

Gallery Education course, Katedra dejín výtvarného umenia
Filozofická fakulta Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave



Evaluation of museum exhibitions

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Presentation available here:

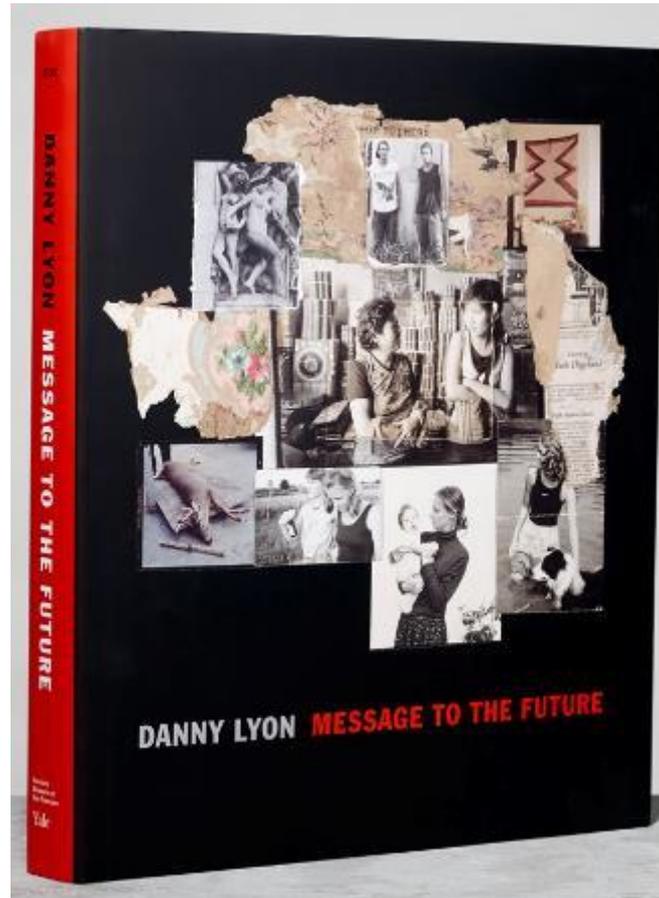
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/5jv2x20c4yl22k1/AAC0fKklQp05W-PQX3GKsDy-a?dl=0>

Topics of the presentation

1. Evaluating the messages of an exhibition
2. Seeing if exhibition communication works
3. Accessibility assessment
4. Assessing museum multimedia



Evaluating the messages of an exhibition



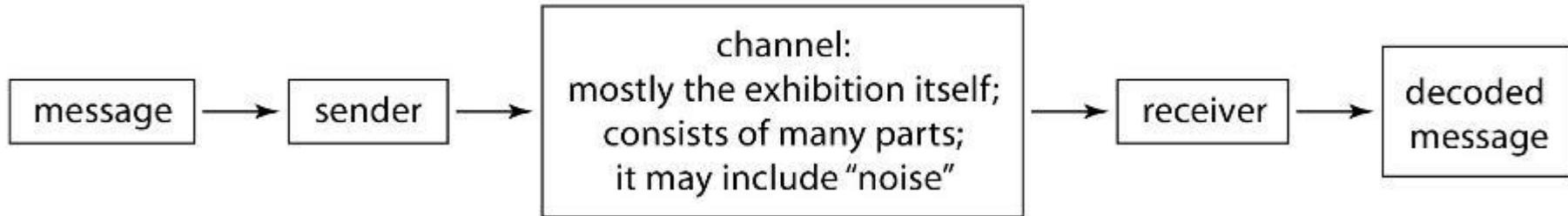
<https://whitney.org/Exhibitions/DannyLyonMessageToTheFuture>

Evaluator Competencies

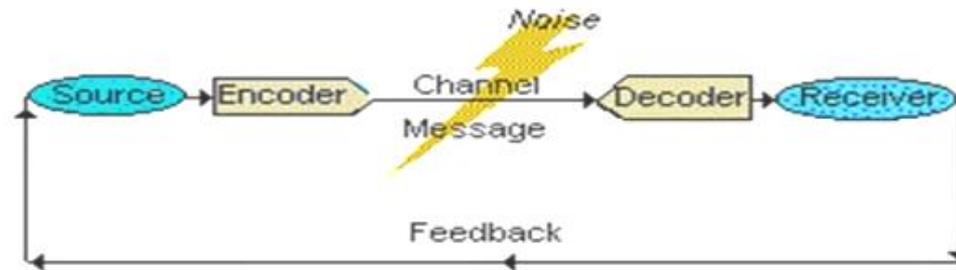
- Competency A. principles and practices of **visitor studies**
- Competency B. principles and practices of **informal learning environments**
- Competency C: knowledge of and practices with **social science research** and evaluation methods and analysis
- Competency D: **business practices**, project planning, and resource management
- Competency E: professional **commitment**

https://visa.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/historical/eval_comp/evaluator-competencies.pdf

Decoding exhibition messages



Shannon Weaver (1949)



Laswell Formula (1948)

Who?	Says what?	In what channel?	To whom?	With what effect?
Communicator	Message	Channel	Receiver	Effect
Control research	Content research	Medium research	Audience research	Effects research



gettyimages
Mark Sullivan

<https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/visitor-leaves-a-message-at-the-interactive-exhibition-on-news-photo/1025262332>

Buy a brick. Build a museum

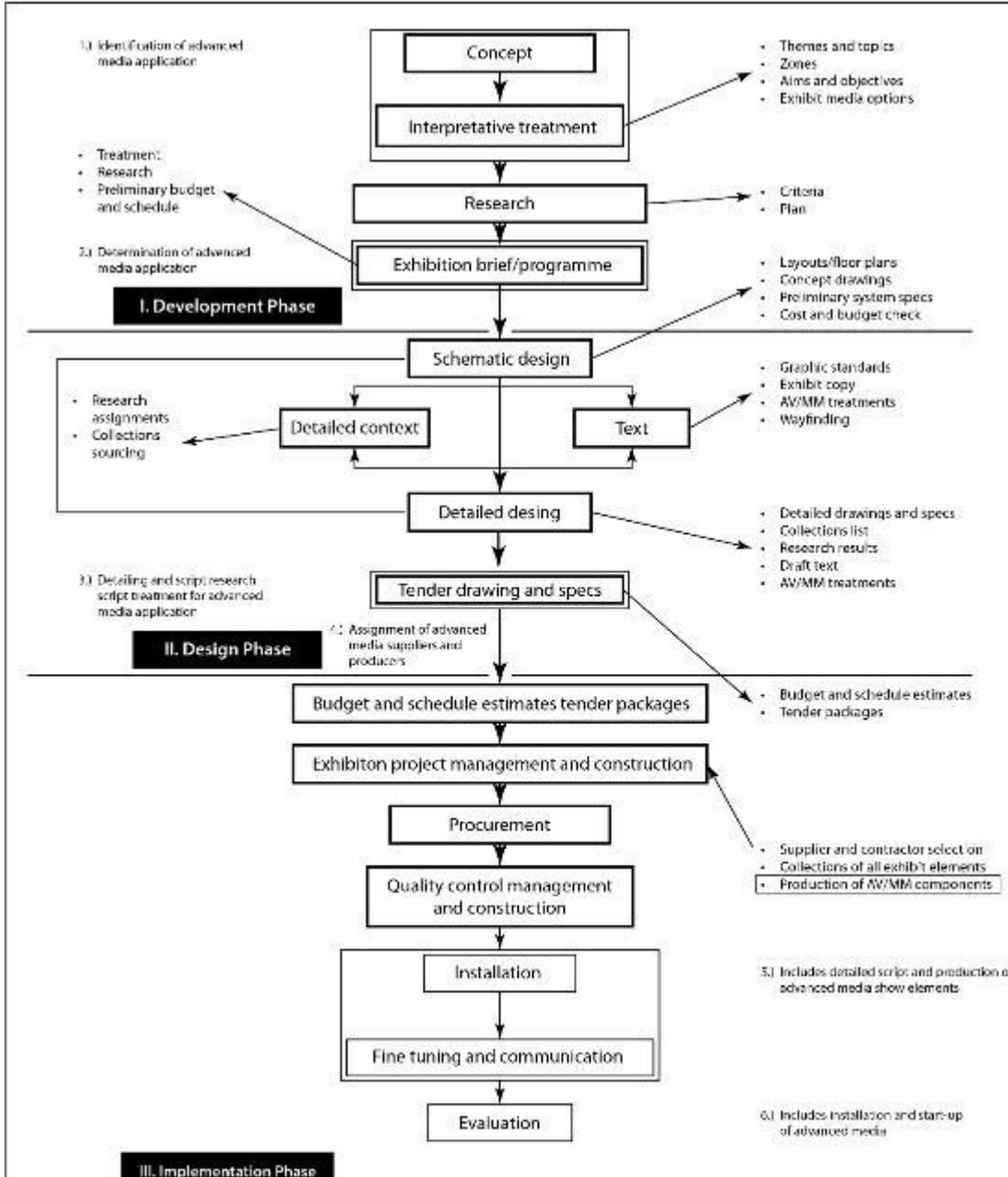


Your name here
(or maybe a haiku or poem
or some crazy message)

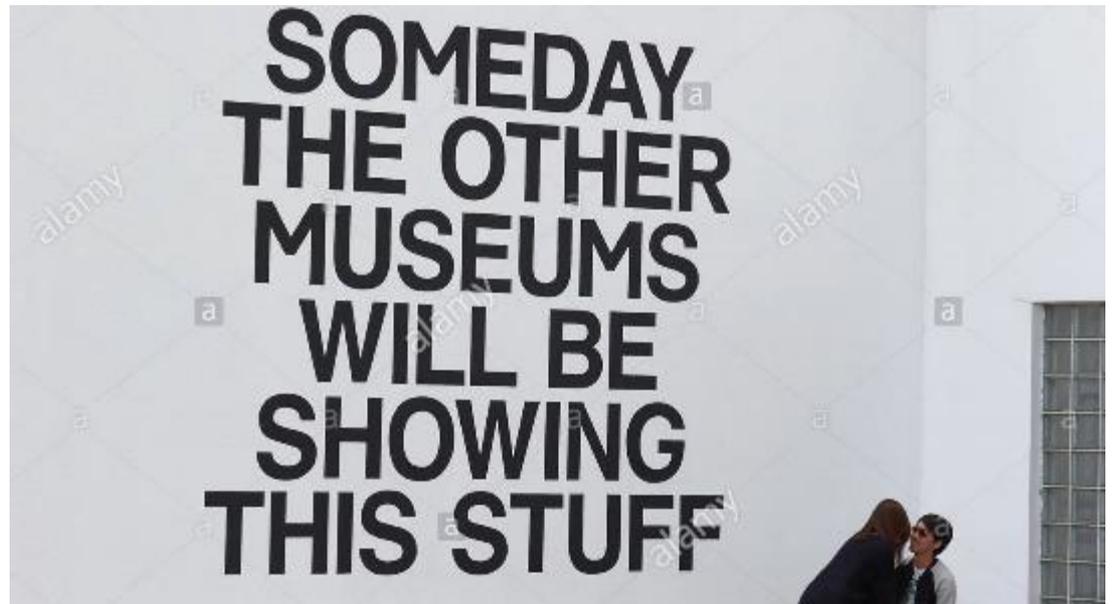
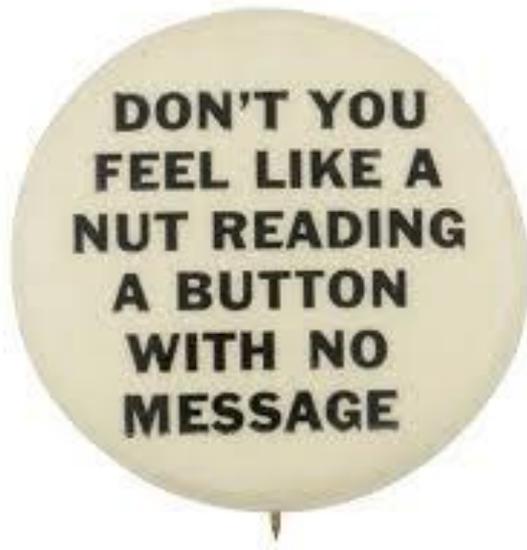


We're selling engraved bricks
to fund the construction of
a Nikola Tesla Museum.

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/buy-a-brick-for-the-nikola-tesla-museum#/>



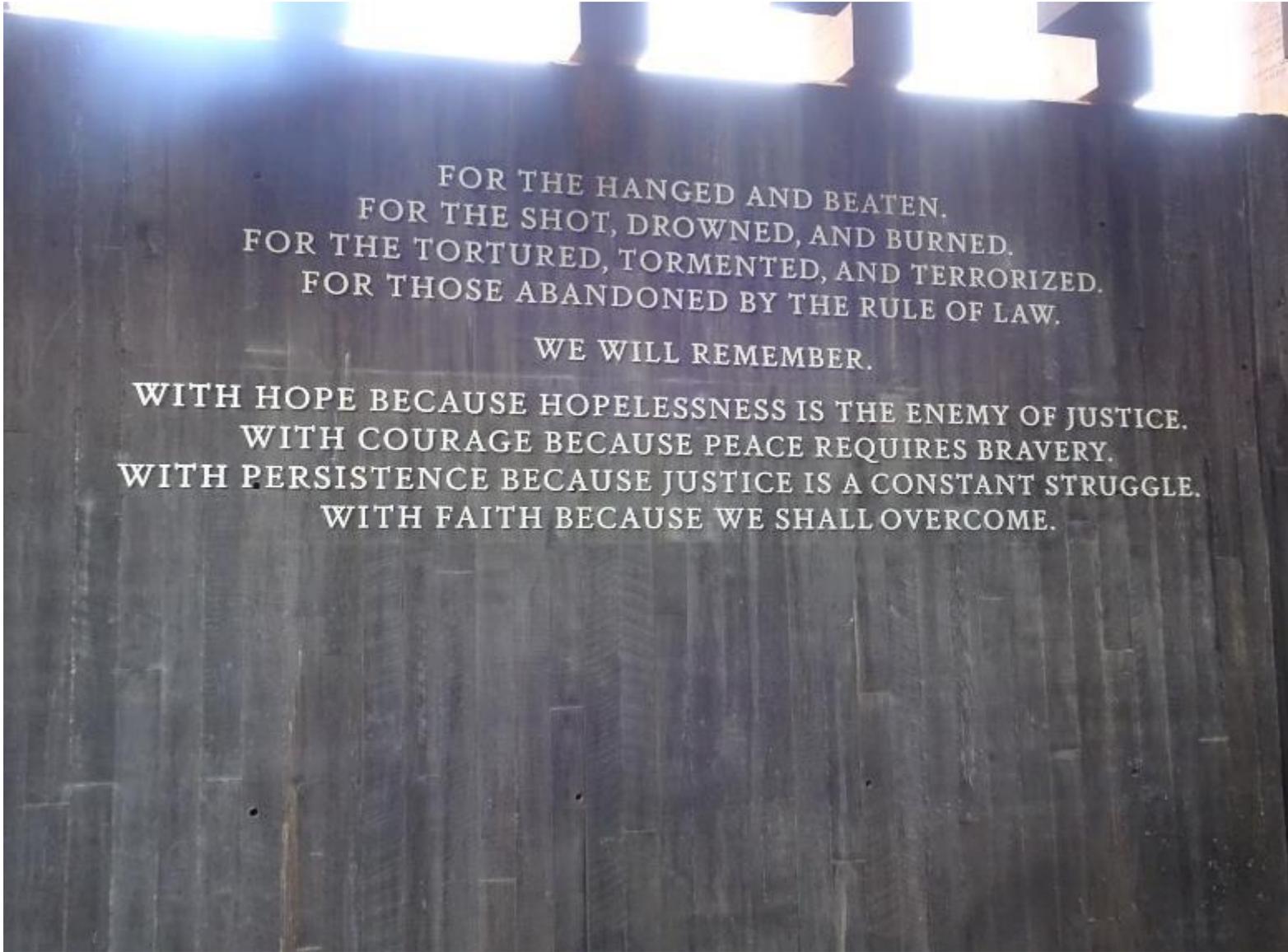
Steps of exhibition design / evaluation



ART WORKS.

**National
Endowment
for the Arts**

arts.gov

A photograph of a dark, weathered wooden wall. The wall is covered in white, serif text. The text is arranged in several lines, with some lines indented. The lighting is dramatic, with a bright light source from the top left creating a strong glow and casting shadows. The wall appears to be part of a larger structure, possibly a museum or a memorial.

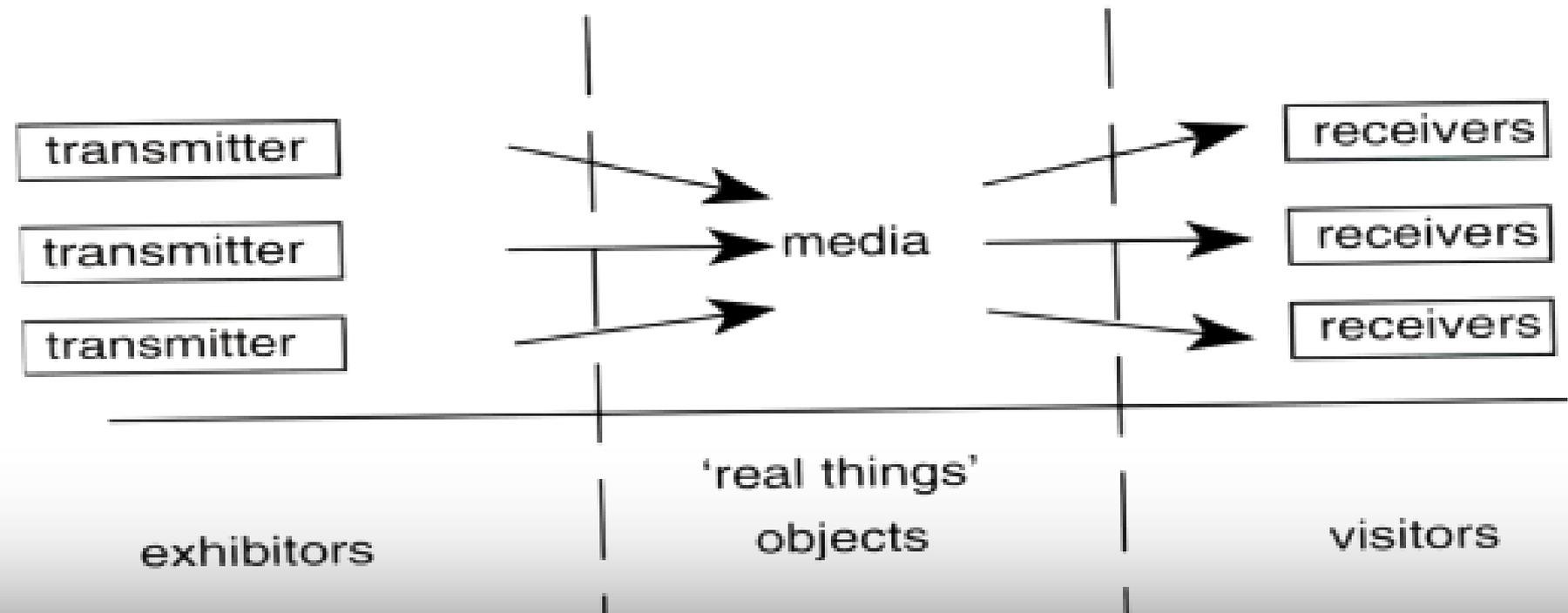
FOR THE HANGED AND BEATEN.
FOR THE SHOT, DROWNED, AND BURNED.
FOR THE TORTURED, TORMENTED, AND TERRORIZED.
FOR THOSE ABANDONED BY THE RULE OF LAW.

WE WILL REMEMBER.

WITH HOPE BECAUSE HOPELESSNESS IS THE ENEMY OF JUSTICE.
WITH COURAGE BECAUSE PEACE REQUIRES BRAVERY.
WITH PERSISTENCE BECAUSE JUSTICE IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE.
WITH FAITH BECAUSE WE SHALL OVERCOME.

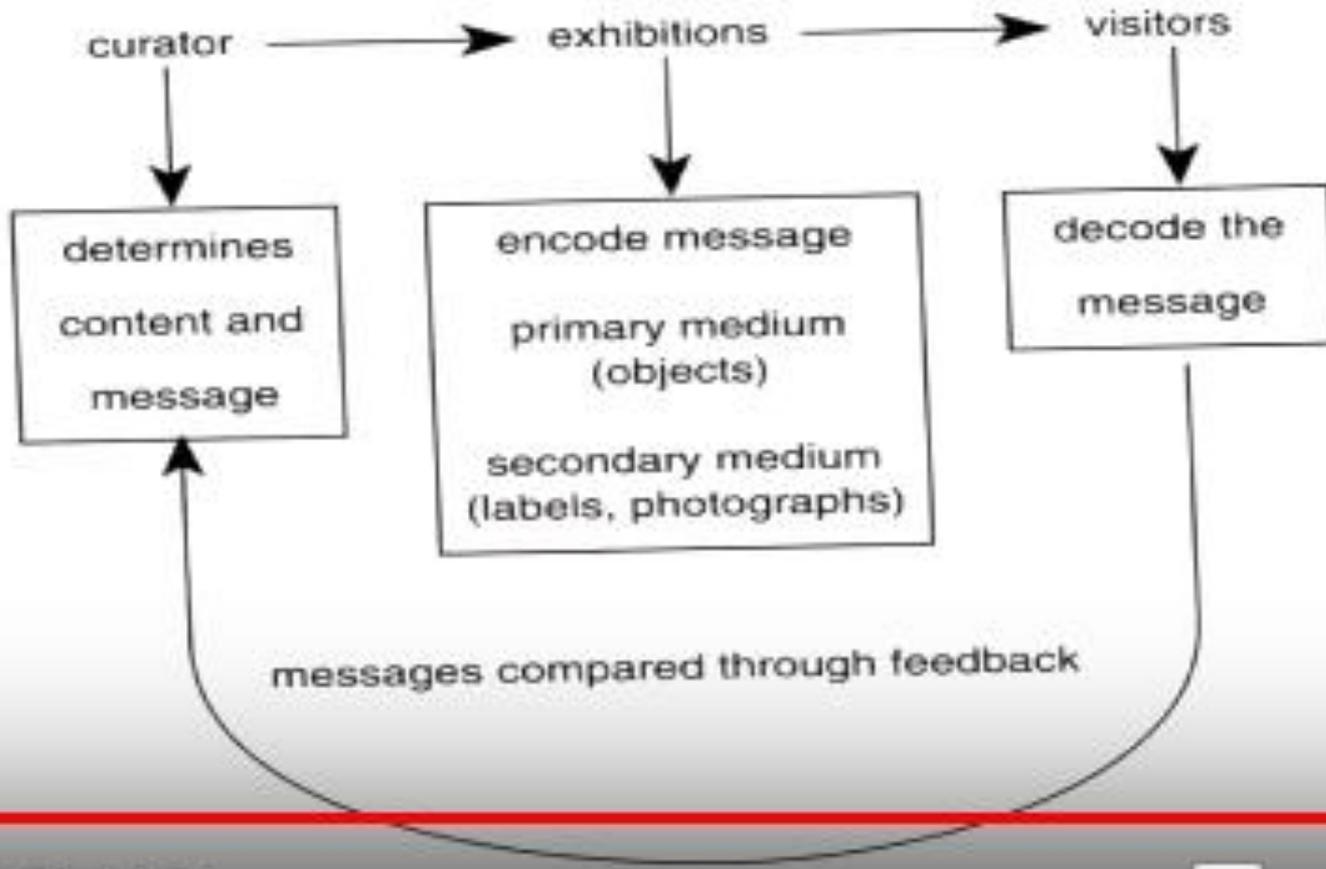
How to get a message through?

Cameron's model Transmission in museums



How to get a message through?

Knez - Wright's model Feedback in museums



Transmission models: criticism

- Communication = message linking 2 minds. Linear. Hierarchical. Straightforward view of 'shared reality'.
- Communication science (message-making process) vs. semiotic enquiry (meaning of a message)
- Questioning the assumption that we all share the 'same reality' (communication & learning theories)



Market Research

UX Research

- Business KPIs
- Brand loyalty
- Brand messaging
- Marketing sizing
- Market expansions

- Personas
- Analytics
- Competitor analysis

- Understand the users wants and needs
- Measure and improve the user experience

User experience (UX) Research methodology

User experience (UX) research

UX Research

Story-driven

Data Models / Affinity Diagram

Holistic View of Audience

Data describing intentions, motivations

-the WHY- is best for knowing

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Traditional Evaluation

Statistical

Charts / Graphs

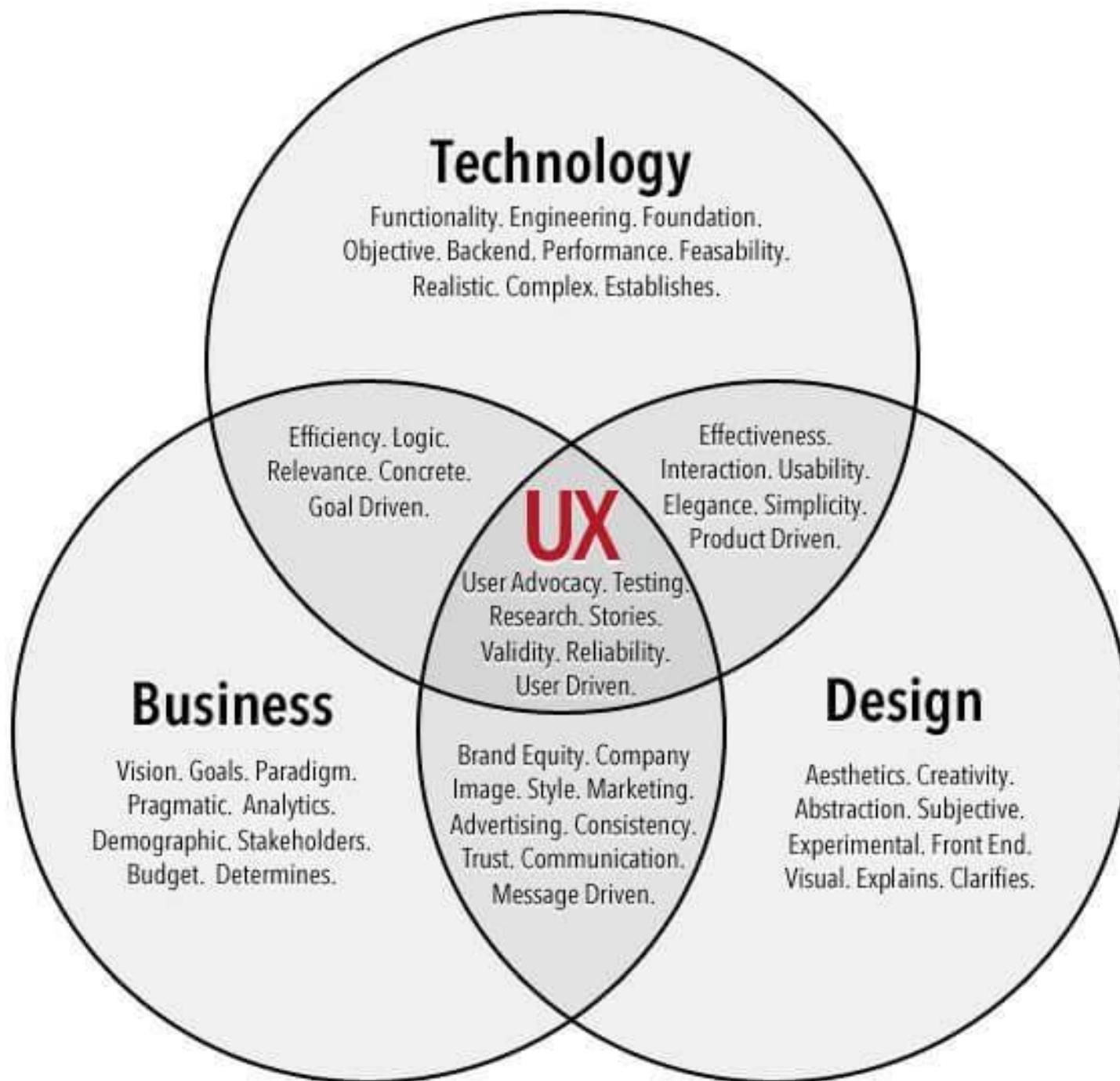
Answers Specific Questions

Data describing habits and actions

-the WHAT- is best for knowing

WHAT HAS HAPPENED

<http://digin-ux.com/>



Use Qualitative Research To:

- ✓ Develop an initial understanding of how customers perceive the product category
- ✓ Look for a range of ideas and feelings about your products
- ✓ Understand different perceptions about your products between groups and categories of people
- ✓ Uncover underlying motivations and factors that influence the decision to buy your and your competitors' products
- ✓ Provide information needed to design a quantitative product testing
- ✓ Explain findings from a quantitative product testing
- ✓ Explore different creative solutions to position and advertise the product

Use Quantitative Research To:

- ✓ Recommend a final course of action on which product version should be launched
- ✓ Find whether there is consensus on product appeal, benefits and current or potential customers' purchase intent
- ✓ Project results to a larger population of customers you are targeting
- ✓ Identify evidence regarding cause-and-effect relationships between different factors relevant to the product and purchase behavior
- ✓ Test specific hypotheses about your products
- ✓ Identify and size market segments
- ✓ Describe characteristics of relevant customer segments

<https://www.relevantinsights.com/blog/how-to-use-qualitative-and-quantitative-research-in-new-product-development>



https://www.slideshare.net/robertatassi/redesigning-museums-for-good/16-UX_for_GOOD_Redesigning_Museums

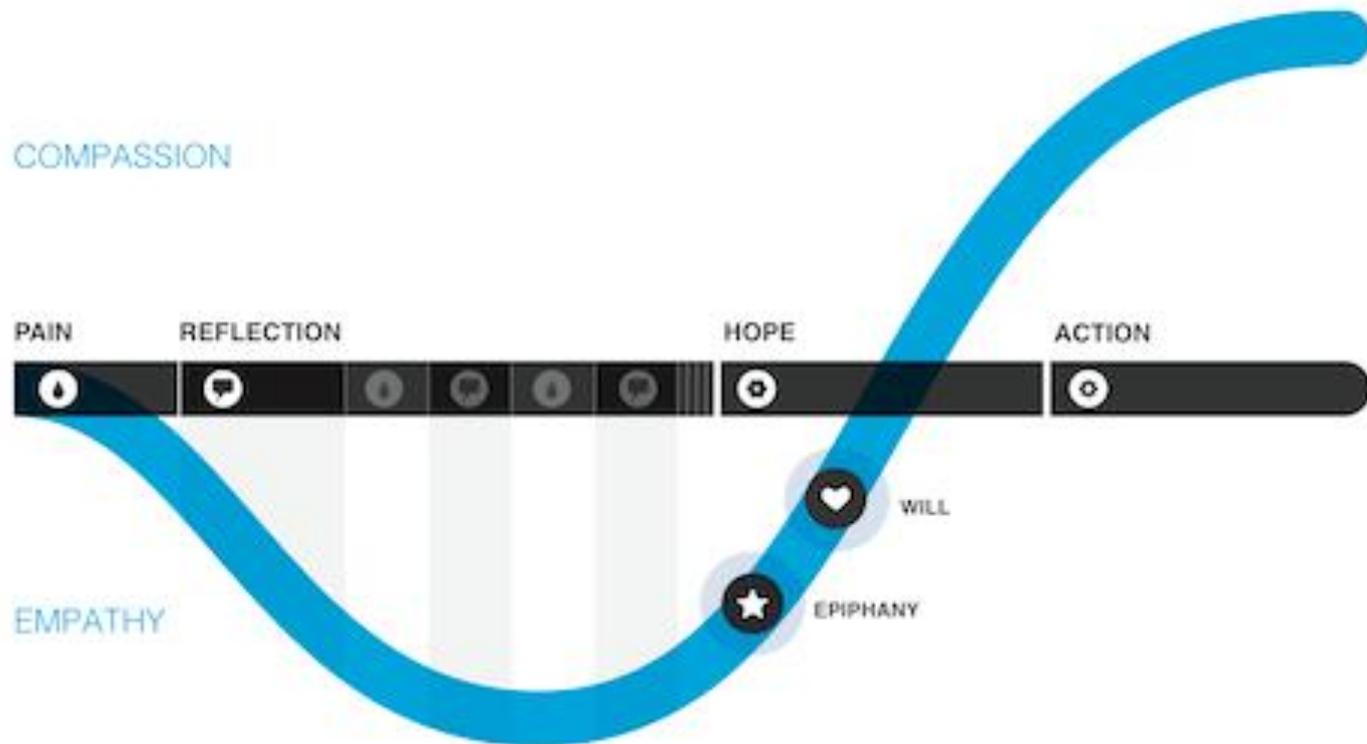


***“It takes a while
to process the anger,
guilt, and
helplessness.”***

The museum generates
an emotional burnout
that leaves visitors
unable to react.

Inzovu curve

It maps a prototypical journey of a person going through the transformative experience of a museum **reaching a state of motivation and action.**



UX based planning of a genocide memorial

PAIN



A genocide memorial is meant to trigger a profound personal reaction. This is a moment of suffering and creates a strong emotional connection to what happened.

REFLECTION



This moment should happen multiple times during the experience itself. It's meant as a way to decompress for sensible people, and a space to think for everyone.

HOPE

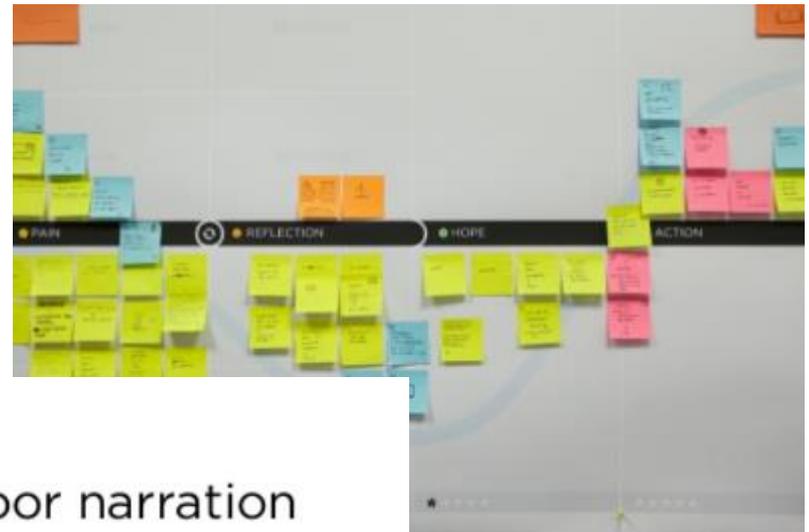


While genocides are terrible events, there are always heroes that shine through. These people are often highly relatable because are normal people that do positive acts. It's hope for the humanity.

ACTION



While it's difficult to generate action in each and every person, this moment is made possible by the ones before. In a sense, the pain prepares the seeds that then reflection is able to turn to something positive, while hope gives examples to follow and show how others acted positively.

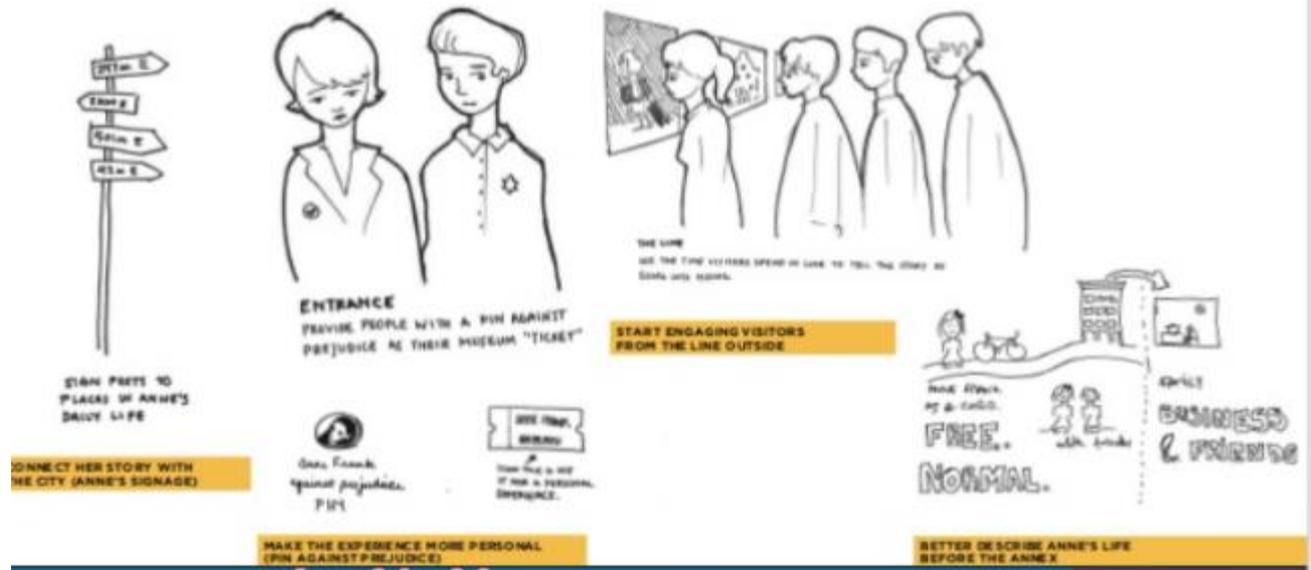


KEY INSIGHTS

The poor narration of the “life before” the secret annex prevent visitors from building enough understanding and empathy.



The helpers are a great opportunity to shift the perspective from **victims** (*not-empowering*) to positive **heroes** (*empowering*).



ANNEX AS PILGRIMAGE

PETEROO
ACCESS TO
SECRET ANNEX

KEEP THE ROOM
SPACE "EMPTY"
AND SACRED,
DEVOID OF CLUTTER



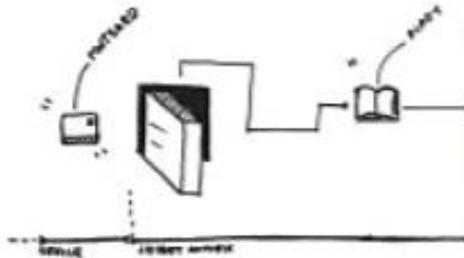
PLEASE
WAIT



USE THE FLOOR,
MARK PLACES WHERE ANNE
DO SPECIFIC THINGS.
OR WHERE FURNITURE ONCE
WAS.



EMPHASISE THE KEY PHYSICAL
PASSAGES (E.G. ANNEX'S ENTRANCE)

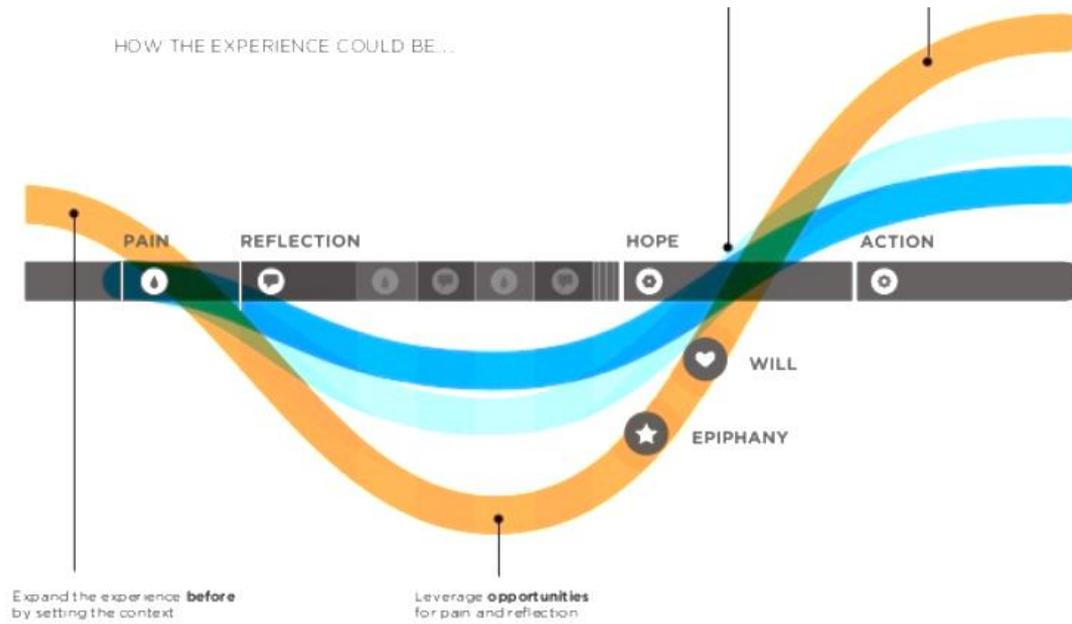


EMPHASISE THE KEY OBJECTS (POSTCARD,
DIARY,...) BY LOCATING THEM WITH MEANING

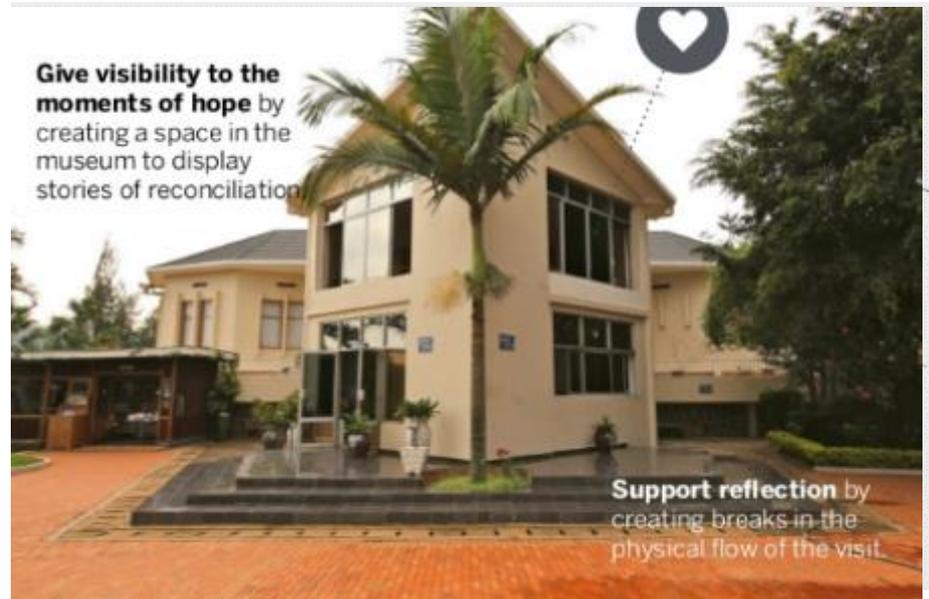
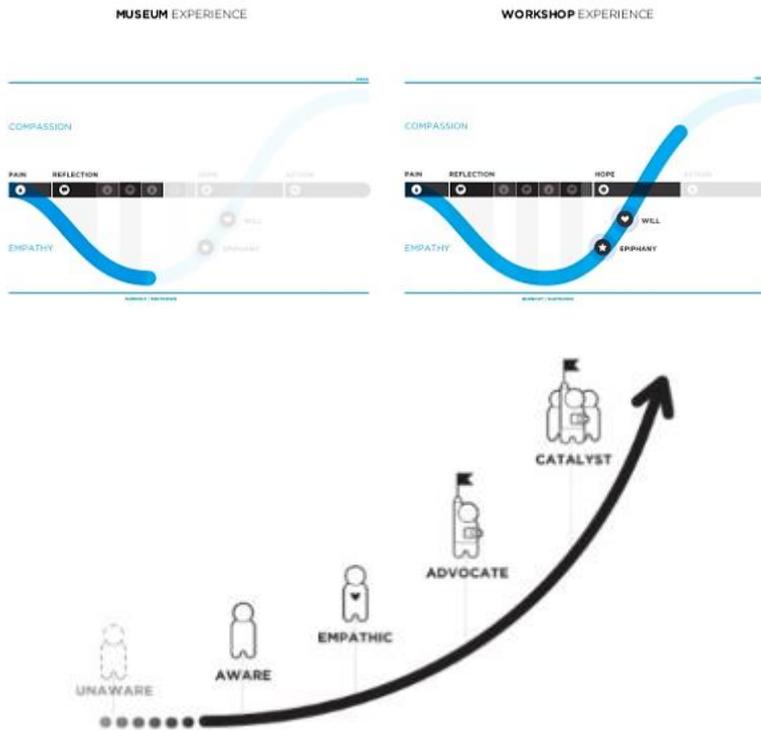
AUGMENT THE EMPTY SPACE IN THE ANNEX
BY CREATING REFERENCES TO ANNE'S EVERYDAY LIFE

PLAY WITH SILENCE/NOISE TO STRESS THE
IDEA OF HIDING AND CONTRAST WITH OUTSIDE

KEEP QUIET
THE SOUND LEVEL
HAS TO BE LOW SO NO
ONE WOULD DISCOVER
THE FAMILY. CAN YOU
BE SO QUIET.

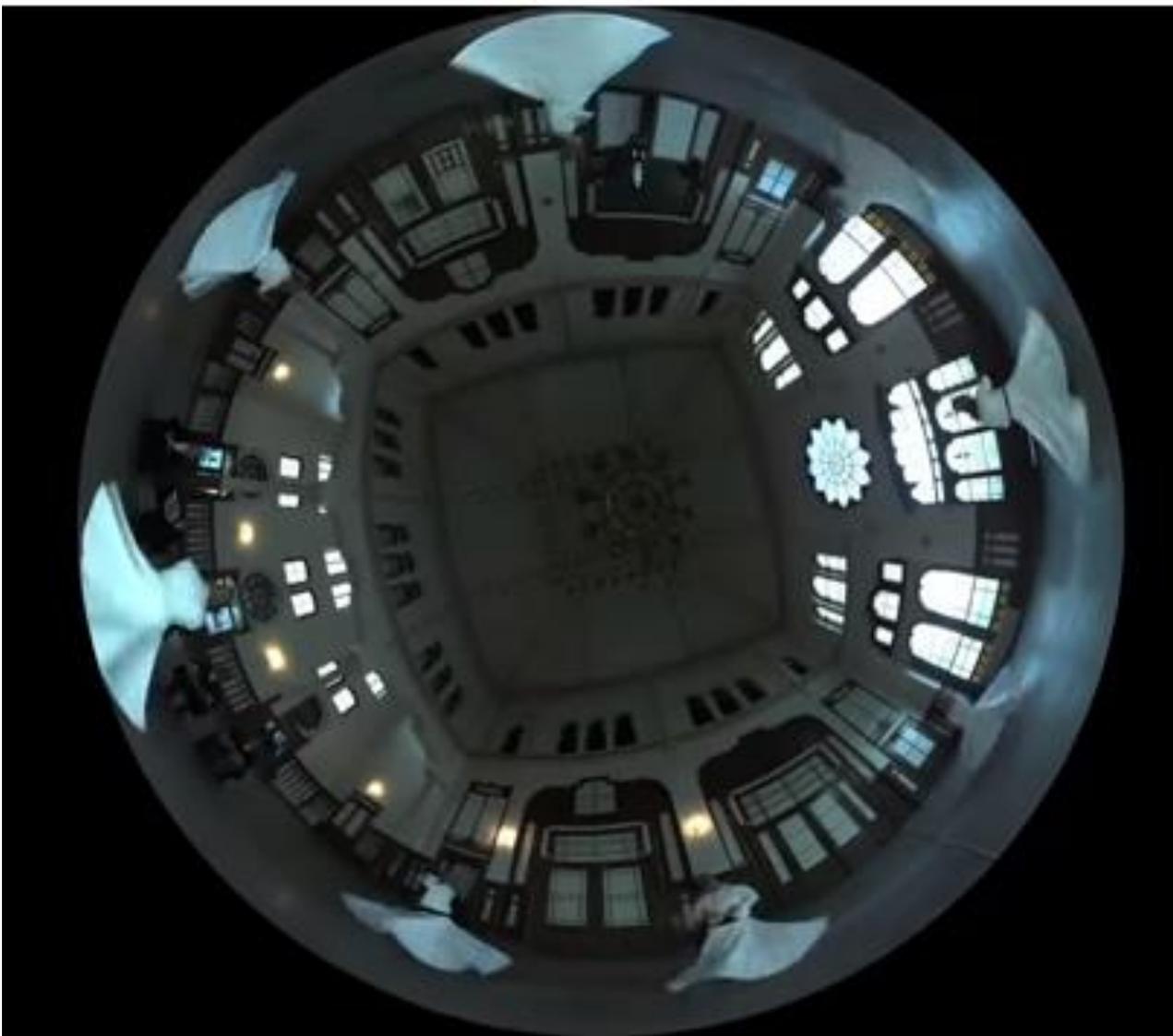


Reaching out: museum extensions in the city



Assessing museum multimedia





Museums Test New Technology, Interactive Exhibits

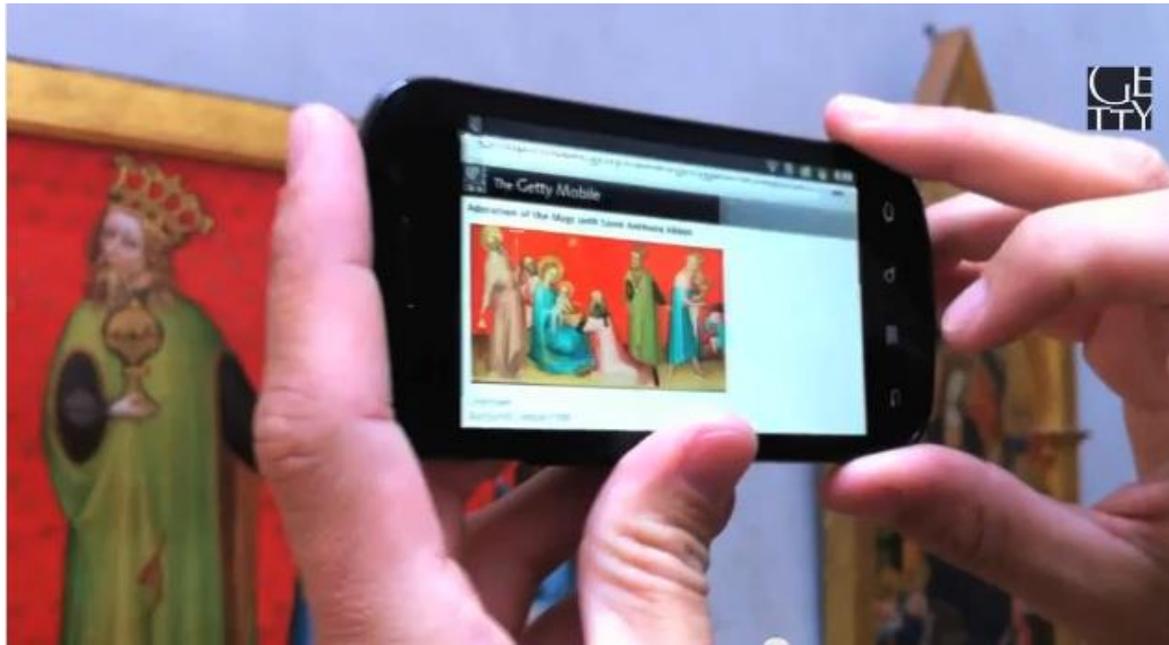
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32pql1dod8A>

How will museums of the future look? | Sarah Kenderdine | TEDxGateway 2013

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXhtwFCA_Kc

Criteria of multimedia assessment

- Is it **necessary**?
 - Why? Where? For whom?
- Is the choice of **genre** appropriate?
 - Does it match the exhibition style /message?
 - Is it enjoyable /instructional?
 - Is it up-to-date?



Criteria of multimedia assessment

- Is the tool **easy to handle**?
 - Are the needs of visitor types considered?
 - If necessary, is there trained staff / manual with images to assist?
- Is it **sustainable / adaptable**?
 - Maintenance/upgrade secured?
 - Is the hardware easy to reach?
 - Is software upgrade affordable?





Merging real and digital explanation tools



Accessibility assessment



State of Museum Access 2018

<https://vocaley.es.co.uk/state-of-museum-access-2018/>

Worcester Art Museum (WAM): Accessibility Assessment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7yAt44PD3Y>

Suggestions by visitors with special needs to improve the gallery experience

Euan's Guide – Disabled Access Reviews

<https://www.euansguide.com>



Touch tours

- Letting visitors touch the exhibits. **Very popular** for children.
- **Staff should be available to describe the objects** and place them in context. (Alternative: audioguide).
- A frequent approach: **build a 3D model** of the objects for visitors to feel and explore.



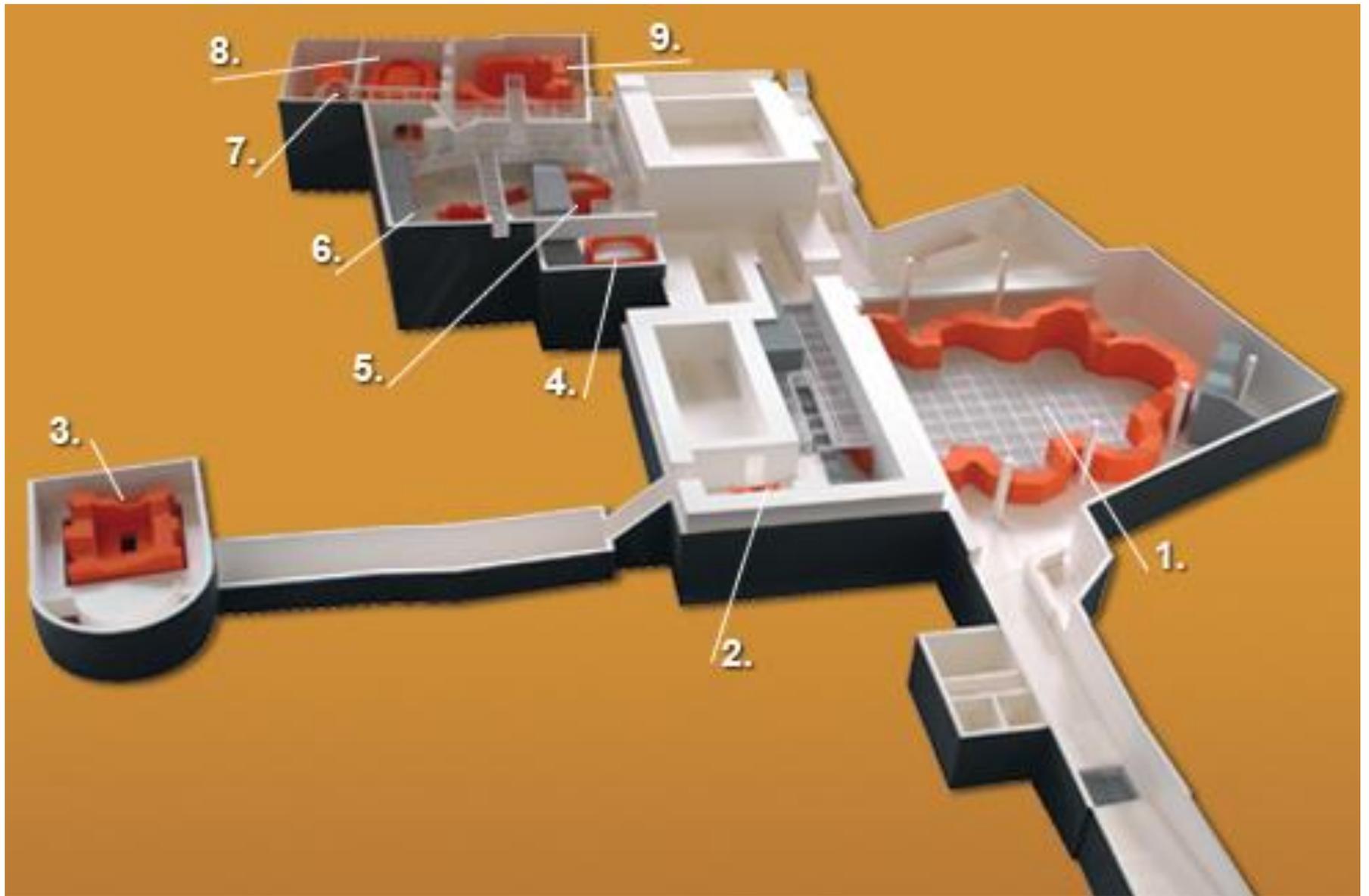
Space

Very important for wheelchair users to enable them **to maneuver** in the museum environment.

Keeping exhibitions **spacious and clear** of trip hazards

Have a space beneath the tables on which objects sit making it easier for wheelchair users to **get closer to the display**.





Signage

High contrast text and clear directions are best.

Signs which have a wheelchair symbol and an arrow can be confusing. It is better to have a sign which says 'wheelchair access to the cafe' accompanied by an arrow.

Place signs intended for wheelchair users in places that are **visible from a seated position**.

Things to consider when placing signage:

- Where would people want to go when arriving or when they are leaving?
- Is the exit clearly signposted?
- Are wheelchair accessible evacuation routes signposted?

Other important factors 1

- **Lighting** for the visually impaired (but not blind)
- **Self-guided tours:** [The Royal Yacht Britannia](#) has a self-guided tour in British Sign Language (BSL) and the [Cutty Sark](#) launched an audio described tour
- **Bigger lifts** are better. Disabled people travel with a carer, may use a larger style wheelchair or medical equipment. Elderly visitors or parents with prams can lead to congestion.
- **Autism friendly viewings:** Royal Air Force Museum has done to be awarded with an Autism Access Award from the National Autistic Society. [Pre-visit resource and an autism-friendly trail.](#)

Alinker: wheelchair without pedals



Other important factors 2

- **Water bowls**
- **Toilets:** [Changing Places Toilets](#). Remove surplus or oversized bins and other non-essentials will increase the amount of space wheelchair users have to manoeuvre
- **Induction loop:**
an electromagnetic communication or detection system which uses a moving magnet or an alternating current to induce an electric current in a nearby wire.
- **Information:** listing on [Euan's Guide](#)
- **Promotion:** gifts and other incentives for visit



Case Study

Touching the Prado: a hands on approach to accessibility

<https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/touching-the-prado-a-hands-on-approach-to-accessibility/>

- Prado commissioned **six 3D copies of its famous paintings** (Goya's The Parasol, a version of the Mona Lisa by a pupil of Leonardo Da Vinci's, and paintings by Correggio and Velazquez)
- The Prado used a **relief printing** technique developed by Estudios Durero, a specialist printing company near Bilbao
- Based on a high-resolution photo of the painting, **selected textures and features were enhanced in a print** with a special ink.
- A **chemical process to add volume** was used to turn a flat reproduction into 3D



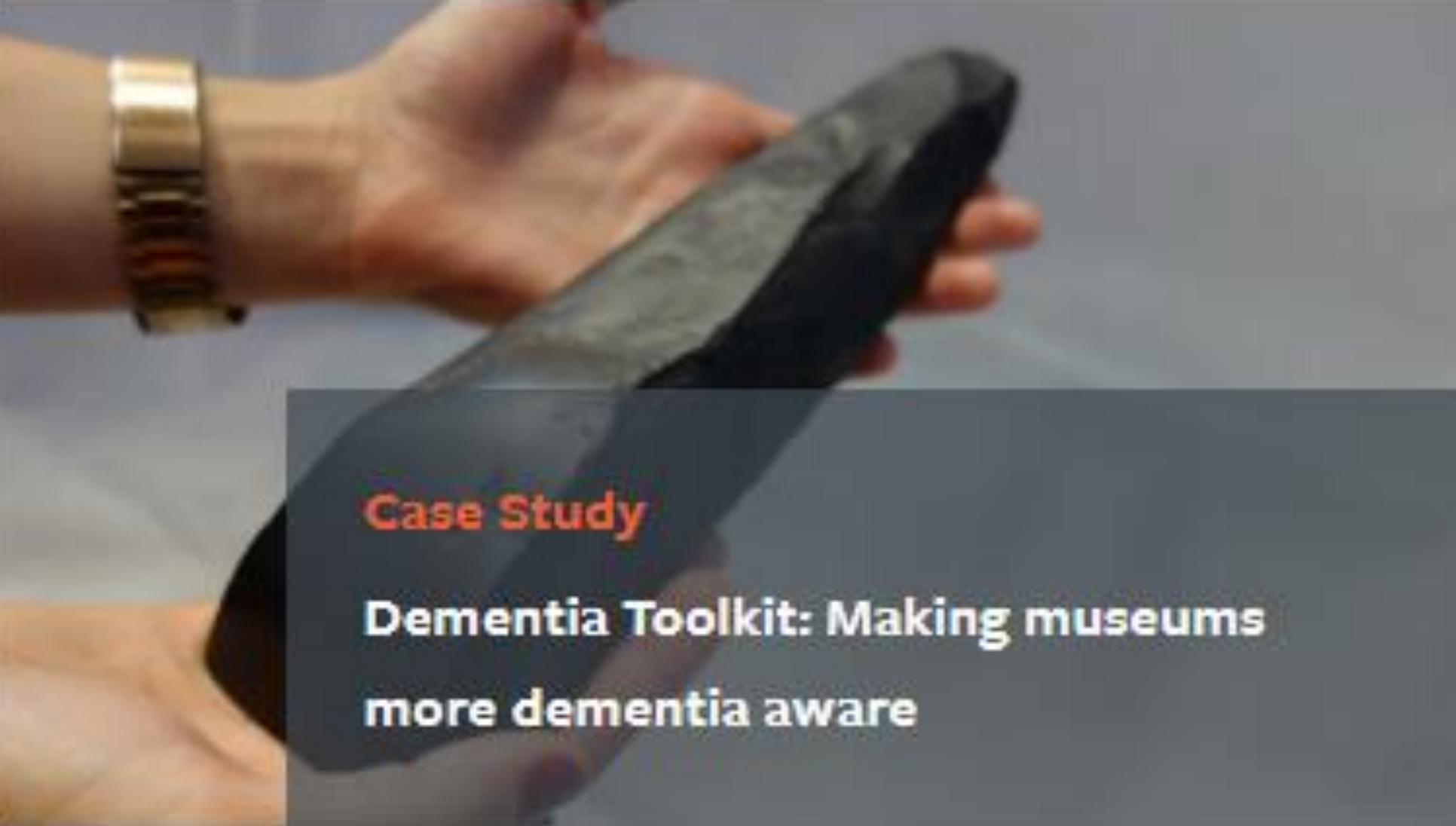
The displays include
didactic materials:

texts in braille,

audio guides and opaque
glasses aimed at
facilitating the experience
for fully sighted visitors.







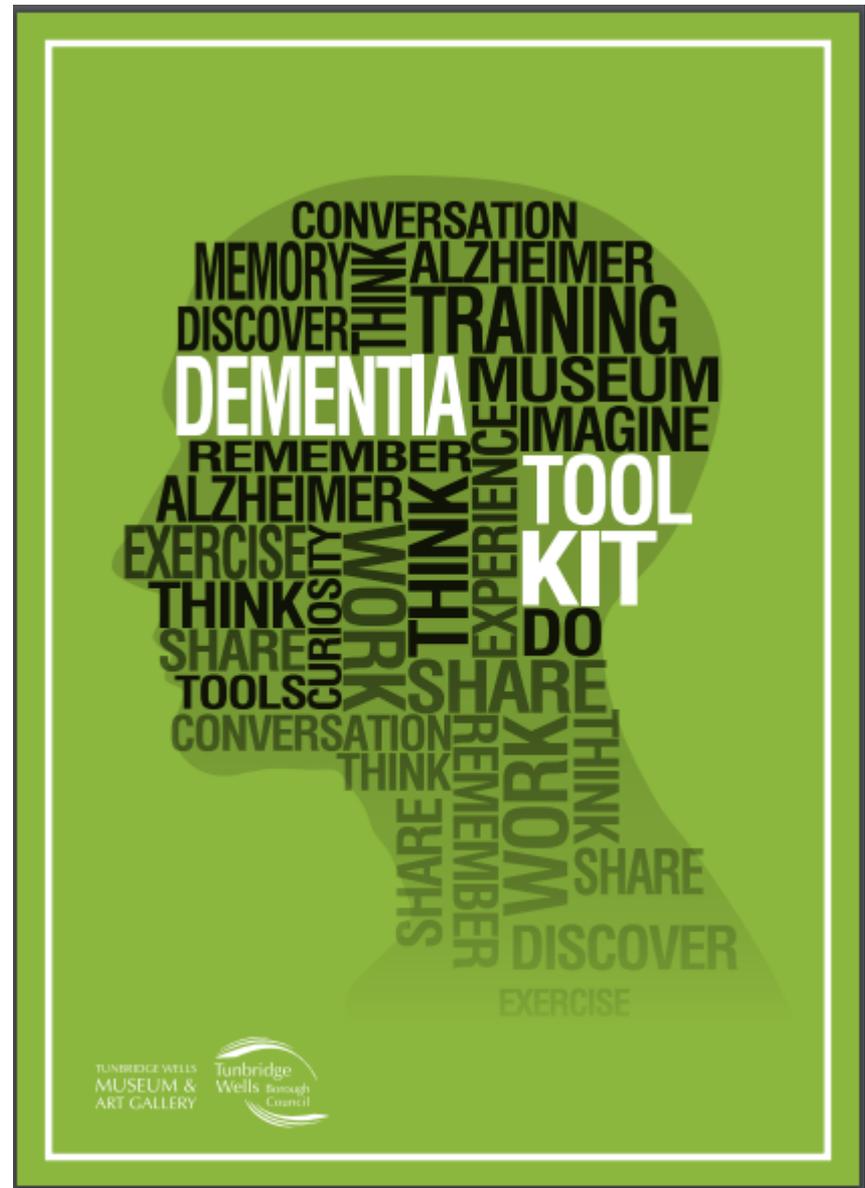
Case Study

**Dementia Toolkit: Making museums
more dementia aware**

<https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/dementia-toolkit-making-museums-more-dementia-aware/>

It is based on a two-year research project led by Canterbury Christ Church University in collaboration with Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery and the Alzheimer's Society in West Kent.

850,000 people in the UK are living with the disease. This is estimated to rise to 1m by 2025.



<http://dementiafriendlykent.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Tunbridge-Museum-Dementia-Toolkit.pdf>



A clinical study, with 70 people on monthly visits over a two year period.

Instead of working with them on their past memories, the project focused on **new learning by introducing a range of objects from the museum's collection** including a tiger's skull, a Victorian boot warmer and an Egyptian mummy.

Dementia café in Imonry Museum in Evesham, UK



Sociopolitical messages in museums?





Documenta exhibition, Kassel, **2012**: protesters against the selection of exhibitors / concept / message

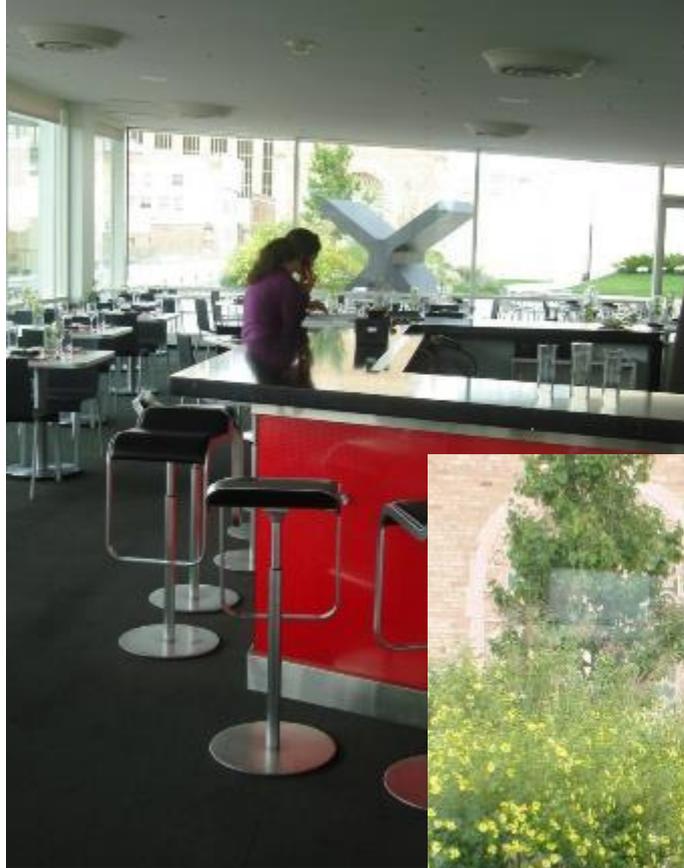


The museum restaurant

- Relations with the environment
- A lifestyle statement
- Integration with the exhibition:
messages may be reinforced, e. g.
high quality food culture of a nation
/minority presented
- Selection of food may suggest
healthy living / junk food culture



Chicago, Shedd Aquarium



Madison (USA),
Museum of Modern Art



London, Victoria and Albert Museum

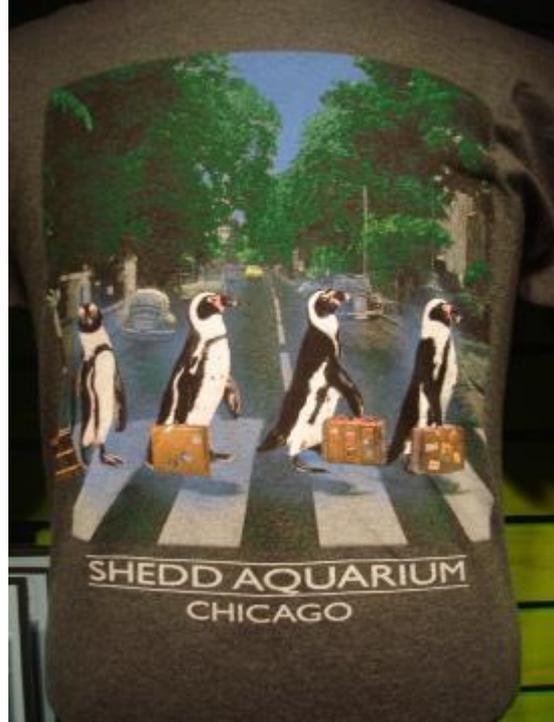


The museum shop

- Easy access from the exhibition but not pushy and intrusive placement
- Matching the (life)style of visitors:taste, social status, money to spend
- Integration with the exhibition
- The offering has strong messages about environmental consciousness, vulgarisation of art, multiculturalism



Chicago, Shedd Aquarium,







Madison, USA
Museum of Modern Art

Films on gallery exhibition evaluation

You are a Museum's Most Powerful Asset | Wendy Meluch | TEDxUCDavisSalon

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFfYLN7vJRk>

Experiential Learning through Art and Museum Experiences | Laci Coppins - Robbins | TEDxUWMilwaukee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BT5KR4ijOc>

21st Century Museum Issues Lecture Series: The Museum Experience Revisited

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDP87JEC3D4>

Shepparton Art Museum - Feasibility assessment and business case

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmbxZqv3vtk>

Creating Exhibitions - Evaluation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV9X2K8uEYE>

Through the Looking Glass: Museums and Internet-Based Transparency

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9zYCeAOtxQ&list=PLF7GHNwkLqZqvoVadHtv2Pq7T492kJk3A>

Organisations that conduct / publish museum / Gallery evaluation

CARE
Committee on Audience Research & Evaluation
Professional Network of AAM
Advocating evaluation within the museum field writ large
www.care-aam.org

VSA
Visitor Studies Association
Professional network of researchers and evaluators
Sharing best practices and developing R&E competency
www.visitorstudies.org

AMERICAN EVALUATION ASSOCIATION
American Evaluation Association
Professional association of evaluation practitioners
Exploring, assessing and training
www.eval.org

- InformalScience.org
- Curator: The Museum Journal
- Journal of Interpretation Research
- Journal of Museum Education
- Museums & Social Issues
- Visitor Studies
- Practical Evaluation Guide by Judy Diamond, Jessica Luke, David H. Uttal