

INSPIRING VISITOR PARTICIPATION

A DISCUSSION WITH NINA SIMON

nina@museumtwo.com

[@ninaksimon](#) on twitter

Hi.

**My name is Nina,
and I want to
change museums.**

traditionally, museums are visitor-agnostic

- * destinations
- * trusted sources of information
- * places for seeing and exploring

i'm interested in museums
that are visitor-centered

- * destinations
- * trusted sources of information
- * places for seeing and exploring

i'm interested in museums
that are visitor-centered

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted sources of information
- * places for seeing and exploring

i'm interested in museums
that are visitor-centered

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted hosts for social experiences
- * places for seeing and exploring

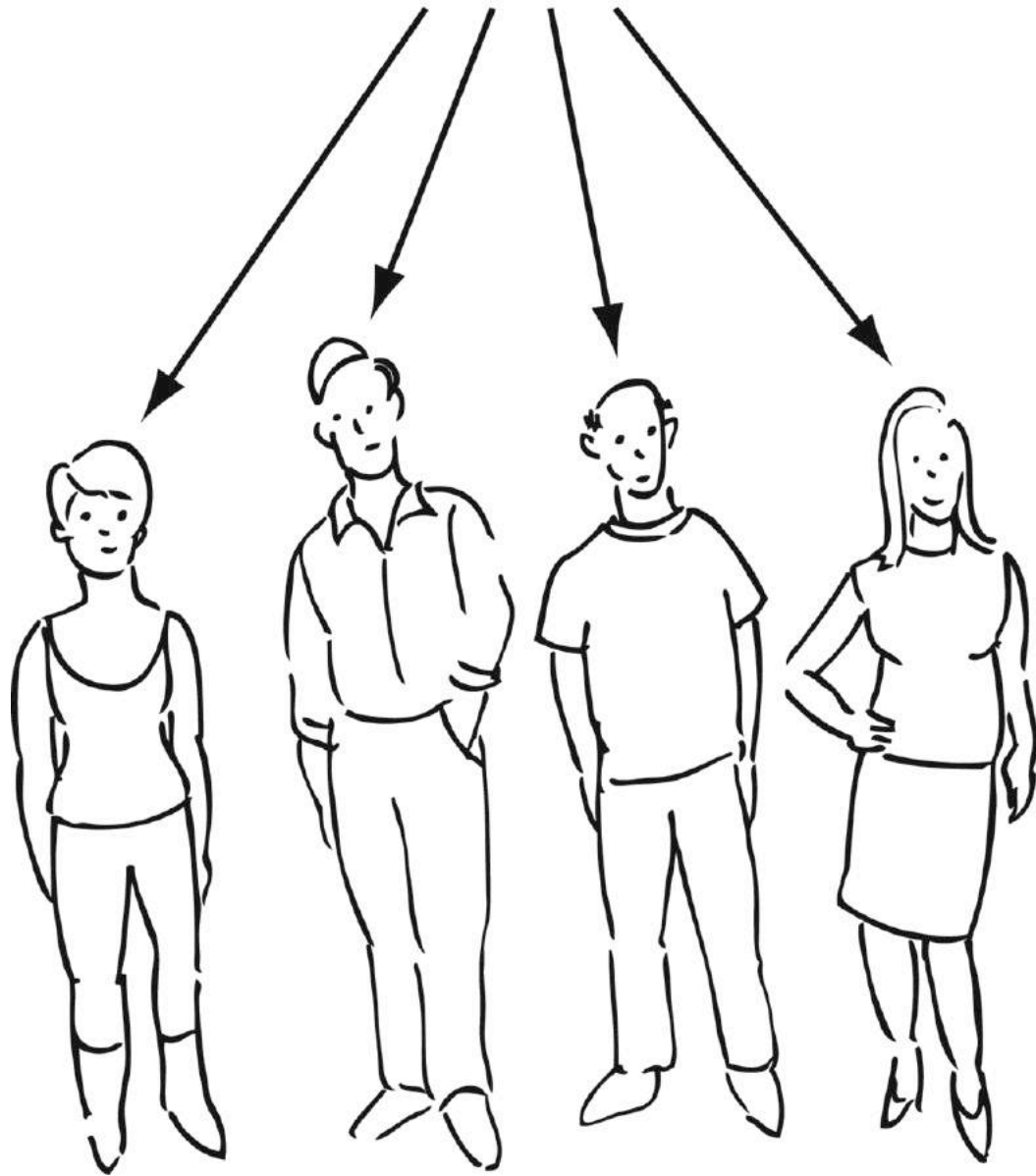
i'm interested in museums that are visitor-centered

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted hosts for social experiences
- * places for making and sharing



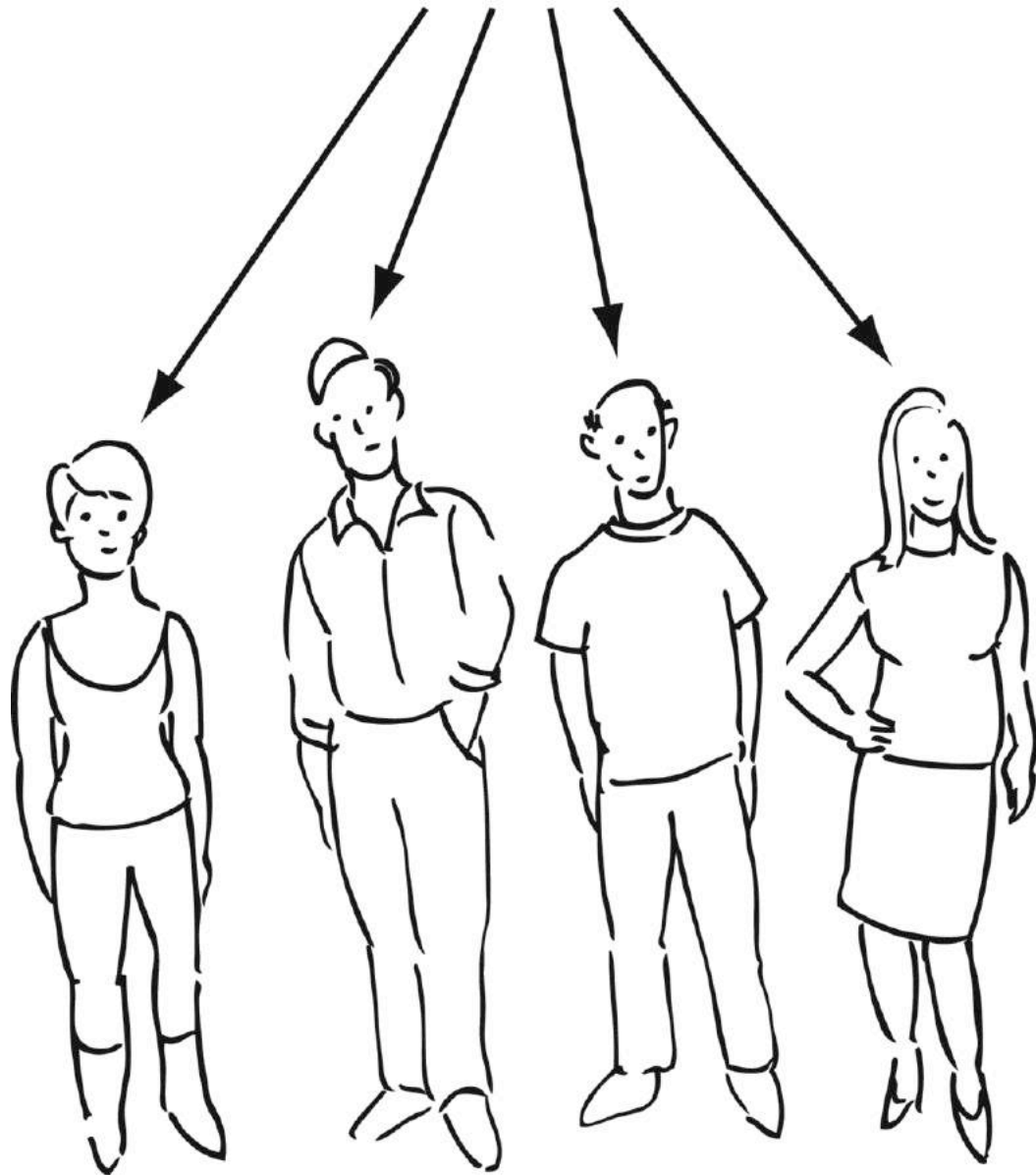


TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION



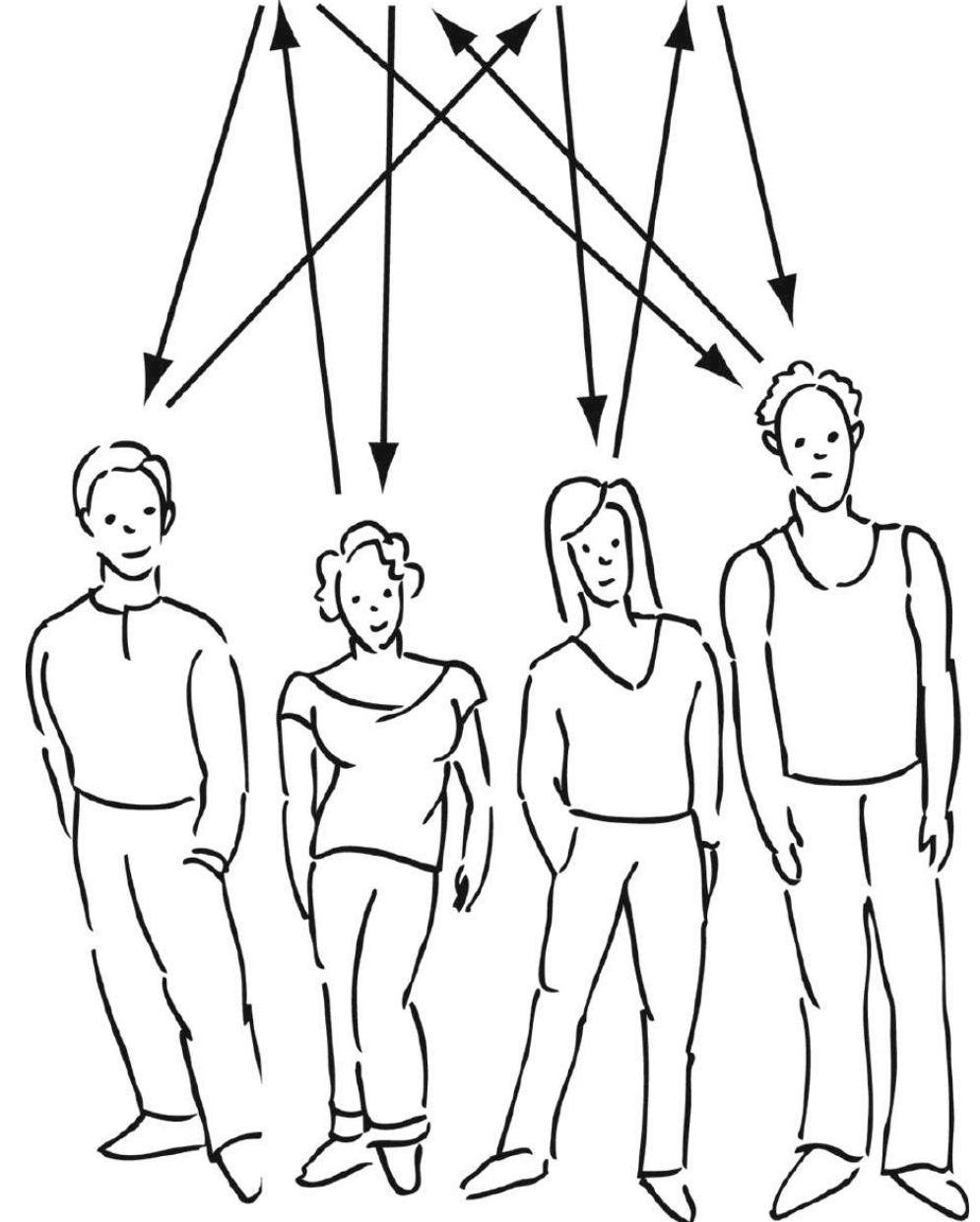
Authority is **content** provider

TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION



Authority is **content** provider

PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION



Authority is **platform** provider

how?

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted hosts for social experiences
- * places for making and sharing

less like this



Photo by cybertoad on Flickr

more like this



hob
offee £3.00

m Soda)

n brioche £3.70
ney





All of the baby pictures you see here came from people who grew up in California in the 1950s. The museum asked our community for their baby boomer portraits, and all the images we received are displayed on these walls.





First three minutes spent discussing visitors' previous experiences with trees. Discussion lightly woven into tour.

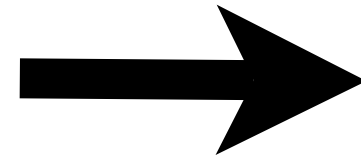




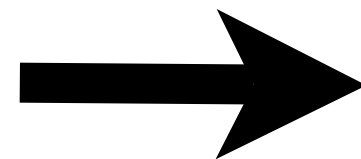
First three minutes spent discussing visitors' previous experiences with trees. Discussion lightly woven into tour.



First three minutes spent chatting in a friendly way before the tour begins.



higher engagement
better experience
more content retention



similar to control group

9

in the countdown
of favourite pictures

Gillian Ayres

Sikar II, 1992

Print

Gift of the Contemporary Art Society



9

in the countdown
of favourite pictures

Gillian Ayres

Sikar II, 1993

Print

Gift of the Contemporary Art Society

I vote for

2.8.09
...B.W. Reader...
on the heels at B. Coed
to go higher in the Top 40

countdown next week

I like this picture because:

of the Broad. Scope & range of
his work. Detail & colour
sublime. One of Worcester's
greatest artists.

9

in the countdown
of favourite pictures

Gillian Ayres

Sikar II, 1992

Print

Gift of the Contemporary Art Society



how?

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted hosts for social experiences
- * places for making and sharing



Science Museum of Minnesota
Photo by Terry Gydesen




FREE Advice

Advice
[give it, get it, flip it, fix it]
3 7 4 P

and if you're
Name
Email
Phone



A man and a woman are sitting on a wooden park bench, viewed from behind. They are looking towards a grassy area where other people are sitting. A wooden sign is attached to the back of the bench.

talk to strangers

HUMAN LIBRARY.ORG

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HUMAN LIBRARY.ORG

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I've never had a gay friend. It was unbelievably exciting to find myself facing him with his body, opinions and identity. It seems he was not very different from me and especially he was not an alien. From now on, I will not disrupt my communication with the gays, I will enhance it.

- Reader in Istanbul, 2007

how?

- * places for everyday use
- * trusted hosts for social experiences
- * places for making and sharing

there are many ways to participate



Stanford Art Center



upper: chicago children's museum
lower: Science Museum of Minnesota



Minnesota History Museum

which techniques fit your mission?



Stanford Art Center



upper: chicago children's museum
lower: Science Museum of Minnesota



Minnesota History Museum

The mission of The New York Public Library is to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our communities.



Jessica Pigza
Rare book librarian



Jessica Pigza
Rare book librarian

Josh Greenberg
Director of Digital Strategy
& Scholarship



Hand-Made

Are you interested in sewing and knitting, book arts and letterpress printing, traditional crafts and the new DIY, sewists of yesterday and today, vintage-inspired design, and all things handmade? Then join in the conversation at Hand-Made. We'll share information on unique items from the Library's collections as well as details on Library events that cater to the curious crafter in us all.



Do It Yourself Fun, 1920s Style.

by Jessica Pigza, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Rare Book
Division
March 3, 2010

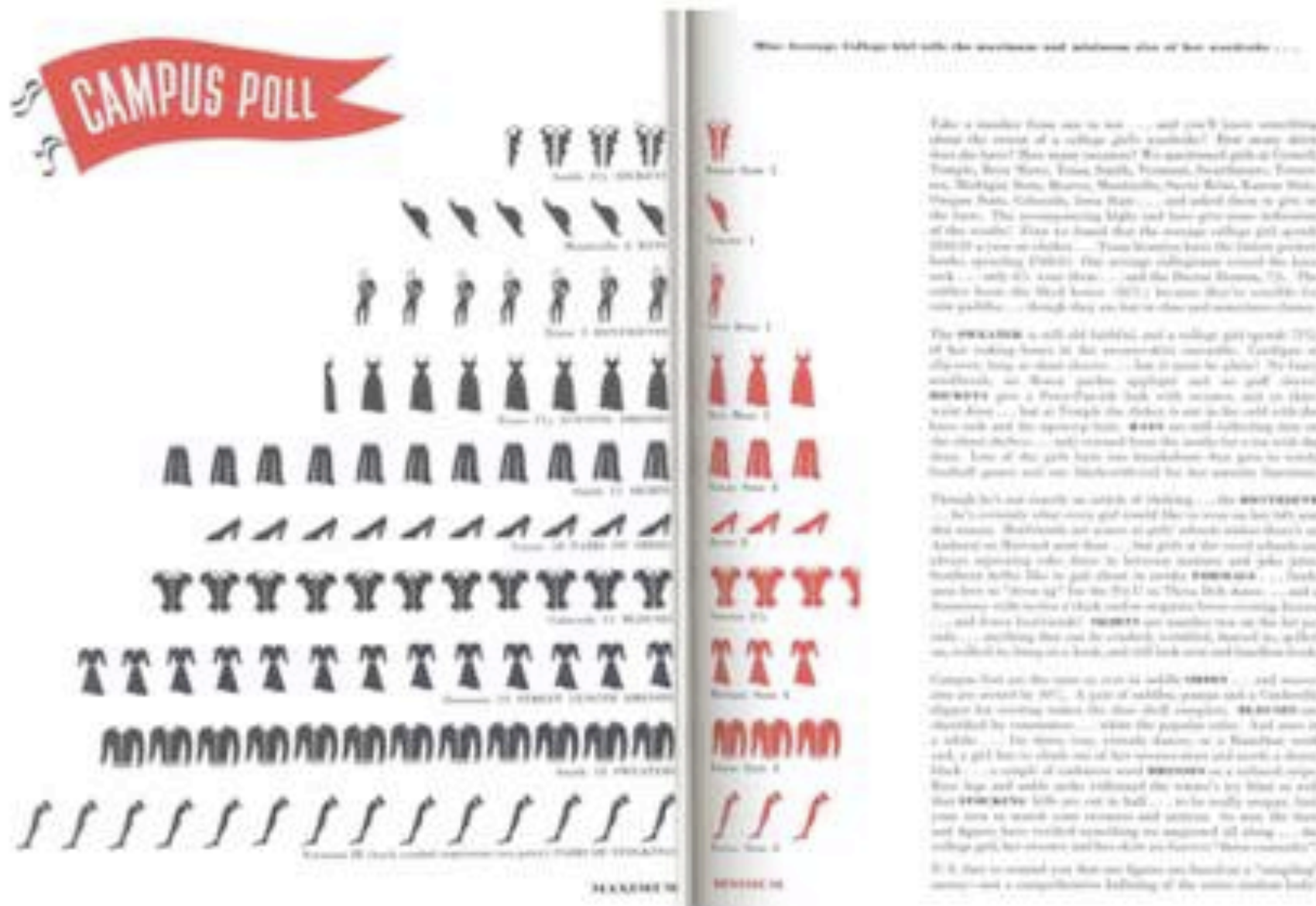
Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, this little book offered sage advice as well as entertaining distraction for those in England lucky enough to be able to be included in weekend getaways to the country. The Week-End Book was the work of Francis and Vera Meynell, who attempted to balance the competing interests of excellent book design and affordable production in the books they created for Nonesuch, their private press. [READ MORE >](#)

Clothing Choices, 1941 and Today

blog

by Jessica Pigza, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Rare Book Division
January 24, 2010

There's much being written (*Cheap* and *A Year Without "Made in China"* are two recent examples) these days about the ethics behind the quality and quantity of what we buy and consume—including clothing. So when I came upon this 1941 wardrobe survey in *Design for Living*, I wanted to share it.



[Click image for larger view](#)

on that last point

Anonymous (January 30, 2010 - 6:50pm)

The above poster mentions something that often keeps me from increasing my sewing -- much of the time the fabric is coming from the same countries as the sweatshop clothes. It would be nice to know that you're not supporting the same issues in that.

It'd also be nice to live somewhere with a fabric store that actually carried decent things beyond quilting fabrics.

reply

\$240 a year

Anonymous (January 31, 2010 - 12:20pm)

It's worth noting that \$240 in 1941 is equal to about \$3,500 today, at least according to the inflation calculator at the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

reply

Lotsa Money

Anonymous (February 3, 2010 - 9:17am)

Yeah, I thought that sounded like a lot. I may spend that much (\$240) on clothing in a year now, in the 2000s.

reply

Who went to college in 1941

Anonymous (February 3, 2010 - 9:50am)

video



benpadero (1 year ago)

cool! love what this program can do to bring people back to the library. and im inspired to go through my books again :-) cheers!

upheaval10 (11 months ago)

wonderful to see and hear the artists talk about process..a great library or any library is a natural place to refresh/feed the creative force..hats off to Design Sponge..I am sure these artists will return to NYPL thruout their careers.

erchix (1 year ago)

oh-no theres only gonna be one more episode, you must do this a full timw tv show like prjoect runway, because there are no tv shows (well I didnt find any) on design / illustration / paintings etc. We need films like these to give us the chance to see other creative souls in action, reading interviews gets boring. Awesome work!



Photos by Shira Kronzon on Flickr

GROWN UPS
ENJOY READING
ALSO.

A Book Arts Booklist.

by Jessica Pigza, Stephen A. Schwarzman Building, Rare Book
Division
February 27, 2010

If you were one of the nearly 80 crafty book artists-in-training who came out for Handmade Crafternoon last weekend, thanks for joining us as we folded and glued and cut our way to unusual pop-up paper garland book structures. And speaking of books, a number of guests asked about getting a list of the Library books I brought along for browsing that day. Your wish is my command. Here are the titles I gathered to inspire us; each title links to its record in the Catalog, so you'll know where to go to see it yourself. Enjoy! [READ MORE >](#)





“My boss knows that I find this to be very satisfying, but he also recognizes that it’s a good thing for the institution in general. He is one of the people who recognizes the connection between handicraft and history and rare books.”



“My boss knows that I find this to be very satisfying, but he also recognizes that it’s a good thing for the institution in general. He is one of the people who recognizes the connection between handicraft and history and rare books.”

inspire lifelong learning

advance knowledge

strengthen our communities

INSPIRING VISITOR PARTICIPATION

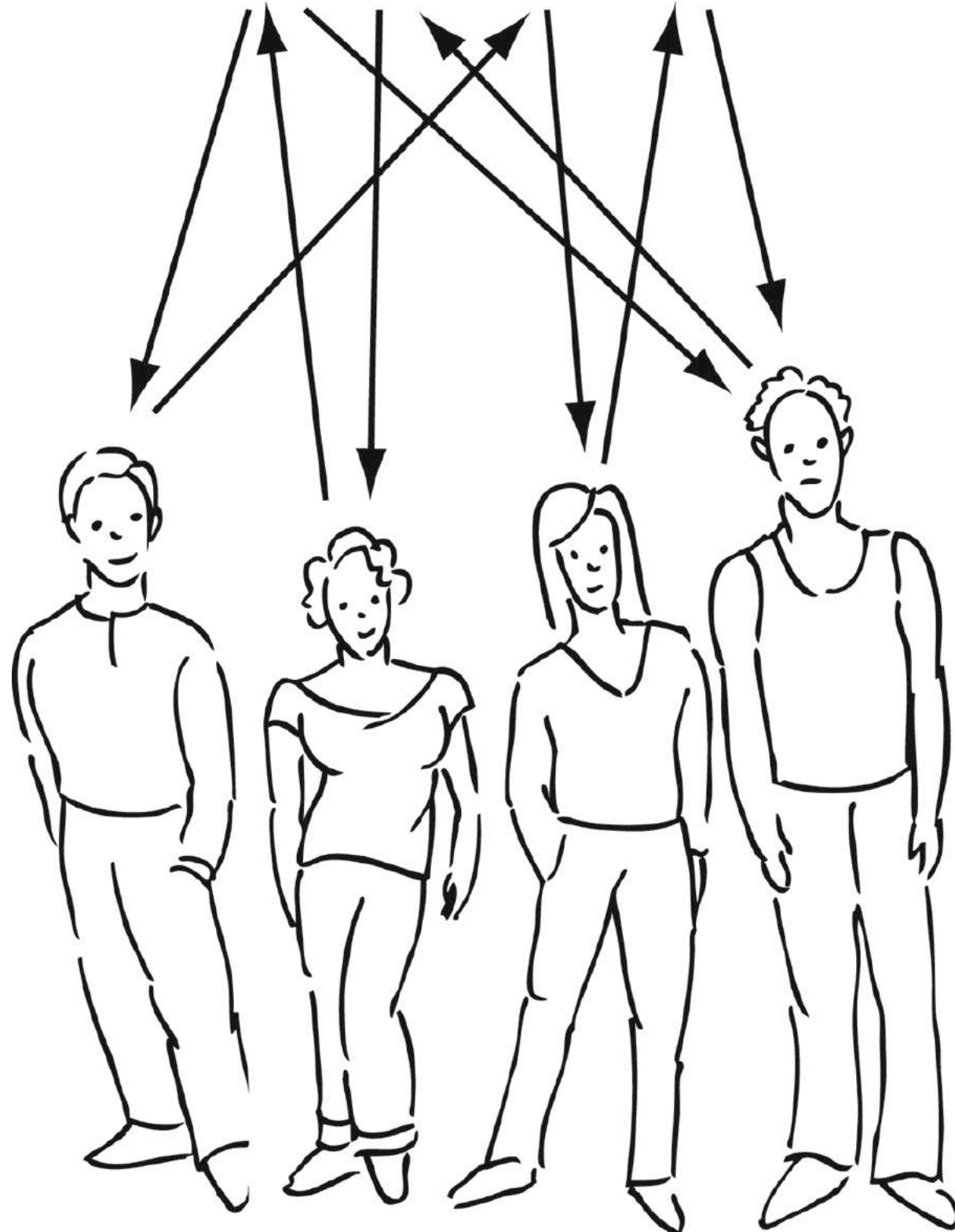
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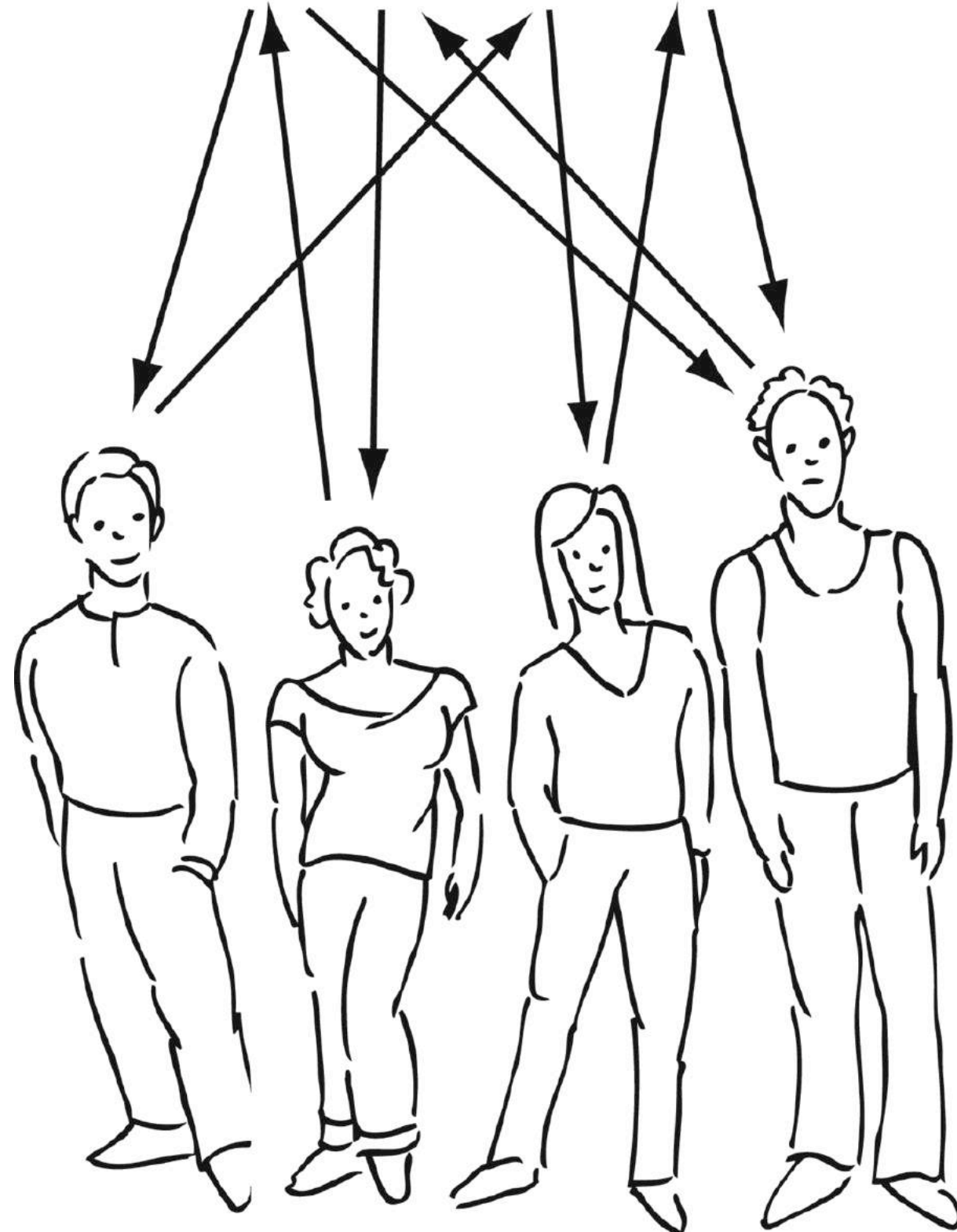
**HOW CAN VISITORS MAKE
YOUR MUSEUM BETTER?**

PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION



what do they
need?

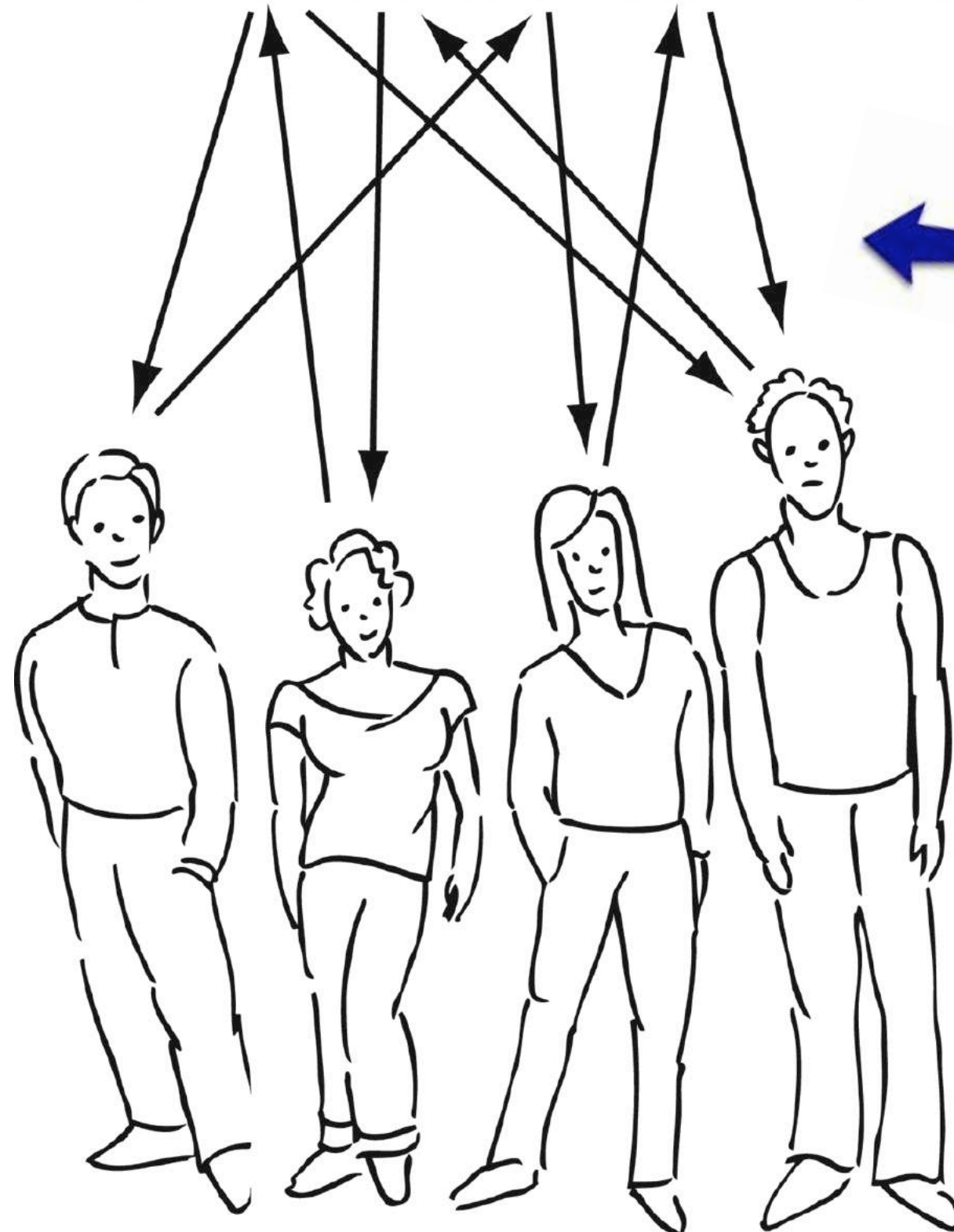
PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION



what are
you about?

what do they
need?

PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION



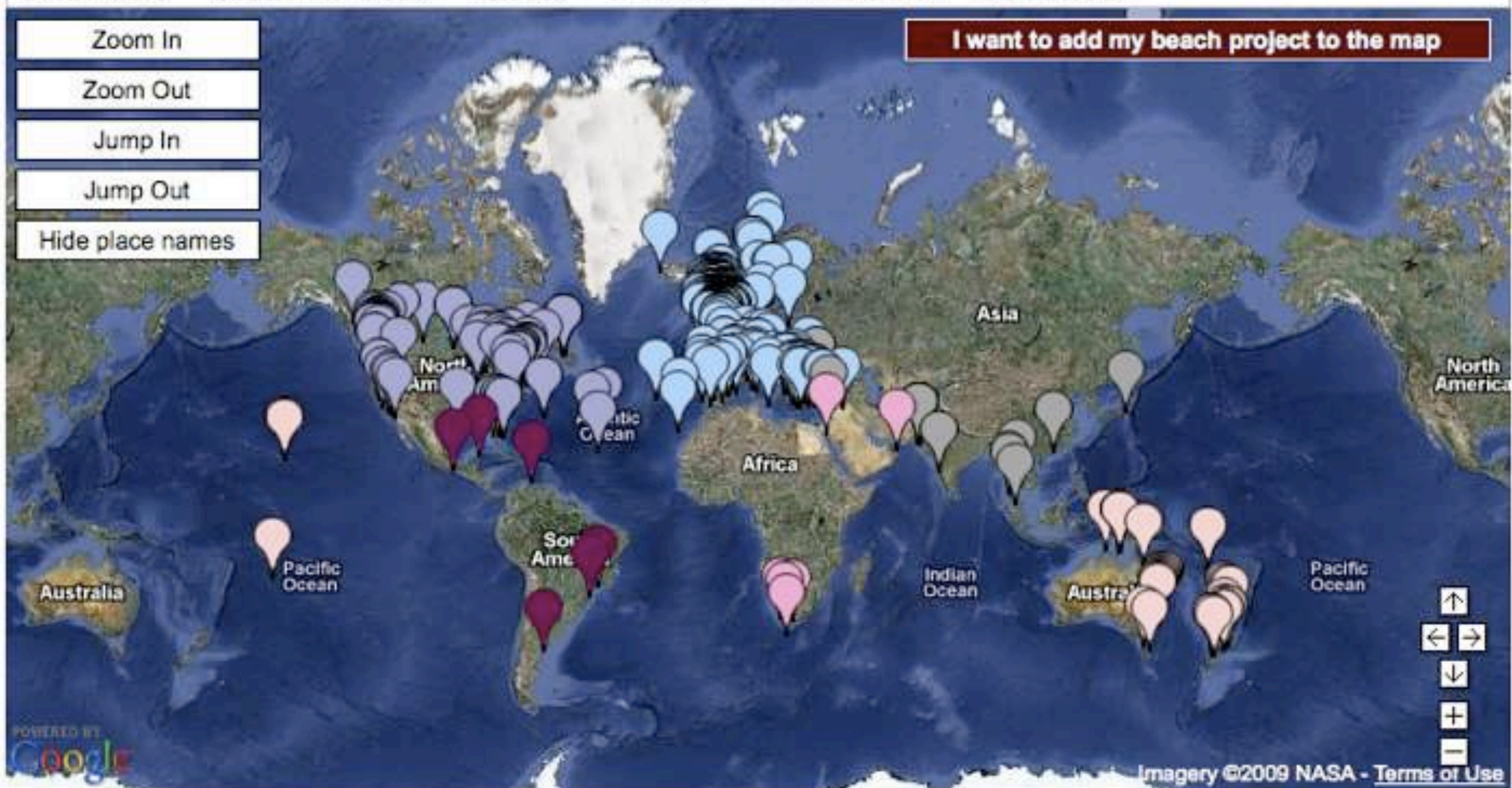
what are
you about?

what will these
relationships look
like?

what do they
need?

**HOW CAN VISITORS MAKE
YOUR MUSEUM BETTER?**

Europe (520) North America (157) Asia (33) Africa (6) South America (6) Oceania (43)



World Beach Project Gallery

[View all contributions](#)



Rorvig, Denmark



'Rorvig, Denmark'
Auntie K and Lelle
19 January 2009

Lelle and I were roaming around a pebble beach looking for something to catch our eye. We started noticing the special yellow ones... We were just piling them up to separate them from the rest... Then she said: 'look, it's a little nest!' so that's what we called it. Looks like we made the first contribution from Denmark, the land of our ancestors!

'Rorvig, Denmark', Auntie K and Lelle, 2009





De vitrina en vitrina

Case By Case

Estamos desarrollando nuevas exhibiciones y deseamos que nos ayudes.

We're developing some new exhibits—and we want your help.

Cuando miras los objetos de las colecciones de nuestro museo:

When you look at objects from our museum collections:

¿Qué es lo que ves?

What do you see?

¿Qué es lo que piensas?

What do you think?

¿Qué es lo que quieres saber?

What do you want to know?

Haznos preguntas, o danos respuestas.

Ask us questions—or give us your answers.

Comprender lo que piensas nos ayuda a pensar a nosotros cómo exhibir
nuestras colecciones.

Understanding what you think helps us think about how we display our collections.



You wanted to know...

What kind
of bees
are they?

How do they
make their
hive?

How old is
the hive?

Where was
it found?

What kind
of bees
are they?

How many
bees are there?

Is it a queen?

How do bees make
their hives?

What is the hive
made of?

How are wasp
nests built?

What is it MADE
OUT OF?

Is it a BEE
hive or a Wasp
nest?

HOW OLD
ARE THE
THE CEE-
HIVE?

How old is it?

Where did you
find it?

Where did
you find it?

What do you find
in it?

Where did you
find it?

We asked you what you wanted to know about this specimen, and you told us.
Here are some of your questions.
We've tried to answer them inside the case.

How many bees
are there?

Are there
any bees?

How do they make
their hives?

The honey
Beehive
and where did
you find it?

What tree
was the bee hive
originated from?





A fossilized beehive? Think again.

It's a hornet's nest. Like bees, hornets—a type of wasp—build hexagonal cells in which to lay their eggs. Why hexagons? Because it's efficient. Hexagons fit together with no gaps, so there's no wasted space in your nest or hive.

Wasps build their nests in sheltered places—chimneys, attics, trees (like this one, which still has some leaves attached). They make a pulp by chewing up wood fibers. So they basically make their own paper. Bet you didn't know insects could do that.

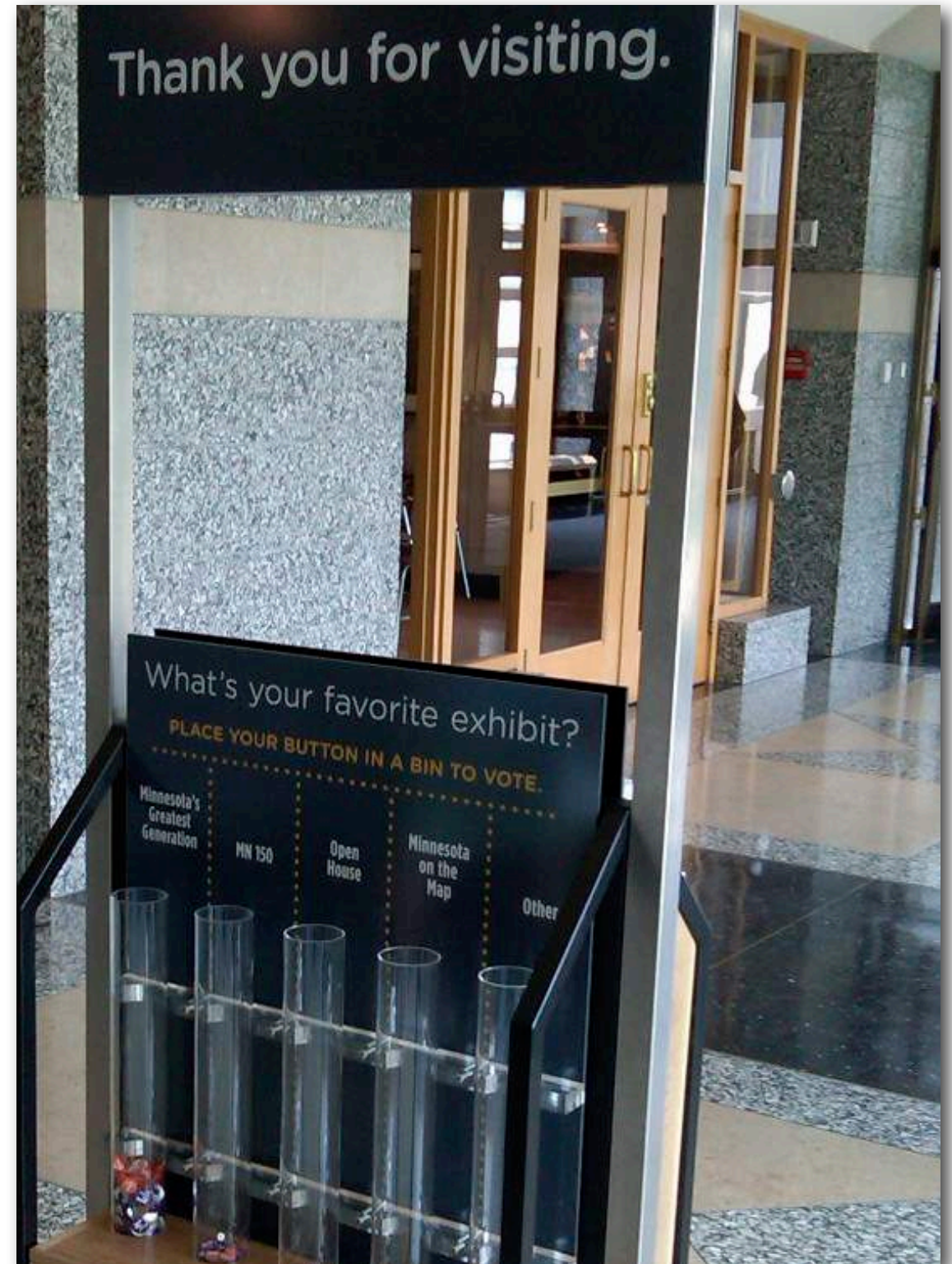
Hornet's nest

Bald-faced hornet (*Dolichovespula maculata*)

participation *can* be for everyone



Auckland Museum



Minnesota History Center

**HOW CAN VISITORS MAKE
YOUR MUSEUM BETTER?**

step 1: audience needs

**WHO ARE YOUR AUDIENCES OF
INTEREST AND WHAT ARE THEIR
PARTICIPATORY/SOCIAL NEEDS?**

step 2: institutional values

**WHICH NEEDS ALIGN BEST WITH
YOUR MISSION?**

**WHICH ARE OF GREATEST INTEREST
TO YOU PERSONALLY?**

step 3: new connections

**IDENTIFY A PLACE IN THE MUSEUM
THAT COULD BE MADE MORE
PARTICIPATORY.**

HOW WOULD YOU TRANSFORM IT?



continue the conversation...

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www.participatorymuseum.org

nina@museumtwo.com