**Mexico Beyond Its Revolution | Mexico Más Allá de su Revolución**

Excerpts from the catalogue essay by Adriana Zavala, exhibition curator, Associate Professor of Art History, and director of the Latin American Studies Program

Over the course of the Twentieth century, artists have explored the legacy of the armed struggle and the cultural revolution that followed. The array of works in this exhibition explore the complexities that have marked the cultural rebirth of Mexico, by presenting a range of perspectives. Rather than focus primarily on the historical events surrounding 1910, the works on view were selected in order to set the cultural revolution in a more comprehensive framework. Viewers are invited to reflect upon the ideals and accomplishments of the Mexican Renaissance, and are introduced to artists who challenged the historical, political and folkloric themes that predominated in the work of many artists.

**Mildred’s Lane | Renovating Walden**

Amy Schlegel, Ph.D., director of Galleries and Collections and exhibition curator

Renovating Walden is an art project spearheaded by noted American artists J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion in which an extensive, participatory installation animates the readings and misreadings of Henry David Thoreau’s 1845 book Walden, Or Life in the Woods, while “renovating” Thoreau’s ideas about the complex and fraught relationship between nature and culture in provocative, intra-disciplinary ways.

Renovating Walden was developed at Puett and Dion’s...
Mexico Beyond Its Revolution continued

The earliest works in the exhibition are two prints by José Guadalupe Posada. He created a genre of political satire in dialogue with popular culture. In the 1920s, Mexican artists rediscovered Posada posthumously and championed his work as directly influential to their own. Whereas Posada was long believed to be revolutionary in his politics, recent revisions of his career argue that his views about the Revolution were considerably more complex. Among the artists who appeared to have a more accurate understanding of Posada’s interpretation of the armed struggle was José Clemente Orozco, whose admiration for Posada is consistent with the vexing nature of his own disturbing satirical lithographs. In stark contrast, Alberto Beltrán exalts the president credited for revitalizing the state’s political orientation toward the left and standing up to totalitarianism. Beltrán was a member of the People’s Graphic Workshop (Taller de Gráfica Popular), which was founded with the idea that art should be political and accessible to the masses in the form of prints and broadsides.

Mexico’s complex legacy of political violence is signaled in Dulce María Nuñez’s 1994 portrait of José Antonio Ruiz Massieu. The victim of a political assassination in 1994, Ruiz Massieu was a congressman and Secretary General of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). By associating his murder to that of French Revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat through inclusion of a miniature reproduction of Jacques-Louis David’s famous portrait of the martyr, Nuñez casts Ruiz Massieu as a modern-day model of political virtue; however, three miniature grotesque figures in the background allude to endemic corruption and to revelations that Ruiz Massieu’s murder was a political conspiracy. Nuñez’ collage composition resonates with the work of Manuel Álvarez Bravo as he illustrates the betrayal of a fundamental legacy of the Revolution: the worker’s right to organize. Along similar lines, David Alfaro Siqueiros’ woodcuts from 1930-31 were made during a period of political repression while the artist was in prison for his involvement in the Communist Party.

The artist best known for celebrating Mexico’s rebirth as a confluence of populist ideals, including Indigenism, or the Mexico Beyond Its Revolution continued

The year 2010 marks the centennial of the Mexican Revolution, launched on November 20, 1910, and the bicentennial of Mexico’s independence from Spain, declared on September 16, 1810. Mexican Independence, achieved in 1821, brought to a close three centuries of colonialism; it was the Revolution (1910-1920), however, that ushered Mexico into the modern era and its legacy has been complex.

The Mexican Revolution began as a political movement to overthrow the autocratic regime of Porfirio Díaz (1877-1910). While Díaz had unified Mexico under a program of progress and economic prosperity, this mainly benefited a tiny elite, and deeply entrenched social inequalities intensified over the course of his thirty-four year rule. Díaz’ ouster brought an end to his successive re-elections but it also initiated a volatile civil war in which multiple opposing factions fought for political power. Over the course of the war more than one million Mexicans lost their lives and the nation was torn apart along social, geographic lines.

Participating Artists: Lola Álvarez Bravo, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Francis Alÿs, Abraham Angel, Alberto Beltrán, Enrique Chagoya, José Luis Cuevas, Javier de la Garza, Pedro Friedeberg, Mathias Goeritz, Graciela Iturbide, Helen Levitt, Carlos Mérida, Dulce María Núñez, José Clemente Orozco, Adolfo Patiño, José Guadalupe Posada, Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, Melanie Smith Gerardo Suter, Rufino Tamayo, Mariana Yampolsky, Nahum B. Zenil

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Fall Calendar of Contemporary Art Circle Events and Openings

**Thursday, September 16, 5:30-8:00pm**
Public Opening Reception for Fall Exhibitions and Mexico Independence Day Celebration

**Thursday, September 16, 8:00pm**
Annual Contemporary Art Circle Supporters’ Dinner (RSVP required)

**Saturday, October 23, 4:00-6:00pm**
Guided Walking Tour of Chelsea Galleries, NY, NY (RSVP required) (see page 17 for a sneak preview)

**Tuesday, November 2, 6:00-8:00pm**
Day of the Dead Event, Medford, MA

**Conversations with the Past: Veneration of the Dead in the Visual Arts from Pre-Hispanic Times to the Present**
with Eulogio Guzman, Visual/Critical Studies Program, Tufts/SMFA (RSVP required)

**Friday, November 12, 6:00-8:00pm**
Closing Reception for Mildred’s Lane with J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion

**Thursday, December 2, 5:30-8:00pm**
Public Opening Reception for the MFA Thesis Exhibition

Mildred’s Lane | Renovating Walden Events

A series of public salon-style conversations and open class sessions is planned for Mildred’s Lane | Renovating Walden. Tufts faculty from across the School of Arts & Sciences will participate with their students. These open-ended thematic conversations are designed to emulate the 19th century Lyceum, a public educational forum, where the curious public (that’s you!) is invited to converse about the relevance of Thoreau’s ideas.

**Keynote Lecture**
Friday, October 22, 11:00am-12:00pm

**Drawing Rooms and Disturbed Consciences: Parlors Politics on the Homefront**
Radiclani Clytus, Department of English and American Studies Program

**Salons:**
- Tuesday, September 21, 12:10-1:20pm
  **Artists as Researchers:** Monica McGilte
  Department of Art and Art History

- Tuesday, October 5, 12:10-1:20pm
  **What does Thoreau teach us about sustainability?**
  Gilbert Metcalf, Department of Economics

- Tuesday, November 2, 12:10-1:20pm
  **Out in front (a little to the left): The Tufts Dance Ensemble led by Daniel McCusker**

**Lyceum:**
- Thursday, September 30, 7:00-8:30pm
  **Simplicity, Simplicity...Complexity?** Jonathan Kenny, Department of Economics

- Thursday, October 14, 5:30-8:00pm
  **Architecture and Thoreau’s House at Walden Pond:**
  Danny Abramson, Department of Art and Art History,
  David Wood, Concord Museum, and
  Becky Hutchinson, architect

- Thursday, October 28, 6:00-7:30pm
  **The philosophical significance of Thoreau’s Walden:**
  Avner Baz, Department of Philosophy

Mexico Beyond Its Revolution continued

symbolic celebration of Mexico’s Indians, and leftist politics is the muralist Diego Rivera. Rivera, in fact, missed the Revolution almost entirely, spending the decade in Spain, France and Italy. However, upon his return to Mexico City in 1922 Rivera resumed the figurative tradition. In many respects, he was the self-appointed leader of the mural movement and his work exemplifies a romanticized interpretation of the nation’s history, its revolutionary process, and its Indians and workers.

Rivera’s ennobling images of Mexico’s indigenous people represent a powerful and lasting strain in twentieth-century Mexican art. Mariana Yampolsky carries forward this vision beautifully. While also invoking this tradition, a more circumspect interpretation is expressed in two photographs by Graciela Iturbide, both of which offer a poignant reminder that Mexico’s political movements have offered few solutions for victims of endemic social injustice. Irony on a grand scale characterizes Javier de la Garza’s portrait of indigenous fishermen in *The Pearl* (1990), which engages the romanticization of Indians in films of Mexico’s “golden age” of cinema (1935-60); its monumental scale and vivid colors bring to mind post-revolutionary murals, especially those by Rivera.

Carlos Mérida and Mathias Goeritz employed progressively more abstract modes in works nonetheless inspired by the pre-Columbian past. They, along with Rufino Tamayo, exemplify the independent sensibilities of artists who refused overtly political themes in favor of art that was conceptually free and formally experimental. Yet even partisans of “pure” art frequently fused Mexico’s traditions with avant-garde artistic innovations. In referring to ancient and indigenous cultural traditions and history, they created art that was in dialogue with international modern trends yet no less concerned with aspects of Mexican identity.

José Luis Cuevas and Pedro Friedeberg represent a generation of artists who, in the late-1950s, staged a challenge to the consecrated iconography of post-revolutionary art, regarding it with disdain and cynicism, or ignoring it outright. What followed was a heterogeneous period of artistic countercultural production known as La Ruptura (The Rupture). The rejection, by artists of the Ruptura of the themes and styles of the so-called Mexican school disrupted the tidy metanarrative of the revolutionary “renaissance.” It also signals the growing disenchant with the institutionalization of the cultural revolution.

Today critical tendencies continue to guide a dynamic contemporary art scene. Works by Nahum B. Zenil, Adolfo...
Mexico Beyond Its Revolution

Mexico City shortly after the catastrophic earthquake of 1985, a period when contemporary artists responded with cynicism to state patronage. They exemplify the conceptualist strain among the generation of artists who responded to the economic, political and social crises of the 1980s-90s.

Varied and diverse, the works on view in Mexico Beyond Its Revolution exemplify the ways that artists have expressed the cultural revolution, but also the ways that art has transcended the movement. In chronological terms, these works span the twentieth century but rather than striving for depth in a particular area this exhibition was shaped with the idea of offering students at Tufts University and our gallery goers, the privileged opportunity to see a broad range of Mexican art. Our hope is to inspire the viewer to think critically and seek to learn more about the role of art in consolidating and challenging political, social and cultural processes in modern Mexico.

Javier de la Garza, The Pearl (La Perla), 1990, Acrylic on canvas, 58 ¼ x 75 inches, Private Collection

Patínó, Dulce María Nuñez, and Gerardo Suter exemplify the diverse direct and indirect ways artists in recent years have mediated on the past, upon art history, and politics. Theirs was a generation that adopted the critical attitude of postmodernism to create a “caustic remix” in an attempt to revise the nation’s iconography and modify its consciousness. Pointedly, Patínó repudiates the patriarchal lineage of Mexican art history by declaring his allegiance, albeit in a tongue-in-cheek manner, to a matriarchal figure: Frida Kahlo. Meanwhile, Zenil is known for his head-on critique of the homophobia prevalent in Mexican society and the Mexican art world in self-portraits that feature, as well, his lover Gerardo Vilchis. Based as he is in the United States, Enrique Chagoya levels a critique, through cross-cultural dialogue, of U.S. cultural, political and economic frameworks as much as Mexican ones.

The most recent works in the exhibition are by Melanie Smith and Francis Alÿs, whose videos exemplify the engagement of artists in Mexico today with currents in global contemporary art. Though foreign-born, Smith and Alÿs have made their careers in Mexico. Like their Mexican contemporaries they are motivated by an interest in circumventing and critiquing the institutionalization of art through the long-standing cultural system administered by the state. Both settled in
New Advisory Board Member Profile: Mara Williams

Jeanne Koles, Tufts University Art Gallery Staff Writer

The Tufts University Art Gallery is pleased to introduce the newest member of its Board of Advisors, Mara Williams. Ms. Williams’ addition to the Board will enhance an already exceptional group that for the past five years has been a guiding voice in positioning the Gallery as an arts hub both on and off campus.

A Vermont-based independent curator with an expertise in modern and contemporary art, Ms. Williams has been involved with artists ranging from Jean-Michel Basquiat to Robert Rauschenberg, with a recent focus on more contemporary and emerging artists. Her business, Arts Bridge LLC, is guided by a firm belief in the importance of the arts and humanities as a cornerstone for a strong society. This value parallels nicely with Tufts’ commitment to active citizenship and the Tufts University Art Gallery’s integral role in this philosophy. Through Arts Bridge, Williams’ has lead museums in conceiving and developing inter-disciplinary exhibitions designed to provide positive learning and social experiences for all audiences.

Prior to forming Arts Bridge, Ms. Williams spent a decade as the Director of the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center in Vermont. Today, much of her time is spent curating contemporary exhibitions for BMAC, which she describes as “a progressive, audience-friendly, non-collecting institution with the mission of ‘exploring the art of our time.’”

Though this will be Ms. Williams’ first year on the Board of Advisors at the Tufts University Art Gallery, she is already quite familiar with the organization. When Director of Galleries and Collections Amy Schlegel came on board, Arts Bridge was hired to help the Gallery connect with its key stakeholders, rewrite its mission statement, and develop a five-year strategic plan. Ms. William can also claim Jumbo pride as an alumnus of the Tufts in London program. Though she has continued to follow the programmatic and structural developments of the Gallery since then, she views her first year on the Board as an opportunity to “listen and learn.” Once she better understands how the Gallery has implemented the five-year strategic plan she helped craft, and how it is perceived and utilized on the Board as an opportunity to “listen and learn.”

Her perspective on audience-centered, inter-disciplinary art exhibitions has been strongly influenced by her association with the theater—a passion that she comes by through a long line of familial connections. Before crossing into the visual arts, Ms. Williams worked in theater design and stage management in Boston, New York, and Washington D.C. She has a particular fondness for puppetry because she feels it harmoniously blends two of her loves—the plastic and the performing arts. She was the founding producer of Puppets in the Green Mountain: An International Festival of Unusual Theater at the Sandglass Theater in Putney, VT.

Ms. Williams holds an A.B. in theater from Boston College; an MFA in museology from Syracuse University; and has completed her doctoral course work and exams in comparative arts at New York University. She has served as chair of the Vermont Arts Council board, is a past President of the Brattleboro Rotary and Corporator of the Brattleboro Hospital, and was a board member of the New England Museum Association. She divides her time between New York and Vermont and has two gorgeous standard poodles. Welcome Mara!
Six graduate students from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston were selected to participate in “Town and Country,” a three-week residency held in July 2010 at Mildred’s Lane, the artists’ complex in Beach Lake, PA co-directed by J. Morgan Puett and Mark Dion. This session focused on the fraught relationship between the city and the countryside by investigating the place the rural world occupies in the projections, fantasies, economy, and antagonism of the cosmopolitan set. This dialectic is responsible for a cultural production as diverse as the invention of Adirondack style, the formation of 1960s communes, the “urban cowboy,” and the new urban garden movement. “Town & Country” examined, celebrated, and parodied the inherent contradictions in our new attempts at Bohemian life and the attend history of these attempts. In short, the Mildred’s Lane collaborators are “renovating Walden” by applying the pedagogical methodologies and workstyles praxis of Mildred’s Lane to create a living, breathing, socially charged site at the Tufts University Art Gallery, September 9 through November 14, 2010.

Mildred’s Lane | Renovating Walden continued

The hybridized approach of the Mildred’s Lane collaborators suffuses every aspect of the Renovating Walden installation—from its parlor, where classes and public conversations will take place, to the construction yard, where two cabins inspired by Thoreau’s house in the woods at Walden Pond will be erected during the course of the exhibition period, to the photographer’s studio and portrait gallery, where all project collaborators and participants may have a tin type portrait taken and then displayed.

An extensive series of public salon-style conversations and open class sessions is planned in which an array of Tufts faculty from across the School of Arts & Sciences will participate with their students. These open-ended thematic conversations are designed to emulate the 19th century Lyceum, a public educational forum, where the curious public are invited to converse about relevance of Thoreau’s ideas today. See page 18 for a full roster of events.

This project is organized by the Tufts University Art Gallery, guest curated by curatorsquared (c2), and supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mildred’s Lane | Renovating Walden “Town and Country”

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Book Synopsis: Becoming Modern Becoming Tradition: Women, Gender, and Representation in Mexican Art

Excerpt from book jacket

By Adriana Zavala

408 pages
24 color/70 b&w illustrations
Published by Penn State University Press, 2009
$95

Becoming Modern, Becoming Tradition examines the relationship between women, nationalism, racial identity, and modernity before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution. In this innovative study, Adriana Zavala demonstrates that the image of Mexican womanhood, whether stereotyped as Indian, urban, modern, sexually “degenerate,” or otherwise, was symbolically charged in complex ways both before and after the so-called post-revolutionary cultural renaissance, and that crucial aspects of post-revolutionary culture remained rooted in nineteenth-century conceptions of woman as the bearer of cultural and social tradition. Focusing on images of women in a variety of contexts—including works by such artists as Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, María Izquierdo, and Frida Kahlo, as well as films, pornographic photos, and beauty pageant advertisements—this book explores the complex and often fraught role played by visual culture in the social and political debates that raged over the concept of womanhood and the transformation of Mexican identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Adriana Zavala is the guest curator of the Tufts University Art Gallery’s fall exhibition Mexico Beyond Its Revolution / Mexico Más Allá de su Revolución. She is Associate Professor of Art & Art History at Tufts University and a specialist in modern Latin American art and visual culture. She earned her her B.A. from University of Cincinnati and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Brown University.
New Modes of Interaction continued

Programmatic Elements
People have been using keywords to define searches for many years; however with the introduction of more Web 2.0 technologies, tagging has become a compelling means for participation. More specifically, Folksonomy allows users to describe what they are seeing in terms that make sense to them, rather than using the organizing principles imposed by others. Museums can apply these concepts to create interactive visitor web programming that fosters the organic growth of social interactions and eventually communities. When participants tag objects, they in turn become experts themselves as their terms are given greater meanings through the institutional website. Folksonomy methods can be applied directly to user generated exhibition programs through the use of tagging clouds. With this type of software, words are given a visual weight as they grow larger in relation to how often a specific word is tagged by a user.

The Role of the Expert
User generated exhibitions present many paradoxes for the museum’s authority over knowledge, as well as for the role of experts conveying facts. Click! capitalized on this paradox by putting knowledge levels and the very concept of expertise to the test through its examination of the actual wisdom of crowds. As museums give control to the public through user generated exhibits, participants are able to become experts themselves. This new role within the context of a museum is an exciting prospect for people. Participants are able to gain prestige and notoriety through the inherently significant value chain associated with such institutions. As in the case of Click!, amateur photographers were able to show their work at a world renowned institution next to practicing artists. However, expert opinion in evaluation and exhibition development provide a framework for participants—a model for success—where they can edit their content in order to become more informed experts themselves.

Creating a Community
Community engagement through educational programming is an absolute necessity for museums in order to remain relevant and productive. Museums must capitalize on the virtual world in a similar manner because this is the space where people spend most of their time as well as interact with one another. Multiple successful social networking websites currently exist and digital technologies present new opportunities for institutions to form their own unique communities. Fundamental to these web initiatives is user participation, and user generated exhibition programs provide a framework for museums to create communities. These programmatic models also allow for users to create content, but in a mediated manner where museum educators are facilitators and can maintain control and authority. Museum personnel must realize that online groups are fundamentally different from communities, primarily because of the amount of participation required from the latter.

Conclusions
Every museum is different, and there is no precise formula to design a successful user generated exhibition. These are just initial considerations and suggestions that educators can use as a recipe book for producing these programs. All departments within a museum must be committed to and involved with such a project because it involves all available facets and resources. Online user generated exhibition programs require an absolute dedication to web initiatives and programming. Institutions must be confident in their ability to integrate and experiment with new technologies, their functions, and their implications. Furthermore, museums attempting such a program must be completely open to public participation.

Artists’ Profiles: Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett

Mark Dion's work examines the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge, and the natural world. Appropriating, archiving, and other scientific methods of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects, Dion creates works that question the distinctions between objective (‘factual’) scientific methods and subjective (‘irrational’) approaches. His art is a spectacular and often fantastical curiosity cabinets, modeled on Wonderkabs of the 17th century, exalting peculiar offerings of objects and specimens. By locating the roots of environmental politics and public policy, in the construction of knowledge about nature, Mark Dion questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society. Dion was born in New Bedford, MA and attended the School of Visual Arts in New York and the Whitney Museum of American Art independent Study Program in 1983. He received a BFA in 1989 and an honorary doctorate in 2005 from the University of Hartford School of Art, Connecticut.

J. Morgan Puett is a project artist who creates large-scale, collaborative, and site-specific works that are both tactile in nature and ephemeral by experience. Puett got her start in New York City, rising to prominence in the mid-1980s as a celebrated fashion designer. Much of her inspiration comes from the history of wear and reuse of clothes. In 1984 while researching early 20th century clothing in the costume archives of the Metropolitan Museum, Puett discovered that no samples of these fabrics had survived. The clothes had been worn until they could not be worn any longer: turned into quilts, curtains, etc, and finally used as rags. The ingenuity and resourcefulness of these consumers has found its way into both Puett's working method and artistic creations. Puett's current works draw from historical practices, while questioning current social culture. Just as Puett brought people together in quirky clothing shops installations in SoHo and Tribeca from 1985-2001, she continues to create environments that facilitate creative collaboration and creation. Puett was born in Habira, Georgia, received her BFA and MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago, and is currently living and working between New York City and Beach Lake, PA.

Recent projects have been commissioned by the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Santa Barbara Contemporary Art Forum; the Abington Art Center, Philadelphia; Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA; Artex, Arnhem, Amsterdam; The Fabric Workshop Museum, Philadelphia; Wave Hill, Bronx, New York; the Serpentine Gallery, London; and the 2002 Spettro Festival in Charleston, South Carolina.
New Modes of Interaction continued

museum.

Just like physical museum exhibits, their online counterparts require an overarching ‘big idea.’ Because it is incredibly difficult to forecast types of users, museum personnel must strive for a ‘big idea’ that invites people in while sparking thought and inspiration. User generated exhibition programs also necessitate clear goals and executable strategies. They must ask the important questions that all museums must consider: “How does it connect with… the current priorities for the organization? Does this online learning opportunity advance the museum’s existing goals and objectives? To what extent is your institution uniquely poised to contribute to this area?” Additionally, users must know the objectives of the museum and how it plans to use their content before they will be truly comfortable participating.

When instituting a user generated exhibit program, museums must have a clear understanding of their prospective audience. There must be a conscious decision of whether to reach out to one particular constituency, or to present the program to the general public. In all instances, it is critical that the organizing museum set an acceptable tone of communication, employ an appropriate technology for their audience, and select a suitable theme for their potential audience.

Before creating an online user generated exhibition program, museums must be aware of the different types of internet users. Each of these users participates in social media in different manners and methods, and these types are: 1. Creators – people that generate content; 2. Critics – people that rate content, comment, or review content; 3. Collectors – people that aggregate content by collecting links; 4. Joiners – people that explicitly join social networking sites; 5. Spectators – people who read content; 6. Inactive – people that do not visit social sites.

most internet users are not creators, and this notion is commonly referred to as the Power Law of Participation. Nina Simon explains, “And while about 20% of people who engage in the social web are creators in some capacity, on any given participatory site the representation of creators is much smaller.” Nevertheless, the benefits of such interactive tools can extend to all members of an online community. Thus, museums must not generate programs with exclusively creators in mind. Rather, educators should build activities for all levels of user involvement.

Evaluation

It is absolutely necessary for museums creating an online user generated exhibit program to complete front-end evaluations. Museum professionals must have an initial understanding of whether their audience will use and value such a program, followed by an assessment of the popularity of all the programmatic components. Front-end evaluation also assists museums in predicting response levels and overall success of potential programs. Assessment methods must go beyond statistical software that can track visitors.

continued on page 14
New Modes of Interaction: Museums and User Generated Exhibitions

Lauren Valone, excerpted from a paper for the Museum Studies’ Program Course, Museums and Online Learning (ED292), Spring 2010

The museum community is abuzz with talk of open-source development, tagging, social networking, and user generated content. As museums navigate and adapt to these unprecedented changes, they must approach their models with new method for visual involvement; they must evolve to create opportunities for participation, community-building, and most importantly learning.

The Example: Click! A Crowd-Curated Exhibition

Produced at the Brooklyn Museum, this online exhibit was an experiment to test the assertion that crowds are willing to make informed decisions about content. The museum chose the broad theme of the ‘changing faces of Brooklyn’, and invited up to both professionals and amateur individuals. Public participants (who were asked to rate their knowledge level and give their location) were invited to a three month evaluation period that rated each image (like or dislike). In the end, an image’s size was determined by the evaluation, and the top 20% of images were shown in a gallery at the Museum.

Learning Theories and Implications

Even with new technologies in web analytics, it is almost impossible to gauge what viewers take away from visiting a website, let alone what they actually learn. Online user generated exhibits are best posed within the constructivist paradigm, where participants are free to construct knowledge in a way that is specifically meaningful to them, as well as how their peers perceived these differences and made meaning from them.

Improving aesthetic development is an absolute necessity in this technology driven culture as it directly corresponds with peoples’ visual and media literacy. Comprehensive user generated exhibitions fundamentally improve this necessary skill by promoting active creation and critical evaluation. These programs also have the potential to use visual literacy to develop participants’ verbal intelligences through critique and other communication oriented activities.

User generated exhibits integrate Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences because all learners gain and distribute knowledge in different manners. The ability to evaluate others’ work while expressing opinions is a very rewarding element in all forms of active web participation. Within this paradigm, participants are able to construct their own knowledge that is relevant to their lives, while forming new and lasting relationships with the museum. In fact, it is people’s multiple intelligences that make user generated exhibits so exciting and interesting.

Practicalities of Implementation

Museums need to animate their online learning scenarios with specific tools for discussion and activity while promoting the organic growth that is inherent to user generated exhibits programs. Although content and interaction should not be policed, program officers must also ensure that the online environment remains safe, appropriate, and relevant to the exhibition theme. Corresponding to this role of moderator, museum educators must also instigate stimulating dialogue between both the participants and the institution itself. Additionally, educators must take user content and artwork and return it to the contextual framework of the people to the various cultures of Brooklyn, as well as how their peers perceived these differences and made meaning from them.

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Caption here

Hidden in Plain Sight continued

sion for architecture and urban planning, is no stranger to aesthetic studies — and has a markedly modern taste.

The orange-splashed Helen Frankenthaler painting in the entrance of Gifford House is evidence of her love of vivid, contemporary imagery and is one of Fleet Bacow’s favorites. “It was very bold to put here and very large, but I just love it,” she said. “I try to use art to bring in a diversity of styles and flavors to the house.”

From the Hale Woodruff linocut prints in the bathrooms to the pre-Columbian ceremonial mask resting in the sitting room, the pieces in Gifford House benefit from a secure, high-profile home. Fleet Bacow looks over her shoulder at the curved figure of a Rodin sculpture and then at the stately John Singer Sargent oil painting on an adjacent wall. “Some of the pieces that are here are not what you’d want in really public spots just because they’re so valuable,” she said. “We have good security here, and plus, we have 9,000 people a year who get to come in and enjoy it.”

For current students, senior dinners, a tradition established by the Bacows, allows undergraduates to view the pieces on the main floor of the house before they leave Tufts. Other opportunities may present themselves through various courses, and students have occasionally e-mailed the Bacows in the past to ask for appointments. The access to the work may seem restricted — and in many ways it is — but the pieces are also some of the most actively viewed. “The work at Gifford House arguably is the best exposed,” Schlegel said. “It might seem a little counterintuitive, but in fact I think more people see the work at Gifford House each year than anywhere else on campus.”

Maybe that’s because Fleet Bacow is eager to show off the work in her home. “I’m not exaggerating when I say that within two minutes of people walking in I’m going, ‘Let me show you this!’ and ‘Let me show you that!’” she said. “We’re always giving impromptu tours of the collection.”

Increasing accessibility

Lauren Lanster, a graduating senior who worked at the Tufts University Art Gallery in Aidekman Arts Center, said that she constantly faced inquiries about the permanent collection — and for a while, didn’t know exactly how to address them. While working within the archives of the Tufts Galleries and Collections last year, Lanster learned more about the permanent acquisitions and wanted to do something about the lack of awareness among students. “I went through and realized we have so much art, and it’s all over campus,” she said. “I think it adds to the prestige of the university to have such a nice collection. People should know about it.”

To make the collection more accessible, Lanster created for her multimedia arts minor senior project a website that catalogs the permanent works as well as other pieces displayed across campus. The site, which is linked to the Tufts University Art Gallery website, is now live and includes an interactive map, a section of collection highlights and a printable walking tour with a suggested route that starts at Aidekman and circles campus. The site, which is linked to the Tufts University Art Gallery website, is now live and includes an interactive map, a section of collection highlights and a printable walking tour with a suggested route that starts at Aidekman and circles campus. The site, which is linked to the Tufts University Art Gallery website, is now live and includes an interactive map, a section of collection highlights and a printable walking tour with a suggested route that starts at Aidekman and circles campus. The site, which is linked to the Tufts University Art Gallery website, is now live and includes an interactive map, a section of collection highlights and a printable walking tour with a suggested route that starts at Aidekman and circles campus. The site, which is linked to the Tufts University Art Gallery website, is now live and includes an interactive map, a section of collection highlights and a printable walking tour with a suggested route that starts at Aidekman and circles campus. While the Galleries and Collections staff updated its collection management system two years ago, and conservation assessment for permanent artworks is underway for the summer months, a huge digitization project would require another dedicated staff person and probably federal funding from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Lanster, who wishes the works in the Gifford House and other semi-private locations were more readily available to students, hopes that a tour program might someday be created. Unfortunately, Schlegel said that regular tours of the Gifford House are not as feasible as the gallery staff might like. “We’re not really equipped at this point to do regular standing tours for the public,” Schlegel said. “And it would have to be synchronized with when [the Bacows] are not home, which would be tricky.”

Schlegel admits, though, that with the proper initiative from the student body and careful planning, art-centered events providing undergraduates with extra opportunities to view the less-accessible pieces in the permanent collection could work. In the meantime, students can look up from their books in the Tower Café, where Lowell Nesbitt lithographs add moonscapes to the walls and Hollis Perry’s bulbous cup sculpture oversees studiers.