The Boston Children's Museum offers unconventional exhibits that empower children to explore different topics through interactive stations. The museum has a curated focus on "science, culture, environmental awareness, health and fitness, and the arts" (Museum Virtual Tour) The museum offers children a chance to engage with their personal interests and the museum's curriculum to enhance their knowledge and confidence in different learning environments. The physical museum is an example of a participatory museum based on Nina Simon's ideologies. However, the virtual tour acts as a traditional tour. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors are unable to visit the museum physically and are only able to engage with their website. The online tour of the museum is self-directed through Google Maps. This takes away from the engagement of the exhibits and becomes a very passive experience for its visitors.

The participatory museum is a concept based on Nina Simon's ideologies. The idea of participatory museums implies that the "institution supports multi-directional content experiences" and "diverse visitor co-produced experiences" (Simon). Compared to a participatory museum, a traditional exhibit has the institution more in control of the visitors' experience and provides the content for their consumption (Simon). The control of the institution guarantees a positive experience for visitors (Simon). However, this control becomes a singular experience, unlike the participatory museum, which welcomes collaboration from staff and other visitors to challenge one's perception of the museum. This can create unique experiences for visitors and creates opportunities for open dialogue on exhibitions.

Within a virtual tour, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, museums and other traditional institutions must incorporate digital engagement with audiences to continue their relationship until they can safely visit the physical institution. This online traffic will benefit the

institutions because the digital space can invite international audiences and spike mass interest. The Boston Children's Museum does not offer a participatory museum online because of its inability to incorporate additional resources to engage their young audience members. Instead, it uses traditional approaches that go against its mission statement of being focused on child-centered approaches.

The Boston's Children Museum excels in their curated exhibits that allow children of different ages to learn through unconventional methods. As one goes through each room, there are many activities that are physical and untraditional, such as huge building blocks that act as a puzzle or working with toy cars (Museum Virtual Tour). The children are guided to use their intellect to solve these issues in creative ways. In addition, the exhibits are separated by age groups and grade levels (Museum Virtual Tour.). This can encourage children to explore their age level and test themselves in different areas and allows for a child-led approach that enables children to approach activities for their personal development and special interests (Museum Virtual Tour.).

As it was fun to scroll through the museum, it does not offer any insight for those exploring the museum from a virtual experience. Participatory exhibits give audiences a unique way to absorb content and provide "educational experiences for visitors" and display relevant exhibits for its audience (Simon). The online experience is very singular, as the child will most likely grow bored of only witnessing the fun they could have. The online tour is considered the first stage of engagement, according to Simon, which is associated with individuals consuming the content (Simon).

Museums are an environment where children can explore informal learning that can provoke a "curiosity" beyond the classroom (Luehrman and Unrath 41). It offers children a safe

space to ask questions and to become critical thinkers of subjects (Luehrman and Unrath 42). As much as the museum provides child-centered approaches within the physical museum, the online exhibit does not engage with the same materials. There is no sense of engagement to their younger audiences' educational needs, as there are no activities to physically incorporate them (Simon). The museum has a clear audience; however, the virtual tour does nothing to compel young people to visit. Young people will not feel valued when attending the online exhibit as no sense of personalized profiles or features offer any personal engagement (Simon). To create active engagement, the museum must incorporate authentic practices that allow children to respond to what they are witnessing that can create connections to their curriculum (Luehrman and Unrath 44). This can be changed if the museum starts to incorporate online games or options to use Google Maps to zoom into the working stations and contribute to the activity. Also, this engagement can lure in audiences that are associated with cultural engagement that provokes "creative activities and social connection" (Simon).

Moreover, the virtual space does not create a relationship between curators and visitors. The visitors are left alone to travel through the museum with no fundamental understanding of what each exhibit is expected to be. The virtual exhibit does not have any forms of feedback that would allow the visitors' relationship with the museum to continue after their visit (Simon). This can be improved with staff engagement that warmly invites participation from their visitors (Simon). Some examples that can incorporate staff engagement could be a live chat feature that can allow visitors to question what they are seeing or using interactive features that allow the visitor to engage with the material. This can be rewarding for visitors as it can be interpreted that their visit matters and thanks the visitor for their support during this pandemic (Simon). In addition, there could be personalized profiles that can deepen visitors' interests as their profile

would be catered to them (Simon). The more individualized the experience is for the visitor, the more personal their relationship with the museum they will be. This will encourage loyal visitors that will support the museum in non-traditional methods that will keep the museum relevant. This can be successful if staff allow options that create customized content in order for visitors to create a self-identity (Simon). This identity will only extend the impact the museum has to the public.

The Children's Boston Museum's physical space looks intriguing and would be labelled a successful participatory museum. However, the virtual tour offers nothing to its audience, whether it is a young person or an adult hoping to bring their young one to visit. Visitors want to be treated as individuals and benefit from the possible social networks that can be established (Simon). These social networks can create a long lasting community with the participants and the museum. Participatory museums can attract new audiences and continue to produce marketing campaigns that can expand on their work (Simon). The online tour feels like an afterthought in comparison to the incredible details the curators created for the in-person experience.

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Winnie-The-Pooh Exhibit Introduces a Collaborative Comic Book Project for the *Victoria and Albert Museum*

The curators of the Winnie-the-Pooh exhibit at the Victoria and Albert Museum in England understand the importance of valuing children. The curators created the exhibit using child-centered approaches to incorporate non-traditional learning styles that enables children to have their own connections to Pooh and the other characters. The original museum was offered from December 9, 2017 to April 8, 2018 (Winnie-The-Pooh: Exploring a Classic). The online exhibit consists of a few images, along with reading and listening exercises to engage their audience. However, the longest activity lasts only three minutes and does not incorporate the child. Overall, the online exhibit fails to meet the same interactive engagement level as the physical exhibit and becomes a highly unforgettable experience for its users.

The online exhibit fails to include interactive activities. The proposed activity for consideration for the online exhibit will be through personalized storytelling from the child. The proposed activity would be to create a comic strip based on a chosen Winnie-the-Pooh story. This activity will highlight the importance of child participation and values their voices. Personalized storytelling will heighten digital engagement and be a creative tool to gain an online following. The comic would include the blue balloons and small bees found on the website to connect to the current online exhibit. The Victoria and Albert Museum staff would choose a Winnie-the-Pooh story from the collection and would include multiple variations to be inclusive to different reading levels. The cartoon would allow the children to draw their interpretation to the story, which eventually will be displayed as a virtual exhibit and include a small biography of the child as if they are an artist in a traditional museum. The process of curating this exhibit will consist of a realistic deadline to ensure multiple submissions and keep

the exhibit relevant and timely. There will also be advertisements and social media coverage prior to the opening of submissions to create excitement among online visitors.

The current online exhibit is a passive experience for children, hence the importance of expanding the online exhibit and incorporating child-centered approaches to highlight the importance of child growth and learning. The contextual model of learning will be applied to the idea of the comic. This model will specifically target "designing learner-centered museum services for diverse, target visitors within museum contexts" (Chiou et al. 204). As society moves into a more digital world, especially during the pandemic, there is an importance for creating communities online that allows users to create connections with each other and the museum. There is a personal relationship between the individual and the art that allows for the connection to be explored at a more intimate level (Chiou et al. 205).

Technology is becoming a more accessible platform to gain research and knowledge. The museum's digital audience should be valued as much as the physical audience. Mobile technology has become a norm among children, and the popularity of these devices has heightened as technology becomes more complex (Chiou et al. 295). The more modern changes brought into the museum space, the more relevant these institutions will be in society. Incorporating the physical and the virtual will allow for a blend of diverse learning devices and facilities to create progress for children and the traditional museum space (Chiou et al. 297-298). Children can be fully immersed in the physical and virtual spaces and grasp different learning styles to better educate themselves in unconventional methods. The idea of enhancing the online platform allows visitors to feel a "greater sense of ownership, connection and participation" (Bagnall et al. 408).In addition, their ownership of the project will enable them to be the leaders of their project without heightened adult control. This allows the child to create freely without

strict adult censorship. Allowing children access to display their work online will boost their relationship to art and museums, and it will grow the museum's popularity from around the world.

Based on the high level of engagement with children participants, it can be considered a contributory project. Contributory projects allow for visitors to function as participants (Simon). This can be considered a successful way to introduce a modern concept of the participatory museum to the Victoria and Albert Museum (Simon). These projects amplify the importance to "personalize and diversify the voices and experiences presented in cultural institutions" (Simon). Specifically, this project requires "necessary contribution" from children to ensure that the exhibit will become a success (Simon). The comic will be solely created by the child, and it includes their own personal interpretation, which does not require much support from the staff. A good contributory project considers the participants time (Simon). This can be seen in the constant engagement the staff will give the participants and a strict deadline to keep the exhibit relevant. The selection of reading levels to choose from allows the exhibit to welcome any ability and provides "accessibility regardless of prior knowledge" (Simon). It is a creative challenge for young minds to be able to discover their inner artist through how they are able to interpret the story. This does not even require prior knowledge of Winnie-the-Pooh as the child has the ability to use their imagination without consequences.

During the final steps of the curating process, staff members can carefully go through submissions and curate the comics as a virtual exhibit to display each artists' work. From here, the participants and other audience members will be able to share their opinions. Before the final display goes live, the staff will send the final emails to thank the children for their effort and time for participating in the museum and creating this celebratory success that can heighten the virtual

exhibit's excitement. Staff engagement intensifies the experience for children by their

personalized experience with the curators (Penfold and Piscitelli 268). The staff can act as a

guide to offer each participant what they require at their level of needs (Penfold and Piscitelli

268). However, the benefit of using the contributory format is that the staff can help nurture the

participants from the "creative medium through experimentation and discovery learning"

(Penfold and Piscitelli 268). This will be beneficial for children as the online format can

sometimes be tricky to navigate. With some guidance and check-ins from the staff, each child's

needs can be met for their specific learning level. In addition, if there are technological

challenges, the staff can help adapt the system to become more accessible to the child's needs

(Antoniou and Lepouras 2). The online platform can help engage young people because of

digital media's significant presence within their lives (Bagnall et al. 414).

      With the participation of staff, this can also heighten the experience for different

cognitive styles as they can reach out to the children and provide "situation-independent" insight

on how best to serve the child (Antoniou and Lepouras 4). Through more research and

communication, the museum can eventually have more adaptive systems that can welcome

different levels of control for the user (Antoniou and Lepouras 2). In addition to the staff's

involvement with problem-solving, they can monitor the comment section after the exhibit is

published. They can flag content that is deemed inappropriate (Simon). This helps create a safe

environment for its users and participants. Finally, after the exhibit is over, the staff can reach

out to participants to ask questions about their experience, both negative and positive, to learn

from their mistakes and continue to grow their online platform, specifically by asking questions

that can lead to more emotional responses (Antoniou and Lepouras 6).

Overall, the comic book would offer opportunities to expose their creative strengths through their personal experience with the story. Through the wide range of reading levels, many children can participate in this exhibit, creating an inclusive environment for all. As children are the lead participants, they grow a sense of responsibility through their efforts and personal growth with creating art that is entirely within their interpretation. The guidance from the staff members will only heighten their experience. The activity will also focus on using child-centered approaches that escalate the child's curated experience without being blocked by adult censorship. The comic will be necessary to the online exhibit and expand the museum experience that moves past a traditional perspective.

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