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**Art & Allyship:
Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler Museum of Art**

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**Art & Allyship:
Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler Museum of Art**

by

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Dedication

For Nan & Pa

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Abstract

Art & Allyship: Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler Museum of Art

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This study examines an art museum's efforts to foster greater inclusion for the LGBT community through a range of programming, outreach, and staff initiatives. Employing a mixed methods case study methodology, this research investigated the inclusive practices of the Chrysler Museum of Art, a mid-sized, encyclopedic museum in Norfolk, Virginia. Through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires, and document review, this research uncovered meaningful insights surrounding the motivations, implementation, and impacts of the Chrysler's efforts to welcome local LGBT community members into the museum. An analysis of the data exposed an institution-wide culture of inclusion built on prior efforts to engage diverse local communities and create a more accessible space for all audiences. This study demonstrates that targeted initiatives to welcome the LGBT community can establish the museum as a safe and inviting space for staff and visitors alike; connect LGBT individuals with a shared history and shed light on invisible narratives; educate front-line staff about gender and sexual difference and prepare them for positive interactions with LGBT

visitors; and present opportunities for collaboration, community building, and critical dialogue to occur. These discoveries present valuable insights for art educators and museum practitioners interested in developing more inclusive practices within their own organizations and working toward a more just society for all.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In many ways, art museums are in the business of empathy. These institutions present opportunities for people to encounter new cultures, ideas, and perspectives; they enable visitors to engage with new understandings of the world, expand their horizons, and build compassion for those whose identities and experiences differ from their own.

Despite the many progressive victories for equality seen in recent years, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Americans continue to face discrimination, bigotry, and violence because of their gender and sexual identities. The current political climate surrounding the LGBT community—characterized by so-called religious liberty laws and fearmongering “bathroom bills” preventing transgender citizens from using the restrooms that align with their gender identities—highlights a growing need for empathy in this country. And though it is “a common assumption that the arts and culture fields are populated with LGBT folks who find welcoming working environments in museums,” the reality is that “the culture sector lags behind the corporate workplace in formalizing its commitment to LGBT staff and visitors” (Youngs, Leitch, & Lesperance, 2016, p. 33).

Over the last several years, the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia has been working to change that perception. With initiatives spearheaded by the museum’s Education Department, the Chrysler is taking strides toward greater inclusion of the local LGBT community. Through a range of targeted programming, community outreach, and staff training, educators and colleagues across departments are working to make the Chrysler a safe and welcoming space for visitors of all identities. This thesis research

explores these inclusive efforts and the impacts they have had on museum staff, volunteers, and visitors. It sheds light on the important work the Chrysler is doing for the local LGBT community and emphasizes the need for these kinds of efforts within the broader field of museum education. Adopting Murawski's (2016) belief that "developing empathy has the potential to create radical social change," this investigation explores the potential for art museums to effect positive change within their communities through socially inclusive practices rooted in human compassion.

My interest in the Chrysler Museum of Art as the site for this research began with a blog post. Perusing the Center for the Future of Museums blog (an initiative of the American Alliance of Museums) in March 2016, I came across a headline that immediately grabbed my attention: "Creating a More Inclusive Museum: Welcoming LGBT Students and Visitors" (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016a). I had never heard of a cultural institution actively—and proudly—working to engage the LGBT community; this short blog entry served as a catalyst for a professional interest that has sustained me in the time since this initial discovery. It prompted me to reach out to the authors of the post and the architects of the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive initiatives, Director of Education Anne Corso and Community Engagement Manager Michael Berlucchi. An informational phone conversation with Anne and Michael on March 29, 2016 grew into an ongoing dialogue and, ultimately, a collaboration. These museum educators proved essential to this research, devoting significant time and energy to coordinating my research visit and ensuring my investigation was successful.



Illustration 1: The author with Director of Education Anne Corso and Community Engagement Manager Michael Berlucchi at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

In order to gain insight into the inclusive work taking place at the Chrysler Museum of Art and its impacts, I traveled to Norfolk, Virginia for three days in October 2016. During my visit, I observed a unique program designed for teens in a local high school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), a presentation by Anne and Michael at the 2016 Eastern Virginia Regional Diversity and Inclusion Conference, and an LGBT sensitivity training delivered to museum staff and volunteers. I conducted semi-structured interviews with several museum staff and affiliates with varying involvement in the museum's LGBT inclusive programming to obtain insights about these initiatives from a range of perspectives. I collected anonymous survey questionnaires from participants in the staff trainings to capture their reactions to this new program, reviewed a number of documents

related to these initiatives, and maintained a field journal in order to record my observations and reflections on all that I saw, heard, and experienced over the course of my site visit.

Upon analyzing the data collected through each of these methods, this research illuminated the ways in which art museums can work to strengthen their roles as sites of social inclusion through focused initiatives. Building upon its people-centered mission and established practices emphasizing access and service, the Chrysler's efforts to welcome the LGBT community reflect a broader organizational culture of inclusion. Targeted programs and internal trainings serve as active demonstrations of the museum's commitment to creating a comfortable and inviting environment for LGBT audiences. These initiatives establish the Chrysler as a safe space for both LGBT visitors and staff and send a broader message of welcome and inclusion to internal and external constituents alike. While these programs have seen some pushback, particularly from longtime docents resistant to change, they have impacted staff and community members in overwhelmingly positive and meaningful ways. This study illuminates how, with the courage and conviction to serve all audiences, art museums can foster greater inclusion for marginalized communities. I hope this research contributes to an urgent conversation within the field of art education, and believe it will resonate with museum professionals and art educators who seek to make their places of work more accepting, inviting, and inclusive for people of all identities.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

This research was motivated by the following question: What can be learned from an examination of the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts to foster greater LGBT inclusion?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

I carried out this research with the hope of contributing to art museum professionals' understanding of LGBT identities and to add to the body of research concerning inclusion of minority voices, identities, and communities in the art museum. In addressing the issue of LGBT inclusion, I hope museum practitioners gain insight into the value of fostering an internal culture of inclusion at their institutions and the significance of efforts to welcome LGBT visitors to the art museum. This research supports the notion that “sexual orientation and gender identity are threads in the vibrant, variegated tapestry of any community” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 3) and that LGBT identities should be included in discussions of multiculturalism in the field of art education (Desai, 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a case study methodology. As Stake (1995) outlines, this methodology involves “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case” (p. xi) that is of special interest. It is an investigative approach used to examine a single instance of a phenomenon in-depth as opposed to gathering broad, surface-level data (Moore, Lapan, & Quartaorli, 2012). The range of LGBT inclusive programming implemented at the Chrysler Museum of Art comprised a unique case to be explored in-depth. Despite the specificity of this case, I have drawn important generalizations for the field of museum education based on the findings gathered from this research. These conclusions are discussed in the final chapter of this report.

I gained insight into the museum's inclusive practices through a number of data collection methods. Through direct observation and a field journal, I collected detailed, firsthand data concerning (a) a program delivered to teen members of a local high school's Gay-Straight Alliance, (b) staff presentations on LGBT inclusivity at the Eastern Virginia Regional Diversity & Inclusion Conference, and (c) LGBT sensitivity training sessions delivered to museum staff and docents. Additionally, I conducted semi-structured interviews with key staff members and museum affiliates, collected survey questionnaires from training participants, and examined documents relevant to the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives.

Believing in the importance of story, particularly when engaging the complex and sensitive theme of identity, this research incorporates a narrative approach. Semi-structured interviews with key museum staff, volunteers, and affiliates enabled me to gain the knowledge needed to properly inform this research while providing opportunities for these individuals to expand upon the ideas and themes with which my interview questions were concerned. As Fylan (2005) defines,

semi-structured interviews are simply conversations in which you know what you want to find out about—and so have a set of questions to ask and a good idea of what topics will be covered—but the conversation is free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants. (p. 65)

While I had identified the broad topics I sought to cover in advance of these conversations, a semi-structured interview approach created possibilities for my interviewees to expand the discussions to include unanticipated information and ideas. The narrative accounts collected from these interviews are woven into this report, enabling

these voices to tell the story of a program that is, at its core, about people. Each individual who participated in this research enriched my understanding of the museum's LGBT inclusive efforts and their impacts on the local community.

Finally, this research engaged a critical, queer perspective (Creswell, 2014; Plummer, 2005). As this study concerned LGBT identities, understanding and confronting the established power structures and oppressive forces that bring about the need for LGBT inclusive work proved central to the investigation. Working toward social inclusion involves destabilizing the status quo, and these theoretical lenses urged me to question accepted societal norms of gender and sexuality. A range of literature on anti-oppression theory (Baines, 2011; Strier, 2007), queer theory (Levin, 2010; Sanders, 2007b; Warner, 2002), intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Robert, 2014), and critical multiculturalism (Acuff & Evans, 2014; Adams & Koke, 2014; Desai, 2003) served to shape the theoretical lens through which this research was approached.

MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Personal Motivations

My journey as an ally began in high school. Participating in theater productions and symphony orchestra, I found myself in the constant presence of sexual difference in my teenage years. This fact did not, however, solidify my school's place as a beacon of tolerance and inclusion; "gay" was still a derogatory term, archaic gender roles were widely enforced, and many of my friends felt the need to remain closeted.

When two of my male classmates were suspended for kissing in a stairwell, I realized that homophobia was a school-sanctioned policy. I discovered that hate was systemic. Struck by the injustice of this event, I joined my high school's Gay-Straight Alliance, a student group committed to promoting safety, acceptance, and equality for LGBT students at school and in the community. From then on, the fight for LGBT rights was my fight. It was personal.

My conception of allyship has shifted a great deal in the time since high school. I have met exceptional people and have been honored to hear their stories of struggle and triumph. I have learned to acknowledge my own privilege as a beneficiary of heteronormativity, and to use that privilege to speak out against oppression and hate. I have come to see that bigotry can be blatant and loud, as with the Westboro Baptist Church, but it can also be subtle, covert, couched in microaggressions, jokes, and careless language. More than anything, I have come to know that to be an ally is not simply to wave the rainbow flag with pride; to be an ally is to act. It is to love fiercely, and to acknowledge that to love means to do something.

Recently, my cousin, who grew up as a boy, came out to my family as transgender. She adopted a new name, switched to new pronouns, and began the process of transitioning. At her mother's (my aunt's) wedding shortly thereafter, we met her for the first time. Unsure of how my Irish Catholic family would react to this change, I was profoundly moved by the outpouring of support she received that day. Hugs from brothers and uncles; loving words from a new step-dad; silly photos with female relatives. My grandfather, a Korean War veteran with old-world values, told her she looked beautiful.

I return to this story often as a reminder of how simple this all can be. Notions of gender and sexual identity are incredibly complex, heavily theorized, and endlessly debated by scholars. Yet it does not take a scholar to show love, to empathize, to include. My grandfather may not have understood what it means to be transgender, but he understood what it means to love, and to love unconditionally. Family is family, no matter who we are or how we identify. My family's demonstration of love and support toward my transgender cousin serves as a constant reminder that people are capable of greater compassion than we may realize, and that love transcends all understanding.

Efforts to include the LGBT community in the art museum experience reflect these ideas, demonstrating an institutional belief in the goodness of humanity and the capacity for empathy that resides in each of us. Art museums are spaces where we can come together to embrace our differences, celebrate our uniqueness, and revel in our diversity. While bigotry and hate toward the LGBT community continue to pose real threats to equality in this country and around the globe, I remain hopeful that these active demonstrations of allyship from our most trusted cultural spaces can serve to create a more just, caring world.

Professional Motivations

At the National Art Education Association's annual convention in March 2016, I spoke with many colleagues who were passionate about the fight for LGBT inclusion in art education. Dr. Mindi Rhoades, a faculty member at The Ohio State University and fierce advocate for LGBT inclusion in art education, told me that "ally should never be something you call yourself. It should be something others call you" (personal communication, March

17, 2016). Allyship is not an identity, she explained, but a constant process, a continual course of action. Allyship, quite simply, is work.

I see this research—this work—as a part of my ongoing journey as an ally. Through the process of conducting this study, I gained a deeper understanding of what it means to be an ally within the field of art museum education. As informal educators who guide visitors in explorations of humanity’s biggest questions—questions of identity, of morality, of justice—art museum practitioners are poised to be forces for radical social change in this world. With this thesis research, I hope to add to the field’s understanding of LGBT identities and to provide actionable ideas for inclusive practice. I believe this study has the potential to serve as a model for others in the field who seek to engage LGBT communities in their own spaces, and I hope it inspires those who wish to learn more. I am thrilled to highlight the work of the courageous staff at the Chrysler Museum of Art, who have taken active steps to welcome the LGBT community through their own practices. Building off a significant body of literature in this arena, I hope this research illuminates the significance—and, truly, the urgency—of fostering inclusion for LGBT identities in the art museum.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the diverse efforts of the Chrysler Museum of Art to welcome the LGBT community into the museum. Over the course of the research process, I observed three concrete programs onsite: (a) an immersive museum visit designed for LGBT teens and their allies, (b) a series of conference presentations delivered by museum staff at a local

diversity and inclusion conference, and (c) two LGBT cultural competency workshops offered to staff and docents at the museum. Through interviews and document review, I examined several other initiatives related to the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive efforts. An analysis of the data collected through these methods—observations, interviews, document review, and field notes—provided insights into the motivations, implementation, and impacts of these initiatives as they relate to the Chrysler Museum of Art, its staff and visitors, and the local region of Hampton Roads. While these findings are limited to this specific place and time, they nonetheless present meaningful implications for the broader field of art museum education.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD

I believe this research contributes to a meaningful gap in research concerning LGBT identities in the art museum. This report is intended to help art museum educators build greater empathy for their LGBT visitors and to demonstrate the value in making concerted efforts to serve this community. In gaining insight into the efforts of one art museum to welcome this community, I hope all museum professionals begin to consider the steps they might take to effect positive change for LGBT staff and visitors at their own institutions.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

As language is central to the subject of LGBT inclusion, a clear understanding of the relevant terminology has been crucial to this study. Below is a list of key terms used

throughout this research. Many of the definitions for these terms are pulled directly from the American Alliance of Museums' (2016a) *LGBTQ Welcoming Guidelines*, a recently published document that provides a thorough glossary of terminology relevant to the specific nature of inclusive work in cultural institutions.

- **Anti-oppression:** A theory of social work intended “to oppose the roots and effects of social oppression” (Strier, 2007, p. 857). The research paradigm employed in this study draws inspiration from anti-oppression theory.
- **Ally:** “A non-LGBT person who actively supports the civil rights of LGBT people” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 54). “Allyship” refers to the practice of being an ally.
- **Cisgender:** “Someone whose gender identity and assigned biological sex are not in conflict” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 52).
- **Gender binary:** “The idea that human gender exists in two forms: masculine and feminine” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 53). This term also refers to the social construction and maintenance of prescribed gender roles, identities, and attributes.
- **Gender identity:** One’s “internal sense of being male, female, or something in between” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 53). Gender identity is personal to the individual and may not be visible to others.
- **Gender pronouns:** The terminology an individual uses in third person references. Binary notions of gender account only for male (he/him/his) and female

(she/her/hers) pronouns, yet individuals on the gender identity spectrum use a range of additional pronouns. Recently, the gender-inclusive singular “they” pronoun has seen widespread use in the LGBT community by those who do not identify as strictly male or female.

- **Gender-neutral/gender-inclusive:** Language that is “free of reference to a particular biological sex or gender identity” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 53).
- **Heteronormative/heteronormativity:** “Of or pertaining to the practices and institutions that legitimize and privilege heterosexuality, heterosexual relationships, and traditional gender roles as fundamental and ‘natural’ within society” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 53).
- **Homophobia:** “Discomfort or negative response toward gay and lesbian people and/or of same sex attraction or behavior in the self or others” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 53).
- **Intersectionality:** A term coined by civil rights advocate and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to describe the overlapping or intersecting of social identities and their related systems of oppression. This study adopts an intersectional approach to identity, understanding that gender and sexuality are only pieces of an individual’s identity and experience.

- **Inclusion/inclusive:** Terms used to describe practices (language, behavior, etc.) that welcome and embrace a diversity of identities. This study focuses primarily on the inclusion of LGBT identities and communities in the art museum.
- **LGBT/LGBTQ:** Acronyms for “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender,” often accompanied by a “Q” for “queer” and/or “questioning.” As the Chrysler Museum of Art staff consistently employed the acronym “LGBT” in discussions of their inclusive work, this is the term that appears most frequently in this study. It is intended as an all-encompassing term for the community of individuals who identify as anything other than straight. Variations of this acronym exist to include a broader spectrum of gender and sexual identities, but these are the acronyms I have used in this study for the sake of clarity and consistency.
- **Queer:** “An inclusive, unifying umbrella term” for people who are LGBT, particularly used by teens and young adults (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 54). Traditionally a pejorative term, “queer” has been adopted by some in the LGBT community to describe themselves. This is a highly-contested term even within the LGBT community, and has been used in this study to refer only to the ideas of queer theory scholars and, infrequently, as a synonym to the term LGBT.
- **Sexual orientation:** “The internal experience that determines whether we are physically or emotionally attracted to men, women, to both, or neither (asexual). An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 54).

- **Transgender:** An “umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior is different from that typically associated with their assigned sex at birth” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 55). “Trans” is often used as the shorthand for this descriptor.
- **Transphobia:** “Discomfort or negative response toward transgender individuals and other people who are gender nonconforming” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 55).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the efforts of one art museum to foster greater inclusion for the LGBT community. I employed a mixed methods case study research approach in this investigation, adopting a critical perspective and emphasizing the power of narrative. Grounded in a personal passion for social justice and a professional belief in the social impact of art museum education, this research sought to demonstrate the value and urgency of LGBT inclusion in the art museum.

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the study. I defined my central research question and discussed the problems it addresses within the field of art education. I also presented my motivations for conducting this research, explained the methodological approaches and tools used in the study, and explored the potential benefits the study might pose for the field. I concluded with a list of terms relevant to the study, defining them as they are used throughout this report.

In Chapter 2, I present a compiled summary of the literature that has informed this research and guided my thinking throughout the study. These texts focus on the role of museums in society, the notion of social inclusion in the museum, and the inclusion of LGBT identities in the museum.

Chapter 3 situates this case study within its historical, social, political, and cultural contexts. In this chapter, I explore the foundations of the Chrysler Museum of Art and the broader Hampton Roads region and present information relevant to an understanding of the museum's contemporary efforts to include the local LGBT community.

Chapter 4 covers the methodological theory, design, and implementation of this case study, as well as the tools and techniques used for data collection and analysis. Here, I provide a descriptive report of my research visit to the Chrysler Museum of Art and identify the key personalities who participated in this study.

Chapter 5 revisits the central research question in order to frame the processes of data collection and analysis employed in this investigation. In this chapter, I present an analysis and interpretation of data gathered through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The themes and takeaways that emerged from this analysis are highlighted in this chapter.

In Chapter 6, I review the study in its entirety and present concluding thoughts for the field of art museum education. Recognizing the opportunities this study presents for future research, I propose several recommendations for art educators interested in engaging in similar investigations. I conclude this report with my personal perspective on the importance and urgency of this research.

Having presented a thorough overview of the study, I now examine the literature that situates this research within the field of art museum education. The next chapter offers an in-depth discussion of texts relating to the social role of the museum, inclusion in the museum, and LGBT identities in the museum context.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Seeking to answer the central research question, this study draws from literature in a variety of fields to ground the research in established theory and practice. Here, I discuss the pertinent bodies of literature that guided and informed this study. I explore texts concerning the role of museums in society, the issue of diversity and inclusion in cultural institutions, and the inclusion of LGBT identities in museum practices. The scholars included here help situate the research within the broader context of contemporary museum discourse and develop understandings of this investigation related to the Chrysler's social agency, the museum's mission to serve its diverse communities, and its efforts toward greater inclusion of LGBT identities and audiences.

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE MUSEUM

Why study an art museum's efforts to embrace a marginalized community in its programming and practices? The value of this research is grounded in a vast body of literature concerning the social agency of the museum. The role of the art museum in society has been a central topic of discourse in the field since the establishment of the first arts institutions in America in the late 19th century. Particularly in discussions of the art museum's educational mission, authors turn toward broader conceptions of these institutions as purveyors of civic engagement, social services, and public good (Zeller, 1989). Education played a central role in the foundation of America's first art museums. Those in leadership positions espoused the democratic beliefs that art belongs to the people and is "their best and most efficient educator" (Zeller, 1989, p. 14).

Scholars in the field further embraced these populist values in the 1930s, a period characterized by broad social reforms and progressive ideals amidst a backdrop of global depression and the threat of war (Zeller, 1989). Rea (1932) spoke of the art museum's responsibility to its community and the need for museums to receive public support in order to achieve this service mission. Adams (1937) discussed the civic value of museums as institutions that uphold democratic ideals and provide "equal cultural opportunities for all citizens" (p. 4). These scholars believed that museums must know and listen to their publics, as the true social importance of the museum comes not from the quality of its collections but from the quality of the visitor's experience (Rea, 1932, p. 43). Embedded in this "social education philosophy" of the art museum is the perspective that the purpose of cultural institutions is not just to enhance visitors' art knowledge or aesthetic sensibility, but to have a positive impact on the everyday lives of community members (Zeller, 1989, p. 66). This stance reflects Dewey's (1920) conviction that the purpose of democratic social institutions "is to set free and develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status" (p. 186). He believed the value of arts education in these spaces could be seen in "the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of [their] possibility" (Dewey, 1920, p. 186).

Cameron (1971) echoed these sentiments years later, calling for museums to contribute to the "democratization of culture" by extending cultural programming opportunities to all people. "Society will no longer tolerate," he writes, "institutions that either in fact or in appearance serve a minority audience of the élites" (p. 201). The notion of the museum as a temple, meant to inspire awe in the visitor for the treasures it holds,

would only ever serve a small segment of wealthy, educated individuals; instead, the museum must move toward the model of the forum, adopting interpretive reforms that reflect the public's interests and create "an equality of cultural opportunity" (p. 196). Decades later still, Weil (1999) argued that the American museum must "make public service its principal concern" (p. 243), offering programming that is relevant to and produces positive impacts on the lives of community members. Toward the end of the 20th century, scholars were championing the notion of the museum's social responsibility to its community, calling for the need to move beyond "collecting, preserving, studying, and interpreting objects to enrich the quality of individual lives and to enhance their community's well-being" (Weil, 1999, p. 255).

Today, discussions of the art museum's role in society continue to undergird discourse in art museum education. Many scholars focus these discussions around the museum's potential for public value (Barrett, 2011; Dierking, 2010; Garcia, 2010; Garcia, 2013; Scott, 2002; Scott, 2013; Silverman, 2010; Weil, 1999). In the context of the museum, public value refers to "the connective, affective, social-justice functions of museums" as well as their economic clout in the public sector (Garcia, 2010, p. 6). In recognizing their potential for generating public value, Garcia (2010) argues, museums can develop a clear sense of purpose around which they can center their practices. When museum leadership adopts the public value framework and incorporates it into the organizational structure of their institutions, museums can begin to make a positive difference in the lives of their visitors and communities and create a sustainable future for the cultural sector more broadly (Scott, 2002; Scott, 2013).

Some place education at the center of the conversation around the public value of cultural institutions. As advocates both for the institution and the public, museum educators are uniquely positioned to generate public value (Garcia, 2010; Garcia, 2013). They have the capacity to move beyond the simple transfer of art information and toward practices that empower visitors to make their own meaning (Barrett, 2011). As public value derives not from mere operational success but from a museum's ability to connect meaningfully with the populations it serves (Dierking, 2010), museum educators have a central role to play in helping the museum achieve its potential for social worth.

The question of relevance is one that has become central to contemporary museum discourse. For museums to make themselves matter to their visitors, institutions must hold themselves accountable to the public and listen to their needs (Duclos-Orsello, 2013; Simon, 2010; Simon, 2016; Weil, 2002). In working to become more relevant to a broader public, museums can build deep connections with those who do not view themselves as included in the museum experience and become essential to the communities they serve (Simon, 2010; Simon, 2016). Engaging contemporary social concerns that impact visitors' lives is a way museums can come to matter more to the public and move toward effecting social change (Duclos-Orsello, 2013).

Museums offer visitors a therapeutic value as well. "As people engage with objects and each other," writes Silverman (2010), "museums become containers and catalysts for personal growth, relationship building, social change, and healing" (p. xi). The museum can have positive impacts on individual relationships and on the world if it chooses to employ its resources toward these service-oriented missions. The museum's status as a

social space makes it ideal for relationship building, providing “a place for coming together and appreciating how we differ and examining how very much we share” (Archibald, 2004, p. 78). These institutions may also serve as spaces where individuals can find intellectual, spiritual, and emotional sustenance (Sellars, 2010). In looking to the field of social work for guidance and inspiration, museums might embrace their potential as agents with the capacity to foster relationships and effect social change (Silverman, 2010).

In the museum, visitors can have transformative experiences in which they explore, discover, and construct their own identities (Falk, 2006; Falk, 2009; Falk & Dierking, 2012; Fienberg & Leinhardt, 2002; Leinhardt & Knutson, 2004; Paris & Mercer, 2002; Rounds, 2006; Spock, 2006). Rather than acts as “empty vessel[s] waiting to be filled with our wisdom” (Falk & Dierking, 2012, p. 7), visitors come to the museum to engage in “identity work” (Rounds, 2006). Arriving with their own sets of prior knowledge, experiences, and perspectives about the world, individuals use the museum visit to build upon their understandings of self, both affirming and constructing their personal identities. Museums, through the thoughtful use of their objects, spaces, and programming, can play a crucial role in shaping both individual and collective identities (Rounds, 2006). When museum educators recognize the museum’s capacity for identity development, they can create opportunities for transformative experiences to occur (Garner, Kaplan, & Pugh, 2016).

SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE MUSEUM

In 1992, the American Association of Museums (now the American Alliance of Museums) published its report *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public*

Dimension of Museums, an event now regarded as the catalyst for “the ascendancy of the museum educator” (Spock, 2006, p. 167). The report called on museums to “place education—in the broadest sense of the word—at the center of their public service role” (American Association of Museums, 1992, p. 8). Museums, it asserted, are educational institutions, and they should reflect this fact in their missions and in every aspect of their operations.

A key premise in this shift toward an education-centered mission has been the need for greater inclusion—for museums to require equity by embracing cultural diversity. The report challenged museums to combine “intellectual rigor with the inclusion of a broader spectrum of our diverse society” (American Association of Museums, 1992, p. 6). Committing themselves to welcoming, enriching, and empowering visitors from all backgrounds, museums could become an integral part of the human experience and “help to create the sense of inclusive community that is so often missing in our society” (p. 17).

The concepts of social inclusion and exclusion are relatively new in the context of the museum, yet the terms can be traced back as early as the 1970s when “social exclusion” was used to describe those not protected by national social insurance in the U.K. Since then, social exclusion has become a prominent term for understanding disadvantage and inequality in many arenas (Dodd & Sandell, 2001, p. 8), referring to “the process by which groups in society become disenfranchised and marginalised” (Sandell, 1998, p. 401).

As purveyors of cultural values, museums play a strong role in conveying and enforcing relations of power (Cameron, 1971; Coffee, 2008; Ferentinos, 2015; MacDonald, 1998; Sandell, 1998). As such, they are uniquely positioned to serve as agents of social

exclusion—favoring dominant cultures and modes of expression at the expense of those on the margins of society. Contrary to the principles of democracy and public service on which they were founded, museums often appear to serve “the interests of an educated and prosperous minority” while excluding many in their communities (Fleming, 2002, p. 213). They can reinforce social hierarchies and class distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984), normalize and legitimize specific narratives (Coffee, 2006), and “reproduce exclusionary relationships to subaltern narratives” (Coffee, 2008, p. 271).

By the same token, they can promote social inclusion through their collection, exhibition, interpretation, education, and outreach efforts (American Association of Museums, 1992; Coffee, 2008; Delin, 2002; Sandell, 2002; Young, 2002). These activities reflect the “ideological performance of the museum” and demonstrate the specific narratives privileged by an institution (Coffee, 2008, p. 271). Groups left out of these narratives frequently perceive museums as exclusionary spaces; however, cultural institutions can work toward greater social inclusion not by inviting excluded populations to take part in the traditional museum narrative, but by seeking out and embracing alternatives to established perspectives (Young, 2002, p. 211). Hooper-Greenhill’s (2000) “post-museum” model encourages this shift toward an organization that embraces a variety of social perspectives and cultural values, incorporates intangible heritage and human emotions, and connects directly to the interests and concerns of its communities (pp. 151-162).

The conception of the museum as an agent of social inclusion reflects arguments in the field for the social responsibility of cultural institutions (Cameron, 1971; Dodd &

Sandell, 2001; Fleming, 2011; Gurian, 2006; Hein, 2011; Janes, 2009; Janes & Conaty, 2005; Lang, Reeve, & Woollard, 2006; Marstine, 2011; Sandell, 2002; Sandell, 2007; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012; Silverman, 2010; Weil, 2002). While this notion is fairly new in the context of the museum, its history as an educational institution has imbued it with a longtime mission to benefit society (Fleming, 2011). In discussing the museum as a socially responsible—and responsive—agent, many scholars offer guidelines for internal organization that supports the goal of public accountability. Lang et al. (2006) identify several characteristics of the responsive museum, noting that such organizations are audience-centered, learning-focused, accessible, in dialogue with their communities, and innovative in their programming, among other qualities (pp. 227-228). Similarly, Janes and Conaty (2005) present four core values central to the socially responsive museum: idealism (imagining a brighter future), intimacy (striving for deep connections), depth (investing resources to build relationships), and interconnectedness (acknowledging the links between individual well-being and issues in society). As Dodd and Sandell (2001) illustrate, the notion of social inclusion in the context of the museum derives from the understanding that cultural institutions have a social responsibility to the communities they serve and the potential to create positive change in the lives of visitors (p. 4). “By being socially responsible institutions,” writes Fleming (2011), “museums can promote greater inclusion and social harmony” (p. 9).

Conceptions of inclusion in the art museum draw heavily from the field of critical multicultural education. In the context of the museum, this theoretical lens prioritizes the “structural analysis of unequal power relationships, analysing the role of institutionalized

inequities” (Acuff & Evans, 2014, p. xxviii; May & Sleeter, 2010) including racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and heteronormativity. In contrast to what Smith (1994) calls “surface multiculturalism” (p. 15), which presents a semblance of diversity but results in non-dominant cultures being trivialized, stereotyped, or exoticized (Desai, 2000), critical multiculturalism involves incorporating “counter-narratives” into museum education practice (Acuff & Evans, 2014, p. xxvii). Counter-narratives synthesize a multitude of historical, sociological, and personal perspectives in order to reject a single, dominant narrative and present a more accurate, pluralistic account of reality (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2016, p. 17). These narratives “unearth suppressed and hidden stories of marginalized groups,” presenting history as “multiple and simultaneous” and encouraging people to develop new understandings of power and privilege (Adams et al., 2016, p. 17). Through the lens of critical multiculturalism, museum practitioners can acknowledge how their work is conditioned by social and cultural norms (Karp & Lavine, 1991) and make efforts to be more inclusive in the stories they tell. “Addressing themes of critical multiculturalism,” write Adams and Koke (2014),

helps the art novice audience understand ways art is relevant to their lives. Engaging in critical multiculturalism underscores the important work of artists through time and across cultures—artists who have often worked diligently to portray the social structures and strictures of their time. Critical multiculturalism creates a role for the art museum at the center of important community conversations. Paying attention to critical multiculturalism can help an art museum shake off a reputation of elitism and move to the center of the community. Critical multiculturalism allows museums to demonstrate and support civil and civic dialogue in a culture that has moved toward increasingly polarized politics and uncivil arguments rather than reasoned discussions. (p. 16)

As the *Excellence and Equity* report promotes, “museums must become more inclusive places that welcome diverse audiences, but first they should reflect our society’s pluralism in every aspect of their operations and programs” (American Association of Museums, 1992, p. 5). While museums may work to engage and reach out to new communities through specific initiatives, they cannot hope to be truly inclusive unless the diversity they seek in their audiences is reflected in the objects, language, and programming they present. Skramstad (1999) echoes this notion, writing, “it will be impossible for museums to retain any sense of authority with the more pluralistic America outside museum walls unless there is diversity inside those walls” (p. 130).

In the last two decades, museum scholars have increasingly turned their attention to these efforts to “construct new narratives that reflect demographic, social and cultural diversity and represent a plurality of lived experiences, histories and identities” (Sandell & Nightingale, 2012, p. 1). The notion of democratic representation in the museum, and the challenges therein, has garnered considerable interest among those concerned with notions of power and privilege in collection and exhibition practices (Anico & Peralta, 2009; Hein, 2011; MacDonald, 1998; O’Neill, 2011; Sandell, Dodd, & Garland-Thomson, 2010; Wexler, 2007). Reflecting a critical multiculturalism paradigm, contemporary museum scholars call on museums to engage in radical display practices that question normative assumptions of cultural hierarchies, challenge binary understandings of the world, and invite a wider spectrum of society to see themselves in the museum experience (Ferentinos, 2015; Hein, 2011; Marstine, 2011; Sandell, Dodd, & Garland-Thomson, 2010).

Museum practitioners can engage in democratic, inclusive work beyond the museum walls. One approach for building a more inclusive institution is through collaboration with community partners (American Association of Museums, 1992; Dodd & Sandell, 2001; Duclos-Orsello, 2013; Lynch, 2011; Simon, 2010; Simon, 2016). Adopting a framework of shared authority, cultural institutions can develop equitable relationships with individuals and organizations representing the diversity of their communities (Duclos-Orsello, 2013; Frisch, 1990; Frisch, 2011). These partnerships can democratize museum practice, inviting community members to create work that is relevant to the issues that affect them and positioning the museum as a space that is essential to the community. Oftentimes, these collaborative efforts prove critical to the institution's ability to address challenging contemporary social issues (Clifford-Napoleone, 2013; Kollmann, Reich, Bell, & Goss, 2013; Silverman & Bartley, 2013; Wagner, Eckler, & Leighton, 2013). Community partnerships also enable museums to develop more inclusive programming, as these democratic, participatory relationships provide partner organizations a greater voice in the museum's output and enable them to tailor these programs to their cultural and personal interests (Betancourt & Salazar, 2014; Collins & Daniel, 2014; Ehrlich, 2014; Lynch, 2011; Rappaport, 2014).

The mission of social inclusion is widely understood as a means for museums to make their programming accessible to a diverse public, yet museum audiences do not always reflect the true pluralism of our society. Kinsley (2016) argues that inclusion in the museum is not simply an admirable goal toward which institutions should aspire, but a matter of social justice. By looking at inclusion through a social justice lens, museum

professionals may be able to embrace greater diversity and inclusion in the objects they display and the publics they engage (Fleming, 2012; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012). Increasingly, museums are taking up explicitly activist positions—what Sandell and Dodd (2010) call “activist museum practice” (p. 3)—through which they aim to engage visitors in challenging conversations surrounding contemporary issues of social justice (Sandell, 2007; Sandell & Dodd, 2010). “The best museums use their position of trust to encourage people to reflect on society’s contemporary challenges,” writes the United Kingdom’s Museums Association. “They promote social justice and human rights, challenge prejudice and champion fairness and equality” (Museums Association, 2013).

Social inclusion in the art museum requires museum practitioners to develop multicultural understandings of history and society, embrace the plurality of their communities, and engage in critical self-reflection. Dodd and Sandell (2001) explain the value of working toward greater inclusion in cultural institutions:

Fundamentally, engaging with ideas around social inclusion requires us to recognise that the cultural is inextricably linked with the social and, more particularly, that collecting, documenting, conserving and interpreting are simply the means to an end. They are functions through which the museum can pursue its goals—social goals which must centre around their benefit to individuals, communities and society. (p. 2)

LGBT INCLUSION IN THE MUSEUM

In recent years, a growing body of literature has emerged concerning LGBT issues in art education. These authors explore theoretical frameworks for “queering” art education (Cosier, 2011; Desai, 2003; Rhoades, 2012; Sanders, 2007a), discuss methods for introducing LGBT themes in the art classroom (Check, 2002; Check & Ballard, 2014;

Cosier, 2011; Gude, 2003; Hsieh, 2016; Lampela, 2007; Rhoades, 2012; Sanders & Gubes Vaz, 2015), and reflect on experiences with LGBT issues in the professional sphere (Check, 2000; Check, 2004; Check & Ballard, 2014; Cosier & Sanders, 2007; Fehr, Check, Atkins, & Keifer-Boyd, 2002; Lampela & Check, 2003). They promote the benefits of engaging in conversations around gender and sexuality in art education, explaining how these discussions can help students explore complex notions of identity, expand their understanding of what is “normal,” and engage with difference in their daily lives.

Discourse surrounding LGBT identities in museums, galleries, and cultural institutions has also emerged over the last several decades. Much of this scholarship concerns the display and interpretation of LGBT histories (Austin, Brier, Herczeg-Konecny, & Parsons, 2012; Ferentinos, 2015; Gabriel, 2010; Lee, 2011; Lesperance, 2014; Koskovich, 2014; Petry, 2010; Vanegas, 2002). These scholars discuss the value of representing LGBT narratives in the museum setting, as well as the difficulties involved in sharing challenging or controversial information with the public. “Presenting LGBT history is not simply an exercise in inclusion,” writes Ferentinos (2015). “Rather, a focus on outsiders has the potential to reveal a great deal about the society as a whole” (p. 7). By exploring the histories of cultural outsiders, museums can invite all visitors to consider how the dominant culture favors certain narratives and makes assumptions about the “other.” Displaying the cultural diversity of the human experience enables all visitors to learn about themselves.

Historically, LGBT identities have been excluded from museum representations and from historical interpretations more broadly (Adair, 2010; Conlan, 2010; Frost, 2008;

Karkruff, 2014; McIntyre, 2007; Meinke, 2016; Sanders, 2008; Vanegas, 2002). The stakes of this exclusion are severe: as Conlan (2010) remarks, “omission from the museum does not simply mean marginalization; it formally classifies certain lives, histories, and practices as insignificant, renders them invisible, marks them as unintelligible, and, thereby, casts them into the realm of the unreal” (p. 257). Until recently, cultural institutions have been hesitant to engage in open discussions of sexuality in general (Winchester, 2012, p. 143). “Perhaps the most complex issue at stake in any drive for inclusivity based on sexuality,” writes Winchester (2012), “stems from the inherent tension that lies at the centre of the gay liberation movement and its legacy—the desire to eradicate discrimination whilst enshrining difference” (p. 143). Individuals and institutions alike find difficulty in reconciling the conflicting ideas that the LGBT community seeks both acceptance and acknowledgement of their difference. Attempts at presenting notions of “sameness,” while perhaps beneficial to straight audiences hoping to develop better understandings of these identities, often has the effect of further erasure and marginalization of LGBT experiences (Austin et al., 2012; Ferentinos, 2016; Steorn, 2012).

Promoting the value of LGBT inclusion in the museum is a central goal in these texts. Interpreting LGBT history can “foster public dialogue, enrich the full telling of US history, expand audiences and collections, and provide a sense of belonging to a group whose contributions to the nation have been largely unrecognized” (Ferentinos, 2015, p. 15). Central to each of these benefits is the increased visibility of LGBT identities, histories, and experiences that results from inclusive interpretive practices (Meinke, 2016; Winchester, 2012). These positive impacts reflect the social agency of museums and their

capacity to serve as spaces of inclusion; they also derive from the lack of LGBT visibility in many social and cultural arenas and the erasure of LGBT narratives from dominant discourse. Despite the many recent strides the Western world has made toward progress for the LGBT community, “cultural institutions have yet to catch on that equal representation of queer narratives is also a matter of equal rights” (Karkruff, 2014, p. 12). Displaying and interpreting LGBT history can help museums achieve their potential to effect change and work toward social justice. “Incorporating LGBT experiences into museum interpretation,” Ferentinos (2015) writes, “holds the potential to embody museums’ higher purposes” (p. 15).

Another reason for the inclusion of LGBT narratives in the museum is the effect such practices have on destabilizing oppressive, socially constructed systems of power. Much of the scholarship surrounding LGBT inclusion in the museum concerns the notion that museums perpetuate notions of heteronormativity through their exhibition and interpretive choices (Adair, 2010; Coffee, 2008; Fraser & Heimlich, 2008; Frost, 2008; Levin, 2010; Mills, 2008; Sanders, 2007b; Sanders, 2008; Steorn, 2012; Tseliou, 2013; Tyburczy, 2012). Reflecting the concept that museums enforce relations of power through their practices, and drawing heavily from the field of queer theory (Levin, 2012; Sanders, 2007b), these authors contend that cultural organizations contribute greatly to the institutionalization of what is “normal” in relation to gender and sexual identity. Engaging in the display and interpretation of LGBT narratives can serve to create “equitable distributions of power and authority [that] can build a more democratic, compassionate, just, and equitable institution” (Sanders, 2008, p. 15).

Key among the many benefits of LGBT inclusive museum practices is the notion that these efforts can help LGBT visitors connect to a shared heritage. Many authors have discussed the personal significance among visitors of discovering a connection to a once hidden history (Clark & Wexler, 2008; Dunlap, 1994; Farrell, 2010; Ferentinos, 2016; Martinac, 1997; Oram, 2011; Turino & Ferentinos, 2012; Vanegas, 2002). Just as any visitor may find common ground with an object based on an aspect of their identity, encounters between LGBT visitors and their history can have powerful, identity-affirming impacts (Clark & Wexler, 2008; Karkruff, 2014).

Despite the value of LGBT inclusion in the museum for all audiences, bringing queer narratives into the museum comes with its complexities and challenges (Austin et al., 2012; Petry, 2010). Institutional homophobia, pressure from donors and local authorities, and the fear of negative public reactions often prevent museum practitioners from engaging in more inclusive practices concerning LGBT lives (Dubrow, 2002; Vanegas, 2002). Many scholars feel it is not enough to merely display the work of LGBT artists; the museum must be willing to integrate social and political discussions into these displays and encourage difficult conversations to occur (Sanders, 2008). Institutions often draw distinctions between the aesthetic value of objects and their cultural contexts, making it challenging for LGBT visitors to find works with which they can identify (Steorn, 2012). There is also the issue of evidence: as much of these histories were erased or kept hidden, and because social constructions of gender and sexuality have shifted greatly over time, museum practitioners must be mindful of how they choose to interpret these narratives and the language they choose to use (Ferentinos, 2014; Lee, 2011; Steorn, 2012; Winchester,

2012). The lines between what constitutes public and private knowledge become blurred in the process of interpreting LGBT history, and these questions must be interrogated (Lee, 2011).

Inclusive efforts must draw from the plurality of LGBT experiences in order to avoid stereotyping, generalizing, or promoting binary conceptions of gender and sexual identity (Ferentinos, 2016; Sanders, 2007b; Sanders, 2008). As Levin (2012) notes, “‘queering’ the museum is not as simple as adding objects related to—or examples of art by—individuals who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. We must also be aware of persistently (and perniciously) presenting these populations as monolithic” (p. 158). Even in this effort to diversify LGBT representation, LGBT narratives may be subjected to a heteronormative perspective of history (Steorn, 2012). In choosing to engage in these inclusive efforts, museum practitioners must be willing to work collaboratively with the LGBT community (McIntyre, 2007), practice critical self-reflection, and take risks in their work (Sanders, 2008). Gabriel (2010) recommends situating queer narratives within the broader scope of human sexuality, noting that “if we have to remember to ‘include’ queer . . . we are not accepting that human sexuality has always taken myriad forms and expressions and profoundly informed who we are and what we do” (p. 63).

Examples of LGBT interpretation abound in these writings. The United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum serves as a prime example of an institution that chose to commit itself to representing LGBT history within its exhibition program. An often-overlooked aspect of the historic tragedy is the violence toward LGBT people that occurred under the Nazi regime. “The GLBT audience is everywhere,” remarked the curator of *The*

Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, 1933-1945, which opened in 2002. “Let that audience know they will see and learn something about themselves/ourselves and their/our communities in our museum exhibitions, public programs, and outreach, and they will be at our doors” (Phillips, 2008, p. 108). An alternative labeling initiative at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum sought to “create a counterpublic space through one of the most ubiquitous forms of public address—the museum label” as a means of working toward restorative justice (Lee, 2011, p. 177). This project attempted to shed light on the little discussed fact that Addams shared her life with a woman for over thirty years, yet required a nuanced interpretive approach to avoid anachronisms (Ferentinos, 2014; Lee, 2011). In 2010, the National Portrait Gallery mounted *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, “the first major museum exhibition to focus on sexual difference in the making of modern American portraiture” (National Portrait Gallery, 2010). While a significant (albeit overdue) milestone for LGBT representation in the art museum, it was quickly embroiled in controversy over the censorship of a video work by David Wojnarowicz, which was pulled from the show after public outcries denouncing its seemingly anti-Christian imagery (Rose, 2016, p. 120). American institutions have produced a number of additional exhibitions and interpretive projects in recent years surrounding notions of gender and sexual difference (Austin & Brier, 2015; Clark & Wexler, 2008; Dubrow, 2002; Farrell, 2010; Givens, 2016; Koskovich, 2014; Martinac, 1997; Robert, 2016; Turino & Ferentinos, 2012).

Internationally, cultural institutions have exhibited strong commitment to LGBT inclusion. The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is an excellent model of an institution

that has committed itself to the representation and inclusion of LGBT identities and audiences. In 2006, the V&A founded the LGBTQ Working Group for staff across institutional departments interested in engaging gender and sexual identity as emerging tools for interrogating collections. The following year, the museum began programmatic efforts aimed at engaging the LGBT community as part of LGBT History Month (Winchester, 2012), offering “queer heritage gallery talks and tours” that “encourage the reading of difference in museum objects” (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2016). Today, this initiative has expanded to include a broad range of programming exploring the intersections of art, design, and LGBT identities. A physical and online resource, “Out on Display,” enables visitors to learn about objects spanning history that deal with notions of gender and sexuality (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2014). The LGBTQ Working Group’s blog, “Out in the Museum,” serves as a further resource for visitors interested in research, musings, events, and more relating to notions of gender, sexuality, and identities.

Other institutions and organizations in the U.K. have taken steps to include LGBT narratives and embrace queer perspectives in their exhibition and programmatic efforts (Frost, 2013; Petry, 2010; Tseliou, 2013, Vanegas, 2002). In 2009, Glasgow’s Gallery of Modern Art exhibited *sh[OUT]*, a social justice project focused on LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex) art and culture (Frost, 2013; Sandell, Dodd, & Jones, 2010). In 2010, the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery invited artist and curator Matt Smith to engage in a queer intervention of the museum, rearranging and re-contextualizing objects from the collection in the vein of Fred Wilson’s *Mining the Museum* project (Corrin, 1994) in order to reveal hidden LGBT narratives (Karkruff, 2014; Tseliou, 2013).

Most recently, the Tate Britain (2017) opened its exhibition *Queer British Art, 1861-1967*, the first exhibition dedicated to presenting LGBT British artworks. Internationally, institutions have engaged in related efforts (Davison, 2011; Gosselin, 2014; Steorn, 2012). National cultural organizations in Australia and Sweden have even made efforts to incorporate LGBT inclusion into official policy (Davison, 2011; Swedish Exhibition Agency, 2016).

With the increasing visibility of the LGBT community in American politics and culture more broadly, the topic of LGBT inclusion has garnered significant interest in the museum field in recent years. The achievement of nationwide marriage equality in the previous year marked 2016 as a particularly significant moment for LGBT issues in the museum. The American Alliance of Museum's (2016b) annual *TrendsWatch* report for 2016 made representation and identity one of its key focal points for the future of museums. The report discusses recent cultural shifts toward a broader acceptance of the notion that gender and sexuality exist on spectrums (p. 32) and offered suggestions for how museums can update their practices to include visitors regardless of where they fall along those continuums. That same year, AAM also released its *LGBTQ Welcoming Guidelines*, a detailed resource for institutions to examine what they are doing right and how they might work to become more inclusive of this community across a range of operations. "The museum professions are tracking a monumental shift toward open and inclusive engagement with LGBTQ communities," writes Michael Lesperance, Chair of the AAM LGBTQ Alliance. "Programs and policies for visitors and staff are evolving in ways that mirror social and cultural attitudes. Current headlines impel us to insist that simply

reflecting the social or political status quo is not enough” (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a, p. 3). The National Parks Service additionally used its 2016 centennial celebration to publish its theme study *LGBTQ America*, the first major publication relating to this population ever produced by the U.S. federal government (Springate, 2016). This resource came in conjunction with the dedication of the first ever LGBT national landmark, the Historic Stonewall Inn in New York, by President Obama in June 2016 (The White House, 2016).

While there are notable exceptions, including the National Portrait Gallery’s *Hide/Seek* exhibition, American art museums are noticeably less active in these recent efforts toward greater LGBT inclusion in cultural institutions. Also lacking in this growing body of literature are accounts of museums working to engage LGBT communities through educational and outreach programs. Museums across the country have recently started offering targeted programs for the LGBT community and have taken strides to make their spaces more welcoming and accommodating to LGBT visitors and families (see Appendix G), yet scholarship relating to LGBT inclusive programming in the art museum is lacking. Through this study, I hope to contribute to this timely and urgent dialogue in the field of art museum education.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined literature pertinent to the study of LGBT inclusion in the art museum. I have discussed scholarship surrounding the role of the museum in society, the museum as an agent of social inclusion, and the inclusion of LGBT narratives

and perspectives in the museum. Embedded in these literary bodies are elements of feminist, queer, anti-oppression, and critical multicultural education theories. While scholarship concerning LGBT interpretation in museums and historic sites has become increasingly abundant in the 21st century, few texts exist examining art museum educators' efforts to engage LGBT audiences through inclusive programming. This study seeks to fill that gap in research.

In the chapter that follows, I explore the contextual information relevant to my investigation of the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive practices. This knowledge will situate my case study research within its broader historical, political, social, and cultural frames.

Chapter 3: Situating the Study

In the previous chapter, I presented a review of the pertinent literature guiding my research into the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive practices. As context plays an integral role in case study research (Yin, 2009, p. 18), I now examine the historical and contemporary circumstances surrounding these engagement initiatives. First, I discuss the Hampton Roads region and its LGBT community; next, I review the Chrysler's foundation and evolution; finally, I describe the inclusive programs that led me to select the Chrysler as the site of this study. Situating my investigation of the museum's LGBT inclusive efforts within its wider context enables a more complete understanding of the region, the institution, and the events that contributed to the development and reception of these inclusive practices.

HAMPTON ROADS

The Chrysler Museum of Art is located in Hampton Roads (Figure 1), a coastal region in Southeastern Virginia where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Chesapeake Bay. The area is comprised of seven major cities: Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Virginia Beach to the south and Hampton and Newport News on the eastern portion of the Virginia Peninsula. The two areas are divided by a natural harbor—one of the largest in the world—that serves as the region's focal point.



Figure 1: The Hampton Roads region (Virginia Tourism Corporation, 2017a).

It is because of this central channel that the Hampton Roads region “has had a balcony seat for history” (Apple, 1999). Once home to a number of American Indian tribes who hunted and farmed on the area’s fertile lands, Hampton Roads saw the arrival of the country’s first English settlers in 1607. The surrender of General Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781 made the region a key player in the Revolutionary War, while the Battle of Hampton Roads in 1862—the first combat between ironclad warships—is regarded as the most notable naval battle of the Civil War (Hampton Roads Partnership & Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, 2009, p. 2). This harbor saw Commodore Perry set course for his historic voyage to Japan, hosted the first Civil War peace talks, and witnessed the American invasion force depart for North Africa during World War II (Apple, 1999; Conroy, 2015). It is where American warships have been built and where the U.S. Atlantic Fleet now resides.

The harbor played a central role in the history of Hampton Roads and continues to define the region today. The area is home to the largest naval base in the world and one of the highest concentrations of military personnel in the U.S. All five branches of the U.S.

armed forces are represented in Hampton Roads, a strong presence that accounts for roughly one third of the region's economy (Hampton Roads Partnership & Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, 2009, p. 12). Beyond the safe harbors that have brought commerce and trade to the region for centuries (p. 13), the "Historic Triangle" of colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown, the coastal attractions of Virginia Beach, and the area's many cultural landmarks have cemented Hampton Roads' status as an established tourist destination in the area (p. 14).

According to an annual report published by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service (2016), the Hampton Roads region has an estimated population of roughly 1.7 million people. Its racial makeup is nearly 60 percent white and 31 percent black, with small percentages of Hispanic, Asian, and other racial and ethnic demographics represented (City of Norfolk Department of Development, 2014, p. 1). In general, the population of Hampton Roads "tends to be younger and more diverse than the population of the United States" (Hampton Roads Partnership & Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, 2009, p. 1).

Norfolk

Situated in the heart of Hampton Roads, Norfolk can be viewed as the historic, economic, and cultural center of the metropolitan area. The city's long history as a military and transportation hub is reflected in the present day: a U.S. naval base, a major North American railway, and one of NATO's two Strategic Command headquarters are all located in Norfolk. It is "a Navy town par excellence," where the "fearsome gray

superstructures of aircraft carriers, cruisers and other vessels” line the harbor walls (Apple, 1999).

Beyond its strong military presence, the city is also known for its cultural allures. The Chrysler Museum of Art, “widely counted among the top museums in the country” (O’Sullivan, 1999), is situated in Norfolk’s historic Ghent District, a primarily residential neighborhood with a lively commercial area. Nearby, one can find Harrison Opera Hall, the Virginia Opera’s home stage, as well as a grand performing arts venue that hosts the Virginia Symphony Orchestra and the Virginia Ballet. More recently, the city has seen the emergence of the NEON District, a budding arts district that is home to an eclectic assortment of contemporary art galleries, performance groups, and other cultural organizations. Norfolk is also home to Old Dominion University, a public research school that plays a central role in the region’s intellectual life, and Norfolk State University, a historically black university and another key contributor to the cultural vibrancy of the city.

Norfolk is the second most populous city in Virginia, after Virginia Beach. Its estimated 247,000 residents account for nearly 15 percent of the greater Hampton Roads population (Weldon Cooper Center, 2016). The city’s racial profile differs significantly from that of the surrounding region, however; according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), Norfolk’s white and black populations are nearly equal in size at 47 and 43 percent respectively. It is no surprise, then, that the Chrysler Museum of Art recently defined the local black community as one of three populations around which to focus new, targeted outreach and engagement initiatives; the other groups included in these recent

efforts are the military, which accounts for roughly 20 percent of Norfolk’s workforce (City of Norfolk Department of Development, 2014), and the LGBT community (E. Neil, personal communication, October 12, 2016).

LGBT History

Gender and sexual diversity have long been a part of the social fabric of Hampton Roads (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 7). Norfolk, in particular, has a history of LGBT presence stretching back to its foundations as a naval seaport. Viewed by the 1800s as the “metropolitan center of Hampton Roads” (p. 9), the city’s mobile, transient population created a culture of vice and permissiveness that permeated the region. By the late 19th century, the city had become known for its “raucous maritime reputation,” with visitors referring to the stretch of taverns and saloons lining the harbor as “Hell’s Half-Acre” (p. 7). Drag performers, burlesque dancers, and sex workers of all genders and orientations emerged in the region during this time, contributing to Norfolk’s reputation as “the wickedest city in America” (p. 32).

This reputation only intensified during the world wars, as the population of Hampton Roads increased dramatically and young people began flocking to Norfolk’s rowdy and liberated neighborhoods. “Identifiably LGBT communities” (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 7) began to emerge in the region during this time as a result. Norfolk became known for its redevelopment after World War II, and as its urban spaces transformed, many of the city’s mainstream establishments began transitioning to accommodate a growing gay, male clientele (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016).

In 1975, decorated Vietnam veteran Leonard Matlovich became “the first enlisted serviceman to come out as gay” (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 7) while deployed at the Langley Air Force Base in Hampton, Virginia. In an effort to challenge the military’s ban on gay service members, Matlovich entered the national spotlight with an appearance on the cover of *Time* magazine—the first openly gay person ever to grace the cover of a nationally circulated publication (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 7; NPR Staff, 2015). His brief stint in Hampton Roads encouraged others in the area to come out as well, and helped jumpstart the establishment of more official infrastructure for the region’s LGBT community in the following years. While violent police raids and the devastation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic presented LGBT individuals with immense hardships in the latter half of the 20th century, the 1970s and ‘80s in LGBT Hampton Roads were nonetheless characterized by a spirit of activism, community organizing, and a vibrant nightlife (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 33).

The new millennium marked a difficult transition for the LGBT community in Hampton Roads. The community’s local newspaper stopped production, gay bars struggled to survive, and the area’s LGBT organizations and businesses lacked a unified front. Over the last ten years, however, the region has seen a renewed sense of energy and activism sparked in large part by the foundation of Hampton Roads Business OutReach (HRBOR), the local LGBT chamber of commerce, in 2007, and by the efforts of Hampton Roads Pride to expand and strengthen its annual Pride festival. In 2015, a remarkable crowd of 20,000 people attended the celebration (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 137). The year prior, a Norfolk couple filed a federal lawsuit challenging the state’s same-sex marriage ban, an

action that led to statewide marriage equality; the Supreme Court extended this right to LGBT couples nationwide the following year (Daugherty, 2013). While the fight for equality continues in Virginia, the LGBT community in Hampton Roads is visible and thriving.

LGBT Community

A new section in the *State of the Region* report, released annually by Old Dominion University (2016), reflects the current significance of the LGBT community in the region. For the first time in its 17-year history, the annual report dedicated a full chapter to “the economic and social impact and importance of the LGBTQ community” (p. 126). Titled “The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Community in Hampton Roads,” this chapter presents a comprehensive look at the region’s LGBT community and the ways in which this population has impacted the area. Here, I briefly examine the contemporary role of the LGBT community in Hampton Roads.

Population

As the concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity are still deeply embedded in social and cultural stigma, measuring the size of the LGBT community can prove challenging (Gates & Newport, 2012). Only in recent years has data been collected regarding the size and geographic distribution of this population (Gates, 2015, p. 1). In 2012, Gallup added a question to its national Daily Tracking survey asking respondents to report whether they personally identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; the

organization now boasts the largest ongoing study of the country’s LGBT population (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 127). A recent iteration of this poll reports that roughly 4.4 percent of adults in the Hampton Roads region self-identify as LGBT (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 127), compared with 2.9 percent in the state of Virginia (Movement Advancement Project, 2017) and 4.1 percent—roughly 10 million Americans—nationwide (Gates, 2017). The Norfolk metropolitan area has the 12th largest LGBT population in the country (Gates, 2015, p. 2). The Movement Advancement Project, a national think tank focused on LGBT issues, suggests these numbers are likely higher due to the sensitive nature of the survey question (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 126).

Economic impact

While accurate numbers are, again, difficult to determine with certainty, Old Dominion University (2016) estimates that “working members of the LGBTQ community earned a total income of \$2.017 billion in 2015” (p. 134), accounting for nearly five percent of the total income earned by working adults in Hampton Roads that year. Norfolk and Virginia Beach have seen the greatest number of LGBT marriages in Virginia since the state (and, later, the country) legalized same-sex unions (Virginia Department of Health, 2016); Hampton Roads has thus contributed a significant portion of the projected \$60 million in spending generated by LGBT weddings to the state’s economy (Badgett, Neshad & Mallory, 2014, p. 1). Additionally, the region’s LGBT chamber of commerce comprises a network of 200 active businesses owned by a member of the LGBT community (p. 134), a fact that speaks to the significant economic activity of this population.

Health and safety

Issues concerning the health and safety of LGBT Virginians point to a great deal of outdated terminology and a lack of attention to the particular health needs of this community. The gender binary—the notion that there are only two distinct gender identities, male and female—is still maintained in area hospitals and health agencies, and the now-derogatory term “homosexual” continues to appear on police incident reporting forms. As Virginia does not have laws protecting LGBT individuals against hate-motivated crimes, obtaining statistics related to hate crimes on the basis of gender or sexuality is a challenge for Hampton Roads law enforcement. “We have to use, and in using promote, this kind of hate language every day as part of our jobs,” one openly gay Norfolk police officer commented. “We need to make forms that include a . . . designation for transgender people so we can begin tracking those crimes and so we can get the training sessions needed in order to better serve the community” (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 136).

Policies and procedures

The Human Rights Campaign’s Municipal Equality Index evaluates city laws that affect LGBT communities, including those concerning housing, employment, nondiscrimination policies, and the city’s overall relationship with the LGBT community. Norfolk scored the highest out of every Hampton Roads city included in the report due to the creation of an LGBT liaison position within its police department, its annual hosting and financial support of the region’s popular PrideFest event, and other inclusive policies (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 137). Since the publishing of the State of the Region

report, the police departments of each Hampton Roads municipality have appointed LGBT liaisons for their communities (Hampton Roads Pride, 2017).

Upon his inauguration in 2014, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe issued an executive order prohibiting discrimination against state employees on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity; in 2017, he signed a similar order applying to state contractors (Vozzella, 2017). Beyond these limited protections, there are no laws in Virginia preventing LGBT employees from being fired on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. “Frankly, in Virginia they can fire you for anything,” commented the Director of the LGBT Center for Hampton Roads. “Maybe they will say, ‘You were late too much.’ But the reality we are seeing is that may tend to happen right after the employer sees a picture of an LGBT person with their spouse on the desk” (Old Dominion University, 2016, p. 138).

Old Dominion University’s (2016) State of the Region report reveals the LGBT community in Hampton Roads “is sizable and exercises considerable economic clout” (p. 139). However, there is still much work to be done in achieving greater equality for LGBT Virginians concerning issues of housing, employment, and healthcare. Governor McAuliffe, a strong proponent of LGBT rights, initiated an LGBT Tourism Task Force in 2015 to devise ways by which the state could attract more LGBT travelers to Virginia (Blackwell, 2016). In 2016, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (2017b) introduced a new marketing program specifically aimed at drawing LGBT tourists to the state. Its website encourages would-be visitors to explore a list of LGBT-friendly businesses in the state while proclaiming that, “today, Virginia is for all lovers.” With these initiatives in place

and others on the horizon, McAuliffe hopes to “send a message to the entire commonwealth, to the nation and to the globe that Virginia is welcome to members of the LGBT community” (Portnoy, 2015).

THE CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART

Having presented a thorough look at the history and current state of the Hampton Roads region and its LGBT community, I now examine the specific site of this case study research: the Chrysler Museum of Art. Here, I discuss the Chrysler’s origins, its evolution over the decades, and its contemporary institutional culture.

Overview

The Chrysler Museum of Art is a mid-sized art museum located in the historic Ghent District in Norfolk, Virginia. The museum’s collection, an encyclopedic selection of 30,000 objects representing nearly 5,000 years of history, resides in an Italianate building overlooking the picturesque Hague inlet of the Elizabeth River. A grand entrance facing the water welcomes visitors to the museum, which is free for all visitors.

Nearby, the Chrysler’s Perry Glass Studio offers daily demonstrations, a range of classes, and monthly performances from visiting glass artists. As the museum boasts an 8,000 object glass collection—“one of the most significant in the Western Hemisphere” (Harrison, Baker, & Johnson, 2007, p. 9)—the studio serves as an active resource for those interested in learning more about the glass art medium.



Figure 2: The Chrysler Museum of Art (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2008).

Today, the Chrysler is the cultural cornerstone of the Hampton Roads region, a regular stop for area locals and a must-see for those visiting Norfolk. The institution’s rich history offers insight into how it achieved this status in the community.

History

Irene Leache & Annie Wood

The origins of the Chrysler Museum of Art date back to the late 19th century, with the arrival of two women to Norfolk in 1871. Irene Kirke Leache and Anna “Annie” Cogswell Wood were educators and friends who came to the city to establish the Leache-Wood Seminary, “an all-girls school in the heart of Norfolk dedicated to educating the daughters of the city’s most prominent and wealthy families” (Weinstein, n.d.). Their efforts soon expanded beyond the school as they began taking strides to improve Norfolk’s then lacking arts and cultural community, a mission that dominated much of their lives. What began as a series of “discussion clubs, poetry readings, and other intellectual

offerings eventually lead to the establishment of the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences in 1933, now known as the Chrysler Museum of Art” (Weinstein, n.d.).

Leache and Wood first met at Angerona, a women’s seminary near Winchester, Virginia, where Leache was a faculty member and Wood a student. Of this initial encounter, Wood (1901) wrote,

It was on a September day of the year 1868 that my eye first lighted on that rare woman whose influence was thence forward to dominate my life, and develop in my character all that it should possess of significance. (p. 3)

The pair remained inseparable for the next three decades, their lives intertwined as educators, business partners, and travel companions. Though it is difficult to discern the nature of their relationship with certainty, Wood’s (1901) memoir, *The Story of a Friendship*—written just after Leache’s passing—lays bare a deep connection between the two women. “While we can not determine the sexual orientation of these women,” notes Censer (2003), “Wood’s narrative makes it clear that theirs was indeed a loving partnership” (p. 176).

Known as a “Boston marriage,” this kind of intimate relationship between two women was not uncommon in the 19th century. The women who entered these unions, writes Falderman (1999), “were usually feminists and almost always career women” (p. 29), both qualities Leache and Wood seem to have shared. Such “marriages,” she continues,

afforded a woman companionship, nurturance, a communion of kindred spirits, romance (and undoubtedly, in some but not all such relationships, sex)—all the advantages of having a “significant other” in one’s life and none of the burdens that were concomitant with heterosexuality, which would have made her life as a pioneering career woman impossible. (p. 30)

Whether romantic, sexual, or otherwise, Leache and Wood's close relationship presents intriguing, albeit tenuous, possibilities concerning the connections to be made to the Chrysler's current LGBT inclusive efforts.

The Leache-Wood Seminary “provided some of the highest quality all-girls education in Virginia at the time, and used philosophies and teaching approaches considered quite progressive by nineteenth century standards” (Weinstein, n.d.). Among these pioneering practices were the addition of a kindergarten program and the provision of physical education to the female student body. These innovations extended beyond the seminary in programs like the Fireside Club, a group that met for weekly intellectual readings and conversations, affording Norfolk women the rare opportunity to move beyond their domestic lives and to learn and speak freely—actions which were forbidden in public.

When Leache's health began to fail in 1891, the pair journeyed to Europe where they lived and traveled for nine years. Upon Leache's death in 1900, a heartbroken Wood founded the Irene Leache Library to preserve her partner's memory and life's work. Wood established the library to provide lectures and performances and to “preserve works of art, statuary, and rare books, especially those of an essentially spiritual nature” (Weinstein, n.d.). Her ultimate goal for the library was to collect artworks for the foundation of a museum in Norfolk. When Norfolk's Carnegie Library opened in 1903, it included a gallery dubbed the Irene K. Leache Memorial Room—the beginnings of what would ultimately become the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Beyond this venture, Wood continued to perpetuate Leache's memory by establishing a regular lecture series and combining the library and the seminary's alumnae association to form the Irene Leache Art Association (Earle, 2008, p. 6). This group later became the "Norfolk Society of the Arts," an organization whose mission was to "stimulate and further the interest in art in Norfolk and to establish an art museum" (Weinstein, n.d.). This society is still in operation today, and the group partners regularly with the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Wood's vision was realized in 1933 when the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences officially opened to the public. Over the next several decades, the museum's collection would expand thanks to significant gifts from local families, including works by noted American artists Helen Turner and Charles Willson Peale. Then, in 1971, came the arrival of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

The trajectory of the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences was forever altered by the son of an automobile tycoon. "It would be difficult to spend time in the Chrysler Museum," wrote the *New York Times* art critic, John Russell (1991), "and not come away convinced that the most underrated American art collector of the past 50 years and more was the late Walter P. Chrysler Jr." He was, according to the museum's former director, "one of the most adventuresome American collectors, never confining his interests to a single period or culture" (Harrison, Baker, & Johnson, 2007, p. 9). It is indeed challenging to ignore this quality when paying a visit to the encyclopedic institution; nearly 85 percent

of the museum's permanent collection consists of objects Chrysler gifted the institution in a historic donation in 1971.

Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.'s life as a visionary collector began at the age of 14, when he purchased a small Renoir nude; the work was quickly destroyed by a teacher at his conservative boarding school (Earle, 2008, pp. 22-24). He attended Dartmouth College, where he was deeply involved in the arts and cultural scene. He edited an arts magazine, participated in the performing arts, and, not unlike Leache and Wood in Norfolk, "was able to bring New York speakers and exhibitions onto campus, as well as host soirées of music and poetry in his off-campus digs" (p. 24).

Realizing his inescapable passion for art, Chrysler abandoned his studies at Dartmouth after his junior year and instead embarked upon a grand tour of Europe. During this time, he encountered and purchased artworks from modernist masters themselves, including Picasso, Braque, Gris, Matisse, and Léger (Earle, 2008, p. 25). Not one to adhere to convention, Chrysler was an adventurous collector who claimed he often "bought against fashion" (Harrison, Baker, & Johnson, 2007, p. 11)—a habit that would later set his collection apart as "one of the last great collections of European and American painting to be formed in the twentieth century" (Earle, 2008, p. 59). He opened his first gallery on the ground floor of the Chrysler Building in New York in 1932—one year before the opening of the Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences. As Chrysler began to establish himself in New York as one of America's preeminent collectors, a group of dedicated women in Southeastern Virginia were working to found a community art museum.

At the outbreak of World War II, Chrysler volunteered himself for service in the Navy and was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. During this time, he met Norfolk local Jean Outland, whom he married in 1945. This was Chrysler's second marriage, the first having ended contentiously after less than 18 months. While his first wife cited communication and social issues as factors that led to the end of the relationship, much evidence suggests their marriage likely suffered due to Chrysler's sexuality (Earle, 2008, p. 34). "In 1938, there was enormous social pressure on gay men to marry and give the appearance of living a 'normal' life," Curcio (2000) states. "In any case, this marriage certainly was an unhappy one for both of these young people" (p. 658). As Earle (2008) writes,

That Chrysler led something of a double life was widely acknowledged. The fact that he was gay was noted by many of those who knew him professionally and personally. And while his sexual orientation seemed to have little bearing on his career as an art collector, it may have indirectly influenced his eventual move to Norfolk. (p. 34)

Further supporting this notion is Chrysler's discharge from the Navy, which occurred shortly before his marriage to Outland. While Chrysler pointed to health issues as the reason for his departure, others stationed with him recalled that he was released on "character discharge" after he was "found to be gay" (Earle, 2008, p. 40).

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that when Chrysler retired from his active role in his father's business in 1956 to devote himself entirely to the arts, he chose to move his collection to Provincetown, Massachusetts—a summer art colony well-known by the 1950s for its prominent gay community (Manso, 2002, p. 65). He found a home for his artworks in a deconsecrated Methodist church, now the Provincetown Public Library. Formally called the Chrysler Art Museum, the locals nicknamed the space, "The First

Church of Chrysler” and “St. Walter’s” (Earle, 2008, p. 48). During the Provincetown years, Chrysler would spend many of his days perched on a plastic chair “at his museum’s open front door, wearing a sports shirt and casual slacks. He greeted visitors, took their seventy-five-cent admission fee, and occasionally escorted them on personal tours of his collection” (p. 48). Those who have visited the museum in Norfolk may find traces of Chrysler’s gregarious approach to visitor service in its current gallery host program.

There are varying stories regarding Chrysler’s decision to leave Provincetown. While the museum’s official narrative states that the collection eventually outgrew the limited space of its 19th century church dwelling, other accounts point to tensions with the local community due to Chrysler’s business dealings and brash personality. Regardless, Chrysler, faced with the decision of where to move his impressive collection, ultimately settled on Norfolk. In addition to his wife’s status as a native of the city, Chrysler noted that “the community itself is progressive” and, therefore, an apt fit (Earle, 2008, p. 78). He donated his collection to the city in 1971, a gift regarded as “one of the strongest and most various ever given at any one time by a single individual to an American museum” (Russell, 1991). The Norfolk Museum of Arts and Sciences became the Chrysler Museum of Art. Chrysler served as the Director of the museum until 1976, during which time he was heavily involved in the daily operations of this now eponymous institution. He died in 1988 after a long battle with cancer.

Bill Hennessey, the institution’s former Director, remembers Chrysler as

one of the most ambitious and successful private collectors of his era . . . a man of passionate enthusiasms and wide interests with a strong and distinct personality.

His character infuses the collection and gives the Museum much of its special feel. (Harrison, Baker, & Johnson, 2007, p. 7)

The gift of Chrysler's vast collection marked a dramatic shift in the museum's history, instantly elevating the institution's significance among the nation's art museums and setting the groundwork for all it would become over the next several decades. "He could have built a monument to his own taste," remarked a former curator following his death, "Instead, he created the community's most valuable resource" (Earle, 2008, p. 159).

This examination of the Chrysler's founders serves to situate the contemporary institution within its long and complex history. Although the sexual identities of these founding figures cannot be defined with any certainty, it can be said that these pioneers and visionaries of the arts bestowed upon the Chrysler a certain queer, feminist sensibility—a notion that holds particular relevance in light of the museum's recent efforts toward LGBT inclusion.

Recent evolution

In the decades following Chrysler's monumental gift, the museum saw a number of significant changes. The building underwent several expansions and renovations in order to accommodate its growing collection and reflect its core mission. In the 1980s, the architecturally confused structure received several updates that resulted in the unified, limestone building seen in Norfolk today. A towering, Italianate facade now greets visitors approaching the museum from the river, and an expansive, light-filled courtyard in the center of the space invites guests inside to embark upon their museum experience. The Perry Glass Studio opened its doors across the street in 2011; an architecture firm is already

exploring a possible expansion for the highly successful glass art space (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2016). The Chrysler's most recent renovation and expansion, completed in 2014, included drastic additions and alterations to the museum's interior and a "go-green" initiative to enhance the sustainability of the building (Chrysler Museum of Art, n.d.).

The Chrysler has recently evolved in dramatic ways beyond these architectural improvements. The museum's former Director, Bill Hennessey, introduced a number of changes to the museum's core operations that earned the institution its status as one of six "magnetic museums" in Bergeron and Tuttle's (2013) recent compendium of highly successful cultural organizations. As I discuss in later chapters, these innovations are integral to an understanding of the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive efforts.

Shortly after Hennessey began his tenure as the Chrysler's sixth director in 1997, the museum launched a strategic planning initiative that would prove vital to its transformation into the institution that exists today. Three key decisions resulted from these meetings. First, the museum transitioned from an object-oriented mission statement to one that is truly visitor-focused: "The Chrysler Museum exists to enrich and transform lives. We bring art and people together through experiences that delight, inform, and inspire" (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 102). Second, the board and executive leadership made a pledge to establish greater fiscal responsibility in the face of years of poor management and financial instability; they have since maintained a balanced budget each year. Third, they defined the Chrysler's primary audience as the Hampton Roads community, and "made a genuine commitment to serving and engaging all of them, not just the slice of well-to-do, educated residents who were accustomed to attending" (p. 102).

This newly adopted, service-first mission created a seismic shift in the Chrysler's approach to its programs, policies, and organizational culture. The museum transitioned away from the use of uniformed security guards in the galleries in 2007, replacing them with "gallery hosts, specially recruited and trained guest service representatives whose purpose is to make people feel welcomed, relaxed, and comfortable in the presence of art" (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 102). Gallery hosts receive extensive training in both security and visitor engagement techniques, and seem to wear a variety of hats over the course of a given workday. Whether answering questions, engaging in conversation, or sharing insights about the collections, these staff members are on the front lines of the Chrysler visitor experience.

In an attempt to remove any remaining barriers to access, the museum introduced free admission in 2008. As a result, attendance rose 33 percent in the first year and the crowd diversified noticeably; more African Americans, younger adults, and families began to visit, and the museum also saw an increase in repeat visits (p. 106). To further demonstrate this increased access, Hennessey instated a literal open door policy—today, Chrysler staff open the door at the museum's grand entrance for every visitor, ensuring they are greeted with a warm welcome and guided through what is, to many, an intimidating threshold.

Hennessey instituted a number of additional changes to the Chrysler's practices during his 17-year tenure, including an ambitious capital campaign and the establishment of the museum's glass studio. He was successful in effecting dramatic change at the Chrysler, and did so with "a kind of leadership that . . . was visionary, inclusive and

empowering” (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 101). As I discuss in later chapters, the many transformations the museum saw under his direction would set the stage for the inclusive initiatives that were to follow. Hennessey’s commitment to service and his belief in the transformative power of art helped pave the way for an organization that has become a hub for community activity and enrichment.

LGBT INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

Having thoroughly situated the Chrysler Museum of Art’s recent series of LGBT inclusive programs in its historical, geographical, social, political, and economic contexts, I now present an overview of the programs themselves. Many of these initiatives were included in the blog post that initially sparked my interest in the Chrysler’s inclusive work (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016a), thus serving dual roles as both context and content in this case study research. While these events range in scope and objective, they share a common thread in their focus on the inclusion of LGBT visitors, identities, and issues. These programs are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5; here, I describe each event in order to contextualize what I frequently refer to as the museum’s “LGBT inclusive programs.”

Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera Opening Party

The Chrysler’s initial attempt to engage the local LGBT community arrived in August 2015 with the acclaimed exhibition *Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera*. This exhibition featured the work of Tseng Kwong Chi, a Chinese-American photographer best known for his performative chronicling of New York’s art and club scene in the 1980s.

For Tseng, a gay man who died of AIDS-related complications, the exploration and expression of identity through photography was a chief concern, and one that often played out in comic and theatrical ways in his work.

To mark the opening of the exhibition, the museum transformed its central courtyard into a “swank New York club” (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2015) for its monthly Third Thursday program, complete with go-go dancers, custom cocktails, and a Tseng Kwong Chi-themed photo booth. Typically a ticketed event, this Third Thursday was free for all visitors due to partnerships with Hampton Roads Pride, an organization serving the LGBT community, and HRBOR, the region’s LGBT chamber of commerce. This collaboration resulted in a wildly successful event for the museum, one that saw the attendance of many first-time visitors and heralded the beginning of a new relationship with the local LGBT community.

World AIDS Day Programming

To commemorate World AIDS Day, a global event intended to show solidarity with those who live with HIV/AIDS and to remember those who have died, the museum recently began screening relevant films and offering themed gallery talks that walk visitors through the AIDS epidemic as evidenced in artworks and in the lives of many artists represented in the museum’s collections. While certainly not an issue unique to LGBT individuals, the devastation it wreaked on the gay community in recent history makes this annual event a meaningful one for the LGBT community.

Cultural Competency Workshops

In efforts to create a more welcoming and inclusive space for visitors and colleagues alike, the Chrysler introduced an internal LGBT inclusion training for staff and volunteers in December 2015. The Education Department offered this voluntary workshop to all interested colleagues, but most strongly encouraged members of the docent corps and gallery host program—those with visitor-facing roles—to attend. A representative of Equality Virginia, a statewide LGBT advocacy organization, facilitated the workshop, guiding attendees through terminology, issues, and challenges surrounding the LGBT community. The Education staff offered the second installment of this program in October 2016, with the potential for a more regular occurrence of these workshops on the horizon.

Gay-Straight Alliance Visits

The Education Department has hosted Gay-Straight Alliances, LGBT advocacy groups from local high schools, at the museum on several occasions. These visits are tailored to emphasize identity exploration and inspire confidence in student members. Typically, these visits include an introductory, identity-related exercise, an object-based activity in the galleries, and a pride-themed glass demonstration in the Chrysler's Perry Glass Studio.

Gallery Talks

Several Chrysler staff members have delivered gallery talks highlighting LGBT history and themes found in works from the collection. These discussions cover objects

from a variety of artistic movements, and may range in content from the subject matter of the works to the identities of the artists themselves. These talks tend to be offered in conjunction with the region's annual PrideFest celebration, held each June.

PrideFest

The Chrysler's mobile glass studio enables the museum's talented glass artists to take their artful demonstrations beyond the confines of the museum and into the community. For the last two years, the mobile hot shop has been present at PrideFest, Hampton Roads Pride's annual celebration of LGBT identities and community. Here, glass artists provide live demonstrations to festival attendees, often creating rainbow-colored objects to signify LGBT pride.

LGBT Town Hall

On January 21, 2017, the Chrysler hosted an event intended to foster dialogue between the LGBT and law enforcement communities in Hampton Roads. The program, which was facilitated by Hampton Roads Pride, included a panel of individuals representing several law enforcement agencies in the community and a town hall discussion where community members could engage directly with these local leaders. The goal of the event was to promote understanding, trust, and awareness of the particular challenges LGBT individuals face in relation to public safety.

Conference Presentations

An extension of the Chrysler's efforts toward LGBT inclusion is its participation in professional conferences, during which key staff members can share their experiences with peers and seek feedback for future improvement of these programs. Chrysler educators Anne Corso and Michael Berlucchi have presented these initiatives at the Eastern Virginia Regional Diversity and Inclusion Conference and the Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference, and Michael will share their inclusive work in a joint presentation at the American Alliance of Museums Annual Meeting in May 2017.

The programs described above encompass the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts toward LGBT inclusion. Anne and Michael, along with other colleagues at the Chrysler, designed each of these programs and initiatives with the objective of engaging the local LGBT community and making the museum a more welcoming space for LGBT individuals. As discussed in later chapters, Michael's roles as both an educator at the Chrysler Museum of Art and as the President of Hampton Roads Pride have unique and significant implications for the implementation of the museum's LGBT inclusive efforts.

CONCLUSION

Here, I situated this case study research in its real-world context in order to provide a holistic picture of the circumstances surrounding the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive programs. I led with a discussion of the foundations, contemporary status, and LGBT population of the Hampton Roads region. I then examined the history and evolution of the Chrysler Museum of Art, highlighting the museum's potential LGBT roots and

tracing the institution's recent transformations toward greater access and engagement. Finally, I presented descriptions of each LGBT inclusive initiative the Chrysler has implemented in recent years in order to contextualize my initial interest in this museum as a research site and to review the full extent of these engagement efforts.

In the chapter that follows, I provide a discussion of the methodological framework that shaped this study. This includes a presentation of the research philosophy, case study design, and data collection methods that guided my investigation of the Chrysler's inclusive efforts. Additionally, I present an in-depth account of my personal research visit to the museum in October 2016. This chapter illustrates both the conceptual and practical structures of the case study and sets the stage for a discussion of the data and findings garnered through various research methods. The information provided enables a deeper understanding of how the Chrysler Museum of Art, by "following in the tradition of its great benefactor, Walter P. Chrysler Jr., . . . has gradually become a key partner in the fight for LGBT people to gain respectability and identity" (Ford & Littlejohn, 2016, p. 31).

Chapter 4: Methodology

Investigating the LGBT inclusive practices of the Chrysler Museum of Art required the development of a comprehensive research plan. Guided by the central research question, I designed a specific research approach aimed at satisfying the objectives of this study. In this chapter, I discuss the three key components that comprised this research approach: the philosophy, design, and methods of investigation employed in the study. I provide the theoretical underpinnings that shaped each facet of the research approach and present descriptions of their practical implementation during the research process.

RESEARCH APPROACH

A clearly defined research approach is essential in any well-designed investigation. The research approach comprises all the plans and procedures used to propose and conduct a study. This broad framework involves the intersection of three key components: research philosophy, design, and methods. In planning a study, it is necessary for the researcher to consider the specific worldview and assumptions she brings to the study, the research design that reflects this philosophy, and the tools and methods that enable her to translate these ideas into practice (Creswell, 2014, p. 5). In the following sections, I discuss these three components of the broad research approach as they relate to this study.

RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Objectivity has long been upheld as “one of the most cherished ideals” of research (Eisner, 1992, p. 9). Despite this central goal, researchers cannot prevent bringing their

own personal experiences, perspectives, and biases into their work. Although the subjectivity of the researcher is frequently seen as a flaw in qualitative research, those who seek complete objectivity ignore the reality that humans ultimately imbue their research with their individual understandings of the world, regardless of any intention to erase these partialities. Researchers, then, must recognize objectivity as an “unrealizable ideal” (Eisner, 1992, p. 14) and, instead, seek to identify and reveal the unique perspective they bring to the research.

The issue of subjectivity necessitates a clear and transparent definition of the investigator’s research philosophy and its influence on the study as a whole. The research philosophy is the “basic set of beliefs that guide [the] action” of the researcher (Guba, 1990, p. 17). This philosophy—also referred to as the worldview (Creswell, 2014), paradigm (Mertens, 2010), epistemology, or ontology (Crotty, 1998)—encapsulates the beliefs, assumptions, and biases a researcher carries into her study. It is “an organizing metaphysical framework to enable researchers to examine the underlying belief systems that guide their work” (Mertens, 2010, p. 470). Before developing a plan for research or selecting specific data collection methods, it is critical for the investigator to identify the research philosophy upon which her ideas are founded. In defining and asserting this ideological framework from the outset, she creates a level of transparency in her research that enables her to conduct the investigation from a position of thoughtful subjectivity.

Many qualitative researchers situate themselves within a social constructivist research philosophy. Social constructivists believe individuals seek understanding of the world and develop personal meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2014). These

perspectives are unique, varied, and multiple, and the mission of the research is to enable these meanings to shape the study. The meanings individuals make of their experiences are often constructed historically and socially (Crotty, 1998), making the context in which research participants are situated particularly central to the research. In this paradigm, the generation of meaning is understood as a social activity, developed through interactions with others. The constructivist worldview is often combined with interpretivism, a paradigm in which researchers “attempt to understand phenomena by accessing the meaning and value that study participants assign to them” (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012, p. 8). The overarching goal of these research philosophies, in essence, is to gain insights about how participants experience and understand the world in which they live and work.

This study draws on many of the basic assumptions of the social constructivist paradigm, acknowledging that “reality is constructed through the meaning individuals give to a particular phenomenon” (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 9) rather than assuming the existence of a single, objective reality. It moves beyond these assumptions, however, in its focus on the “ways power is embedded in the structure of society and how individuals become empowered to transform themselves, the social organization around them, and society as a whole” (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 9). This concentration on power dynamics and, ultimately, social justice, situates this study in the realm of a critical, transformative research philosophy.

Studies grounded in critical theory perspectives emphasize the empowerment of human beings oppressed by constraints of race, class, gender, and a range of other factors

(Fay, 1987). Rather than make any claims at objectivity, studies based in critical research paradigms “espouse explicitly ideological positions” (Rossman & Rallis, 2011, p. 6).

Rossman and Rallis (2011) capture well the notion of critical theory in qualitative research:

Traditional social science has come under increasing scrutiny and attack as those espousing critical and postmodern perspectives challenge objectivist assumptions and traditional norms for the conduct of research. The critical tradition is alive and well in the social sciences. Postmodernists reject the notion that knowledge is definite and univocal. Central to this attack are four interrelated assertions: (a) Research fundamentally involves issues of power; (b) the research report is not transparent but rather is authored by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual; (c) race, class, and gender (the canonical triumvirate to which we would add sexual orientation, able-bodiedness, and first language, among others) are crucial for understanding experience; and (d) historically, traditional research has silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups. (p. 91)

In short, the critical research philosophy is concerned with the notion of power not simply as it appears within the context of the study, but also as it exists in the perspective of the researcher herself. It becomes necessary, then, for me to present myself as the “raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual” I am (Rossman & Rallis, 2011, p. 91). I identify as a white, able-bodied, heterosexual, cisgender woman with a privileged upbringing, an intersectional feminist perspective, and liberal political leanings. I believe these elements of my identity have invariably shaped my perspective in this research, and I hope this transparency regarding my positionality as a researcher will strengthen the validity of this research rather than diminish it.

The aim of critical inquiry is to critique and transform the social, political, and cultural structures that constrain humankind, an objective for which advocacy and activism are central concepts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). Mertens’ (2010) transformative paradigm further emphasizes the activist role of the researcher, asserting the enhancement

of social justice as a central mission for the researcher. This perspective, Mertens (2003) states,

is characterized as placing central importance on the lives and experiences of marginalized groups such as women, ethnic/racial minorities, members of the gay and lesbian communities, people with disabilities, and those who are poor. The researcher who works within this paradigm consciously analyzes asymmetric power relationships, seeks ways to link the results of social inquiry to action, and links the results of the inquiry to wider questions of social inequity and social justice. (pp. 139-140)

In conducting this research, it has been my aim to move beyond knowledge and understanding of the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive programs and to seek real ways in which this new understanding can be employed in the service of transforming the field of art museum education and increasing social justice.

Because the focus of this research is placed on the LGBT community and the historical, social, political, and cultural contexts that have contributed to the very existence of the museum's inclusive practices, I have also found inspiration in elements of queer theory. Research grounded in queer theory "does not objectify individuals, is concerned with cultural and political means, and conveys the voices and experiences of individuals who have been suppressed" (Creswell, 2014, p. 65). Beyond this, queer theory seeks to challenge strict identity categories, to deconstruct gender and sexual boundaries, and to shun all attempts at normalization (Plummer, 2005, p. 366). It questions the heteronormative assumptions on which so many of our institutions—art museums included—were founded.

It is upon the theoretical foundations of the queer, critical, and transformative research philosophies, then, that I have found my own worldview as a researcher. These

paradigms share a great deal of ideological concerns, yet all have informed this research in meaningful ways. Having presented an in-depth exploration of the paradigms that have guided my thinking throughout this study, I now introduce the second component of my research approach: the research design.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design, or methodology, is the broad plan for research that aligns with the investigator's worldview. It is the mode of inquiry that provides the investigator with a specific procedural direction in which to conduct the study (Creswell, 2014, pp. 11-12). Selecting a research design involves choosing not only between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches to research, but also deciding on a type of study within these options.

For this study, I employed a qualitative, mixed methods case study research design. In this section, I discuss each facet of this specific strategy of inquiry and explain the rationale behind adopting each component of this design for my research at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Qualitative Mixed Methods Research

The research design for this study adopted a mixed methods approach that emphasized qualitative inquiry. Mixed methods research involves the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods into a single research study. While quantitative research is typically characterized by closed-ended responses such as those found on

questionnaires or in scientific experiments, qualitative inquiry tends to be open-ended and avoids predetermined responses (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). Mixed methods research designs combine these seemingly oppositional approaches in an attempt to increase the credibility of a study.

Many researchers view this integrative research approach as a way to combat or neutralize the biases and flaws found in both quantitative and qualitative modes of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). “The goal of mixed methods research,” write Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), “is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both” (pp. 14-15). It is an attempt to broaden, rather than restrict, the researcher’s choices in her approach to answering the research question by providing her with a more expansive form of research. A mixed methods research design is “inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary, and it suggests that researchers take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

There are many ways to integrate quantitative and qualitative methods in a mixed methods study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Some studies use a sequential approach, combining these methods in a strategic order to suit the needs of the research; in others, the order in which the quantitative and qualitative data is collected is insignificant. This particular study employed a convergent parallel mixed methods design, an approach in which the researcher merges these two forms of data in order to present a holistic analysis and interpretation of the central research problem. In this type of design, the researcher typically collects both quantitative and qualitative data in the same general timeframe; the

results of this research are integrated in the final interpretation of the data to present a comprehensive set of conclusions, and any contradictory evidence between these findings is discussed (Creswell, 2014).

In the convergent parallel mixed methods design this research employed, the emphasis was placed on qualitative methods and data. Qualitative mixed methods designs are less common than those centered around quantitative data. Typically, qualitative methods play a supportive role in these designs, often in the form of a sequential mixed methods study in which the qualitative data collection precedes the more valued quantitative research methods. As Hesse-Biber (2010) explains,

qualitative approaches stem from a different research logic, one that privileges subjective experience and that is open to a multilayered view of the social world. . . . Centering a qualitative approach in mixed methods research can be illuminating, useful, and advantageous, especially as a means to get at subjugated knowledge—knowledge that has not been a part of mainstream research inquiry. A mixed methods approach also allows the researcher to get at “subjective experiences” of those researched while providing the means to test out theories generated from in-depth research samples. (p. 9)

In other words, a mixed methods design that favors qualitative inquiry over quantitative data enables the researcher to gather rich, meaningful information regarding the ways in which individuals make meaning of their lived experiences and to verify themes drawn from that data by converging these concepts with results gathered from quantitative techniques.

In the case of this study, quantitative methods played the supportive role to qualitative forms of inquiry. The quantitative component of the study—which took the form of a survey questionnaire distributed at an LGBT sensitivity training at the Chrysler

Museum of Art—enabled me, during the data analysis process, to compare closed-ended, numerical data with the personal, subjective, open-ended data collected through qualitative methods. I discuss the specific quantitative and qualitative research tools employed in this study in the following section, but it is worth noting here the ancillary role quantitative data played in this primarily qualitative research.

Case Study Research

In addition to the choice of a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approach, the research design also involves selecting a type of study within this overarching plan of investigation (Creswell, 2014). There are many ways in which a research design can be implemented, yet the kind of study chosen should reflect the central research questions and objectives of the investigator. In this qualitative mixed methods study, I employed a case study research methodology.

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Unlike an experiment, which removes the phenomenon from its context and places it in a controlled environment, the case study methodology is interested in developing an understanding of that phenomenon as it exists in the real world. The case study researcher hopes to develop an in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon in question, and this necessitates the examination of the contextual conditions in which it is situated (Lapan et al., 2012).

The “case” in this method of research refers to the unit of analysis used to answer the central research question. It is “the particular example or instance from a class or group of events, issues, or programs, and how people interact with the components of this phenomenon” (Lapan et al., 2012, pp. 243-244). In this methodology, the researcher determines clear boundaries to define the case and limit the scope of the data collection. Identifying these boundaries also enables the investigator to draw distinctions between the phenomenon (the subject of the study) and the context (the external data) (Yin, 2009, p. 32).

This study fit neatly into the primary tenets of case study research (Yin, 2009). It is an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon; in this case, a series of LGBT inclusive programs at an art museum. It examined this phenomenon empirically and in-depth, investigating the case through a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods. It looked at the case in the context of its real-world setting at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia. Finally, the boundaries between the Chrysler’s inclusive practices and their external context were not clearly distinguishable. The museum and its history, the city of Norfolk and the region of Hampton Roads, and the lives of the individuals involved in these efforts were all elements that contributed to the existence of the museum’s inclusive programs. Case and context were deeply intertwined. These factors made it evident that case study research was the appropriate mode of inquiry in seeking to answer the central research question and to develop an in-depth understanding of the Chrysler Museum of Art’s LGBT inclusive programs.

Here, I have outlined and described the particular elements of the research design this study employed. I selected a qualitative mixed methods case study research design in order to broaden the scope of available research methods, strengthen the credibility of the study, and examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context. In the next section, I discuss the third and final component of the research approach I used in carrying out this investigation.

RESEARCH METHODS

In the previous sections, I have defined the research philosophy I brought into this study and described the research design I developed in alignment with that philosophy. In this section, I discuss the third component of my research approach: the set of research methods that “translate the approach into practice” (Creswell, 2014, p. 5).

Case study research poses unique challenges to the investigator because it lacks a clear set of routine procedures (Yin, 2009, p. 66). Due to the absence of a predetermined plan for investigation, the case study researcher must carefully select the methods she will use in the study based on the objectives laid out in the central research question. While it is important for any investigator to have a thorough plan before conducting research, the case study researcher must also remain open to the discovery of unanticipated data (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 261). An investigation conducted within a mixed methods design, in particular, will involve “multiple forms of data drawing on all possibilities” (Creswell, 2014, p. 17), a notion that further demands flexibility from the case study researcher.

The case study that comprised this research employed a variety of methods for data collection and analysis. As this was a mixed methods investigation, I incorporated both quantitative and qualitative tools into my research. These methods enabled me to gather evidence from a range of sources with the goal of developing a deeper understanding of the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive efforts. In order to answer the central research question regarding the lessons to be learned from an investigation of these initiatives, I collected data through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires, and a review of relevant documents. In addition to obtaining approval from Chrysler staff to visit the museum for this research (see Appendix A), I submitted a proposal for this study to The University of Texas at Austin's Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to initiating the data collection process; this office determined the investigation to be exempt from IRB review (see Appendix B). In the following section, I discuss the data collection methods employed in this study and present a complete overview of my research visit to the Chrysler.

Direct Observation

Direct observation comprised a critical piece of the data collection process involved in this research. As case study research is used to describe a complex phenomenon and its context in-depth, observation is an important research method for gathering information about the case in question. While certain research designs may involve more structured observation (Lapan et al., 2012), this study employed a highly unstructured approach to gathering observational data. Such unstructured observation “offers details of the unique

surroundings [of the case] that could not be known until the observation begins” (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 259). Rather than use predetermined tools and protocols for my observation, as occurs in certain forms of educational research, my goal during this site visit to the Chrysler was simply to absorb what I witnessed and record it in detail. I documented these observations in a field journal that I maintained throughout the course of my visit.

In order to gain insight into the inclusive work in which the Chrysler is engaged, it was vital that I have the opportunity to see this work in action. And so, on October 11, 2016, I traveled to Norfolk, Virginia to visit the Chrysler Museum of Art and observe a few installments of the institution’s LGBT inclusive initiatives firsthand. I began recording these experiences in my field journal as soon as I touched down in Norfolk, a practice I maintained throughout the duration of my site visit. These notes included both objective observations as well as the more subjective thoughts, reflections, and budding interpretations that these observations sparked. While both types of observation are beneficial sources of data, it is important that the researcher understand the difference between observation and interpretation and that she is able to distinguish between the two in the field journal (Lapan et al., 2012). For my own purposes, I separated the notes I took each day into two sections: observations and reflections. This enabled me to distinguish between what I had witnessed and the thoughts, questions, and interpretations these experiences brought to mind, both during my site visit and during data analysis.

Over the course of my three-day visit to Hampton Roads, I observed three programs directly related to the Chrysler’s efforts to embrace the local LGBT community: an immersive gallery tour for a local high school’s Gay-Straight Alliance; a series of

presentations delivered at a regional diversity and inclusion conference; and a voluntary training workshop presented to museum staff and volunteers. Beyond these concrete programs, however, I engaged in a range of informal conversations and made observations about my surroundings over the course of my visit to Virginia. As context played a vital role in my understanding of the museum's inclusive efforts, these casual observations were as valuable to the study as the conclusions I drew from my direct observation of the programs themselves. In this section, I focus my discussion on the three key events that comprised my research visit and on the objective (rather than interpretive) observations I recorded during each program.

October 12, 2016: Gay-Straight Alliance visit

On the first full day of my research visit, a group of young people from a high school in nearby Virginia Beach traveled to the Chrysler Museum of Art for a special program designed just for them. These students were members of the school's Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), a student-run club intended to provide “a safe space for students to meet, support each other, talk about issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and work to end homophobia and transphobia” (GSA Network, 2009). They visited with their faculty advisor, Victoria, along with two other adult chaperones, for a morning of art activities led by the museum's educational staff.

After arriving at the museum that morning and sitting in on a lively Education Department meeting, I joined Anne and Michael in welcoming the students at the museum's entrance. While there, I met a docent, Charlene, who would be shadowing the

group along with me. Charlene had been volunteering with the Chrysler for eighteen years, and she was present that morning simply to learn something new.

Once the staff and chaperones had ushered the students from the bus into the museum's main lobby, we moved into the Education Workshop, a colorful, spacious room toward the back of the museum where the Education team hosts many of its events. As I learned, the program designed for the GSA was split into three components: an introduction in the workshop, an art-based activity in the galleries, and a live demonstration in the Chrysler's Glass Studio.

During our time in the Education Workshop, Michael and Anne introduced themselves and explained what they had planned for the group's visit. Michael discussed his upbringing as a young, gay man growing up in Virginia Beach, his work at both the Chrysler and Hampton Roads Pride, and the importance of community in strengthening the LGBT community in the area. He provided the students with words of support and encouragement, inviting them to get involved in his organization and offering buttons and stickers for them to take home. A local LGBT advocate was there to encourage the students to become activists in their community beyond their activities in the Gay-Straight Alliance.

Next, Anne asked the students to participate in a short icebreaker activity in the workshop. This exercise encouraged them to consider the ways in which objects might reflect their identities. Anne asked each student to select one personal item from their belongings that represented them in some way, and to present that item and its significance to the group. She led with a story about her Fitbit (a watch-like device that tracks and measures one's daily activity) and its symbolism of personal growth, describing how she

had gone from someone who faked her way through gym class in high school to someone who recently completed a marathon. Michael followed with a story about his favorite tie, which he had bought with his boyfriend during a trip to New York, and how it represented the pride he took in his style and in dressing up for work. One by one, the students each shared their own stories about the objects that signified something about themselves: a necklace that represented an important relationship; a sketchbook that demonstrated creativity; a flower crown that revealed craftsmanship.

After each student had shared, Anne asked them to consider why they had participated in the exercise. She explained that, in the museum, every object tells a story; however, it takes an engaged visitor to find and tell that story. She then introduced the second event of the day: a gallery activity in which students divided into groups, explored the museum, and selected a work of art that spoke to them. Each group received a worksheet with a specific theme and a series of questions to help guide their thinking about their chosen artworks. After a brief tour through the museum's myriad galleries, the students dispersed with their individual groups in search of their favorite pieces.

For about half an hour, I meandered around the galleries, watching the students hunt for the artworks that most spoke to their groups, discussing their responses to the questions included on their worksheets, and engaging with the objects they had selected. Once each group had gathered their thoughts about their chosen works, the class reconvened for presentations. One by one, each group of students shared their ideas about their artwork in relation to their assigned theme: relationships, love/hate, include/exclude, decision/choice, diversity, and gender identity. They took turns presenting their responses

to the questions included on the worksheets, ensuring that even the shyest of their classmates had the chance to speak.

Once each group had shared their insights about their works of art, the class moved to the Glass Studio—located in a separate facility across the street from the Chrysler—for a special demonstration. During this presentation, for which members of the public were also in attendance, the students watched as glass artists created a rainbow-colored witch hat. This was a fitting choice of object, both for the significance of the rainbow colors for the Gay-Straight Alliance and for the nearby Halloween holiday. I sat in on this demonstration, but left before the piece was completed in order to attend a scheduled interview with the museum’s director. As Michael and I left, Victoria and a few of the students stopped us to thank him for organizing the program.

This concluded my observation of the Gay-Straight Alliance’s visit to the Chrysler Museum of Art. For the remainder of the day, I conducted interviews with staff and spent time roaming the galleries, taking note of the curatorial and interpretive elements in each gallery and observing the interactions of staff and visitors. I discuss these observations in the following chapter.

October 13, 2016: LGBT 101 and Beyond!

The following day, I accompanied Michael and Anne to the Eastern Virginia Regional Diversity and Inclusion conference in Virginia Beach. There, they introduced conference goers to LGBT identities, terminology, and issues, and shared their experiences of fostering LGBT inclusion at the Chrysler in their presentation, “LGBT 101 and

Beyond!” Scheduled to present this talk three times over the course of the day-long conference, Michael and Anne had the opportunity to share their insights on this topic with a range of community leaders from the region, including individuals working in local government, business, medicine, transportation, higher education, law enforcement, the military, and faith communities.

After sharing a car to the Virginia Beach Convention Center with Anne that morning and meeting up with Michael at a table in the main hall, I joined them in listening to the opening addresses. Included in the welcoming remarks was a speech from the Mayor of Virginia Beach, who made mention of the new LGBT liaison appointed in the Virginia Beach Police Department. Following a panel discussion about issues of diversity and inclusion in the workplace, I joined other attendees in the conference room for Anne and Michael’s first session.

Anne and Michael divided their presentation into two parts. The first, led by Michael, provided the audience with an overview of LGBT identities, terminology, and issues facing the community. He introduced attendees to concepts from sexual orientation and gender identity to the housing and employment discrimination currently facing the LGBT community. He also discussed his work as President of Hampton Roads Pride and the efforts his organization undertakes for the local LGBT community.

Next, Anne discussed the Chrysler’s recent initiatives to foster LGBT inclusion at the museum. She briefly introduced the array of programs the museum had offered this community within the last year, ranging from an opening reception organized in partnership with Hampton Roads Pride to a themed tour delivered by the museum’s chief

curator emeritus. She mentioned the successes the museum has seen with these programs as well as the setbacks and challenges they have had to overcome. Overall, they provided a full picture of the population they are serving through these initiatives and the programs that are helping to make the Chrysler a more inclusive institution. Finally, they took questions from the audience, which were largely concerned with clarifying terminology and questioning how these ideas might apply to their own lines of work. Others had comments and insights to share regarding their own experiences or connections with the LGBT community.

I attended the first and third installments of this presentation, leaving the conference during the second in order to explore the surrounding area. As a part of the greater Hampton Roads community and Michael's home, I was interested to learn more about the city of Virginia Beach. The convention center was near the budding arts neighborhood and a short walk to the Virginia Beach boardwalk. I strolled around, seeing murals and a public art project, a residential area, and finally the highly commercialized beach and boardwalk area.

Returning to the convention center after my brief exploration, I joined Michael and Anne for lunch in the main hall. During this period, we listened to a speech from the keynote speaker, the President of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities. He spoke passionately about how those in the room could work to create inclusive environments in their own organizations. We also conversed with other attendees who shared our table, including an imam from a local mosque with whom Michael was hoping to collaborate on future faith-based programming with the Chrysler's Islamic art collection. Other conversations illuminated notable anecdotal evidence, discussed in detail later.

Following lunch, I attended Michael and Anne's final presentation of the conference. The two decided to change a few things from the previous sessions, having learned from their experiences about what audiences would like to learn. Whereas in the first session the presenters encountered many technical difficulties resulting from the conference computers, they had worked out these issues for this final presentation and it went far more smoothly. Following this presentation, I joined them for some light appetizers at a waterfront restaurant on the nearby boardwalk. We had a long discussion about the museum, the conference, and their work, as well as my own academic and professional goals. I then took a car back to Norfolk with Anne, thus ending the second day of my research visit.

October 14, 2016: LGBT inclusion training

My third and final day at the Chrysler Museum of Art consisted of an LGBT sensitivity workshop for museum employees. A representative from Equality Virginia, a statewide organization devoted to achieving equality for LGBT Virginians through education, outreach, and advocacy, led two training sessions in the museum's Education Workshop. The Education Department extended an invitation to this voluntary workshop to all staff and docents; between the two sessions, the workshop drew about 24 attendees.

When I arrived that morning, I set out a stack of questionnaires for participants to complete along with a signup sheet for those willing to speak with me about their experience in the future (see Appendix D). As the participants filed into the Education Workshop, they took a blank questionnaire and added their name to the list, as desired.

Some appeared confused about the purpose of these documents, so I approached them and explained who I was when these issues arose.

Before each session, Anne discussed the purpose of the workshop and the ways in which she hoped it would impact the participants' work with museum visitors. She briefly introduced me as a student conducting research, ensuring that participants were aware of my presence and understood the purpose of my attendance at this workshop. She then introduced Virginia, the representative from Equality Virginia who had traveled from Richmond to facilitate these workshops at the Chrysler. Virginia uses they/them pronouns.

During each hour-long session, Virginia discussed their work at Equality Virginia, introduced participants to the purpose of diversity and inclusion initiatives, presented basic concepts related to the LGBT community, and answered questions attendees had about these complex issues. They focused their educational efforts on the transgender community, as issues surrounding gender identity have been prevalent in national news in the past year. Participants learned about the concept of gender identity, watched a video of a transgender man and his mother, completed a brief activity surrounding transgender terminology, and considered the ways these concepts related to their work in the museum. Beginning in small groups and eventually convening as a whole, participants brainstormed potential methods for incorporating the ideas discussed in the workshop into their personal and professional lives. During this sharing period at the end of the training, Virginia also fielded questions and concerns from participants, doing their best to provide explanations and increase understanding where there was confusion and hesitation. At the end of each

session, Virginia kindly requested that participants complete my questionnaire, which nearly all took the time to do. I discuss the questionnaire more in-depth later in this chapter.

I attended both of Virginia's training sessions that morning, sitting at a table adjacent to the one where the participants were seated. I did not participate in the workshop directly, but did take notes throughout the program to ensure I had a record of my observations. Following these workshops, I joined Michael and Virginia for lunch at the museum's cafe, where we discussed Virginia's work with Equality Virginia and other issues facing the local LGBT community.

I spent the remainder of the day conducting interviews with various staff members, touring the galleries, and reflecting on my experience in the office space Anne graciously offered me in the Education Department. At the end of the day, before I was set to depart for the airport, I reconvened with Michael and Anne for a final conversation about my research and the potential next steps for this project. They presented me with a generous gift from the museum's Glass Studio and ensured I had all the materials I needed to complete my research. Following warm goodbyes from everyone in the department, I left the museum and began my journey back to Austin.

Here, I have provided a detailed account of the observations conducted during my site visit to the Chrysler. Direct observation proved a vital component of my research approach, enabling me to gain firsthand insight into the museum's inclusive endeavors. As mentioned previously, this was just one of the data collection methods I employed for this research. In the following section, I discuss the interviews I conducted with museum staff

and affiliates and the specific techniques I used in gathering information from interview participants.

Interviews

Interviewing was another key data collection method employed in this study. In case study research, interviews present opportunities to gather rich data from insiders to the case in question. This research method enables the investigator to delve deeper into the lived experiences of the research participants, drawing out personal narratives that can reveal far more about the phenomenon being studied than observation alone. As qualitative researchers believe that reality is socially constructed and seek to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of insiders (Lapan et al., 2012), interviews served as a critical source of information in this study.

Interviews can take many formats depending on the study. Researchers can employ a highly structured approach, in which questions are specifically worded and ordered, or they can be conducted in a more informal manner (Lapan et al., 2012, p. 256). The structure of the interview method should be chosen based on what format is best suited to answer the central research question. Due to the exploratory nature of this particular case study and its intended purpose to gain insight into the unique initiatives taking place at the Chrysler Museum of Art, I selected a highly informal, unstructured interview method for this research. The interviews I conducted with individual participants were structured to feel more like conversations, and the interviewees had the opportunity to guide the

discussion in the direction that was most interesting and relevant to their unique perspectives.

Despite the rather open-ended nature of these interviews, I prepared highly structured interview protocols, or guides, prior to each conversation. The questions included in these protocols were tailored to the specific individual being interviewed, and different information was emphasized depending on the interviewee's role and experience. As I sought to interview a range of museum affiliates in order to gather a variety of narratives from which to draw interpretations, I knew that each individual would have their own unique perspective to share. I anticipated that each interviewee would have a different relationship with and understanding of the Chrysler's inclusive programming, and that the stories would differ drastically depending on each participant's affiliation with the museum.

Going into the interviews, then, I knew they would not be one-size-fits-all conversations. As such, I prepared interview protocols for each individual, designing different questioning strategies based on my knowledge of that individual's involvement with the Chrysler's inclusive efforts. Creating these guides helped me to think through the general information I hoped to gather from each conversation. Once I had reached these conclusions about where to focus my efforts in each interview, the protocols became unnecessary; I could simply treat each interaction as an informal conversation, entering with a general sense of the information I hoped to capture but ultimately enabling the individual themselves to guide the conversation in ways that were meaningful to them.

This strategy left me feeling prepared for each interview and resulted in rich outcomes in terms of data collection.

The semi-structured interviews I conducted with Chrysler Museum of Art staff and affiliates yielded key information about the institution's LGBT inclusive practices from a range of insider perspectives. Below, I provide a brief overview of each interview I conducted—some in-person during my site visit, some over the phone following my visit—followed by a sample set of general questions I posed to each interviewee.

Interview participants

I conducted nine semi-structured interviews with various museum affiliates for this research. I selected each participant based on their involvement in an aspect of the Chrysler's inclusive programming and their availability during the data collection period. Michael, who served as my primary contact for this research, was invaluable in coordinating my meetings and facilitating introductions with these participants. Thanks to his insider knowledge, I was able to speak with those individuals who had the strongest ties to the museum's LGBT inclusive efforts and who could offer a diverse range of insights into these initiatives. While I will delve further into the content of these conversations in later chapters, I present a brief introduction to each individual here in order to provide the reader with a sense of the array of voices that contributed to this study. Each interview participant provided written permission to include their name in this study, some preferring to omit their surname to maintain a level of anonymity. I refer to these individuals

frequently in the following chapter, opting to use their first names to reflect the familiar, welcoming nature of my research visit.

Erik Neil. Erik is the Director of the Chrysler Museum of Art. He joined the museum as director in 2014, succeeding the former director, Bill Hennessey, upon his retirement. He has served as the director of several other museums in the U.S. prior to this role at the Chrysler. Erik was the first individual I had the opportunity to interview during my site visit to the Chrysler; I met with him in his office on October 12, 2016. During our conversation, we discussed his approach to museum leadership, his thoughts on the role of museums in society, and his involvement in initiating the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive efforts.

Susan Leidy. Susan is the Deputy Director of the Chrysler Museum of Art. She is heavily involved in the museum's exhibitions and programs, and she stands in for Erik in various directorial duties when he is unavailable. We met in her office for a lively conversation on October 14, 2016. My interview with Susan was somewhat spontaneously orchestrated on my final day at the Chrysler, but she provided a unique perspective about the museum's inclusive efforts that greatly enriched this research.

Michael Berlucchi. Michael is the Community Engagement Manager for the Chrysler Museum of Art. He began working at the Chrysler in 2010 as a visitor services representative, then served as the Special Events Coordinator before transitioning into his current role in 2015. As a Community Engagement Manager, he works to build partnerships with community members and organizations in order to engage diverse audiences in the region. He is also the President of Hampton Roads Pride, the local

organization dedicated to serving and celebrating the LGBT community. Because of his central role in implementing the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives, Michael served as my primary contact with the Chrysler throughout this research. In addition to a phone interview conducted on November 14, 2016, I engaged in numerous informal conversations with Michael over the course of the research process, both over the phone and in-person during my site visit. Michael served as an invaluable resource throughout my investigation of the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive initiatives, and was the primary source of information relating to these programs due to his key role in bringing about these efforts. Having initiated contact with him in March 2016, we developed a familiar relationship over the course of this process. In our many conversations and interactions, he discussed a range of topics including his upbringing as an LGBT child in Hampton Roads, his passion for community and progressive policy, and his thoughts on diversity and inclusion in the art museum and beyond.

Alex Mann. Alex is the Brock Curator of American Art at the Chrysler Museum of Art. He has been with the museum since 2011, and as such has seen some of the recent changes that have taken place at the institution. Alex delivered a talk to a local GSA during the group's first visit to the museum, in which he discussed LGBT themes in pieces from the Chrysler's collection and shared a bit about his experience as a gay man in the museum profession. We spoke over the phone on November 2, 2016 about his approach to curatorial practice, his involvement in the museum's LGBT inclusive programs, and his thoughts on the role of diversity and inclusion in curatorial work.

Jeff Harrison. Jeff is the Chrysler Museum of Art's Chief Curator Emeritus. We did not have the opportunity to meet in person during my brief visit to Norfolk, but we spoke over the phone on October 19, 2016. Jeff worked at the Chrysler for over thirty years, and as such had a great deal to share about the ways in which the museum had evolved as an institution. He also revealed insights about the museum's original founder, Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., who hired him as an intern when he was still in college. Over his decades-long tenure at the museum, Jeff had the unique opportunity to assist in the research and acquisition of countless works in the museum's current collection. He delivered an LGBT-themed tour of the Chrysler's permanent collection during Hampton Roads Pride's annual PrideFest celebration in June 2016, an experience which linked him directly to the museum's LGBT inclusive programs.

Karen. Karen is a Senior Gallery Host at the Chrysler Museum of Art. She has worked at the museum for about five years, and has therefore seen how the institution has changed over the years. During our conversation at the museum on October 12, 2016, she shared her insights about the Chrysler's unique approach to visitor service and her personal connections to the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives. In addition to attending both installments of the museum's inclusivity training (the first in December 2015, the second during my visit in October 2016), Karen has volunteered with Hampton Roads Pride and shared insights about the impacts she has personally seen as a result of these inclusive efforts.

Christine. Christine is a Senior Visitor Services Representative at the Chrysler Museum of Art. She has been working at the museum for over 13 years, and her longtime

experience with the institution has provided her with a truly unique perspective of the ways in which the Chrysler has progressed over the years. When I sat down with Christine on October 14, 2016, she shared her experiences with the museum's transition to the Gallery Host program and the drastic changes that took place as a result of this evolution.

Virginia Lamneck. Virginia is the Deputy Director of Equality Virginia, a statewide organization committed to achieving equality for LGBT individuals and families. They facilitated two LGBT inclusion workshops at the Chrysler on October 14, 2016. I conducted a phone interview with Virginia on November 21, 2016, during which we discussed their partnership with the Chrysler and their thoughts on the museum's LGBT inclusive efforts.

Claus and Robert. Claus and Robert are a prominent couple in the Hampton Roads community. They own a contemporary furniture store in Norfolk's business district—a district the two played a key role in developing—and are heavily involved in the local LGBT community. Claus is a new trustee of the Chrysler Museum of Art, an institution the two have been strong supporters of for decades. I spoke with the couple at the museum on October 12, 2016 about their role in the local community, their work for LGBT equality, and their thoughts on the museum's efforts to welcome LGBT audiences.

Sample questions

Below, I have included a series of questions that guided my thinking throughout each semi-structured interview. While my primary goal in these interviews was to empower individuals to speak openly about their own thoughts and experiences relating to the

museum's LGBT inclusive work, preparing these questions helped me to think about the primary topics I hoped to address in each conversation.

- What is your role at the museum, and how long have you held this position? Please discuss the responsibilities your role entails.
- What is your relationship with the public in your role at the Chrysler? In what ways, if any, do you interact with visitors through your work?
- Please describe your involvement with the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives. What programs have you participated in, and what was your role in these programs?
- What kinds of responses, outcomes, and impacts, both positive and negative, have you seen as a result of these programs among staff/ visitors/ the local community?
- What are your thoughts on these LGBT inclusive programs? What value, if any, do you think these programs have for the museum and/ or the community? For art museums more broadly?
- What role, if any, do you think the Chrysler played in enabling these kinds of programs? What qualities do you think make the Chrysler a place where these kinds of programs can take place?
- How do you think inclusivity can be fostered at other institutions? What advice would you give to other museum professionals hoping to welcome the LGBT community through their work?
- How, if at all, have the museum's LGBT inclusive programs impacted you personally?

Here, I have outlined the interview method I used in this research, introduced each interview participant, and provided a set of questions that guided my thought process during each interview. Next, I discuss the third key data collection method this research employed.

Questionnaires

As discussed, this case study employed a qualitative mixed methods design. While qualitative methods comprised the majority of my data collection and analysis, I also used a component of quantitative research in order to strengthen the credibility of the study and the validity of my final interpretations of the data. This came in the form of an anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix C) distributed to attendees of the two LGBT inclusion workshops held at the Chrysler Museum of Art on October 14, 2016.

The questionnaire is a research tool typically associated with survey research. It is a quantitative research methodology that provides a “numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” with the intent of generalizing from that sample to a broader group (Creswell, 2014, p. 13). Unlike the interview technique I employed in this research, questionnaires often include highly structured questions and yield closed-ended responses.

I chose to employ this quantitative research method in my investigation for several reasons. Because of the highly qualitative approach I adopted in this case study, I was interested in capturing numeric data from one piece of the central phenomenon in order to increase the validity and generalizability of the study (Creswell, 2014; Johnson &

Onwuegbuzie, 2004). As will be discussed, I used the results of the questionnaire in a broader analysis of all the data collected during the research process. Assessing the data across quantitative and qualitative sources provided a way to draw out common themes and corroborate interpretations made from qualitative data alone (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 21). While the interviews enabled me to capture far more rich, in-depth information about the unique perspectives of a few individuals, the questionnaire responses served as clear, quantifiable data sources from which to draw potential conclusions about this component of the museum's LGBT inclusive work. The survey also fulfilled a practical purpose, serving as a highly informative method to use in capturing information about the workshops in an anonymous, unobtrusive, and timely manner. Given the challenging, sensitive, and even controversial nature of the information discussed in the workshop, a brief, anonymous survey seemed the most appropriate data collection method to use in this instance. Optional, unthreatening, and straightforward, these surveys were successful in capturing the responses of nearly every attendee at the two workshops.

While I considered administering the survey through an online platform, which would have simplified and perhaps enhanced the data analysis process, I ultimately decided to utilize a paper format for these questionnaires. The questions were clearly laid out on a single, double-sided sheet, a design I hoped would maximize the number of responses I received by keeping the survey as brief and straightforward as possible. And while I did receive surveys from nearly all the participants in attendance that morning, I learned after the first workshop that several individuals neglected to complete the reverse side of the questionnaire. This could have been a simple lack of awareness of the double-sided design,

or it could have been due to the more personal, open-ended nature of the responses requested on the reverse side of the sheet. Having learned this information after the first workshop, I made sure to inform participants in the second workshop of the reverse side of the questionnaire. Unfortunately, this issue posed challenges during the data analysis process that could have been avoided if each participant had completed the full questionnaire.

I carefully designed the questionnaire in order to maximize responses and ensure it suited the needs of the research. The questions included were intended to capture data related to participants' knowledge and comfort levels surrounding LGBT issues prior to the training, their experiences during the program, and their key takeaways from the workshop. As the organization of survey instruments can have a strong impact on research results (Moore et al., 2012, p. 256), I took care to order the questions in a strategic manner. I began with a series of Likert scale questions, a widely-used technique aimed at measuring attitudes toward a topic by presenting a set of statements and asking participants to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a summated rating scale (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Walker, 2014, p. 226). I worded these statements to sound highly biased in either a positive or negative light, a strategy used to push respondents' answers more extremely toward one direction of the scale rather than remaining neutral.

I followed these attitude-based statements with a series of open-ended questions as a means of obtaining more detailed insights into the participants' experiences with the training than the closed-ended Likert scale questions could provide (Moore et al., 2012, p. 256). These open-ended questions enabled me to obtain narrative data related to

participants' decision-making, learning, and thought processes; they also served as a means of collecting a greater range of responses than could reasonably be provided as options for a closed-ended question (Fowler, 1995, pp. 177-178). Biographical questions were included at the end of the survey to garner demographic information about the participants and to uncover potential corollaries between certain responses and identity factors. With only nine questions (albeit one with multiple parts) and at just one double-sided sheet of paper, I kept the survey as brief as possible to ensure it was direct and quick for participants to complete. I carefully designed each question to ensure the meaning was transparent, the wording did not come across as leading, and the survey did not appear biased in any one direction.

As mentioned, I distributed the questionnaires to the museum staff and volunteers who elected to participate in the two LGBT inclusion workshops. I set out a stack of questionnaires near the doorway of the Education Workshop for individuals to pick up before taking their seats. Next to the surveys, I placed a sign-up sheet where participants could leave their contact information if they were willing to be contacted for further participation in this research in the future (see Appendix D); as I discuss in the following chapter, I emailed these participants roughly one month after the training to request reflective feedback related to the information discussed in the workshop (see Appendix E for this email). While I chose to remain a quiet observer during each training session, I stepped in to clarify my presence and the purpose of the questionnaire when necessary. Following each of the workshops, Virginia asked participants to complete the surveys. At this point in the sessions, I made sure everyone had received a questionnaire and passed

them out to those who had not yet received one. On average, the forms seemed to take about five minutes to complete. Once finished, participants had the option to slip their questionnaires in envelopes for added anonymity. Some chose to return them to me using this measure, while others simply handed me their completed forms on their way out of the workshop. In total, I received 21 survey responses from workshop participants.

Overall, the questionnaire method provided a quantifiable snapshot of the population present in the Chrysler's LGBT inclusion workshops. It served as an additional source of data from which broad themes could emerge and strengthened the validity of the findings in the data analysis process. One final method, discussed below, was used as a tool for gathering data about the museum's LGBT inclusive programs.

Document Review

In addition to direct observation, interviews, and questionnaires, a review of relevant documents comprised the final research method used in this study. As I learned over the course of the research process, there were a number of documents related to the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive practices that served as valuable resources in the data analysis. In particular, this method of data collection enabled me to gather information about the inclusive programs I did not have the opportunity to witness firsthand. Here, I have provided a brief overview of these documents.

Training invitations

Museum staff and volunteers learned about the LGBT inclusion workshops—held in December 2015 and October 2016—through email invitations from the Education Department. As the workshops were attended on a voluntary basis, these messages provided insight into how the Education staff communicated the purpose and content of these training sessions to museum staff and volunteers.

Staff testimonials

After the first LGBT inclusion training in 2015, the Education Department received a number of testimonials from workshop participants sharing personal experiences from and responses to the training. These narratives provided me with insight into the original installment of the LGBT inclusion training, an event I was not able to observe firsthand.

PowerPoint presentations

Both Michael and Anne’s presentations at the Eastern Regional Diversity and Inclusion Conference and Virginia’s LGBT inclusion workshops were supported by visual slideshow presentations. I obtained both of these in order to gain insight into the ways each presenter chose to communicate the information they aimed to disseminate to their respective audiences, as well as to have a reference point when analyzing the data collected from these presentations.

Images

Photos from some of the museum's LGBT inclusive programs provided a sense of how the public attended and received these programs. These images were particularly helpful in developing an understanding of those programs I was not able to observe directly.

News articles and blog posts

The Chrysler Museum of Art has been the subject of a variety of local and national news stories, including arts and museum blogs. These articles and posts bolstered my understanding of the museum, its staff, and its programming, corroborated many of my interpretations of the data gathered through other methods, and served as important sources for contextual data and information I did not have the opportunity to collect during my brief site visit.

Museum website and social media presence

The museum's website, as a digital extension of the museum itself, proved to be a rich data source for this research. It enabled me to learn more about the museum's history and evolution, gain insight into its exhibition and programmatic offerings, and deepen my understanding of the Chrysler's institutional culture.

As further online extensions of the Chrysler as an institution, the museum's accounts on the social media platforms Facebook and Instagram served as additional avenues through which I developed an understanding of its institutional culture. Beyond

what the Chrysler itself chooses to share with its online followers, I also had the opportunity to view the ways in which the public engaged with the museum through these platforms.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have presented an in-depth definition and description of the particular research approach employed in this study. I discussed the three key components of the research approach—the philosophy, design, and methods—and provided a comprehensive description of each of these components within the context of this research. To review, this study employed a critical, qualitative, mixed methods case study research approach. Direct observation, semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires, and document review were all used as methods in the data collection process, reflecting the emphasis on narrative data and lived experience that characterizes this investigation. Now that I have provided a sufficient description of my research approach and data collection procedures, I discuss the findings and interpretations that resulted from this research. The next chapter examines the data analysis process and explores the thematic strands that emerged during this phase of the research.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis & Interpretation

My research visit to the Chrysler Museum of Art in October 2016, combined with a number of phone interviews and offsite data collection, resulted in the collection of a vast array of data. As discussed in the previous chapter, this data came in the form of interview transcripts, survey results, and a variety of documents, texts, and images that enabled me to gain insight into the museum's inclusive efforts. Here, I present my analysis and interpretation of the data. First, I provide a brief overview of the approach and methods used in the data analysis process. Next, I discuss the key findings that emerged in this process, drawing from the raw data to support my analysis. Finally, I present some concluding thoughts on what this research reveals about the Chrysler's inclusive practices. These revelations begin to answer the central research question: What can be learned from an examination of the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts to foster LGBT inclusion?

DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis enables the researcher to uncover the major themes, issues, and ideas present in the data. It involves deconstructing the raw information gathered during the research process and piecing it back together in meaningful ways (Creswell, 2014). As Stake (1995) simply states, "analysis essentially means taking something apart" (p. 71). The researcher's objective in analyzing the data is to reconstruct what she has taken apart in order to find meaning in her case.

Creswell (2014) provides a comprehensive framework for data analysis in qualitative research. This process involves organizing and reading through the raw data the

researcher has collected, coding the data for themes and descriptions, converging these findings across data sources, and interpreting the meaning of these core ideas. Coding is perhaps the most involved, yet crucial, step in the analysis method. It is an iterative process, one in which the researcher notes emerging themes drawn from multiple careful readings of the data, generates detailed descriptions and thematic categories from these notes, and draws connections based on themes found across data sources.

The data analysis process for this mixed methods research involved an examination of both quantitative and qualitative data. Unsurprisingly, the processes of analysis for these two types of data take distinct forms. As Stake (1995) writes,

The qualitative researcher concentrates on the instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully . . . The quantitative researcher seeks a collection of instances, expecting that, from the aggregate, issue-relevant meanings will emerge. (p. 75)

While the majority of my data was qualitative in nature, the questionnaires I distributed to the participants at the Chrysler's LGBT inclusion workshop resulted in quantitative information, thus requiring a different analytical process.

As case study research often generates a large quantity of data, it is important for the researcher to corroborate the data gathered from one source with information collected through other means. This is particularly important in mixed methods studies, when the data collected through quantitative methods differs drastically in format from the data gathered qualitatively. Triangulation, a means of analyzing data across quantitative and qualitative sources, enables the researcher to reach valid and well-supported interpretations within a mixed methods approach (Jick, 1979).

Triangulation of the data is one of several strategies an investigator can use to strengthen the validity of a study. The researcher employs these validity strategies during data analysis in order to assess the accuracy of her findings. To triangulate the data, the researcher examines evidence gathered from across sources in order to justify the emergent themes she has identified. When themes are established as a result of the convergence of several data points, then the triangulation process has strengthened the validity of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Following the data collection phase of this research, I was left with a multitude of interview transcripts, field notes, primary documents, and survey responses from which to draw meaning. I began the analysis process by carefully sifting through each of these materials for emergent themes. My coding method involved examining each sentence for thematic significance, developing a complex system of themes and subthemes to categorize and organize this data, and drawing connections within and across multiple data sources (Lapan et al., 2012).

Because I had been immersed in the data throughout the research process, I had a broad understanding of some of the themes I was looking for when I entered the coding process. These preset categories provided me with a starting point from which to approach the data; rather than enter with no knowledge of what I might find, identifying these themes from the outset enabled me to read each document with intentionality and focus. However, a close reading of the many transcripts, documents, and additional texts caused a number of new, intriguing concepts and patterns to emerge. This process of analyzing and

interpreting narrative data is known as content analysis (Taylor-Powell & Renner, 2003, p. 1).

Over the course of these close readings—and re-readings—of the data, my coding system evolved to reflect the most significant emerging themes. I began grouping concepts into categories and subcategories, considering how each of these findings fit together to create a holistic understanding of the research.

The quantitative analysis process, while more technical and straightforward than content analysis, involved a similar system of looking closely at the data and rearranging it in order to draw out meanings. I recorded each survey response in a spreadsheet, then began looking for correlations, connections, and outliers in the data. I cross-referenced the results with biographical details each respondent had provided in an attempt to tease out links between these responses and a participant's age, gender, or sexuality. While the small size of my sample group—only 21 responses—and a number of incomplete questionnaires made it difficult to draw any substantial correlations, I nonetheless observed several intriguing factors that reinforced my analysis of qualitative responses. A complete set of charts developed in the quantitative analysis process is found in Appendix F.

Upon completing the qualitative coding and quantitative dissection of the data, I then examined the emergent themes and ideas across each data set (e.g., interview transcripts, field notes, survey responses, and key documents). This triangulated method of in-depth analysis enabled me to make connections across data points, identify key themes, and formulate well-founded interpretations from these findings.

The small quantity of survey responses I received does not reflect a lack in data quality in this investigation. In fact, the massive size and scope of my entire data set posed a number of challenges during the analysis process. As this research was not limited to the examination of a single program, event, or population, it became difficult to look at any of the data without viewing it as relevant to the study. This notion also made it difficult to know when the data collection process had truly ended, as I discovered new information about the Chrysler, the Hampton Roads region, or the social and political climate toward the LGBT community on a daily basis. This experience reinforced Yin's (2009) notion that case study research often involves examining phenomena that are not easily separated from their real-world contexts. This project was and is very much a living, ongoing phenomenon that moves with and is shaped by its historical, social, cultural, and political realities. Given these circumstances, I have done my best here to present the most intriguing and relevant findings garnered through the data analysis process.

PREFACE

Through the coding and analysis processes, I discovered a wide array of notable findings related to the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive practices. What struck me throughout my careful readings of the data were the many similarities and connections to be made with Bergeron and Tuttle's (2013) prior case study of the Chrysler, detailed in *Magnetic: The Art and Science of Engagement*. While my focus on the museum's efforts to welcome and engage the LGBT community brought forth new insights into the organization's current practices, the findings from Bergeron and Tuttle's initial research

underscore much of what I discovered in this study. This realization has been central to my own understanding of the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive initiatives, and has enabled me to develop meaningful connections between the broad findings described in *Magnetic* and the ways in which they contribute to the museum's more recent efforts to engage the LGBT community.

As mentioned in previous chapters, *Magnetic* examines the practices of six highly successful cultural institutions—what Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) label “Magnetic Museums.” Their case study of the Chrysler Museum of Art is presented in the chapter “Empower Others,” a title that reflects a core principle of the museum's organizational ethos. “Our research for this book,” the authors write in the chapter's introduction, “found that Magnetic Museums [demonstrate a] holistic leadership philosophy and illustrate an inclusive approach that successfully empowers others” (p. 90). This description encompasses much of what makes the Chrysler such a compelling institution and, as I learned through my own research, remains central to the museum's value system. In all the Chrysler does, it employs a “serve first, lead second” approach that places people—staff and visitors alike—at the center of its practices.

Under Bill Hennessey's leadership (during which Bergeron and Tuttle conducted the research for *Magnetic*), the museum underwent a dramatic transformation toward greater access and engagement for the local community. Since Erik Neil assumed his role as Director, he has taken Hennessey's people-first philosophy and run with it, emphasizing a dedication to expanding the museum's reach with constituencies previously underrepresented in the Chrysler's audiences. The commitment to people, service, and

empowerment detailed in *Magnetic* continues to inform all the museum's practices, including the institution's recent efforts toward LGBT inclusion. The open, democratic institutional culture that Hennessey established and Neil has advanced has proven integral to the implementation of the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives.

In many ways, then, the following findings garnered through my case study of the Chrysler Museum of Art build directly off Bergeron and Tuttle's foundational research. I present these findings thematically, grouping them into four overarching categories: (a) Welcome, (b) Represent, (c) Educate, and (d) Collaborate. "Welcome" focuses on the ways in which the Chrysler positions itself as a safe space for LGBT staff and visitors, creating an accessible, inviting environment for all. "Represent" looks at how the museum practices LGBT inclusion through its acquisition and interpretive decisions. In "Educate," I examine the Chrysler's efforts to inform staff and volunteers about the LGBT community in order to prepare them for positive engagement with this population. Finally, "Collaborate" highlights the spirit of shared responsibility and democratic partnership that runs through the museum's internal and external operations. Each of these thematic areas comprises a significant element of the museum's efforts toward greater inclusion of the LGBT community.

WELCOME: CREATING A SAFE AND INVITING SPACE FOR ALL

As Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) describe in *Magnetic*, one of the reasons for the Chrysler's recent success is its decision to put people first. Whether staff or visitor, the museum is committed to serving the people who enter its doors and reaching out to those

who feel less than welcome. In examining the data collected throughout the course of this study, one notion that consistently struck me was the idea of the Chrysler as a safe space—an institution where people know they are welcome, know they belong, and know they can feel comfortable just being themselves. In large part, this is due to the culture of service and engagement instituted during Hennessey's tenure. Here, I discuss some of the ways in which this institutional ethos carries through in the Chrysler's approach to the LGBT community.

Gallery Hosts

To realize the Chrysler's steadfast commitment to its visitors, one need only approach the museum's front steps. Walking toward the monumental, Italianate entrance on my first day in Norfolk, I watched as one of three massive, wooden doors swung open and a friendly employee in a light blue sweater invited me into the sun-drenched, covered courtyard. This simple gesture may seem insignificant to some, but Susan Leidy, the Deputy Director, believes in its symbolic purpose. "If you just walk up to our building, it's intimidating," she explains. "But if somebody's standing there and opening the door for you, suddenly you can make the next step and walk in" (personal communication, October 14, 2016). In opening the door for every visitor, the museum signifies its commitment to removing barriers to access and inviting all people to engage with the art inside.

The decision to convert to this "open door policy" began with former Director Bill Hennessey, who experienced such a gesture at a museum in Europe and wanted the Chrysler to be equally inviting. "It's not something you see at a lot of museums," explains

Christine, Senior Visitor Services Representative at the Chrysler. “They don’t usually open the door for you. We do here, though” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). Once Hennessey enacted this change, he began to think of other practices the museum could adopt in order to present itself as a friendly, welcoming institution.

One component that came to mind was the Chrysler’s approach to security. As Christine describes,

Security is there to protect the art, and there are a lot of museums that don’t even want their security officers talking to guests. They don’t want them to engage. They just want them to make sure that nothing’s being harmed. . . . And [Hennessey] wanted [a] more inclusive environment that felt a little friendlier. Not so standoffish, with this colder greeting. He wanted it [to feel] a bit warmer. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

This thought process led to the creation of the gallery host program, which removed the intimidating, blazer-donning security officers from the museum floor and replaced them with friendly, engaging staff trained in customer service and dressed in informal, pale blue attire—“a very friendly color,” notes Karen, the Senior Gallery Host (personal communication, October 12, 2016). While guards still work behind the scenes in the event of a serious security issue, the gallery hosts make rounds throughout the space, ready to engage visitors and guide them in their museum experience. “We do enforce the rules,” Karen acknowledges, “but always with a smile. That’s one of the things we’re trained on. If you have to say, ‘Please don’t touch that,’ you always follow it up with a nice little something, like, ‘I’m always tempted myself’” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).



Illustration 2: A gallery host takes a photo for a young visitor (Pollard, 2016a).



Illustration 3: A gallery host discusses an artwork with a visitor (Pollard, 2016b).

As with opening the door, changing the attire and function of the Chrysler's front-end staff may seem inconsequential. However, "from a visitor's standpoint," writes Britt-Darby (2014), "the differences are palpable, even seductive." Gallery hosts, remarks Hennessey, are "specially recruited and trained guest service representatives whose purpose is to make people feel welcomed, relaxed, and comfortable in the presence of art" (as cited in Britt-Darby, 2014). They are taught to "read" visitors' body language, comfort level, and interests in order to gauge an individual's openness to engagement (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 103).

As Karen explains, the gallery hosts learn to discern between three types of visitors: "art lovers," individuals who already possess an art background and require little to no guidance; "information sponges," visitors who seek out knowledge and enjoy learning new facts about artworks; and "art novices," guests who have little museum experience. These visitors, Karen explains, "have the highest intimidation barrier, so we want to make them feel at ease." The gallery hosts approach these visitors with a friendly, "Hi! Are you enjoying your visit so far?" and begin to engage with them "if they seem open to information" (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

Erik Neil, the museum's current Director, believes this program "helps change the tenor of the institution," making it friendlier and more welcoming to visitors (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Claus, a new museum trustee, agrees:

Now when you go to a museum, you look at it in a very different way. For example, we were at [a museum] in Washington, which is a wonderful museum, but the security [guards] . . . there are standing back, very much like, 'Now, don't you dare touch anything. Don't you get too close to anything. You've got to stay away two feet or I've got to talk to you.' Where the [gallery hosts] here . . . are trained . . .

that if you get too close to something, they go and engage the person, talking about the piece, and then ease them away, rather than” take the firm approach of most museum security guards. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

Christine, who has been with the Chrysler for 14 years, provides a helpful explanation as to the value of this changeover from security officers to gallery hosts. Because they recruit individuals with experience in customer service, gallery hosts “are used to thinking of [a situation] from another person’s point of view” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). They have experience working with people of all stripes and are trained to anticipate the needs of others by putting themselves in their shoes. With security guards, on the other hand,

it doesn’t matter the variety of person—you don’t touch it. There’s no extra concern for how that person feels, necessarily. Whereas, in customer service, what we try to do is to really think about: What does that guest want? How can we anticipate their need before they’re asking for it? We’re already thinking about it from someone else’s point of view. How would they feel in this situation? Or, is our environment friendly for this person or that person? Or, are we not inclusive enough here or there? So, I think that alone [explains this shift] . . . because you’re already looking at people who are naturally more inclusive [and are] trying to think of how to be more inclusive. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

In this rationale, one can determine a link between the Chrysler’s service-oriented organizational culture and its recent efforts toward LGBT inclusion. When the institution hires service-minded individuals, it is effectively hiring people with a strong capacity for empathy—a quality that paves the way for a more inclusive environment.

In the years since its establishment, the gallery host program has contributed greatly to creating a welcoming environment at the Chrysler. “The key to making this program work,” Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) point out, “is that the gallery hosts are empowered and authorized to do whatever is required to meet a visitor’s needs” (p. 103). This includes

anything from playing a Benny Goodman track in front of a painting titled Hot Jazz (Britt-Darby, 2014), to escorting a visitor to the administrative suite to show them a particular Velázquez portrait they had hoped to find hanging in the Director's office (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 103).

Safe Space

On October 8, 2016, meeting the visitor's needs meant assisting a young woman propose to her girlfriend in the galleries. Both Christine and Karen were involved in pulling off the surprise. When Michael Berlucchi, the museum's Community Engagement Manager, informed the gallery hosts of the situation, they did everything in their power to ensure the proposal was successful and the couple felt comfortable. The woman who was proposing arrived with a group of friends, and Christine helped them decide where to stage the surprise, provided them with a small pedestal on which to display the flowers she had brought, and assisted them in arranging the area until they were satisfied with the setup.

And they seemed absolutely thrilled. They were completely comfortable. . . . And they were so excited that we were willing to help them and set up the pedestal wherever and trying to help them figure out what the best plan would be to bring her girlfriend in and propose. (Christine, personal communication, October 14, 2016)

In addition to going above and beyond to help this visitor pull off the perfect proposal, the gallery hosts wanted to ensure the women felt comfortable and at ease. "It was completely normal . . . I didn't want them to feel like anything was weird here or that we were doing anything that would make them uncomfortable. And I got the impression that they didn't feel like that at all" (Christine, personal communication, October 14, 2016).



Illustration 4: The newly engaged couple at the Chrysler (M. Berlucchi, email communication, October 8, 2016).

Karen, who was also present that day to assist the happy couple, adds, “That was lovely. And I think it was helpful [that] everybody’s on board. There’s nobody who doesn’t understand what we’re doing here, and I think that is extremely helpful” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Several emails I received from museum staff that day confirmed this sentiment. Following the successful proposal, Michael emailed the above image to a group of staff members and myself, saying, “I thought you might want to see this photo. Thanks to Christine and Karen for making it happen!” (personal communication, October 8, 2016). The responses from staff were positive and enthusiastic: “This is such a lovely photo and moment, thank you so much for sharing it,” said one. What

a wonderful moment!” exclaimed another. Anne Corso, the Director of Education, responded, “This is wonderful! I am so proud that we work at a museum where our visitors (all of our visitors) feel so comfortable” (personal communication, October 8, 2016).

These messages indicate that staff are not just “on board” with the inclusive environment established at the Chrysler; they welcome it, and they are proud of its positive impact on visitors. Not only did staff support these women in their efforts to create a happy memory at the museum, but they also supported one another in pulling off the proposal and celebrating the event afterward.

According to staff, this story is far from an isolated incident. “I can tell you, just from observation,” says Michael,

that we’re seeing more people [in] same-sex relationships, more LGBT families, we’re seeing people display affection in the museum openly who are in same-sex relationships. . . . We haven’t always seen [that] much, [and] we’re seeing a lot more of it. . . . because people know that they’re welcome here. (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

Robert, a local business leader and Claus’ husband, reinforces this perspective. “The fact that [you can] come in and feel comfortable with a date in the museum, because you know the museum is LGBT friendly,” is meaningful, he says. “Not every museum is LGBT friendly. People think that, ‘Oh, the museum is the arts, and so, gay people can go there,’” but that is not always the case. “But this museum, here, practices what it preaches, that they’re all-inclusive [and] accepting” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

Karen further confirms this notion, saying,

I’ve heard people, guests, come and tell me that this is their safe place. They can come here and they know that they won’t be judged, they won’t be sneered at. They can come here and enjoy the art, relax, unwind, be with their friends. It’s a nice,

safe place, it's welcoming. Nobody's going to stare at you if you're holding hands with your girlfriend. That is so important to offer a place like that, because you won't get that everywhere. And hopefully, one day, you will get that everywhere, but for now, at least we can make this a nice, safe place. And when people are having a bad day, they can come here and hopefully be uplifted and hopefully leave happier than they came, which is very often the case, in fact. So that's the importance. You can change somebody's day, change somebody's week. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

Because of the inclusive environment the Chrysler has established, staff say LGBT visitors feel comfortable and at ease when they visit the museum. They perceive the museum as a safe space where they can be themselves and live openly, free from any judgement or intolerance. While most might expect this or take it for granted when visiting a museum, the ability to feel safe and welcome in a public venue is, as Karen notes, not a sense LGBT individuals will find everywhere. And, remarks Hennessey in *Magnetic*, "no one learns when they are anxious or uneasy" (as cited in Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 104). Removing this anxiety from the museum experience enables LGBT visitors to enjoy their time in the galleries without fear or trepidation, and opens them up to the full potential of the Chrysler's mission to "bring art and people together through experiences that delight, inform, and inspire."

Beyond creating a safer space for LGBT visitors, the Chrysler has also taken strides toward becoming a more inclusive workplace for LGBT staff. Having worked at the Chrysler for many years, Christine reveals that the museum was not always a comfortable environment for her as a gay employee. As she explains,

I worked day-to-day with the front-line staff which, at the time, was security and not gallery hosts. And they were apparently a lot less open to LGBT issues in general. . . . I don't know if anybody realized that, but it was the people I worked

with day-to-day who were not very friendly. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

She describes what work was like for her during this time:

We would have a gay couple walk in. And I'd check them in and . . . it'd be fine. And depending on who the security officer was, one of them in particular would always turn his back to the couple and . . . make gagging faces. A different one would then start lecturing the Bible to me There were moments where it was really uncomfortable, but there was really nobody for me to go to. . . . That's just kind of how it was. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

Christine attributes some of this intolerance and bigotry to a broader, homophobic attitude that pervaded the country at the time:

When I started 14 years ago . . . there was a lot of, in general, animosity in the country [toward LGBT people], so it wasn't so unusual to come to an environment like the Chrysler and be made to feel like there was something wrong with me. I don't know that anyone even realized that I was gay, and so it was always in the context of these other people—these people are evil. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

With the establishment of the gallery host program, however, Christine noticed she began to see less of this intolerant behavior. She recalls that, as “upstairs” (administrative staff) and “downstairs” (front-line staff) became integrated, “all the attitudes started changing. We were getting a lot more artists in, and I think that helped” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). The program recruited more empathetic staff members, and, inevitably, more gay employees as well. Those staff members, Christine notes, began “to push the comfort level of everybody else until eventually it [became] much more normalized” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). The introduction of a more liberal-minded, empathetic, and LGBT staff, therefore, brought on “a very dramatic

change,” with the museum now “actively attempting to find ways to make sure [it is] including everybody” (personal communication, October 14, 2016).

Now, with the gallery host program in full effect, Christine feels comfortable and safe from bigoted remarks at her workplace. “That’s not even on my mind at all,” she says. “It’s not anything that I think about. Because it no longer has to be. . . . And it feels good to know that the museum supports not only me, but all the other staff members [who] are gay” (personal communication, October 14, 2016).

Beyond the introduction of the gallery host program, the Chrysler has established itself as a safe space for LGBT employees through a series of cultural competency workshops offered to staff and volunteers. Simply by offering these training sessions, the museum sends a clear message of inclusion throughout the institution. Further, when staff attended the voluntary workshops, the first of which was held in December 2015, LGBT employees had the opportunity to see their colleagues and supervisors show support through their attendance and through dialogue shared during the training. In this instance, yet again, a simple gesture served as a powerful signifier of inclusion. As Karen recalls,

After that training, actually, one of my colleagues, a gallery host, came to me, and he asked if it would be okay if he wore his heels and his wig to work. And of course it is. But I had no idea that, in his personal life, he liked to wear what some might term as ‘women’s clothing.’ But he does, and so, ever since, he has come to some of our events in his dress and heels and wig. And it’s wonderful, just great, to be in a place where people can truly be themselves and not have to hide any aspect of their personality. And that training, I think, opened a door for him, because he knew that he could come to us with a request and he’s in a welcoming environment that would not only accommodate that, but welcome it. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

This story reveals the enormous impact that can result from the simple act of offering these educational opportunities for staff. Karen did not know this individual enjoyed exploring his gender identity through his style, and likely would never have learned this about him had it not been for this demonstration of inclusion from the museum. Christine reinforces this notion, saying, “I think he felt comfortable because we had this training—that this is something we’re mindful of, and that maybe he could do that” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). Seeing his supervisors at this training, and realizing their open, accepting outlook on the subject of LGBT inclusion, undoubtedly instilled in him the comfort and confidence he needed to approach them with this personal request.

While I discuss the content of the training later in this chapter, I find it poignant that the very existence of this program established the Chrysler as a safe, inclusive workplace for its LGBT employees. Michael sees this impact as an intentional purpose of the training:

On one hand, it does train our staff, and . . . makes them better prepared to address needs for all our visitors. But it also sends a message to our staff internally, that this is not a place where discrimination or any kind of exclusionary remarks or commentary about any particular group is accepted. . . . And I’m really grateful for the role and success that has played in making this a more healthy, welcoming workplace for all people. (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

Karen confirms the improvements Michael mentions, describing how,

In the last five years . . . you were already starting to see the shift in the culture of the institution, but you’ve seen it get even better as the time goes on. And I’ve seen that with some of my colleagues who were maybe still a little bit in the closet, so to speak, here at work, and now those barriers have been dropped. Everybody can be really free and open and not have to hide any aspect of their personal lives. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

Virginia Lamneck, the training facilitator from Equality Virginia, agrees with this notion: “I think that, even though this wasn’t specifically directed at how to build a more LGBT inclusive workplace . . . there’s some transfer there” (personal communication, November 21, 2016). They believe that, “internally, that impact is really significant.” The notion that employees can go to the museum and “feel heard, or not afraid to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity, or that a colleague can come out and have their wedding picture on their desk and not be afraid of being gay”—the subtle effects of the museum’s decision to offer the training go a long way toward making the Chrysler a safe, inclusive workplace for LGBT staff.

Inviting People In

The Chrysler has done a great deal to ensure people feel welcome when they visit or work at the museum. “Deepening relationships with visitors once they arrived at the museum, however, was only one of the Chrysler’s goals,” Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) explain. “A second goal was to reach out to and serve the local and regional population, and this required diversifying audiences and removing barriers to attendance” (p. 105).

With the creation of Michael’s role in 2015, the institution continued taking steps to welcome those who had largely been excluded from the art museum audience. “[One] big part of my responsibility in this role,” says Michael, “is to connect . . . with underserved audiences or audiences that have historically been marginalized from, or left out of, the perceived audiences for museums for many, many years” (personal communication, November 14, 2016). When Michael took on the role of Community Engagement Manager,

Erik asked him to focus on three groups in particular: the African American population, the military, and the LGBT community.

This decision reflects the Chrysler's commitment to its local audience, a value Hennessey instilled during his tenure as Director, and demonstrates the institution's keen awareness of the demographic makeup of its visitorship and of the region more broadly. "We have a certain tourist audience," says Susan, "but mostly who we get are our local people. . . . [And] that has really shaped how we think about things, and made us very conscious that every visitor is important" (personal communication, October 14, 2016). This includes potential visitors—those locals who might not yet see themselves as included in the museum audience. Of Norfolk's large African American population, Erik acknowledges this group "hasn't always been the community that the Chrysler has been known for reaching out to . . . so, it certainly felt we needed to broaden that" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) reinforce this idea, noting that, "despite the fact that 43 percent of the population of Norfolk is African American, the Chrysler, like many art museums, historically attracted an almost exclusively white, affluent audience" (p. 105).

Erik also recognizes the sizable military presence in the area, noting that this contingent includes "not just [those] who are active duty, but maybe . . . they're veterans, they've retired here, or they're involved in businesses that serve the military"; they may also be families of active military members who are out at sea for long stretches of time. Since he began his tenure as Director, Erik has made it a point to "think more broadly: Who else is here in our community? . . . Are we serving them? Are we welcoming?"

(personal communication, October 12, 2016). This line of thinking illustrates the Chrysler's consistent focus on addressing community needs and identifying areas where the institution could be doing more.

Erik identified the local LGBT community as another such area. "There is a large gay community here," he remarks, "and this institution, again, I don't think always was seen as being as friendly, broadly speaking, as it might be. So, doing a little bit there isn't very hard. . . . It's a very easy decision to make in that sense" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). On the beginnings of the museum's efforts to foster greater inclusion for this population, Erik reasons that,

the LGBT community has always been important at arts institutions that I've been familiar with. . . . Obvious: You have a group of people that like and are supportive of what you're doing—shouldn't you make an effort to . . . meet their needs . . . [and] to just be welcoming? From my own personal experience, that's an important community. And there's something self-serving in that, for sure . . . We don't really track our donors by orientation but . . . anecdotally, I think it's evident that we have strong support in the gay community in the region. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

Susan, Erik's right-hand woman, attests to his rationale that these inclusive efforts simply made sense: "That's partly just Erik's absolute commitment. . . . that it's just the right thing to do" (personal communication, October 14, 2016). As the self-described "worrier" of the duo, Susan has considered the potential risk in actively engaging the LGBT community. "I just worry," she admits, "that some people [might] think that's controversial and that might turn them off. . . . I don't think they're right," she adds. "I will defend that we do what we do" (personal communication, October 14, 2016). This reveals that, despite the Chrysler's staff being fully "on board" with the museum's LGBT inclusive initiatives,

some worried at the outset that this work might offend the institution's more traditional audiences. Fortunately, this understandable concern did nothing to prevent the museum from reaching out to this marginalized community. “Not everyone makes the same calculation,” Michael notes. “I know scenarios where people will say, ‘We’re not going to touch that, because we don’t want to upset our donors. . . . We’re not here to rock the boat’” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). With Erik’s steadfast commitment to doing the right and “obvious” thing, as well as a staff that supported this inclusive work, the museum made the courageous move to “rock the boat” and welcome LGBT visitors.

This new outreach effort began in conjunction with a 2015 exhibition of the Chinese-American artist, Tseng Kwong Chi. Because of the Tseng’s identity as a gay man who was active in the New York arts scene in the ‘80s and died of AIDS, Michael viewed the exhibition as “a huge opportunity to bring that LGBT piece into the museum and, hopefully, invite a lot of people into the museum” (personal communication, November 14, 2016). The show’s curator, Amy Brandt, had passed away due to cancer shortly before the exhibition’s opening; before she died, however, she told Michael she wanted to use the show to engage the LGBT community (Michael, personal communication, November 14, 2016). Despite the tragic nature of the situation, this story nevertheless demonstrates the commitment to inclusion that has run through the museum for some time.

Recognizing this opportunity to reach out to a community traditionally underrepresented in the museum’s audience, Michael set out to build relationships between the museum and local LGBT organizations. While I discuss these partnerships later in this chapter, I find it valuable to mention the significance of viewing this exhibition as a chance

to engage a new population. Michael feels passionate about the value of the kind of targeted engagement displayed at the exhibition's opening night reception. "I think that . . . anytime that you present work . . . that relates to a community or a particular group of people, and you specifically invite them, that is meaningful" (personal communication, November 14, 2016).

This sentiment reflects a similar initiative implemented during Hennessey's tenure, in which the museum used an exhibition to invite Norfolk's African-American community to the museum. Just as Chrysler staff recognized the connections to LGBT identities in *Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera*, the 2012 exhibition *30 Americans: Masterpieces of African-American Art* presented a clear opportunity to reach out to a community that had largely been excluded from the museum's audience up to that point. In providing a free, opening night party for the exhibition and working with African-American organizations to interpret and promote the show, *30 Americans* became "a perfect illustration of the museum's efforts to serve non-white visitors" (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 106). "There was and is a significant portion of the community that has never set foot in the Chrysler," one former board member remarked. "*30 Americans* was a very bold programming move that touched the African American community" (as cited in Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013, p. 106).

These efforts to reach out to underrepresented audiences demonstrate the museum's capacity to identify community needs, recognize where there is room for improvement, and capitalize on opportunities for growth. It also reflects the staff's entrepreneurial spirit and emotional intelligence. As Michael thoughtfully states:

Everyone likes an invitation. That's something I've learned. That's not discriminatory against other groups. It's just saying, "We're going to make a concerted effort to reach these people for this thing," and that's what we did. And as a result, I think it really enhanced affection [toward] and interest [in the museum], and the result is that people came here after the [*Tseng Kwong Chi*] opening, they came back, and they brought their friends, because they know that they are welcome here and they're safe here. . . . We really did see that as a result. Because we offered a specific invitation. And that's a big deal. (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

In addition to broad populations such as the African American or LGBT communities, the Chrysler has also extended direct invitations to more specific groups. One such example is the museum's recent work with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) from area high schools. Rather than an initiative implemented in conjunction with a specific exhibition, these programs are simply intended to provide the young people who participate in these groups with a space to feel comfortable and inspired. "We plan to offer an immersive experience . . . that uses our collection to simultaneously foster empowerment, teamwork, and communication," Michael wrote in an email (personal communication, September 14, 2016). As many GSA members are vulnerable to bullying and harassment in school and out, programs like these provide opportunities to instill valuable skills in these students and help build a sense of community within the group.

During the program I observed on October 12, 2016, the visiting students had the opportunity to explore, discuss, and share ideas about identity, relationships, and diversity through activities designed specifically for them. Perhaps the most meaningful of these was a gallery activity that asked groups of students to find a work of art that spoke to them about a specified theme. For half an hour, I roamed the galleries and watched as the students worked together to choose their artworks, discuss potential meanings, and plan their

presentations. Many appeared highly engaged, enthusiastically interacting with different artworks and strategizing talking points. When it came time to share what they had prepared, each group member took turns speaking in front of their peers. Each group made insightful comments relating their chosen object to themes of love and hate, inclusion and exclusion, and more, but the most memorable remark, for me, came from the group discussing gender identity. The students spoke about a massive, abstract painting in the contemporary galleries covered in vibrant, rainbow hues. “We chose this painting because it has every color, like a spectrum—like us in GSA, just having fun,” one student shared. To me, this spoke directly to the sense of community, connection, and empowerment Anne and Michael hoped to foster during the GSA’s museum visit.



Illustration 5: GSA students contemplate a colorful, contemporary artwork in preparation for their peer presentations in the galleries.

These programs also enable staff to serve as positive role models for the LGBT teens and their allies, a goal about which Michael is passionate. During the program I

observed, Michael shared a bit about his childhood as a young, gay man in Virginia Beach. He recalled how the region did not feel very hospitable to LGBT people, acknowledging that he grew up feeling as though he could not be himself. He encouraged each of the students to become involved in the local LGBT community and to help make the region a place that welcomes LGBT people. “I want to thank all of you,” he said, following an identity exercise in which the students shared a personal object that represented them. “You’re pioneers. When I was in high school, I couldn’t have imagined this kind of group would exist. Don’t stop what you’re doing” (observation, October 12, 2016). This kind of language surely goes a long way in instilling a sense of confidence and empowerment in these particularly vulnerable young people.

Michael has also asked his colleagues at the museum to assist in implementing these programs in the past. Alex Mann, the Brock Curator of American Art, once led students in a tour of a few artworks containing themes of gender and sexuality, discussing how these questions might be understood in different images and how the artists’ biographies were connected to this imagery in some instances (personal communication, November 2, 2016). “I also shared with the students that I’m gay,” Alex recalls,

and that . . . [it’s] easy within the art world to be open about one’s sexuality. I think certainly within museum culture, there is an attitude of tolerance and acceptance and appreciation for diversity. And so, I certainly encouraged any of them that were interested in an art career to know that that is one benefit of this particular industry as opposed, sometimes, to others. It’s something that we were very conscious about supporting here at the Chrysler. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

Michael, too, makes a point to share with students the benefits he has experienced as a gay man working in the arts. “It’s important for me to do my little part to make sure that

students know that there are jobs available to them,” he explains. “There were no ‘out’ people that I was aware of, when I was growing up, in any kind of job that I would have wanted” (personal communication, February 14, 2017). Because of Michael’s firsthand experience growing up feeling as though there was no place for him in the professional world, he sees the value in positioning himself as a role model for these young people.

While I was not able to speak directly to the students about their experience, it was clear they enjoyed their time at the museum. Following up about the visit, their faculty advisor, Victoria, wrote:

One of my students said, “it just gets better each year.” Another said, “the existence of this club has changed my life for the better and given me a place to be my true self.” We all are making a difference and in turn these kids are changing OUR lives! (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

She also noted that the students, who normally fall asleep on the bus ride back from a field trip, instead spent the trip engaged in lively conversation with one another. These observations suggest that this program—and the museum’s decision to specifically invite this group—had a powerful and positive impact on these young people.

As I learned after my research visit, this student group planned to host a pride rally at their high school that created quite a controversy throughout the region not long after their trip to the Chrysler. In writing to me on this subject, Michael said, “I think it’s worth pointing out the important and meaningful role that a cultural institution like the Chrysler Museum of Art can play in supporting and cultivating student organizations, especially emerging groups like GSAs” (personal communication, December 14, 2016). Alex voiced a similar opinion when reflecting on the Chrysler’s LGBT inclusive work:

I believe that all art museums have a special responsibility to be safe spaces: public places where the LGBT community (and all people) can feel affirmed and empowered in their identities and opinions. In schools, places of worship, sporting arenas, even sometimes libraries, there can be barriers to freedom of expression, but the Chrysler Museum consciously celebrates all types of voices—and invites visitors to use their own. (Email communication, September 30, 2016)

These statements reveal the value of LGBT inclusive efforts in the context of the art museum. When a vulnerable population does not receive the support it needs from its community leaders or public spaces, this group can turn toward its local cultural institutions for comfort, safety, and empowerment.

Positioning the Chrysler as a welcoming, inviting, and accessible institution presents a mutual benefit for both staff and visitors. As Karen reasons,

It's one of these wonderful circles . . . when we're more welcoming to our visitors, then staff feels happier, and they are welcomed for who they really are and celebrated for who they really are, and then they're happier. And, in turn, the guests will have a happier experience because the people who work here will be truly comfortable and happy. And everything feeds into one another and makes it better. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

For Jeff Harrison, Chief Curator Emeritus, the museum's efforts to foster LGBT inclusion are a way of keeping up with the times. "I would imagine any public institution that wants to be relevant in this day and age," he says, "and address all aspects of the community it serves . . . [should] think of the LGBT community as part of that" (personal communication, October 19, 2016). Erik agrees with this sentiment, saying, "I don't feel that the Chrysler needs to be on the cutting edge. . . . But, by the same token, I don't think we should be lagging in our times" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Museums, he believes, can "be supportive of progressive change" without being radical or groundbreaking. LGBT inclusion is an easy and obvious step on this road toward progress.

Beyond the LGBT community, though, the Chrysler hopes to serve as an institution where all feel welcome. “I want to be friendly to everybody,” notes Erik. “I hope that, in some way, this institution will be seen as a place where people are welcome” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). As Karen adds, this goal of holistic inclusion is

something that you can’t just sit back and let it happen. You do have to be active in pursuing that, and that’s on many different fronts—not only LGBT, but in so many aspects of the community. We’re trying to reach out and diversify our audience, because when you bring people in and you’re hearing these different voices, it adds so much color and beauty and wisdom to the conversation. (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

Here, Karen explains the need for active allyship and the value of expanding the museum’s network to include a diverse range of perspectives. “Things have changed,” she notes, “[but] we still have a lot of work to do” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Chrysler staff seem to be constantly looking toward the future, considering the ways in which they can improve upon current practices. However, she continues, “it feels so good to know that I work in a place where we’ve always made these great big advances in welcoming everybody from the community. It starts here, and hopefully we’ll have a farther reaching effect” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

Summary

The Chrysler’s efforts toward greater LGBT inclusion begin with the people-first, service-first approach instituted under Bill Hennessey and outlined in Bergeron and Tuttle’s (2013) *Magnetic*. Practices such as opening the door for every visitor, offering free admission, and placing friendly, engaging staff in the galleries helped create a culture of inclusion and laid the groundwork for more focused outreach. These elements work to

establish a safe space for staff and visitors alike, producing a welcoming environment that helps all people to feel comfortable and secure in their museum experience. Further, the museum's commitment to its local community lends itself to programming that engages specific, underrepresented audiences through targeted invitations. These programs demonstrate Chrysler staff's ability to identify needs in the community and capitalize on opportunities for specialized engagement.

REPRESENT: REFLECTING THE LGBT COMMUNITY THROUGH DISPLAY AND INTERPRETATION

The Chrysler's people-first ethos is equally apparent in its curatorial and interpretive practices as it is in its approach to visitor engagement. After an 18-month closure for renovation and expansion, the museum reopened in 2014 to much critical acclaim (Britt-Darby, 2014; Cascone, 2014). Its unique display choices, accessible object labels, and participatory elements set it apart from the typical encyclopedic museum and demonstrate its commitment to putting the viewer at the center of every experience. Here, I discuss how this approach to display and interpretation, combined with a deep commitment to diverse representation, informs the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive efforts.

Acquisition and Display

Roaming through the Chrysler's encyclopedic galleries during my research visit in Norfolk, I was continuously struck by the museum's surprising curatorial decisions. In the ancient worlds galleries, a contemporary, frosted glass cast of a reclining woman complements a series of large, marble sculptures similarly draped in flowing garments. The

medieval galleries, meanwhile, feature two photo prints from a contemporary artist whose work draws heavily on conventions of medieval portraiture. These intriguing juxtapositions, called “activations” (Heddaya, 2014), are scattered throughout the building, inviting viewers to make connections between works differing dramatically in time, media, style, and message.



Illustration 6: An “activation” in the Chrysler’s ancient worlds galleries (Pollard, 2014c).



Illustration 7: Contemporary photography among medieval artworks (Pollard, 2014d).

These moments of surprise and delight reflect a departure from the systematic classification and rational organization of the traditional encyclopedic museum. As I noted

during my visit, this decision to “break the rules” of common institutional practice through its unexpected display choices seems to reflect the same open, democratic, and courageous organizational culture that enables the museum’s recent efforts toward LGBT inclusion.

Indeed, one way in which the Chrysler has sought to include LGBT identities is through its collecting and acquisition practices. Working to expand the museum’s collections in meaningful ways, the Chrysler’s curatorial team appears to view LGBT artworks as part of the broad spectrum of multiculturalism. Several examples of this perspective came to light in my interviews with staff, revealing a culture that values representation and diversity as a tool for greater engagement and inclusion.

In January 2016, the museum acquired noted Harlem Renaissance artist Beauford Delaney’s *Portrait of James Baldwin* (Figure 3). In the painting, a charged, neon yellow field provides the backdrop for an electric image of the late author and activist. As Erik writes, “this impressive painting captures the sensitivity of a man who was one of the most significant authors and essayists of the last 100 years and who was particularly incisive in his examination of the African American experience” (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2016).

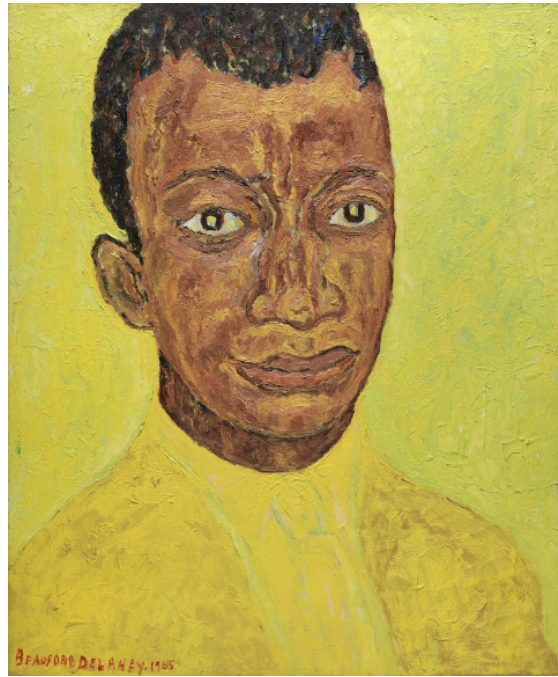


Figure 3: Beauford Delaney (1965), *Portrait of James Baldwin*.

Alex acquired the work after researching African American artists who had been overlooked during their lifetime (Watson, 2016). He explains the acquisition process and the motivations behind the purchase in greater depth:

About a year ago, almost, we purchased a painting by the American painter Beauford Delaney, who passed away in 1979, and he was a gay African American painter. And his identity as a gay man is an important part of the understanding of his work and of the networks of friendships and artistic relationships that were important in promoting his career and determining where and how he could work and types of discrimination he faced within his life. And I thought that was an important reason for us to acquire his work. It's something that makes it distinctive and valuable in comparison to other works of art from the same time period And so, I spoke about that openly as we were acquiring the painting and [as] I was presenting it to my colleagues as something that I thought that the museum should purchase. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

For Alex—and, ultimately, the museum's Collections Committee—Delaney's LGBT identity was not an extraneous biographical fact. Rather, it was central to the understanding

of his work and presented a special opportunity for the museum to diversify its collections. Further, its subject, the author James Baldwin, was also a gay, black man—identities that were equally integral to his writing.

Given all these factors, it would be difficult to discuss this painting without also revealing the identities of both the artist and his subject. Fortunately, the inclusive culture that pervades the Chrysler meant this was never a thought for the Director and curators. As Erik writes in the Spring 2016 members' magazine,

The striking portrait on the cover of this edition of *Chrysler* is of the noted author James Baldwin, painted by his friend Beauford Delaney. . . . Both the artist and the sitter were gay black men living and working in New York in the mid 20th century, biographical facts that are not irrelevant to the meaning of the painting. These factors may also account for the limited appreciation of Delaney's work in his own lifetime. (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2016)

The Director's willingness to acknowledge the sexual orientation of both Baldwin and Delaney speaks to his positive outlook on the subject of LGBT inclusion and his belief that "it's just the right thing to do" (Susan, personal communication, October 14, 2016). The mention of LGBT identities in this introductory essay, while brief, sends a clear message of acceptance to a readership that is, quite likely, a more traditional museum audience—older, white, and affluent. Erik moves beyond simply alluding to sexual orientation here, however; he also makes a point to highlight the significance of that information to the work's interpretation and presents these facts as central motivations for acquiring the work. "Its presence in our galleries," he continues, "allows us to tell a fuller story of painting in America. It also begins to redress a key weakness in our collection: the underrepresentation of African American artists" (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2016). With

this, he acknowledges a gap in the Chrysler's collections and demonstrates the value the museum places on diverse representation. It is clear this is a value he hopes his readers will share as the Chrysler continues to take steps toward greater inclusion in the art it acquires and displays.

He reveals as much in our conversation, saying he sees this brief magazine entry as “one of the things that’s, maybe, sent a couple signals” that the museum plans to be more open about narratives surrounding LGBT identities. He wants to help traditional audiences recognize that, “when we make a purchase that’s of a really great [significance],” he continues, “it’s also okay to talk about things that maybe, if we bought the painting 20 years ago, would have been left unsaid or just wouldn’t have been as public” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Again, the notion of relevance, of keeping up with broader trends toward social progress, appears to factor into the museum’s decision-making.

Alex discusses another recent acquisition in our conversation that reflects the Chrysler’s commitment to diverse representation:

About a year and a half ago, I had the opportunity to acquire two other photographs for the collection . . . by the artist collective PaJaMa, which is an acronym for the names of the three members of it, which were Paul Cadmus, Jared French, and Margaret French. And Cadmus was also gay, and had relationships with men, and maybe on some occasions women—it was a very complicated and fluid circle of friendships and relationships and sexualities around Cadmus and his artistic associates. And so, several of the figures that appear in these photographs that we acquired were also, like Cadmus, gay, and I think that their relationships and friendships were a part of their artistic practice, working together. . . . That was another case where I was excited that [the works] offer a lot of different stories, including stories about sexuality and LGBT history that we can bring into the museum through those objects. . . . That’s something that wasn’t, I think,

represented in the collection in the past. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

Again, this story reveals the Chrysler's belief that the presence of LGBT identities in artworks make the objects worth collecting, as they present opportunities for new perspectives to be represented on the museum's walls and, thus, for new conversations to occur. Alex believes it is part of his job "to look historically . . . and see where there are opportunities for us to introduce these stories" (personal communication, November 2, 2016). As he works with American art before 1945, this means digging "deeper into the past" for stories of LGBT identity. Going forward, he also plans to encourage collectors in the area to acquire work by LGBT artists (personal communication, November 2, 2016). All this speaks to the museum's steadfast commitment to, and belief in, cultivating a collection that reflects the diversity of the community and represents the vast range of voices that have existed throughout history. Writing on the newly acquired Delaney portrait in the members' magazine, Alex declares:

"Artists are here to disturb the peace," James Baldwin said in a 1961 interview. . . . Beauford Delaney's *Portrait of James Baldwin* is a landmark acquisition, the Chrysler's first-ever purchase of a painting by a deceased black artist. We welcome its fearless color into our galleries, where it shines a blazing yellow spotlight on America's history of injustice toward minorities. But the fight for equality and respect continues, and we promise to bring you more works of art that disturb the peace. (Chrysler Museum of Art, 2016)

Interpretative Texts

In addition to taking in the objects themselves, I made a point during my visit to the Chrysler to examine the wall labels for voice, style, and accessibility. The didactic texts seen in each gallery are accessible, inclusive, and familiar in tone. Object labels ask

questions (“What does glass look like today?”). They direct the eye toward specific details (“Look at the bee’s abdomen or the flying goose’s outstretched wings”). They lead with enticing quotes (“You think you’re slick. Just wait. One day a woman is going to straighten you out!”). They recommend a particular action (“Pick a single color and watch how it interacts with other colors as your eyes move across the painting”). They reframe standard colonialist narratives (“generations of Western artists . . . draw inspiration from the newly ‘discovered’ East”). They frankly describe non-Western religious traditions (“Muslims believe the Koran to be the Word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad”). They are playful (“at any moment, she could pounce”). Regardless of the gallery one finds themselves in, these texts are consistently direct, relatable, and inviting.

Alex explains the motivations behind this phenomenon:

We had a big initiative during the time that we were renovating . . . to find a relatively unified voice for all of the wall labels so that our visitors, whether they were in the ancient art collections or the contemporary art collections, would not feel some dramatic disjuncture between the kind of language or the approach that was being taken. And, recognizing that we are a museum that serves a large and diverse community, we wanted the labels to be relatively accessible and not full of complicated jargon and vocabulary, such as you might find in a university art museum that has a very specialized primary audience. So we consciously went through and talked about a series of strategies and priorities in writing our labels in order to bring us all into a relatively unified sense of what was important to convey and how we could do that in the way that we think is most effective for our community. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

This rationale reinforces the notion that the museum places the visitor at the center of every decision. The new interpretive texts for the Chrysler’s renovated and expanded galleries were designed with the museum’s diverse, local audience in mind, and a group of staff

members worked together to ensure a single, cohesive voice carried throughout the building.

As a curator, Alex is highly committed to quality interpretive writing. “My most extensive interaction with the public is through what I write,” he says, “so I take very seriously the idea that my words and my language are things that the public read as they’re going through the museum” (personal communication, November 2, 2016). He also contributes to the Chrysler’s members’ magazine, the website, and press releases, publications that serve as additional avenues through which he engages with the public. But his didactic texts are where he devotes the most energy and care, as he understands these labels have a significant impact on the visitor experience. He provides further details about the process of rewriting the museum’s labels:

I had a lot of ideas and input into that. It was a group effort. But for me, relatively easy, because those particular strategic goals were things I was always doing. And those would be, specifically: Speaking in a way, or writing in a way that is accessible and agreeable to a large, wide portion of the audience. . . . And, secondly, to really focus specifically on the work of art. So, to write within the label about the object that the visitor is standing in front of . . . so that there is created a pattern of looking back at the object while one is reading, rather than getting lost in the biographical details about the artist. [This is] a way to keep the visitor present in that experience and specific to that work of art. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

It is rare to hear a curator speak so thoughtfully about his approach to interpretive writing, and to exhibit such a sincere dedication to access and engagement. Alex’s words echo the museum’s mission to “bring art and people together,” a notion that reflects the mission-oriented philosophy instilled in the museum’s empowered staff.

While Alex sees the wall labels as opportunities to aid visitors in the process of looking, he also sees these texts as chances to offer potential connections between art and viewer and shed light on overlooked aspects of history. Discussing Delaney's *Portrait of James Baldwin*, he says,

in the wall label with it, I mention Delaney's sexuality as well as his race, and I've done public programs and written for our magazine specifically around that painting in which, certainly, that information appears and is available. And so, I hope that, as folks in the LGBT community spend time in the museum and read the labels for different paintings, anyone who reads that label will say, "Oh, this is an artist that I have something in common with." And the subject of the painting is a portrait of the artist's friend James Baldwin, who, of course, was also a gay black man. And so anyone who's familiar with Baldwin's work will find that connection into his sexuality as well. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

Here, Alex presents a clear rationale for including an artist's gender or sexual identity in the object label: it enables LGBT visitors to experience meaningful connections with these artworks. Just as including the racial identity of an artist will hold significance for a visitor of that race, openly presenting the identities of LGBT artists is a simple way to create opportunities for powerful engagement between viewer and object.

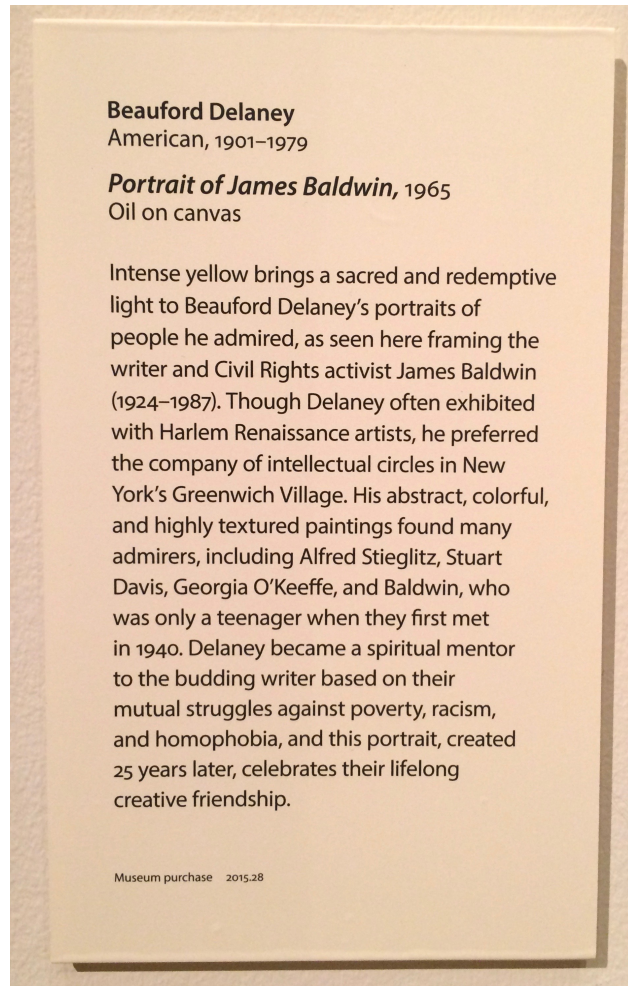


Illustration 8: Object label for Beauford Delaney's *Portrait of James Baldwin*.

While Alex does not believe these biographical details should be included in a label if they are irrelevant to the work at hand, he feels passionately that these small additions to the wall text can be immensely meaningful for the visitor. "I think, as people are going through an art museum," he says,

they are using art to think about issues within their own lives. And so, opportunities to make a personal connection with a work of art are something that's valuable and make a museum experience more meaningful and more educational for all of our visitors. And so the greater diversity of personalities and histories that we can

include within the works of art that appear on the wall, I believe, are opportunities to engage a wider range of visitors and make this museum a special place for everybody. (Personal communication, November 2, 2016)

Gallery Teaching

In addition to interpretive texts, visitors might also learn about LGBT art history through a museum tour. As part of the Chrysler's efforts to foster LGBT inclusion, Michael has organized a number of thematic tours aimed at connecting visitors with LGBT themes in artworks. Both Jeff and Alex have worked with Michael at different times to deliver these tours to the public.

Jeff delivered one such talk in June 2016 in conjunction with Pride Week. Because of its connection to the LGBT celebration, the program received a large audience. "I think there were about 40 people there," recalls Jeff, "I was really gratified" (personal communication, October 19, 2016). He guided the group through the galleries, looking at a small selection of works that lent themselves to discussion of gender and sexuality. While some dealt directly with LGBT identities in terms of the artist or the content of the work, others enabled more nuanced conversations around these topics. With all of the objects he chose, he tried not "to be anachronistic in any way, and suggest that, somehow, a 17th century Italian painter was gay, because we have no conception of . . . how that person would've identified him or herself. So I did my best to work around that" (personal communication, October 19, 2016). He remained sensitive to the time period in which these works were made, using his vast art historical knowledge to inform the discussion.

The works he selected for the tour varied greatly. He talked about two images of Saint Sebastian (“which, of course, are pretty standard gay-freighted images, or can be”), a Rococo piece by François Boucher (“which is not in any way LGBT, but very interesting in its approach to sexuality”), a painting by J. C. Leyendecker (who was “quietly gay [and] freighted many of his [Saturday Evening Post] covers with this sotto voce glamorization of the young collegiate male), Delaney’s Baldwin portrait (“I talked about the double-burden of being, in postwar America . . . both gay and African-American”), a Keith Haring subway drawing (“I talked about . . . his role as a gay icon in the ‘90s and his role as an outsider artist”), and a few others (J. Harrison, personal communication, October 19, 2016).

Because of the wide range of time periods, styles, and themes represented in this tour, Jeff had the opportunity to introduce a variety of concepts into his discussion. The earlier works he touched upon enabled a conversation about symbolism and modes of representation as they relate to questions of sexuality. Pieces like the Leyendecker lent themselves to discussions of homophobia and how an artist might subvert mainstream media through subtly homoerotic imagery. Later works like the Delaney and the Haring provided fodder for more frank conversations about racial and sexual identity.

He also discussed a recently acquired Kehinde Wiley work, *St. Andrew* (Figure 4), speaking about how Wiley’s work “[rewrites] the standard canon in terms of those who had been excluded from it” (personal communication, October 19, 2016). As with Delaney’s Baldwin portrait, *St. Andrew* grapples with issues of race and sexuality. *St. Andrew*, he explains, “was crucified on an X-shaped cross, and in Wiley’s painting, this

hip-hop guy is straddling an X-shaped cross. And I talked about that as a sexual gesture. I mean, it really, really is. And I thought that was hilarious” (personal communication, October 19, 2016). Jeff demonstrates a wealth of knowledge and a thoughtful approach to art throughout his description of the tour, yet he also finds the humor in these discussions. I can only imagine his talk was equally engaging and amusing.



Figure 4: Kehinde Wiley (2006), *St. Andrew*.

Under the label of an LGBT themed tour, gallery teachers are able to address themes and identities that often go overlooked or unspoken in the art museum for fear of causing offense or discomfort. These specialized talks create a safe space within which the educator can inform, challenge, and provoke their audiences to consider alternative ways of being. Inviting visitors to engage with notions of gender and sexuality can expose them

to new understandings, spark dialogue around uncomfortable issues, and reveal truths too often left in the shadows.

In shedding light on LGBT themes and identities throughout art history, educators can also help connect LGBT visitors with a broader cultural heritage. As Jeff reasons,

I think it's absolutely critical to connect LGBT folks to their own history. The history has been obscured and repressed for so long that it's essentially a crime. It's a cultural crime, and it's time to bring that forward and talk about it directly, passionately, and honestly. . . . And make it clear that these things have existed, do exist, and these people led full lives, and were, at a time when we thought it was impossible, were expressing their inner thoughts and feelings. (Personal communication, October 19, 2016)

Summary

Collecting and interpretation practices present opportunities for museums to address gaps in representation and foster greater inclusion. In acquiring work by LGBT artists—and acquiring them for that very reason—the Chrysler demonstrates the value it places on diverse representation in the art it collects and displays. Recognizing that identity is often integral to our understanding of artworks, the Chrysler does not shy away from including biographical details about an artist's gender or sexuality when these identities are relevant to the work. Including these stories can create opportunities for visitors to make personal connections with works of art, finding something in common with the work and thereby leaving with a more meaningful experience. The museum has also offered several LGBT-themed gallery tours, which enable educators to discuss themes of gender and sexuality that often go ignored in standard gallery teaching practice. These tours might

also serve to connect LGBT visitors to a shared cultural heritage, one so frequently overlooked by the art historical canon.

In reflecting on these practices, Alex poignantly captures the value of including representations of queer identities and desires in the art museum:

For many visitors, the most memorable works in the Museum are those in which they can see bits of themselves or connections to their own lives, and the Chrysler's wall labels open up these connections by sharing that artists like Tseng Kwong Chi and Beauford Delaney were gay. In this way, the Museum's displays and exhibitions don't just allow or tolerate discussion of LGBT identity, but they actually start these conversations, speaking first through the images and their accompanying texts. By vocally honoring the identities and artistic talents of a diverse array of artists, the Museum uses its cultural and educational prestige to embrace the diversity of the people of Hampton Roads, including the local LGBT community. This is a part of the Museum's mission, in which it seeks not only to gratify its visitors with beautiful things, but also to challenge them with complicated, perhaps controversial, stories and ideas. (Email communication, September 30, 2016)

The inclusion of LGBT representations in the Chrysler's collections and interpretive writing, as Alex so powerfully illustrates, serves to benefit not only those who identify as LGBT and can find personal connections in these words and objects, but all the museum's visitors who are invited to engage in the conversations initiated by these inclusive display practices.

EDUCATE: PREPARING STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS FOR POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH LGBT VISITORS

As I have mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, one notion that has emerged in this research is the capacity of Chrysler staff to reflect on current practices and identify areas where improvements can be made. Recognizing that not all museum employees and volunteers may possess the knowledge necessary to engage successfully with LGBT

visitors, the Education Department recently began to offer cultural competency workshops to front-end staff with the goal of better preparing them for positive interactions with this population. The first trainings were offered on December 4, 2015; the second installment was held on October 14, 2016. This section takes an in-depth look at these workshops and their potential outcomes.

Staff Training

For the Chrysler's gallery hosts, everything comes back to the visitor. To ensure each individual has a positive experience during their visit, these staff members attend weekly training sessions focused on a range of topics. These trainings, Karen explains, "could be about an art movement But then sometimes it is customer service based, or sometimes it might be museum shop related" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Whatever the topic, these information sessions are intended to leave gallery hosts fully prepared for their daily interactions with museum guests. "Everything comes together to help us do our job better," Karen continues, "and that is to help remove the intimidation barriers between the visitors and the art. We want to make it welcoming and really, honestly, bring art and people together" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). As a result of these regular training sessions, front-end staff feel empowered and confident to perform their responsibilities effectively and provide visitors with an accessible, comfortable, and meaningful museum experience. Karen's words provide further evidence that the Chrysler's mission is central to the work of each staff member.

When the museum's Education Department decided to implement a new training session on the subject of LGBT inclusion, then, this move was not seen as out of the ordinary. Rather, it was simply another attempt made by the museum to equip staff with a new set of tools that would aid them in their work with visitors. The first installment of this training was offered on a voluntary basis to Chrysler docents and Visitor Services staff in December 2015; the second, held in October 2016, was open to all staff and volunteers. Here, I examine my findings about both sets of trainings—the first garnered through interviews with staff and the training facilitator, the second obtained through questionnaires, interviews, observation, and email correspondence with the workshop's organizers and participants.

Setting Clear Objectives

One month before the first training session, the Education Department sent out an email to front-end staff and volunteers. The subject line read: "Creating an Inclusive Museum: Welcoming LGBT Students and Visitors," reflecting the title of the training. "This workshop is being offered to Docents and Gallery Hosts as a way to assist in creating a Museum that is inclusive and welcoming," the email began. "We hope you can attend" (R. Sanchez, email communication, November 5, 2015). It continues,

While the past several years have seen significant advancement in terms of full equality for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community, the fact remains that many LGBT people feel they must hide their sexual orientation or gender identity to avoid discrimination or harassment.

However, leading cultural institutions know that creating a fully inclusive environment is not only the right thing to do, but will enrich and enlighten our visitors' experience.

This workshop will provide staff and volunteers with the fundamentals needed to foster an inclusive environment where LGBT visitors feel safe and respected.

Starting with basic definitions and terminology, this workshop will also cover challenges, solutions and best practices that will allow our museum to become a more welcoming place to visit. (R. Sanchez, email communication, November 5, 2015)

This message presents a straightforward explanation as to why the Chrysler was offering the training, what content it would cover, and how it would benefit docents and Visitor Services staff. As the people who work most frequently and directly with museum guests, it is understandable that this invitation to a workshop aimed at creating a more welcoming environment for a vulnerable population would be extended to them. The connection between the LGBT community and the Chrysler is made clear, enabling staff and volunteers to gain a sense for how their work might benefit from the training. As the workshop was offered on a voluntary basis, it seems all the more important that the Education staff should aim to present a compelling argument for attendance.

The invitation to the second training—held ten months after the first and following greater recognition of the museum’s inclusive efforts—appears far less clear in its objectives:

The LGBT community is experiencing unprecedented social and political advancement toward full equality. Museums around the world are responding with more inclusive policies and engagement. In the past year, the Chrysler Museum of Art has been recognized for its efforts in creating programming for and with the LGBT community, has been featured in publications by the American Alliance of Museums; and Education staff has been invited to present panels at the Hampton Roads Diversity and Inclusion Conference. (R. Sanchez, email communication, August 25, 2016)

As Figure 5 demonstrates, most participants in the second training seem to have possessed a solid understanding of why the museum offered this workshop to staff and volunteers. One respondent appears slightly confused as to the purpose of the workshop, while two others express no understanding of why the training took place. These respondents were both aged 66 or older, signifying that the objectives of the workshop may have been lost on some of the Chrysler’s senior volunteers.

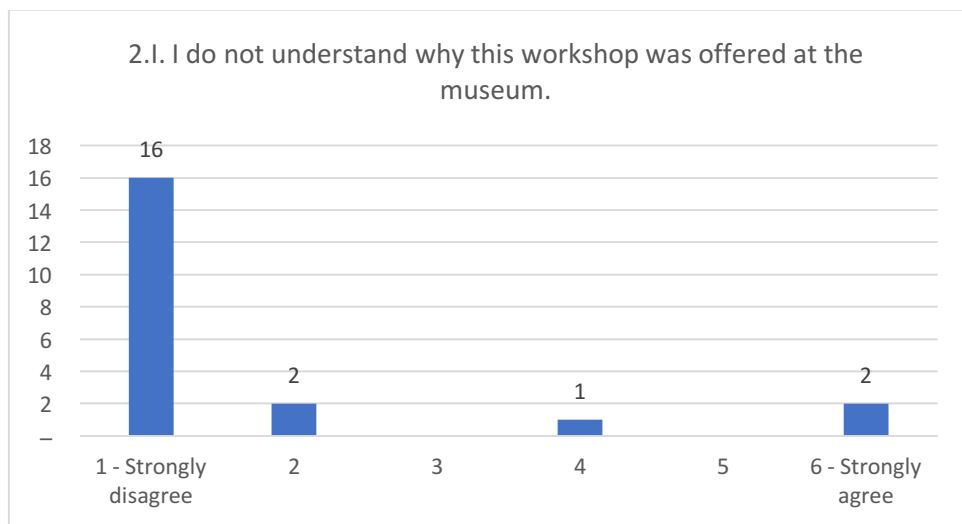


Figure 5: Range of responses to survey question 2.I (see Appendix C).

It is important to bear in mind that the second round of training sessions, which I observed, occurred shortly after the initiation of a new docent class; the first round, on the other hand, was offered to more seasoned volunteer guides. While I do not have specific data on the attendance of the first installment, this distinction potentially made for a different turnout than that of the first workshop. “We have a whole class of new docents right now,” Susan noted shortly after the October 2016 training session, “so they are less set in their ways and more open . . . they’re here to learn” (personal communication,

October 14, 2016). By contrast, she finds that “change is difficult for [the experienced docents]. . . . They get into their routine. And they like their routine” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). By this logic, the first training session may have resulted in different outcomes than the program I observed.

The Visitor Services staff, on the other hand, showed up in full force at the first training session, reinforcing the inclusive culture of the institution. “The attendance [that morning] was great,” Karen notes. “We had all the gallery hosts who were scheduled that day attend, and there were some who were not scheduled that day [who] even came in for it” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). This fact suggests that the front-end staff welcomed the opportunity to learn more about the LGBT community and gain insights into how they might better serve this population. “I would never miss an opportunity to . . . learn a new technique that’s going to help me do my job better,” Karen reasons. Nor would she “miss an opportunity to be able to better aid in [the] effort to broaden [the museum’s] audience” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

It seems many of her colleagues share this philosophy. Figure 6 reveals a range of motivations for attendance at the October 2016 training, but many participants indicated that they showed up in order to learn, to improve their job performance, or simply because they felt it was important.



Figure 6: Range of responses to survey question 3 (see Appendix C).

The operative word in this survey question, of course, is “choose.” It bears repeating that the museum offered these workshops on a voluntary basis; this factor determined the workshop attendance and therefore had a significant impact on the results of my survey research. While Anne and Michael hope to make LGBT sensitivity training mandatory for all front-line staff—and for docents in particular—in the future, the program is still in the experimental phase and thus presented as an optional session for these volunteers and employees.

This decision came up in many of my conversations with staff, as well as in the feedback I received from program participants. “Anne told me that the ones who were really struggling [with LGBT acceptance] didn’t come,” Susan recounts, “and the ones that really needed to hear it” weren’t there (personal communication, October 14, 2016). During

a presentation at the 2016 Eastern Virginia Regional Diversity and Inclusion Conference, Anne shared a particularly problematic response the museum's Education Department received after they sent out the original training invitation. "Why are we making special accommodations for this group," it read, "and we don't for others? African American, Orientals, American Indians?" (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016b). Outdated language aside, Anne responds emphatically: "Well, actually, we do" (observation, October 13, 2016). The Chrysler does, in fact, take active steps to include a diverse range of populations in addition to the LGBT community, and front-end staff have the opportunity to learn about these cultures through other training offerings.

Regardless, this sentiment still persists among some of the museum's more senior volunteers. Susan recalls a similar reaction among docents the first time the museum offered the workshop. "It wasn't necessarily a pretty picture," she admits. "They were having a hard time getting there. Because it's the old story of, 'Why should we be nicer to them than we are to these other people?'" (personal communication, October 14, 2016). Susan's response to this perspective echoes Anne's sentiment: "Well, actually, you have to be nice to everybody" (personal communication, October 14, 2016).

One docent, who participated in the second training, provided further insight into her colleagues' outlook on the program:

Upon speaking to a colleague who refused to come to the training, she questioned the necessity of "making the museum open to the LGBT community." She felt that we are a public institution and it should not even be a focus. She speculated that there may be signs, advertisements, or particular mention on the museum's website about welcoming the LGBT community. I told her that it was more about making us as docents more aware and understanding of these issues. She would have

benefitted from the training. Perhaps it should be mandatory for all those working with the public. (Personal communication, November 19, 2016)

Meeting People Where They Are

One notion that struck me in my examination of the Chrysler's LGBT inclusion training was the empathetic approach taken in preparing the program. Virginia, the workshop facilitator from Equality Virginia, understood going into the training that the museum's staff and docents may very well enter the workshop with little knowledge, understanding, or even acceptance of the LGBT community. As they explain, the training was "designed to be a foundational experience into understanding the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, with the idea that the more they were able to understand it, the better able they would be to interact with their LGBT patrons" (personal communication, November 21, 2016).

Just as the gallery hosts aim to help visitors feel comfortable and welcome in their museum experience, Virginia took a similar approach in planning the cultural competency workshop for docents and staff. "For many, many folks, this was the first time that they would be hearing this type of information," they note, "so [I considered] how to defuse some of that anxiety" (personal communication, November 21, 2016). This involved creating a safe environment for the voluntary participants, one in which it was understood "that it's okay not to know what, even, LGBT means and . . . that allowed folks who were very unfamiliar with the community to begin the process of building a foundation of understanding" (personal communication, November 21, 2016). Virginia's lighthearted presentation style and warm personality set an open, inviting tone where participants felt

comfortable asking difficult questions and acknowledging points of confusion or discomfort (observation, October 14, 2016). As one survey respondent commented, “Virginia does a wonderful job of encouraging discussion and helping those who were uncomfortable about certain topics—become comfortable.”

Beyond a mere lack of knowledge, Virginia also recognized there would be participants who would be hesitant to receive the information presented in the training. In addition to building understanding, their intent was to “[help] folks who may be a little resistant to learning more about the LGBT community . . . understand that sexual orientation and gender identity [are] part of a broader construct which is diversity” (personal communication, November 21, 2016). Framing LGBT inclusion in the broader context of diversity, Virginia believes, has the potential to reach individuals who may not understand why these efforts are being made in the first place. This reflects the notion of conceptualizing LGBT identities as part of the greater spectrum of multiculturalism.

Whether or not they are accepting or understanding of the LGBT community, Virginia—who has facilitated similar trainings with a range of organizations across the state—has learned that most people possess at least some familiarity with an LGBT individual. “Even for folks who, maybe, aren’t as familiar with the LGB community,” Virginia explains, “they at least know somebody who is lesbian or somebody who is gay. And so, they’ve got this very basic personal connection or experience” (personal communication, November 21, 2016). That personal link helps contextualize some of the more complex or challenging ideas introduced in the workshop. “Even if they don’t understand or if they don’t agree . . . they know somebody,” Virginia remarks. “And I think

that personal connection is really helpful and important for folks like this. This isn't something that's happening in a vacuum" (personal communication, November 21, 2016).

When it comes to transgender identities, however, Virginia finds participants express less familiarity. "There's just a lot of misinformation [and] a lot of confusion" relating to the transgender community, they remark. Knowing this, Virginia adapted the second training session in October 2016 to emphasize transgender identities and the safety and sensitivity concerns specific to this group. Their goal with this more recent training was to focus on "building that understanding and building that empathy for the transgender community" (personal communication, November 21, 2016).

Participants in the workshop seemed to respond positively to the inviting, empathetic environment Virginia created in the workshop. "I appreciated that we could speak freely without judgment," one participant wrote to me after the training. "Open and honest discussion is so important" (personal communication, November 19, 2016).

Exercising Empathy

One activity included in the 2015 training, which Virginia refers to as "Coming Out Stars," appeared to have a profound impact on workshop participants. As Anne and Michael describe in their American Alliance of Museums blog post, this "empathy exercise . . . led [participants] through the coming out process for LGBT individuals and the potential responses from families, friends, and colleagues" (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016a). It is "an experiential, interactive activity," Virginia explains, "to help folks understand the

diverse and complex experiences that [LGBT] people have when they come out” (personal communication, November 21, 2016).

In the activity, participants were given stars in different colors. Each point of the star represented a specific relationship or connection, such as friends, family, work, and community groups, and participants wrote down the names of people and organizations they associate with each relationship. Then, Virginia revealed different outcomes of the coming out process based on the color of participants’ stars: some were rejected by their families, some lost their jobs, some experienced rifts with a number of their connections. One person had a green star which, as Christine recalls, meant that “nobody accepted them. And so they ripped off all the little corners, and what [Virginia] had them do was rip up their star to . . . indicate that they had committed suicide” (personal communication, October 14, 2016).

Rather than simply list statistics in a PowerPoint presentation, Virginia feels this activity enables participants to experience for themselves the feeling of discrimination, rejection, and even death that can result when LGBT youth come out to their loved ones and close connections. “Even being gay myself,” Christine remarks, “I thought that really drove the point home. And I know that, around the room, there were people reacting to it in a [way] that really puts you in that mindset and really connects you with what’s going on” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). “It was really poignant,” Karen agrees. “You could really sympathize with somebody in the LGBT community who is faced with situations in their past where, certain aspects of their life, they’ve had to keep hidden It was a really powerful training” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

Changing Behaviors

Once participants had learned about the basic terminology, concepts, and current events surrounding the LGBT community—with particular attention to transgender identities—Virginia invited Chrysler staff and volunteers to consider how they might apply this information in their personal and professional lives. “What would it look like to create a more LGBT inclusive space at the Chrysler?” Virginia encouraged the participants to consider. “And what’s neat about that” part of the program, Virginia explains, “is that [you’re] allowing folks the chance and the opportunity to think about what next steps look like for them” (personal communication, November 21, 2016). Here, one sees an empowering approach that demonstrates a shared value between the museum and its partners. The participants “were able to get together in groups and talk amongst themselves,” Virginia continues, “and really think creatively about what inclusion means, and what it means to be welcoming to gay and transgender patrons, and what that means from a personal standpoint” (personal communication, November 21, 2016).

Making the training directly relevant to the lives of workshop participants seems to have been a successful approach. When asked, “What are the most important ideas you will take away from this workshop?” survey respondents revealed a few of the practical changes they intended to make. For many, language use played a central role. “Need to rework some of my tour scripts,” wrote one docent. Another docent noted that she learned “not [to] address groups as male or female.” A staff member commented that “pronoun usage can make an impact on someone.” The full results of this survey question are indicated in Figure 7:



Figure 7: Range of responses to survey question 4 (see Appendix C).

Further reflections from participating docents provided a more in-depth look at how these volunteers plan to incorporate the lessons learned into their practice. One woman writes:

Admittedly, I am much more aware of what I say when practicing how to facilitate a museum tour. My well-intentioned colleagues seem a tad insensitive. For instance, while training to give a tour, they will ask questions noting gender assumptions based on a figure's dress. Before the LGBT training, I probably would have done the same. (Personal communication, November 19, 2016)

This thoughtful comment reveals that, for this volunteer, the training instilled an increased awareness of the assumptions docents may make when working with the public. She admits her own faults, and acknowledges that the workshop taught her to pay closer attention to the language she uses in her tours. One can only hope she will share this lesson with her “insensitive” colleagues when issues arise in the future.

Survey results reinforce the notion that the information discussed in the training relates to the workshop participants' work at the Chrysler. As the two figures below reveal, nearly all questionnaire respondents felt the training was relevant to their professional practice. Interestingly, slightly fewer respondents agreed they would use the information gleaned from the training in their work at the museum. This minor gap between the conceptual and practical relevance of the workshop may be due to the extreme wording of the questionnaire statements, but they may also reveal an intriguing divide between philosophy and commitment to action.

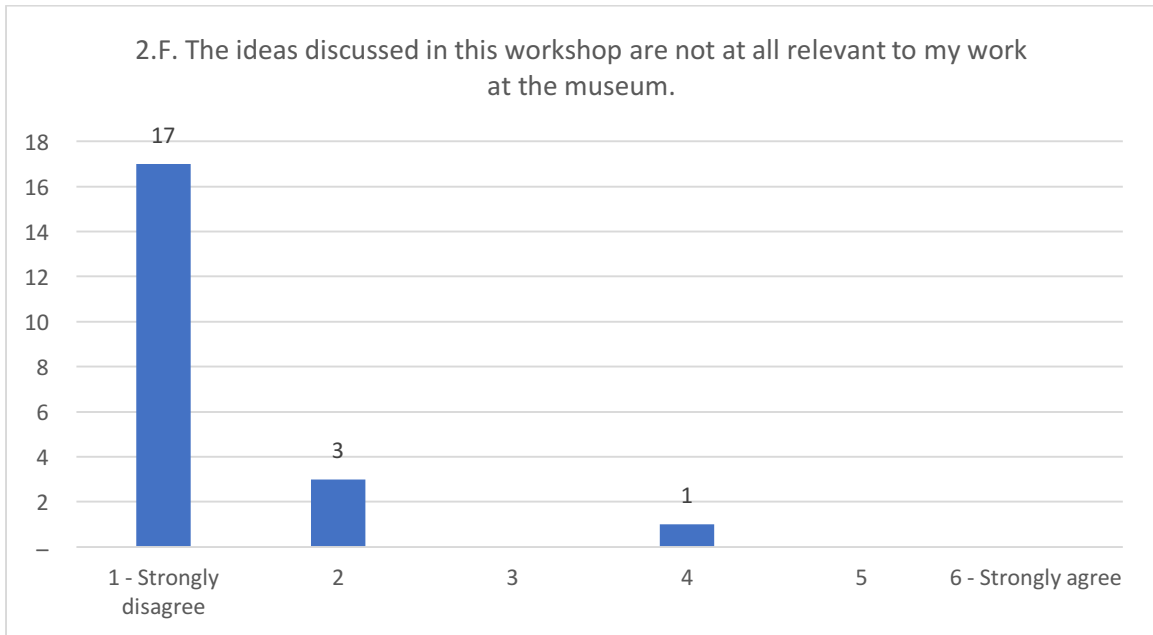


Figure 8: Range of responses to survey question 2.F (see Appendix C).

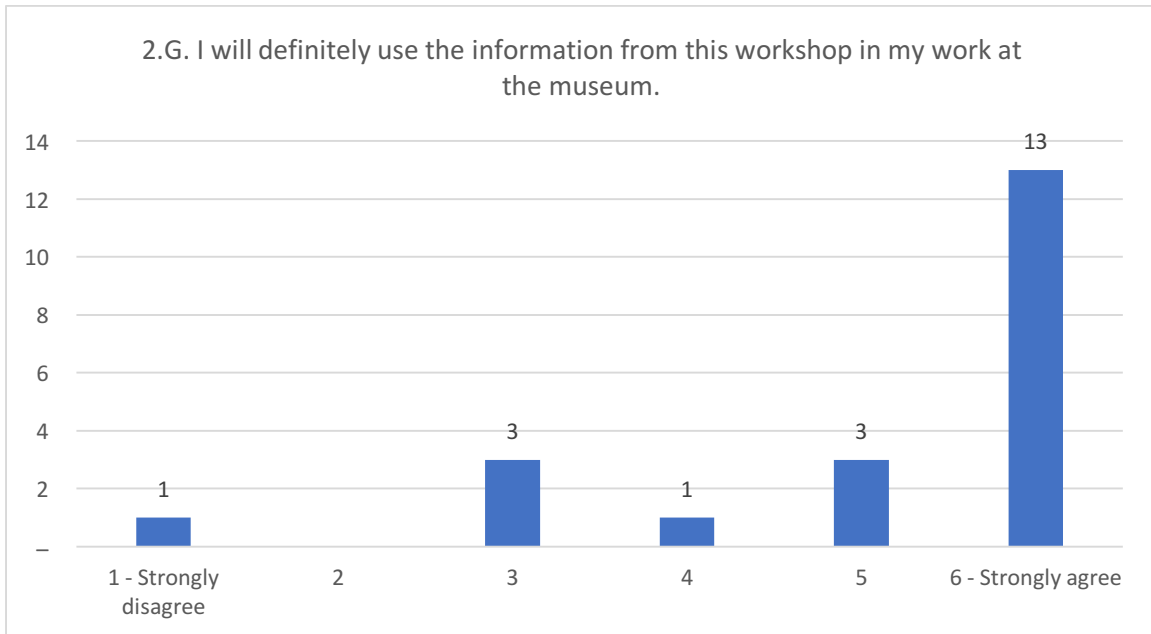


Figure 9: Range of responses to survey question 2.G (see Appendix C).

In reflecting on the first installment of the training, Anne and Michael offer further insights as to its impact:

One of the training’s most positive outcomes was the bond that was created between staff and docent volunteers. Like many museums, the Chrysler’s staff and volunteer corps tend to represent different demographics. Front-line staff members skew young and many identify as LGBT, or are personally familiar with the community. By contrast, docents are largely retired, overwhelmingly female and straight. This training session allowed both groups the opportunity to better understand each other’s personal lives and experiences. (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016a)

By making space for this intergenerational dialogue to occur, the museum enabled connections to be made between two groups with significantly different life experiences and perspectives. These conversations likely served to improve how the two groups engaged with one another in their shared visitor-facing roles at the museum.

Virginia provides additional reflections on the training's practical impacts. "Some folks talked about policies," they say, "but I think some folks, too, really took it to heart, and talked about how it would impact the way that they relate to their young students" (personal communication, November 21, 2016). This is true: in observing the workshops, I listened as colleagues brainstormed ideas for potential changes they could make in their work at the museum. They could address tour groups as "students" rather than "boys and girls" in an effort to move away from the binary conception of gender identity. They could point out all the museum's bathrooms to visitors rather than make assumptions about which facility they might use. They could work to actively promote the museum as a place that welcomes LGBT visitors. As colleagues continued to throw out ideas for practical change, Virginia noted them on a board at the head of the room.

But the impacts extend beyond that which can be contained in a few bullet points. "We're not just siloed individuals," Michael explains, continuing:

And what those sessions do is educate people. And what we're seeing — what I have seen, including in private conversations I've had, is that many people who participated in those programs, they now better understand their grandchildren. Or things that are happening in their own neighborhoods or their own families. I had one docent tell me that her granddaughter is transitioning, and how much it really did help her understand what was going on. She was prepared to deal with that in a way that she probably wouldn't have been. (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

As a direct result of the training, Michael reveals how one woman developed an understanding for a complex topic—that of transgender identity and the process of transitioning—which equipped her to deal with a significant change in her personal life. While this experience may have little to do with her work at the museum, it speaks to the

far-reaching effects educational initiatives like the LGBT sensitivity training can have on participants. One can imagine this event in her personal life—and her newfound ability to understand it—will only serve to make her more empathetic and accepting in her work with the public at the museum.

Changing Attitudes

Virginia has a realistic perspective when it comes to the goals for the LGBT cultural competency program. “If people are walking out with a better understanding of terminology . . . that’s enough,” the facilitator says (personal communication, November 21, 2016). Virginia understands the challenging and emotional nature of these issues, and recognizes the process of developing understanding is a lengthy one. “I know we’re not going to change any behaviors, we’re not going to change any minds,” they say.

I think it’s a slow process for many people, and that’s okay. And that’s what this training is all about, is meeting people where they are and helping to give them the tools and the support and the space that they need to begin thinking more critically, more deliberately about the gay and transgender community. And if they walk out with that, with a little bit more of an ability to think about the community in a way that’s positive or in a way that’s different than they’ve been traditionally thinking about the community, I think that’s a win. It impacts their ability to be more inclusive and accessible and engaging to gay and transgender students and families. (Virginia, personal communication, November 21, 2016)

One docent participant shared a similar sentiment with me in an email: “If the workshop we attended helped to educate even one person in the audience of the LGBT community, then it was worthwhile” (personal communication, November 26, 2016). Another volunteer revealed the training had opened her up to new ideas, and that she planned to continue to think about the ideas discussed in the workshop. “This is so new to

me,” she said. “I am learning. I hope to continue to understand and be more sensitive to the LGBT community” (personal communication, November 19, 2016). These comments echo Virginia’s objectives for the training:

I don’t expect anybody to walk out of there [as] LGBT advocates, wearing a rainbow flag, attending the General Assembly and advocating. I don’t expect anyone to walk out with that kind of passion. . . . At the end of the day, [I’m happy if] folks just become more comfortable with their not knowing and feel inspired to know more. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Despite the many positive outcomes of the training, it is important to note the less favorable results of the program as well. A few of the participants voiced confusion or pushback around some of the ideas discussed in the workshop. “I was confused by all the adjectives used to describe a transgender or transsexual person. There were so many variables,” wrote one docent (personal communication, November 19, 2016). “I disagreed with the way the speaker ‘suggested’ on how to address a person in the LGBT community,” commented another. “I feel, first of all, it’s no one’s business about a person’s sexual preference And then, secondly, if it is a subject of discussion, using the identification with the sexual preference first is wrong” (personal communication, November 26, 2016). Others fixated on physical or biological concerns relating to LGBT individuals rather than focusing on how they might use the information to become more inclusive. In a response I found particularly problematic, one volunteer wrote,

I am still confused as to the distinction between a gay and a transgender if you can be a transgender only in your mind with no physical changes. For example, if a gay man prefers sex with another man, and a transgender man thinks of himself as a woman but is physically a man and prefers sex with a man, what is the difference? Also, what makes someone think of himself as the opposite sex? Are there really characteristics that apply only to one sex? (Personal communication, November 17, 2016)

This message highlights a preoccupation with sex and physiological factors that dominated much of the conversation in the training sessions I observed and, unfortunately, appears to have overshadowed more appropriate discussions of inclusive language and behavior. While Virginia made patient attempts to address these questions in the workshop, they were not conducive to a productive conversation about LGBT inclusion in the art museum. This message also demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to proper language use surrounding LGBT identities, indicating that this fixation with LGBT bodies and sexual acts prevented this individual from retaining any relevant information about how they might treat LGBT people with greater respect.

I share this not to shame this particular docent, but rather to point out a real challenge that appears to come with such attempts to educate an older, more conservative volunteer corps about challenging social issues. However, it bears repeating that this individual opted to participate in this training; she was not required to attend. Her attendance alone suggests that she was open to engaging with the information presented, and her message does demonstrate a desire to know more. While it is important to ask how the training can be adapted to move past participants' preoccupation with biological factors, it is also worth questioning whether the museum ought to make such educational initiatives mandatory for those who need the lessons most.

Summary

The Chrysler regularly provides opportunities for its docents and gallery hosts to learn new concepts and develop skills to improve their work at the museum. The LGBT

inclusion workshops offered in December 2015 and October 2016 afforded these front-end staff members to build increased understanding of a marginalized community underrepresented in the Chrysler's audience. The museum presented the training sessions on a voluntary basis, signifying that those people most likely to benefit from the program may have elected not to attend.

Despite this, those who did attend were heavily impacted in a variety of ways. Participants gained foundational knowledge about LGBT terminology, concepts, and current issues, and developed an increased awareness of and sensitivity to language used in addressing LGBT individuals and families. Those who attended the first program in 2015 were exposed to alarming statistics around the ugly realities facing LGBT youth and the immense challenges associated with the coming out process. Staff and volunteers brainstormed practical changes they could make in their personal and professional lives to become more inclusive of the LGBT community; many expressed that these ideas had, or would be, translated into their actions at the museum and beyond. While some participants expressed confusion or demonstrated problematic attitudes toward the LGBT community following the training, the program appears to have been largely successful in its objective to aid staff and docents in their interactions with LGBT visitors.

“The Chrysler realizes that this training is part of a broader conversation that needs to happen,” says Virginia, musing on the value and significance of this educational initiative at the art institution.

It's part of the culture of the museum. . . . And I believe that folks will then take what they learn and go back to their office and talk to their officemate, or go back home and talk to that family member about the training, or go to church and talk

about what they learned. I think those small conversations that happen at an individual level are hugely impactful. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Here, Virginia speaks to the powerful effect that small efforts like this training can have on an individual, an organization, and a community. It is this ripple effect that makes the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive work so valuable to the Hampton Roads region.

COLLABORATE: SHARING RESPONSIBILITY AND FOSTERING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

On the first day of my research visit to the Chrysler, I arrived through the staff entrance. The Education team invited me to sit in on their weekly departmental meeting that morning, enabling me to experience the collective energy and collaborative spirit of the small, tightknit staff firsthand. A few days later, I found myself back in that office with Anne and Michael, reflecting on the week and discussing next steps for the museum's inclusive work. Throughout my time in Norfolk, Anne and Michael made me feel a part of the team, demonstrating a sincere interest in my ideas and welcoming my input on these efforts. Rather than a visiting researcher—an outsider—I left feeling a sense of deep connection to and investment in the museum's efforts to engage the LGBT community. This feeling of partnership sustained long after my brief stay in Norfolk as I remained in regular contact with Michael in the months that followed.

This spirit of collaboration runs through all the Chrysler does. It imbues staff across departments with a sense of shared responsibility and empowers each employee to see themselves as leaders in their roles at the museum. It encourages staff to build meaningful, lasting relationships both internally and externally and to seek out opportunities to form

key partnerships with community organizations. Whether gallery host or community leader, those who come in contact with the museum are made to feel like valued and equal players working toward a shared vision. Here, I examine this notion of collaboration in greater detail with an eye toward the ways in which it reinforces Bergeron and Tuttle's (2013) research nearly five years later.

Shared Responsibility

In speaking to a number of Chrysler staff over the course of my research, I became aware of how employees spoke about their work at the museum. I realized that, regardless of department or seniority, each individual spoke in terms of “us” and “we.” “The new Chrysler, we’re calling ourselves,” comments Alex in discussing the Chrysler’s recently completed renovation and expansion project (personal communication, November 2, 2016). “We always say we’re the smiling faces of security” jokes Karen, explaining the gallery host program. “We have to live up to what we say,” notes Michael, reflecting the museum’s “practice what you preach” philosophy (personal communication, February 14, 2017). Whether discussing their own work or other initiatives taking place at the museum, the ways in which staff speak about the Chrysler reveal a collective spirit that underlies each individual’s work and imbues it with a sense of shared purpose.

Christine links this team mentality to the institution of the gallery host program. “When I started, downstairs and upstairs were very separated. So, the front line staff didn’t really interact with the administrative staff in any way” (personal communication, October 14, 2016). Through the dramatic changes implemented during Bill Hennessey’s tenure,

however, these distinct factions became integrated into a “big, cohesive unit.” While museum security transitioned to a more behind the scenes role, the gallery hosts nonetheless view them as teammates in a shared mission to protect the art and visitors alike. “If we see a rough touch on a piece . . . [or] a disruptive incident,” notes Karen, “we can call on our colleagues, the security officers They have our backs” (personal communication, October 12, 2016).

This sense of unity extends beyond the relationship between Visitor Services and Security staff. At the Chrysler, curators play an active role in cultivating the visitor experience alongside gallery hosts. Jeff, speaking with Bergeron and Tuttle (2013), explains this relationship:

In the ‘80s, the assumption was that the curators knew best. Now we have shifted our thinking so that we trust and support and listen to the staff on the floor. Our curators are always on call for the gallery hosts and will come down to the floor immediately if a visitor has a question. It would not be acceptable here for a curator to say “no” to such a request. (p. 103)

Several years later, Alex confirms the direct, informal interactions Chrysler curators have with visitors. “[While] walking around the museum . . . I’ll casually engage with visitors all the time,” he remarks. Oftentimes, “a casual visitor will have asked a question . . . and the [gallery host] will see me in the room and say, ‘Oh, perhaps if Alex has a moment, he can answer your question even better than I can,’” something the curator says he is “always happy to do” (personal communication, November 2, 2016). To me, such instances of casual engagement between curator and visitor are rare in art museums, where curators traditionally operate on an academically superior plane to educators and front-line staff. For Alex, however, “it’s fun to interact with the public, to learn what

they're curious about, to ask them questions . . . and to think about how that might influence things that we change or the next project that we do down the road" (personal communication, November 2, 2016). At the Chrysler, it seems visitors are a part of this sense of shared responsibility, valued as equal partners in the museum's efforts to serve the community more effectively and responsively.

The curatorial team's direct involvement in visitor engagement reflects a communal commitment to a unified set of objectives. Programming initiatives, rather than being siloed to an individual department, are viewed as the work of the museum as a whole. Such is the case with the Chrysler's recent LGBT inclusive efforts. While the Education Department spearheads much of the programming, staff across departments play key roles in implementing various aspects of these initiatives. My research revealed that staff in Curatorial, Visitor Services, Communications, Collections & Exhibitions, the Glass Studio, and the Library have all had a hand in bringing these programs to life. Michael does not think twice about reaching out to his colleagues to facilitate or participate in these inclusive efforts, a notion that speaks to the implicit understanding among staff that everyone is working toward the same mission.

The spirit of collaboration that pervades the Chrysler often extends beyond the museum's walls. As many staff members are heavily involved in the local community, colleagues from different departments frequently show up to support one another in their lives outside the Chrysler. Michael's role as President of Hampton Roads Pride creates many opportunities for staff to become involved in his LGBT advocacy work beyond the museum. When Pride installed a massive rainbow crosswalk in Virginia Beach's budding

arts district in November 2016, it was local artist and Chrysler Librarian Allison Termine’s design that volunteers painted in the public space; this project was also completed in collaboration with the Chrysler and the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach (Michael, personal communication, November 14, 2016).



Illustration 9: Hampton Roads Pride paints a rainbow crosswalk, designed by Chrysler Librarian Allison Termine, in the Virginia Beach ViBE Creative District (Tiernan, 2016b).

Michael has frequently called upon his colleagues at the Chrysler for assistance with Pride-related events. Before entering his role as President, Michael coordinated the organization’s special events, including an annual block party held in conjunction with PrideFest. As Karen, who volunteered at the block party a few times, recalls, “I was very pleasantly surprised by other colleagues who also volunteered. Some people who [I thought] were maybe . . . not on board—they showed up and showed their support, and it was truly a wonderful thing to see” (personal communication, October 12, 2016). When staff members ask for help in their work outside the museum, they create opportunities for

their colleagues to demonstrate support and allyship. These opportunities likely help coworkers form strong connections that will transfer directly into their working relationships at the museum.

In addition to valuing one another as collaborators with shared objectives, Chrysler staff are empowered to view themselves as leaders in their own departments. “All of us have leadership positions here,” said Christine in an interview with Bergeron and Tuttle (2013). “The key is that the museum trusts us to make good decisions and we trust that the museum will support our choices. We are invited and allowed to take a high degree of ownership here . . . and so we do” (p. 99). Years later, she echoed this sentiment in our conversation:

I know that . . . when you put trust in an employee, they put trust in you back. And you get so much more from somebody when the organization shows that they believe in you and they trust you. . . . You’d be hard-pressed, I think, to find another front-line staff like the Chrysler’s. Our gallery hosts are so good at what they do and so passionate about what they do and they love what they do, and some of that is because the museum trusts them and empowers them and they respond to that, and they feel empowered, and they trust the museum back. And it really goes to making such a stronger overall team. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

When staff feel empowered and entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out the museum’s mission, Christine explains, they take ownership of their individual roles and become better team players as a result. “This kind of talk is not necessarily something one normally hears from museum staff,” Bergeron and Tuttle (2013) rightly point out, “let alone from non-curatorial staff in art museums where academic credentials often equate to stature. At the Chrysler, it is the norm and the direct result of the people-focused, service-oriented culture and empowering approach to management” (p. 99) that Hennessey

fostered during his tenure and that Neil continues to cultivate as Director. “More than anything else,” they write, “a sense of joyful shared purpose, ownership, and accountability for results permeates the Chrysler” (p. 108)—an observation that certainly still holds true today.

Partnerships

“Inclusive and participatory practices that involve broader audiences and communities are gaining traction in museums,” write Bergeron and Tuttle (2013). “These practices often take the form of empowering external constituencies, as well, which can have a profound ripple effect on the community” (p. 96). Much of the inclusive efforts already discussed in this chapter emphasize the Chrysler’s internal practices and visitor engagement initiatives. Here, I look at a few of the key partnerships that have advanced the museum's inclusive mission in powerful ways.

As the Community Engagement Manager, Michael’s role is to “represent the museum to outside groups” (personal communication, November 14, 2016). Central to his outreach work is a resourceful outlook and an enterprising mindset. Community engagement “really requires entrepreneurial thought,” he says. “When you show up to work, or you’re out in the world, opportunities present themselves. Opportunities, partnerships, or collaborations.” The key, he says, is to be “able to identify opportunities and then capitalize on them” (personal communication, November 14, 2016).

Tseng Kwong Chi

This active approach to relationship building is apparent in much of Michael's work engaging the LGBT community. As the Chrysler's first active attempt at LGBT outreach, the opening night reception for the exhibition *Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera* serves as a prime example of a program that identified an opportunity and capitalized on existing assets. As I have mentioned, the sudden passing of the show's curator shortly before its unveiling meant this exhibition served, in a sense, as the final achievement in her curatorial career. As a result of this tragic loss, Michael explains,

a lot of important people in [the LGBT] community who knew her and liked her and supported her career were paying attention to this particular exhibition. And I knew that it was an opportunity for the organization in Hampton Roads to get exposure among key business leaders [and] cultural leaders in our community. And I thought, because I knew they were tuned into this exhibition and the opening, we should really jump on this chance to partner with the museum because it would get really, really valuable exposure for the community. And I knew that's what the curator . . . wanted, because she told me that she did. (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

As one can see in this passage, the lines often become blurred between Michael's role as President of Hampton Roads Pride and his position at the museum. Here, he speaks as an LGBT community leader, explaining the value of collaborating with the museum for a program surrounding the Tseng Kwong Chi exhibition. Regardless, his entrepreneurial outlook is apparent in this explanation. He demonstrates his ability to identify an opportunity for the museum to foster a new relationships with an underrepresented community and to build a meaningful partnership through thematic connections with the art on view.

Michael’s deep ties with the local LGBT community made it all the more easy for him to establish a partnership with relevant organizations. He “lobbied” with both Pride and HRBOR, the LGBT chamber of commerce, “to support the exhibition opening in a way that could make it free and open to all people” (personal communication, November 14, 2016). The two organizations provided “some very nice underwriting” (Erik, personal communication, November 14, 2016) for an accessible, opening night event, and were also instrumental in promoting it to their own networks.



Illustration 10: A banner promoting the opening reception for *Tseng Kwong Chi: Performing for the Camera*, featuring the logos of Hampton Roads Pride and HRBOR (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016b).

The party, many staff members attested, was “incredible”; it was also “one of the most successful exhibition opening parties . . . in the museum’s history” (M. Berlucchi, personal communication, November 14, 2016). More than 1,000 people were in attendance

(Berlucchi & Corso, 2016a). For the event, staff converted the Chrysler's central, covered courtyard into a "posh club" complete with lounge furniture, a nod to Tseng's involvement with the New York art and nightlife scene in the 1980s. The party offered an exhibition-themed photo booth, gallery talks, custom cocktails, and contemporary dance performances throughout the night. "Come as you are or dress as you like!" the Facebook invite proclaimed.

Erik reflects on the significance of the event beyond its successes in attendance and entertainment value. "It seems like, 'Oh, you just had a party,'" he says, "but, what I think an event like that can [do is] just . . . say, 'Yes, this is a place where everyone is welcome.' And that's poignant" (personal communication, October 12, 2016). Again, by sending a specific invitation to an underrepresented audience, the museum sent a powerful message of inclusion to this population that has aided in its perception as a safe, welcoming space for LGBT visitors.

PrideFest

With the success of the Tseng Kwong Chi opening, Michael began looking for other opportunities to collaborate with the LGBT community. "We have a glass studio that's dispatched to festivals," he says, explaining his rationale. "Why not dispatch it to PrideFest?" (personal communication, November 14, 2016). Combining an existing asset and an identified need, Michael once again recognized an opportunity and set out to capitalize on it.

When the museum sends the mobile glass studio to a community event, a few gallery hosts will travel with it to engage community members, explain the glassblowing process, and promote the museum. Wanting to provide her with an opportunity to experience the lively event and engage with the LGBT community, Christine’s boss has encouraged her to accompany the glass studio to PrideFest as a representative of the museum for the last two years. Having worked with the mobile hot shop at other festivals and events, Christine can speak to the unique quality of the PrideFest crowd. “At Pride specifically, we’re getting an audience that seems more genuinely interested in what we have to say than at, potentially, other festivals,” she says. “It’s always very positive. . . . There’s a good buzz everytime we go” (personal communication, October 14, 2016).



Illustration 11: Gallery hosts manage the Chrysler’s table at PrideFest (Berlucchi & Corso, 2016b).

Not only does this partnership afford the museum a marketing opportunity with a new audience, it presents the Chrysler as a potential ally to the LGBT community. As Christine explains,

we'll get people [from Pride at the museum], inevitably, the day afterwards. I've had people show up and be like, "Oh yeah, I saw you guys at Pride!" . . . And that's why I'm here, and so, it's great. Because we are really, genuinely getting people back and into the museum who might not have visited and reaching people that might not have thought that we were as welcoming. But seeing us at Pride seems to be a pretty clear indication that we are. (Personal communication, October 14, 2016)

Christine's story reveals a direct impact of the Chrysler's partnership with Hampton Roads Pride. By showing up in their space and participating in their celebration, the museum demonstrates its commitment to this community and sends a powerful message of welcome and inclusion. Collaborating with a major LGBT community organization and participating in its largest event—which has drawn crowds of 20,000 to 25,000 people in recent years (Robert, personal communication, October 12, 2016)—the museum begins to change the way this population perceives it.

LGBT Town Hall

On January 21, 2017—a day that saw massive protests across the U.S. in the wake of Donald Trump's presidential inauguration—the Chrysler engaged in a different form of civic engagement. Partnering with Hampton Roads Pride and WHRO, Norfolk's public radio outlet, the museum invited the public to a town hall forum on law enforcement, rights, and safety concerns surrounding the LGBT community. The CIA, FBI, and seven regional departments were represented at the event. The panel included the Norfolk Chief of Police,

the Virginia Beach Police Department's LGBT Liaison, the Executive Director for Equality Virginia, an FBI representative, and a transgender woman of color who is a prominent community organizer.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, there are a number of health and safety concerns specific to the LGBT community. "When a person is arrested," Michael notes, "their identity becomes a major factor" (personal communication, February 14, 2017). Creating a space for this critical dialogue to occur serves as a real demonstration of allyship on the part of the Chrysler.

To support the event, the Chrysler allowed Hampton Roads Pride to use its theater space at no charge. The institution also provided lunch for the community and law enforcement leaders, which created an opportunity for these important figures to break bread together and engage in informal dialogue. While the organization could have booked a dreary conference room for the event, Michael believes hosting the town hall in the museum's attractive theater space made an enormous difference in terms of the program's reception. It also served as a central meeting place for a range of key decision makers in the region. Further, he feels this partnership between the Chrysler and Hampton Roads Pride "lent credibility" to the event. An invitation from the Chrysler, as a "known safe place, [a] trusted place, [and a] place of knowledge," carried weight in the community and set a serious, respectable tone that enabled these important conversations to occur (personal communication, February 14, 2017).

Despite the Women’s March taking place that day, Michael said “the Town Hall was a huge success,” with over 300 people in attendance (personal communication, February 4, 2017). Reflecting on the event’s impacts, Michael wrote,

I do believe the conversation built trust and understanding in the community and has produced substantive results such as the appointment of six LGBT Liaison Officers in our local cities. Five of those appointments were made this year, and four in the last two months! We’re definitely making a difference. (Personal communication, February 4, 2017)

Michael also shared a few anecdotes from the town hall that reveal the less tangible impacts of programs such as this. At one point following the panel discussion, Anne witnessed a gay man—clad in a leather jacket and piercings—hug a black, female police officer and say, “Thank you for everything you’re doing to protect us” (Michael, personal communication, February 14, 2017). In another instance, a chief of police, speaking privately with the black transgender woman who served on the panel, admitted he once used to torment trans women like her by stealing their wigs, placing them on the antenna of his patrol car, and driving around the neighborhood—a denigrating experience she spoke about during the town hall. He apologized to her for his past abuse, and these two dramatically different people were able to have a genuine exchange about an ugly truth. “That kind of thing makes a difference,” Michael said, “especially [given that it was] an interaction with a person of power. . . . The fact that he knows [about that abuse] means that he’ll do everything he can to prevent it from happening again” (personal communication, February 14, 2017).

Both stories speak to the real, human interactions between law enforcement officials and the LGBT community that would likely not have happened outside this

particular setting. The Chrysler, in electing to partner with Pride and host the town hall, helped facilitate these meaningful exchanges and spark urgent community dialogue. Through this program, the institution demonstrated its awareness of the challenges LGBT individuals face in their everyday lives, its commitment to supporting the local LGBT community beyond the context of the art museum, and its courage to initiate difficult conversations around issues that affect the region. The LGBT town hall serves as a prime example of a true partnership between museum and community, and presents the Chrysler as a visible ally and active advocate for the rights and safety of the local LGBT community.

Summary

A spirit of collaboration and collective vision runs through all the Chrysler does. Staff possess a sense of shared responsibility and work together to carry out the museum's mission. Operating in a system of mutual trust, employees feel empowered as leaders in their individual roles and support one another in their work. This supportive culture extends beyond the museum walls as staff collaborate and assist their colleagues in community projects outside of work.

The Chrysler's collaborative ethos can be seen in its partnerships with community organizations. Taking an entrepreneurial approach, Michael seeks to identify opportunities for collaboration and capitalize on existing assets. The museum's efforts to engage the LGBT community through an exhibition opening, an annual Pride celebration, and a town hall event demonstrate the value and mutual benefit of these collaborations. In partnering with local LGBT organizations, museums can make themselves more visible in the

community, help LGBT visitors perceive them as more welcoming spaces, and facilitate critical discourse around issues relevant to the community. Karen presents a simple yet powerful motivation for engaging in these partnerships:

We've had Third Thursdays where we've partnered with Hampton Roads Pride . . . and I often see friends we made during that time. They come back, and they bring their friends. And that's all we want. We want to bring the art and everybody together. We don't want anybody to feel like this isn't their place, because this is their place. This is for everybody, you know? (Personal communication, October 12, 2016)

CONCLUSION

A close analysis of the data collected in this case study research reveals a range of insights into the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts to include the LGBT community. Building on a culture of service, access, and empowerment instituted during Bill Hennessey's tenure as Director, the museum has been able to engage this underrepresented audience in diverse and meaningful ways.

The Chrysler welcomes LGBT visitors by presenting itself as a safe place where they are made to feel comfortable and invited to be their full selves. Through targeted invitations, the Chrysler empowers particularly vulnerable populations to take ownership of the museum and to see it as a place where they can safely explore the issues most relevant to their lives. In so doing, the museum also creates a friendly work environment for its LGBT staff through these efforts, sending a clear message of acceptance and inclusion that instills a sense of security and belonging for all who work at and visit the institution.

The museum also demonstrates its commitment to inclusive representation through its acquisition and interpretation practices. Curators see the value in accessioning work

created by LGBT artists and feel empowered to advocate for these acquisitions without fear of prejudicial response. The Chrysler also believes in shedding light on LGBT histories and narratives in its interpretive texts, feeling that these small details create opportunities for meaningful connections between visitors and artworks. Similarly, the educators and curators do not shy away from discussing these concepts in their gallery teaching. Staff understand the significance of offering a range of perspectives in the objects they collect and the ideas they discuss, recognizing that the inclusion of these narratives present rich opportunities to inform visitors about often overlooked pieces of history and to connect them with works with which they find resonance.

Through informative, cultural competency training sessions, the Chrysler works to educate staff and volunteers about the LGBT community. In these workshops, participants gain foundational information and understanding of the terminology, concepts, and issues surrounding the LGBT community. They are asked to empathize with these individuals and to consider ways in which they might work to be more inclusive in their own lives. The impacts of these trainings are both practical and personal: they provide front-line staff with ideas for adjusting their professional practices to include the LGBT community, but they also provide staff and docents with the knowledge and understanding they may need to handle issues in their personal experiences. While there is still room for improvement, these experimental workshops demonstrate the museum's commitment to improving its interactions with LGBT visitors.

Finally, the spirit of collaboration that pervades the Chrysler has a profound impact on its ability to engage the LGBT community. Internally, staff view one another as partners

working toward a shared mission and support each other in providing visitors with engaging, informative experiences. This collective mindset extends beyond the museum, as staff feel comfortable calling on their colleagues to assist them with their work in the community. Collaboration has become a central component of the Chrysler's efforts to engage the LGBT community, with the institution partnering with local LGBT organizations and community leaders to produce meaningful programming both at the museum and beyond. These partnerships reveal the museum's ability to capitalize on opportunities for engagement and demonstrate a true commitment not only to welcoming LGBT visitors to the museum, but to serving this community in urgent and powerful ways that extend beyond the traditional purpose of the art museum.

All told, the Chrysler's LGBT initiatives to engage the LGBT community illustrate a strong devotion not just to this particular population, but to the region as a whole. The museum hopes to serve as a place where all visitors feel welcome and invited to participate in the process of making meaningful connections with art. Further, these efforts present the museum as an institution willing to be bold and take risks in the pursuit of a more just and equitable world. It sheds light on critical issues in our society, encourages civic dialogue, and challenges its visitors to move beyond themselves and consider the greater good. As Michael posits,

Museums have trust. They have credibility. They have story. And that's one thing that emerging social justice causes don't necessarily have. So if a museum can lend those assets to a just cause, isn't that one of the best things they could do? (Personal communication, November 14, 2016)

In the following chapter, I present my concluding thoughts about the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive efforts. I provide a summary of this case study research, revisiting my central research question and outlining the various processes involved in carrying out this investigation. I conclude with my ideas for further research related to this topic and share my personal reflections on the significance and implications of this work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This research examined the Chrysler Museum of Art's recent efforts to foster greater inclusion for the LGBT community. Through a range of focused programming, community outreach, and staff education initiatives, the mid-sized, regional art museum has taken strides in recent years to welcome and engage local LGBT audiences. While Michael, the museum's Community Engagement Manager—who also serves as the President of the region's LGBT advocacy organization, Hampton Roads Pride—has led the charge for LGBT inclusion in close collaboration with Anne, the Director of Education, since 2015, this work began at the request of the Chrysler's Director and has required the support of staff across departments. These efforts reflect a broader institutional commitment to serving its local communities, welcoming diverse audiences, and creating enriching and transformative art experiences for all visitors.

In October 2016, I traveled to Norfolk, Virginia to investigate the Chrysler's LGBT inclusive practices. This visit enabled me to witness an immersive, identity-based program designed for a local Gay-Straight Alliance group, a series of conference presentations on LGBT inclusion led by Anne and Michael, and an LGBT cultural competency workshop delivered to staff and docents. Through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and survey research, I gained rich insights into the motivations behind these efforts and their impacts on staff, volunteers, and visitors. This study reveals the benefits and challenges of targeted initiatives to welcome the LGBT community into the art museum and the positive

effects these practices have on both internal and external constituents. It illustrates how LGBT inclusive efforts can establish the museum as a safe and welcoming space for marginalized groups; shed light on overlooked histories and connect communities to a shared heritage; prepare staff for positive interactions with LGBT visitors and families; and create space for meaningful community gatherings and dialogue to occur.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research sought to address the problem of the social exclusion of LGBT identities, histories, and perspectives from the art museum. I conducted the study in order to highlight the need for greater LGBT visibility in cultural institutions and for broader, organizational support for inclusive and equitable practices. In addressing these issues, I aimed to raise awareness of LGBT identities among museum professionals and contribute to a growing body of literature surrounding the inclusion of LGBT voices and visitors in the museum. This research ultimately sought to encourage museum practitioners to embrace gender and sexual diversity as integral threads in the intricate fabric of multiculturalism (American Alliance of Museums, 2016a; Desai, 2003).

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

The central question that initiated this research was: What can be learned from an examination of the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts to foster greater LGBT inclusion? This question addressed the problem of the invisibility of LGBT identities in museum displays and interpretation and the social exclusion of LGBT individuals from museum

audiences. I referred back to the question throughout the course of this research in order to guide my investigation and focus my thinking.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This investigation employed a critical, qualitative, mixed methods case study research approach. The critical perspective that shaped the study emphasized notions of power and oppression as they relate to constraints of gender and sexuality. Drawing from queer theory and the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2010), I sought to consider how an initiative to foster LGBT inclusion in the art museum might serve as a catalyst for greater social change.

I adopted a qualitative, mixed methods case study research design in this study. This methodology involved the collection and analysis of both numerical and narrative data, yet privileged information garnered through qualitative methods. Favoring narrative and textual data over quantitative facts in the data analysis process enabled me to develop rich, nuanced understandings of the Chrysler's inclusive efforts.

This study engaged a variety of research methods used to collect both quantitative and qualitative information. I gathered this data through the methods of direct observation, field notes, survey questionnaires, document review, and open-ended interviews conducted during my visit to the Chrysler Museum of Art in October 2016 and remotely thereafter. Employing an evolving coding technique combining both prescribed and emergent themes in my close readings of the qualitative data, and augmenting these thematic categories with

an analysis of the survey responses, I worked to uncover a number of significant findings from this research.

KEY OUTCOMES

This research produced an overwhelming abundance of insights into the Chrysler Museum of Art's LGBT inclusive practices. Perspectives echoing an earlier case study surrounding the Chrysler (Bergeron & Tuttle, 2013) revealed connections between these efforts and the people-centered approach the museum adopted under its former Director. The institution's efforts to foster greater LGBT inclusivity build upon this emphasis on visitor experience and reflect an institution-wide commitment to service, access, and empowerment.

The Chrysler's visitor-focused practices lend themselves to the creation of a welcoming environment for the LGBT community. Initiatives to make the museum more inviting and accessible to all visitors—such as committing to opening the door for each guest and placing friendly, informative gallery hosts around the museum—make the Chrysler a space where everyone can feel comfortable. As staff specially trained in customer service, gallery hosts practice empathy in their daily work and are highly attentive to the needs of others. These staff members are critical in creating a safe environment in which LGBT visitors feel comfortable being themselves. Targeted invitations to local Gay-Straight Alliances and other groups serve to empower vulnerable populations to participate in and take ownership of the museum experience. In creating a welcoming environment for

LGBT visitors, LGBT staff come to feel accepted and included in their working environment.

Through its collecting and interpretive practices, the Chrysler illustrates a dedication to inclusive representation on its walls. The institution acquires artworks by LGBT artists, as well as objects that offer alternative perspectives on gender and sexuality, specifically because the museum sees high value in adding these works to its encyclopedic collection. Museum staff recognize the need to shed light on the often-overlooked stories of LGBT individuals and view these narratives as integral to a full presentation of art history. Through interpretive texts and thematic tours, staff work to highlight the lives of LGBT artists and engage in typically taboo conversations around gender and sexuality. These efforts aid in connecting LGBT visitors to their shared heritage and integrating queer identities into the broader narrative of the museum.

Central to the Chrysler's inclusive work are its efforts to educate staff and volunteers through LGBT cultural competency workshops. These trainings are intended to provide participants with basic information about LGBT identities and encourage them to think constructively about how they might apply that knowledge in their museum work. Anecdotal evidence suggests that those who have participated in the trainings often come to think differently about their language and behaviors and actively seek to incorporate what they have learned into their practices. They also developed knowledge that helped them approach related concerns in their personal lives beyond the museum. Survey and interview responses demonstrated a clear divide between staff and volunteer participants: whereas visitor services staff responded positively and were highly impacted by the

program, docents were comparatively more hesitant to accept certain aspects of the discussion—particularly issues surrounding gender identity—and expressed confusion and problematic understandings of the information following the workshop. Also concerning is the notion that, due to the voluntary nature of the workshops, those who were perhaps most in need of hearing this information did not attend. While the training could be adjusted to address the particular challenges of working with museum docents, it nevertheless served to increase awareness of LGBT identities and help staff and volunteers rethink their practices.

The collaborative spirit at the heart of the Chrysler’s organizational culture contributes to the museum’s efforts to engage the LGBT community. A sense of shared authority helps staff feel empowered to be leaders in their own work and support one another at the museum and beyond. This collective mindset among staff extends to its partnerships with LGBT organizations, fostering equitable relationships through which community members are invited to take part in the museum’s mission to enrich and transform lives. These collaborative efforts take place both at the museum and in the community, where events like PrideFest provide opportunities for Chrysler staff to engage directly with LGBT locals and demonstrate the museum as a welcoming place for the community. The institution’s direct engagement with the LGBT community through these partnerships has resulted in meaningful impacts, from gaining new visitors to holding space for critical community dialogue. The Chrysler’s collaborative engagements with LGBT organizations reflect staff’s ability to identify and capitalize on opportunities, employ existing resources, and think beyond the standard functions of the art museum.

While this research uncovered a range of discernable effects that have resulted from these inclusive efforts—both internally among staff and volunteers, and externally among visitors and community groups—it is likely that much of the Chrysler’s work to foster greater LGBT inclusion has been impactful in ways less visible. Alex movingly illustrates this notion in reflecting on these initiatives:

As it does this good work, courageously accepting the responsibility of being a safe space for the expression of LGBT identity, the Chrysler probably doesn’t always recognize or have the means to measure the rewards. Yes, there are vibrant community partnerships, lively events, and provocative lectures. Museum staff greet each other and all visitors with a smile. In my opinion, however, this inclusivity is most valuable as a service to young people and those still on the outskirts of the LGBT community, to those who silently enter the Museum to learn more about themselves through the experience. This is a place where you can admire a handsome statue, perhaps a nude of the same sex, without any reproach. Here you can see that there is not one single definition of “masculinity,” “femininity,” “family,” or “love,” and you leave with greater confidence in the beauty of your own unique personality. And ideally, if you leave the Chrysler emboldened to love yourself, you’ll share that love with others and multiply its impact far beyond this building. (Email communication, September 30, 2016)

Overall, what is compelling about this particular case is its scope: the Chrysler’s LGBT inclusive work involves staff across many departments, reflecting an institution-wide commitment to diversity, inclusion, and visitor service. Museum leadership identified this community as one of several underrepresented audiences in need of greater attention, created a position that would help the institution serve that community, and empowered someone they saw as underutilized by hiring them to lead the charge toward greater inclusion. With visionary leadership and targeted action, museums can create a culture of inclusion internally and act on that inclusive mission with intentionality. Rather than reinvent the wheel, institutions can build upon practices already in place when engaging

the LGBT community. Approaching their work with an entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to take risks, staff can consider ways in which existing programs might lend themselves to new opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

While this study examined a siloed component of the Chrysler's programming, it is worth noting that the museum demonstrates a strong commitment to improving the social, environmental, and economic health of its region more broadly. It takes an active role in local policy conversations, partners with organizations representing diverse communities, and mounts exhibitions that address pressing environmental concerns impacting the coastal region. In all it does, the Chrysler seeks to position itself as a vital community resource for all of Hampton Roads. Institutions seeking to engage the LGBT community may wish to consider how they might instead work to make themselves essential to all the populations they serve.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens many avenues for further research. Scholars interested in pursuing similar investigations into the practice of LGBT inclusion in the museum might first turn their attention toward the LGBT community itself. While I am thrilled at the insights I received through my inquiry of Chrysler staff, volunteers, and affiliates, my study did not actively engage the perspectives of LGBT visitors and community members. Just as the museum seeks to include this audience in its programming, I believe it is vital that research in this arena include the voices of LGBT individuals. An examination of community impact

more broadly—engaging locals of varying identities to measure their reactions to these practices—might be of value as well.

As this study covered a broad spectrum of inclusive programming, from interpretive practices to community outreach to staff trainings, interested scholars might engage in a more focused examination of a single initiative. Taking a detailed look at an individual program has the potential to yield rich insights regarding the planning, implementation, and impacts of inclusive work in the museum. Researchers may choose to study a program aimed at LGBT youth, examine the particularities of a “queer” museum tour, or investigate the complex challenges of implementing more inclusive practices among docent corps. Honing the research to focus on a single effort will provide more focused information and insight than the holistic approach this study adopted.

Scholars may also seek to investigate museum practitioners’ reactions to these inclusive efforts. Anne and Michael have made significant efforts to share their work with the field, participating in conference sessions for both the Virginia Association of Museums (2017, p. 19) and the American Alliance of Museums (2017). As the subject of LGBT inclusion is still a relatively new and potentially challenging concept, a reflexive look at the museum community’s responses to these discussions may yield fruitful understandings of the field’s motivations and concerns surrounding this work

Comparative studies investigating the notion of LGBT inclusion in the museum might also be of value to the field. Researchers may be interested to examine the inclusive efforts of an art museum such as the Chrysler in relation to those of a history, science, or children’s museum. My own research suggests that these institutions may be more open to

engaging the LGBT community than art museums, and I believe art museum practitioners may benefit from learning the reasons behind this difference. Scholars may also choose to conduct comparative studies of similar inclusive programs at different museums across the country or investigate the distinctions between American museums and international institutions in relation to their LGBT engagement.

Michael's dual responsibilities as both an educator at the Chrysler and the President of Hampton Roads Pride pose intriguing possibilities for research surrounding the institutional hiring practices of museums. It is clear that his experience in advocacy and activism have benefited his work at the museum in meaningful ways. The practice of hiring community organizers is becoming more commonplace among museums, as seen at institutions like the Queens Museum of Art (Reddy, Finkelparl, & Rosario, 2012) and the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (Kinsley, 2014). Longitudinal studies investigating the impacts of these unique hiring decisions could have significant implications for the future of the field.

The recent publication of the American Alliance of Museums' (2016a) *LGBTQ Welcoming Guidelines* presents further opportunities for research in this area. Using the detailed and comprehensive criteria established in this document, scholars may conduct a broad assessment of LGBT inclusivity in museums throughout the country. An extensive, quantitative study such as this would provide museum professionals with a thorough, unbiased illustration of where American cultural institutions currently stand in their inclusion of the LGBT community and what work remains to be done.

Beyond the realm of academic research, interested parties might seek to establish an online resource where LGBT inclusive museum programming can be collected and shared with a broader network. In my discussions with peers and museum practitioners, I have discovered a general lack of knowledge surrounding current museum practices engaging the LGBT community. A central site where students, members of the public, and museum professionals alike could learn about the work of institutions around the country (and the world) to include this population might prove to be a valuable resource as museums seek to become more inclusive. The Queering the Museum Project (n.d.), a blog exploring the intersections of gender, sexuality, and the museum, serves as an excellent starting point, yet lacks a comprehensive take on these efforts.

Possibilities abound for research concerning LGBT inclusion in the museum. I encourage any interested scholars to pursue these efforts, as further investigations will serve to improve institutional practices and help to elevate this critical issue within museum discourse.

THE MUSEUM AS ALLY

Our current moment often seems frightening and uncertain. Despite the recent milestone of nationwide marriage equality, the LGBT community continues to face violence, discrimination, and bigotry in the U.S. In many states around the country, LGBT individuals can still be fired from their jobs, rejected from housing opportunities, and denied urgent healthcare because of who they are and who they love. Those who do not fit into binary understandings of gender identity have increasingly become the targets of

discriminatory policies, hateful rhetoric, and unspeakable cruelty. This hatred has disproportionately impacted transgender women of color, who continue to face brutal and often fatal violence as a result of their intersecting identities (Human Rights Commission, 2016).

The urgency for empathy and for action is unmistakable. In an era characterized by “fake news” and “alternative facts,” by bullying and fearmongering from those in the highest positions of power, museums are uniquely positioned to serve as beacons of truth, support, and radical human compassion. Museums have trust. They have credibility. They have cultural currency. Museums have the power to elevate marginalized voices, spark challenging dialogue, and spread knowledge. They have the capacity to enrich lives, shape culture, and impact positive change.

The Chrysler Museum of Art serves as a powerful illustration of these truths. Yet the Chrysler’s example also teaches us that these impacts require intentionality, action, and courage on the part of museum practitioners. Whether educator or curator, director or docent, we must be willing to embrace gender and sexual differences as vital and beautiful strands of our multicultural world. We must begin to turn our attention toward our LGBT colleagues, friends, and neighbors, recognizing them as essential pieces of what makes our communities great. We must educate ourselves so that we might begin to educate others. Knowledge is the greatest foil to bigotry and fear.

Now is not the time to play it safe. Now is the time to take risks, take a stand, and take care of one another. Now is the time to listen, to respond, to act. Now is the time for

empathy, advocacy, and togetherness. Now is the time to show love—to remember that love is verb, and to love is to act.

To be an ally is to act, too. It requires work. It requires heart. It requires a steadfast commitment to public service. I believe museums have the capacity to serve as powerful allies to the LGBT community. But first, we need to get to work.

Appendix A: Site Approval Letter



September 12, 2016

Dr. James Wilson, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
P.O. Box 7426
Austin, TX 78713
irbchair@austin.utexas.edu

Dear Dr. Wilson:

The purpose of this letter is to grant Clare Donnelly, a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin, permission to conduct research at The Chrysler Museum of Art. The project, "Art & Allyship: Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler Museum of Art," entails an examination of an LGBT sensitivity training to be administered to museum docents on October 14, 2016. Data will be collected at the museum in Norfolk, Virginia through observation, interviews with key staff members and museum affiliates, and anonymous survey questionnaires to be distributed to training participants. No more than 40 museum affiliates will be included as interview and questionnaire subjects. The Chrysler Museum of Art was selected because the institution's LGBT inclusive programming met the needs of this study. Miss Donnelly has been in communication with myself and other museum staff since March 2016, but she has no professional or personal relationship with the museum beyond the context of this research. She will share her final research report with the Chrysler Museum of Art as a digital PDF upon its publication. I, Anne Corso, do hereby grant permission for Clare Donnelly to conduct her project, "Art & Allyship: Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler Museum of Art" at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Corso".

Anne Corso
Director of Education

ONE MEMORIAL PLACE
NORFOLK, VA 23510

TEL: (757) 664-6200
FAX: (757) 664-6201
C H R Y S L E R . O R G



Appendix B: IRB Exempt Determination



OFFICE OF RESEARCH SUPPORT
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

P. O. Box 7426, Austin, Texas 78713 · Mail Code A3200
(512) 471-8871 · FAX (512) 471-8873

FWA # 00002030

Date: 09/28/16
PI: Paul E Bolin
Dept: Art/Art History
Title: Art & Allyship: Fostering LGBT Inclusion at the Chrysler
Museum of Art

Re: IRB Exempt Determination for Protocol Number 2016-09-0045

Dear Paul E Bolin:

Recognition of Exempt status based on 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

Qualifying Period: 09/28/2016 to 09/27/2019. Expires 12 a.m. [midnight] of this date.
A continuing review report must be submitted in three years if the research is ongoing.

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator:

Research that is determined to be Exempt from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review is not exempt from ensuring protection of human subjects. The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible for the following throughout the conduct of the research study:

1. Assuring that all investigators and co-principal investigators are trained in the ethical principles, relevant federal regulations, and institutional policies governing human subject research.
2. Disclosing to the subjects that the activities involve research and that participation is voluntary during the informed consent process.
3. Providing subjects with pertinent information (e.g., risks and benefits, contact information for investigators and ORS) and ensuring that human subjects will voluntarily consent to participate in the research when appropriate (e.g., surveys, interviews).
4. Assuring the subjects will be selected equitably, so that the risks and benefits of the research are justly distributed.
5. Assuring that the IRB will be immediately informed of any information or unanticipated problems that may increase the risk to the subjects and cause the category of review to be reclassified to expedited or full board review.

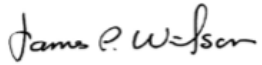
6. Assuring that the IRB will be immediately informed of any complaints from subjects regarding their risks and benefits.
7. Assuring that the privacy of the subjects and the confidentiality of the research data will be maintained appropriately to ensure minimal risks to subjects.
8. Reporting, by submission of an amendment request, any changes in the research study that alter the level of risk to subjects.

These criteria are specified in the PI Assurance Statement that was signed before determination of exempt status was granted. The PI's signature acknowledges that they understand and accept these conditions. Refer to the Office of Research Support (ORS) website www.utexas.edu/irb for specific information on training, voluntary informed consent, privacy, and how to notify the IRB of unanticipated problems.

1. Closure: Upon completion of the research study, a Closure Report must be submitted to the ORS.
2. Unanticipated Problems: Any unanticipated problems or complaints must be reported to the IRB/ORS immediately. Further information concerning unanticipated problems can be found in the IRB Policies and Procedure Manual.
3. Continuing Review: A Continuing Review Report must be submitted if the study will continue beyond the three year qualifying period.
4. Amendments: Modifications that affect the exempt category or the criteria for exempt determination must be submitted as an amendment. Investigators are strongly encouraged to contact the IRB Program Coordinator(s) to describe any changes prior to submitting an amendment. The IRB Program Coordinator(s) can help investigators determine if a formal amendment is necessary or if the modification does not require a formal amendment process.

If you have any questions contact the ORS by phone at (512) 471-8871 or via e-mail at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Sincerely,



James Wilson, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair

Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire for Training Participants

LGBT Sensitivity Training Feedback

1. Overall, how would you rate your experience in this workshop?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

2. For each of the statements below, choose the response that best represents how strongly you agree or disagree.

	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A. I was knowledgeable about LGBT identities before this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
B. I did not care about LGBT issues before this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
C. I gained new insights about LGBT issues during this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
D. My perspective on LGBT issues changed during this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
E. I was extremely uncomfortable with the topics discussed during this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
F. The ideas discussed in this workshop are not at all relevant to my work at the museum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G. I will definitely use the information from this workshop in my work at the museum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
H. It is unnecessary to educate museum staff and volunteers about these issues.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I. I do not understand why this workshop was offered at the museum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
J. I am glad I participated in this workshop.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Why did you choose to participate in this workshop?

4. What are the most important ideas you will take away from this workshop?

5. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience in this workshop?

6. What is your age?

- 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 66 or older

7. What is your relationship to the Chrysler Museum of Art?

- Staff Volunteer Other (please specify) _____

8. I identify my gender as:

- Woman Man Trans* Prefer not to disclose
 Other (please specify) _____

9. I identify my sexuality as:

- Straight Gay/Lesbian Bisexual Prefer not to disclose
 Other (please specify) _____

Appendix E: Follow-Up Correspondence to Training Participants

Date: November 17, 2016

Subject: LGBT Inclusion Training: Request for feedback

Good morning,

My name is Clare, and I am a graduate student in Art Education at The University of Texas at Austin. I am conducting my master's thesis research on the Chrysler Museum of Art's efforts to foster an inclusive environment for the LGBT community.

I am writing to you because you provided me with your contact information during last month's LGBT inclusion training at the Chrysler Museum of Art. As it has been about a month since your participation in this workshop, I wanted to follow up with you regarding your thoughts on the information presented in the workshop.

Would you be willing to share a story about how the LGBT inclusion workshop has impacted your personal and/or professional life? Perhaps it has guided your thinking in your work with museum visitors, or helped you to feel more informed in conversations with family and friends, or simply left you with more questions about these complex issues. Whatever your story, I would love to hear it.

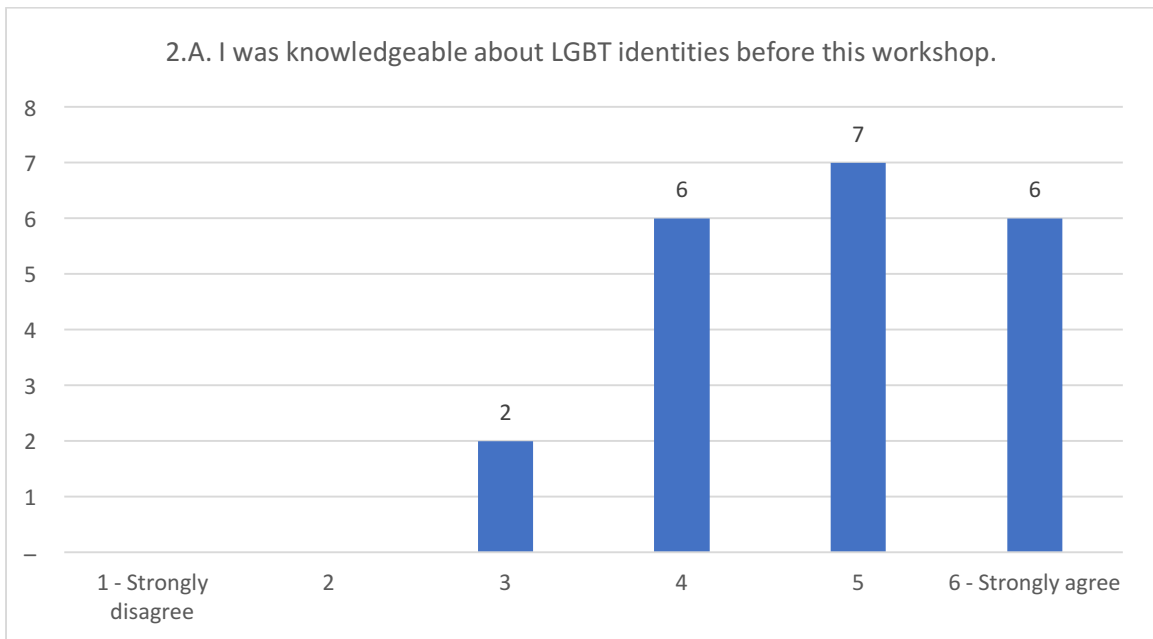
If you have something to share, please respond directly to this email with your story. Your responses will remain completely anonymous in my thesis report, and I will be happy to share the final document with you if you are interested.

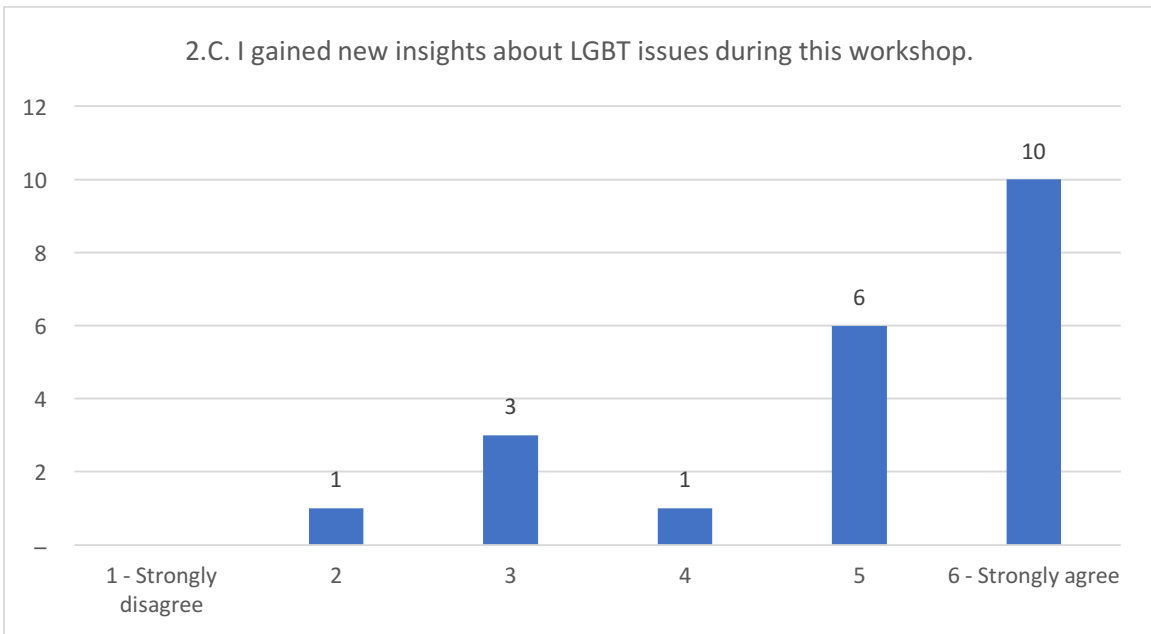
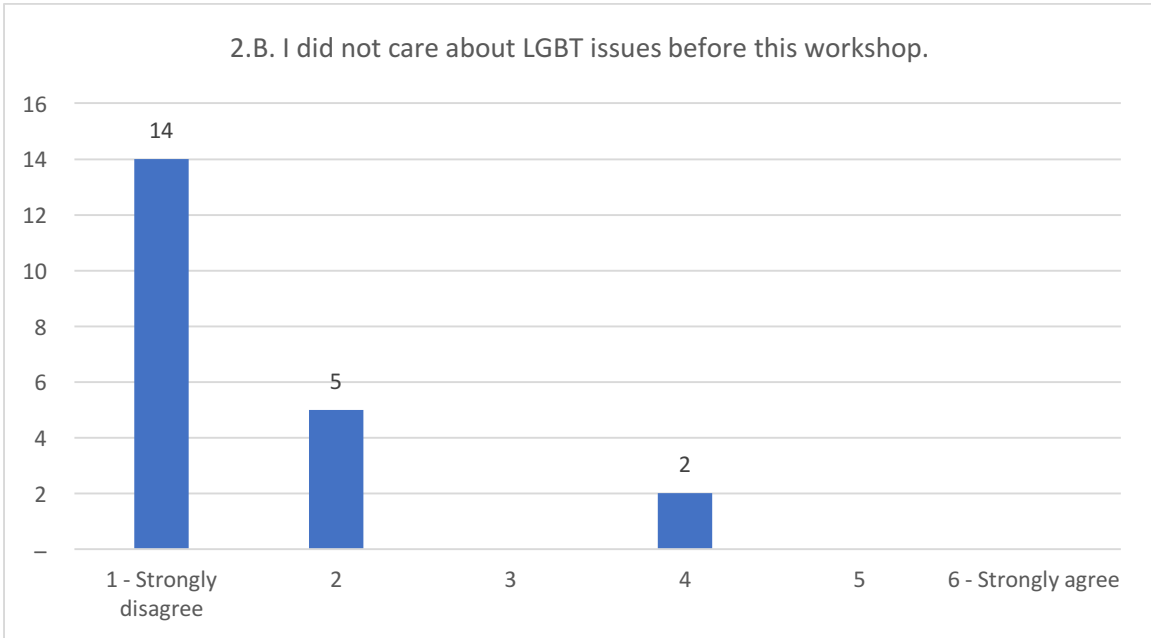
Thank you for offering to be contacted for this research. I am grateful for your thoughtful participation and feedback. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

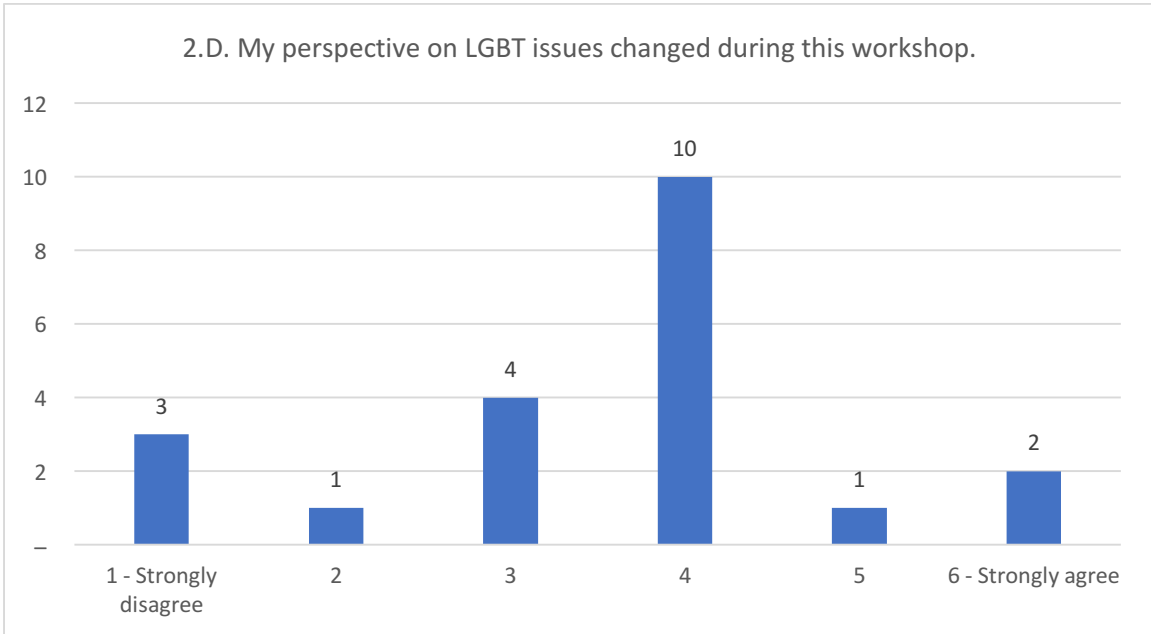
My best,
Clare

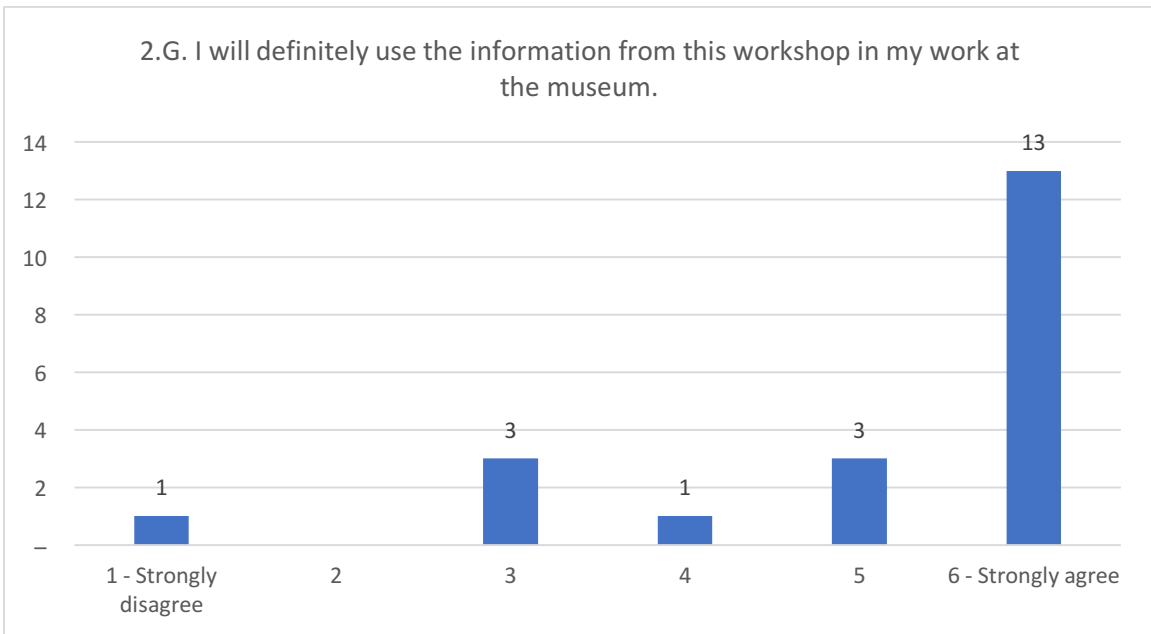
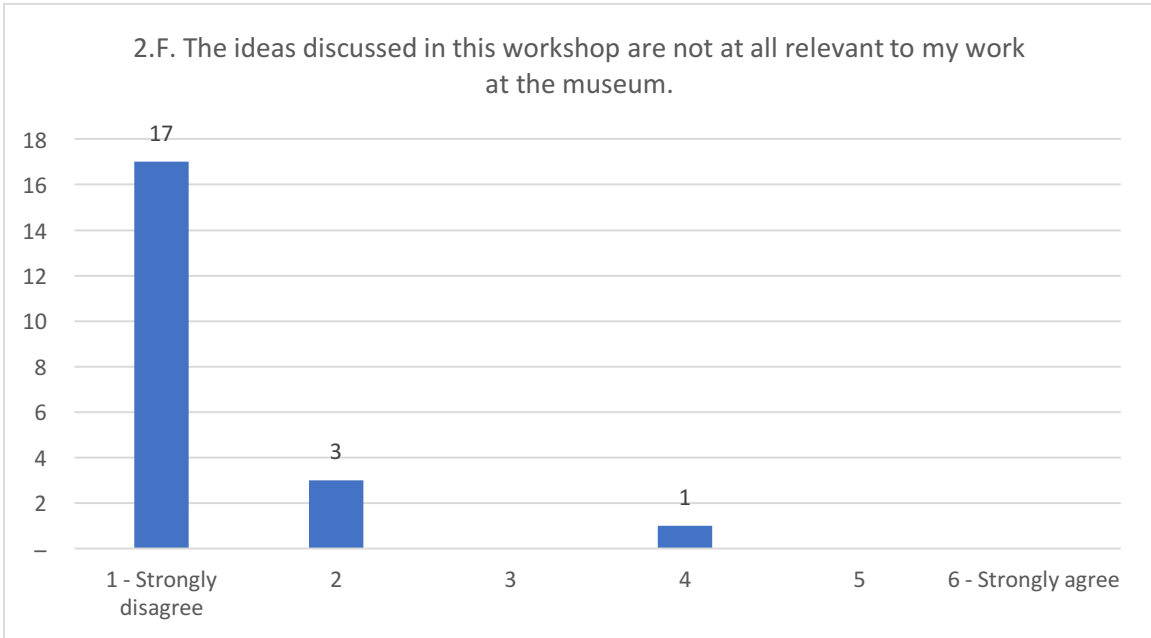
CLARE DONNELLY
MA Candidate in Art Education
The University of Texas at Austin

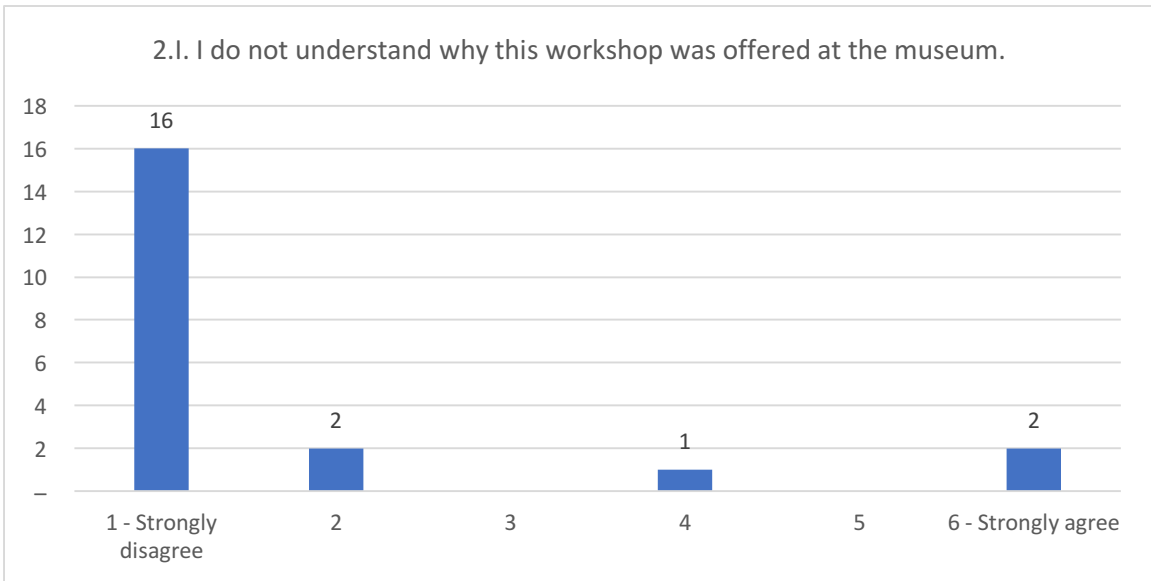
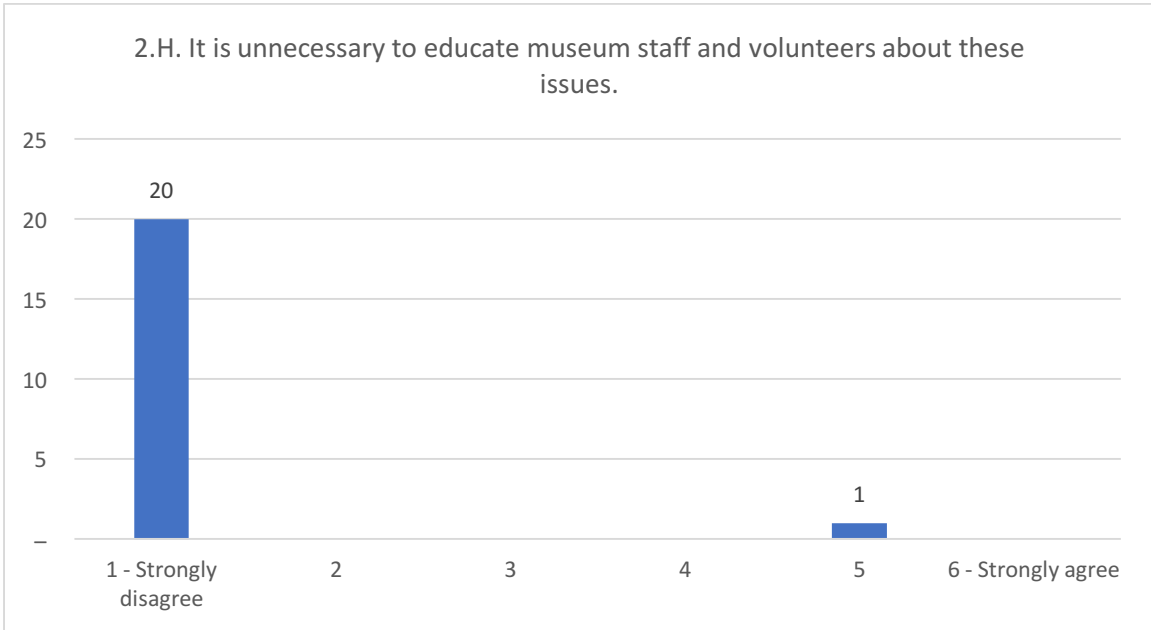
Appendix F: Survey Result Charts

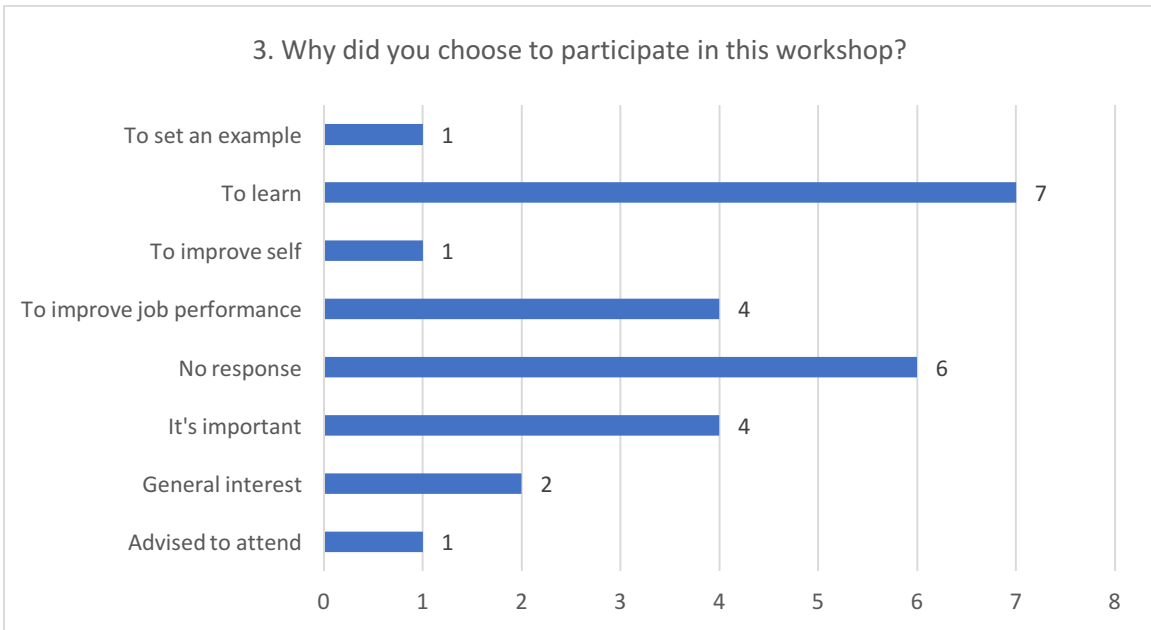
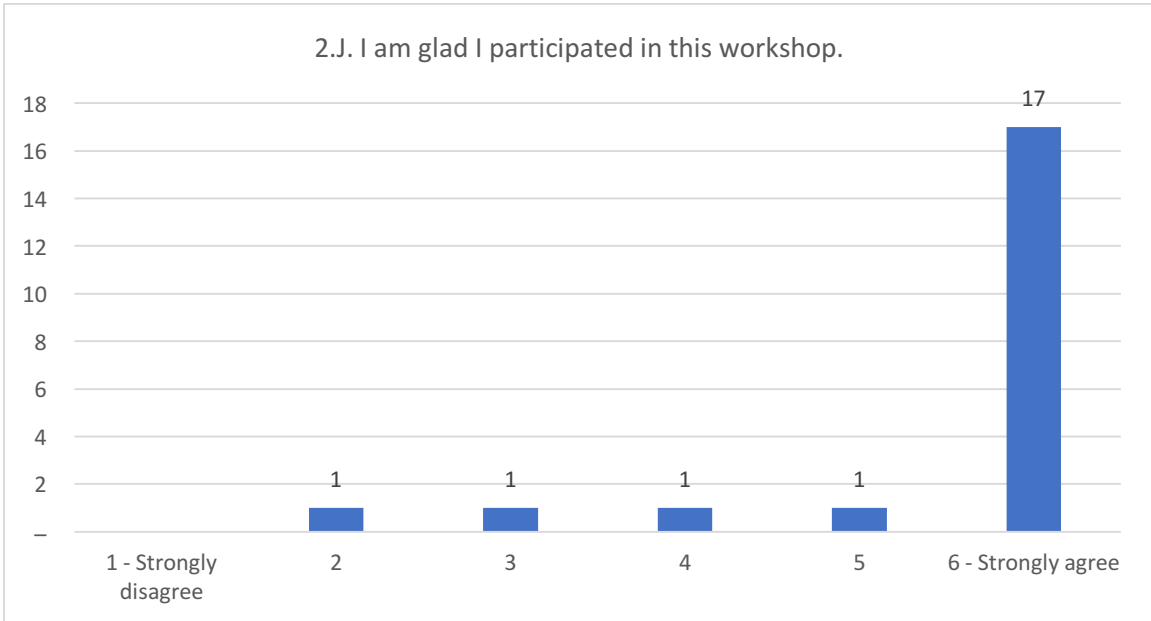




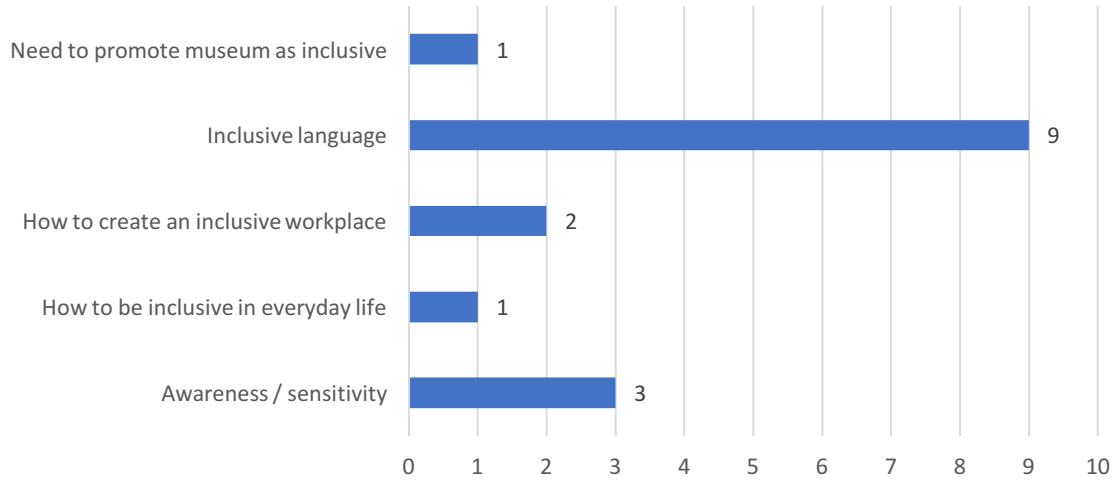




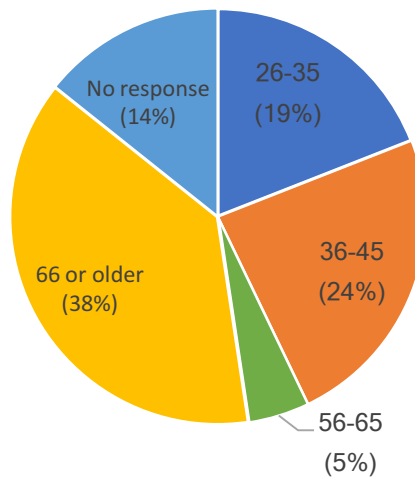




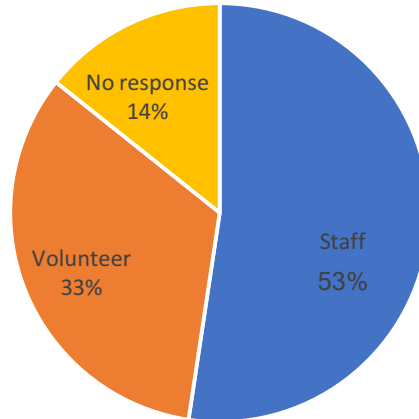
4. What are the most important ideas you will take away from this workshop?



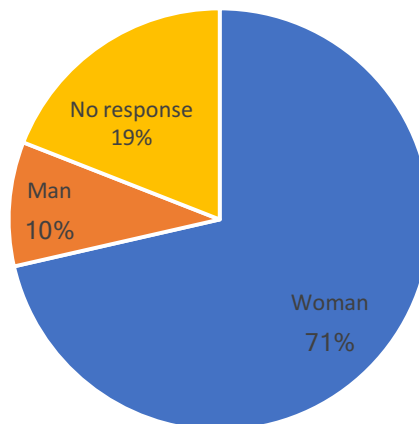
6. What is your age?



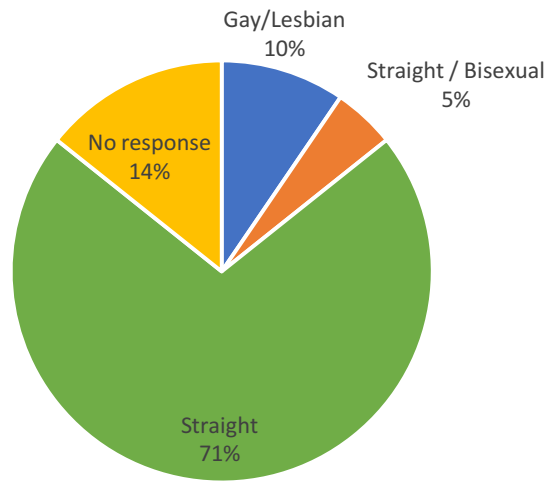
7. What is your relationship to the Chrysler Museum of Art?



8. I identify my gender as:



9. I identify my sexuality as:



Appendix G: LGBT Inclusive Programming at U.S. Museums

The following is by no means an exhaustive list, but is intended to highlight a wide range of LGBT inclusive practices for museum practitioners who seek to welcome this community into their institutions.

- **The Andy Warhol Museum**
 - [LGBTQ+ Youth Prom](#): An event that creates “a safe opportunity to participate in an experience every youth deserves.” Teens can participate in the LGBTQ+ Youth Prom Planning Team, working to plan the event’s theme, decorations, and activities.
 - [TQ Live!](#): A performance series featuring “artists and performers from the many LGBTQIA communities in the Pittsburgh region.”
 - The museum has hosted a number of exhibitions exploring themes of gender and sexuality, partnered with local LGBT organizations, and offered a variety of other programs aimed at the LGBT community.
- **Boston Children’s Museum**
 - [Mimi’s Family](#): A photography exhibition about a transgender grandparent and her family, displayed in 2015.
- **Brooklyn Museum**
 - [LGBTQ Teen Night](#): An annual event “planned by LGBTQ teens for LGBTQ teens and their allies,” including an exploration of gender and sexuality in the museum’s collections and exhibitions. Teens can participate in a [paid internship](#) to plan the event.
 - The museum’s digital collections include an “[LGBTQ artist](#)” tag that helps visitors identify works made by queer artists.
- **Chicago Children’s Museum**
 - [International Family Equality Day](#): An annual program that “celebrates children with LGBT parents and caregivers and allows them to discover how many families are just like theirs.”
 - [Statement on LGBTQ Inclusion](#): Part of the museum’s wider Accessibility and Inclusion initiatives, the statement demonstrates the museum’s belief that “it is imperative that the LGBTQ community be recognized, understood, and accepted in the same manner as the other communities we serve.”
 - [Series of LGBTQ Pride Events](#) that “celebrate and show . . . support for LGBTQ families,” including a participatory rainbow staircase, a response wall, storytelling and resources for LGBTQ families and allies, and more.

- **Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose**
 - [American Family](#): A photography exhibition highlighting “one Bay Area family with two gay moms.” An interpretive approach focusing on the meaning of family helped make the exhibition relevant to all visitors.
- **Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens**
 - A [series of GLBT programming](#) including “Gay Day,” a family picnic, and outdoor film screenings.
- **Field Museum**
 - [Outfielders](#): An employee group whose mission “is to create a safe, welcoming place at The Field Museum dedicated to promoting the inclusion of people of all genders and sexual orientations.”
- **Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago**
 - [The Skew](#): A “performative panel” of trans* women exploring issues of identity, representation, and celebrity culture.
- **Museum of History and Industry**
 - [Revealing Queer](#): A community-driven exhibition examining how the Puget Sound LGBTQ community “has grown, changed, become more visible, and worked towards equality.”
- **Museum of International Folk Art**
 - [Let’s Talk About This](#): An exhibition focused on folk artists’ responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis that involved community partnerships and a digital storytelling project with LGBTQ youth.
- **Museum of Modern Art**
 - [Open Art Space](#): “A free drop-in program for LGBTQ-identifying teens and their allies.”
- **Mutter Museum**
 - [Out4STEM](#): A networking event “aimed at getting LGBT youth into notoriously white, straight and male science professions.” This program offered talks on gender and sexuality and an LGBT-centered tour of the museum’s medical specimen collection.
- **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**
 - [Here and Queer Tours](#): A thematic self-guided tour of “LGBT-specific works.”
- **New York Public Library**
 - [LGBT@NYPL](#): An online resource “connecting you with the LGBT collections, programs, and expertise that The New York Public Library has to offer.”
 - [Anti-Prom](#): “An alternative, safe space for teens who may not feel welcome at official school programs or dances because of their sexuality, gender presentation, the way they dress, or any other reason.”

- **Portland Art Museum**
 - [Powerful Self: LGBTQIA2S+ Lives Today](#): Part of the museum’s *Object Stories* series, this exhibition is “the culmination of a conversational workshop between newly acquainted intergenerational persons from within Pacific Northwest LGBTQIA2S+ communities.”
 - The museum’s collection and interpretive practices demonstrate an openness to discussions of gender and sexuality. The description of the 18th century Italian painting [Il Femminiello](#), which depicts an early example of gender nonconformity, is a prime illustration of this inclusive practice.
- **San Francisco museums**
 - [#museumswithpride](#): A show of support from a number of Bay Area museums in the 2016 San Francisco Pride Parade.
- **Wadsworth Atheneum**
 - [Warhol & Mapplethorpe: Guise & Dolls](#): An exhibition exploring these artists’ work with “role-playing and gender roles—masculinity, femininity, and androgyny.” An education room within the exhibition encouraged reflection and an exploration of gender expression. Related programming—talks, film screenings, and after-hours events—engaged themes of gender, sexuality, and LGBT history.
- **Walker Art Center**
 - [Queer Takes: Alt Families](#): An annual film series featuring “films that delve into the complexities of the topic of families within the LGBT community.”
- **Whitney Museum of American Art**
 - [Queer Bodies](#): “A tour exploring gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ perspectives in *Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney’s Collection*.”
 - [Partnership with the LGBT Community Center](#): The Whitney has partnered with the Center on a number of programs—including an alternative mapping project, a family picnic, and a multi-visit program for teens—since 2010.
 - [All-Gender Restrooms](#) were installed in the museum’s new building in 2015.

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