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Changing Lexicons: A Study of Young Adult Programming at the

Denver Art Museum

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Changing Lexicons: A Study of Young Adult Programming at the Denver Art Museum

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents for all the years that they have abandoned common sense with me so that I might live my dream.

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Abstract

Changing Lexicons: A Study of Young Adult Programming at the

Denver Art Museum

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A decrease in arts participation among Generation Y young adults demonstrates a need for museum educators to increase programming efforts with this audience. By reaching out to young adults, educators can secure museums' relevance in society while inspiring lifelong learning in what will be America's largest generation. Moreover, due to their learning preferences young adults present an opportunity for educators to investigate participatory and digital engagement programming. This explanatory case study draws from current research on Generation Y and recent trends in museum programming particularly related to the young adult audience. It explores the approach of educators at the Denver Art Museum (DAM) to developing young adult programs. I conducted interviews with DAM staff members and program evaluators and examined multiple documents related to the development of these programs. Based on my data, I identified five key features of the Denver Art Museum's approach and assessed their suitability for transferring to other museums.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

With the coming of age of what will soon be America's largest generation, named the Millennials or Generation Y (Gen Y), there is a need for museums to invest effort in programming for young adult audiences. This generation of twenty-somethings represents a change in how people are thinking about social interaction, technology, and the milestones of adulthood. Gen Y'ers are more educated, career oriented, technologically literate, and have more disposable income than preceding generations. They are part of a "creative renaissance" (Chung, Johnstone, & Wilkening, 2008, p. 17) defined by a marked increase in creative output. Moreover, they are informed, community conscious, and connected (Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Goldgehn, 2004). The fields of marketing, psychology, and education have provided museum educators with a starting point for understanding their own unique audience of young adults, however, the field of museum education has yet to establish best practices for connecting with and serving these audiences (DePrizio, 2012; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010). As Millennials enter the workforce and eventually parenthood, museum staffs must consider how to reach this audience now; they will comprise museums' visitor base for years to come. The goal of this study was to examine one multifaceted approach to young adult programming that has proven successful at increasing participation in this target audience, that of the Denver Art Museum (DAM). I also examined how this approach might be useful to the work done in other museums.

CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

The following question served as the motivation and guide for my investigation: In the eyes of administrators, educators and evaluators, what is the Denver Art Museum's approach to young adult program development and in what ways might it be useful to the work done in other museums?

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In an online survey of 2,300 young adults Chung, Johnstone, and Wilkening (2008) found that museum attendance in the young adult age group is decreasing; survey participants ranked visiting museums 12th out of 15 leisure activities listed. This trend is problematic for a number of reasons. First, as Generation Y ages they will become the foundation of museums' family and adult audiences. Therefore, it is critical that museum educators demonstrate the relevance of museums to members of Gen Y now to create a lasting pattern of participation and museum advocacy, i.e. an invested interest in one's museum. Increased attendance in this group would help secure the financial future of museums. It would also provide an opportunity for museum staffs to reinforce the relevance of museums in society by being in tune with up and coming people in their communities.

The literature on the current generation of young adults suggests that they are different than their preceding generations in their comfort with technology, the way they connect to others, and how they learn. Thus, they present opportunities for museum educators to explore new types of programming with this audience of visitors as collaborators. As the first generation of digital natives (Prensky, 2001), Millennials are a

suitable audience with which to begin exploring digital engagement. Furthermore, their comfort with and dependence on technology has enabled them to be constantly connected to a global network that shapes their social dynamic and also how they learn, that is, by aggregating crowd-sourced information then applying their own perspective. Gen Y'ers expect museum experiences to mirror other experiences in their lives by being highly participatory and co-creative. As such Gen Y is also an appropriate audience with which to explore participatory education practices. It can be reasoned that future generations will follow the same trend of connectedness and reliance on technology; therefore, the pioneers of this lifestyle cannot be ignored by museums, but should be considered potential collaborators for improving museum experiences.

For Millennials increased attendance and, more importantly, increased participation in museum programs can inspire lifelong learning and museum advocacy. If educators can demonstrate to Millennials that museums are worth their time and attention, they can plant the seeds of a lifelong relationship that can have a significant impact on Millennials' lives. By creating a stronger connection between Millennials and museums educators can offer young adults not only new perspectives through meaningful experiences with art objects but also a forum for connecting with their community and sharing or expanding their interests. However, to do this museum educators need to understand young adults today—how they live, learn, what they are involved in, and how the museum might fit into their lives.

MOTIVATIONS

As a member of Generation Y, I have experienced firsthand the changes that authors in psychology and museum education are noticing in how this group approaches life (Arnett, Hendry, Kloep, & Tanner, 2011; Chung & Wilkening, 2009). From floppy disks and dialup to smartphones and Facebook, I have experienced the unprecedented evolution of technology in my daily life for as long as I can remember. As I entered adulthood I noticed the differences in my parents' and my own experiences of college and the way we handled the responsibilities of our twenties. Thanks to my mother I had the opportunity to visit many museums throughout my childhood. These visits were partially responsible for my decision to become a museum educator, and they introduced me to the benefits of museum advocacy. As I begin my career I have the opportunity to be a leader in ushering my generation into museums. Understanding both museum education and the underserved young adult audience, I see a chance to do innovative work that inspires more people my age to be invested in museums and also challenges me to reflect on and respond to the unique characteristics of my generation.

In Hirzy's 1992 report *Excellence and Equity*, she recognizes a need for museums to, "Identify specific segments of the community that the museum would like to serve more fully, develop working relationships with them, and initiate programs to involve them in substantive ways" (p.16). Twenty years later museum educators are still searching for ways to reach out to new audiences and keep up with evolving ones. In a research agenda for the 21st century released in 2009, the National Art Education Association (NAEA) similarly posed the question, "How do museums become more

accessible and comfortable for everyone in order to cultivate a life-long interest in museums" (p. 3)? This question is extremely relevant to the field at this moment. The phrase that stands out to me is "cultivat[ing] a life-long interest in museums"—something Chung et al. (2008) have shown is lacking in the young adult age group. Because Gen Y'ers are waiting longer to start families (Chung et al., 2008), there is a unique opportunity with this audience to cultivate that interest at a moment that could impact museum visits throughout future stages of their lives. Therefore, it is important that methods for reaching and serving young adult audiences be studied, tested, and disseminated.

SPECULATION ABOUT RESEARCH

While considering an internship with the Denver Art Museum in the summer of 2012, I researched its various education initiatives and was ultimately drawn to young adult programming. I sensed that educators at DAM were doing something new with these programs, so during my internship I attended some and spoke with educators about their work with young adults. The programs I observed were lively and social. Activities were innovative and most required input from the audience. Visitors were not shy about jumping into an activity and most drifted around to various activities as there were many different options. From my experience facilitating some of the experiences at *Untitled*, visitors were willing to get swept up in an experience no matter how strange it was. They were also genuinely interested in the art content at the heart of each experience. As the summer progressed, I developed this thesis study to explore how DAM's young adult

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programs were developed so that I could identify elements that might inform mine and others' future work with this audience. Moreover, I was interested in looking in-depth at the program development process that might inform my work with all audiences.

When I began this project I speculated that my study would reveal that educators at DAM have an understanding of the young adult audience and audiences in a broader sense that is informed by existing research in museum education, but also indicative of a unique approach. I expected to find that some aspects of DAM's approach could be applied to museum programming at large, while others would be unique to the specific context of the city of Denver and the identity of the Denver Art Museum. As revealed by the title of this thesis, I found in my conversations with educators a new vocabulary for thinking about young adult audiences, but also the process of developing programs for them; phrases like "showing up," "hubs," and "style." This lexicon embodies ideas that made me reconsider some assumptions I had. I hoped that delving into the personal stories of those that developed it would have the same effect on other educators.

RESEARCH METHODS

This explanatory case study (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Reimber, 2011; Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2009) focused on young adult programs at the Denver Art Museum, the process by which DAM educators developed them, and how this process might be useful to other museums. The purpose of the study was to examine a group of programs through the eyes of the people who developed, oversaw and evaluated them. I chose this particular case study based on my own interest and because DAM's programs were

successful at increasing attendance in the target audience. This outcome is significant because it suggests that the staff at DAM successfully reached out to their community of young adults and demonstrated the relevance of museum experiences to that audience. I used explanatory case study as my methodology because I was interested in piecing together the story of how DAM educators developed their programs to understand what made the programs successful at reaching the target audience.

To collect my data I conducted semistructured interviews (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006) and examined a number of documents relating to the programs I studied. I interviewed members of DAM education staff to obtain information on program goals, audience research, and community outreach among other facets of their program development process. I also interviewed Randi Korn and Associates staff members to discuss an evaluation they conducted of DAM's young adult programs in 2011. I used an interview guide for each of my interviews, which I adapted to the conversation to enable participants to talk freely about what topics and information they considered relevant. I then transcribed audio recordings of the interviews and reviewed them multiple times. I used the grounded theory approach to analyze my documents and transcripts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), beginning with finding repeating patterns in the data and organizing the patterns into loose themes and finally large concepts.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The Collective: A website created by the Denver Art Museum that contains digital engagement programs for young adults and museum generated content including a blog and updates for onsite programs.

Demo & Do: A Denver Art Museum event that includes a live art demonstration and hands-on activities.

digital Do-It-Yourself (*dDIY*): A Denver Art Museum digital engagement program that poses creative challenges to visitors and then enables them to share their work on *The Collective* website.

Digital Engagement Programs*:* Onsite or online museum experiences facilitated by a digital tool.

Generation Y/Millennials: The generation of approximately 70 million people born in the United States between the early 1980s and early 2000s.

Happenings: One-of-a-kind events facilitated by the Denver Art Museum and a partnering community organization.

Untitled: A monthly program at the Denver Art Museum characterized by unexpected interactions with works of art.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study examines one set of young adult programs, those of the Denver Art Museum; therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized. Rather, they provide considerations for other museum educators developing young adult programming. My goal with this study was not to provide a single method that can be applied in whole, but

to find tools that can be adapted to other museums in accordance with their unique visitor population and institutional ethos. Because data was collected through single interviews conducted on one visit to DAM and a single interview with members of Randi Korn and Associates, I do not assume that the data records the entirety of educators' and evaluators' thoughts or actions in relation to the programs under study.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As museums develop programs for young adult audiences, it is important to explore examples of success that can be integrated into practice across the field of museum education. This study provides a detailed look at the development of a set of young adult programs that were successful at engaging this audience while also impacting education practices with other audiences.

The thesis is comprised of five chapters. In Chapter 2 I review literature on Generation Y, young adult museum programming, and education at the Denver Art Museum. I describe the methodology that I used to complete my study in Chapter 3 and the results of my data analysis in Chapter 4. Finally, in Chapter 5 I answer my central research question based on the themes I found in my data and I provide the significance of my study and suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of Pertinent Literature

The research for this study began broadly, looking at psychology (Arnett, Hendry, Kloep, & Tanner, 2011; Bentley, 2007; Erikson, 1982; Settersten & Ray, 2010) marketing and education (Black 2010; Goldgehn, 2004; Loy, 2010), and museum education (Burton, Fellenz, Gittings-Carlson, Lewis-Mahoney, Sachatello-Sawyer, & Woolbaugh, 2001; Chung, Johnstone, & Wilkening, 2008; Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Fischer & Levinson, 2010; Hein, 1998; Simon, 2010; Williams, 1984) for discussions and definitions of young adults now and in the past that might shape my understanding of museum programming with this group. I begin this chapter, however, with a discussion of the current generation of young adults, Generation Y. They are examined first as a demographic and then in terms of their unique personal characteristics, specifically those related to creativity and their connection to the world through technology. I then investigate a shift in recent adult programming, specifically with young adults, from transmission style programming that positions the visitor as learner, to experience-based with the visitor as collaborator. I include a history of young adult programming in the United States to contextualize the Denver Art Museum's programs within museum education as a whole. Finally, I provide further context for these programs with an overview of recent DAM education initiatives.

DEFINING GENERATION Y[1]

The available literature (Anderson, 2007; Black, 2010; Goldgehn, 2004; Loy, 2010) attempts to define Generation Y or the so-called Millennial generation within a 20 year span of time and in some cases demarcated by significant global events. Goldgehn (2004) cites a total of 70 million people in this generation, which will soon pass America's current largest generation, the Baby Boomers, in size (Chung & Wilkening, 2009). A single set of dates for this generation does not exist, however the early 1980s to early 2000s is most commonly cited (Burton et al., 2001; Goldgehn, 2004). Anderson (2007) argues that 2001 is a clear cutoff for Generation Y because the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon that occurred on September 11, 2001 caused a paradigm shift that separates this generation from the next. Anderson posits that the ensuing political, financial, and cultural changes, i.e., the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, mounting national debt, and the increased awareness and tension toward the non-American, were an "indelible marker for the end of a generation" (p.7). Essentially, children born into the fallout of a significant global event only experience its effects without fully understanding the causes. Thus, they lack an important shared memory held by the generation that precedes them, thereby separating them from that generation.

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[1]"Generation Y" is a term used to distinguish a generation of young adults approximately born between 1980 and 2001. Although museum staffs use the general term "young adult" for programming for this age group, I will use a form of "Generation Y" or "Millennials" to clarify that I am writing about this specific generation.

If Generation Y is defined by the dates 1980-2001, it is composed of people aged 12 to 33. This range bridges two distinct stages of life according to psychologists and educators: adolescence and early adulthood (Arnett et al., 2011; Bentley, 2007; Erikson, 1982). Millennials are distinct from previous generations of young adults in that they prolong the transition from adolescence to early adulthood and all other milestones in life. This presents serious implications for the future of family structures and in turn the way museums will need to serve family audiences. Scholars (Arnett et al., 2011; Burnett, 2010) have responded by identifying a new stage of adulthood that captures the changing definitions: emerging adulthood.

EARLY ADULTHOOD THEN AND NOW

One of the ways in which research in the social sciences has traditionally distinguished groups of people is by age and characteristics related to views of self and the world; psychologists (Arnett et al., 2011; Bentley, 2007; Erikson, 1982) have developed stage theories to track human characteristics, priorities, and actions across a lifetime. Although this approach enables a seemingly clean distinction between life stages, denoted by an age range and title such as adolescence or early adulthood, various scholars' theories have their own distinct categories and age ranges. It is problematic to define groups of people by age, especially when there is not a common template for the division of the particular human lifespan. With Generation Y the distinction between stages becomes even messier as the progression from adolescence to early adulthood is lengthened.

The 12-33 age range for Gen Y mentioned above crosses multiple stages of life depending on which theory is examined. For example, Erikson (1982) breaks this age group into two stages: adolescence (12-18) and early adulthood (20s and 30s), each with distinct characteristics related to the discovery of personal identity and its impact on social behavior. Bentley (2007) presents Levinson's theory of early adulthood, which is more comprehensive than Erikson's (17-45). It is divided into phases in which the person develops a stable sense of self and relationships with others, plans, achieves, and reflects on goals, and eventually settles into a structured life. Burton et al. (2001) cap early adulthood at 35, defining it by a focus on career and home as opposed to older adults who are focused on community. Because the literature is so varied in defining this group demographically, I have looked to research that characterizes them in other ways. For example, Millennials have been characterized in the literature by how they compare to previous generations of young adults and how they navigate the milestones of adulthood as described in life stage theories (Burton et al., 2001; Erikson, 1982).

Traditionally a person experiences five milestones of adulthood: leaving home, finishing school, getting a job, marrying, and having children (Settersten & Ray, 2010). Researchers in psychology (Arnett et al., 2011) and museum education (Chung et al., 2008; Chung & Wilkening, 2009) have noted significant shifts in the way Gen Y approaches these milestones. In past generations, the acceptance of adult roles, i.e., getting a job or marrying, coincided with physical maturity (Arnett et al., 2011). With more young adults earning college degrees and doing post graduate work than ever

before, these milestones and in effect adulthood are being postponed by Gen Y. The prolonging of adolescence has caused some psychologists (Arnett et al., 2011) to argue for a new stage of adulthood called emerging adulthood (18-29). Emerging adulthood describes the gradual acceptance of adult roles as people in their twenties gain independence throughout the years they are in school (Burnett, 2010). During this stage they are still supported both emotionally and financially by what Black (2010) and Loy (2010) call "helicopter parents" who are extremely involved in their child's lives. Hovering parents only help to support Gen Y in prolonging acceptance of adult roles. Inherent in this dynamic, however, is a cooperative mentality between child and parent, as opposed to the us versus them mentality that has ruled past generations' familial relationships. Other theorists (Arnett et al., 2011) argue that life stages, including emerging adulthood, are too general and do not consider the effects of norms and cultures on an individual's specific journey through life.

The postponement of milestones is significant in that it will affect family structures in the future because people are attending college and waiting later to marry and begin families, if they choose to do so at all. Whereas marriage and parenthood used to be thought of as required, now they are a choice (Settersten & Ray, 2010). It can be reasoned that the age gap between Gen Y parents and their children will be wider than in the past and these older parents will be more financially stable and well-educated. Furthermore, with more women attending college than men, there will likely be an increase in stay-at-home dads, which is also a break from tradition (Chung & Wilkening,

2009). Just as early adulthood must be reconsidered in light of the changes mentioned in this section, the family, in effect, must be reconsidered too. For museums, Generation Y represents an audience that is underserved, but one that is also the future of family programming. Museums must respond to the changing young adult audience and think ahead to what families might look like in the future and how to design family programs that serve both parents and children.

WHO IS GEN Y?

After studying Gen Y as a statistical and age group, I examined studies in marketing and education (Black, 2010; Goldgehn, 2004) as well as museum education (Chung et al., 2008; Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Simon, 2010) that seek to understand Millennials from their interests to their buying habits and social norms. It is important that we do this as museum educators because knowing the unique characteristics of a potential audience is a starting point for ensuring that the museum and its programs are relevant to that group.

Despite being more affluent than previous generations, Goldgehn (2004) suggests that members of Gen Y are motivated by friendship, technology, and the need for job satisfaction over salary. They are accustomed to organization and structure in their lives due to an upbringing filled with extracurricular activities. Gen Yers are assertive and confident in their pursuits, due in part to the strong support of helicopter parents. As consumers of both information and materials, Gen Yers are brand-conscious and loyal. They value finding truth for themselves rather than accepting the truths of others; thus

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they are not easily affected by advertising. The idea of brand-consciousness and brand loyalty is important in terms of marketing with this group, but it can also be understood in a larger sense—that this generation is sensitive to presentation and quality in things like products or experiences and supports them with time or money when quality is found. Above all, the available literature (Chung et al., 2008, Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Goldgehn, 2004; Simon, 2010) describes Gen Yers as creative, collaborative, and connected knowledge seekers.

Creativity

Two reports published by the Center for the Future of Museums (Chung et al., 2008, Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010) describe Gen Y as experiencing a "creative renaissance" characterized by an increase in Do-It-Yourself (DIY) activities as a means of customizing one's life. This means leisure time is devoted in part to activities like sewing circles, gardening, and crafting. Creative production and the consumption of crafted materials have increased among people of this age. Gen Y's brand devotion and conscious buying habits indicate a careful observance of craftsmanship and personal style, both of which come out in the DIY movement. By creating, altering, or buying products, they are reflecting on their personality and then displaying it for the world in an effort to "curate their lives" (Chung & Wilkening, 2009, p.17).

The word curate—a choosing of objects to convey an idea—is one that has historically been relegated to the museum world. "Curate" has been taken from jargon to vernacular to describe a generation's need for uniqueness in the things they own. It

also points to an awareness of the multitude of choices we have as consumers and that the choices we make are reflections of ourselves like the profiles we create on Facebook or, in the traditional sense of the word curate, the objects we choose to display. With the current generation of young people using a museum generated concept in their daily lives, museums have the opportunity to cultivate valuable creative partnerships in exhibition and program design. With effective collaboration visitors could make the museum's collection, space, and programs their own, as they do with other facets of their lives.

The rise in creativity and customization of possessions and experience has implications for the types of museum experiences Gen Yers expect (Simon, 2010). As Black (2010) points out, Gen Yers demand accommodation of their needs in learning situations, including the need for highly collaborative and immersive experiences both live and online. Part of this expectation is what Denver Art Museum educator Lindsey Housel calls an "outward-facing personal experience," in which a visitor's choices, experiences, and personal identity are aggregated into a public expression that can be commented on (Fischer & Levinson, 2010). Live *and* online experiences are key as the needs and styles that stem from this generation's creativity, like personal expression and the outward-facing-personal experience, are also tied to its connectedness—to each other, the community, and the world—and to a reliance on technology.

Connectedness, collaboration, and the impact of technology

The literature (Black, 2010; Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Simon, 2010) shows Gen Y to be highly collaborative and connected on a number of levels, from small social groups to the global community. Inextricably linked to creativity, connectedness, and collaboration is the impact of technology on this group. Gen Y's comfort with and, now, dependence on technology has played a significant role in how they function in the world as workers, learners, and members of the social fabric. They are the first digital natives, that is, a generation that has grown up with digital technology as an integral part of their daily lives (Prensky, 2001).

With the rise of social media as well as online tools like YouTube, Skype, and blogs, there are innumerable outlets for dialogue and multiple ways to be involved in online communities from reading, to commenting and posting. As such, the world has become a smaller place and Gen Y adults have grown to prefer working, learning, and socializing in groups rather than to do so individually. I group the concept of collaboration with connectedness in this section because the ease with which people connect online has ushered in an eagerness to compare and construct one's life with the lives of others. Gen Yers find information, buy products, explore places, and make decisions through the aggregation and filtering of communal knowledge through a digital platform. Thus, collaboration has become the norm. At the root of these experiences is the idea of exchange. Users can be both consumers and producers, readers and contributors; as consumers Gen Yers are discerning about the information

they value. They prefer to co-construct information with transparent, authentic sources within their communities, whether those communities exist on or offline.

This generation is constantly connected on many social levels from their close friends to the global network. Settersten and Ray (2010) discuss how John Zogby calls the Millennial generation the "first globals," speaking to their status as the first generation in which globalization, i.e., the melding of cultures through exchange of products and ideas, is engrained and differences in race, gender, and sexual orientation are increasingly unimportant (p.22). Compared to generations past, young adults today are more accepting of other ways of living, often traveling in wider and more diverse social groups and viewing the world as a human community brought together by innovations like communication technology and social networking. Although they are connected to the world through technology, they appreciate local creative groups, businesses, and grassroots organizations for their focus on community (Chung & Wilkening, 2009). Millennials have adopted a way of being in the world that is focused on the local, but informed by the global.

In a 2008 study Chung, Johnstone, and Wilkening conducted a survey of media use in outdoor history museums. They found that museum visitors under 30 were least likely, and visitors over 70 were most likely, to use media aids like videos, audio, and computer interactives during their visit. Researchers attribute the results to Gen Yers' desire to unplug from their connected lives. However, as the above research shows, Millennials are interested in collaborative, participatory experiences throughout all

aspects of their lives; and technology often facilitates these experiences. Therefore, the results of the study reveal a disparity between the types of digital experiences young adults have in their daily lives versus those that occur in the museum. The important question then becomes how do museum educators design digital experiences that engage young adults? The challenge for educators is to find ways of using digital media that are purposeful and tied in a meaningful way to what young people are already doing.

FROM LEARNING TO EXPERIENCE

Museum educators are beginning to recognize the changing needs and learning styles of adult visitors. Program design is gradually shifting in focus from an emphasis on learning to experience, that is, from lecture-based programs targeting adults as learners toward facilitated participatory experiences with potential collaborators (Fischer & Levinson, 2010). To understand what it means to move from learning to experience-based program design, the growing distinction between the terms "learning" and "experience" must be examined. Learning, according to the Objectivist model long held by educators, is defined by the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. This model is based on the assumptions that a reliable set of knowledge about the world exists that can be uniformly transmitted and assimilated, and that students are empty vessels for receiving that knowledge (Jonassen, 1991). Dewey (1938, 1958), one of the forerunners of experiential learning, began to use "learning" and "experience" interchangeably. Learning, for him, should be active and engaging and experiences should be designed to be educative; it is not enough for them to be "lively, vivid, and interesting" (pp. 13-14).

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Dewey's ideas were foundational to museum education in that they were a first step in recognizing that people need to experience rather than simply absorb new information. Museum educators have since begun to create programs in which learning, formerly the focus then equally important with experience, is no longer the primary goal. Rather ,participation and the construction of a personally meaningful experience through collaboration with the museum and other visitors takes precedence. Patterson Williams (1984), a longtime educator and influential member of the Denver Art Museum staff, defines the role of museum programs as providing "significant experiences with art objects" as opposed to connecting people to information about art objects (p. 12). The word significant, like the word meaningful, is vague, but in this case quite expressive. Significant and meaningful denote importance; they assume a personal reaction, whether emotional, intellectual, or physical, but not necessarily one of clear or immediate learning. A significant or meaningful experience could be realizing something about oneself, establishing a closer connection to a loved one through shared experience, or igniting a spark of creativity. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1991) describe an experience with art as an emotional reaction realized through the reordering and merging of old and new information in a focused "flow" state. The outcome may be as simple as seeing the museum in a new light, which they advocate is a valid experience.

Despite this transition in education literature, as of the early 2000s traditional adult program formats that favor information transmission were still pervasive in American museums. In a study of adult museum programs within three regional museum

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associations conducted in 2000, Sohn found lectures, classes, guided tours, symposia, and seminars to be the most common types of museum programs offered for adults. Likewise, in a three-year national study of 508 museum program participants, 75 instructors, and 143 museum program designers, Burton et al. (2001) found docent training, lectures, and guided tours to be the most common art museum programs for adults. Often at the heart of these types of programs is a transmission model of learning that identifies the museum or museum-selected experts as the suppliers of information and visitors as the recipients of information. In recent decades the literature on adult program design (Collins, 1981; Burton et al., 2001) has supported traditional education programming by limiting the conversation on program design to the fulfillment of learning goals and accommodation of various types of learners. In effect, the adult visitor, as an individual and a valuable contributor of information has been undervalued.

The framing of museum programs as learning activities is propelled by an attempt in academia (Burton et al, 2001; Hiemstra, 1981; Knowles, 1973, 1981, 2011) to identify types of adult learners as well as their motivations for and styles of engaging in both formal and informal learning. Burton et al. (2001) describe a range of adult visitor types: knowledge seekers, socializers, skill builders, and museum lovers, each with specific motivations and visiting styles. Knowles (1973, 1981, 2011) likewise profiles three types of adult learners: those that are goal oriented, activities oriented, and learning oriented. Both Knowles and Burton et al., report that adults are self-directed, pragmatic learners; they are internally motivated and prefer learning experiences that can be applied to their

personal or professional lives in a practical way. The learning-driven model of adult programming recognizes a spectrum of adult visitors with unique experiences, perspectives, motivations, needs, and styles, yet adult visitors are ultimately labeled as learners rather than contributors. The learner label narrows the types of experiences educators might design for visitors and underutilizes them as potential collaborators. The power dynamic between the museum and visitors therefore remains embedded with this way of thinking about adult visitors.

In *Learning in the Museum*, Hein (1998) advocates for the progression from an emphasis on learning to experience. Experience, he posits, is replacing transmission as a key part of education efforts in museums, thereby changing the definition and role of education. Hein (1998) and Falk and Dierking (2012) were instrumental in ushering in a new way of thinking about museum education and museum visitors. Hein's (1998) emphasis on experience is based on the idea of Constructivism, whereby educators recognize that knowledge is constructed in the mind of the visitor and formed through active engagement in an accessible environment. Therefore, ideas are not passed from educator to visitor but co-constructed by the two through a unique experience in which they integrate new information with existing knowledge. Falk and Dierking's (2012) Contextual Model of Learning likewise recognizes the unique perspective of each visitor and the importance of accessing that perspective through experience. They assert that an experience in a museum consists of a complex interaction of three contexts: the personal context—a visitor's knowledge, experiences, and interests; the sociocultural context—

their cultural background and the influences of social interaction within the museum; and the physical context—the way they experience the museum space and objects.

In the last decade museum educators such as Nina Simon (2010) have clarified the shift that Hein (1998) and Falk and Dierking (2012) noted by exploring the equalization of the museum-visitor relationship and participatory practices in the museum. Adult visitors are no longer learners, but rather "co-creators," "contributors," and "collaborators." These terms are incredibly expansive in that they do not presume that all visitors come to the museum with learning goals in mind. Rather, they highlight the visitors' individuality and potential to contribute a valuable perspective to an experience, the outcome of which is open-ended. Thus, experiences and informal learning opportunities are not dictated by a museum to a learner, but "jointly constructed" by the museum as a facilitator, the voices of visitors as participants, and outside sources (Fischer & Levinson, 2010). The idea of the museum as a facilitator is an important development because it positions the museum as both a contributing voice and a mediator for bringing other voices together. Simon (2010) describes the evolution of participatory practices in museums as a "me to we" progression in which individual consumption and subsequent reflection of content along with others' reflections are aggregated by the museum to promote a social experience. Her ideas highlight the changing role of the museum (p. 91).

The shift toward participation and co-construction is especially important with young adults, as seen in the recent wave of young adult programs sweeping the country and which I describe below. It is expressed through a trend of evening programming that

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tests the boundaries between education programs and parties. According to Farrell and Medvedeva's (2010) report on demographic changes in museums, co-creation and highly participatory experiences have now become expected by Gen Y visitors, and museum educators are beginning to listen.

A HISTORY OF YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING IN THE UNITED STATES

This study focuses on the Denver Art Museum's forays into young adult programming; however, DAM is not the only museum experimenting with this audience. Museums across the country are developing their own brand of programming for young adults based largely on a model of casual evening programming featuring musical performances, cocktails, and art-making activities. Nina Simon (2010) refers to this type of programming as "hosted," denoting a shift from the museum as institution to museum as potential venue (pp. 286-287). In a blog entry published in 2012, Simon refers to museums as becoming "event-driven," whereby visitors are attending specific events like evening programs rather than visiting to stroll the galleries. Under the umbrella of casual evening programming there is a spectrum ranging from weekly after-work happy hours and singles mixers to what Simon (2010) calls "large-scale monthly parties geared towards young professionals" (p. 287). Apart from size, programs also range from being primarily social in nature to collection-focused. Though all have a social component and some remain entirely social, evening programming has, in general, evolved over the past twenty years from happy hours to collection or exhibition-focused programs that facilitate experiences with art (Cretaro, 2009).

Evening programming as a trend began with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *After Hours* program in 1989 (Cretaro, 2009). As the title suggests the museum stayed open late on Fridays and Saturdays for a happy hour geared toward young professionals. The Philadelphia Museum of Art followed in 1991 with *Art After 5*, a weekly gathering featuring musical performances, refreshments, and guided tours (Cretaro, 2009). The museum describes the atmosphere of the event as a "cabaret," suggesting the feeling of a dark, comfortable club (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2013). The Walker Art Center offers two programs that fall under evening programming: *Walker After Hours*, begun in 1997, and *Target Free Thursday Nights* (Cretaro, 2009). *Walker After Hours* is a night-long party held three times per year concurrent with major exhibitions. Visitors enjoy music, a film screening, refreshments, and art-making activities inspired by the exhibition. *Target Free Thursday Nights* evolved from *Walker After Hours*, giving visitors a weekly happy hour spot to mingle and appreciate current exhibitions (Cretaro, 2009).

In 1998 and 2003 respectively, the Brooklyn Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art set a new standard for after hours participation. Since its conception, Brooklyn's *Target First Saturdays* have averaged 6,500 visitors per event making it arguably one of the most successful late programs available (Brooklyn Museum, 2010). Originally conceived as an event to diversify museum attendance and attract families and young adults, this free monthly program features performances, film screenings, art-making activities, talks, and a now discontinued dance party that drew capacity crowds for over a decade (Brooklyn Museum, 2010).

The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is not far behind with the unprecedented success of its *Late Night* Series, begun in 2003 (Strand, 2004). This program grew out of a 100 hour marathon of programming in celebration of the museum's centennial. The museum received an overwhelmingly positive response to the unstructured, free-choice approach that enabled visitors to design their own evening based on their interests from an array of offerings. From this response DMA created a monthly program in that style focused on music performances but also featuring tours, readings, film screenings, and family programs. In reflection, former Director Bonnie Pitman commented that the event changed the way the people of Dallas perceived the museum (Strand, 2004). DMA's experiment represents a movement toward branding programs like *Late Night*. Pitman (in Strand, 2004) noted that opening the doors was not enough to draw visitors. An entire branding campaign and logo including the slogan "The art doesn't go home. Why should you?" made a significant difference in establishing their late night visitor base. Denver Art Museum educators consider Dallas to be one of their main influences in the creation of their young adult programs (Strand, 2004).

Most recently, the Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, The Seattle Art Museum (SAM), and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA) have launched evening programs in 2007, 2009, and 2010 respectively (Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum, 2013; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010; Seattle Art Museum, 2009). *Gardner After Hours* offers a wine bar, jazz, and artist talks with an interactive artist studio for art-making activities. The Seattle Art Museum's *SAM Remix* provides a

variety of "unexpected" activities from dancing to wig-making and "highly opinionated tours" led by local artists, along with the typical music and drinks. The program happens four times a year, often selling out, and is branded as a "late-night creative explosion" for visitors 18-35 (Seattle Art Museum, 2009). SFMoMA's weekly *Thursday Night Happenings* follows the same unexpected vein as SAM with an opportunity for visitors to "see the museum in a new light" through performances, talks, a lounge atmosphere, and collaborative art-making experiences with artists. Frank Smigiel, Associate Curator of Public Programs, described it as both a party and chance to "engag[e] with the museum itself as a total work of art" (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2010).

I do not cover every museum hosting evening programming here. Because this is not a multiple case study, I cannot definitively speak to whether or not the programs currently available are successful or unsuccessful. Based on the most prominent examples of young adult programming explored here, there is a general trend toward hosted evening events with a social element as well as collection or exhibition-inspired programming, which is also carried into the Denver Art Museum's programs. Despite a nearly twenty year history, work with the young adult audience is still in process, even for the museums that are on the cutting edge of designing these programs. In 2010 Ferrell and Medvedeva held three focus groups at the University of Chicago to find out what young people think of museums and museum experiences. Participants included one group of 16 and 17-year-olds and two groups of 18-25-year-olds. The study revealed that young people want participatory experiences in museums, however, the museums doing

innovative participatory practices did not register on the "radars" of college educated or teen participants (Ferrell & Medvedeva, 2010, p.26). This signals that either young adult programming, and specifically the "hosted" evening program approach, has not become an established part of museum education or that museums, in general, are not in the consciousness of this age group.

EDUCATION AT THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

Young adult programs at the Denver Art Museum, which is explored in-depth in Chapter 4, are part of a history of innovative education programming founded by a mission that calls for "exemplary" public programs (Denver Art Museum, 2013). A factor that contributes to the success of interpretation initiatives at DAM is the collaboration between curators, designers, and educators. For each area of the permanent collection a curator and educator, the latter called a master teacher, are partnered to create a content-based interpretative approach tailored to the objects on display. Interdepartmental partnerships are strengthened by a staff blog that pulls in perspectives from educators, curators, conservators, and even the director to provide visitors with interesting exhibition and collection-based content (Denver Art Museum, 2013). Within the education department there are specialists for a range of program types including those for schools and teachers, families, adults, access, and Latin American audiences. Although the museum is known for its emphasis on adult audiences, each program area offers a variety of options for their target audience (Denver Art Museum, 2002). Behind

each program is a focus on inspiring visitor creativity, institutional transparency, and evaluation.

Creativity is a cornerstone of DAM's institutional ethos and it comes through in many of the museum's offerings. For example, Creativity Resource, a database of lesson plans designed to satisfy state standards using the DAM's collection, challenges teachers and students to approach standardized learning goals through creative interpretation of art objects (Denver Art Museum, 2009). A rotating studio on the first floor of the museum invites visitors to dive into design and art-making activities in response to temporary exhibitions. Much of the programming follows in this vein with all audiences emphasizing art-making or some other form of visitor creativity as a channel for experiencing the art on display.

As in any museum each new education initiative involves an iterative design process, and DAM staff members have upheld a level of transparency about their efforts through the release of public reports. Examples include a report on the process of designing Creativity Resource (2009), another on family programming (2002), and multiple reports about the installation, evaluation, and subsequent reworking of interpretive materials throughout the museum's two buildings (1993, 2001, 2007). A pivotal report was the two-and-a-half-year *Denver Art Museum Interpretive Project* (McDermott-Lewis) released in 1990. In this document, educators recount efforts to establish a new education framework built upon research, an understanding of visitors and their expectations, and the establishment of specific interpretive goals. This

framework is still evident in the department's program design process, which is supported by clear interpretive goals and strong evaluation efforts with both small, non-generalizable studies and large, contracted studies of participation and the effectiveness of interpretive materials.

CONCLUSION

This review of literature provided a foundation for my case study on young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum. I found that this particular generation of young adults, Generation Y, stands apart from those previous to it in the way they approach life stages such as graduating college, finding a job, and marrying. Furthermore, there are strong trends with this group toward collaboration, creativity, and connectedness through technology, all of which have implications for how museums connect with them as visitors. Museums have begun to respond to the unique qualities of America's newest group of young adults with casual evening programming characterized by a shift in focus from learning to the facilitation of experiences and likewise the cultivation of a new dynamic between museum and visitor—one based on collaboration rather than transmission. Upon reviewing the literature in this chapter, it is clear that Gen Yers as people and museum visitors cannot be defined in any one absolute way; however the general characteristics observed by scholars can serve as a starting point for examining a particular subset.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This investigation was a single explanatory case study (Lapan, Quartaroli, & Reimber, 2011; Woodside, 2010; Yin, 2009) aimed at explaining how educators at the Denver Art Museum developed their suite of young adult programs and how their approach might be useful in other museums. I designed this study to take a closer look at a set of programs that has proven to have a significant effect on young adult museum participation in light of an observed need in the field to increase participation by this audience (Chung & Wilkening, 2009). This chapter is organized into three sections describing the research method I used in the study. First, I describe qualitative inquiry and the explanatory case study according to the available literature. I then detail my process of selecting my site and participants. In a section on data collection, I describe the tools I used to conduct my study—document analysis and the semistructured interview. Finally, I trace the steps I took in interpreting my data through grounded theory (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Glaser, 1967).

Stokrocki (1997) describes qualitative inquiry as interpretive, expressive, highly detailed, and persuasive. It is like quantitative research in that it is based in observation, however, it is focused on the description and interpretation of a facet of everyday life. I chose this approach because my research question necessitated deep investigation that cannot be obtained through a quantitative approach (Hessie-Biber & Leavy, 2006, Saldana, 2011). Simons (2009) and Glaser (1978) describe qualitative research as being

theory generated, meaning the researcher does not make and test a hypothesis through research, but rather observation and analysis generate a hypothesis. The goal of qualitative inquiry is to explore ideas rather than create generalizations. The specific type of qualitative inquiry I used in this study, the single explanatory case study, exemplifies this approach.

Case studies serve to examine a problem in "its personal and social complexity" (Stake, 1998, p. 256) as represented by a single case, in this case, the development of young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum. As Simons (2009) writes, case studies enable an in-depth study of the complexities of implementing a program. They can reveal multiple perspectives and trace influences, which is what I have set out to do with this project. This case study is explanatory because my question deals with obtaining detailed information about how a set of programs were developed in order to determine the characteristics that lead to their success. According to Woodside (2010) and Yin (2009), explanatory case studies often include the perspectives of direct participants, informed third parties, and the researcher to explain what Yin calls "causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies" (p.15). Yin (2009) specifically describes this type of research as being focused on explaining the how and why of a phenomenon over time. The word that comes to mind in reading his comments is "process." In this study I aimed to capture the process of program development through multiple perspectives.

SELECTING THE SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

As noted in Chapter 1, my interest in this topic and the Denver Art Museum grew out of my internship in the Summer of 2012. Through my experiences at DAM as well as a cursory reading of a published report on the museum's young adult programs, it became clear that the staff were thinking about the young adult audience and museum-community relationships in an interesting way. My decision to use the Denver Art Museum as the site for my case study was also influenced by the museum's transparency in terms of sharing program development and evaluation reports with the public, including posting many of them on the museum's website. By choosing a museum site that is not only open about their programming efforts, but also interested in discussing them, I hoped my study would yield fruitful conversations firmly grounded by published documents. To use DAM as my site, I contacted educator Lindsey Housel by email and obtained a site consent letter (Appendix A).

I chose the participants in this study because of their involvement with either planning, implementing, overseeing, or evaluating the programs under study. Because the subject of this investigation was the program development process rather than an evaluation of program effectiveness with visitors, I focused my data collection on museum education staff, rather than visitors. As Woodside (2010) suggests, I organized my participant group to include the perspectives of those directly in contact with the programs, two DAM educators, and informed third parties, DAM's Director of Education and evaluation staff from Randi Korn and Associates, a firm responsible for a formal evaluation of the DAM's young adult programs. I contacted each of my participants by

email asking if they were interested in being interviewed, and then arranged times to conduct the interviews either in person or on the phone. I obtained written consent (Appendex B) from each participant in person or through fax before conducting my interviews.

The two educators I interviewed are Sonnet Coggins, Head of Adult and College Programs, and Lindsey Housel, Manager of Digital Engagement Programs. Sonnet was with DAM throughout the process of designing and implementing their young adult programs. Lindsey joined the museum in 2007 as the *Untitled* program was beginning. I intended to interview the two educators together rather than individually to obtain rich detail about their collaborative process. This was not entirely possible due to scheduling, so I interviewed them back to back, with Sonnet sitting in for part of Lindsey's interview, on December 13, 2012. My goal for these two interviews was to capture a detailed account of how they developed their young adult programs. This includes: (a) how the programs were initiated, (b) program goals, (c) audience research, (d) evaluation techniques, (e) the museum's relationships with the community of Denver, (f) responses to the summative evaluation, and (g) how transferrable their process of programming for this audience might be. My goal was to tease out opinions, reflections, and backstory that was not made available in the official report or the evaluation of these programs. I also hoped to discern how the theories each educator prescribed to might have influenced their approach to program development and decision making.

To contextualize my discussion with the two educators, I arranged interviews with experts who could lend broader perspectives on the programs. One such expert is Melora McDermott-Lewis, Director of Education at DAM, who oversees the education department including young adult programming. I also interviewed two staff members from Randi Korn and Associates, Stephanie Downey and Amanda Krantz. Randi Korn and Associates is an evaluation firm that has evaluated museum programs across the country and in 2011 studied young adult program participation at DAM.

My interview with the Director of Education, also conducted on December 13, 2012, shed light on the programs in relation to departmental goals and practices and the museum's educational mission. It also provided the perspective of an experienced educator/administrator with a broad view of the museum and the field. The development of a museum program is simultaneously shaped by the educators working on it, the department it is created by, the museum that hosts it, and the current climate in the field of museum education. It was my goal to reveal these inner workings in my interviews with Melora by obtaining information about: (a) program goals, (b) how these programs fit into the mission of the museum and the goals of the education department, (c) beliefs that found and shape all education programs at DAM, (d) response to the summative evaluation, and (e) DAM in relation to other museums.

By interviewing staff members of Randi Korn and Associates, I hoped to gain a sense of what the firm had observed both at Denver and overall in the field in terms of young adult programs. Knowing that the firm conducted a study of young adult programs

at another museum, I hoped that they could discuss characteristics they observed between the two groups. Furthermore, I was interested in observations they had about DAM's programs that were not included in the study. Because program evaluations are designed to measure specific facets or effects of a program, it can be reasoned that researchers may capture information that is not relevant to the goals of that specific study, but may still be interesting and useful. Specifically, my goals for this interview were to obtain observations about: (a) young adults in Denver and elsewhere, and (b) the effectiveness of DAM's programs with this audience. I conducted this interview by phone on December 21, 2012.

DATA COLLECTION

The methods of data collection I used for this study were document analysis and the in-depth semistructured interview. I began my data collection reviewing multiple documents and websites related to DAM's programs (Appendix C), the two main sources being a report released by the museum in 2011 titled *Creativity, Community, and a Dose of the Unexpected* and Randi Korn and Associate's *Audience Research: Study of Young Adults to the Denver Art Museum*, completed in 2011. A careful reading of these documents provided basic information on audience, DAM's programs and approach, and a summative evaluation of the programs.

Over the course of about a week, from December 13, 2012 to December 21, 2012, I conducted four 20-45 minute semistructured interviews with the participants described above. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) define the in-depth interview as a "meaning-

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making partnership" (p.128) that is achieved through active asking and listening and through the assumption that individuals have unique knowledge that can be transferred through verbal communication. As such, these interviews were vital in obtaining personal insights not included or not fully explored in the documents I read. Interviews were semistructured in that they were guided by predetermined sets of questions (Appendix D), but participants were invited to veer from these questions as they saw fit. I used one set of questions for both educator interviews and a separate set for each of the supporting interviews. I tailored my interview questions to the goals I had for each interview, as outlined in the previous section. Although I altered questions slightly to allow for fluid conversation, I ensured that the topics I wanted to address were covered. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) discuss Karp's view that the majority of work with in-depth interviews should be put into the interview questions. Karp asserts that the interview questions reveal what will eventually be written, and in that sense they are an important part of analysis. I designed each question to be open-ended to encourage participants to be thoughtful and expansive with their answers. They responded by taking the conversation in directions that were unexpected but enlightening. I also included questions that encouraged reflection on the past as well as speculation about the future to promote self assessment, particularly among the educators I interviewed. Furthermore, I designed questions that asked my participants to consider their work critically by calling attention to potential flaws in their process.

I conducted three of the four interviews in person at the Denver Art Museum offices on December 13, 2012, and the fourth one week later through a conference call. I audio recorded each of the interviews with the consent of the participants to enable my full engagement in the conversations and analysis of the conversations later. I then listened to the audio multiple times and transcribed the interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of my data began during data collection, which enabled me to rework questions or approach topics in different ways in later interviews based on information I received in the first one. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) write that simultaneous collection and analysis of data is important to the process of interviewing. In my interviews in Denver I was very engaged in the conversations I was having and that active listening enabled me to pick up on key words and similar answers between my participants. From the beginning, it was clear that there was a unity of thought between participants.

Formal data analysis began with the transcription and coding of the four recorded interviews and the examination of my documents. To guide my analysis, I used grounded theory proposed by Strauss and Glaser (1967). This theory of data analysis proposes a ground up approach to finding patterns in data that lead to a theory, from reading to coding and ultimately the creation of a theoretical narrative or summary of what was learned about the research questions. In essence, the data reveals what it is going to reveal without the researcher's control (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003). This process involves continuous reevaluation of assumptions and speculations about the results of the

study. It was, for me, the most logical way to go about analyzing my data because it proposes a structured way of organizing, reducing, and interpreting large amounts of qualitative data.

After reading the transcribed interviews and each of my documents multiple times, considering them individually and as a set, I began to note key phrases, ideas, and themes in the data that needed to be explored further. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) call this transition from raw to relevant text the initial phase of separating relevant and irrelevant text. I then formed repeating ideas into loose categories or themes that each successive set of data strengthened (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; La Pierre & Zimmerman, 1997). At this stage I noticed that some themes emerged that I had not expected as a result of the loose structure of the interviews. I then categorized the themes that I found into theoretical constructs—larger concepts that were closer to my research question.

ESTABLISHING VALIDITY

Being a single case study, the scope of my research is limited and ultimately not generalizable. Therefore, I had to establish validity to strengthen my research. Yin (2009) recognizes four measures for ensuring validity in a case study: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability.

I addressed construct validity in the way that I designed my data collection. Yin (2009) asserts that it is important to draw information from a variety of sources to build evidence for a case. As previously mentioned, I examined multiple documents and

websites and interviewed several parties who were involved with DAM young adult programming in different ways. The information I gained from each of these sources was strengthened by the amount and variety of sources I used. This in turn ensured internal validity, which Yin (2009) describes as supporting inferences with information from another source. In this study I explained how a set of programs were developed in such a way that they became successful and how that development process might be useful in other museums. Therefore, I examined the past and could not observe what happened; I could only infer from the data I collected. I ensured internal validity through "pattern matching," a technique Yin (2009) suggests, which involves finding repeating patterns of information across sources to support ideas that cannot be directly observed. I established external validity, or the generalizability of the study, through the literature that I reviewed to design this study. Although no case study is completely generalizable, this research is built on theories and recent findings from multiple fields of study. Therefore, I designed the study with a concern for broad application. Finally, reliability refers to the accuracy of the collected data. I ensured reliability by researching and implementing proper protocol for the methodology I used, which I have presented in this chapter. I maintained a consistent pattern of data collection by using interview guides and interview consent forms, and a consistent data analysis strategy with each of my sources.

The methodology I chose, as well as my data collection and analysis methods that I used, enabled a detailed explanation and interpretation of young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum. Ultimately the theoretical constructs I ended with resembled

those I aimed at in my interview guides. However, because I chose a semistructured

approach to interviewing my participants, the data revealed intriguing themes that I had

not anticipated. In the following chapter I describe the constructs I found, in detail.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Data

This chapter presents the major themes that emerged from my analysis of the interviews I conducted and the various documents I examined. To review, I interviewed three members of the Denver Art Museum staff including Melora McDermott-Lewis, Director of Education; Sonnet Coggins, Head of College and Adult Programs; and Lindsey Housel, Manager of Digital Engagement, as well as two Randi Korn and Associates staff members, Stephanie Downey and Amanda Krantz. I examined many documents including reports released by the Denver Art Museum education staff, an evaluation of young adult programming at DAM conducted by Randi Korn and Associates, and various websites related to DAM and its programs. I have organized the chapter to detail as closely as possible the program design process that the Denver Art Museum educators and administrators underwent in creating the young adult programs that constitute *Untitled* and subsequent programs. Although it was difficult to create a clear narrative of the program design process, I have attempted to organize my data in a way that mirrors the steps the educators took when designing these programs, from audience research to evaluation. I begin with an overview of *Untitled* and other young adult programs at DAM to lay a foundation for the in-depth look at how they were created. I then transition into audience research and the educators' goals for the group of programs, as well as tools they used to meet their goals, and the evaluation and outcomes of their work.

OVERVIEW OF YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMMING AT THE DENVER ART MUSEUM

From an investigation of Denver Art Museum research reports, websites, and my interviews with the staff, I gathered information on the basic format of young adult programs at DAM. According to a report released by the education staff in 2011[2], young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum was a new initiative funded through a three-year grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It is comprised of multiple online and onsite programs including *Untitled, Digital Do It Yourself, Demo and Do, Happenings* and a blog. In addition, a website with its own audience-specific branding called the *Collective* provided visitors access to online programs as well as updates on upcoming onsite programs.

Untitled, the first and central program in this series is a monthly Friday night program featuring music performances, a comedy show, art-making, and tours among many other collection-inspired activities. Each *Untitled* centers on a theme drawn from an exhibition or the permanent collection. Activities are designed to explore different facets of that theme. For example, the theme "aftermath" was drawn from an exhibition of Laura Letinsky's (1962-) artwork—large photographic still lifes of dinner party leftovers—but it was translated into many different activities throughout the evening to fully explore the idea of an aftermath. Visitors experienced the aftermath of a heated

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[2]The full title of the report is *Creativity, Community and a Dose of the Unexpected*. I will refer to it in this chapter as DAM's report.

Jenga[3] game, and reflected on the unfortunate aftermath of holiday binging with a nutritionist.

*Untitled*s offer a variety of activities so that visitors may customize their own experience based on their interests. When visitors enter the museum, they are greeted by the aptly named *Icebreaker* project, what educators describe in DAM's report as an "easy moment of creativity" that sets a playful, social tone for the evening while encouraging participation by giving visitors a feeling of success from the start. Examples include personality quizzes and brainstorming possible neighborhood improvements. *Untitled* offerings vary from month to month, but there are crowd favorites, which have become staples. One such activity is the *Detour*. DAM staff invites experts from non-art fields to lead tours of the collection from their own professional perspective. Examples include neurologists, cartographers, and chefs. A local theater group, Buntport Theater, has performed a popular 15-minute skit called "Joan and Charlie Discuss Tonight's Theme" at nearly every *Untitled* for the last six years to great acclaim. The skit is based on a painting by Joan Brown (1938-1990), *Self-portrait with Swimming Coach Charlie Sava* (1974), which features a woman in a blue swimsuit, goggles, and swim cap standing next to her swim coach against the backdrop of an abstract pool. Buntport Theater was inspired by this piece in DAM's collection and created a comedy skit for the two painted subjects that also connects to the unique theme of each *Untitled* (Figure 1). At showtime

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[3]The purpose of this game is to remove individual wooden blocks from a stacked tower without causing the tower to collapse. However, in the end it always does collapse, resulting in a loud chaotic moment and an aftermath of scattered blocks.

DAM's large blue painted freight elevator, representing the pool, opens to reveal the pair in their swim gear, Joan neurotically adjusts her goggles and finds new excuses for not getting in the pool and Charlie dryly counters every comment.

Figure 1:   Joan and Charlie Leading a *Detour* in front of *Self-portrait with Swimming Coach Charlie Sava*.

According to Sonnet Coggins, the educators working with young adult programs took the successes of *Untitled* activities and developed a number of other ways for visitors to participate both onsite and online. From the *Detour* series came the museum's smartphone application *DAM_Scout*. The application, available for both iPhone and Android, enables visitors to scan QR codes located next to selected works of art in the galleries. They then receive content related to the artwork such as interviews and videos showing the artist's process among other content unique to the work of art. Artist demonstrations at *Untitled* evolved through multiple iterations into *Demo & Do* and

Happenings. On the *Collective* website the staff describes *Demo & Do* as a program that invites local artists to "set up shop" in the museum and then gives visitors the opportunity to "pick up some skills in a pint-size apprenticeship" with the artists. *Happenings* are unstructured events that take place away from the museum, but remain inspired by an exhibition. Educators plan *Happenings* with local organizations to create a one-of-a-kind experience that fosters co-creation between these two facilitators and the visitors. Finally, out of *Icebreakers* came *digital-Do-It-Yourself* or *dDIY*, an online program that poses creative challenges to visitors and then enables them to share their work with the community. The staff describes this program on the *Collective* website as "digital Do-It-Yourself missions to do and share. Knit it, speak it, play it, act it, tape it, snap it, paint it. Then upload and share it. Dig it." Challenges range from cooking recipes from Van Gogh's hometown and then snapping a picture of the feast to arranging a photo still life with a favorite coffee mug. Visitors can choose to post their projects to the *Collective* website for others to see and comment on.

The online programs are channeled through a website specifically designed for DAM's young adult audience: the *Collective*. At first glance the website does not seem connected with the museum; its appearance and content does not match that of the museum's website, and logos are relegated to the bottom of the page (Figures 2 and 3 below). The *Collective* website is formatted like a blog and includes a feed of entries that are updated with changing exhibitions and program themes. Although online programs are implemented solely through the *Collective*, the site also provides updates for onsite

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programs. There is also a blog section that holds DAM staff entries on a range of subjects from conservation to upcoming *Untitled* themes and reflections on past programs. The two most notable features of this website are its tone and its participatory design. All staff generated content, from the look of the website to the entries, are delivered in an informal manner. Staff members have taken a friendly, fun tone that is carefully crafted to appeal to young people while remaining authentic to the identity of DAM as an institution. For example, the description of the *Untitled* program is as follows: "Final Fridays at DAM feel less like a field trip, more like a night out. Have an offbeat art encounter, strut your creative stuff, groove to local sounds, and more." Although staff entries are a key feature of the site, it is also designed to highlight visitors' content and creativity. Visitors are encouraged to register a login and become part of the community of *Collective* users, thereby enabling them to post their *dDIY* projects and comment on entries. (The extent to which visitors actively engage with this website is explored in a later section). Aside from the *Collective*, the education department maintains a Facebook account devoted to *Untitled*, which features similar content and tone as the website.

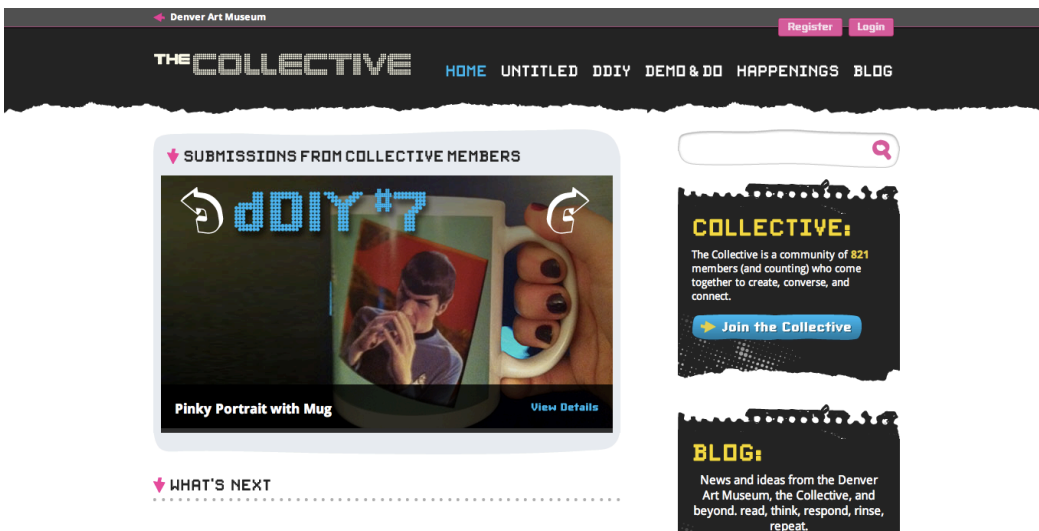Figure 2:   Denver Art Museum website.

Figure 3:   The *Collective* website.

The range of programs that now exist under the young adult programming umbrella can be traced back to the development of the *Untitled* program. In light of the program's success and subsequent expansion, one of my goals in conducting staff interviews was to find the catalyst for beginning *Untitled* as well as the process by which

the education department at DAM targeted their audience. According to Sonnet, young adult programming at DAM was born out the staff-wide process of writing a five-goal strategic plan for the museum, which included the goal of "diversifying and broadening audience." With this goal in mind, the educators studied program attendance rates and overall museum attendance to identify underserved audiences. They discovered that young adults ages 18-35 made up 12% of the museum's visitor population. At the time 30% of Denver's population was in that age range and DAM educators recognized a potential area for growth. Sonnet recalled that this decision to target young adult audiences was concurrent with the rise of social media in popular culture. As museum staffs were beginning to think about the implications of social media, she says, it made sense to reach out to the "early adopters of those ways of being in the world and communicating"—young adults. The first step, then, toward reaching out to young adults was understanding who they are.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

DAM educators began audience research on young adults by looking at the 18-35 age range, which then developed into an exploration of the personal characteristics and lifestyles of that group. According to each of my interviewees, demographics were not the education department's only or preferred method for searching out new audiences, however, it was an important first step. DAM staff looked at how marketing firms were characterizing and appealing to this age group to get a sense of the audience's "style." This term, as it is used at DAM, is more fully unpacked in a later section, but in this

initial foray into young adult audience research it meant a way of living. Sonnet specifically mentioned being influenced by the work of arts marketing firm LaPlaca Cohen on what they called "young cosmopolitans." Director of Education Melora McDermott-Lewis reasoned that the key to targeting an audience is to find what is important in their lives and figure out how the museum fits into that, rather than finding out what is important to them in museums. After all, if the target audience is not visiting the museum then they may not know what they want from a museum visit. Adult visitor studies in DAM galleries, which included visitor observations and interviews with those who were attending, contributed to the staff's research for *Untitled* and the subsequent programs. Once the staff began implementing *Untitled*, they conducted informal studies and observations of attendees that shed more light on the needs and styles of their target audience. However, the observations did not stay within the museum walls.

The idea of "showing up" was emphasized by each of my interviewees as a vital part of developing the young adult audience base. This concept came out of Lindsey Housel's initial job interview with DAM staff when she was asked, "What is important to you in terms of this young adult audience?" She replied, "Showing up." What she meant was that educators should be out in the community, not as formal representatives of an institution, but as individuals. Lindsey and Sonnet both attended events that young adults, and specifically members of the creative community in Denver, attended such as underground music festivals and the city's creative expo. They had conversations with the people there, met the "movers and shakers" of various creative groups, asked questions,

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listened, and observed what young adults in Denver were involved in. Essentially, they met the audience where they already were to figure out how the museum could fit in.

What emerged from of the audience research were some general characteristics about young adults. First and foremost the staff recognized DAM's young adult audience as being Denver-centric. Though they may share characteristics with young adults in other areas, DAM's audience is ultimately influenced by what all of my interviewees recognized is a very creatively charged community. When I asked Sonnet and Lindsey to characterize their young adult audience based on their research, they emphasized creativity, saying that they are a "highly creative group, personally engaged in creative things." Both mentioned creativity in relation to a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) spirit that was pervasive in Denver, whether in the creation of a business, a blog, or knitted accessories. Sonnet mentioned that creativity with this group was strongly tied to a need to personalize or customize their possessions as well as online versions of oneself, such as Facebook profiles. Secondly, Sonnet and Lindsey described Denver's young adults as highly collaborative. They tend to do things in groups, creating, working, or socializing as a group rather than as individuals. They prefer co-construction of experiences and knowledge, again customized and personalized to reflect who they are and what they are interested in. That is, they prefer to build knowledge or interests by collecting a variety of carefully chosen perspectives and then integrating their own perspective. Furthermore, young adults construct customized experiences with an expectation that objects, spaces, and experiences look cool. Lindsey attributes this expectation to the emphasis placed on

creativity in the Denver community at large. She also speculated that there is a strong desire to support local creative efforts that underlies the collaborative spirit in Denver. Moreover, that spirit unites the many creative sub-groups, e.g. designers, yarn-bombers, painters, etc.

The audience research that DAM education staff conducted revealed two characteristics, creativity and collaboration, that served as a basis for the program goals they developed. The staff worked to integrate pre-existing institutional ideas with those of educators to organize goals that would ultimately impact the entire museum.

PROGRAM GOALS

In my interviews with DAM educators and analysis of both DAM's report and the museum's official website, I uncovered a hierarchy of goals: those of the museum, the education department, and goals specific to the young adult programming initiative. I asked my participants a series of questions (See Appendix D) to ascertain goals for *Untitled* and subsequent programs and how the goals grew out of institutional notions and those existing in the field of museum education. Specifically, I asked Lindsey and Sonnet what their goals were for their young adult programs and how these purposes aligned with the goals and mission of the museum. In my interview with Melora, I focused my questions on the goals of the education department in general and how they change per audience.

Beginning with the broadest set goals that may have influenced the formation of program goals, those of the museum, I looked to DAM's website for the mission of the museum, which is

> To enrich the lives of present and future generations through the acquisition, presentation, and preservation of works of art, supported by exemplary scholarship and public programs related to both its permanent collections and to temporary exhibitions presented by the Museum.

When I asked Melora about the goals of the education department, she likewise emphasized "engaging visitors with our collections and with our museum." She specified that this goal does not change with each new audience: "It is really about engagement," but the way the goal is carried out does change with different audiences. Sonnet outlined a two-point goal for young adult programming: making the museum more meaningful and relevant to this age group and connecting them to the collection. From my conversations with Sonnet and Lindsey, in which they expanded on these audience-specific goals as well as my analysis of DAM's report, the following four goals for young adult programs emerged:

1. Provide unexpected content.

2. Facilitate easy moments of creativity.

3. Connect visitors to the collection and exhibitions.

4. Eliminate barriers to participation.

In DAM's Report the staff introduced easy moments of creativity and unexpected content as "two concepts we knew from the start that we wanted to build programs

around." Although they never use the word goals in the report, instead referring to them as concepts, when I asked Sonnet and Lindsey about the goals of the programs, they mentioned these same concepts. The third and fourth goals are concepts that Sonnet and Lindsey mentioned repeatedly throughout the interviews, though never labeling them as goals. I have included them in the program goals because of the emphasis that my interviewees placed on them as well as their connection to the larger adult programming goal of making the museum more relevant to the audience and connecting the audience to the collection.

Provide unexpected content

Sonnet defined unexpected content in relation to young adult programs as "learning something I might not have otherwise." She clarified that providing unexpected or offbeat content on the collection was only half of the goal. Educators also offered an unexpected *approach* to content. The distinction became clear when she described conversations between curators and master teachers in the exhibition and program planning stages. These conversations yielded rich narrative moments and "ripe" pieces of information that "never see the light of day in an exhibition, in a label, [or] in a catalogue." Such information might be stories of how an object was acquired or conserved or how an educator saw the object in a new way after learning new information. This content is brought to life in the staff blog or in some aspect of a program thereby giving visitors some backstory that might inspire them to look closer. Whereas unexpected content is derived from finding new information on the collection,

an unexpected approach to content is finding new ways to present information on the collection. As Lindsey and Sonnet put it, this means offering varied perspectives on the collection that tease out opportunities to think about a work of art or the issues it raises in a new way. This could happen in a *Detour* led by a non-art expert or in the way an *Untitled* theme addresses the many facets of a concept as did "aftermath." Whether through videos, blog entries, or onsite programs, visitors encounter collection-related content that is offbeat and delivered in an intriguing and unanticipated manner. Melora commented that DAM's unexpected approach to its collection sets the museum apart from other museums that are experimenting with evening programming.

Facilitate easy moments of creativity

In responding to audience research that suggests young adults are interested in creative output, it was important to DAM educators that visitors not simply "bask" in the creativity of others, but also explore their own creativity and enter into a creative conversation with their community. According to Sonnet this goal was born out of an existing creativity initiative in the museum whereby education programs were designed to highlight visitor creativity. According to DAM's report on young adult programming, an easy moment of creativity is semi-structured, brief, free or cheap to access, and requires no previous skill or experience. The *Icebreaker* activity is an example. As the name suggests, it is a starting point for easing visitors into the casual, participatory atmosphere of *Untitled*. They are presented with a quick and simple challenge that gets them thinking about the evening's theme while showing them it is okay to express

themselves and share ideas with others. Music and drinks add to the lively atmosphere that sets the social tone for the program. When I asked Lindsey about visitor participation in creative activities, she reflected on an instance where a visitor was adamant about observing rather than participating in a poster-making activity that coincided with an exhibition of psychadelic rock posters from the 1960s. After stirring some memories from his own experiences of that time, the visitor set aside his assumptions about his own creativity, or lack thereof, and made a poster. "There is something about comfort...something about giving permission," Lindsey said, "something about saying this actually is a safe thing." She added that a successful easy moment of creativity may not inspire a visitor to fully participate in one visit, but it encourages them to see the museum as a safe place to explore their own creativity.

Connect visitors to the collection and exhibitions

As mentioned above, Sonnet stated one of the overall goals of young adult programming is connecting them to the collection. As a result, DAM young adult programming is collection-based rather than being focused on a cocktail party approach that is primarily a social experience. When I asked Lindsey about her perceptions of young adults in general, she responded that they want deep experiences with objects. They want to "get into stuff—processes, ideas, and hands-on exposure to art." Further answering the same question, Sonnet remarked that it is not enough to just have unexpected content. With this group of visitors, "[The experience is] not just fun and fresh. It's fun and fresh and deeply meaningful; and deeply tied to content." What came

out of this goal was the carefully planned, collection-focused program that *Untitled* now is. "Although a night is made up of a bunch of different program elements," Sonnet said, "the gallery is where we really want the most people to be engaged and talking and thinking."

Eliminate barriers to participation

Although it was never explicitly stated as a goal, ideas related to accessibility arose repeatedly in my interviews with Sonnet and Lindsey. Accessibility can take on many different meanings in museum education, but in the context of young adult programs at DAM it means making the museum a welcoming place for visitors and eliminating barriers to participation in programs. Both Sonnet and Lindsey mentioned the traditional power structure of museums that discourages visitor participation; content providers spout art historical information and visitors supposedly absorb the information, whispering if they speak at all. The educators hoped to break this tradition and utilize the museum as a "front porch"—a space that is neither wholly private or public, but shared by the museum and the public. Lindsey developed this metaphor in her Master's thesis to discuss the interactions that can happen between a museum and its community when the building becomes a space that neither party fully controls. Thus, the museum is not a sacred space or an authority, what Sonnet calls an "ivory tower," but "part of the network and the ecosystem" of the community. By eliminating barriers to participation DAM educators hoped to shift the museum from an entity that *tells* to one that *listens*, from one that *protects* and *provides* to one that *shares* and *co-creates*. However, this was easier said

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than done. Sonnet and Lindsey both recalled with some amusement that some initial experiments with *Detours* were unsuccessful because of the traditional norms dictating behavior in museums. *Detour* speakers typically practice their tour with staff members to test their content and tone. Unfortunately, sometimes the practice tours went well, but then the speakers would "all of a sudden want to be docents" for their real tour, dryly lecturing about art history, rather than telling their experience of the art as it pertains to their own expertise. Lindsey commented that it was challenging articulating her and Sonnet's goals so that community partners and museum staff alike could avoid the pitfalls that make the museum less accessible.

As mentioned earlier, one method the team used to achieve accessibility was crafting a tone unique to young adult programs. Everything related to this programming —the *Collective*, the staff blog, social media, and live programming—is delivered in a casual tone that lets visitors know that it is people they are connecting with, not an institution. It is described in DAM's report as "the way you'd talk to someone on your front porch." On Twitter and in the blog it was Lindsey@DAM and Sonnet@DAM, not just an institutional voice (Figures 4 and 5). At events around town, staff members did not show up with the Denver Art Museum logo behind them, but rather as fellow members of the community. As Lindsey put it, "You're there as Lindsey who happens to work at DAM."

Art Inspired 'Dos

Posted by *Jaime@DAM* on Tuesday, April 10, 4 pm

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↗ Share

This post was written by two Adult & College Programs interns, Megan and Jordan.

Untitled #45 (Haute) was a smashing success! The bravest Untitled visitors trusted their locks to our very own makeover machine in The Hub. Amazing styles, inspired by art in the museum, occurred all night by our Golden Triangle neighbor, Studio Salon. The 'Full-on Foxy' seemed to be the most popular cut and style requested by clients, but we had some men with fabulous hair transformations as well. From cuts and crazy coiffures to brilliant braids, hair styles became their own works of art! Check out some of our favs from the night.

Figure 4:   Post from the *Collective* blog.

Figure 1:   Post from the *Untitled* Facebook.

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As mentioned in a previous section, Lindsey characterized the adult audience as having an awareness for the way things are designed and delivered, and the staff considered this in the way they implemented *Untitled*. Lindsey made the point that the way the program looks or the atmosphere of a program models the behavior that will happen there. Things like table height, the way a pen looks, the materials the staff provides for art-making, and music all provide cues for visitor behavior. When a visitor scans the room and sees couches or low lighting, they perceive that this is a place in which they can relax and spend time. For Lindsey, the delivery of a program is as important to program development as thinking about content because it affects engagement. The atmosphere created for *Untitled* was "a deliberate attempt to break down some of those barriers" to engagement or simply being in the museum. Lindsey used the phrase "positive expectation violation" to describe the way the museum is countering visitors' perceptions of what their visit should be like, but in a way that is "unexpected, fun, friendly, comfortable, and welcoming." Although designing the delivery of a program in a deliberate way is not a new idea, it was a critical step in designing the program as a whole.

Aside from accessibility concerns related to visitors' comfort within the museum space, I was curious about if and how educators addressed barriers to adult learning such as the fear of appearing dumb. Both Sonnet and Lindsey expressed that they attempted to build strategies for alleviating these anxieties into their programs. Sonnet liked the idea of building a filter or a lens for the art that served as a springboard for conversation. A lens

gives visitors an entry point to ease the connection between the art and their own knowledge base. The filter could come from Jungian psychology and talking about dreams or hearing music that captures the essence of a work of art. As long as the filter is a non-art perspective, Sonnet said visitors feel "off the hook" from having to know some embedded answer. Lindsey agreed that using a filter is successful when visitors become so comfortable talking about the work through that lens that they almost unknowingly begin talking about their own thoughts and feelings. The challenge is finding the proper lens and framing the experience in a way that broadens rather than narrows interpretation.

TOOLS FOR MEETING PROGRAM GOALS

With their goals in mind the team of educators explored a number of avenues for carrying them out. Going back to Sonnet's two overarching goals—to make the museum relevant to this age group and to connect them with the collection—it was critical that the staff build a solid museum-community relationship to ground the museum and these new programs "in the ecosystem of the community," as she put it. Taking cues from Nina Simon's work[4], educators also established a platform of co-creation, collaboration, and participation that pervaded every element of the programs from inception to evaluation. Finally, social media and technology have remained an ever-evolving integral part of young adult programming by keeping visitors in the know and expanding the ways they

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[4]This includes her book, *The Participatory Museum*, as well as her blog, *Museum 2.0*, and a workshop Simon conducted with DAM staff.

can engage with the collection. Thus, the tools educators used to meet their program goals are as follows:

1. Redefining the museum's relationship with the community.

2. Establishing a platform of co-creation, collaboration, and participation.

3. Creating digital engagement opportunities.

Redefining the museum's relationship with the community

As previously mentioned, "showing up" played a vital role in how the staff connected with the community. By casually attending city events as individual members of the community rather than as formal representatives of the museum, staff members found potential partners within Denver's creative community, which was comprised of members of the target audience of young adults. The benefit of showing up, Lindsey asserted, is that you start to notice the same people clustering together and it is possible by talking to some of them that you can find within a couple of degrees who the "hub" is. She used the word "hub" to describe people who others considered to be or they considered themselves to be the influencers of a certain subset of the community, e.g., the subset interested in yarn bombing or lace making. Lindsey described the benefits of identifying and co-creating with hubs as being four-fold. First, they ensured relevance with the young adult audience because often the hubs were part of the target audience. Second, they ensured relevance within different community groups, particularly creative groups, because they have "their fingers on the pulse of what was going on in town and outside of their own discipline." Third, they were a good source of information on their

respective creative disciplines and could help educators present that information to visitors. Finally, they introduced DAM staff to a network of many other potential collaborators.

One way the staff utilized the network of partners that they had built was by hosting advisory groups that included key hubs in order to brainstorm potential program ideas. Upon reflection, both Sonnet and Lindsey commented that the meetings did not work as well as they had hoped. Although they did produce some good ideas and key insights into different groups of young adults in the Denver community, it was not always clear to the participants why they were there or what they should be contributing. On that point Sonnet expressed that the one-on-one interaction and showing up are better means of forging strong partnerships than establishing advisory groups.

The collaborative community relationships that the staff developed reflect an effort on their part to integrate co-creation, collaboration, and participation into every element of young adult programming, from brainstorming to planning, implementation and evaluation. These relationships are also a direct translation of Lindsey's "front porch" idea. Sonnet described the metaphor using the example of the museum's longstanding collaboration with local theater group Buntport Theater:

> We're going to bring our expertise and our assets and our resources, which are the collection and the people who work here, and you bring yours, which is your really unique skills in bringing things to life through theater and voice, and let's meet here on this kind of neutral ground and co-create.

She proposed that the basis for this approach to community involvement was both a systemic, institutional proclivity for reaching out, but also a grassroots effort to give a platform to creative people who did not have institutional backing.

Establishing a platform of co-creation, collaboration, and participation

The phrases "co-creation," "collaboration," and "participation" consistently appeared in the data when I asked Sonnet and Lindsey about the museum's relationship with the community or visitor experience. Based largely on Nina Simon's *Participatory Museum* (2010), her *Museum 2.0* blog, and a workshop she held with DAM staff members as well as audience research that the museum conducted, the staff developed a platform for program development that integrated all three concepts. Based on my conversations with Sonnet and Lindsey they understood co-creation to be a meeting of minds that results in a new idea. As Sonnet expressed in the quote above, co-creation is a skills swap on the museum's metaphorical front porch that yields a mutually beneficial result that could not have been achieved without that exchange. Lindsey distinguishes between co-creation of programs and co-creation of content. She said it was for her a real "aha" moment "noticing the power of co-creation." Lindsey continues, "I think we [educators] talk about [co-creation] a lot and don't mean for it to have the outcome that it has. I think it provides us a way to remain relevant and develop something that is truly valuable." Collaboration was used interchangeably with co-creation by Sonnet and Lindsey and likewise described partnership.

"Participation" was by far the most prominent topic that came up in my interviews about visitor experiences. In describing young adults in Denver, Lindsey observed that they like "creating their own experiences; and participatory experiences are important to them." As such the staff imbued young adult programs with a slew of ways for visitors to participate. According to Sonnet and the various interpretive reports released by the museum (See Appendix C), interactive, hands-on, or participatory experiences have been built into education at DAM for some time. Sonnet specifically mentioned visitor response journals, which are placed on tables in galleries that visitors can use to log their reactions to works of art and/or read comments left by other visitors. The reports describe other more complicated gallery activities like a coffee table that activates a projection of a portion of an artist interview, depending on where the visitor places an X-shaped block. The former example represents an activity that calls for either passive or active participation, the latter, active participation because the visitor chooses what topic they would like to hear the artist speak about. In these cases, certain types of participation were expected with each activity. This distinction between active and passive participation, between those who do and those who observe becomes important in participatory programs like *Untitled*. Likewise, the issue of how educators and visitors define participation came up numerous times throughout my conversations with Lindsey and Sonnet, specifically related to the results of Randi Korn's evaluation. This issue is fully explored in a later section.

When I asked Sonnet to describe how DAM young adult programming came about and what she believed the key characteristics of young adults to be, she emphasized the import of social media as an emerging way of "being in the world" that quickly became a "big part of this audience's life." Visitor participation, for her and Lindsey, was very closely tied to digital engagement and the target audience's relationship with the digital world. Thus, DAM education staff integrated multiple digital engagement opportunities into their programming to appeal to young adults' existing online presence and thereby increase audience participation.

Creating digital engagement opportunities

Digital engagement at DAM has been an iterative process marked by what Sonnet called a "proliferation of ways to engage and connect and create content to share," each with its own purpose. Lindsey's current role in the education department, Manager of Digital Engagement Programs, came out of this evolution. Sonnet remembered that the museum was not involved in any form of social media when the grant for young adult programming began. As the museum has established a social media presence and various digital engagement platforms, educators have continually evaluated these tools to maintain a clear purpose and define the relationship between online and onsite engagement. Sonnet and Lindsey revealed that the roles of current digital offerings, specifically *dDIY* and *DAM_Scout* were currently being evaluated and reworked to ensure that they are purposeful and valuable to visitors. When they were first developed, digital engagement programs were another way to meet the audience where they are so to speak,

thereby appealing to young adults as digital natives. According to DAM's report, young adult programming was "envisioned...as a continuum that people drop into at multiple points." Digital engagement became an important part of that continuum based on findings by the National Endowment for the Arts[5] that, "People who participate in the arts through electronic media are nearly three times as likely to attend live arts events as non-media participants." However, when I mentioned this trend to Lindsey, she replied that the field has since begun to move away from this idea that online engagement predicts live participation, toward seeing digital engagement as its own entity. Sonnet likewise commented that the education department has had to clearly define their goals for such programs as being distinct from the marketing department's goals. The point of education programming, she says, is not to promote repeat visits but rather to "provide the rich connections with the collection as an end." Lindsey elaborated that online experiences do not mean putting a live program online, but rather offering another choice for engaging with content or the museum that feels the same as onsite programs. Therefore, online programs like *digital Do-It-Yourself* or the blog have the same qualities of *Untitled*—the unexpected content, the participatory nature—but in a different format that can be experienced in tandem with visits to the museum or on their own at home.

While discussing the above elements of their program design process, Lindsey and Sonnet repeatedly touched on the importance of program evaluation to their practice.

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[5]The report DAM educators cite is *Audience 2.0: How Technology Influences Arts Participation* (2010).

My conversations with my interviewees about what did not work yielded some of the most fruitful information about their process and in turn sparked a discussion of the lasting implications of their challenges and triumphs.

ITERATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Young adult programming at DAM was evaluated in three ways. First, the education staff conducted small scale formative evaluations of elements of *Untitled,* thinking of the program as an "incubator" for experimenting with new ideas. These evaluations established a need for expanding the program into an entire suite. The evaluations also uncovered trends and ideas that would impact the way the education department approached all of their audiences, e.g., the notion of style, use of tone, and further emphasizing visitor creativity. In 2011 the staff also commissioned Randi Korn and Associates to conduct a summative evaluation of young adult program participation at DAM, titled *Audience Research: Study of Young Adults to the Denver Art Museum*. The study was primarily aimed at defining DAM's young adult audience, their participation patterns with various programs, and what they value about various programs. Its results revealed both the successes and shortcomings of many of the efforts that educators discussed in my interviews. Finally, educators practiced critical reflection in the conversations I had with them for this study. By talking with me and each other, they were prompted to consider their work in hindsight. Their reflections yielded observations about the changing role of the museum with programs like *Untitled* and the generalization of their ideas to the field.

Small scale evaluation and *Untitled* as an incubator

In my interviews and in DAM's report educators refer to their program development process as being "iterative." In the report the staff states, "We borrowed the term *iteration* from mathematics and use it to mean repetition of a procedure, typically as a means of obtaining successively closer approximations to the solution of a problem." Sonnet and Lindsey used the word "evaluation" repeatedly to communicate that the iterative process was a result of small scale formative evaluation and a constant reworking of programs. Lindsey argued that iteration and evaluation can seem "commonplace in our thinking, but not in our practice." She says, "Knowing that [evaluation] is part of your process ensures that you're always hearing from visitors; you're always checking to see what's happening. You might start out with a set of goals and then you realize after hearing from people that that's not exactly what's happening." About their evaluation process specific to *Untitled*, Sonnet commented:

> I feel like in a process like this you have to just try something out and experiment and have evaluation as part of your practice, and have listening to people and collaborating be part of the practice even when it doesn't work perfectly or as great as you might want it to. It gives you that key insight to make you tweak.

Sonnet and Lindsey refer to *Untitled*, which was the first program to debut, as an "incubator" or a "lab" for "seeing what was happening, experimenting in small scale ways to figure out what was resonating, what was working, and...explor[ing] those components that seem to have a little bit of stickiness to them." Through informal, small-scale evaluations consisting of observations and visitor responses, the staff found what

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was resonating and either tweaked missteps or developed successful ideas into mainstays of the *Untitled* program or a new program altogether. As mentioned in a previous section, new programs such as *dDIY* and *DAM_Scout* evolved from successes at *Untitled*. Although Melora does not use the words incubator or lab, she discussed the implications of these small scale experiments on the museum at large. The atmosphere of playfulness and irreverence, unexpectedness, and a new way of thinking about audience "ended up being part of a sparking of a broader institutional notion"; the ethos of *Untitled* influenced the ethos of the museum.

According to Sonnet, DAM education staff efforts have been focused on creativity for some time; she said they have been thinking about Csikszentmihalyi's "big c" creativity and "little c" creativity for ten years[6]. The work she and Lindsey did with engaging the creative community and putting visitor creativity at the forefront of their programs had a tremendous effect on strengthening the existing creativity initiative. Sonnet and Melora refer to the new studio space on the first floor of the museum as a clear example. The space enables visitors to get their hands dirty with art processes relevant to temporary exhibitions. For *Marvelous Mud*, an exhibition on claywork around the world, the space held pottery wheels. For a retrospective of Yves Saint Laurent's fashion design, it became a fashion studio complete with a catwalk, mannequins, fabric, and sketching materials. Currently the space is a paint studio for *Becoming Van Gogh*.

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[6]"big c" creativity and "little c" creativity refer to the difference between everyday creativity that we all use (little c) to that used by great artists (big c). For more information on Csikszentmihalyi, see Chapter 2.

Creativity has also become part of conversations on exhibition design and installation; Melora recalled the example of *Open for Design,* a community generated exhibition featuring visitors' designs for objects that would improve their neighborhoods.

Along with inspiring visitor creativity, young adult programming ushered in a tone of irreverence and playfulness—letting the public know that the museum does not take itself too seriously and going back to Lindsey's idea about giving permission to create. *Untitled'*s tone, what Melora calls "bits of whimsy" and a "slightly offbeat way of telling things," has "percolated up" from *Untitled* into the ethos of the museum, becoming part of the museum's identity and how staff members at the Denver Art Museum communicate with the community. Some of these changes are most evident in the museum's use of social media. Both Sonnet and Melora remembered social media and digital engagement emerging in the museum concurrently with young adult programming. Melora said that young adults were a "useful vehicle" for beginning to explore that arena. With some initial experiments completed, she said the staff was beginning to explore what digital engagement looks like for other audiences, and what can be taken from online young adult programs, such as unexpected content and new applications for such content.

In DAM's report on young adult programming and in each of my interviews with staff members the notion of "style" arose many time as an outcome of *Untitled* that would influence education practices across the department. In the report the staff defined the style of young adult programming as "co-created experiences, socially alive

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environments, access to real content, self-directed experiences, and a dose of the unexpected." Sonnet revealed how style became part of the staff's way of thinking about audience:

> Although we saw in the early months of *Untitled* a huge jump in attendance by this target audience relative to both program participation in general and to regular attendance, we saw a lot of Baby Boomers. We saw a lot of everyone. So we began to think of it as a style of program that, of course, was based in its origin in characteristics and needs of a certain audience but that ended up having a broader appeal. It's just something we keep in mind now. Rather than looking particularly at a demographic, maybe starting program design that way then thinking broadly about it as a style rather than a demographic.

Lindsey likewise noted that although attendance for *Untitled* was concentrated in the 18-35 age range, it was varied:

> When I'm saying *the audience* I'm talking about mostly young adult 18-35 year-olds in Denver, but also 55 years olds, and young people, and old people, and all kinds of people. But the characteristics really have much more to do with their style of visiting than they do with their demographics or anything else.

Both educators explained that the various elements of these programs, e.g. the free-choice format, the unexpected content, the emphasis on creativity, and the partners from Denver's creative community, were rooted in audience research on young adults. However, attendance patterns revealed that all ages and types of people enjoyed those program elements. All three educators that I interviewed commented that the department is now considering style in addition to age with all new audiences. Demographics still hold sway, but they are tempered with the understanding that they may or may not have much bearing on who will attend. Style and demographics are considered in tandem. Sonnet and Melora mentioned this shift specifically with recent efforts at attracting the

older adult audience. Melora called style "a hypothesis at this point," but projected that the museum may eventually have many different styles of adult programming.

Summative evaluation of young adult programming at DAM

As mentioned above, the museum commissioned Randi Korn and Associates to conduct a summative evaluation of *Untitled* and other young adult programs, which was comprised of 203 SurveyMonkey questionnaires and 19 in-depth interviews of *Untitled* visitors aged 22 to 34. The study was guided by the following goals:

1. Identify young adults' demographic characteristics.

2. Identify participation patterns.

3. Identify how young adults learn of DAM programming.

4. Describe the range and nature of program engagement.

5. Determine what characteristics young adults prefer about DAM programming.

6. Determine differences among young adults with different levels of engagement with DAM.

7. Identify the nature and qualities of the strong relationships that have formed between DAM and the core, committed group of young adults (those who participate regularly and often).

Rather than addressing the results of the evaluation in total, I have chosen to discuss results as they pertain to major themes in my interviews with educators. For example, the data offer a balance to DAM educators' beliefs about who their target audience is and

what they are interested in. Furthermore, the statistics reveal the outcomes of certain education initiatives like digital engagement programs and the emphasis on both creativity and unexpectedness. Where some efforts were confirmed successful and some beliefs were supported by the data, others were found to be problematic.

Who is visiting DAM young adult programs?

Based on the results of the collected surveys, visitors attending young adult programs at DAM were largely white, late twenties to early thirties, college educated female Denverites who were not members of the museum but do attend regularly, often for programs. The majority work in a creative field, are unmarried, and do not have children.

Awareness of DAM young adult programs

Sixty-four percent of responding visitors were aware of *Untitled*, whereas only one-third were aware of related programs like *Demo and Do*, *dDIY*, and *Happenings*. Furthermore, less than ten percent of respondents had visited one of these other programs. The data showed that three-quarters of young adults had visited the museum at least twice in the last year and two-thirds in the last two years specifically came to attend a program. These numbers reveal that the young adult visitor base at DAM has an interest in taking part in programs, however, they are unaware of their options.

What do visitors value about DAM young adult programs?

Visitors were asked in the survey distributed by Randi Korn and Associates to rank ten program characteristics by importance in terms of the visitors' reasons for

attending or participating in young adult programs at DAM. "Learning about the museum's collection or a special exhibition" rose to the top as most important to visitors with an average of 5.7 out of 7. In a discussion of these results, the evaluators wrote, "The findings demonstrate that, first and foremost, young adults value DAM's programming because it is *museum-based*." They compared the results to those found in a study of young adult programming in another museum, in which visitors placed the most importance on the social experience, only vaguely mentioning engaging with the art. Although interviews from the Denver study revealed that over half of attendees think of *Untitled* as a social experience, whether visiting alone or with a group, content was ultimately the focus of their trip. Respondents also placed great importance on the phrases "encountering unexpected ideas or subject matter and trying something new" (mean of 5.5). "Doing something that feels creative" ranked high as well with a mean of 5.4. In-depth interviews that the Randi Korn and Associate staff conducted with visitors showed that they also appreciated the museum's young adult offerings for the sense of community and the feelings of belonging they fostered. One participant likened the museum to the library, describing it as an "anchor institution for the city." In terms of program format, participants reported liking the "self-driven" nature of the program and the variety of options available to them. A quarter of interviewees said they chose to attend programs like *Untitled* because they fit into their schedule. A few others expressed a desire for more evening programming at the museum.

Respondents placed the least importance on the phrases "personalizing the experience based on my interests" (4.9) and "being able to actively participate (4.8). When I asked Sonnet and Lindsey why they believe these two statements ranked lowest, they reminded me that though participation is low compared to statements about content, the mean is still impressive. Both educators expressed that the lower mean reveals a disparity between how educators and visitors understand "participation." Referencing the visitor response journals that DAM staff has used in galleries for years, Sonnet said that she loves to flip through them and see visitors' responses to the works of art on display, but she never adds her own responses. She classifies this action as participatory because she is taking part, though not actively. Sonnet wondered if visitors understand participation in the same way: "I think a lot of what they're doing at *Untitled*, whether it's a quiz or an *Icebreaker*, maybe they're not thinking of those as participatory as we are." Based on these comments, I asked if observing is still considered successful participation in relation to their programs. Lindsey replied that even when visitors only observe a participatory experience it is a successful act of participation because the content the visitors consume "populate[s] a person's perception" of what the museum is all about or the content at hand. The issue of what active and passive participants want from experiences and how they define participation within DAM's programs is something that my interviewees were curious about. Both Sonnet and Lindsey were intrigued by visitors who do not like to participate. Stephanie Downey and Amanda Krantz, the evaluators who conducted the Korn evaluation, wrote in their discussion of the data, "DAM should

consider what degree of participatory engagement they expect from young adults and visitors in general indicates success (p. ix)."

How do visitors utilize digital engagement opportunities?

As part of the study of young adult program participation at DAM, Downey and Krantz gauged visitor awareness of and interaction with online resources. What they found was that the majority of visitors in the study had visited the *Collective* website, but few to none visited there on a daily basis. DAM's Twitter feed received much more traffic, showing that young adults are interested in being involved in the museum's online happenings, but in what capacity? When asked to rank statements describing possible experiences with online resources and social media, respondents rated "getting up-to-date news and information about the Denver Art Museum" highest (5.8 out of 7) as well as "engaging with content that is unexpected or unusual" (5.0). They placed the least importance on "posting my creative projects for others to see" (3.0), "commenting on visitor generated content" (3.2), "contributing content" (3.3), and "participating in a program online" (3.5). Respondents living outside of Denver rated these statements higher than Denver residents, leading Downey and Krantz to suggest that non-Denverites may be an important audience to consider when designing digital engagement programs.

The study reveals some possible reasons for the discrepancy between educators' goals and visitors' experiences with digital programs, one being awareness. Although ninety-five percent of respondents were aware of DAM's website, much fewer (fifty-five to sixty percent) were aware of the *Collective* website, blog, and *Untitled* Facebook page,

all of which feature unexpected content that visitors reported enjoying in onsite programs. Moreover, members of the *Collective* said that they value the website because it keeps them up-to-date on programs and events rather than valuing the participatory experience it provides. Downey and Krantz suggest in their discussion of the data that scaling down digital programs and redefining their purpose as well as how they engage people may help young adults find what they are looking for or access more easily something that might interest them.

Reflective evaluation

For the participants of this study the interview process served as a forum for reflecting on current and past education practices while speculating about the future. What arose in these conversations were critical assessments of ideas and processes related to the development of these programs, all of which I have covered in this chapter. In this section I highlight two other observations that emerged in the reflections made by Melora, Sonnet, and Lindsey. While still informed by their practices, these observations are projections for how young adult programming, in general, could call the purpose of the museum into question and how young adult programming at DAM could influence the field.

The first observation arose when I asked Sonnet and Lindsey for their opinion on an entry in Nina Simon's (2011) *Museum 2.0* blog about museum attendance becoming "event-driven." In her blog Simon distinguishes between programs and events, events being large monthly late night gatherings that draw crowds. She notes that visitors are

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attending events in staggering numbers compared to casual attendance numbers for every other day of the month. I saw a connection between the definition of event that Simon was describing and *Untitled*, and I asked my participants what they thought about this attendance trend as well as the differences between an event and program in relation to *Untitled*. Lindsey responded that she has been thinking about this issue for some time. She was sure that *Untitled* falls under the category of programming because the museum is not only a venue for social interaction as it would be in an event, but it also a facilitator of experiences with content derived from exhibitions. For example, elements of *Untitled*, like musicians and activities, are chosen for how they connect to themes drawn from the collection. Lindsey recognized that although event-style activities like social interaction and drinking are certainly outcomes of *Untitled*, they are not the focus of the evening for DAM educators or visitors: "Irregularly do you hear people say it's a cool place to go have a drink. It's always about the experience or the content." She went on to say that the emerging trend of event-style programming is perhaps a response to a shift in the type of experiences visitors want from museums. Where visitors used to prefer quiet, learning-based experiences, they now want social experiences where they can discover new ideas in interesting ways. Sonnet agreed that there has been a noticeable shift from art history or studio-based programming toward live experiences that are not guided by educator generated content, but constructed by visitor generated content. She added that museums now need to be careful about the language they use because terms like event and program imply different types of experiences, i.e., the difference between a party that happens to

be held at the museum and an informal learning experience derived from the museum's collection. The results of the summative evaluation mentioned above, as well as my interviews with the Randi Korn staff members who worked on the study, confirmed Sonnet's and Lindsey's views. Participants in the study reported liking the "relaxed but lively social atmosphere," noting the novel experience of drinking and socializing in the museum. However, they also emphasized the value of seeing the art and participating in art related programming. One interviewee in particular noted that *Untitled* is "definitely not like a kegger."

Because my research question deals with how DAM's approach to young adult programming could be useful in other museums, I asked each of my participants to tell what aspects of DAM's approach they believed to be transferrable to other museums. I knew that their answers could only be speculative, but I was interested in seeing which elements stood out for each person as being applicable on a large scale. Melora answered this question by first recognizing that DAM's programs are based on audience research that was not just localized, but also integrated national studies about this age group. Therefore, their approach could possibly be applicable anywhere. For her, DAM's education department stands out among other museums working with this audience for how they engage the collection in interesting ways, i.e., unexpected content and approaches to that content, which I discussed earlier in this chapter. Melora also credits Sonnet and Lindsey with being pioneers with this audience in the way they use tone. Answering the same question Sonnet replied, "I wouldn't pass out a toolbox of actual

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things we did. I would say look at the process of designing the experience; and that to me transfers easily." Lindsey was more specific in her answer; she said that showing up and thinking about style are two exercises that should be part of every educators' practice when reaching out to a new audience. She added that the sense of unexpectedness in their programs and the purposeful design of the experience could be useful in other museums. Lindsey summed up by saying that the density of creative young people in Denver made their approach successful, but many of the trends they found in their young adult audience could likely be found in other cities. The thread that connected each of my participants' answers was a concern with authenticity or the need for an institution to stay true to its ethos and its community through the programs it conducts. Melora argued that even when similarities can be found between young adult audiences in different cities, the way an art museum interacts with their community must reflect the identity of that institution and their specific audience. In essence, what worked for one museum may not work for another because each has a unique vision and identity.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I used my collected data to narrate the process that Denver Art Museum educators followed in developing programs for their young adult audience beginning with an overview of the programs designed and delivered. I then detailed educators' process starting with audience research, goals they set for their young adult programs, tools they used to meet program goals, and program evaluation. In the next

chapter I relate my data to the literature and my research question about DAM's approach to young adult programming and discuss how this information might be useful to other museums.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

This single explanatory case study explored young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum. My research question dealt with understanding and detailing the Denver Art Museum's approach to developing young adult programs in light of its proven success with that audience and how the the DAM's approach might be useful in other museums. To answer this research question I interviewed three educators from DAM, one of whom was also a member of the administration, and two staff members from Randi Korn and Associates, the firm that evaluated the museum's young adult programs. I also examined websites related to the programs, a number of documents released by DAM, and the Korn evaluation. I answered the first part of my central research question about DAM's approach in the previous chapter, and I focus this chapter on how that approach might be useful in other museums. First, I present the five key features of DAM's approach in order according to the program design process. I then assess how each feature is conducive to transferring to other museums based on how that feature worked for DAM and the degree to which it is rooted in the literature on young adults. Therefore, some elements of DAM's approach are more suitable for use on a large scale than others. I then explore how DAM's introduction of a new lexicon regarding young adult audiences indicates new practices in museum education, and I discuss two concerns that emerged from this project. Lastly, I pose recommendations for future studies based on

this research, explain my study's significance to the field of museum education, and provide concluding thoughts.

HOW DAM'S APPROACH MIGHT BE USEFUL IN OTHER MUSEUMS

In Chapter 4 I answered the first part of my central research question by identifying the key features of DAMs approach to young adult programming to understand how their programs were successful at reaching the target audience. The features that emerged are:

1. Redefining the museum's relationship with the community.

2. Developing clear program goals.

3. Embracing a value of participation.

4. Developing digital online and onsite programs.

5. Integrating formative evaluation into practice.

The features that I identified as defining DAM's approach to young adult programming represent both values and practices that contributed to the museum's educators connecting with Denver's young adult community and engaging them in museum experiences. Based on the previously mentioned criteria, I determined the suitability of each of these features for transfer to other museums and young adult audiences.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, these features, however transferrable they may be, are ultimately not generalizable exactly as they are. When I asked my participants to speak about their work in relation to the field, each of them agreed that it could be applicable on a large scale but stipulated that ideas and processes must be tailored to the

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identity of the museum and that of its community. They called this *authenticity* in the sense that educators should always stay true to the mission of their museum and the community they serve. Throughout my conversations with DAM educators, authenticity emerged as a value that is important to them in each stage of programming with all audiences. I agree with my participants' concern with authenticity and challenge museum educators to adapt the tools I present here to the identity of their own institutions, the philosophies they subscribe to, and the audiences they serve. These tools are springboards for the innovative work that still needs to be done with young adult programming.

DAM's approach is ultimately about knowing your audience and genuinely connecting with them. This occurs in contrast to assuming you know your audience based on demographic factors. It is also about connecting every aspect of programming back to the audience. This value that drives young adult programming at DAM can and should be embraced by all museum educators with all audiences; however, the ways in which educators put it into practice could vary from the method used in Denver.

Redefining the museum's relationship with the community

I identified DAM's process of creating a relationship with their community of young adults as one of the most transferrable aspects of their approach. This process is about getting out into the community and being more relevant in the lives of potential audiences by knowing those audiences well. A quote from Sonnet has stood out to me throughout this project as a defining statement of DAM's place within the community, but also as a goal for all museums to strive for: to be "part of the ecosystem of the

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community." The word ecosystem suggests interdependence between the different facets of a community, a network where everything is a necessary, contributing part of the whole. The idea is for the museum to become part of that network, an entity which if gone, would leave the community lacking.

As educators make the transition from information transmission to providing participatory experiences, it is not enough to engage visitors in participatory activities during the implementation of programs. They must maintain a dialogue with their visitors throughout every stage of program planning. This starts with getting out into the community, getting to know your audience well, connecting with them in personal ways, and then taking that collaborative mentality back to the museum and using the museum as a shared space between staff and visitors—what DAM calls the museum's "front porch." DAM's front porch metaphor represents a shift in thinking that goes beyond the way educators interact with potential collaborators. It is a mindset that can be considered at every possible point of contact between the institution and its community, and should be considered by all museum staffs with their young adults and other audiences.

The literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 describes the current generation of young adults as being community-oriented, collaborative, connected, and creative (Black, 2010; Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Goldgehn, 2004; Simon, 2009). Collaboration has become the norm for many aspects of young adults' daily lives—how they find information, work, make consumer choices, and share their thoughts and experiences. As collaborators they contribute to an exchange whereby users are

simultaneously acting as creators and consumers, adding and consuming content in forums ranging from small social groups to global networks. Museums should become part of this way of working and utilize young adults' willingness to share ideas. DAM recognized this potential and successfully tapped into it by "showing up," identifying "hubs" in Denver's creative communities, and co-creating with them. As such, I would argue that they have made steps toward realizing Nina Simon's (2009) goal of equalizing the museum/visitor relationship. Their method of establishing a strong working relationship with their community of young adults is transferrable because it is based on knowing the audience and meeting them where they are. That is, breaking down the cold institutional facade and genuinely showing interest in the community and in individuals. This is something all museum educators should be working toward with all of their audiences.

Developing clear program goals

I learned from DAM education staff members that developing clear goals is a practice that founds every education initiative there, not just young adult programs. Goals are constructed based on ones that educators have made for the audience, those of the education department as a whole, and the mission of the museum. Herein lies the transferable quality of this feature of DAM's approach. Although goal setting is a common and necessary step of any education initiative in museums, there is a distinction between creating program goals and creating *clear* program goals. At DAM, this means carefully considering the identity, aims, and beliefs of the institution and education

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department. Perhaps more importantly, clear program goals connect back to the audience. As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, DAM's approach to young adult programming can be summed up as knowing one's audience and connecting every element of programming to them. In their evaluation of DAM's programs, Stephanie Downey and Amanda Krantz of Randi Korn and Associates commended DAM educators for the deliberateness with which they created program goals, as compared to some educators who "go fishing" with their audiences, operating by trial and error rather than focused, well-founded goals.

By creating clearly defined, audience-centered program goals, my participants had a strong foundation on which to build their programs as well as markers that they could revisit every time they considered adding new elements or reworking existing ones. Their goals ensured that their work always connected back to the audience, departmental goals, and the mission of the museum. The educators were able to revisit their goals in formative and summative evaluations, giving them a way to gauge the effectiveness of their programs by representing what the educators' intended, compared to the actual effects as revealed in evaluations.

In terms of specific goals, providing unexpected content and facilitating easy moments of creativity potentially could be useful in other museums because they are rooted in audience research and the literature on young adults. Farrell and Medvedeva (2010) described Generation Y as experiencing a "creative renaissance" characterized by a renewed interest in creative activities in general and the DIY movement in particular.

Chung and Wilkening (2009) likewise found that young adults today have become invested in local creative groups as well as more personal creative expressions such as "curating their lives" through customizing personal possessions. Thus, creativity could be a useful entry point for getting young adults everywhere engaged in museums. DAM educators' focus on unexpected content is based on audience research revealing that young adults are genuinely interested in learning and prefer to find information in many different ways and from a wide variety of sources, in part due to their social connectedness through technology. Although qualities like creativity and connectedness are pervasive in the literature on Generation Y, each community of young adults will have unique characteristics; setting clear goals for one's specific group of young adults requires connecting with them, as discussed in the previous section.

Embracing a value of participation

A characteristic of DAM's approach is the integration of participatory practices into each stage of the program development process, from planning to implementation and evaluation. DAM's educators have embraced a value of participation that pervades everything they do in relation to their young adult audience. As mentioned in a previous section, DAM has created an active, ongoing dialogue with their community rather than simply engaging visitors in participatory activities during the execution of programs. Their focus on participation, co-creation, and collaboration clearly can be traced back to Simon (2010) in the way that the staff thinks of visitors as "co-creators," and "collaborators" whose perspectives are as valid as those of staff members. Moreover,

their application of the front porch concept into practice represents Simon's "me to we" transition in participatory museums by which the museum serves as a facilitator for the co-construction of content by visitors, museum educators and curators, and other visitors and/or collaborators.

In a report on demographic changes in museums, Farrell and Medvedeva (2010) assert that co-creation and highly participatory experiences have now become expected by Gen Y visitors. Furthermore, young adults' comfort with technology, desire to be constantly connected to online and live communities, and their preference for communal rather than individual pursuits suggest that participatory and collaborative experiences may be a useful tool for engaging them in museum experiences. In that sense using participatory practices in young adult programs is transferrable to any museum working with this audience. Considering museums' emerging progression from transmission to experience-based, co-constructed programming, participatory practices should be considered by all museums and with all audiences. However, using participatory practices in programming alone is not enough. To truly create and maintain relevance with an audience, museum educators must adopt an overarching value of participation that informs every step of programming from brainstorming to summative evaluation.

Although DAM had this value in place, the data revealed the current iteration of participatory practice to be only partially successful. Some initiatives worked for DAM and others did not, thus the need for an iterative process and formative assessment. When DAM staff members collaborated with a single group like Buntport Theater in the

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planning stages of an *Untitled* program, the partnership was successful and has continued for many years. Other experiments with co-creation like brainstorming sessions with local creative leaders, hubs, were not as successful because they were too unstructured. Furthermore, Randi Korn's evaluation revealed that educators and visitors were not understanding participation in the same way, thereby leading visitors to rank active participation relatively low on a scale of interests. I explore this problem with defining "participation" in depth in a later section. Although this particular iteration is not entirely transferrable it is an important step toward finding ways to collaborate with the young adult audience. It is also evidence that the progression toward a participatory museum culture is still in process. Specific participatory practices will vary by museum and require many iterations, but as a value integrating participation into every stage of a program and at every point of contact with visitors is transferrable and adaptable to every museum.

Developing digital online and onsite programs

Digital engagement, like participatory practices, is an element of DAM's approach that is transferrable as a consideration for young adult programming in museums everywhere. However, the specific iteration that I observed is not entirely transferrable. The practice of integrating digital experiences, whether live or online, into young adult programming is applicable on a large scale because it reflects what young adults today are doing in their daily lives. DAM staff members recognized, as did Prensky (2001), that Generation Y are the first digital natives, or as Sonnet describes, the

"early adopters of those ways of being in the world." Young adults are using digital tools to connect with ideas and people in their daily lives and demand the same types of experiences from their museum visits.

My interviews with DAM educators and examination of Randi Korn's 2011 evaluation revealed that digital engagement is an area of these programs that requires future iterations. Despite having many of the same qualities as popular onsite programs, e.g., unexpected content, a focus on visitor creativity, and a casual tone, digital engagement options like *dDIY* and the *Collective* website in general were underutilized by visitors and lacked a clarity of purpose. Thus, the current iteration of digital engagement in DAM young adult programming is not directly transferrable, but digital engagement in general is something that all museum educators should explore with their own audiences.

Integrating formative evaluation into practice

Small scale formative evaluation played an integral part in the development and expansion of DAM young adult programs. Thinking of *Untitled* as a lab or an incubator enabled DAM educators to test, rework, and retest ideas to find what worked best with their audience. Museum educators should already be evaluating everything they do, and in that sense, thinking of a program as a lab is not only transferrable but common sense. What I gained from conversations with my participants about evaluation was not just the importance of it, but the multitude of ways evaluation can be carried out. The educators working with these programs have challenged themselves to find new, creative ways to

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conduct small formative evaluations during a program. For example, they mentioned giving cameras to visitors during programs and asking them to capture scenes like the most empty or most happening spot in the museum. Educators would then analyze all the collected photos to evaluate activities' effectiveness at engaging visitors.

Integrating evaluation moments, however small, enabled educators at DAM to expand ideas that tested well with visitors during experiments at *Untitled* and rethink those that did not. Evaluations provided feedback about the kinds of experiences the target audience wanted and if their needs were being met by the current program offerings. Thus, formative evaluation told educators whether or not they were on track with the goals they had set and the needs of the target audience. Moreover, the findings revealed which practices could potentially be applied to educational programming throughout the museum. Ultimately, formative evaluation served as a means of reflecting on past work, reworking current issues, and questioning what could work in the future. Falk and Dierking recall in *The Museum Experience Revisited* (2012) that evaluation, consisting of front-end, formative, and summative assessment, was not a common practice in museums 20 years ago. It has since become more pervasive throughout museum education. The authors assert that formative assessment ensures that "miscalculations" and "expensive mistakes" are avoided early so summative assessment reveals to funders that museums are in fact relevant and necessary. Formative evaluation, like that conducted by educators at DAM, is necessary and transferrable for two reasons:

it challenges us to be better at our jobs and helps us prove to funders why we should continue to have those jobs.

THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW LEXICON AS AN INDICATOR OF NEW PRACTICES

As is evident in the title of this study, the lexicon that staff members at DAM have created in relation to their young adult programs caught my attention from my initial investigation through my data collection and analysis. In my conversations with Sonnet and Lindsey in particular a number of words and phrases emerged repeatedly that were familiar, but were used in new ways. Coming out of my courses in museum education I knew that theories and authors in this field are often associated with key words. For example, the words "participatory," and "co-creation" are associated with Nina Simon's (2010) views on how museums should relate to visitors. Likewise, "free choice learning" is associated with Falk and Dierking (2012). I identified the following terms as comprising DAMs lexicon for young adult programming:

1. Style

2. Showing up

3. Hubs

4. Front porch

5. Lens or filter

6. Lab or incubator

I have discussed each of these terms in previous sections and chapters and do not expand on them here. Rather, I am interested in recognizing how they collectively represent the

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introduction of new ways of thinking or working into museum education practices. What Sonnet and Lindsey found in their audience research on young adults, and I found in my review of literature, is that Generation Y stands out as a group who is experiencing the world in new ways. As discussed in a previous section and in Chapter 2, young adults today are setting new standards for how people move through the stages of adulthood (Arnett et al., 2011; Chung et al., 2008) and how they connect to people on local and global scales (Chung & Wilkening, 2009; Ray & Settersten, 2010). Educators at DAM have responded to the changes they saw in young adults with a new language of programming for them that represents an innovative way of thinking about this audience and museum education as well as new practices for connecting with audiences. For example, "showing up," "hubs," and "front porch" represent the adoption of a number of new practices for connecting with one's community that align with the way young adults' experience community. "Style" represents a shift in how educators group audiences—by interests and the types of programs they prefer rather than solely by demographic factors. As Melora said in her interview, educators must find a way for the museum to fit into what an audience is already doing by getting out into the community. Sonnet and Lindsey have done so with Denver's young adult community and their new lexicon is proof of their efforts.

CONCERNS THAT EMERGED FROM THIS PROJECT

Despite the advancements that educators at DAM and elsewhere have made in young adult programming, a couple issues arose from my data that signal there is much

more work to be done. After reviewing the available literature on my topic and collecting and analyzing my data, two concerns emerged that I believe may be useful to educators who are considering creating or reworking young adult programs. First, as educators integrate participatory practices into programming, it is essential that they define what participation looks like for their particular institution and how to gauge participation for the purpose of evaluation. Second, the growing trend of event-style programming necessitates a clear distinction be established between an event and a program. Moreover, this trend requires a careful consideration as to the role of the museum in a participatory experience. Like in the case of participation, definitions will vary from one institution to another.

Defining "participation"

Upon reviewing Korn's evaluation of DAM's programs, it became apparent that active participation did not rank among visitors' highest priorities. This struck me as odd for a set of programs so focused on participation. I asked Sonnet and Lindsey for their opinion on these findings and they answered that perhaps educators and visitors understand the word participation differently. They speculated that visitors might think of participation as raising their hand in class to fulfill a participation grade or filling out a survey, a type of engagement that is more obligatory and less enjoyable. Sonnet and Lindsey went on to explain their own understanding of participation. They argued that when visitors observe other visitors participating or consume visitor generated content like comments left in a visitor response journal, they are in fact participating.

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Participation for Sonnet and Lindsey aligns with Simon's (2010) complex definition of participation, which allows for a range of participatory styles. These include content creation, criticism, organization, and spectating, all of which she regards as equally valid types of participation. DAM educators support this view with the belief that passive participation, like spectating, plays into visitors' perceptions of the art, the museum, or some related topic and that makes the experience participatory. This reasoning aligns with Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's (1991) idea that the aggregation of old and knew information accompanied by an emotional reaction in a focused "flow state" can yield new perceptions. This process, although spectatorial, is considered participatory.

Although I recognize as Simon (2010) does that people approach participatory experiences in different ways, I am not entirely convinced that spectating is a meaningful type of participation. Dewey (1938, 1958) was instrumental in establishing a point that has become foundational to art education: experiences and the meaning derived from them can have a profound and lasting effect. For Dewey, a meaningful experience is based on action not observation, and the one having the experience must reflect on that action either immediately or over time. As museum educators have adopted the word experience to describe the interactions that visitors have in museums, it can be reasoned that these experiences too require action and reflection. Is the action of going to the museum sufficient or is another type of participation necessary for a meaningful experience to occur? Furthermore, if spectating is deemed a successful act of participation, are programs successful as long as visitors are present and conscious? This

standard leaves little for educators to strive toward. Remembering Simon's findings that the vast majority of social media users are consumers (spectators) rather than creators, I am curious if current participatory museum programs follow this trend. If so, there is a need for educators to consider if they are content with so much watching and so little doing in their programs.

This conversation raises an important point that educators designing participatory programs should consider. In an increasingly participatory museum culture, educators must ask themselves what kinds of participation they expect in their programs and how their visitors define participation. Korn's evaluation of DAM's programs revealed that visitors did not understand participation in the same way that educators did. Thus, they reported being relatively uninterested in participating in programs that were designed to be participatory. As a result the educators' efforts appeared to be less successful than they likely were. It is important that educators be aware of how visitors want to participate in museum programs and how they define the word participation when it comes up in evaluations so they can design programs to fit the needs of their audience and receive accurate evaluation results. Farrell and Medvedeva's (2010) report on demographic changes in museums showed that participatory experiences in museums are expected by young adults. So how are young adults thinking about participation in regard to art museum visits? Although as Lindsey and Sonnet speculated the word participation may conjure up negative school memories or boring surveys, young adult visitors may picture an engaging museum experience as a fun, hands-on activity like those offered by science

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centers. Perhaps they imagine experiences like those facilitated by social media sites or something completely different.

Evaluators conducting the 2011 study of DAM's programs suggested that the educators there need to define their expectations for participation. Considering Simon's (2010) wide range of visitor participation levels ranging from contribution to almost complete control of a gallery space, I would argue that every educator creating participatory programs needs to do this, particularly if they are embracing a fully participatory approach like DAM. Educators at different museums will be comfortable with various level of participation from their visitors and therefore will define successful participation differently. They will also have a range of visitors, some like Denver with a high concentration of creatives, and others with more who are spectators. Museum educators creating participatory programs need to define what kind of participation they want from visitors at each point of program creation and execution, as well as what kinds of participation their visitors want. Once they have established what constitutes successful participation, they can decide if their process and resulting program is effective.

The role of the museum in regard to young adult programming

Another concern I had after analyzing my data was the changing role of the museum as a result of emerging trends in young adult programming. As I discussed in Chapter 4, Nina Simon (2011) has described late night programming in museums as "hosted parties" and "events." She observed that museum attendance has become event-

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driven, with large scale events leading to staggering attendance increases and more partnership opportunities. She also identifies the evolution of participatory practices in museums as a "me to we" progression characterized by a shift in the museum's role from teacher to facilitator (2010). It is evident from Simon's findings and my interviews with DAM staff that participatory programming, particularly late night programming, has created multiple roles for museums in relation to their public.

As museums make the transition from a transmission model of programming to one that is participatory and experienced-based, it is necessary to consider what role museums and their staffs should fill in their communities. Is that role one of facilitator, co-creator, teacher, and/or venue? Lindsey made the point in our conversation on this topic that *Untitled* is not an event, and DAM is not a venue. Instead, she perceives *Untitled* to be a program and the museum to be a place with unique assets to offer the community of Denver. For her, there is a clear distinction between a program and an event, even though the distinction may only be clear to other DAM educators and not to the visitors. It lies in whether an experience is based in a meaningful interaction with the collection (program) or purely social interaction (event). The first necessitates being in the museum and using the museum's assets, the second uses the museum as a venue thereby only utilizing its space. With drinking, music performances, and a strong social element becoming the norm of young adult programs, the line between programming and entertainment is quickly vanishing. It is not necessary for visitors to see this line; they will attend either format if it appeals to them. However, educators must be sensitive to

how each of these circumstances—programs and events—situates their museum within the community. At a time when museums are compelled more than ever to demonstrate their relevance in society, it is imperative that educators be clear about the roles they are creating for their institutions through their programming. If museum educators ignore the cultural value of their institutions by making them venues, visitors will follow. They must also consider how programs and events relate to the goals they have for their audience and if events help them reach those goals.

DAM's front porch metaphor is evidence of how educators there have attempted to navigate this issue. A front porch is a meeting place between private and public, host and guest. It is not a space that is offered to guests to enjoy how they like, but rather one that is shared by the two parties. Thus, the metaphor of the museum as a front porch defines the museum as a shared space between visitors and staff as opposed to a venue in which the host (staff) is absent or perhaps silent. Neither party can control what happens there, but each contributes to a shared experience, thereby setting the expectation of collaboration between the two parties. With this metaphor DAM is positioned in the community as a co-creator and a facilitator rather than a venue because the museum is always a contributing member of the experiences that happen in the space. Its very purpose for existing is to share its unique assets—the collection and the expertise of the staff—with the community.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES

Researchers interested in young adult programming could expand on this research in a multitude of ways. This single case study could be validated by other single case studies of museums experimenting with young adult programming or comparative case studies of multiple museums' approaches. Other studies could explore the program development process as I have done or evaluate programs for their effectiveness with the target audience. My study could be expanded by observing and interviewing visitors to DAM's programs. Because Korn's evaluation only explored topics like audience demographics, participation patterns, and program awareness it would be enlightening to talk with visitors about topics that were not covered, such as social media use, hobbies, and participation in local organizations. Researchers could also conduct a longitudinal study measuring visitors' participation rates, interests, and attitudes toward DAM's programs over time. These changes could be tracked in conjunction with the evolution of various programs to measure the effectiveness of program changes as well as changes in the core audience. Finally, the study revealed digital onsite and online programs to be an area that needs to be explored further by museum educators everywhere. Action research focused on researching, developing, and evaluating digital programs would be of great value to the field.

Significance to the Field

In light of decreasing arts participation among Generation Y young adults, programs that have increased participation in this audience must be explored and evaluated for what they can contribute to museum education practices. It is important to

study and disseminate cases of success so that the field might learn ways to engage this audience; they are not only vital to the financial future and lasting relevance of museums, but they also present an opportunity for museums to experiment with digital engagement and participatory practices while inspiring a new generation of lifelong learners. This study is significant to the field of museum education in that it examines in-depth a set of young adult museum programs to identify characteristics that other museum educators should consider in their own programs. In doing so I have identified possible successes and challenges related to this area of education programming that can serve as lessons for educators everywhere. I have also raised issues that require further exploration by the field, demonstrating that young adult museum programming is in fact an area that is still evolving. Lastly, this research has provided the field with a set of tools and new ways of thinking, both represented by a new lexicon that can serve as a starting point for those looking to develop young adult programs or reworking those currently in place.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

I intended for this research to present a detailed account of one approach to young adult program design as well as characteristics of the process that could then inform educators working in other museums. Although my findings are not generalizable, they revealed tools and ways of thinking that should be considered by the field as it establishes meaningful practices for young adult audiences.

I concluded that the Denver Art Museum's approach to young adult program development consists of five key features that vary in their suitability for transferring to

other museums. They are: (a) redefining the museum's relationship with the community, (b) developing clear program goals, (c) embracing a value of participation (d) developing digital online and onsite programs, and (e) integrating formative evaluation into practice. As a result of my research there are two concerns that I identify as points for future research: the problem of defining "participation" and the role of museums in regard to young adult programming. My findings from this study suggest that the current generation of young adults is an underserved audience in museums and one with a particular set of characteristics and challenges for museum educators. I have concluded that DAM educators are meeting these challenges with new ways of thinking and working represented by the creation of a new lexicon.

The lasting impression I have from this project is the realization that audiences are much more complex than the demographic classifications by which museum educators have understood them. Museum programs have traditionally been grouped into school, family, teen, college/young adult, adult, and senior programs, all of which are defined by narrow demographic factors like age or institutional identity. Perhaps it is time for museums to move away from audience categories defined by overarching demographics toward a more flexible understanding of audience. This could mean considering *style* as DAM has done, or some other way of thinking about audience specific to the community that a museum is situated within. This research has showed me that age groups change from one generation to the next. It also revealed to me that age

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does not necessarily define the types of museum experiences that people want. The lesson to be learned from this research is one that can be applied to all types of visitors: educators must understand their visitors as people, as co-members of the community, and as potential collaborators, and then work to figure out how the museum best fits into their lives. The days of funneling visitors into museums through single-demographic programs are over.

Appendix A: Site Letter of Agreement

DENVER ART MUSEUM
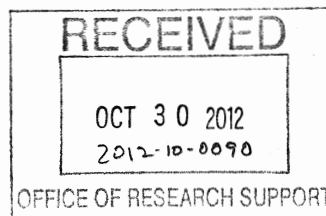
October 23, 2012

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 Jessie Frazier, a graduate student at the University of Texas at Austin permission to conduct research at the Denver Art Museum. The project, "Changing Lexicons: A Case Study of Young Adult Programming at the Denver Art Museum" entails conducting 3 semi-structured interviews of DAM staff members in the museum offices to gain an understanding of young adult program development at this institution. The Denver Art Museum was selected because it hosts the programs under study. Results of the study will be shared with the Denver Art Museum if requested. I Melora McDermott-Lewis, Director of Education at the DAM, do hereby grant permission for Jessie Frazier to conduct "Changing Lexicons: A Case Study of Young Adult Programming at the Denver Art Museum" at the Denver Art Museum.

Sincerely,

Melora McDermott-Lewis
Director of Education
Denver Art Museum

Appendix B: Consent for Participation in Research

Title: Changing Lexicons: A Case Study of Young Adult Programming at the Denver Art Museum

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. The person performing the research will answer any of your questions. Read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your consent.

Purpose of the Study

You have been asked to participate in a research study about young adult programming at the Denver Art Museum. The purpose of this study is explore young adult program development at the Denver Art Museum and its potential application in other museums.

What will you to be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to
• Complete an interview lasting approximately 30 minutes
This study will take 1-2 and will include approximately 4 study participants. Your participation will be audio recorded.

What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, by participating in this study your will have the opportunity to discuss your work in a way that might benefit the field.

Do you have to participate?

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all or, if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin (University) in anyway.

If you would like to participate return this signed form to Jessie Frazier. You will receive a copy of this form.

Will there be any compensation?
    You will not receive any type of payment participating in this study.

What are my confidentiality or privacy protections when participating in this research study?
    This study is confidential and your name and title will not be revealed without your consent.

    If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the research team will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept for 5 months and then erased. The data resulting from your participation may be used for future research or be made available to other researchers for research purposes not detailed within this consent form.

Whom to contact with questions about the study?
    Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Jessie Frazier at (210) 471-9890 or send an email to jessicabfrazier@gmail.com. This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2012100090.

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?
    For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

Participation
    If you agree to participate return this signed form to Jessie Frazier.

Signature
    You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

_____

Printed Name

_____   _____

Signature   Date

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

_____
Print Name of Person obtaining consent

_____   _____
Signature of Person obtaining consent   Date

Appendix C: Documents Examined in this Study

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Appendix D: Interview Questions

1. What was the reasoning behind starting this set of programs?

2. What initial research did you do into this audience before beginning?

3. How did you characterize this audience before beginning this set of programs? Has your view evolved or changed since then?

4. What stands out to you most about this audience?

5. What do you believe to be important in reaching out to them?

6. What are your goals with young adult programs? How do they compare to the goals and mission of the museum?

7. What was the process by which you arrived at these 4 distinct programs?

8. What is your approach to museum-community relations, specifically for young adult programs?

9. Who are you most influenced by as educators? What about as an institution?

10. In your report you write that you think of this audience more as a style than an age...do you still consider this to be young adult programming?

11. In what ways is this style idea applicable to other museum audiences?

12. What, if anything, did you find surprising or beneficial in Randi Korn's evaluation of these programs?

13. Inspiring visitor creativity is very important to the DAM and research shows this generation to be very creatively charged, but in Randi Korn's evaluation of your

programs they noted a low participation rate in interactive programs, especially those requiring creative input…how do you explain this disconnect and how do you plan to address creativity in future programming?

14. Evaluators found visitors' top motivation for attending to be "learning about the museum's collection or special exhibition". What was your approach to making that connection with this set of programs? How effective do you believe it to be?

DAM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION QUESTIONS

1. What, for you, are the key goals in education programming at the DAM? How much do they vary depending on audience?

2. How would you describe the DAM's place within the community?

3. What is the literature that founds your and your department's ideas about education programming?

4. How would you compare what the DAM is doing in terms of education with similar museums around the country?

5. What would you like to see happen in the future in your department or in the museum? What do you see as Denver Art Museum's method for reaching out to new or underserved audiences?

6. How did you think of the young adult audience before beginning this set of programs? Has your view evolved or changed since then?

7. How does the work that Lindsey and Sonnet started with young adults fit into the educational mission of the museum?

8. In the published report on these programs, you found that style is best way to think about programming for young adults. In what ways could this idea be applied to all programs and audiences at DAM?

9. In your experience, how do you think this set of programs aligns with or departs from previous ways of thinking about audience?

10. What, if anything, did you find surprising or beneficial in Randi Korn's evaluation of these programs?

RANDI KORN AND ASSOCIATES STAFF QUESTIONS

1. In your studies of young adult programs at the Denver Art Museum and the Isabel Steward Gardner Museum, what similarities did you find in the audiences you observed? How effective do you believe these programs to be in engaging the audience they serve? What makes them effective? What might hinder their effectiveness?

2. Aside from demographics, how would you characterize young adults based on your observations?

3. How does this group of visitors compare with others you have observed?

4. Based on your observations of the Denver Art Museum, how important do you believe digital engagement programs to be with this particular audience versus live programming?

5. What did you perceive the museum-community relationship to be based on your findings?

6. How did your tools (surveys and interviews) discuss learning in the museum?

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Vita

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This thesis was typed by Jessica Brianna Frazier.