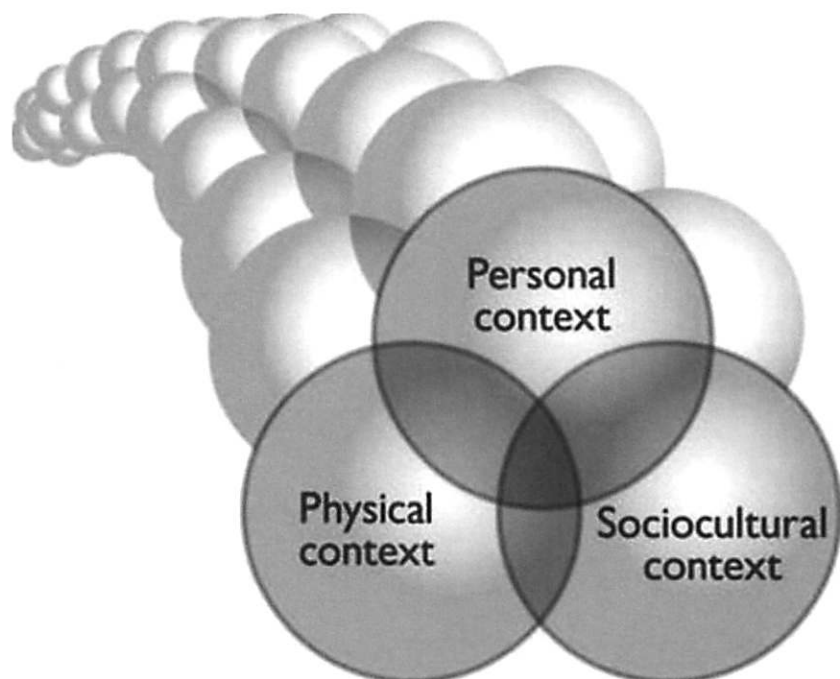


Figure 2: The Contextual Model of Learning (Falk & Dierking, 2012 p. 26)

The first element of the Contextual Model of Learning covers the personal context which the visitor brings to the experience. Included in this context are the “variety of experiences and knowledge,” held by the visitor, their “developmental level...preferred modes of learning...individual interests, attitudes and motivations for visiting” (Falk & Dierking, 2012, p. 27). By exploring this variable of the visitor experience, one also seeks to understand the anticipated experiences of the visitor and his or her predetermined beliefs. Once this information is obtained, it becomes feasible to understand “how and why individuals develop specific personal visit narratives, narratives that support memories of, and learning from, the visit that typically last weeks, months, and even years” (p. 27).

The second context, the sociocultural context, explores how one’s cultural and environmental background (including race, socioeconomic status, etc.) helps in the shaping of one’s reception of the museum itself. Additionally, this means that not only are visitors bringing with them their own value and belief systems shaped by their cultural standing, but that they are

entering an establishment built upon the cultural experience of those who were instrumental in building the museum. Investigating the link between the cultural beliefs of the visitor and that of the museum provides valuable insight into “who visits museums or not, and why they make the decisions they do” (p. 29).

Another aspect of the sociocultural context of this model is the social behavior of the visitor during his or her experience. This aspect explores how the interaction with others (either friends, family, security, museum staff) or the absence of this interaction strongly influences one’s perception of the museum experience and meaning making with the artifacts. In their 2012 *The Museum Experience Revisited*, they expand this component of the model to include the impact of our “media-driven lives” stating that:

...Increasingly our users themselves are utilizing social media like Facebook, Twitter and Flickr, just to name the most common vehicles at this moment in time, to frame our institutions from their own very personal perspectives. Through this process our audiences not only make their own meanings about their experiences during or after the visit, they also actively shape the perception of the museum for others beyond their immediate group. Through social media, past visitors become co-creators of the museum experience for future visitors. (p. 65)

Though this subject will be explored elsewhere in terms of what visitors as ‘co-creators’ implies for the future of museum experiences, it is important to note that the above quote also highlights the evolving sense of ‘community.’ Accompanying the increasing globality is a recognition of the expansion of the role of the sociocultural context of the museum visitor.

The third and final aspect of the experience, which has been extrapolated upon previously, is the physical context. This aspect of the model investigates how individuals interact

with the museum environment, answering questions regarding accessibility, navigation, as well as “objects and events visitors interact with both prior to and subsequent to the visit including TV shows, internet sites, books or magazines” (p. 29).

Falk and Dierking argue that the variable of time, though not a context, is a “crucial fourth dimension of this model” (p. 29). The element of time helps to elucidate their claim that contexts within the sociocultural model are not finite static layers, but rather interplaying and continually shifting elements which, over time, allow the investigator to better understand experience. As Falk and Dierking go on to explain (2013):

The Contextual Model represents a dynamic, situation-specific system. Each of the contexts is continuously constructed by the visitor, and the interaction of these contexts through time becomes, for each visitor her museum experience...we have distinguished three separate contexts, but it is important to keep in mind that these contexts are not really separate, or even separable. (p. 29-30)

The issue of time adds fluidity to their model, allowing exploration of the interaction between each construct, and adding to a more holistic impression of the visitor experience, and the process of meaning making.

The model has evolved over the past 23 years, with its origins predating the advent of the Internet as a household element. In their 2013 publication, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, this model is not reconsidered but is amended, primarily, to include those aspects of connectedness which contribute to the visitor’s life and experience. Though they claim that the internet will never replace a physical trip to a museum, they acknowledge its role primarily in the predetermining of objects viewed by the visitor, technology and artifact presentation, feedback

gathering, and within the social aspects of the museum visitor - that now, even while physically alone, the individual may still be 'connected' (p. 162).

Museums and Digital Natives

Despite any bumps along the way in terms of the museum's ability to connect to the public, research shows that individuals continue to consider museums to be integral parts of a strong community (Wilkening & Chung, 2009). Museums, sites of free choice learning, continue to attract younger audiences, with forty percent of individuals being under fifty years old (Falk & Dierking, 1999; Wilkening & Chung, 2009). Considering the changes that have occurred over the past thirty years including, but not limited to, that of technology, individuals are now faced with a number of opportunities to engage in free choice learning. This project focuses primarily on those individuals on the cusp of this life stage, being in their early twenties, specifically undergraduate university students.

These young adults were primarily born between the years of 1990 and 1995, placing them at the upper end of the millennial or Y generation (Wilkening & Chung, 2009). These individuals are 'digital natives.' Their existence is inextricably bound to an interconnected universe and is inherently part of their identities. These young adults acknowledge that after graduation, individuals in their early twenties have the greatest amount of time to develop free choice interests before entering the family raising years of their thirties. Despite the fact that what constitutes traditional 'childbearing years' have been pushed back to meet the demands of the economy, graduate degrees, and an increase in what many consider to be the criteria of the financial responsibility necessary to have children, an individual's thirties provide their own challenges which reduce the amount of time one allots to free choice learning and leisure. As

opposed to individuals in their twenties, those in their thirties are described as entering “the most stressful years of an individual’s life,” in which “free time will never be in shorter supply” (p. 107). This owes to the demands of raising families, jobs, and financial responsibility.

Nevertheless, as these individuals begin raising families, children “offer new opportunities for learning,” as they allow adults the excuse to revisit museums, zoos, and other establishments “many unavailable since childhood” (p. 107). The importance of the introduction of children to the arts via parental suggestion is paramount to continuing museum engagement overall. The 2004 study “The Gifts of the Muse” showed that:

Most adults who become involved in the arts were initially exposed to them as children. If these initial exposures occur early in an individual’s life, they are likely the result of decisions by parents and relatives or activities at school. (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004, p. 54)

Thus, as parents come to view children as “tickets” to revisiting areas of free-choice learning such as museums, the cycle of museum engagement begins again with a new generation. If the museum can rise to meet the needs and desires of this generation now, the next will follow.

Wilkening and Chung’s *Life Stages of the Museum Visitor* is unique in that it is currently the only literature which goes in-depth about what they term “generation Y” and their involvement with museum culture.

The Cult of the Real: Now

The argument that the authentic experience of cultural artifacts is irreplaceable by digital technology is by no means a new topic. Again, the cult of the real, which first appeared at the beginning of the industrial revolution has resurfaced as we begin to navigate our roles and

experiences within the technological revolution. The dynamism between the visitor's sense of presence and objects is now not an issue of mass-reproduction, but rather of a sweeping introduction of technology that allows virtual interaction with objects situated, potentially, in distant parts of the world. The Google Art Project (<http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/project/art-project>) is one of the most popular examples, allowing the individual to tour the Louvre and other institutions once only limitedly accessible.

Regardless of which side he or she wishes to stand upon the issue of technological representations of museum presentation, it is undeniable that technology and the ready access of information is becoming more commonplace in the museum visit. This also includes how and what the visitor chooses to experience within the walls of the institution. As Falk and Dierking (2012) point out, many more individuals are now mapping out their visits prior to entering the museum. Moreover a recent study "Exploring the Relationship Between Presence and Enjoyment in a Virtual Museum" (Sylaiou, Mania, Karoulis, & White, 2010) in which the researchers examined visitors' comparative sense of presence when interacting with virtual reality *within* the physical museum found a positive correlation to the visitor experience overall and the use of virtual and augmented reality. Speculation on the future of museums is inevitably tied to manners of dealing with presence, and the future of digital technology.

Culture of Curation and Implications for Museums

With this ready access of information has evolved a culture of curation, in which the individual's experience – whether it be a museum, which coffee shop to enter, or from which source to derive their news – is no longer inextricably tied to a select few 'tastemakers.' Self-

curation has become a necessity in navigating information, and the museum is not exempt from this phenomenon. Author Terry Smith (2012) recognizes “engaging viewers as co-creators” (p. 22) as being important discourse for the future of curating in his *Thinking Contemporary Curating* in a world where ‘curating’ has become a loose term, and which is an aspect of everyday life for many. He goes on to expand the definition of curator:

I raise this question [what is curatorial thought?] at a time when curating is everywhere being extended, encompassing every kind of organizing of any body of images or set of actions. The title of curator is assumed by anyone who has a more than minimal role in bringing about a situation in which something creative might be done, who manages the possibility of invention, or even organizes opportunities for the consumption of created objects or orchestrates art-like occasions. Google invites us to curate our profile, Picasa our very own image gallery. (p. 18)

Now individuals can pick and choose what they intend to view at the museum based on personal taste, amongst a milieu of other factors including those covered in the sociocultural context of the contextual model of the museum experience. Another individual at the forefront of literature surrounding this argument, or realization, is author Steven Rosenbaum whose *Curation Nation: How to Win in a World Where Consumers are Creators* (2011) examines the issue of digital curation:

Curation emerged as a solution to a problem. The problem was — and is — information overload. We’re living in a world of data deluge...Now that everyone is making content, with Tweets, Tumblr posts, Facebook status updates and more, how can we filter the flood, and make sure we get the information we need and want — not just a fire hose of

random stuff? Curation is the new magic of the Web that gives humans the tools to connect with other humans — to trust human creators of content and context. (p. 1)

Though the formal curator still stands as the one who chooses what is shown, now more than ever, curators are not necessarily the ultimate purveyors of how and what the viewer intends to view.

Information which pertains to one's own personal taste has never been more readily acceptable, and is often the norm. In other words, individuals are accustomed to accessing personally relevant information on a day-to-day basis, and this is shaping the museum experience as well. Technology only aids in furthering the importance of the individual's investment of information from which they may base their prior knowledge. This is not to say that museums, if not already on the individual's docket of personal relevance and interest, are irrelevant, but issues concerning the continued relevancy of the museum have evolved into much more of an important factor than they were was thirty years ago.

Museums and the Future

In other words, as with any other aspect of human existence, we cannot go back. The museum has always sought, at least in theory, to match the needs of the public. And as the public becomes increasingly immersed in digital culture, museums, and particularly those who take it upon themselves to use the museum as an educational tool, must acknowledge the insurgence of information and technology upon the visitor's experience, just as museums sought to meet the needs of a rapidly educated, industrial and urban public at the turn of the 20th century.

There is no shortage of literature concerning the path museums will or should take in future years. On the heels of constructivist theory, the ‘post museum,’ a concept originating with Hooper-Greenhill (2000), is described by Henry (2010) as being a museum in which:

The visitor is...seen as a collaborator in the construction of meaning. The post-museum will retain some of the traditional roles of the museum as we know it, but will broaden its scope and engage more directly in the life of the community in which it exists. (p. 12)

As stated previously in reference to the concept of Falk and Dierking’s sociocultural context of the museum experience, the influx of a more global take on the concept of community, when coupled with the idea of the post-museum, has wide-ranging implications for the museum.

Although museum education continues to make strides to include those who feel that the museum retains inaccessible material, according to a study headed by Susie Wilkening and James Chung (2009), the majority of the public does not feel as if the museum cares about them. Only 1 in 8 visitors of those studied acknowledged that museums are concerned with their personal needs. This ranges from the objects shown to the accessibility of the museum staff. This paints an extremely negative picture of the museum’s concern with those who patronize, or choose not to patronize. Instead of viewing technology, or at least the emergence of the new visitor – one who is connected, technologically versed and accustomed to curating experience - as a new hurdle in sustaining the relevance of the museum, it may be seen as a means of advancing the fight to break down the barriers between the public and the institution. The best practices of how institutions choose to go about ‘tapping into’ the technological revolution, and the cultural repercussions surrounding it, continue to be debated. However, successfully catering to the ways in which individuals now navigate and consume information could mean the dissolution of centuries of inaccessibility, or if denied, could mean further alienation of the

general public. Though it does not use technology to do so, my project aims to satisfy the connected individual's desire for personally relevant information as a means of engaging them with the Georgia Museum of Art's permanent collection.

Chapter 3

Project Development and Design

Academic Museums and the Georgia Museum of Art (GMOA)

The Georgia Museum of Art boasts an impressive international collection of works. Since 1982, in addition to being the museum of the University of Georgia, The Georgia Museum of Art also operates as the state art museum of Georgia. The museum is situated on the eastern end of campus, surrounded by buildings housing the visual and performing arts (Appendix A).

Education is at the core of the Georgia Museum of Art's mission statement:

The Georgia Museum of Art shares the mission of the University of Georgia to support and to promote teaching, research, and service. Specifically, as a repository and educational instrument of the visual arts, the museum exists to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret significant works of art. ("Georgia Museum of Art")

One of the ways in which the museum attracts and engages the university population is through student nights, during which the tours I developed were officially piloted.

The "customary image," of the "pedagogy," of the academic art museums is "that of the art history professor standing beside a painting, lecturing to a half-circle of undergraduates" (Jandl & Gold, 2012, p. 89). However, the authors concede that "while the museum-as-laboratory model is a venerable one, it need not limit the possibility of re-prioritizing the museum to be a fulcrum of learning for the entire campus community, regardless of disciplinary focus" (p. 89). Carissa DiCindio (2012), Curator of Education at the GMOA explains that one way in which the museum, and academic museums in general, are able to expand their reach to

other disciplines on campus is by “incorporating themselves more effectively into the social realm of the campuses” (Dicindio, 2012, p. 1). She also observes that:

In becoming an integral part of the fabric of the university through both course connections and by reaching students during their time out of class, the museum not only validates its position on campus, but also creates an environment in which students and faculty can understand its potential role in their lives. Most importantly, these opportunities to visit the museum offer members of the university a chance to make intellectual and personal connections with works of art. Once these audiences have made these initial connections, they will be more likely to come back to the museum to further explore what it has to offer (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004). (p. 1)

Making personal connections with the permanent collection is what this project aims to do – an idea that is deeply rooted in the ingenuity and success of the Tate Britain’s “Collections.”

The Tate Model

The Tate Britain has been lauded as an “emblem of British culture,” as it houses the largest collection of British art in the world, and abides by its mission of “making art accessible to more people,” by providing a plethora of educational opportunities to the public both online and at the gallery itself (Springate, 2011, para. 1; “Learn | tate”). Yet, by 2005, the Tate Britain was losing its relevancy next to the newly founded Tate Modern, built in 2000 (Springate, 2011, para.1). In order to remedy this situation, the Tate Britain found it necessary to reframe “‘Old’ work through ‘Fresh’ eyes” (Springate, 2011, para.1). As the “Collections” project planner Matt Springate (2011) remarks “Many see the gallery as traditional, part of the establishment, stuffy and old school. Others see it as worthy, educational and dull” (para. 3). Thus in order to engage

new audiences, the museum created the “Collections,” creative pamphlets designed to facilitate self-guided tours of the museum. By creating the Collections project, the Tate Britain challenged notions of the traditional art museum experience by inviting a broader audience to unearth personal relevance within, what some may consider to be, a fairly inaccessible collection.

In order to make this new vision a reality, the Tate Britain acquired the help of the Fallon marketing planner, Matt Springate. Springate reflects (2011) “In 2005 ... art and culture was going through a renaissance,” and although the Tate museums growing fan base would be the primary demographic target for those involved in the Collection creation, there was a specific concern for another group as well (para. 7). Springate (2011) goes on to explain:

We also wanted to target a secondary audience; people who didn't think art was for them...Our goal was to arrive at an idea that would truly broaden Tate Britain's appeal.... We didn't want people to think that Tate Britain attracted a certain type of person; educated, academic and knowledgeable about the discipline. We didn't want the gallery to be seen as elitist and exclusive to 'those in the know.' (para. 7)

Thus, the museum sought to play off of a strictly emotional theme rather than what formal aesthetic knowledge visitors may have brought to the museum, and to make the museum's collection relevant to the modern viewer. Tate Britain aimed at re-envisioning their collection of British artwork from the 1500s to the present day through a universal and timeless emotional lens, in order to make all art as contemporary as that in the recently opened Tate Modern (Springate, 2011). In doing so, the museum took a decidedly constructivist curatorial approach by “consider[ing] the personal connections visitors may make with modes of presentation and ways to think about exhibits,” and subsequently “shed[ding] the impersonal tone associated with museum exhibitions” (Hein, 1998, p. 163, 178).

Yet, the Tate Britain itself remains aesthetically tied both in architecture and layout to the traditional museum, unlike its modern counterpart. Opened in 1897, the intimidating grandeur of the Tate Britain reflects a *fin-de-siècle* homage to the “mighty quality of the museum and the importance of what it contains” (Hein, 1998, p.157). Thus, a critical aspect of the museum experience, the physical environment, lies beyond the scope of this project. Unfortunately, as Cziksentsmihalyi and Robinson (1990) remark, under the conditions of the Tate Britain’s physical environment, “it is...possible that viewers not conditioned to the antiseptic installations of modern museums may feel uncomfortable and self-conscious in such an environment” (p. 142). However, one may argue that the scope of my project innovatively addresses the emotional environment of the viewer to an extent which may overshadow or challenge the traditional museum setting that the Tate Britain exhibits by “highlighting the perceptual, the emotional, the cognitive and the communicative content of the works” (p. 175).

Another more practical way in which the Tate project aims to make the individual who “doesn’t think that art is for them,” comfortable, is apparent in the measures taken to explicitly orient the individual to both the museum and the selected works (Springate, 2011, para. 7). For example, an abbreviated map of the museum is located on the front of the pamphlets upon which specific rooms are highlighted which correspond to the selected works contained within the tour. Additionally, next to the four to eight works provided in each pamphlet, the individual will find the work’s corresponding room number next to the image provided. However, the collections are arranged thematically, as to either remedy or heighten the emotional state of the viewer at the expense of providing a more fluid orientation throughout the museum. To illustrate, both the “I’ve Just Split Up,” and “I’m Hungover” begin by exploring the current state of the viewer, and end the tour on a promising note by selecting certain works which allude to the transience of

their state. In order for this transition to be achieved, the viewer is led back and forth throughout the museum, sometimes leaving and re-entering certain rooms which contain thematic works relevant to the state the collection desires the viewer be at a certain point in the tour.

Regardless, I would argue that the collections live up to their overarching intended purpose of targeting the average individual's emotions as a means of initiating the viewer to the museum, and inviting frequent viewers back to the museum for a fresh take is a success. However, I do feel that certain tours had the potential to invite a deeper exploration into more historical and formal aspects of the works. These ideas are ambiguously referenced in, for example, inviting the viewer to inadvertently contemplate the rhythmic, repeating abstract forms of David Bomberg's *Mud Bath* while assessing just how hung-over they may be (*The I'm Hung-over collection*, 2007 p. 2). Yet, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to complement the emotional orientation of the viewer with a brief formal orientation at certain points within the tour.

Although the persistence of the Tate Britain's physical environment and lack of explicit, formal aesthetic 'pedagogy' within the Collections may be viewed by some as a shortcoming of the project, pertinent issues regarding the accessibility of the museum's collection are addressed with an innovative and creative approach. I believe that the project's primary focus on individual emotion and experience as precursory to eliciting the aesthetic experience underlies a primary focus of constructivist museum education, a noble and egalitarian approach to an inaccessible subject for many.

Chapter 4

Case Study for Developing Thematic Tours: “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” Tour

The Tate model laid the foundation for my applied project. During the summer of 2012 I began the first of four tours, which I would eventually pilot at the Georgia Museum of Art and courses at the University of Georgia. Because the GMOA is an academic museum, and because I knew that eventually I would like to explore the incorporation of technology, I decided to narrow my audience to undergraduates at the university who are considered ‘digital natives.’ Specifically, I would begin the project by targeting undergraduates who were not familiar with, or had never visited, the museum with the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” tour.

My initial concern in the development of each tour was that once the visitor enters the building, they are able to orient themselves with the collections, and the works therein. After obtaining a map from the front desk, I was able to tailor it specifically to the self-guided tours, and placed the map on the front inside leaf where the viewer may initially see it. I attempted to mimic this from the Tate’s “Collections,” as I believe this was a strength in their consideration of design. However, unlike the Tate collections, I tried to maintain a predictable flow around the permanent collection to coincide with the theme of the collection as much as possible. Additionally, I sought to guide the viewer through a variety of galleries, and not to limit the overall focus exclusively to traditional paintings and to include a number of aesthetic styles.

Another aspect of the Tate model which was preserved within the tours is that the viewer be greeted with informal, sympathetic language throughout the pamphlet, regardless of the emotional situation at hand. Over the development of this project, I created both tour-specific introductions and general introductions for the visitor. The general introductions are added as a way of sustaining the project for future tours, without necessitating a new introduction for each. They also serve to reassure the visitor of their decision to visit the museum through a warm and welcoming tone. Additionally, through the narrative I sought to emphasize the collective ‘we’ of the Georgia Museum of Art, as if the establishment as a whole stood as this collective empathetic but inspirational ear to the viewer’s dilemma.



Figure 3: *Transcontinental Bus* by Louis Freund

In terms of the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” tour, I chose to bring the viewer to the work *Transcontinental Bus* by Louis Freund for a number of reasons (Fig. 3). The first was that this work contains aspects of immediate accessibility – the viewer is greeted by literal human figures and recognizable symbols (e.g. bus, words) instead of abstract

shapes and forms. I chose to begin the tour with a representational (instead of abstract) piece in order that the visitor be greeted with a sense of comfort, as well as to not immediately destroy any confidence instilled up to this point.

Additionally, in keeping with the Tate model, I chose a work which pulls the viewer deeper into their current emotion, which is to be overcome by the end of the tour. Another main aspect of this decision surrounds the similarities between the work's context and the experience of the viewer. The University of Georgia transit system, which on the first day of fall classes, utilizes 40 buses to transport over 50,000 UGA students, faculty, and staff is an often used, often crowded mode of transportation ("Bulldogs in Transit"). Here, the viewer's likely experience during their commute is highlighted as a potential threat to their arrival at their next course. *Transcontinental Bus* captures this crowded, off-putting environment often experienced as a contributing factor to the viewer's overarching debate.

If I could change one aspect of the viewer's (potential) initial experience with the works on the tours, I would omit the contextual and biographical information which accompanies the piece's label. Ideally, the viewer would contemplate the work entirely devoid of any distraction, as to fully immerse themselves in their personal experience. Despite the fact that the labels remain, one of the more intriguing and enthusiastic elements of feedback when I piloted this tour came from a student who was excited that the tours encouraged her to instead focus on the art instead of immediately reading the labels. Although I feel much more flexible about this during other points in the tours, I feel that providing initial contextual information may be "injurious to the free flow of ideas" (Hubard, 2007, p. 18). One may argue that the lack of a mediating human presence may make determining whether or not this is the actual case a considerably subjective

judgment. Nevertheless, it is a viable concern that providing contextual information may interfere with the viewer's unadulterated interpretation of the work.



Figure 4: *Bacchus #81* by Elaine de Kooning

In contrast, the label accompanying Elaine de Kooning's *Bacchus #81*, while providing some hint of biographical information, focuses primarily on the artist's creative process and abstains from providing any references to intended subject matter. Thus, as the viewer is led from *Transcontinental Bus* to *Bacchus #81*, he or she is free to continue their experience through de Kooning's abstract forms prompted by the pamphlet's guidance as opposed to the information provided within its label. The second selection, *Bacchus #81* operates under the assumption that the viewer may feel less comfortable relating to abstract forms than the social realism depicted by Freund. "The I Love Athens" tour (Appendix B) considers a similar approach by saving the abstraction of *Little Grand Canyon* until later in the tour, after the individual is prompted to consider more representational works. In terms of *Bacchus #81*, the viewer is given more of a

push within the pamphlet's captioning to find relevance in the formalist aspects of the painting. As the tour progresses, the pamphlet prompts the viewer to consider the movement of the piece, the melding of colors and composition as elements of their 'mood.'

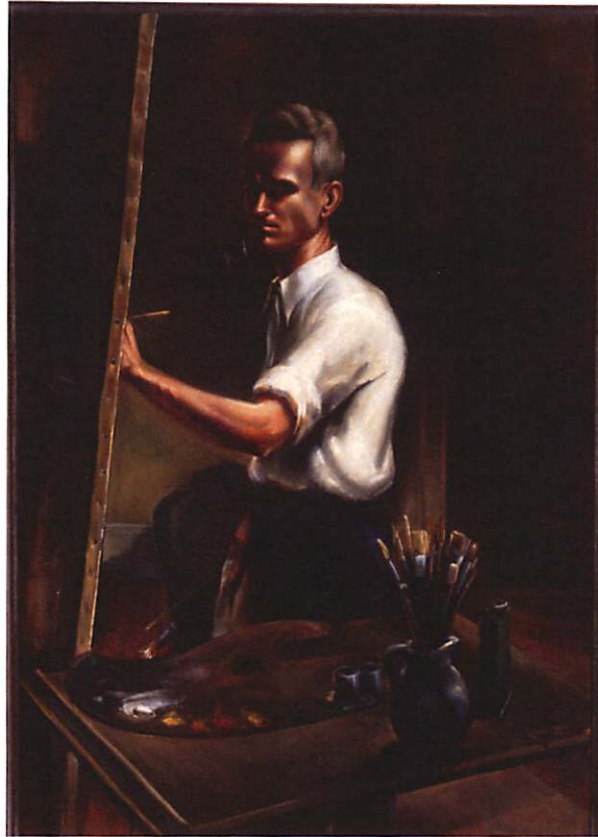


Figure 5: *Self Portrait* by Lamar Dodd

After experiencing *Bacchus #81*, the tour continues with Lamar Dodd's *Self Portrait* (Fig. 5). Here the tour takes a notable turn towards inspiring the viewer out of the chaos of de Kooning and Freund. At this point, I sought to apply some brief historical context in such a way that would be relevant and conversational to the viewer. By relating aspects of the participant's experience to that of Lamar Dodd's - such as parallels between age and mutual affiliation with the University of Georgia, and Dodd 'never skipping class,' this aspect of the tour attempts to capitalize off the idea that "learning more about the historical and cultural context of a work of art can increase understanding and develop a greater sense of appreciation," and that

“appreciation in contemporary terms is neither passive nor detached, but is a product of both intellectual and emotional engagement with works of art” (Henry, 2010, p. 67).



Figure 6: *The Old Mill* by Homer Dodge Martin

As the tour comes to a close with Homer Dodge Martin’s *The Old Mill* the tour concludes with inspirational captioning similar to that which accompanies the self-portrait of Lamar Dodd’s captioning. Although throughout the tour the viewer is given guidance as to what aspects of the works highlight a presupposed mood or emotion, I deliberately chose to end the tour with a work with which no contextual information aside from the tour’s captioning was provided. Only the artist, title, year, medium and museum call number are included in its labeling. This was to avoid the “here’s the real story,” tone as described by Hubbard (2007, p. 20). Whereas Hubbard discusses the importance of timing in delivering contextual information in terms of a single work, I believe her theory may be expanded here to the entirety of the tour. To illustrate, as with the “Skipping Class” and other tours, I do not want the viewer to end the tour feeling as if the raw emotion they began the tour with was not enough to have a meaningful connection with the artworks by contradicting this with an overload of contextual information as they viewed their

final work. Instead, my intention was to incorporate information “at key moments,” throughout the viewer’s experience - such as with the Dodd *Self Portrait*, or within the abstract communication of formal aspects within de Kooning’s *Bacchus #81*. Aside from the absence of contextual information, I chose this work on the basis of its physical immensity and serenity.

In keeping with the Tate model, with each tour I strove to inspire the viewer to leave on a positive note, regardless of the emotions which initially attracted them to the tour. As the “Class” tour concludes, the individual is asked to ‘take it all in,’ to reconsider attending their upcoming class, and to rekindle their ambition. Although the tour does slant towards a preferred course of action, the tour does not explicitly make any demands of the viewer, leaving the next move up to the individual. Therefore during the course of the tours I aim to allow the disposition of the viewer to run its course with the museum’s artworks and provided captions as functioning facilitators.

Chapter 5

The Docent Led “I’m Just Here for the Frames” Tour

During the fall semester of 2012, I explored the creation of a docent-led thematic tour in DiCindio’s *Engaging Art Museum Audiences as Student Docents* course. During this course I learned that the docent can play a considerable role in the museum visitor’s experience. The docent’s ability to positively affect the visitor’s experience is inevitably tied to their ability to creatively solve a multifaceted issue universally faced by art museums. As Sweney (2007) states, “even for those works of art always intended for museum exhibition, there is the challenge of presenting them advantageously, even forcefully and in a manner that will connect with visitors,” (p. 80) implicitly highlighting the necessity for creative problem solving on the behalf of the docent. With this in mind, I have designed a docent-led tour for a young adult audience, which takes into consideration varying levels of familiarity with the permanent collection at the Georgia Museum of Art, entitled the “I’m Just Here For the Frames” tour. This approach focuses heavily on a traditionally overlooked aspect of the viewing experience, the frame, which I will use as a vehicle for discussion.

Once visitors are given a brief overview of the museum’s facilities and history, the tour begins with an introduction to the Kress Gallery and the European art collection. The first work to be discussed will be Salvador Rosa’s *Saint Simon the Apostle* (Fig. 7).



Figure 7: *Saint Simon the Apostle* by Salvador Rosa

In keeping with the self-guided tours, I feel that this work is the most appropriate to begin with considering the desire to have the tours guide the viewer in a chronological and fluid manner through the museum. Given that this work has a close proximity to the entrance to the permanent collection, and because it will prove to be the oldest work on the tour, it fits that criteria. Another reason why the tour begins with a discussion of this piece lies in the interesting relationship of the work to its frame and label. The contextual information concerning the frame is also the strongest of the works included on this tour.

First the visitor is provided contextual information surrounding the piece - a brief background about Rosa, explaining that the artist was an “Italian painter, draughtsman, etcher, poet, and actor,” (Kress, p. 10) while highlighting the intent of the Baroque artist’s rendering of the saint. Pertinent information will include the following:

Like many of his Baroque contemporaries, Rosa eliminated halos from his portrayal of saints for the sake of naturalistic appearances. By depicting a holy figure such as St. Simon with the face of an old peasant, he sought to enhance the connection between the real-life world of the viewer and the biblical realm of the far distant past. (p.10)

Saints were often portrayed with the instrument of their martyrdom. The mislabeling of the frame, which reads “Saint Paul,” rather than Saint Simon is due to individuals mistaking the saw for a sword. This realization occurred after the work underwent restoration, and the serrations were made visible (p.10). As an activity, at this point the visitors will engage in discussion concerning whether or not, if they were the curator, they would re-label the frame. On a previous tour this question provoked an animated discussion, which eventually focused on museum ethics – whether it is better to correct historical inaccuracies (such as the mislabeled frame) or to leave original artifacts intact. At the end of this discussion, the viewer is to transition to the next work bearing in mind the general relationship between a work and its frame, and that it is a point worthy of consideration throughout the tour.



Figure 8: *La Confidence* by Elizabeth Jane Gardner

At this point the tour will transition to discussion of *La Confidence* by Elizabeth Jane Gardner (Fig. 8). Whereas the previous discussion began by initially providing contextual information, the discussion of *La Confidence* begins with a solicitation of reactions to the work at large. This is done with the hope that viewers are now comfortable with the general idea of discussion, having just engaged in conversation about the previous work. This conversation may take many forms, but will begin with initial reactions from the viewers in order that the group may touch upon the history and controversy surrounding the piece. Woven within the conversation will be contextual information that touches upon the symbolic elements of the work. This includes a description of the intact jug, clasped hands, and cross as symbols of purity, as well as an overview of the evolution of the controversial reception of the work. Once viewers have expressed initial impressions and potentially alerted viewpoints, and once they are provided

with background information, the viewers are asked to consider this impression with regard to the grandeur of the frame. General questions, such as whether or not they feel the frame is appropriate or in keeping with their reactions will arise. To aid in this consideration, the viewers will be given two L-shaped pieces of cardstock, which may be used to remove the frame from view.



Figure 9: *Snow on the Hills* by Stuart Davis

Following the discussion of *La Confidence*, the visitors are led to Stuart Davis' *Snow on the Hills* (Fig. 7). I feel that this work is an appropriate follow-up due to the stark contrast of the work's understated frame in comparison to the ornate framing of *La Confidence*. This will also be to the viewer's advantage during activity participation in which each individual will be asked to sketch his or her vision of an appropriate frame after engaging in discussion about the work itself. A discussion regarding Davis' work will begin with an introduction to the gallery at large. The intent of the depression era social realists will be examined as well as and how this intent is

reflected within their typically visually comprehensible works with recognizable figures, which provide narratives of pertinent social predicaments of the time.

Once the viewers are briefly introduced to the gallery, their attention will be drawn to Davis' work, and the visitors will be asked how this artist's work might still fit, in terms of style and intent, within other surrounding works in the gallery. The group will discuss the intent of the artist and his desire that the viewer find meaning and narratives within the forms rather than an explicit portrayal of the American experience – notably, that:

Davis despised geometric abstraction as much as he did the sentimental realism of the American Scene painters. It was, he felt, too arbitrary, too detached from the stimulating irregularity, unpredictability, and messiness of real experience, on which his own work was always based. (Wilkin, 2005, p. 46)

The visitors are then asked to consider the visual rhythm of this work in terms of sound.

Specifically, the visitors are asked what the work would sound like if it were a song, serving as a transition into a discussion about the strong influence of jazz upon Davis' work.

Once the visitors have considered the broader scope of the painting in terms of the artist's intent, the work of his contemporaries, the environment in which the artist worked and lived, and the more abstract considerations of the painting's relationship to sound, the audience is provided with a small reproduction of the work with blank space surrounding the image, and a pencil. Here the docent will draw the visitors attention to the frame which is understated compared to that of the previous work discussed, *La Confidence*. At this point in the tour, the audience has spent at least 15 minutes considering the contributions and relationship of a frame to its work. Following the discussion, the group will sketch their own vision for framing the work around the

reproduction provided. Doing so may serve as a reflection of their own interpretation of Davis' artwork and any concluding opinions constructed surrounding the role of frame aesthetics.



Figure 10: *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues* by Jay Robinson

Ideally, with regard to transition, the visitor will take into consideration the element of jazz in constructing their vision of the frame as we move to Jay Robinson's *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues* (Fig. 8). Yet, if this is not the case, and if the visitor composes a frame not visually congruent with Davis' work, this may be highlighted in introducing Jay Robinson's *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues* as its frame is a stark contrast to the work it holds.

At this point in the tour, the floor becomes widened for discussion. The conversation, though still thematic with regard to the frame, will become more open to interpretation by the viewers. Though questions will continue to be implemented to "bring into the open aspects of artworks that merit examination, and to focus concerns that visitors themselves voice" (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011, p. 98), I will attempt to lessen my involvement in bringing about specific

interpretations of the following works – *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues* and Radcliffe Bailey’s *7 Steps* (Fig. 9). Though in this particular tour the discussion surrounding the works that conclude the tour do not focus heavily on the subject of race but there are a number of opportunities to end the tour with a discussion of ethnicity and culture.

With the idea of Stuart’s influence of jazz upon his work fresh in the minds of the visitors, the docent leads the visitors to Robinson’s work and begins the discussion by highlighting both artists’ mutual affinity for the musical style. The discussion commences with a consideration of comparable aspects of the work of Davis and Robinson. In keeping with the chronological nature of the tour, it is highly relevant to include within the introduction to Robinson’s *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues*, that, as stated by the former Curator of American Art at the Georgia Museum of Art, Paul Manoguerra (2006):

Robinson's art documents a period of transition in American culture, a moment that reflects the critical impact of the displacement of European artists by World War II and the popular emergence of American abstract painting [and that] Robinson's own work announces itself in its diversity of styles and subjects, drawing on both European and American influences. (Manoguerra. 2006, “Jay Robison”)

Within this discussion, the docent is also encouraged to highlight a 1948 New York Times review of Robinson’s work which claims that “Robinson presented ‘A facility which allows him to move from a simplified realism in landscaped views to an imaginative semi-abstract for his interpretation of jazz themes,’” and that:

“...In the jazz themes, Robinson imposes a taut, excited line on splashing areas of bright color. [Jay Robinson] suggests the clanking noise of cymbals, the penetrating whine of

the wind instruments and the beat of the drums with extraordinary vividness.

(Manoguerra, 2011, p. 270)

The conversation is then led towards a consideration as to whether or not the mood is similar to that of Davis', and what visual cues led the viewers to their interpretation of the overall mood of the piece.

This piece offers an excellent and extremely feasible opportunity to incorporate technology into the tour by playing Holiday's work as visitors contemplate the mood of the piece. After contextual information about the piece is offered and opinions are expressed, the docent takes a similar approach to that of *La Confidence* by asking the visitors how they feel the frame interacts with the piece – qualitative language will be encouraged, and the L-shaped cardstock may be used as well.



Figure 11: 7 Steps by Radcliffe Bailey

The comments made by viewers concerning the framing of *Billie Holiday Sings the Blues* will be used as a transition as the tour proceeds to the last work, Radcliffe Bailey's *7 Steps*, whose abstract and postmodern nature is a stark departure from previously discussed works. This work is situated towards the end of the tour, for reasons of aesthetic accessibility. Robinson and Bailey's works are tied together by not only the by their overt homage to African American culture and its history in the United States.

To begin the discussion, the visitors are introduced to Bailey's Atlanta roots, and the idea that to a large degree, the artist "built a successful career as an artist largely out of his fascination with the city's [Atlanta's] history as the crossroads of the South, and with the past more generally" (Sheets, 2011). From here the discussion is left open to the visitors, providing contextual information when necessary. Here the emphasis is placed on a more 'dialogic looking' approach in which "viewers exchange observations, memories, and associations with partners, while maintaining a second, internal dialogue as they work to understand the images they encounter" (McKay & Monteverde, 2003, p. 40). After the discussion draws to a close, the docent will again ask the viewer to consider what frames, or does not, frame the work. One possible interpretation may be that the fire hose serves to frame the work. Another may be that the majority of the work is actually its frame – this is considering the area surrounding the encased image of the two children.

An informal assessment concerning the success of the tour may be based upon Kirkpatrick's "framework for museum education assessment that addresses the distinctions among education, learning and experience," with a focus on two of the four levels of assessment being "reaction," and "learning" (in Gordman, 2007, p. 208). Though ideally this assessment would be conducted via survey, the docent may end with a general solicitation of impressions of

the tour itself. This would be conducted informally as the visitors and docent exit the permanent collection. Here he or she may gauge the first (or most basic) level, the “reaction level” or the “satisfaction of the participants” (p. 208). Though it may be difficult for some to give an honest account of any negative experience, the docent may attempt to gauge the reaction level based primarily upon any lingering comments questions the viewers may have.

In terms of estimating the level of knowledge gained by visitors, the docent may inquire as to what interested them most concerning the tour, or perhaps what they wish to know more about with regard to the works covered (or not covered within the tour). Through a more extensive, formal assessment, it may be possible to gather information concerning ‘higher’ levels of assessing the success of the tour, and the behavioral and results levels. However, this would ultimately, or perhaps ideally, necessitate a longitudinal study concerning behavior and a gathering of information regarding in what ways the tour works to “increase or improve the [museum]” (Gordman, 2007, p. 209).

Ultimately, I believe that any of the self-guided tours may be reworked as docent-led, and visa versa. Out of the tours developed, I felt that this tour might best serve those who are already somewhat familiar with the art museum, considering that those individuals who are unfamiliar with the space may be reluctant to go on a docent led tour, and approximately 40 percent of ‘core visitors’ to museums under thirty years of age prefer the guided tour (Wilkening & Chung, 2009, p. 111). With the majority of this audience’s preferences in mind, I continued with the project as a series of self-guided tours, which, by the fall of 2013, was ready to be piloted.

Chapter 6

Piloting the Tours

The project originated with the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” tour in the summer of 2012 as a final project in Henry’s *Introduction to Museum Education* course at the University of Georgia. During the spring semester of 2013, I worked closely with Dr. Carissa DiCindio, Curator of Education at the Georgia Museum of Art, in the development of other themes pertinent to the undergraduates at the University of Georgia (Appendix C). Together we decided upon the “Party Animal,” “Homesick,” “I Love Athens,” and the previously completed “Skipping My Next Class” tour as those to be developed for the Applied Project. These were chosen for strength of theme, appropriateness for the demographic, as well as their ability to showcase a wider sample of the objects in the permanent collection, ranging from early to contemporary artworks, as well as the decorative arts.

During this time, we also implemented the idea of ‘challenges’ to go along with the tours (Appendix D). The idea of tour challenges grew out of the *Engaging Art Museum Audiences as Student Docents* course, in which I developed the docent-led *I’m Just Here for the Frames* tour. During this course, we were asked to incorporate activities which allowed the docents to interact with the visitors, as well as allowing the visitors to more readily interact with the artworks and encourage conversation. In terms of this course and the tours currently provided at the Georgia Museum of Art, these activities ranged from encouraging visitors to write about works and then discuss them, selecting from a list of laminated adjectives which they felt best described the

work, to placing cut outs of various items such as a heart (for works one loves) or a light bulb (for works that one has a question about) next to works in a gallery after which a discussion follows.

Art Criticism and Aesthetic Understanding Course

The tours were informally piloted as a component of Henry's *Art Criticism and Aesthetic Understanding* course, which is offered at both the graduate and undergraduate level. Of the eleven students enrolled, four were graduate students with varying concentrations within Art Education, and both an undergraduate and a graduate student were absent that day. In keeping with the course objective which aims at educating future educators on how to interpret and appreciate contemporary art and use these skills in the classroom, I was asked to consider how the tours relate to teaching art in the K-12 setting. After the students had taken the tour, we engaged in a brief discussion of personal meaning making and the importance of accepting the validity of multiple interpretations as well as creative ways to incorporate this aspect of learning about art into the classroom.

Each student was given a copy of the "Party Animal" (Appendix E) tour and were taken through the galleries with a general overview of where each work was located, given there were varying levels of familiarity with the museum, and provided with a pencil in order to complete the challenge. From there, the students were allowed to take the tour at their leisure before reconvening near the entrance of the museum.

Many students opted initially not to take the tours in order, which was an unforeseen turn of events. During the designing of the tours, I had taken special consideration to design them in a way which leads the viewer through a preconceived course through the museum and thought

process. The students reconvened at the beginning of the guided tour after I left the galleries. My impression that the students would take the tours in a non-linear fashion, coupled with George Hein's (1998) views on the constructivist museum and visitor orientation made me reconsider using the dashed line which delineated the path the viewer was to follow when taking the tour. On one hand, it came to my attention that if a number of individuals were taking the tours at once, the experience may become crowded if they were each to follow the same course through the museum. On the other, I appreciated the initiative the students took in experiencing works on their own, regardless of the direction proposed within the pamphlets. However, I kept the numbers associated with each work for ease of location, and optimal fluidity of the narrative if the viewer chooses to visit each work in the order proposed in the pamphlet. This also cleared up visual space on the map, allowing visitors to more clearly discern navigation of the galleries.

On average, the students spent roughly 10 minutes on the tours. Once I received feedback I realized that the students had in fact gone as a group, as a number of them commented on the group conversation that ensued while taking the tour. When the class reconvened five days later, the students were given an informal prompt to be completed in class regarding the tour which read "did your experience in the museum differ from other museum experiences you've had?" The question was worded so that students did not necessarily have to mention the tours themselves, and were able to comment on any aspect of the experience they wished. In response, each prompt focused on the experience with the "Party Animal" tour.

Of the feedback received, the majority (six out the ten) of students commented upon the tour being either "fun," "interesting" and most frequently, "engaging" (Appendix F). Other themes of the students' commentary included the relatability of the tours, the added structure to the museum visit, an appreciation of the humor of the narrative, and being relaxed in the

museum. One student commented that he or she felt that it was “less intimidating” than having someone lead the tour, while another commented that “I think the pamphlet of this style would be helpful in making work more accessible to people less familiar with art.” Interestingly, one individual referred to the tour as being “engaging in a somewhat unartistic, relatable way.” What does this *mean*? Though at first I was taken aback, one may presuppose that the student finds that which is ‘artistic’ ‘unrelatable.’ If so, this student has effectively highlighted the problem the tour aims to solve.

Student Night at the GMOA

Five weeks into the fall semester of 2013, I piloted two of the tours at the GMOA’s fall student night event. The night featured free food, crafts, a photo booth and a popular Athens DJ. Student nights are events sponsored and organized by the GMOA Student Association. The event was also a ‘blue card’ event, which are campus events in which undergraduates are enticed to attend in order to receive early access to registration. The theme of the event was ‘fire and ice,’ and coincided with the Fashion Independent exhibition of the clothing and life of Ann Taylor.

The suggested amount of time to spend in the museum was forty-five minutes. A total of forty tours were distributed, with twenty being the “I Love Athens” tour and the remaining twenty being “Skipping My Next Class” tour. The tours were distributed as the students entered and ‘checked in’ as attending the blue card event by scanning their university identification card. At this point the students were able to choose which tour to take. I observed students taking the tours in the galleries, and noticed that the “Skipping My Next Class” tour went very quickly as opposed to the “I Love Athens” tour. After completing the tour, students were encouraged to fill out a brief anonymous survey on the back which asked what level of education they were

enrolled in, whether they never, infrequently, or often visit museums, and whether it was first time at the GMOA, or whether they infrequently or often visit the museum. Only one of the brochures returned with feedback was from the “I Love Athens” tour, with the rest being the “Skipping My Next Class.” Of the feedback received, the majority was from undergraduate students. The samples were split with half of the students sampled visiting museums infrequently and the other half visiting museums ‘often.’ Only one of the students considered themselves to have visited the GMOA often, while for the rest of the students stated it was either their first time at the museum or that they visited infrequently.

The students’ majors were Art Education, Art, Journalism, Anthropology, and Spanish. The suggestions for new tours from those in the arts were women artists and sports. The remaining concentrations suggested themes based around armor, jewelry, fashion, Greek or Byzantine Art, costume design, and “anything” from the Victorian era. Suggestions around fashion and jewelry were the most frequent.

As I walked through the galleries, I noticed that not one tour was taken independently, with the majority of tours being taken in groups of two to five individuals. The amount of time spent on the tours also varied, with a number of students continuing into the Fashion Independent exhibition after completing the tour. Students also appeared to be engaging with the tours intermittently, with many of them holding the tour pamphlets while viewing other non-listed works in the galleries.

Engaging Art Museum Audiences as Student Docents Course

The week following the student night, I distributed the tours again to students enrolled in DiCindio's *Engaging Art Museum Audiences as Student Docents* course which consists primarily of undergraduate students in the arts. The partial objective of the course is as follows:

This course will focus on how museum audiences interact with works of art and how docents can facilitate these experiences. It will include readings, discussions, and activities in the galleries of the Georgia Museum of Art. Students will learn about the museum's collection and give tours as student docents. (DiCindio, 2013)

I began by providing a brief overview of the development of my work, beginning with the Tate model, and then followed with a discussion of the assigned readings which included excerpts from Falk and Dierking's (1998) *Lessons Without Limits* and chapters 7 and 8 of Wilkening and Chung's (2009) *Lifestages of the Museum Visitor*, which were critical readings in the development of these tours.

After a general discussion of the readings, the students took the tours in the galleries (again with a number of students doing so in groups) and reconvened to discuss ideas for future tours. DiCindio, the students and I brainstormed on the whiteboard.

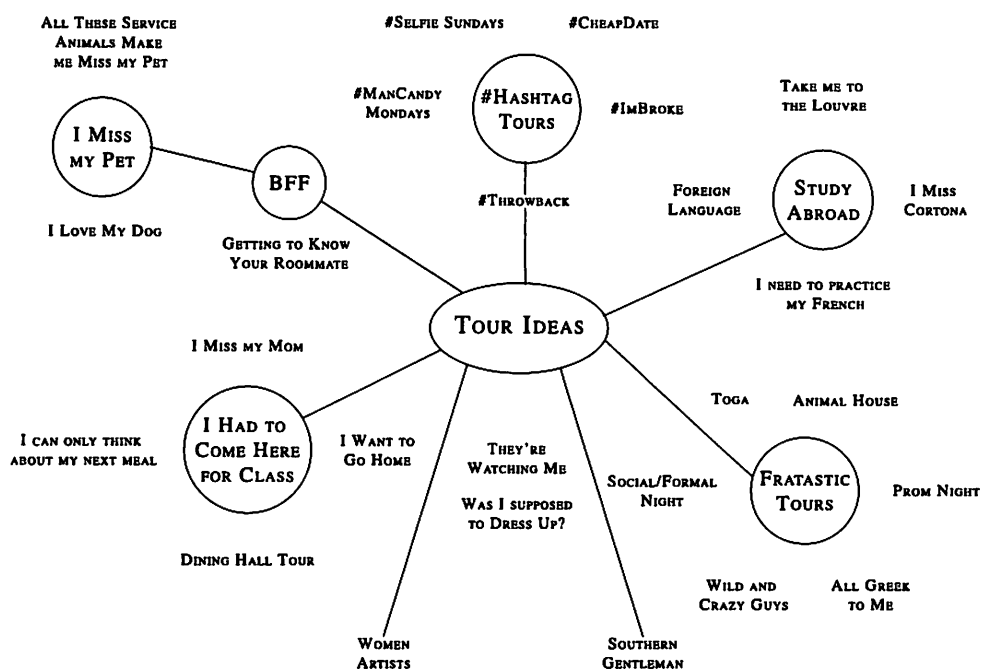


Figure 12: Brainstorming with Student Docents

The students appeared very engaged in coming up with new tour ideas, and were encouraged to use these ideas in the development of their final projects for the course if they were interested.

I considered this mind map as being one of the most critical pieces of feedback generated, considering the opportunity allowed me to engage directly with undergraduates by asking them what *they* want to experience with the tours. The social aspect of their suggestions permeates a number of the sub-categories proposed, including the BFF, #hashtag, and even Frat Boy tours. I am particularly interested in the #hashtag collection, seeing as the tour would be an excellent way to transition into digital tour components, and it has been included in the list of challenges. For example, a student may be ‘challenged’ to comment via twitter on an artwork with the suggested themed hashtag (as well as a suggestion to include #GMOA).

Suggestions for the Implementation of Social Media

Given that during each piloting of the tours, the students chose to primarily take the tours in groups, coupled with the socially themed suggestions from the undergraduate docents in training, it seems fitting to create a tour that caters to a small group of visitors. This is also in accordance with the observation stated previously in the literature review that the majority of individuals who visit museums do so in groups (Falk & Dierking, 2012). Originally, my intent was to entice students individually to visit the museum, but, as can be seen from even the relatively small number of students in both the Docent and Aesthetic Understanding courses, the students engaged with the tours in groups. Though the tours distributed do not *demand* they be taken individually, accommodating groups is a next step in their development.

Along similar lines, and as suggested previously, the connectedness between individuals within the galleries and in terms of social media is one that can be easily integrated into the challenges of the tours via the suggested #hashtags. Moreover, these platforms are free and are currently being explored by the GMOA. The museum has a considerable Twitter following with 2578 followers as of October 2013. The GMOA is ranked 48th by followers in Athens, Georgia, has an average daily increase of two followers, and one following, or subscriber. (“Twitter Counter”). Another major social media presence for the GMOA is Facebook, whose page currently has 3136 ‘likes.’ Both of these platforms include the integration of ‘geolocation based social technology’ or the ability to ‘check-in’ at a location as well as comment.

Geolocate based social media, which is a component of both Facebook and Twitter has gained considerable popularity with the advent of social media giants such as Foursquare and Yelp, but has yet to reach the “tipping point” of popularity. Perhaps the most central reason that geolocation based social media remains in the infancy of its popularity is due to the fact that,

“marketers will need to create and test new geolocation experiences that are not generic but relevant to a particular brand and audience” (Reese & Beckland, 2011; cited in Smith, 2011, p. 7).

According to a 2011 survey commissioned by the Theatre Bay Area which interviewed 207 non-profit arts organizations nationwide, 96 percent of these organizations are active on at least one social media platform, with the three most popular being Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Surprisingly, arts organizations are utilizing content as the motivating factor in utilizing social media to initiate engagement (Smith, 2011). Unlike other venue groups that use special offers and discounts to promote attendance such as Foursquare, arts organizations are uploading and using content as the driving force to initiate traffic.

Additionally, another study of social media use in the arts community by MacPherson and Trudel (2011) shows that arts organizations’ use of mobile applications is currently growing. In predicting the future of social media within arts organizations, MacPherson and Trudel (2011) remark:

Mobile tools and applications are on the rise. Digital media erases physical bounds by connecting people and organizations with any distance between them. In addition, location-aware devices have the potential to greatly enhance the experience of the arts and their venues, increase access to information about arts events, and add convenience to the process of purchasing tickets. (“How Strong is Your Social Net?”)

Currently, “Users of location-based apps are mostly young, active contributors to social networks” (Reese & Beckland, 2011, p. 12). However, that demographic is expanding. As Smith of the Bay Theatre Area comments, “Social media is no longer the purview of rich, white, college kids” (2011, p. 6). With regards to mobile applications (of which geolocative technology

is most important) statistically speaking, “while an older person is less likely to know about these apps, they are no less likely to have used them—so long as they have passed the hurdle of awareness” (Reese & Beckland, 2011, p. 12).

According to Reese and Beckland’s (2011) survey of geolocative technology (2011), two of the contributing factors as to why geolocative services have not yet reached the “tipping point,” can be attributed to the privacy fears (interestingly enough, statistically higher amongst women) of users and the fact that “marketers will need to create and test new geolocation experiences that are not generic but relevant to a particular brand and audience” (Reese & Beckland, 2011, p. 4).

Currently geolocative social media (GSM) is implemented with the desires of the venue and viewer (client) in mind. Foursquare, for example, is used to entice the client with special offers for ‘checking in’ and the client, in return, not only receives these offers, but by letting others know of their whereabouts creates a ‘perceived connoisseurship’ amongst their peers. In other words, by ‘checking-in’ at a place, others are aware of the individual’s interest and the frequency of which they frequent certain locations and ultimately how often they participate within a certain group (Reese & Beckland, 2011). To illustrate, if I were to check in at the GMOA 60 times, my friends may get an impression of my connoisseurship of the arts. This aspect of GSM has such a strong pull that the White Horse survey argues that it actually trumps any special offers and incentives by the venue itself (Reese & Beckland, 2011). Yet, regardless of whether or not the client decided to leave a ‘tip,’ the venue benefits simply by having others notify their peers of their location.

Mobile application generation is currently rather simple (for simple needs) with sites such as Coderbuddy and AppMkr that allow non-programmers to set up their own mobile application

for free within minutes. To some extent, users are able to implement aspects of mapping (predominantly Google maps) into their mobile application, yet the non-programmer-friendly tools are not so friendly as to allow for one to use the essential core of Foursquare's technology when building their application.

Another very simple (not non-locative or social media based) technology that would reduce or eliminate the necessity for any printed material would be the implementation of the tours on a QR code located at the front desk. A QR code is essentially a barcode that may be scanned by a mobile device. This barcode functions as a physical 'link' to online material or documents. By designing the tours as a mobile friendly PDF file, the QR code may be generated within seconds. Though the popularity of QR codes on mobile devices has declined in recent years, it is another free technology, and is much simpler than designing a mobile application. As developing these technologies continues to become easier to develop, proliferate, and consequentially more prevalent in the individual's everyday life, they will be able to use this technology to delve even deeper into the culture of curation.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

I began this applied project with a reflection on my experience with the Tate Britain ‘Collections,’ in 2006, which would heavily inform my project with the Georgia Museum of Art which began in the summer of 2012 as a final project for Henry’s *Introduction to Museum Education* course. I proceeded to explain how the project was a product of my desire to try and make the mindful museum experience more accessible to the public, specifically to undergraduates, by creating self-guided tours with topics relevant to the average undergraduate student.

From there, I gave a brief overview of the origins of the museum, their evolution into the twentieth century, and how their formal rise during the Industrial Revolution created issues of exclusivity between the public and the museum as an institution, as a way of setting up my argument for the need of the tours. I also reviewed the history of education in the museum as a way of showing that education’s intended role over the years has always been a way to interpret museum content, and make these works accessible. The theoretical framework that outlined this project was laid forth in the idea of constructivism as an epistemology, and its manifestations in museum education in the works of George Hein, John Falk and Lynn Dierking. Special attention was paid to the Contextual Model of Learning (Falk & Dierking, 2012) that was greatly influential in the development of the tours. The literature review ended with a brief discussion on the current culture of curation. This phenomenon grows out of a necessity for the individual to curate as a way of navigating an influx of information, which is a result increasing technological

advancement. I argue that this project caters to the popularity of everyday curation by attempting to make the permanent collection of the Georgia Museum of Art explicitly relevant to the student by providing the tours.

Then I provided a brief critique and overview of the Tate Britain Collections, the intent of the project as a method of engaging new audiences as a way of competing with the newly opened Tate Modern, which housed a much more contemporary collection. Using my analysis of the Tate model as inspiration to begin this applied project, I then turned my attention to guiding the reader through the development and layout of the “I’m Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class” tour for the Georgia Museum of Art. In this overview, I described how I sought to apply my knowledge of constructivism and the Contextual Model of Learning to the design of the tours, as well as my intent that the tours serve as an accessible introduction to the Georgia Museum of Art in hopes that the individual returns. I also included the docent-led “I’m Just Here for the Frames Tour,” developed during DiCindio’s *Engaging Art Museum Audiences as Student Docents* course at the University of Georgia to illustrate one example of how the tours may be given in alternative forms.

What I Learned

I then discussed the piloting of the tours in Henry’s *Art Appreciation* course, Student Night at the GMOA, and DiCindio’s *Student Docent* course. When considered as a whole, the three experiences seemed to be more of a new starting point than a ‘wrap up’ of the project. For example, aside from the biggest next step being the integration of technology, I was inspired by the enthusiasm the students exhibited when reflecting on the tours, and within general discussion. One student in particular found that the tours guided her away from immediately

delving into information provided on the labels, which she ritually tended to do when visiting museums. The student's enthusiasm about this continues to stick with me. I think that the potential for the self-guided tour, and variations of it, to alter the way someone experiences the museum – even if they are a frequent visitor – is a powerful tool. If something as simple as reading the labels can provoke reflection (on whatever level) of how someone engages with art, I would argue that experimenting with different forms of tours is something to be explored in the future.

Another lesson learned during the piloting of the tours was that giving out the pamphlets during the student night was an excellent way of getting the tours into the hands of individuals who hadn't visited the museum, but was not the best scenario for receiving feedback. It was difficult to determine, not only from the written feedback, but from observation, how the students were engaging with the artworks compared to how they would normally approach the collection. I would argue that this owes to the nature of the student night. During these events, the museum is not its normal self – e.g. the presence of the DJ, crafts, dancing, etc. Though the students seemed to all be having an excellent time, it didn't strike me until after giving out the tours that the altered environment may have encouraged them to view the tours differently than if they were given out within the museum's typical environment.

The relationship between environment and the museum visitor is another topic I hope to explore more in depth in the future. I believe that tackling a broad subject such as environment may be successfully handled using systems thinking. Systems thinking provides an ecological framework for understanding phenomena as open systems that are connected to many parts of their surroundings (Senge, 2006). It is a way of problem solving that focuses on the whole rather than the parts. I believe that using systems thinking as a basis for developing and exploring

research questions concerning the environment and the museum visitor will help to broaden the scope of the project and potentially reach a wider demographic.

Aside from the integration of technology into the next phase of the project, the feedback from the informal assessment by students warrants a more in-depth study. Working with a model of the tours that relies on mobile technology and social media may go hand in hand with the receiving of feedback. For example, one of the major subcategories suggested by the students in the docent education course were the 'hashtag' tours. Hashtags have become an extremely popular social media element that allows users to broadcast personal interests through using the hashtag to demarcate a topic through various social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. This concept may be easily incorporated into the 'challenges' portion of the tours, an element of the tours which seemed to lack proper engagement from the visitors. For example, visitors may broadcast #(tour name e.g. selfie Sunday) alongside #(GMOA). Once this information is published to the Internet, collecting basic information (such as the frequency and content) of the posts is easily obtained through Twitter and Facebook. But perhaps more importantly, this approach lends itself to the popular interests of the demographic, making the challenges more engaging.

Another issue surrounding the future of the project concerns the transience of the student led development. The university is constantly cycling through graduate and undergraduate students, and this poses potential problems for a number of projects across campus. However, if the tours are easily maintained and developed, this may help to ameliorate the issue of impermanency. To make the design of future tours congruent, there is a main template for each tour, which is easily manipulated through Adobe Illustrator and InDesign. A major concern for any online component of the tours is that of obsolescence of technology or software. For this

reason, it compels the tour designer to maintain a printable version of each tour, which may be used regardless of any technological components.

Both artwork and students are subject to rotation. This has proven to be an issue in keeping the tours up to date. In order to keep the tours current, they necessitate having ‘backups.’ This is an ongoing project. For example, *La Confidence*, one of the major spotlighted works at the GMOA, and an included work in multiple tours, recently went on loan. Until that point, I hadn’t considered that this work, or others of similar prominence within the museum, would risk being loaned or even taken down for that matter. Late in the summer semester of 2013, I walked through the galleries with the sole purpose of scouting out the works that had been repositioned, were newly exhibited, or had been retired for the moment. I was surprised at the subtle changes in displayed works that meant not so subtle issues for the tours. This was a lesson for me, and much remains desired in terms of streamlining the process of changing the tours as the works cycle or new ones are acquired.

Some individuals worry that the museum is losing relevance in the 21st century - that the traditional museum model is less applicable to our increasingly connected lifestyle (Anderson, 2004; Usherwood, Wilson, & Bryson, 2005). However, I would argue that those who fear for the future of museums are essentially concerned with a timeless and constant challenge of whether or not the museum is able to reflect the desires of the public. Academic museums are in a unique and potentially challenging situation of not only meeting the needs of the community, but especially the students of its affiliated university. Nevertheless, history shows that this not a new concern for any museum. Reinvention, or re-envisioning of approaches necessitates flexibility, which is not always an easy task. In fact, it can be extremely difficult to institute and effectually merge novel methods of presentation which reflects both the public and the varying philosophies

of those who are in positions of authority in the museum. Regardless, if individuals are invested in the museum, they are inevitably invested in its future. At the center of this future is the creative and relevant interpretation of what lies within the museum.

When I reflect upon the span of this project, I think the elephant in the room is humor. It deserves mentioning that it is okay to laugh in a museum. Humor is considered by some to be a part of a “disruptive pedagogy” that ultimately promotes a “higher tolerance for ambiguity and chaos, and value improvisation” (p. 38) Klein (2013) advocates humor, specifically in art education, in her statement that:

The art educator as trickster-pedagogue who engages in a disruptive pedagogy through humor warrants further consideration particularly for art educators at the secondary and university levels. For it is he or she who may be able to reveal, unravel, and breakdown rigid patterns of thinking early on, and allow for breakthroughs to new ways of knowing and understanding. (p. 38)

Some of the works in the permanent collection *are* funny. And for the works that are not overtly amusing, a light approach can breathe new life into largely unnoticed or tired works and invite the viewer into ‘new ways of knowing and understanding’ the work. Weisfeld acknowledges “many jokes short circuit our habitual ways of thinking, showing us alternative perspectives” (Weisfeld, 2006). Sometimes it requires deeper looking, and other times a fresh take. My favorite memories of this project involve hearing laughs or seeing the grins of visitors taking the tours and knowing that they are engaging with works in a novel way. Humor may not always be appropriate, but when it is, it can create memorable and fond experiences that are worthy of revisiting. And that is a great rapport to have with any museum.

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Appendix B: Tour Text

General Intro

Welcome to your museum. The museum's founder, Alfred Holbrook, donated 100 American paintings to "the people of Georgia through its flagship university," in 1945. Whether you're here for the first time or a regular, there's always something new to discover in the permanent collection. Feeling ecstatic? Anxious? Mad because your roommate stole your Randy Travis poster? We have art for that. So relax and have fun on these tours.

"I Love" Athens Tour

La Confidence

You are not alone in your love of this city - she has been a muse to many. Take La Confidence for example. In 1991 professor James Herbert here at UGA brought La Confidence (as well as a few others from the collection) to life in R.E.M's music video for the song "Low." His music video gave a new racy twist to the innocence of the artist's original intentions. Which left audiences asking – is it sexy?

Challenge: QR code: link to video

Hurricane Season

Art Rosenbaum

You are not alone in your love of this city - she has been a muse to many. Take University of Georgia Professor Emeritus Art Rosenbaum for example.

Downtown Scene

Lamar Dodd

The downtown Athens we know and love has undergone some changes over the years. Yet, as you sit on the quad overlooking Broad Street on a summer evening, you may feel similarly to the

artist. Sure, some of the buildings may have changed and businesses may have moved in and moved out, but the charm remains.

Little Grand Canyon Yellow

Howard Thomas

Here the artist has preserved a little bit of Georgia on the canvas. Howard Thomas worked as an artist and professor at the University of Georgia from 1945 to 1965 and used earth (dirt) samples in the creation of his own pigments. In the case to your right is a collection of those samples, labeled by the artist.

Challenge: I dedicate this to _____ because _____.

Robert Ransome Billups

Edwin Smith Jr.

We'll end this tour by going back to a simpler, perhaps more frustrating time. A time when death at the hands of Creek warriors was a real threat in the surrounding area. It was in a skirmish with the aforementioned that Robert Ransome Billups, a prominent Athenian, met his match in 1836. Despite his gruesome end, he and his wife (whose portrait hangs to the right) found Clarke County a great place to settle—much like you. Now go spread that love back into the city!

Challenge: Badges: lol/gross/love/fail/cute

The I'm Seriously Thinking About Skipping My Next Class Tour

Introduction:

Been there. You're tired. You've worked hard, and a good nap never sounded better. But before you do anything crazy (like skipping class), take a moment to reconsider.

Transcontinental Bus

Louis Freund

Here you are, perhaps in between classes with nothing to do. Apparently you're even contemplating whether or not it's worth it to show up to that next class. You've probably been going nonstop since you woke up, and the thought of boarding another bus could send you over the edge. Maybe you're asking yourself whether those smells and flying elbows are really worth it. Even the noblest academic intentions may waver when considering the cramped commute around campus.

Bacchus #81

Elaine de Kooning

But what if you do show up? Every day it's the same thing. That relentless climb to the top of the academic ladder. All that information melding and swirling in your brain like a chaotic fact explosion. No worries. We know how you feel, and we've got you covered. What you need is a little inspiration.

Self-Portrait

Lamar Dodd

Ah yes. Lamar Dodd. Big man on the art campus. You can bet your biscuits this man would have gone to class. Look at that learned, confident gaze, almost as if he's saying, "Follow my lead, grasshopper, and one day you, too, and may be immortalized on the walls of the museum."*

*This is Lamar in his twenties. Eventually he'd become the head of the art department here at UGA and make some big changes. Oh yeah. And they named the art school after him. No biggie.

The Old Mill

Homer Dodge Martin

Now that your motivation is rekindled, your purpose reinstated, save a moment to take it all in before making your way through . . . the day, at least. Consider where you've come from, what it

took to get here and the opportunities that await you if only you keep up the good work. If that doesn't work, may we suggest a coffee at Ike and Jane downstairs? March on, brave soldier.

The Party Animal Tour

Intro:

Those less fortunate than yourself might say you have a sixth sense. And that sense is knowing how to Rage. You know how to send a lackluster get together soaring into the party stratosphere with your enthusiasm, charisma, and 'take-it-to-the-next-level' attitude – and you've come to the right place. Whether you're on route to your next party conquest or plotting your next appearance, this is your tour.

Untitled Green Apple

Pierre Daura

Your life is anything but still. Like Daura you seek to bring out as much of the evening in one instance as possible. You can (and must) synthesize every perspective, every dynamic of your situation as you float effortlessly amongst your minions. In doing so, you are bold – you stand out like a blazing green hue in a grey room, ready to take charge of the scene on a moment's notice.

Snow on the Hills

Stuart Davis

And on a moments notice, you will dance. And it will be epic. If the music and atmosphere merely suggest it, you are the first to bound across the dance floor (or living room) with spontaneity in a display of magnificent improvisations the like of which the world has never seen.

Boys Pilfering Molasses**George Henry Hall**

Throughout the evening, chances are you may find yourself the leader of the pack. What room) with spontaneity in a display of magnificent improvisations the like of which the world has never seen.

Challenge: Reminds me of the time I _____

Billie Holiday Sings the Blues**Jay Robinson**

Everything is in full swing and mood is everything. Your senses are electrified, or at least on high alert. You've arrived at the right place, physically and emotionally.

Beatnik Girl**Jack Levine**

Then comes the moment in which your work is finished. You may now reap the rewards of your hard work as you gaze around the room, watching a good time being had by all. Become a spectator if you wish - you've earned it.

The Homesick Tour***Quilt***

You're missing those simple comforts of home, those gentle reminders of times past. It happens. Even the thought of those securities is enough to bring you to tears, you trudge onward – albeit your thoughts are elsewhere.

Challenge: Reminds me of the time I _____.

Martha at 13**Pierre Daura**

Maybe you're considering your early teenage years, when your freedom couldn't get here fast enough. And now the thought of being back home maybe doesn't sound so bad. Consider the subject here - Martha Daura, reluctantly sitting for a portrait by her father Pierre Daura. Your parents probably didn't paint your portrait, but I bet they took measures to hold on to you in your younger years just as you were. Now the tables have turned and you're doing your best to hold on to their memories while you're away. Martha's doing this, too. If you follow her gaze, you'll notice it's directed at her father's work on the opposite wall.

Bridge at Old Lyme**Childe Hassem**

But you're here for a reason. You're on a journey. You're setting out to become the best possible you, and that requires stepping out into the unknown. Not knowing what lies ahead while missing home makes you want to turn around, and quick. But remember, the best may lie ahead.

Hurricane Season**Art Rosenbaum**

But it's not all gloom and doom. Think about the new friends you've made - the late nights, the crazy times. These are your glory days, and, ironically enough one day you'll be 'homesick' for them. Live it up young grasshopper, live it up.

Appendix C: Alternate Tour Ideas

- I've just split up
- Spring Break/Winter Break
- Haunted
- Homesick
- Stuck in Athens
- So you want to be an artist
- I'm here for the first time
- Staff Picks
- Security guard's tour
- Curator's least favorite
- Is this really art
- Let's get positive
- Party animal tour
- So you're in a band
- Curatorial conceits
- It's way too hot/cold
- I have way too much homework
- What am I doing with my life
- I'm broke tour
- It's Saturday in Athens
- The Dawgs just lost a game

Appendix D: Challenge Ideas

- Alternative soundtrack
- Alternative titles
- Narrative (as individual in work- something short)
 - I feel, I was, I never
- Prompts (could be most relative to tour)
 - This work could really use
 - Makes me want to
 - Would never be,
 - After viewing the biggest question is
 - I dedicate this to
 - If I could ask author/subject one question
 - Reminds me of the time I
 - Smells like
 - Postcard to share with friend challenge
 - Make up a lie about this work
 - QR code
- Love/hate letter to artist
- Have them write down 4 or 5 adjectives of how they feel when they walk in and match them up to certain works on the tour (i.e. Mad Lib)
- Call your mother challenge
- Draw your version thumbnail

Appendix E: Printable Tours

Welcome to your museum. The museum's founder, Alfred Holbrook, donated 100 American paintings to "the people of Georgia through its flagship university," in 1945. Whether you're here for the first time or a regular, there's always something new to discover in the permanent collection. Feeling ecstatic? anxious? mad because your roommate stole your Randy Travis poster? We have art for that. So relax and have fun on these tours.

I am a(n):

undergraduate graduate other

I visit museums:

never infrequently often

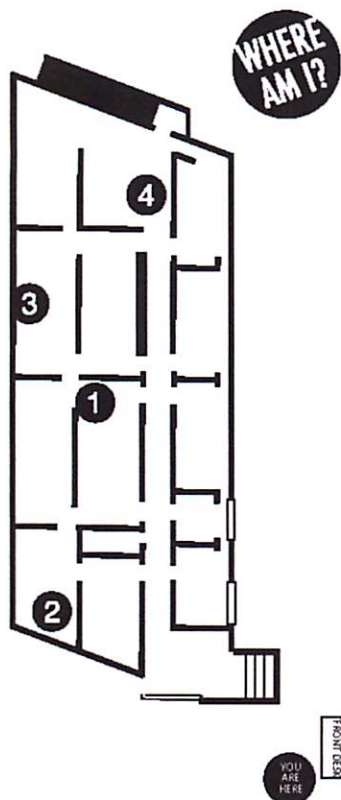
I come to the GMOA:

first time infrequently often

Major/department:

What other themed tours would you like to see?





1 ODUM GALLERY



Cupboard
Unidentified Maker
Elbert County, Georgia

You're missing those simple comforts of home, those gentle reminders of times past. It happens. Even the thought of those securities is enough to bring you to tears, you trudge onward - albeit your thoughts are elsewhere.

2 HOLDER GALLERY



Martha at 13
Pierre Daura

Maybe you're considering your early teenage years, when your freedom couldn't get here fast enough. And now the thought of being back home maybe doesn't sound so bad. Consider the subject here - Martha Daura, reluctantly sitting for a portrait by her father Pierre Daura. Your parents probably didn't paint your portrait, but I bet they took measures to hold on to you in your younger years just as you were. Now the tables have turned and you're doing your best to hold on to their memories while you're away. Martha's doing this, too. If you follow her gaze, you'll notice it's directed at her father's work on the opposite wall.

3 SWANSON GALLERY



Bridge at Old Lyme
Childe Hasslem

But you're here for a reason. You're on a journey. You're setting out to become the best possible you, and that requires stepping out into the unknown. Not knowing what lies ahead while missing home makes you want to turn around, and quick. But remember, the best may lie ahead.

I dedicate this to _____

4 ORKIN GALLERY



Hurricane Season
Art Rosenbaum

But it's not all gloom and doom. Think about the new friends you've made - the late nights, the crazy times. These are your glory days, and, ironically enough one day you'll be 'homesick' for them. Live it up young grasshopper, live it up.

CHALLENGE

Welcome to your museum. The museum's founder, Alfred Holbrook, donated 100 American paintings to "the people of Georgia through its flagship university," in 1945. Whether you're here for the first time or a regular, there's always something new to discover in the permanent collection. Feeling ecstatic? anxious? mad because your roommate stole your Randy Travis poster? We have art for that. So relax and have fun on these tours.

I am a(n):

undergraduate graduate other

I visit museums:

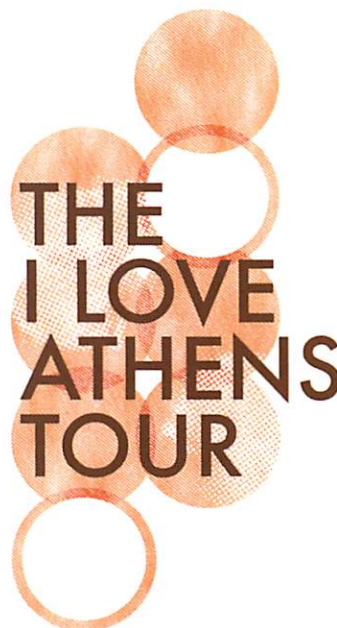
never infrequently often

I come to the GMOA:

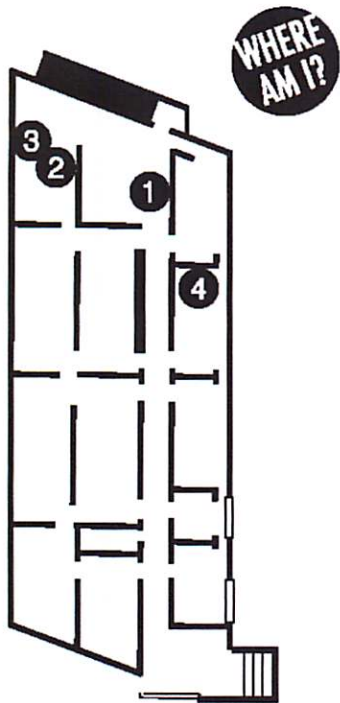
first time infrequently often

Major/department:

What other themed tours would you like to see?



THE I LOVE ATHENS TOUR



WHERE AM I?

1 ORKIN GALLERY



Hurricane Season
Art Rosenbaum
 You are not alone in your love of this city - she has been a muse to many. Take Art Rosenbaum, professor emeritus at the University of Georgia. The far left panel of Hurricane Season immortalizes a single moment in a makeshift skateboarder's park here in town - because when the time comes, we Athenians know how to make their own fun.

I dedicate this work to _____
 because _____

CHALLENGE

2 SWANSON GALLERY



Downtown Scene
Lamar Dodd
 The downtown Athens we know and love has undergone some changes over the years. Yet, as you sit on the quad overlooking Broad Street on a summer evening, you may feel similarly to the artist. Sure, some of the buildings may have changed and businesses may have moved in and moved out, but the charm remains.

YOU ARE HERE

FRONT KEN

3 SWANSON GALLERY



Here the artist has preserved a little bit of Georgia on the canvas. Howard Thomas worked as an artist and professor at the University of Georgia from 1945 to 1965 and used earth (dirt) samples in the creation of his own pigments. In the case to your right is a collection of those samples, labeled by the artist.

Little Grand Canyon Yellow
 Howard Thomas

4 FORIO GALLERY



Robert Ransome Billups
Edwin Smith, Jr.
 We'll end this tour by going back to a simpler, perhaps more frustrating time. A time when death at the hands of Creek warriors was a real threat in the surrounding area. It was in a skirmish with the aforementioned that Robert Ransome Billups, a prominent Athenian, met his match in 1836. Despite his gruesome end, he and his wife (whose portrait hangs to the right) found Clarke County a great place to settle—much like you. Now go spread that love back into the city!

Those less fortunate than yourself might say you have a sixth sense. And that sense is knowing how to Rage. You know how to send a lackluster get-together soaring into the party stratosphere with your enthusiasm, charisma, and 'take-it-to-the-next-level' attitude – and you've come to the right place. Whether you're on route to your next party conquest or plotting your next appearance, this is your tour.

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I visit museums:

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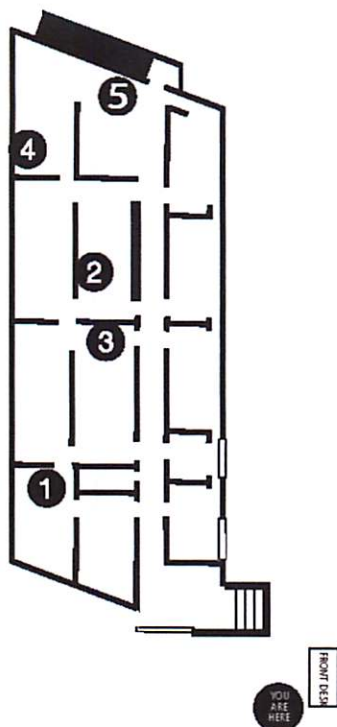
I come to the GMOA:

first time infrequently often

Major/department:

What other themed tours would you like to see?





1 HOLDER GALLERY



Untitled Green Apple
Pierre Daura

Your life is anything but still. Like Daura you seek to bring out as much of the evening in one instance as possible. You can (and must) synthesize every perspective, every dynamic of your situation as you float effortlessly amongst your minors. In doing so, you are bold - you stand out like a blazing green hue in a grey room, ready to take charge of the scene on a moment's notice..

2 NALLEY GALLERY



Snow on the Hills
Stuart Davis

...and in that moment, you will dance. And it will be epic. If the music and atmosphere merely suggest it, you are the first to bound across the dance floor (or living room) with spontaneity in a display of magnificent improvisations the like of which the world has never seen.

3 RADFORD GALLERY



Boys Pilfering Molasses
George Henry Hall

Throughout the evening, chances are you may find yourself the leader of the pack. What is the destiny of this fete? The night may come to a pivotal point at which you must make executive decisions. You call upon your craftiness and cunning to do what others would only imagine. But they will soon follow suite.

Party Animal Challenge:
Boys Pilfering Molasses reminds me of the time I...

4 SWANSON GALLERY



Billie Holiday Sings the Blues
Jay Robinson

Everything is in full swing and mood is everything. Your senses are electrified, or at least on high alert.

5 ORKIN GALLERY



Beatnik Girl
Jack Levine

Then comes the moment in which your work is finished. You may now reap the rewards of your hard work as you gaze around the room, watching a good time being had by all. Become a spectator if you wish - you've earned it.

Been there. you're tired. you've worked hard, and a good nap's never sounded better. But before you do anything crazy (like skipping class) take a moment to reconsider.

I am a(n):
undergraduate graduate other

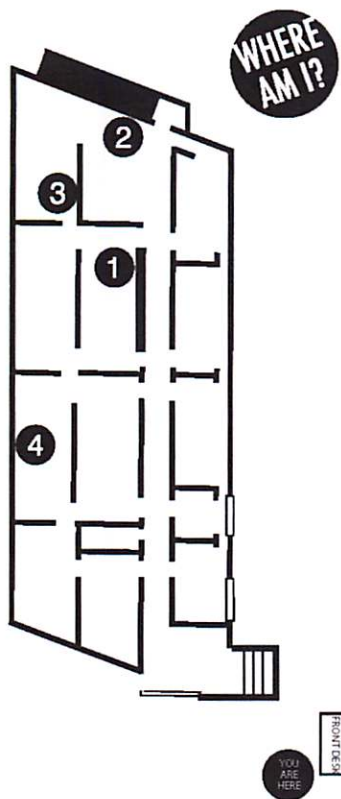
I visit museums:
never infrequently often

I come to the GMDA:
first time infrequently often

Major/department:

What other themed tours would you like to see?

THE SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT SKIPPING MY NEXT CLASS TOUR



1 TURNER GALLERY



Transcontinental Bus
Louis Freund

Here you are, perhaps in between classes with nothing to do. Apparently you're even contemplating whether or not it's worth it to show up to that next class. You've probably been going nonstop since you woke up, and the thought of boarding another bus could send you over the edge. Maybe you're asking yourself whether those smells and flying elbows are really worth it. Even the noblest academic intentions may waver when considering the cramped commute around campus.

I would have titled this _____ **CHALLENGE**

2 ORKIN GALLERY

But what if you do show up? Every day it's the same thing. That relentless climb to the top of the academic ladder. All that information melding and swirling in your brain like a chaotic factexplosion. No worries. We know how you feel, and we've got you covered. What you need is a little inspiration.



Bacchus #81
Elaine de Kooning

3 SWANSON GALLERY



Self Portrait
Lamar Dodd

Ah yes. Lamar Dodd. Big man on the art campus. You can bet your biscuits this man would have gone to class. Look at that learned, confident gaze, almost as if he's saying, "Follow my lead, grasshopper, and one day you, too, may be immortalized on the walls of the museum."

"This is Lamar in his twenties. Eventually he'd become the head of the art department here at UGA and make some big changes. Oh yeah. And they named the art school after him. No biggie.

4 TURNER GALLERY



The Old Mill
Homer Dodge Martin

Now that your motivation is rekindled, your purpose reinstated, save a moment to take it all in before making your way through...the day, at least. Consider where you've come from, what it took to get here and the opportunities that await you if only you keep up the good work. If that doesn't work, may we suggest a coffee at Ike and Jane downstairs? March on, brave soldier.

Appendix F: “Party Animal Tour” Feedback

Student A:

I have never really had a specific tour like that on a museum visit before. I have never seen it done where different pieces of a permanent collection are chosen to make up a themed tour. I really enjoyed the fun and playful narrative of the tour and it actually made me notice and relate to pieces that I have never taken notice of before. I love the mindset that the tour placed me in because it definitely made me feel more relaxed and able to just enjoy being at the museum as opposed to most class [sic] taken or toured trips of museums.

Student B:

I have never been on a scavenger hunt looking for artwork like the sheet had us do. It was a fun way to take a tour around the museum and be able to experience all the artwork that the museum had to offer.

Student C:

The experience was different because it was guided but also left room for an individual interpretation of the work it provided me a gateway to have a personal connection with works I might have otherwise overlooked. Additionally, there was a group aspect. As we were walking from piece to piece, the written guide prompted conversations and we were able to share what we got from the work. Not having a person guide the tour made it less intimidating.

Student D:

I was engaged, and it wasn't just aimlessly walking around I connected with the art rather than just reading the label, glancing and walking away.

Student E:

I thought the theme made it fun and relatable. It allowed me to look at the artworks in a different context and gave me different impressions of the artworks' meaning. The still life of the lime green fruit...the dark space would normally have been interpreted as a simple still life study for the sake of making an aesthetically pleasing work, but looking at the green as an embodiment of electrifying fun made the fruits take on human characteristics - thus making it more relatable and interesting.

Student F:

I didn't read/rely on the labels initially! Since I am not a "party-animal" type, I was forced to first make connections with the works through this false persona, and then further investigate. These connections and relate them to my own knowledge and experiences. This two-step process was very engaging! It was humorous! I really appreciated being able to relax as I began looking at a piece because of a small giggle or humorous notion from the brochure.

Student G:

Considering that it was my first time at the Georgia Museum of Art, it was of course different than all my other museum experiences, which honestly isn't too many. But the [sic] was great. Victoria set up the way, and also the order that we viewed specific pieces was engaging in a somewhat unartistic recatable [sic] way. In the end, it was refreshing.

Student H:

I have not ever used a handout to guide my viewing of works in the museum. The handout was also unique because it was light-hearted and humorous. Most of my experiences with museum guides have been relatively serious. I think that the humor of

the handout helped to create conversations between my classmates and I. Everyone was relaxed and enjoying themselves. I think the pamphlet of this style would be helpful in making work more accessible to people less familiar with art.

Student I:

It differed because I have not had a tour in which there was a pamphlet that helped guide me through the tour. Also having the interactive quality with a particular artwork. That posed sentence prompted the group I was with not only to answer the question but also sparked us to all talk about the question amongst ourselves and share memories.

Student J:

The museum on Thursday was different in how we viewed the artwork. We had your packet that went through the 6(?) paintings in your collection. The packet lead us through each painting and told a story which is different from any museum I've ever been to. It was funny and punny. Normally you just get to aimlessly wander around museums looking from piece to piece, but with this time we had a mission and a story and it was very different and cool.