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Event Response – Exhibition Opening: The joint opening of the Art and Design Faculty exhibition and the World of Yugen exhibition was a conglomeration of various events, including food, a dance performance by Kirstie Simson, a live band, and, of course, the exhibitions themselves. The purpose of the event was to introduce the large-scale paper art of Kyoko Ibe as well as works by the Art and Design department's own faculty. It seemed as though the Krannert Art Museum hoped to show developments in the art world, as well as how those developments relate to the work that is going on within this very university. The targeted audience seemed to be mainly people involved within the Art and Design department, since many art students and faculty were present for the event. Groupings of people in the Link Gallery and the World of Yugen exhibition tended to be either of only younger patrons or older patrons talking to each other. The two groups appeared to mix better in the Art and Design Faculty exhibition, where it seemed like people were more likely to break off from their group to observe art alone. The audience was clearly very intrigued by the faculty's work, with people eagerly vying for a glimpse of each work over heads and shoulders. It was also interesting watching patrons interact with Ibe's paper works. Some touched the art without regard, some kept a grand distance from it, and some curiously (and tentatively) walked in between the white net-like sheets. While the evening provided a lot to do and see, it was very difficult to tell whether or not there was meant to be any divide between the two openings. Entering into the Link Gallery might have been very misleading for a newcomer, as it was very easy to get lost among food and faculty, and not as easy to tell which way the art was. However, once inside the museum itself, the opening felt like a sort of fantastical circus. While weaving in and out of musicians, a dancer, and glowing paper designs hanging from the walls created an all-encompassing feeling of being surrounded by art in all forms, it did feel slightly overwhelming and directionless. This is probably mostly due to the fact that two exhibitions were opening in one night, creating what seemed to me a loss of focus.

Art Exploration:

Art Exploration: Personages Contemplating Birds

Personages Contemplating Birds is an oil-on-canvas painting by Rufino Tamayo from 1950. It is a large painting, roughly 5'x5', and depicts what appears to be a family gazing up at a bird. There are three abstracted red figures—a man, a woman, a child—and a multicolored bird. The painting first comes across as slightly eerie with its muddy yellow-brown sky and dark ground. However, after a slightly longer glance, the burnt-sienna-red of the figures pulled me in.

There is a heavy use of line and shape in this painting. Not only are the humans set apart from the bird with significantly more curved lines, but they are also more segmented and complex. Since the human figures are nude, we can see that each body part is its own piece, so to speak, with the ears distinguished from the head, head from the clavicle, clavicle from the arms, the elbows, the abdomen, etc. by lines. The bird, in stark contrast to the humans, is made up almost entirely of triangles and is just as segmented, but much more simplified. This sectioning off of the figures' body parts seems to put a corporeal emphasis on this work as a whole, almost grouping the bird and humans together as living beings instead of setting them apart.

The human figures and bird figure greatly mirror each other in this work. Even though the people are very rounded and the bird is particularly sharp and pointed, there is a definite connection between them through gesture. The male figure furthest to the left, for example, has his arms spread towards the right as if mimicking the bird. The female figure in the middle is holding a sheet of blue fabric between her open arms, showing a connection to the bird's blue wings. The child figure to the far right imitates the bird as well, by reaching his arms out to the left in the same manner as the male figure. Both side figures draw attention inward, and the central figure draws attention upward, until our eye is finally brought to the bird.

I feel that while this painting had the potential to be very static with its significant use of line, it actually communicates a great deal of movement. Instead of the bird looking like a paper airplane frozen in space, Tamayo

uses smudged color to indicate movement in the bird's wings. We also see movement in the male figure's scarf as it blows behind him, the figures' arms as they move and raise them, and a sort of wave-like motion in the dark, undulating ground. In fact, the theme of the work as a whole seems to be motion or progression of some sort. Even the female figure's stomach appears pregnant, adding to this idea of movement not only in space, but in time, as well.

Overall, the work is clearly emphasizing the people's *connections* to the bird rather than the *differences* by showing both in motion, mimicking each other, unclothed, and directing the viewer's attention in a cohesive way through gesture. Even though the darkness of the painting at first evokes a sense of unease, the formal and thematic harmony expressed in this painting actually seems to communicate a feeling of peace. It makes a lot of sense to me that this painting, having been created in the postwar era, would feel both dark and hopeful, conveying curiosity and a desire to understand that which is different from us.

1.) –What is going on in this painting?

–Do you think the three figures are a family?

–What about them communicates this?

2.) –Talk about the artist's use of color.

–What about his use of line?

–Do you see any similarities between the people and bird?

–Any differences?

3.) –What do you think the “personages” are contemplating?

–What about the figures conveys this?

–What kind of symbolism might exist in this painting?

4.) –This painting was done in 1950. Does the fact that it's

a postwar work change your opinion of its theme/message?

–How so?

Keywords:

Object Guide: Rufino Tamayo

Mexico , 1989–1991

Personages Contemplating Birds, 1950

Oil on canvas

The Mexican Revolution, an uprising of the Mexican people led by Francisco Madero against Porfirio Díaz in 1910, caused many Mexican artists to steer their work towards political themes primarily through the creation of murals. Rufino Tamayo, however, believed that the importance of the visual and emotional quality of a painting outweighed the importance of a rhetorical message. Wanting to both rebel against the political art of his contemporaries and stay true to the heritage of Mexican art, Tamayo created oil paintings of intriguing abstract human and animal figures influenced by Expressionism, and yet used subdued colors such as deep brown and red–orange found in ancient pottery.

In *Personages Contemplating Birds*, an oil on canvas work by Tamayo, a nude man, woman, and child look up at a bird. Each individual in the painting gestures towards the bird as it flies overhead. There is a heavy use of line in this work fragmenting the four figures' body parts, creating a strong overarching corporeal emphasis within the work, even though the human figures are more rounded compared to the sharp geometric form of the bird. Tamayo's use of darker reds, yellows, and blues, creates an eerie yet thought–provoking scene.

During the 1940's, when World War II brought about frequent air attacks, Tamayo began to incorporate themes of flight and movement into his work. In this painting, he communicates movement in the undulating earth beneath the figures, in the scarf flying behind the male figure, and

through smudged paint around the bird's wings. Tamayo was also fascinated by Man's relationship to nature, and believed that violence was causing a disconnect between the two. This concern is addressed in *Personages* through his juxtaposition of Man and bird, and the physical conversation they seem to be having. Both the gestures of the individuals toward the bird, and the mirroring of the bird's blue wings in the woman's blue shawl indicate an effort to reconnect.

Bibliography

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Phillips Collection, The. *Rufino Tamayo: Fifty Years of His Painting*. Mount Vernon: The Press of A. Colish, 1978.

Phoenix Art Museum , The. *Tamayo*. Flagstaff: Northland Press, 1968.

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Annotated Question Plan:

Description

1. Formal Analysis:

- What figures do you see in this painting?
 - ” Possible responses: Man, woman, and child; Father, mother, and kid (*Follow up with “What in the painting makes you think that they are a family?”*)
- Describe the different figures.
 - ” Possible responses: Naked, orange, fat, weird-looking, lumpy; sharp, triangles, pointy.
- What colors do you see in this painting?
 - ” Possible responses: Red-orange, blue, yellow, brown._

- “ Relevant info: Tamayo mostly used colors in his paintings that could be found in Mexico, where he was from. (*Follow up with “Where in Mexico do you think he saw these colors?”*)
- Even though the people are *mostly* nude, what do you notice them wearing?
 - “ Possible responses: Nothing, hair, a scarf (on the man), a shawl/scarf (on the woman).

2. Movement:

- Do you think the scene in this painting is very still or has lots of movement?
 - “ Possible responses: Still, lots of movement.
- Where do you see this?
 - “ Possible responses: Ground looks like it’s moving, bird’s wings, man’s scarf, people’s arms.
 - “ Relevant info: Tamayo was interested in World War II and all the planes and warfare that would happen overhead. Incorporated themes of flying and movement into his art.

Interpretation & Cultural Context

3. Description of action/location:

- What is going on in this painting?
 - “ Possible responses: People are naked, people are dancing, people are looking at a bird, people are flapping their arms like a bird.

- What do you think the people are thinking about?
 - “ Possible responses: They wish they could fly, they want to keep the bird as a pet.
- Where do you think this scene takes place?
 - “ Possible responses: A desert, Mexico, etc.
- How can you tell?
 - “ Possible responses: The colors used, the ground is wavy like sand, the artist probably painted a picture based on where he lived.

4. Interpretation of the figures:

- What are some similarities between the people and the bird?
 - “ Possible responses: Arms/wings spread, similar colors, woman’s blue scarf and bird’s blue wings.
- What are some differences?
 - “ Possible responses: Bird is pointy and people are round, color differences, there are three people and only one bird.
- Why do you think Tamayo made the people and bird similar?
- Why do you think Tamayo made the people and bird different?_
 - “ Relevant info: Tamayo felt that with all the violence from World War II, humans were becoming disconnected from nature. A lot of his art shows people and nature (or people and

animals) separate, but similar. In this work, it's as if the people and bird are trying to communicate, like humans trying to reconnect with nature.

- How do you think the people feel about seeing the bird? Why?

” Possible responses: Scared (bird is flying too close), happy (bird came to visit), don't care (people see birds all the time).

Evaluation & Judgment

5. Personal thoughts

- Do you like this painting? Why/why not?
- What about this painting would you change if you could?
- What is your favorite part about this painting?

Tour Stop: Overview: Students will be observing *Personages Contemplating Birds*, an oil on canvas work by Rufino Tamayo, and further considering the interaction of the people and the bird through role-playing.

Artwork: Rufino Tamayo

Mexico, 1899–1991

Personages Contemplating Birds, 1950

Oil on canvas

Supplies: N/A

- “With big paintings like this one, it helps to look at it in two ways: far away, and up close. First, we're going to take some giant steps back. (look at painting for about 10–20 seconds) Now, we're going to take some big steps forward, slowly! (look at painting closer for 10–20 seconds)

- Have students take a seat
- “So, what’s going on in this painting?”
- “What figures do you see in this painting?” “Can you describe them?”
- “And where are these guys, anyway? The desert, the north pole, a forest…?”
- “What colors do you see in this painting?”
 - Additional Info: Tamayo mostly used colors in his paintings that could be found in Mexico, where he was from.
 - “Where in Mexico do you think he saw these colors?”
- “Do you see any similarities between the people and the bird? Where?”
 - Possible Answers: arms/wings spread, similar colors, woman’s blue scarf and bird’s blue wings
 - “Why do you think Tamayo made the people and the bird similar?”
- “What do you notice that’s different about the people and the bird?”
 - Possible Answers: bird is pointier, people are rounder, color differences.
 - “Why do you think Tamayo made the people and the bird different?”
 - Additional info: Tamayo felt that all the violence in World War II was making people lose touch with nature. A lot of his art shows people and nature (or people and animals) separate, but similar. Like they’re trying to communicate with each other.
- “How do you think these people feel about the bird? Why?”
 - Possible Answers: Scared of the bird flying too close, happy to be talking to the bird, don’t care since they see birds all the time.
 - “What about the bird? How do you think he’s feeling about seeing all these people?”
- Activity: Tamayo Talkshow
 - “Alright, well, it looks like the people in this painting and the bird all have a lot to say about each other! How about we bring them to life and see what they’re *really* thinking? I need

- four volunteers!”
- Select four children, designate three to be people and one to be the bird. For the people, they do not have to follow the genders of the figures in the painting. (For example, it’s okay for three girls to be the figures, as opposed to one girl and two boys.)
 - “Okay, People (addressing three kids), who are you? Why are you together? What are your names?” etc.
 - “And, Mr./Ms. Bird, what’s your name?”
 - Encourage four kids to ask each other questions, and bring rest of class in, as well.
 - Thank them afterwards, tell them to sit.
 - “So, do you guys like this painting?”
 - Possible Answers: “No!! It’s gross!,” “Yeah,” “Yeah, I like birds.”
 - For the No’s, ask them what they would change about the painting if they could.
 - For the Yes’s, ask them what their favorite part of the painting was.

Audience Study – Kids@Krannert: I found that the audience for “Kids @ Krannert” was distinctly different from that of “Artzilla.” Other than the obvious age differences, many people that attended “Artzilla” had never been to the event or to the museum itself before. The “Kids @ Krannert” attendees, on the other hand, were parents and kids that have clearly made a tradition out of coming to the event. Part of this seems to be the effectiveness of advertising, as many of the parents noted that they always hear about the event from handouts and flyers at their children’s schools. Overall, according to five surveyed parents, the event was a hit, and this is certainly something they will come back to in the future.

Many of the responses to interview questions were consistent across the board. For example, every interviewee came to the event because it sounded like something fun for their kids, and that they would absolutely come back. Additionally, every parent that I interviewed came with their child, and one parent noted that she also brought her mother with. According to the interviewees, the event is

viewed as something that the whole family can attend that is educational and “different.” One parent even noted that there is only art class once a week at their school, so this event is good for additional exposure to it. Three parents noted that their (and their child’s) favorite activity at this “Kids @ Krannert” was Become–A–Comic. Others said that they enjoyed the Marble Art and the Reading Corner. The Reading Corner was very successful with the very young children who might have felt overwhelmed by some of the other activities. Become–A–Comic and Marble Art, on the other hand, appeared to be successful because they applied to a wide range of ages.

I was surprised that despite the overwhelming focus of attention on the “Out of Sequence” exhibition, the interviewees still noted that they looked at other art throughout the museum. This included Kyoto Ibe, the African gallery, Japanese print art, and the student exhibition in the Link gallery. This is probably due to the fact that the parents are no strangers to the museum, and have been to the Krannert before with their kids for art classes, by themselves for special tours, and for faculty art shows. The parents I interviewed also had nothing to note about improvements that could be made about the museum. Also, four out of the five interviewees have not been to another art museum in the past year.

Audience Development of College Students: Of the five people I interviewed, three were juniors, one was a first–year grad student, and one was a young woman that is employed by the university and has grown up in Champaign. Their majors were business administration, accounting, mathematics, and library and information science. It was interesting receiving opinions from those that are not habitually in or around the Krannert Art Museum, such as art history or studio majors. Overall, it appeared that there was some confusion about the identity of the museum in general. This was exhibited in two ways: One, interviewees confused it with the Krannert Performing Arts Center, and two, reactions or thoughts pertaining to the museum seem overall neutral by those that don’t actively seek out art–related activities. One young woman even said—after I reassured her that her total honesty would be appreciated—that it’s a “small, crappy museum that nobody

goes to.”

Out of the five people interviewed, four had actually been to the Krannert Art Museum. Two of the interviewees said that they would come to KAM more often (if at all) if they “got the word out more” and “were exhibiting something interesting.” Another two said that, since they’re interested in art, they typically make a point to stop in every now and again on their own, or check the KAM website to see what’s currently being exhibited. The last one said that she probably would not visit KAM regardless of what they exhibited or how much they advertised, since it’s “kind of boring… and not really [her] thing.” She wasn’t alone in feeling out of place when it comes to art. Her and another young man noted in their interview that they “know” that art museums are open to everyone, but they seem to be more for “artsy,” “classy,” “sophisticated,” or “snobby” people that “understand art, and get what’s going on.”

When asked what their feelings were towards their past experiences at KAM, two of the interviewees communicated that they feel completely neutral about their visit. One said that he had a *particularly* good time, since the event he attended was an exhibition opening. Another one, the young woman born in Champaign and employed by the university, talked extensively about the art that she had seen there and how interesting the exhibitions had been. Specifically, a work of art that she described as “an atomic bomb installation,” and a work that was produced by an artist attaching “ink things to drumsticks and then used that to visually record rhythm.” She was also very fond of the “Bird Machine Guy.”

When it came to advertising for KAM, the results were surprising. The grad student, who has only been in Champaign for a couple of months, said that he has seen information about KAM events and exhibitions on the website, the Buzz, and the listserv. The other four people I interviewed said that they don’t see advertising for KAM anywhere. This seemed to show that unless someone is actively looking either for something arts-related to do, or for something to do at KAM specifically, people won’t just “come across” KAM advertising. Personally, before I

became involved in this class, I was never aware that any events or exhibition openings were happening at KAM, and I'm an art history major. This seems to be the strongest problem in reaching out to students.

Overall, the interviewees said that they respond most to email and word of mouth when it comes to finding out about things to do. When asked what sort of art or events *would* draw them in to KAM, they replied live shows/bands and music-related events, film festivals, and even exhibitions by local artists. The mathematics and accounting majors said that "real art, not all that modern crap" would draw them in, whereas the university employee and the LIS grad student were interested in art in general, and were open to seeing any sort of exhibit at KAM.

Audio Guide "The Holy Family with Saint John," by Andrea del Sarto.
Script: Early 16th century.

Alyssa: This oil-on-canvas work is a product of the workshop of Andrea del Sarto, and exhibits some of the earliest emergences of Mannerism in European art. The beginnings of Mannerism, primarily founded in Rome and Florence, can be found in this work through the contorted poses of figures, elongated forms, and high-contrast lighting.

Typically, in 16th century Italian workshops, an artist would design the composition of a painting, possibly go so far as to paint it himself, and then, the artist's apprentices would use the design to create multiple copies, such as this one.

Chrissy: In this work, we see Joseph, Mary, Saint John, and on the bottom right, a young Jesus. The Jesus figure exhibits the classic elongated, contorted human form, typical of Mannerist painting. His body, forming an "S" shape, is strikingly different from the other figures in the painting that appear comfortably seated, or rather, "more Renaissance." This combination of Mannerist and Renaissance techniques in a single painting signifies how current the shift was from the former to the latter during the time this work was created.

Alyssa: The darkness of this work is important to consider,

as well, as the original documented work was *not* as highly contrasted. Theatrical lighting was another typical characteristic of Mannerism, in which light appears to come from a strong singular source, creating many dark shadows over and around the figures. It is possible that this painting was made darker on purpose to fit with the fashion of the time.

Chrissy: Though it is difficult to make out, Saint John's hand is resting on what appears to be fur of some kind. This is no doubt an allusion to the garment that he is frequently depicted in. Saint John is often portrayed wearing a "hairshirt," or a coarse garment of camel's hair worn under clothes by the worldly and elite. Saint John was said to have worn it as a symbol of his self-denial and frugal life.

Alyssa: Jesus' teachings are thought to have succeeded the ideas of Saint John. In this painting, with one hand resting on his hairshirt and one hand pointing, it is as if Saint John is instructing the young Jesus in his future ministry work.

Chrissy: It has been suggested by historians that Andrea del Sarto would frequently use his wife as a model for female figures in his paintings. Likewise, in this work, it is possible that he painted Mary in the image of his wife.

Alyssa: Something controversial to consider about this pre-Mannerist work is both its value and validity. Some might consider its value to be less, since it was not painted by the hand of Andrea del Sarto himself. However, some would argue that it is the painting's reflection of the time's principles and style that not only enhance its beauty, but its significance, as well.

Alyssa Venere and Chrissy O'Shea, *Museums In Action*, Fall 2008.

Audience Study – ARTzilla: The Krannert Art Museum's "Artzilla" event was certainly successful. It brought in not only a fair amount of students, but what appeared to be faculty and even a few children, as well. I noticed that most if not all of the patrons came to Artzilla in groups, which I feel is important to note for future marketing purposes. Even though the number of attendees tended to be greater in the past, the smaller amount of

people was well-suited to this event. Since a majority of the activities could only serve 1 to 5 people at a time, two to three hundred more people would have created longer lines and potentially frustrated patrons. The lines that did happen to form at certain events, such as the 80's Hair and Makeup booths and the Caricature Artist, however, seemed to encouraged people to deviate from Artzilla and wander around the museum itself.

Ultimately, the attendees appeared to be very engaged, and everyone that I interviewed said that they would definitely come back to an event like this one. Comments included that it was very unique, a fun alternative to drinking on a Friday night, fun to come with a group, and "because I didn't have enough time to get my hair done this time." According to half the people I interviewed, they had never been to the Krannert Art Museum before because they didn't know it existed. The other half had only been over to KAM for class purposes. Three of the interviewees noted how much they liked the fact that there was an art museum right on campus, and seemed excited at their new find. When asked what could be improved about the museum, two couldn't think of anything, one suggested that there be more marketing and publicity to get the word out that the museum exists, and one suggested that we should "definitely expand the digital art section downstairs; it was *awesome*."

As I was handing out fliers during the first couple hours of Artzilla, I noticed that even though a fair amount of people breezed past it, a lot of people that were on their way in stopped in the Link Gallery to look at the A+D students' work. Many patrons also visited the "Out of Sequence" exhibition (three out of my five interviewees, as well), which they described as very interesting and different. "I expected to see your garden variety of superheroes, but I really liked that they showed the... 'edge' of comics, so to speak," one student commented.

Though all my interviewees noted that they came with their friends, or because their friends were going, there was an interesting variety of responses to how they heard about Artzilla and what they liked most about the event. Several

different forms of marketing worked, including posters in the Architecture building, announcement in an art class (FAA 199), and facebook invitations. The attendees said that they really enjoyed the variety of the Artzilla event and the “open atmosphere, as opposed to more… museum-y feeling museums.” They also noted that they really liked the Caricature Artist activity and the 80’s Hair Styling. One person in particular actually said that her favorite part of the event was the people that ran it. “The way they were dressed… so great… they’re demeanor, they just made the whole thing even better by being so fun and energetic.”

Event Response – Additional Event: The lecture “Architecture of New Museums in the US (Part II)” by Scott Murray was held in the downstairs auditorium of the Krannert Art Museum. It had roughly 21 attendees, mostly elderly, but who all seemed to know each other. As each two or three people came in, most of them greeted each other, which seemed to reflect that the same general people must frequently attend the Krannert’s lectures. The lecture itself was very interesting and informative without being so highfalutin as to be inappropriate for anyone without an art background. While it was very specialized, pertaining to those interested in museums, the lecture focused mainly on aesthetic aspects of new museum architecture that came about after the Guggenheim Museum was constructed in Bilbao, Spain. In fact, the seven museums that Murray examined are said to be part of what is called the “Bilbao Effect,” or a new wave of museum expansion and design that was influenced by the incredibly bold and unique design of Bilbao’s Guggenheim Museum.

The seven museums covered in the lecture (the Saint Louis Contemporary Art Museum, Figge Art Museum, Institute for Contemporary Art in Boston, Akron Art Museum, New Museum in New York, Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco, and Yale Sculpture Gallery) were all very striking, but showed the same sort of style in that they were either very minimalist or very obscure. An interesting question that one audience member raised was if Murray believed that in a few decades these museums would be looked at as having a 2000’s style. Murray seemed unsure about how to answer and concluded that no, he did not think these buildings would be seen as 2000’s style, as opposed to

how some buildings are very distinctly 1970's. In general, Murray's answers to questions seemed somewhat short and vague, which was disappointing considering his extensive expertise in the field of architecture.

That's not to say, however, that the lecture wasn't very engaging. One of the facts he brought up was that in one year, 140 million people attend baseball, basketball, and football games. Additionally, in that same year, 850 million people attend museums. He also explained how museums tend to act either as "neutral containers" for art or "specific containers," such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao. Overall, the event was very informative, and the audience appeared to be very intrigued.

Final Paper: **Connecting Art Museums and Their Audiences**

Over the course of "Museums in Action," we have examined art museums and their interaction with the audiences they seek to serve. Over the past couple decades this has become an increasingly important topic among museum administration. Through tours, events, lectures, and emphasizing an interactive learning environment, it is clear that museums must connect with their audience on different levels to create a lasting relationships. Specifically, I have found that these connecting tactics can be organized into three tiers: generating an audience, directing the audience's attention towards the art objects, and then maintaining audience loyalty.

I. Generating an Audience

One of the ways in which the Krannert Art Museum draws in audiences in particular is through hosting events. From exhibition openings to college student-centered events like Artzilla, these events act as reasons for people within the community to stop in that might not have in the past. Depending on their interests, community members have the option to come in whenever they choose, whether it is for a program for their child, a lecture on a topic that they have always been fascinated about, or even a theme that might

be totally unrelated to anything in the museum, such as the 80's.

An example of this is the pairing of the A+D Faculty Exhibition and the World of Yugen exhibition opening that happened earlier this fall. It was a particularly interesting case, since it fused the efforts of the Art and Design department and the Krannert Art Museum. The event was massive, a little confusing and overwhelming, and fun. While a majority of the turnout was comprised of art students and faculty, probably due to A+D Faculty Exhibition, people were evenly spread between that exhibition, the food and wine, and World of Yugen. In other words, no matter why someone had come to the event, the mashing up of the two smaller events led to one large event that allowed students, faculty, and community members alike to wander and explore outside of their original interests.

Kids @ Krannert, on the other hand, is a bi-semester event held by KAM that is very useful for generating a family-based audience. After interviewing some attendees, it seems that many parents bring their children in response to flyers at their children's schools. Many noted that they came because it sounded like a fun, different, and educational event for their kids. In this sense, Kids @ Krannert draws in children, but also draws in adults, and both parent and child are encouraged to explore not only the activities provided, but also the surrounding art, as well. The uniqueness of the program in an area such as Champaign, where art classes in grade schools are once a week, provide a solution to a local need among parents, and they respond to it very strongly.

For those looking for a more intellectual stimulation, the Krannert Art Museum also holds lectures in their basement auditorium. For example, "Architecture in New Museums in the US" was a lecture given by Scott Murray, who discussed a new wave of American architecture in the last few years in response to the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. Though this lecture attracted a smaller audience of about twenty people, what is important is that it provided yet another avenue for people with specific interests to enter

the museum, giving them the possibility to form a bond with it on a more personal level.

One issue that arises within the Krannert Art Museum, however, and an issue that certainly arises among other museums, as well, is the question of which audiences *should* a museum be gearing their events and resources towards. In other words, with two events per semester that are geared towards local children, and other events that generate an older and more academic audience such as lectures, is the Krannert Art Museum making a mistake as a university art museum by not focusing more on the college community? One way they attempt to connect with the young university crowd is through Artzilla, a late-night event that errs more on the “fun and goofy” side, including themed activities and food. The only aspect of the event that is somewhat odd is that it is only once a semester.

The response to the event is consistently favorable, according to an attendee survey, as many students had not been to the Krannert Art Museum prior to this event. Students who attended consistently enjoyed themselves, and even took the time to wander around the rest of the museum, looking at some art along the way. When surveys also indicated that students responded well to the event, complimenting its uniqueness and how surprised they were that an art museum like the Krannert is so close to campus. In fact, during the attendee surveys, the main criticism received was that students had not heard about KAM events sooner or at all. This problem, however, becomes complicated. Other surveys of students outside of museum events noted that they felt more publicity would draw more people into the museum, but when asked if it would get *them* to go, they replied that it would not. It seems, however, that the warm response to Artzilla shows a niche in the young university crowd that perhaps KAM is not satisfying. While it could be argued that KAM offers plenty of events that students have the option of attending, this institution—and other museums, as well—seem to be ignoring the fact that they do cater mainly to those younger than 12 and older than 25, and it appears that the university community can sense that.

As previously stated, interviews with University of Illinois students revealed interesting aspects of the audience that supposedly keeps them from coming to the Krannert. This included confusion about the identity of the museum. Some students mistook the Krannert Art Museum for the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, while others simply had never heard enough about the museum to feel that it had anything to offer. Other students said that they felt like the Krannert Art Museum, like other museums, is for “artsy,” “classy,” or “sophisticated” people, categories that they do not see themselves falling into. It seems, then, that for some of these students, the issues keeping them from attending an art museum have nothing to do with the museum itself, but rather their own biases towards it. However, there were also students that noted in their interviews that they were very interested in the Krannert Art Museum, but never saw any sort of advertisement for it. I believe that *this* audience is the one that the museum should be striving to connect with. If students that want to become involved with the museum and are having trouble figuring out how, then that problem rests with the institution and not its audience.

II. Directing the Audience’s Attention Toward the Art Objects

Once students, faculty, and children are brought into an art museum, their attention can then be utilized and focused towards the art. In general, the issue of directing the museum audience’s attention to the actual art objects is a struggle happening in museums across the country. As explored in the class reading by E. Louis Lankford, museums are becoming increasingly more constructivist in their approach toward their audiences. One way museums more personally address their audiences is through tours, and there are several sub-categories to this process. According to Beach provided a list of methods that are commonly used, including Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), Theory Based Strategy for Looking, Broudy’s Aesthetic Scanning, and Entry Point Approach. Each approach differs slightly in its execution, but each technique more or less uses questions to help break down and analyze works of art. Theory Based Strategy for Looking, for example, involves dividing questions into three groups: description,

process, and interpretation. Broudy's Aesthetic Scanning also divides questions into three groups: sensory properties, formal properties, and expressive properties. Entry Point Approach is somewhat different, however, and approaches the art from five points: aesthetic, narrative, logical quantitative, foundational, and experiential.

We discussed in class that the VTS technique, like many of these other techniques, is somewhat controversial in that it does not focus on art historical facts. On the contrary, VTS was developed to encourage students to actively delve into an artwork by specifically addressing each individual observation, linking various observations, and then providing questions that might allow them to examine the work even further. This technique tends to work best for children—as opposed to adults, who tend to prefer readily provided information—since it allows them the freedom to piece apart the work as they choose. Even John H. Falk notes in his article that sometimes a lack of “flow” within an exhibition can be good, since it encourages children to explore at their own pace. Likewise, simply because a tour does not consist of listing off facts about a work of art does not mean that it is not an educational experience.

While the VTS technique does not put historical facts at the forefront, it does foster a higher level of thinking. Children do not learn what is historically significant, or what they should say about a work of art to sound impressive. Instead, by being given the forum in which they can choose to like or dislike a work of art, they learn to become confident in their opinions. Children additionally learn how to defend their opinions, are encouraged to show evidence for their interpretation, and learn how to draw conclusions from abstract concepts. It is surprising that VTS is so often scoffed at when it yields such substantial results.

For example, one tour that I led consisted of thirteen sixth-graders. Before we began examining *Personages Contemplating Birds* by Rufino Tamayo, I told them that they did not have to like the painting. However, whether they liked it or not, the only requirement was that they had to talk about why. Then, I let them piece apart the work. We discussed formal similarities between the humans and the

bird, differences, color, and movement. We talked about why the painting felt scary, why it seemed funny, and why it looked weird. After they had become fairly familiar with the piece, I explained to them that Rufino Tamayo painted it around the time of World War II, and that he had wanted to depict human beings trying to get back to what was kind, good, and “human.” The strong wave of comments after I gave them that sliver of information was surprising. It was as if they had thought these things, but only after I gave them information that hinted they were on the right track did they begin to speak up. One girl noted that the woman in the picture looked pregnant, and one boy added that that probably symbolized new life and new ideas post-war.

Once the students recognized that their thoughts on such an abstract piece were valid, they appeared to feel even more comfortable addressing another work, *Mauve Still-life* by Samuel Adler. The conversation brought forth significantly more enthusiasm, more responses, and more comments that challenged the work. One student in particular said that the painting’s sketchy lines looked haphazard, “like he just did the painting in five minutes… like he didn’t care.” I was so glad to hear them challenging the work, because this meant that they were interested. I told them all to look at all the other abstract paintings in the 20th Century Gallery. “Notice that they’re all different. Not one painting or drawing in this room looks like another. It’s important to remember that each of these artists were able to paint very detailed, realistic works. So, why do you think that Samuel Adler decided to paint like this on purpose? What do you think it means?” I asked them. Their silence in response to my reply was encouraging, since they were clearly taking a moment to reassess the situation. It was amazing how simply letting them explore the work, and dropping small bits of information in along the way, allowed for a fascinating conversation to develop.

Another way in which the Krannert Art Museum in particular turns their audience’s attention towards the actual art objects is through Kids @ Krannert. This event in particular is different from others, such as Artzilla, since its activities all very specifically relate back to the art. Whether it is exploring designs on Asian pottery, looking at

unconventional comic art, or comparing abstract art and music, the activities draw the children to the art works in fun and interesting ways. These activities also draw in the adults. At each Kids @ Krannert event, there was always a substantial amount of parents who would wander away from the activity and noise so that they could discuss some of the art with their child. It seems impossible to tell whether it is the child's connection to the museum that encourages the parent's, or vice versa.

III. Maintaining Audience Loyalty

When it comes to maintaining audience loyalty, larger museums like the Chicago Art Institute are popular enough that patrons return year after year. Smaller museums like the Krannert Art Museum, on the other hand, seem to retain patrons because of how intimate the setting is. "It's like a little secret," one mother at Kids @ Krannert expressed to me. Additionally, one pattern that seems to emerge among every event is that people rarely come to the museum alone. Even at the "Architecture in New Museums in the US" lecture, the attendees all greeted each other as they entered the auditorium, making it clear that they all make a habit out of attending these events together. The exact same occurrence was evident at Artzilla, as well. The interviewees all noted that they came with their friends and roommates.

To summarize, it appears that comfort is one quality that will certainly ensure repeated visits by a museum's audience. When patrons feel that they belong because of events tailored to them, that their opinions matter because they are listened to, and that topics of interest to them are being explored through exhibitions and lectures, there is very little left to keep them from returning.