

REVOLUTIONARY RE-CURATION STARTS WITH YOU

A GUIDEBOOK BY SKYLAR MASUDA - 2024

SO YOU WANT TO BE A CURATOR OF ANCIENT ART?

OR MAYBE YOU ALREADY ARE?

HI THERE, YOU MAY BE THE CURATOR OF THE FUTURE.

I KNOW THE FUTURE MAY SOUND SCARY OR VAGUE BUT IT MIGHT BE GOOD!

IT MIGHT EVEN BE BETTER THAN RIGHT NOW.

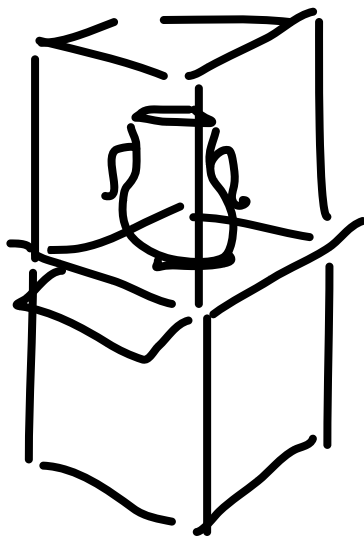
?!



I SEE A MUSEUM FULL OF JOY, COMMUNITY, CURIOSITY, AND CONNECTION.

YOU MAY HAVE SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE WHO DOES NOT FEEL WELCOME IN
THE MUSEUM. I WANT YOU TO IMAGINE A MUSEUM FOR THEM.

HISTORY IS SOMETHING YOU SHOULD FEEL, A STORY THAT TOUCHES,



THIS IS NOT TOUCHING,
INSPIRING, OR WONDERFUL
ENOUGH.

WHAT ARE OUR MUSEUMS
TEACHING FUTURE GENERATIONS.
WHO IS THIS FOR?

LET'S TELL A STORY

USING ALL FIVE SENSES
THAT SPARKS EMPATHY
THAT SPARKS DISCUSSION
THAT WELCOMES ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE
THAT GOES BEYOND OBJECTS.



HERE'S WHY

MANY AMERICAN ANTIQUITIES MUSEUMS KNOWINGLY OR UNKNOWINGLY HOLD OBJECTS IN THEIR COLLECTION THAT HAVE ENTERED THE UNITED STATES ILLEGALLY. THROUGH LOOTING, SMUGGLING, AND OBFUSCATION OF PROVENANCE THESE OBJECTS ENTERED THE CIRCULATION OF AMERICAN COLLECTIONS.

REPATRIATION IS A NECESSARY RESPONSE TO THE COLLECTIONS OF PROMINENT AMERICAN MUSEUMS BUT, AS MORE OBJECTS MOVE OUT OF THEIR COLLECTIONS, ANTIQUITIES MUSEUMS MUST FIND A NEW PATHWAY FORWARD. WE SHOULD BE TRYING OUT SOMETHING NEW.

As pointed out in **“The Rise of “Immersive” Art”**, a 2022 New Yorker op-ed, our expectations for museums are changing. As we live increasingly technologically-oriented lives, the experiences that receive the most attention are those that harness modern technologies to create something previously unimaginable and utterly unmissable. Most museums report decreased visitor numbers while the eye-catching pop up **“Immersive Van Gogh”** experiences generate millions of dollars in each city they visit by charging visitors upwards of thirty dollars.

In the past decade it seems that museums are now considered an **“experience”**, occupying the same realm as concerts, amusement parks, theaters, escape rooms, and other pricey entertainment spaces. This phenomenon aligns with the predictions of the iconic Harvard Business Review article **“Welcome to the Experience Economy.”** The authors of this article point out the growing interest in economic prospects that transcend the offering of goods and services and break into the multisensory and personalized realm of **“experience”**, citing the influence of Disney. In 1998 the authors stated **“Today the concept of selling experiences is spreading beyond theaters and theme parks.”** Now, in 2023, this statement feels nearly prophetic. Everything, from coffee shops to furniture shopping, has been designed for memorable user experiences.

Looking to the future of worldwide museums, it is clear we must embrace the tenets of experiential design and artistry.

A NEW KIND OF EXHIBIT

THERE ARE SO MANY NEW EXHIBITS TO IMAGINE
AND I WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU TRY IT OUT.

LETS START SMALL

THINK ABOUT AN AREA OF HISTORY THAT YOU LOVE A LOT. MAYBE IT'S A PIECE OF
ANCIENT POETRY, OR A SCULPTURE OF A YOUNG ATHLETE, A FRESCO, A POT,
WHATEVER. IT CAN BE ANYTHING, IT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE ANCIENT.

GOT ONE?

(YOU CAN WRITE IT HERE IF YOU WANT)

NOW, CONSIDER THE ELEMENTS OF EXPERIENCE. WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT THE
HISTORY DOES IT CONJURE IMAGES OR SMELLS, TASTES, AND SOUNDS?

SEE

SMELL

TASTE

TOUCH

FEEL

DOES IT MAKE YOU IMAGINE ANYTHING?

THE EXHIBIT IS EXCITING!

ALL OF THESE ELEMENTS IN A ROOM TOGETHER COULD BE REALLY COOL! BUT IT SHOULD ALSO BE PRETTY INFORMATIVE.

WHAT ARE THREE KEY TAKEAWAYS YOU WANT VISITORS TO HAVE?

WHAT ARE SOME SECONDARY TAKEAWAYS?

WHAT IS ONE THING AN ENTHUSIASTIC OR KEEN-EYED VISITOR MIGHT NOTICE?

THAT'S A COOL IDEA!

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO MAKE IT HAPPEN?

MULTISENSORY EXHIBITIONS MAY SEEM TOO COSTLY, LABOR-INTENSIVE, OR OUT OF THE BOX TO JUSTIFY BUT THE RESULTS ARE UNDENIABLE. PEOPLE LOVE THIS KIND OF THING! INNOVATIVE EXHIBITIONS BRING IN PEOPLE WHO DON'T USUALLY COME TO THE MUSEUM. ENGAGING IN ALTERNATIVE CURATORIAL PRACTICE ALLOWS FOR NEW INTERPRETATIONS AND INTERACTIONS.

MAYBE IF YOU'RE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT AND THEY'RE NOT ON BOARD, POINT THEM TO SOME VISITOR NUMBERS. COMPANIES LIKE MEOWWOLF AND IMMERSIVE VAN GOGH PULL IN CROWDS THAT MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN AN IMMERSIVE MUSEUM EXHIBIT.

IF OBJECTS ARE BEING REPATRIATED, WE CAN USE THE EMPTY SPACES AS A SHOWCASE FOR NEW IDEAS THAT ENGAGE AND INVITE ATYPICAL VISITORS.

LET'S TAKE IT FURTHER...

HERE ARE SOME CHALLENGES:

- WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE WITH NO TEXT?
- WITH AN OVERARCHING PLOT?
- IF IT WAS IN A BUS?
- IF IT HAD LIVE MUSIC?
- IF IT HAD THEMED SEATING OPTIONS?
- IF IT HAD ITS OWN CLOTHING LINE?
- IF EVERYTHING WAS MADE OF PAPER?
- IF EVERYONE WAS ALLOWED TO TAKE SOMETHING?
- IF ONE OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS WAS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?
- IF A CHILD HELPED DESIGN IT?
- IF IT WAS MOSTLY FOR OLD PEOPLE?
- IF IT HAD A SLIDE?
- IF IT NEEDED A TOUR GUIDE?
- IF IT WAS CREATED TO MAKE PEOPLE LAUGH?

SEND THIS AROUND!

**MAYBE ONE DAY IT WILL END UP IN THE HANDS OF THE CURATOR OF THE FUTURE.
MAYBE IT'S ALREADY THERE.**