

CAGE Case Study Submission 2002

Project Title: *More than Meets the Eye: Exploring Works of Art*

An education exhibition featuring different approaches to works of art.

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Dates: 20 January to 9 June 2002

Profile of gallery:

The Art Centre has a collection of 13,000 works, making it the third largest of the provincial institutions. Founded in 1957, it is both a university and a civic gallery. The collection includes European, Canadian, contemporary, African, and Inuit works of art in all media, as well as decorative art and ethnographic objects, and a collection of Canadian dress. The Art Centre produces 18 exhibitions per year, with an accompanying range of public programs: school and studio programs, tours, talks, lectures, panel discussions and symposia. Re-opened with 2,139 square metres of gallery space in May, 2000, the Art Centre also has a shop and an Art Rental service.

Goal:

The exhibition features six works from diverse areas of the AEAC's collection, displayed with support material intended to demonstrate different approaches and types of knowledge that can enhance the appreciation of art. The target audience is the individual visitor to the gallery from high-school age on.

The goals are:

To showcase the rich variety of the AEAC's collection.

To *use* local resources, such as the departments at Queen's with special expertise, especially the Art Conservation program.

To introduce the novice or nonexpert visitor to some art-related fields of knowledge: conservation, connoisseurship, historical reassessment, ethnographic inquiry, contemporary critique.

To include interactivity in the display, in one instance overtly where the visitor is asked to decide on the originality of a work and throughout the text by way of questions that ask the visitor to think further.

To program some events that extrapolate from key ideas of the exhibition and target different audiences.

To write all label copy and the brochure in an accessible, jargon-free style.

To present the support information in various ways *so* as not to overwhelm or tire the visitor.

To invite thoughtful feedback

Method:

I drew on my long experience at the Art Gallery of Ontario, doing programming teenagers. We did a number of thematic tours such as "History through the Artist's Eyes" that accustomed me to looking at a broad range of art from different perspectives. This helped me to examine the broader collection of the AEAC in terms of questions that would intrigue visitors.

The exhibition was proposed in January 2000, but the work of grant applications and research was carried out in 2001. The CMA pre-conference session interpretive planning in April 2001, presented by Leslie H. Patten & Associates Inc., helped me to plan the exhibition. I was still wrestling with the selection of works; feedback from the group helped me to delete some and arrive at my final choice. I used their template to delineate the concept design and programming. These are presented on pages 3 and 4.

Evaluation:

I have obtained feedback in the following ways: I asked my colleague who manages our financial affairs to read all the exhibition texts before they went to design, so as to receive feedback from a non-art specialist. Some adjustments were made for clarity and length were made after this.

There are comments books in the front lobby and in the gallery, the latter particularly geared to this exhibition. As it did not receive many comments in the first few weeks, I added a sign saying, "Which approach to exploring art intrigues you? Please share your comments on *More than Meets the Eye*." One negative comment about the design of the booklets, written in our main comments book, has resulted in an improvement.

Resources:

Human:

I conceived the theme of the exhibition and did the bulk of the research, writing and fund raising. I received some assistance from my curatorial colleagues, who gave suggestions about works to use; some research help from a student volunteer; and consultative advice from five Queen's professors.

The installation of the exhibition took place over two weeks by two people, our permanent and casual preparators, both working full-time. One other casual person was brought in for two days to paint walls.

Queen's Graphic Design Unit, in consultation with me, did the design of the brochure and information booklets.

The Community Docents, who do tours for the general public, will use the exhibition in their tours.

Financial:

The Davies Charitable Foundation	2,500
The Community Foundation of Greater Kingston	1,000
Ontario Arts Council	2,600
School Program Revenue	5,000
TOTAL	\$11,100

Museum Literature:

Barrett, Terry. *Criticizing Art: Understanding the Contemporary*, 2nd ed. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Co., 2000.

Karp, Ivan and Steven D. Levine, Eds. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991.

Roberts, Lisa C. *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

Serrell, Beverly. *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*. Walnut Creek CA: Altamira Press, 1996.

Templates from Leslie H. Patten & Associates applied to *More than Meets the Eye*:

1. Interpretive Concept Design:

Title: *More than Meets the Eye: Exploring Works of Art*

Objective(s): The visitor will: learn about different approaches to looking at art, multiple voices re: art, and respond to works of art in a personal way.

Description: Six works from AEAC collection with appropriate support material. Extension of exhibition in programming and website.

	Key Ideas	Artifacts / Specimens	Illustrations / references	Props	Interpretation	Overall Design
1	Art work as object to be physically examined	<i>Granida and Daifilo</i> , by Jacob Backer, Dutch 17 th century	Conservator at work, ptg. under x-rays, U-V light, etc.	Photographs on wall and in booklet	Panel with question, extended label with art historical info	Avoid clutter of too many diverse works in small gallery Brochure to take away
2	How is an unsigned work attributed	<i>Head of Youth and Copy of Head</i> , by unknown Italian artists, 18 th century	Drawings by artists of other artists' work	Booklet with info on connoisseurship, paper, history of drawings	Panel asks viewer to pick the original, with pointers. No labels.	Wall – 3 temporary to create distinct stations for the works, and to display introductory panel
3	Work of art as questionable document in history	<i>Frontenac at Cataraqui 1673</i> , by Adam Sherriff Scott, R.C.A., c. 1935	Maps, painting, photos showing history of Fort Frontenac (Kingston site)	Booklet with viewpoint of First Nations, historical info, info on RCA	Panel raises issue of reliability of art as document of history	Small wooden shelves to support a laminated booklet at each station
4	Work of art as comment on our time	<i>You Complete Me</i> by Jason Dunda, Canadian, 1999	Posters from two recent films in which phrase “you complete me” used	Booklet with info on artist, his work, viewpoint of donor	Panel raises issue of artists subverting popular culture	
5	Work of art as window to another culture	<i>Reliquary Figure</i> , Kota people, Gabon	Photo of a smilia sculpture with basket, map of Africa, repro of drawing of reliquaries in situ, photos of Gabon	Booklet with 3 photos, info on Gabon contextual info on sculpture	Panel raising issue of original context, extended labels.	Colour – one coloured wall as backdrop for historical paintings, others left white. Bench seating Table with related books and comments book.

2. Sample Programming Chart:

Title: *More than Meets the Eye: Exploring Works of Art*

Target Audience: high school students, Queen's students, general adult visitor.

Objective(s): The programming will extrapolate on some key ideas of the exhibition: conservation, drawing and personal response.

Description:

	Key ideas	Location	Resources in place	Resources provided by interpreter	Time required	Visitor Action
1	Explain methods of art conservation, especially with regard to Backer painting	Lecture at AEAC	Professor of paintings conservation in M.A.C. program, grad student	Location and publicity, refreshments at opening	3 hours – talk and opening reception	Listening, questions, one-on-one discussion with speakers at reception, looking at exhibition
2	“	Website	Complete photo documentation done by two grad students who restored Backer painting	Under development	Under development	Come to AEAC to see exhibition
3	Appreciate art through drawing	Galleries	B.F.A. faculty member and docents to facilitate	Galleries, studio, materials, publicity	3 prep meetings, 3 hour program on a Sunday afternoon	Interacting with artist and docents, drawing in galleries and/or studio. Target audience here enlarged to include families.
4	Works of art as stimulus for creative response	Website, booklet in gallery	Local high school English teachers	Access to exhibition	Months of communicating with teachers, an hour with a class in galleries, few hours follow-up	Students visit gallery as part of a class assignment, choose a work of art and write creative response to it. These can be posted on web and printed in booklet for visitors to read in gallery
5	Museum as focus for cultural study	Lecture at AEAC	Queen’s prof	Dropped – not time, money		
6	Introduce exhibition to general visitor	AEAC	8 Community Docents who do highlight tours for drop-in visitors and booked groups	Training, written information	One meeting – two hours	Intrigued by tour to look further