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Event Response –
Exhibition Opening: Event Response

Art Exploration: _____

Art Expolaration Garment or Hanging (fragment) Peru Inca, 1470-1532 a.d squares and stepped diagonals textiles and feathers 67-29-271 What initially caught my eye was the fragment of a textile thats red with a zig zag pattern, but upon approaching I the displays I was naturally drawn to the fragment that was at eye level. At first I just admired the colors and patterns and the differences between the feathers and the example of textile hanging above it. The deep crimson color in the textile above the feathers reminded me of my grandma, partially because she loved this color, but partially because it reminded me of this gigantic woven tapestry of red currant which hung on the wall of my parents house for much of my childhood. Upon first glance I thought they were beautiful, and then reading the information on the card informed me that these fragments which sparked my curiosity trying to imagine how these small rectangular pieces were attached to a bigger unit. The feathers seem to be a secondary addition, or a decoration overlaying the woven textile. The beige color makes me think its some kind of hemp, though I'm not sure what kind of plants were native in Peru and would've been used. The feathers themselves look as though they were dyed. The bright oranges and blues, blacks and whites may, very well have been colors from native birds, my 21st century eye however is quick to dismiss those kinds of colors as artificial. Being a suburb and city dweller, the only places those kinds of colors exist for me is in stores on shelves, and on television/ my computer screen. The tag on the side of the frame informs me that this is either a garment or a hanging. Which leads me to the thought that this is a purely decorative piece. It may have either been worn, or hung on a wall to admire, though I'm not entirely sure. The colors and material obviously hold much symbolism to the maker/viewer, much the same way the colors evoke certain understandings of my ideas of these colors and what it is I identify them with. This also makes me wonder whether the maker was also the viewer and or wearer of the textile. The material itself seems rather stiff and judging by the sheer cloth covering the feathers (to keep them in place), the textile is very fragile, which could be a result of old age, but also could just be the nature of the creation. One side of the fragment has a distinct "stepped diagonals" pattern, in comparison making the left side look wild, mixing all various colors and tones together. The juxtaposition of the two sides makes me see realize a certain sophistication that went into creating this piece. I could only assume that the intent seen

in pattern reflects the color choice. There are many possibilities of what this fragment would've meant for the maker/ viewer/ owner. The colors and patterns could've have represented stories, a passage of time symbolic to the owner or peoples. The bright tones and rhythmic patterns could've also been used as a part of a ritual, mating, marriage, a rite of passage. My initial response to the color and material was to understand it through our use of color in present day. The significance to us today is that it is a cultural relic of our ancestors, and a keystone into understanding some history. With decorative arts, I think I would like to be given a bit more insight into what it is I'm looking at, or at least be given a few more hints about Peru in this time-period. All my observations were purely based on the visual clues which in my opinion can only take one so far. I wish I would've known a little bit about the natural habit from which this artifact came from. questions: What do you see without reading the information tag? What are the materials? What colors and shapes do you see? Now looking at the information, how does that affect what you are seeing? Based on you previous observation what could something like this be used for? Describe the patterns and the colors, what do they make you think of? How do you think the material would feel if you touched it? The museum plate says that this is a fragment, can you imagine what this is a fragment of? What would people in Peru use something like this for, try to think about the climate and what you know of human life to think of some examples of what this type of textile would be used for? Do think this was a sacred object, or something that was used in everyday life? What would lead you to either one of those conclusions?

Keywords:

Object Guide:

Garment or Hanging (fragment) Peru Inca,
1470-1532 a.d
squares and stepped diagonals
textiles and feathers
67-29-271

What drew me in was the fragment of the textile with a zig zag pattern. In passing, the deep crimson color of the textile would remind me of my grandma, partially because she loves this color, and partially because it sparked a memory of a gigantic woven tapestry of red currant which hung on the wall of my parents house

for much of my childhood. Upon approaching the displays I was drawn to the fragment that was at eye level. The colors and patterns seemed almost hypnotic. At first glance I thought they were beautiful. The information on the museum plate informed me that these fragments which sparked my curiosity trying to imagine how these small rectangular pieces were attached to a bigger unit. The feathers seem to be a secondary addition, or a decorative gesture overlaying the woven textile. The beige color led me to think it made of some kind of hemp, though I'm not sure what kind of plants were native in Peru. The feathers themselves look as though they were dyed. The bright oranges and blues, blacks and whites may very well have been colors from native birds. However my 21st century eye is quick to dismiss those kinds of colors as artificial. Being a suburb and city dweller, the only places those kinds of colors exist for me is in stores on shelves, and on a television/computer screen.

Looking back at the museum plate, I am informed that this is either a garment or a hanging. Which leads me to the thought that this is a purely decorative piece. The colors and pattern obviously symbolic to the maker/owner. This makes me wonder whether the maker was also the viewer and/or wearer of the textile.

The material itself seems rather stiff and judging by the sheer cloth covering the feathers (that the museum put in place to preserve the feathers I assume), the textile is very fragile, which could be a result of old age, but also could just be the nature of the creation. One side of the fragment has a distinct "stepped diagonals" pattern, in comparison making the left side look wild, mixing all various colors and tones mixed together in no distinguishable pattern. The juxtaposition of the two sides makes me see a certain sophistication that went into creating this piece. I could only assume that the intent seen in pattern reflects the color choice.

There are many possibilities of what this fragment would've meant for the maker/ viewer/owner. The colors and patterns could've have represented stories, a passage of time symbolic to the owner or the peoples. The bright tones and rhythmic patterns could've also been used as a part of a ritual, mating, marriage, a rite of passage etc. .My initial response to the color and material was to understand it through our use of color in present day. The significance to us today is that it is a cultural relic of our ancestors, and a keystone into understanding some of our history. With decorative arts, I think I would like to be given a bit more insight into what it is I'm looking at, or at least be given a few more hints about Peru in this time-period. All my observations were purely based on the visual clues which in my opinion can only take one so far. I wish I would've known a little bit about the natural habit from which this artifact came from.

questions:

What do you see without reading the provided information?
What are the materials? What colors and shapes do you see?
Now looking at the information, how does that affect what you are seeing?

Based on your previous observation what could something like this be used for?

Describe the patterns and the colors, what do they make you think of?

How do you think the material would feel if you touched it?

The museum plate says that this is a fragment, can you imagine what this is a fragment of?

What would people in Peru use something like this for, try to think about the climate and what you know of human life to think of some examples of what this type of textile would be used for?

Do you think this was a sacred object, or something that was used in everyday life? What would lead you to either one of those conclusions?

Annotated Question

Plan:

Object Description and Location:

Take a walk around the object and describe what you see? These questions are meant to begin the looking process. Hopefully everyone will walk around the piece, get a good look and have time to form some observations.

Where was the object made? After this question I will also show a map of the Czech Republic and explain a bit about the material and how glass is made.

What colors and shapes do you see? What do the colors and shapes remind you of? What about the colors and shapes make you think that? the ocean, the sea, rocks, the sky

How do the colors and shapes of the object compare to the other objects in the case?

Materials and Process:

How do you think this object was made? What materials might be used to make glass?

Most glass is essentially melted sand with a few other ingredients

2. Where would you expect to see an object like this one? Where else would you expect to find glass?

Cups, Windows

Decorative Art:

How is this object different from what you would expect to see in a museum?

How is this object different from the object it shares a case with or the other objects in the gallery?

Why do you think this object is in a museum? How is this glass different, from glass you would come across in windows, bowls or cups?

Tour Stop: _____

Overview- Students will examine Ladislav Palecek's untitled glasswork and make up a title for the untitled work.

Artwork-
Ladislav Palecek
Czech
unknown
Cobalt Pressed Glass
Gift of Don and Carol Wiiken
1998-11-12

Supplies- N/A

Procedure- Students will be introduced to the decorative art's gallery and encouraged to take a moment to look around at the objects. Then they will be instructed to gather by the chosen object for discussion. The students will be instructed to walk around the entire case and examine the object from several different viewpoints. Discussion will begin with a visual analysis then lead into materials processes with an emphasis on where the object was made.

Questions-

Take a walk around the object and describe what you see?

Where was the object made?

What colors and shapes do you see? What do the colors and shapes remind you of? What about the colors and shapes make you think that?

How do you think this object was made? What materials might be used to make glass?

Where would you expect to see an object like this one? Where else

would you expect to find glass?

How is this object different from what you would expect to see in a museum?

How is this object different from the object it shares a case with or the other objects in the gallery?

Why do you think this object is in a museum? How is this glass different, from glass you would come across in windows, bowls or cups?

Naming Rights

The students will create their own titles for the artwork. Titles can be a word or a short phrase. They can be descriptive, metaphorical, or intuitive responses to the artworks. Take another walk around the art work, explain how the work is untitled and needs a title.

Specific Statements

Did anyone notice that the artwork has no title?

Think of what you would title this artwork?

Audience Study – Kids@Krannert:

3 March 2009

Kids @ Krannert February 28, 2009

Kids at Krannert attracted a diverse audience of families and community

members into the museum. Many of the parents and children seemed to be involved in

Saturday school at the art in design, however community members without children

also attended the event to view the current exhibitions and not participate in the hands

on activities. The general purpose of Kids at Krannert was to host an event that would

be both educational and fun. The various activity stations set up in the different exhibits

were a way to experience artwork with a hands on activity.

The audience seemed very pleased with the activities. Of three interviews I

conducted two groups had family members from out of town with them. Everyone

seemed to be able to find the level of engagement that they were seeking. The families

and kids tended to stick to the activities, and at least with mask making people seemed

to really enjoy making something. Parents with younger children were more involved

with helping their child decorate, and parents of older children still

seemed really excited to be making masks with their kids. The program seemed to be familiar to most people. Many audience members mentioned how they had attended Kid at Krannert before and it was an event that they really enjoyed. It appeared to be a nice opportunity for parents to interact with their children in a museum, view the current exhibition and take home some prizes and crafts. My only critique would be is that the way the volunteers were handled was very unorganized. I think they should all be introduced to everybody, and that who ever was the volunteer coordinator needed to be more communicative with us(the college students). The first group of volunteers that we had were great, I think mostly because we introduced ourselves and explained what was happening. They were very eager to be involved which was refreshing. However, I did not even notice when our volunteers got switched out because we had been so busy at that moment. When the volunteers arrived they did not introduce themselves, so I at least didn't even know they were volunteers until the near end. From conducting interviews I learned that the audience members were comfortable at the museum and enjoying a saturday afternoon out. One evaluation that stood out to me was a women who felt very strongly about being too rushed. She explained that her children had activities both before and after Kids at Krannert and how out of the two times she had attended the event she was only able to stay for a short amount of time causing her to feel rushed. Her recommendation was for the event to be longer to accommodate busy saturday schedules.

Audience
Development of
College Students:

Museums are excellent resources for students, scholars and community members. Krannert Art Museum is located within the Art and Design building. This is amazingly convenient for the art and design students, but tends to be

a bit of a distance for the rest of the U of I students. Instead of interviewing students from outside of the Art and Design department, I opted to see just how close the art students of U of I feel to their museum.

With the majority of my interviewees being Art History students, I was hoping for some interesting responses and strong opinions. Many of the students expressed interest in the traveling exhibitions and spoke positively of the current and recent work being shown. The permanent collection however was critiqued and described as a bit of a disappointment. The students were well informed of the events happening at Krannert through email, facebook, local papers and attended these events quite frequently, but what more? Disappointingly I did not seem to get any strong opinions from the students. Yes, perhaps it is difficult to take a survey seriously, but I figured being Art History students they would have some opinions. Naturally, I thought about how I would respond if I were taking this survey. Being an Art History student myself, I also don't seem to have much of an opinion on Krannert, which is sad. Taking this class, is the closest I've gotten to feeling involved in the happenings, which is great but not enough. The words used to describe the Museum, made me think that the students don't feel particularly involved either. As art students the museum should be our home, we should talk about it and know it as if it was a room in our own house, but we don't. Rarely did the students mention specific details about the museum or intimate descriptions that art students should be having about the museum in their very own building. I'm not really sure what to do with this issue, but I think it's important to recognize that there is an issue.

Audio Guide Script: _____

The Chiwara Headcrest depicts a human figure in a crouched position with three animal forms that are fused together. The animal standing at the bottom of the vertical stack with its head lowered is an aardvark. The form on top of the aardvark is the body of a pangolin which is an animal similar to an anteater only its body is covered in scales. The human figure, which is female, is positioned where the head of the pangolin would be located which suggests a metamorphosis is taking place. Rising out of the back of the pangolin are the horns of an antelope.

In Bamana culture the word Chiwara is associated with agriculture. Chiwara is the name given to a half-man, half-antelope who taught the Bamana people how to farm. It is also a term that refers to the stage in a young boys training when they are paired with their future female partners and learn skills needed to become successful farmers. All of the animals depicted in the Headcrest have qualities that are desired by, or similar, to farmers. The horns of the antelope

represent strength, and the aardvark and pangolin have the ability to burrow into the earth which simulates the process of farming. Today, Headcreasts like this one are used in dance masquerades. Two dancers dressed in costumes wear the crests on top of their heads and imitate movements of the animals depicted on their headcrest. This dance not only honors the story of Chiwara but it encourages men to work hard in the fields. There are three styles of Chiwara masks, horizontal, vertical, and abstract. Although the form is appears to be vertical, it is combination of various shapes and body parts is that typical of the abstract style.

this podcast was created by Cristin Vaughan and Anna Ustupski
abrstact- combine different forms

Audience Study –
Art After Hours:

Event Response –
Additional Event:

Teaching Painting
14 March 2009

This event was an all day symposium in the basement of the Krannert, room 62. I attended because of the familiarity of professors and speakers. Fang Lijun gave a brief lecture, it was interesting to hear a contemporary Chinese artist speak about his work. I've become very comfortable in American and Western works, but am very curious about what is happining outside of the Western countries.

Most of the audience were students both undergraduate and graduate. Since it was an all day symposium, there was a break for lunch and audience memebers tended to go in and out as they pleased. The symposium itself concluded, rather anti-climactically, that there is no real way to teach painting.

I found the event to be very interesting regardless, being in the presence of professors from all over the country hearing there experiences and thoughts about art making was valuable. I think there should be as many events like this one as possible at our school. It's helpful to hear a wide ranges of experienced voices from the art world.

Final Paper:

ARTS299
5 May 2009

Museums in Action: Krannert Museum and the Local Community
Predicting a museum event's popularity, is similar to predicting the weather. We can only see so far ahead, and what seems to be certain, ends up changing in the last minute. As a class we participated in planning three public events hosted at the Krannert Art Museum; two Kids@Krannerts which was an event for young children attending with parents or guardians, and Art After Hours which aimed to bring college students in for an evening at the museum. We also worked in pairs, separate from the larger group, to lead a museum tour and to teach a classroom activity. Krannert Art Museum has a calendar packed with events, our class participated in planning a few amongst the many. Through the experiences I've had in the class I plan to address a few significant questions regarding Krannert Art Museum and the community surrounding it.

Our first and last event of the semester was Kids@Krannert. Hosting the same event in the beginning and the end of the semester enabled us to gauge our experiences individually and as a group. We had become more familiar with the process of planning, and with our group dynamic. Kids@Krannert is a weekend event hosted at the museum. Families are invited to experience the current exhibits through activities. The goal has been to try to get families to engage with the artwork, by creating activities that are based on the ideas or techniques of the artists or art that is being highlighted. For example, one of the Kids@Krannert we highlighted the current WOWdesign exhibition which showed an artist's process of experimentation with shoe making. The activity planned to coincide with the exhibition used a type of material with similar malleability to what the artist had used to make shoes with. Slits were cut to make flaps that the kids could manipulate, and velcro dots were used as an adhesive for the flaps. When visitors arrived to the station they were first invited to walk through the exhibition, then venture over to the table to pick up supplies to make their own shoes. Volunteers and class members assisted children with shoemaking and when things became hectic parents and guardians were encouraged to work with the children. The exhibit and activity worked as a foundation upon which the parents/guardian and children could build from.

Louis Lankford's article "Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums" puts forward certain contradictions that emerge with hosting events at museums. Initially he identifies a tone of desperation in museum events and gift giveaways, implying that that should not be the central role of a museum. He argues that in museum events and giveaways the "aesthetic experience" is lost. In hosting Kids@Krannert, we always included a few activities which kids would be able to make something and bring home with them. In a way Lankford's article could be interpreted to say that the

“aesthetic experience” is lost in these kinds of experiences.

However, Lankford’s article is also pointing out that there could be a clearer way of engaging visitors in museums than hosting events and giving gifts. In other words, museums should not have to rely on hosting events, and giving away gifts as a primary way of getting people interested.

There are many different approaches to museum education, inferring from experiences had in class, it is a constant process of trial and error. Events can be very overwhelming, and do often turn into a social experience rather than an aesthetic one, however according to Falk and Dierking’s chapter “The contextual model of learning”, maybe that is not such a bad thing. Falk and Dierklings chapter discusses, several variables that affect a visitors experience in a museum. Amongst those experiences is social interaction. The social interactions had in a museum have the potential to stay with an individual through out a life time. Going back to the activity example from Kids@Krannert, inviting families to walk through the exhibit first opened up the opportunity for parents/guardians and kids to engage with actual work, if they so choose. There were many parents and guardians that took the time to explain the exhibit to the children. There were also many parents and guardians that skipped the exhibit entirely, and went straight to the activity. Whether they directly engaged with the art work, or just with the activity, more importantly they were in the museum and engaging each other. For Lankford the event may have been seen as a distraction from the object, but for Falk and Dierkling it is just another opportunity for learning.

Hosting various kinds of events, to accommodate various learning styles seems to be the approach KAM takes, but is it working?

Taking a look at the calender, KAM is very dynamic and offers something for just about everyone. However, in conducting surveys it seemed that few art students choose to benefit from the museum. Being physically attached to the Art and Design building does not mean students the students feel attached to it. KAM does a wonderful of programming and having events that accommodate a wide range of personalities, but it could benefit the museum to narrow in on a focused set of events, clearly defining what purpose the museum wants to have to it’s community and students. The Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College has an Art Rental program, in which once a month the museum invites community members and students to select and rent two original works of art from the permanent collection per semester. This kind of invitation of collaboration and trust builds an enthusiastic community around it. At the beginning of every semester Oberlin students and community members camp outside the museum to get best picks from the collection. It is more of this kind of hands on collaboration, that stimulates a feeling community and a sense of involvement.

In trying to accommodate various learning styles, are we stretching

our arms out too far too have a real handle on anything? Going back to Lankford's article, in trying to accommodate all types of interests, perhaps KAM's purpose is lost. Some of the many purposes of a museum is to inspire, open up new worlds of thoughts, house a collection of objects that tells a story. KAM and many other museums, attempt to use the museum as dynamic venues, that can juggle all types of interests and acts. These are valiant attempts, but perhaps they are too exhausting, they are too much to handle and are taking away from the already enriching experience that is inherent to a museum. Events frequently act as a buffers, so that real interaction with the art does not have to occur. However real interaction does not have to mean a deep philosophical engagement or even an intellectual one but it could be just looking and appreciating. It is this versatile experience that is unique in itself when going to an art museum. Perhaps KAM's programming could benefit from being in an academic community and hosting more object or artist talks, attracting the artists and students that are already in the building to begin with. In other words, building the community and interest in KAM from the students that surround it everyday by involving the students.

Museums in Action is great class that offers hands on experience at KAM and with leading museum tours and hosting events, but these kinds of opportunities should be more accessible to any students interested in getting involved. Our event flop this semester was Art After Hours. Students wanted to have a more fancy event at the museum, one that didn't involve decorating cupcakes. We marketed the event as a more mature gathering that coincided with a fashion show, and kept the galleries open later than usual. The majority of the audience came for the fashion show, and left with the fashion show. We gave the students what they said they wanted, and then the audience that did come for the show, came with almost exclusively for the fashion show. This is the kind of hit or miss museum and galleries frequently experience, and off course there could be numerous links to why certain events attract an audience and others that do not. An idea, that we discussed as a class, specifically pertaining to Krannert is more student involvement. If students are involved, they are much more likely to invite their friends the event becomes viral, which makes the event more personal.

Museums are for everybody, and KAM certainly aims to be accommodate as many visitors as possible in the community, however KAM's presence in the community is not as strong as other learning centers in Urbana-Champaign. The reasons outlined in this paper are based on readings, class discussions and personal observation. Object talks with professors and more visiting guest lectures would immensely contribute to the KAM's presence and purpose as a source of learning. Students and community members should feel that they have a chance to get more involved, or feel as

though there is an opportunity to get involved if one would choose to do so. Kids@Krannert is very successful in doing achieving some these goals. The event involves local high school students, volunteers from the University and community, and attendance is typically high. Events that welcome students and community members participation is a valuable service, as well as a being a unique center for learning, or simply just for looking.

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