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
Authority is *content* provider
Authority is **content** provider

Authority is **platform** provider
how?

✴ places for everyday use
✴ trusted hosts for social experiences
✴ places for making and sharing
less like this

more like this

Photo by cybertoad on Flickr
Shochi Coffee £3.00

brioche £3.00
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.
9
in the countdown of favourite pictures

Gillian Ayres
Sikar II, 1993
Print
Gift of the Contemporary Art Society
I vote for

B.W. russell

on the heels at R. Good
to go higher in the Top 40
countdown next week

I like this picture because:

of the Good Scale & range of
great artists.

his Work. Detail & colour

sublime. one of worcester's
9
in the countdown of favourite pictures

Gillian Ayres
Sikar II, 1993
Print
Gift of the Contemporary Art Society.
how?

- places for everyday use
- trusted hosts for social experiences
- places for making and sharing
talk to strangers
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
which techniques fit your mission?
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
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)
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 there's 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 didn't 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!
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.”

globe
inspire lifelong learning
advance knowledge
strengthen our communities
INSPIRING VISITOR PARTICIPATION

A DISCUSSION WITH NINA SIMON

nina@museumtwo.com  @ninaksimon on twitter
HOW CAN VISITORS MAKE YOUR MUSEUM BETTER?
PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION

what do they need?
PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION

what do they need?

what are you about?
PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTION

what are you about?

what will these relationships look like?

what do they need?
HOW CAN VISITORS MAKE YOUR MUSEUM BETTER?
Lelie 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!
De vitrina en vitrina

Estamos desarrollando nuevas exhibiciones y deseamos que nos ayudes.

Cuando miras los objetos de las colecciones de nuestro museo:

¿Qué es lo que ves?
¿Qué es lo que piensas?
¿Qué es lo que quieres saber?

Haznos preguntas, o danos respuestas.
Comprendiendo lo que piensas nos ayuda a pensar a nosotros cómo exhibir nuestras colecciones.

Case By Case

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

When you look at objects from our museum collections:

What do you see?
What do you think?
What do you want to know?

Ask us questions—or give us your answers.
Understanding what you think helps us think about how we display our collections.
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.
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
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...

@ninaksimon

www.participatorymuseum.org

nina@museumtwo.com