

Innovation Lab for Museums

Round One Applicant Project Summaries



As we move into thinking about Round Two of Innovation Lab for Museums, we thought it would be good to take a step back and look at what happened in the Round One application process. We were happy to see that there was a lot of enthusiasm and interest from the museum community. The applicant museums were from all disciplines – history, general, art, children’s and science – and spanned both the geography of the country as well as from smaller to larger operating budgets.

There were also several trends that came up throughout the applications that we think are worth mentioning. It’s interesting to note that they are not necessarily discipline-specific. It seems that the field is ready to think about these changes as a whole:

- The museum as change-agent and community representative. Many of the applications dealt with the changing nature of their communities – whether in age or demography. More than one institution feels the need to respond to the rising immigrant (or in one case, refugee) community. How can museums be the voices of the community at large and not just a small section?
- This also feeds right in to the looking at participatory experiences. If the museum is representative of the community, how is that expressed in its programs and exhibits? What is the role of the curator in that case? What is the relationship between curation and education? How is the role of the museum as expert and authority on the works changing?
- Part of the thinking and questioning around participatory experiences is to consider the role of technologies in both exhibit and curation. How can museum goers become more active in the experience? Can they add their own comments and curation? Is this one of the channels to engage a younger audience? How can museums become better engaged with bringing in young people?

Below are project summaries from most of the applications we received. You’ll get a flavor of what was proposed; unfortunately we couldn’t fund all of the worthy proposals we received, but definitely wanted to share the forward thinking and deep thought that went into submitting.

FUNDED PROJECTS

INSTITUTION: Levine Museum of the New South - Charlotte, NC

PROJECT NAME: The Latino New South Project

DISCIPLINE: History



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Latino New South Project will begin to construct a “learning network” that brings together history museums in the southeastern U.S. Long known for its white and black racial landscape, Charlotte, NC, is now multiethnic and multicultural. Since 1990, the city’s Latino population has increased from barely 1% of total population to over 11% in 2010.

“Immigrant integration” – full and meaningful inclusion in community life – is a major nationwide challenge that is especially keen in the South. The Levine Museum will use its skilled staff, experienced board and active community partners to begin forging links with museums in Atlanta

and Birmingham. The aim is for Latino communities to become full partners with museums in the work of community-building.

INSTITUTION: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

PROJECT NAME: Beyond Museum Quality

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: Shifts in popular culture challenge museums today to move from a position of ‘museum as expert’ to one of ‘museum as learning partner.’ Art museums, in particular, are struggling with moving beyond bursts of participatory acts, to an institutional goal of engagement that values visitor participation as an essential part of the museum experience.

The challenge is to create an overall experience that combines online and on-site engagement – that closes the loop when visitors communicate, and extends the conversation. The voice

of the museum has traditionally been a singular one – that of the expert curator. For visitors to feel deeply connected to the institution, the Nelson-Atkins believes they need to see themselves here: in the voices of the non-expert enthusiast. The Museum’s ambition is that its learning in this area will translate broadly to a field struggling with these issues.

FUNDED PROJECTS (cont')

INSTITUTION: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts - San Francisco, CA

PROJECT NAME: Youth Arts: Present/Future

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: Youth Arts: Present/Future will establish a new approach and pathway for youth education, one which goes beyond merely making art to enable young people to become “creative thinkers” and “social changemakers.” It will explore unique youth talents, or “superpowers,” which allow artists to think creatively; a professional artist residency model for youth; a restructuring of the community service component in youth programs; integration of new technologies, gaming, and other inspirations from fields outside of the arts; fitting successful elements of adult engagement into youth programs; and kinesthetic exercises to enhance concentration. By dramatically rethinking

its youth curriculum, YBCA seeks to establish itself as one of the most adventurous and experimental museum youth arts programs in the country, one which could be replicated, in whole or in part, by other institutions.

PROJECTS OF EXCELLENCE

INSTITUTION: Birmingham Museum of Art - Birmingham, AL

PROJECT NAME: Making the Traditional Art Museum Relevant

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: Through the Making the Traditional Art Museum Relevant project, the Birmingham Museum of Art intends to position itself as a place where people can engage in conversations that can ultimately affect the direction in which this community will develop. The Museum wishes to host conversations on difficult but vital issues in our community, using art from our collection as a catalyst.

From the city’s turbulent Civil Rights history to its recent draconian immigration “reforms,” there are complicated conversations that desperately need to happen. Positively, the city is embarking on its first comprehensive plan in 50 years. With a city in the midst of change, the Museum wants to break away from the more conservative notions of what a museum is, transform how people perceive the Museum, and use its collection to engage people in these challenging conversations. An art museum has the unique ability to provide a safe and neutral place to host, and a medium to inspire, such discussion. Making the Museum the intellectual engine to motivate these conversations will provide the organization with the relevance it needs to expand the role of museums while contributing meaningfully to our community.

This innovative approach is not happening anywhere else in Birmingham. To have the greatest impact on our community, however, it doesn’t simply need to be done, it needs to be done right. With help, we can create a model that will not only bring a broader audience to museums but will also be transformative for Birmingham and other communities.

INSTITUTION: deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum - Lincoln, MA

PROJECT NAME: deCordova/Lincoln Nursery School Partnership

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: After his arrival as Executive Director of deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in 2008, Dennis Kois began exploring the creative possibilities of a strategic partnership with Lincoln Nursery School (LNS) - a non-profit, Reggio-inspired preschool located in deCordova’s “backyard” - with the school’s Director, Nancy Fincke. The foundational questions - what could the partners learn from each other and how could their findings inform and enhance both museum and early-childhood educational practices - were potent enough to draw others into early conversations and form the basis of an exciting collaboration. In the fall of 2010, a pilot class of sixteen 4-5 year-olds and teachers from LNS was fully embedded on

deCordova’s campus. The partnership extended beyond using studio space, turning the sculpture park and museum into the school’s classroom. Although diverse, at the heart of both organizations’ missions is a desire to provide meaningful and stimulating educational experiences, and our ambitious model addresses priorities set out by both in recently completed strategic plans. As the partnership enters its second year leadership teams from both organizations are unanimously and enthusiastically supporting further growth and moving all students to the museum campus. Through this innovative partnership we acknowledge how children learn using social constructivist principles of the Reggio Emilia approach to create a new paradigm for education in a museum setting. This paradigm will influence the development of programs at the museum for all ages and learning abilities, become a model for other institutions, and provide the children with a place-based learning environment rich with explorative opportunities.

PROJECTS OF EXCELLENCE (cont')

INSTITUTION: The Hammer Museum - Los Angeles, CA

PROJECT NAME: ARTeries: Creatively connecting teenagers and the arts

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Hammer Museum is seeking participation in the Innovation Lab for Museums in order to develop new strategies and ways of thinking about reaching non-traditional museum-goers. We are interested in targeting teenagers, who are passionate about creativity and the arts, but typically do not visit cultural institutions for artistic experiences. We seek to upend traditional styles of arts educational programming and to translate the Hammer's ability to offer artist-led, unique participatory experiences for teenage audiences. Through strategic partnerships

with community-based organizations, artist-led projects, creative activation of spaces within the Museum and within the community, and through strategies that we have not yet considered, we are eager to root this approach deep within the institution so that the Hammer remains a relevant and vibrant cultural center that successfully responds to the needs and expectations of new audiences.

INSTITUTION: Oakland Museum of California

PROJECT NAME: Applying Participatory Practices to Audience Development

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: OMCA proposes to use the Innovation Lab grant to try new approaches to attract visitors from the local community. OMCA will create a new audience development strategy utilizing the process of design thinking that will build upon the Museum's past successful experience with participatory practice and community engagement. The OMCA Innovation Team will identify two to three new participatory practices to pursue to adopt innovative practices with a clear focus on increasing and diversifying audience. This project will allow OMCA staff and

invested community partners a chance to take our past work with participatory experiences to a new level and into a new area. The project relates to the definition of innovation by introducing a complete shift in organizational assumptions and previous practice. With the Museum's new organizational structure, the new Audience and Civic Engagement Center brings together staff who were formerly in marketing and communications, with staff in programming, learning initiatives, civic affairs and community engagement, and visitor experience. Through the type of innovative audience development initiative envisioned, OMCA aspires to have a greater impact on the civic life of the East Bay, and particularly the neighborhoods that are in its own backyard.

INSTITUTION: Tucson Museum of Art - Tucson, AZ

PROJECT NAME: The Museum as Sanctuary: Expanding Museum Communities with Programming for Refugee Populations

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of this project is to explore how the Tucson Museum of Art can build upon its Museum as Sanctuary program, which serves the growing refugee population of Arizona. The project encompasses three goals: (1) to generate new methods of healing and empowerment through the arts, (2) to clarify and fully implement the Museum as Sanctuary program, and (3) to develop new ways to inspire cross-cultural collaboration within the community. The Museum as Sanctuary program focuses on creating transformative experiences within the Museum space by encouraging self-expression and discussion leading from

participants. Activities are designed to nurture confidence and strengthen life skills. This project supports the mission of the Tucson Museum of Art, connecting art to life, by using art to stimulate personal growth and communication. The project fits the Innovation Lab's definition of "innovation" because it seeks to build new pathways to creating public value. Traditionally, art museums have been cast as conservative repositories of fine art objects. Now, as the industry strives to be more relevant and connected to the lives of its citizenry, creating programming and activities work to construct new connections between the museum and its audiences. Using art as a tool to generate both verbal and visual dialogue, the Museum as Sanctuary offers a salve to the traumatic experiences had by many refugees. Simultaneously, it challenges fundamental assumptions regarding how diversity is reflected within the museum and the community it serves.

PROJECTS OF EXCELLENCE (cont')

INSTITUTION: Valentine Richmond History Center

PROJECT NAME: Community Galleries Exhibit and Program Development

DISCIPLINE: History



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Valentine Richmond History Center seeks to participate in the Innovation Lab for Museums to develop a programming strategy, process and initial programming schedule for our upcoming Community Galleries. These galleries will support our new exhibit on the history of Richmond and are intended to provide both content and a forum to promote thought and discussion within the city. Our vision is for these galleries to rotate exhibits a minimum of two times a year in order to keep up with contemporary topics in the city. By offering exhibits and related programs that align with the current public interest, we will be better positioned to be a relevant

participant in the discussions of the future of the city. Our desire to create these galleries stems from our recent strategic planning process. During that time, we challenged the existing assumption that we should have one large exhibit on Richmond history, and created the idea of a smaller exhibit on the city's history supported by Community Galleries which provide deep dive explorations of current events through the lens of history. Currently, our exhibits are based more on what is in our collection than what is being discussed in the community. With these new Community Galleries, we will create new public value by adding context and color to hot topics and headlines within the community. Our hope is that residents will come to consider the History Center as a "must visit" location as they learn more about the issues that are facing our city.

APPLICANT PROJECTS

INSTITUTION: Anacostia Community Museum - Washington DC

PROJECT NAME: Community Engagement through Community Documentation

DISCIPLINE: History



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Smithsonian Institution Anacostia Community Museum (ACM) has conceptualized a vehicle to facilitate ongoing research initiatives that will shape exhibitions and inform public programs under its recently adopted mission and vision. It will also support ACM's innovative and ever-evolving approach to community engagement. ACM's Community Documentation Initiative is an ongoing research and documentation project to gather, organize, and make accessible to the public, historical and contemporary information that tracks changes in the social, economic, and cultural life and development of the urban neighborhoods of

Washington DC, lying east of the Anacostia River. These communities are representative of the changes and challenges facing urban communities throughout the US and indeed the world. This project presents an opportunity to document urban contemporary communities in real time. The Community Documentation Initiative (CDI) will provide public access to important museum collections of photos, maps, family histories, and other research materials through the CDI website, publications, and public programs. The CDI will also provide community forums with the goals of encouraging community dialogue on issues unique to this community. As a part of the Innovation Lab for Museums, ACM proposes to move the CDI from its current state of concept with some project-related tangibles into an operational and institutional component of ACM's work.

INSTITUTION: The Bakken Museum - Minneapolis, MN

PROJECT NAME: Inspiring a Passion for Science: Improving Science Education through Collaboration

DISCIPLINE: Science and History of Science



PROJECT SUMMARY: The primary purpose of this innovation project is to create a new model for corporate engagement that furthers The Bakken's ability to achieve our mission of inspiring a passion for science and its potential for social good. This new model for corporate engagement will be discovered by including one or two corporations as equal partners in the long-standing and award-winning collaboration between The Bakken and the Minneapolis Public Schools. This new model will go beyond financial contributions and isolated, one-time employee volunteer projects to discover shared values and a common sense of purpose. A necessary step in this

process will be a deep exploration of our recently-revised mission to create internal and external messages that will coherently define what we mean by a passion for science and why having such passion is important and relevant in today's world. Further,

APPLICANT PROJECTS (cont')

The Bakken Museum (cont')

we will also build a sustainable and robust volunteer program for corporate employees based on the initial success of The Bakken's -People of Science- volunteer program. This innovation lab project will contribute to the museum's vitality by building on past success to answer major strategic questions about mission impact and sustainability. A key outcome of this project will be an innovative and replicable model for corporate engagement in the community and in partnership with museums for the purpose of depth and sustainability of impact.

INSTITUTION: Bass Museum - Miami Beach, FL

PROJECT NAME: IDEA@thebass

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: In late-2009, the Bass Museum was awarded a 3-year, \$240,000 Knight Foundation grant to forge a unique collaboration with Stanford University's acclaimed d.School to create IDEA@thebass. Conceived to be a transformative, curriculum-based program for K-3, IDEA@thebass proposes ease of adaptability to art museums and partner schools, nationwide. IDEA@thebass will adapt existing models for museum engagement that will enable medium-sized, regional museums to meaningfully impact students and their teachers. One question that will be examined is whether to expand to more schools or to deepen the program's impact, continuing to work with the 24 schools we are currently working with as well as how to measure impact.

INSTITUTION: Chabot Space & Science Center - Oakland, CA

PROJECT NAME: OpenScienceLAB

DISCIPLINE: Science/Technology



PROJECT SUMMARY: Chabot's OpenScienceLAB has a primary goal of encouraging our visitors to engage in "Open Science", a more self-reflective, creative and collaborative informal science learning process. We will examine, with them, the epistemology of science and the influence of belief systems on scientific knowledge, through a comprehensive program potentially comprised of collaborative activities, artist and writer submissions, classroom curricula, a speaker series, additions to our nighttime events, and exhibit elements. The purpose of our Innovation Lab proposal is to develop these programmatic implementation strategies, and to simultaneously engage in assessing and transforming our organizational practices using

Open Science methods. We will need to be open to change, proactive in seeking out creative resources and partnerships in our community, and more collaborative in our efforts within our own highly motivated and creative staff. Institutionalizing these innovative practices will enable us to be a better resource for our visitors and our community. We first must examine our internal business model to shape new best practices; we will inherently be questioning the value we have placed on present practices, and determining if we have been asking the right questions all along: shifting our underlying assumptions. By working with the Innovation Lab team, we hope to rise to this challenge, and determine how to employ OpenScienceLAB strategies within our institution, engender transformation to improve organizational health, and ultimately improve and expand our service to our communities.

INSTITUTION: Chicago Architecture Foundation - Chicago, IL

PROJECT NAME: Chicago Participatory Model Project

DISCIPLINE: Architecture



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) proposes to develop a strategy for engaging people as active participants in understanding Chicago and contributing to the future of the cities and

regions they inhabit. Through the Chicago Participatory Model Project, built around physical and digital models of Chicago, CAF will create a learning and entertainment experience for people on the street with mobile devices, online at school and at home, and in person while visiting CAF. At the same time, the project will help CAF expand its reach and impact, diversify its audience, and

enhance its public image, while strengthening institutional capacity to meet the challenges of its people- and community-centric mission.

APPLICANT PROJECTS (cont')

Chicago Architecture Foundation (cont')

CAF faces a challenge: how to rethink its approach to physical environments, including scale models and the city of Chicago itself, along with existing programming activities. The goal is to create immersive experiences, structured and unstructured, in a variety of media, ranging from highest- to lowest-tech. These experiences would enable people to create, contribute, and share, while providing opportunities for learning and meaningful reflection. CAF aims to enlarge and diversify its audiences, engaging young people in particular in critical thinking and civic debate.

The Chicago Participatory Model Project represents a long-term institutional commitment. It presents challenges in interpretive methodology, technological integration, and management strategy. Despite much work, questions loom. The Innovation Lab for Museums would enable CAF to develop solutions and take a major step forward as a model institution of community engagement and informal learning.

INSTITUTION: Children's Museum in Oak Lawn - Chicago, IL

PROJECT NAME: LEAP Lab – Leadership Education And Play

DISCIPLINE: Children's



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Children's Museum in Oak Lawn was incorporated as a 501(c)3 in 2001 and we officially opened our doors in 2003 in the confines of a small, 900 square foot room that we leased from the Oak Lawn Park District. In 2009, we opened our new facility, a nearly 12,000 square foot facility that abounds with interactive, educational experiences presented in a learning-through-play environment. At the core of our exhibits and programs is education. In fact, every exhibit and every program is created with the Illinois Learning Standards (and early learning standards), making the museum a true extension of classroom learning.

Our success and growth can be attributed to the vision and innovation of true leaders. It is because of their vision, that we were able to shift organizational assumptions and become a regional attraction for play and learning. Our "Innovation Lab" idea is to adapt and create programming that will allow the Children's Museum in Oak Lawn to become a resource for all families, schools and guests with LEAP Lab – Leadership Education And Play Programs. Kids will learn when they are having fun; our programs and instructors will redefine education!

INSTITUTION: Children's Museum of Richmond - Richmond, VA

PROJECT NAME: Engaging Parents and Caregivers in the Children's Museum experience: Educating parents and caregivers on the importance of their own role in early childhood development

DISCIPLINE: Children's



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Children's Museum of Richmond's (CMoR) leadership was searching for a way to redefine and increase the organization's impact. They concluded if parents and caregivers could adopt the museum's techniques of hands-on, child-driver learning through play the museum could move from engaging children for a few hours to enhancing the way young children learn with their families. After editing CMoR's mission and vision statements to recognize the new emphasis on reaching adults, several steps were taken to initiate fulfillment of this vision, including: Signage and brochures that encourage parents to extend their child's

learning outside of the museum, a partnership with a parent education organization that brings a professional parent educator into the museum regularly, and QR codes in every exhibit that link to videos featuring museum educators explaining what children are learning and why it is important to their development.

In the past, CMoR has tried to maintain a comfortable distance when it comes to what parents/caregivers should be doing in the museum, beyond managing disruptive behaviors. This new direction has shifted the underlying organizational assumptions, and encouraged CMoR's staff to think of adult visitors as critical partners in extending the museum's impact by integrating learning through play into their own and their children's daily lives.

As the next step in this new direction, CMoR has hired its first director of parent engagement. The innovation project would allow CMoR to assemble an interdisciplinary team to accelerate the planning, implementation and testing of this new initiative.

APPLICANT PROJECTS (cont')

INSTITUTION: Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs - Dover, DE

PROJECT NAME: Curators in the Classroom

DISCIPLINE: History



PROJECT SUMMARY: Acknowledging the importance of 21st century learning elements in a 21st century education and understanding the need for museums and collecting institutions to adapt to these priorities in order to maintain their relevance in the societal framework, "Curators in the Classroom" will transform the role of museums in the lives of students and upcoming leaders by challenging them to curate their own exhibitions and, in turn, their own efficacies. Over the course of a school year, students from participating institutions will make connections with their communities, peers, and interests by developing thematic exhibitions through a statewide creative problem-solving competition.

At the beginning of the year, teams will choose from a list of challenges and then utilize professional guidance and resources from participating institutions (Historical & Cultural Affairs) to develop thematic digital and physical exhibit installations. With the help of professional museum staff, students will learn proper methods of handling, researching, documenting, interpreting, and displaying historical objects and identifying their connections to the students' lives and communities. Exhibits will be judged by panels at multiple competitive levels. Finalists and their exhibits will be recognized and displayed at museums across the state. This project represents an organizational innovation for Historical and Cultural Affairs as an independent pilot program for the newly formed C.A.R.E. Team, which was created in July of 2011 to address goals of the division's strategic plan and increase public access to information about Delaware history and the substantial collection of historic materials owned by the state of Delaware.

INSTITUTION: DuPage Children's Museum - Naperville, IL

PROJECT NAME: Twenty-First Century Learning and Beyond

DISCIPLINE: Children's



PROJECT SUMMARY: DuPage Children's Museum (DCM) intends to create an innovative system for training our front-line staff that will change how learning is organized for our adult learners, expand what comprises our community of adult learners and increase the impact the Museum has on early learning. This endeavor will require a shift in organizational culture and an exploration of new technologies, programs, content and/or methods of access to information.

DCM needs better structures to support staff and volunteer training. In concert with a new system, a new way of thinking will be critical. The institution needs to reexamine how areas work together (or don't) to support learning. We need to address what we are doing, how we are doing it and who is responsible for what. By creating better access to exhibit information and early learning content in entirely new formats, DCM will affect many ingrained assumptions about the ways we can serve our community.

With an innovative system for staff training, we will be able to:

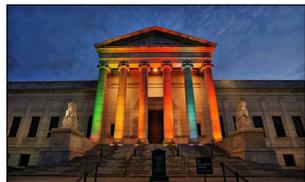
- Affect a greater number of visitors in a deeper way by providing better tools and information to the staff
- Create a better system to support learning throughout the institution and promote collaboration
- Change basic assumptions about what depth of information we can share with adult visitors
- Extend the mission of the Museum beyond its walls by providing easier access to information for parents and other caregivers
- Directly support the Museum's strategic initiative to become a Force for Early Learning.

APPLICANT PROJECTS (cont')

INSTITUTION: Minneapolis Institute of Arts- Minneapolis, MN

PROJECT NAME: Open-sourced didactic label project and evaluation

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: The innovation project for open-source didactic labels and evaluation will test the museum's ability to embrace multiple voices in the interpretation of art in our galleries and help us learn how to evaluate the impact of our programming on our organization and community. The project activities will include candid discussions about integrating various intentions across departments for including non-expert voices in the interpretation of art; testing open-source didactic labels in the upcoming exhibition "More Real?" by inviting audiences to contribute to their creation; and working with a consultant to develop and implement assessment

tools to measure visitor engagement with the labels. The project will contribute to the museum's vitality by helping us become more porous, flexible, interactive, curious, and responsive.

The project represents a shift in the underlying assumption that the museum serves the public merely by caring for its collection to an avowed assumption that the museum serves the public by caring for its treasures and by opening itself to the ongoing creation of culture through continuous reinterpretation of art. By asserting that the layperson's interpretation of a work of art might be as complex, arresting, and true as that of a trained curator is a distinct break from past practices as the museum has not yet asserted this proposition so strongly. The project is a new pathway to creating public value by helping to position the museum as an innovator in museum practices - further elevating the value of the arts sector in the Twin Cities.

INSTITUTION: The Museum of Science - Boston, MA

PROJECT NAME: Defining and Evaluating the Museum's Work with Youth

DISCIPLINE: Science & Technology



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Museum of Science will form a team to pose and answer the following questions:

1. Are Citizen Science activities an effective platform for engaging youth in science and technology with the transformational goal of future empowerment?
2. How do we understand and measure our programs' effectiveness and impact? How do we effectively describe our work?
3. How will we embed this measurement in our evaluation and program development?
4. How do we track our youth over the months/years necessary to really measure the effectiveness of our programs? That is, if we claim our programs empower youth to choose science and technology careers and/or empower youth to engage in science and technology as informed adults, how do we retain a connection to the youth throughout this prolonged timeline?

We suggest these questions are certainly some if not the most challenging in our work. We also recognize that finding the answers to these questions will transform how we develop our educational programming. Using the Citizen Science platform, our hope is to be able to describe and measure the efficacy and outcomes of our programming; be accountable to our funders for the outcomes of our programs and be able to describe our programming more effectively in future fund raising. And we will be able to drive our future program delivery and development based on more accurate and complete evaluation.

INSTITUTION: Please Touch Museum

PROJECT NAME: The Sommer Cube

DISCIPLINE: Children's



PROJECT SUMMARY: The Sommer Cube is an innovative new toy that uses advanced concepts in science and mathematics to create a unique and profound learning experience for young children. By integrating progressive, forward-thinking concepts with established early education practice, Dr. Michael Sommer has created an entirely original toy. Each Sommer Cube unit contains within it four curved tunnels; a ball can enter one face of the cube, travel through the tube and exit through another face. The units are designed so that they can be stacked and aligned to create exponentially longer and more complex tunnels for the ball to pass through.

Children can experiment with different configurations of cubes to create an infinite number of combinations through the manipulation of pattern, symmetry, and geometric notions.

APPLICANT PROJECTS (cont')

INSTITUTION: Sangre de Cristo Arts & Conference Center - Pueblo, CO

PROJECT NAME: Inside Out: The Hoag Studio Experience

DISCIPLINE: Art



PROJECT SUMMARY: Inside Out will create more interactive arts experiences for a younger generation (ages 18-44), capitalizing on their willingness to engage in worthy causes and solidifying their relationship with the Arts Center as a source of education, enrichment and inclusion. This will be achieved through the repurposing of a gallery into a studio/social interaction space, the continued development of a distinct membership level that highlights social interaction in the arts, and the attempt to interact in a purposeful way in our community by taking art beyond our walls. In this way, we hope to impact Pueblo in a positive way by representing the arts as a vital

function of a thriving community, as well as to ensure the stability of the Arts Center for years to come by energizing a new generation of supporters and arts advocates. This change can be accomplished most effectively, we believe, by challenging traditional methods of delivering a museum experience and demonstrating how to those experiences must evolve to capture the attention of a younger generation.

It is our observation that the most effective change in any organization and/or community has been achieved from the inside out, thus the name for our project.

INSTITUTION: Tennessee Aquarium - Chattanooga, TN

PROJECT NAME: Audience Technotecture

DISCIPLINE: Aquarium



PROJECT SUMMARY: The staff of the Aquarium has long sought to engender increasingly participatory experiences for our visiting audience. The Aquarium has made significant strides in providing a deeply engaging experience for many audiences and our efforts have been met with superior visitor satisfaction ratings. Yet, increasing visitor expectations require us to provide increasingly spectacular experiences. Through the Audience Technotecture project, the Aquarium seeks to expand upon our audience engagement efforts by creating a toolkit of 21st century technology. Building a technology infrastructure that allows visitors to personalize their

experiences, to co-create online content and to share interests and preferences with the Aquarium, we will put ourselves in an optimal position to measure and meet the changing needs of our wide and diverse audience. The Audience Technotecture project will seamlessly connect the virtual and physical spaces occupied by the full spectrum of our audience. Recognizing that visitors travel through a complete lifecycle of online, on-site and post-visit engagement, this work will require a number of shifts in operational thinking. We are keenly aware that we cannot rest on our laurels within our community, and we have an extraordinary opportunity to evaluate results of this effort on a scale not available to most museums -which, in turn, could help other museums benefit from our learning process. We hope that this experience will further our efforts to be a recognized, trusted and respected partner within the museum field.