Art Museum Development Association

LaPlaca Cohen

Six Questions About The Future of Museums

June 21, 2017

LaPlaca Cohen

The audience is changing.
Imagine how museums will respond.

Begin by looking at how museums have changed.

On the changing museum:

“The earliest model of the museum was a kind of **mausoleum** . . . a tomb where the past and its taste remain preserved.

Then came the museum as **machine** . . . where education programs and postcard shops and the happy hum of families.

The new museum is a **‘mindful museum’** that enables us to grasp human time as something that belongs to us, and as something that is outside us, at once social and, in a way, sacred.”

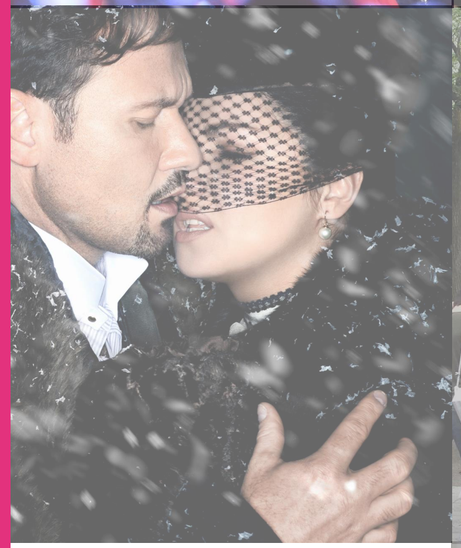
1. How can museums function with greater empathy towards a changing audience?
2. How can the museum best use technology to connect with people?
3. What is the role of the curator/expert in a crowd-sourced, user-generated-content world?
4. How can museums offer active social experiences, as well as meditative, transportive ones?
5. How can the museum be both mission-driven and market-driven
6. How can museums function as gathering spaces for collective experience in an increasingly dislocating and digitized world?

1. How can museums function with greater empathy towards a changing audience?

The mindset of the audience is changing.

They define culture more broadly than ever before, which increases the range and nature of competition.

Source: Culture Track 2014



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66%

60%

54%

90%

60%

15%

87%

59%

28%

96%

74%

64%

The faces of the audience are changing.

By 2025, The United States will **not have a single racial/ethnic majority**.

Source: Pew Research Center

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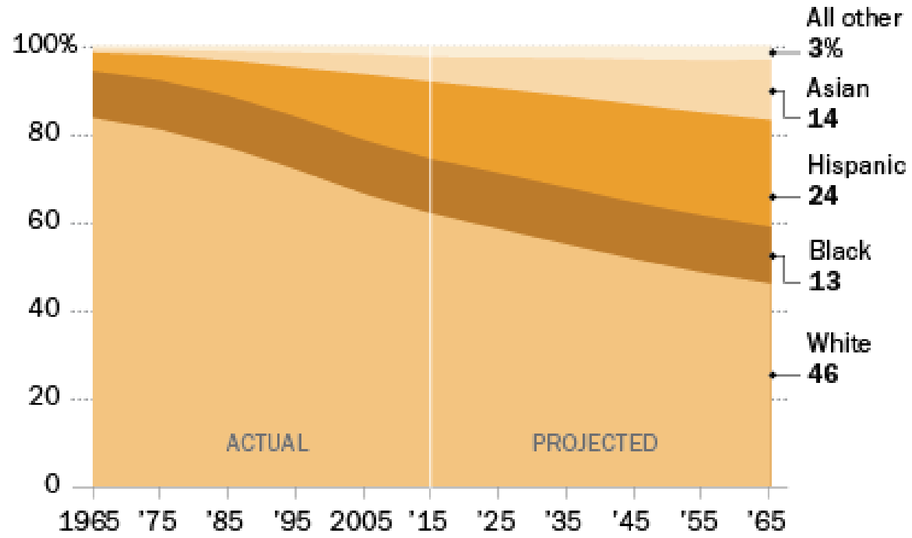
ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF AMERICA, 1965–2065



Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only single-race non-Hispanics; Asians include Pacific Islanders. Hispanics can be of any race.
Source: Pew Research Center 2015 report, "Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to US, Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065"

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Where the audience lives is changing.

By 2050, 70% of the globe will be **urbanized**.

Source: UN World Urbanisation Prospects 2014/LSE Cities

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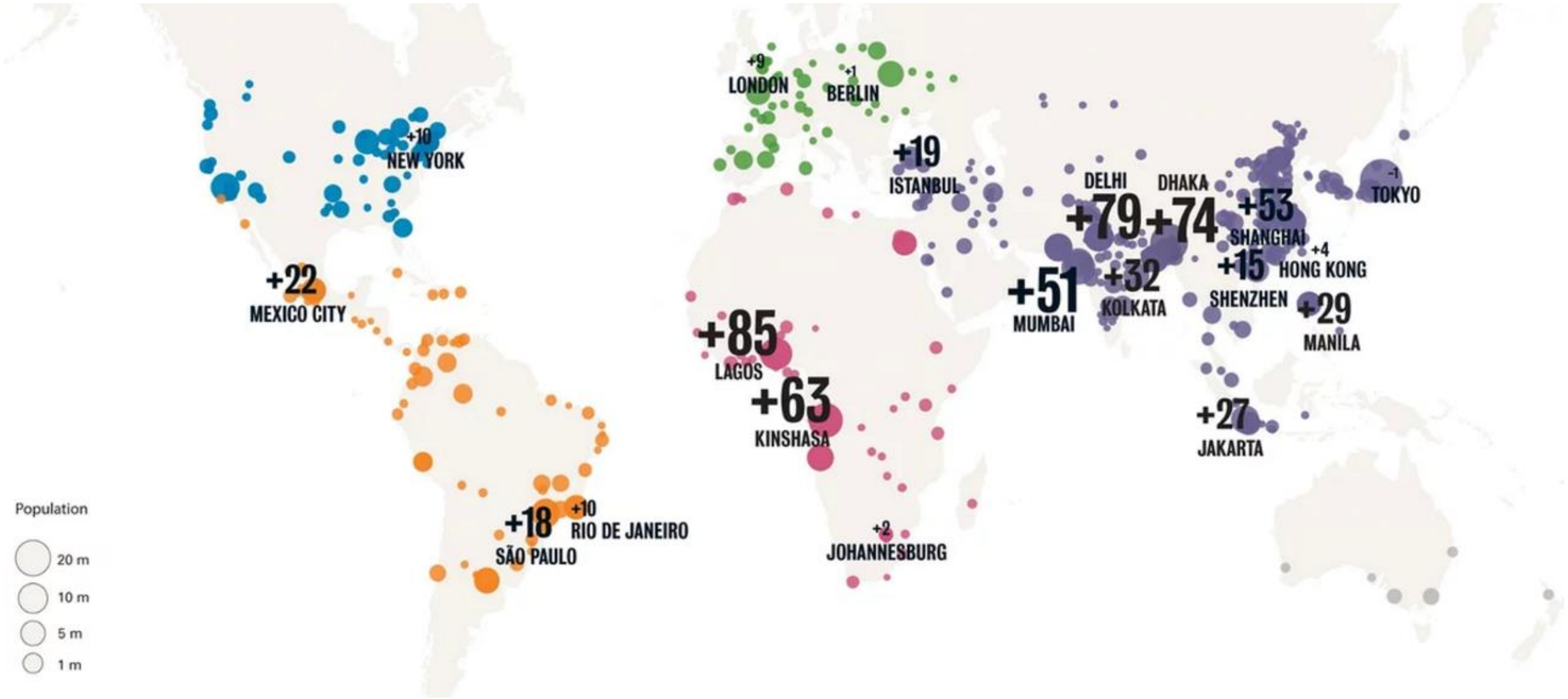
GLOBAL URBAN GROWTH PER HOUR

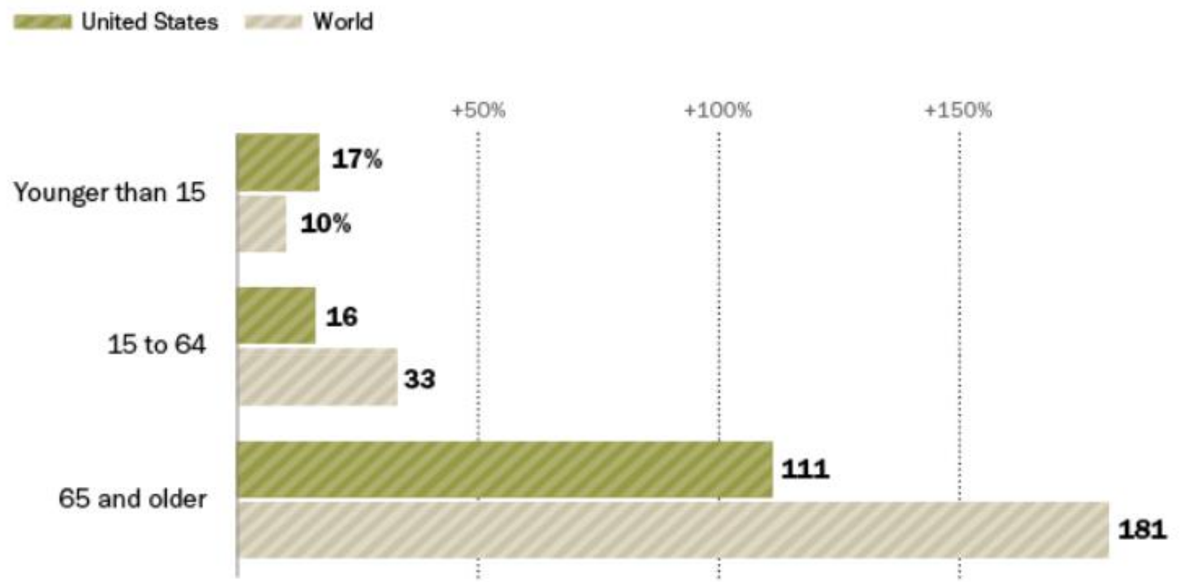


Age demographics are changing.

65+ year olds are the fatest growing population segment worldwide.

Source: United Nations

ESTIMATED CHANGE IN POPULATION BY AGE, 2010-2050, IN THE UNITED STATES AND WORLDWIDE



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: 2012 Revision*, June 2013, http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/index.htm

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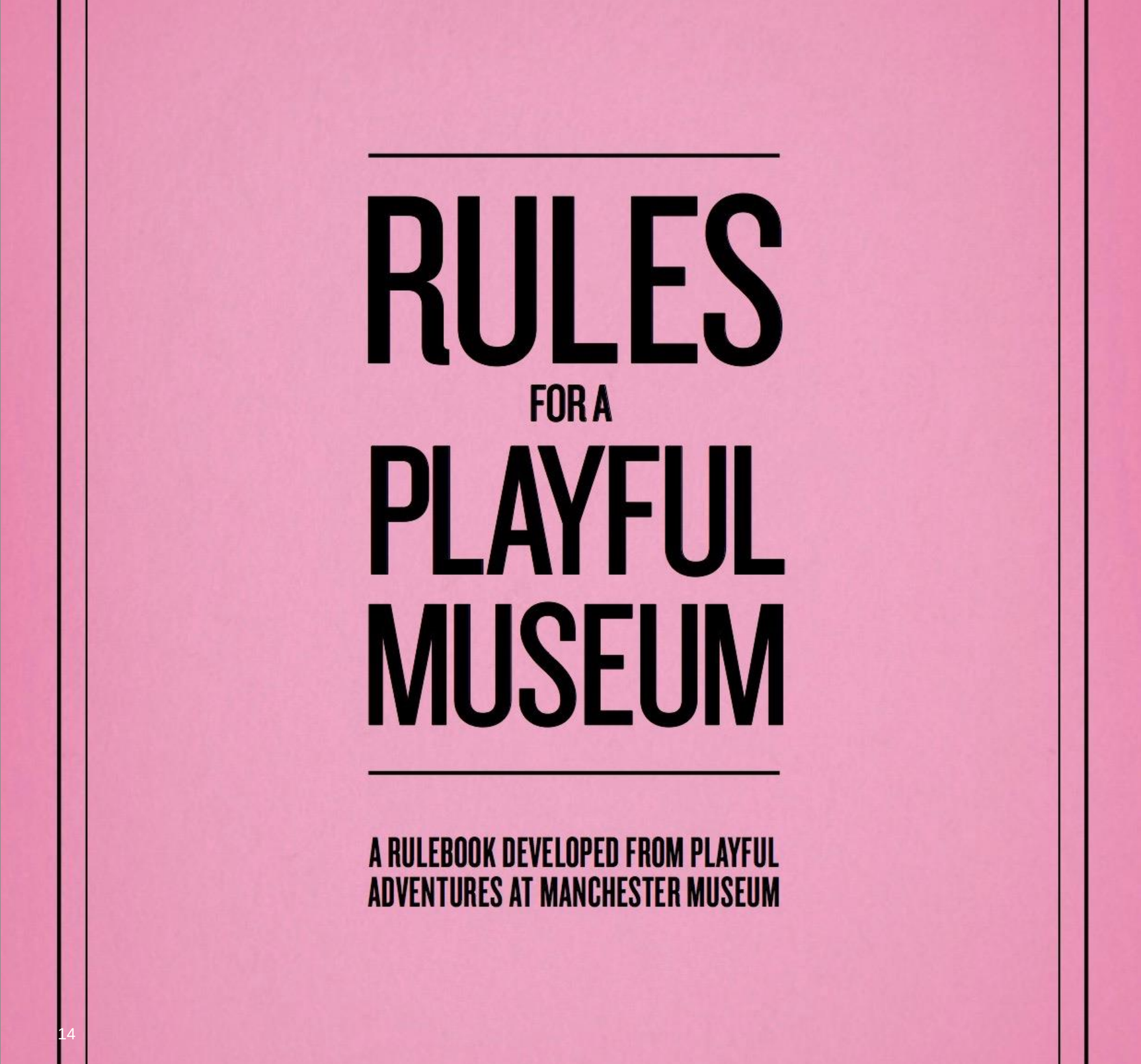
To succeed at attracting an ever-changing audience, we have to look at ourselves through their eyes.

This is **“The Empathic Museum”**

The Empathic Museum . . .

empowers
employees to be
agents—
not gatekeepers.

Example: Visitor Associates at the Broad



The Empathic Museum . . .

empowers employees to be agents—
not gatekeepers.

treats every point of visitor contact as a “moment of truth.”

Example: Manchester Museum “Rulebook”

The Empathic Museum . . .

empowers
employees to be
agents—
not gatekeepers.

treats every point
of visitor contact
as a “moment of
truth.”

is welcoming to all
visitors.

Example: Pacific Science Center, Seattle

Agents versus gatekeepers:

“In every business, there are employees who are the first point of contact with the customers . . . An agent makes things happen *for* others. A gatekeeper sets up barriers to keep people out. We’re looking for agents, and our staff members are responsible for monitoring their own performance: *In that transaction, did I present myself as an agent or a gatekeeper?* In the world of hospitality, there’s rarely anything in between.”

— Danny Meyer, *Setting the Table*

2. How can the museum best use technology to connect with people?

Technology is a means, not an end.

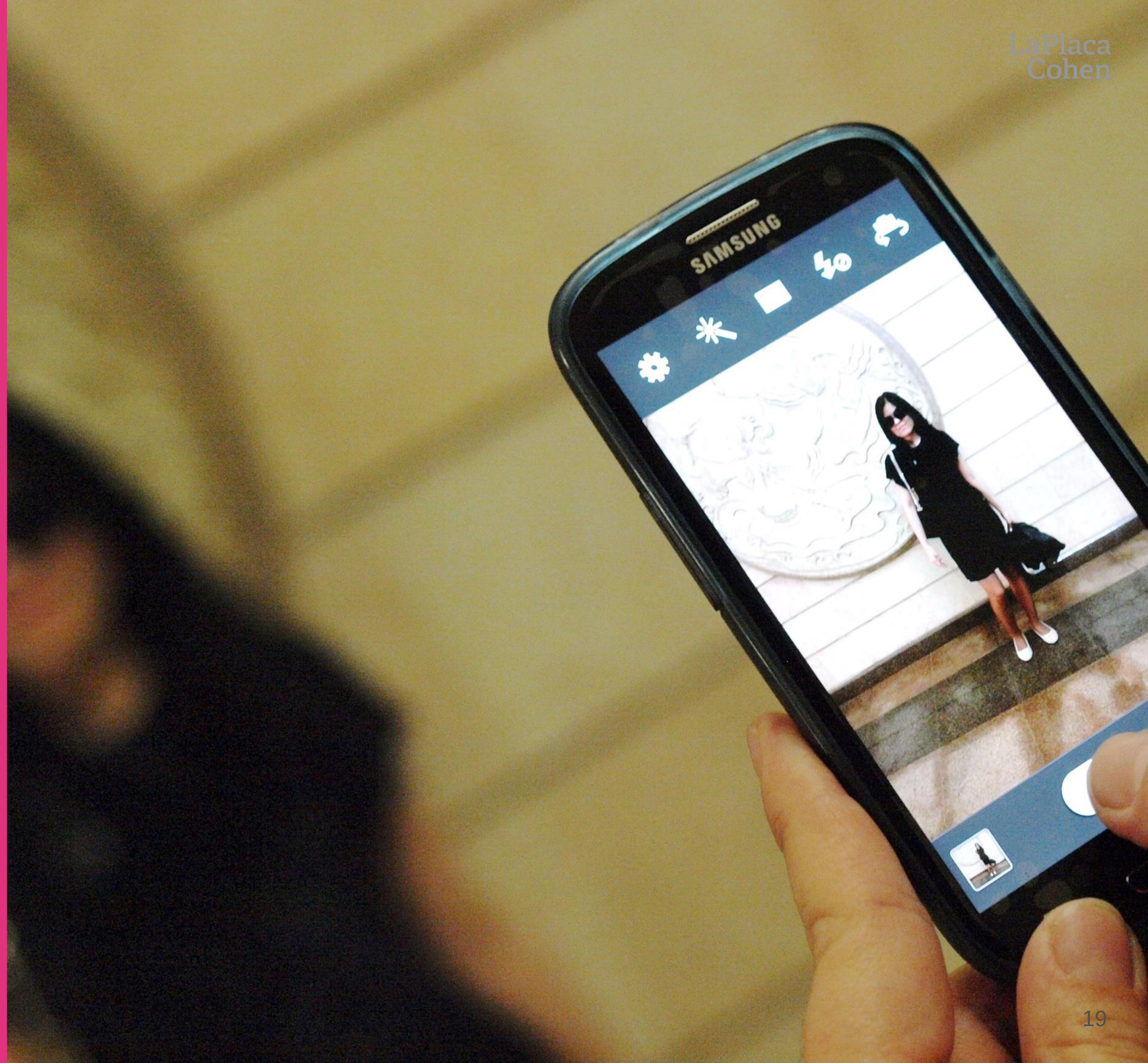
“The Internet wasn’t the point of it, and the dream wasn’t of conquest. The Internet was a mere tool, and the dream was, as ever, to foster the alchemy that occurs when one person stands inches from another’s attempt to make the churning world stand still.”

— Anand Giridharadas, “Museums See Different Virtues in Virtual Worlds,” *The New York Times*

Ownership of mobile devices has skyrocketed since 2011.

In 2014,
66% owned a SmartPhone,
versus
31% in 2011.

Source: Culture Track 2014



Museums lag behind the audience in embracing technology.

In 2014, **66%** owned a SmartPhone, but only **20%** used a SmartPhone to enhance their visit.

Source: Culture Track 2014

It’s not just a selfie, it’s an assertion of identity.

66% of visitors who use mobile devices on-site used them to take pictures.

Source: Culture Track 2014

To succeed in meeting audiences where they are—with phone in hand—museums can use technology to deepen the experience.

This is **“The Digital Museum”**

The Digital Museum . . .

promotes looking with heads up, not down.

Example: “O Experience,” Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania

WALKER SHOP

WEAR WORK EAT READ LIVE PLAY WALKER SALE

FREE SHIPPING OVER $50–STANDARD RATE $5

Intangibles › **Canonical Tones by Nico Muhly**

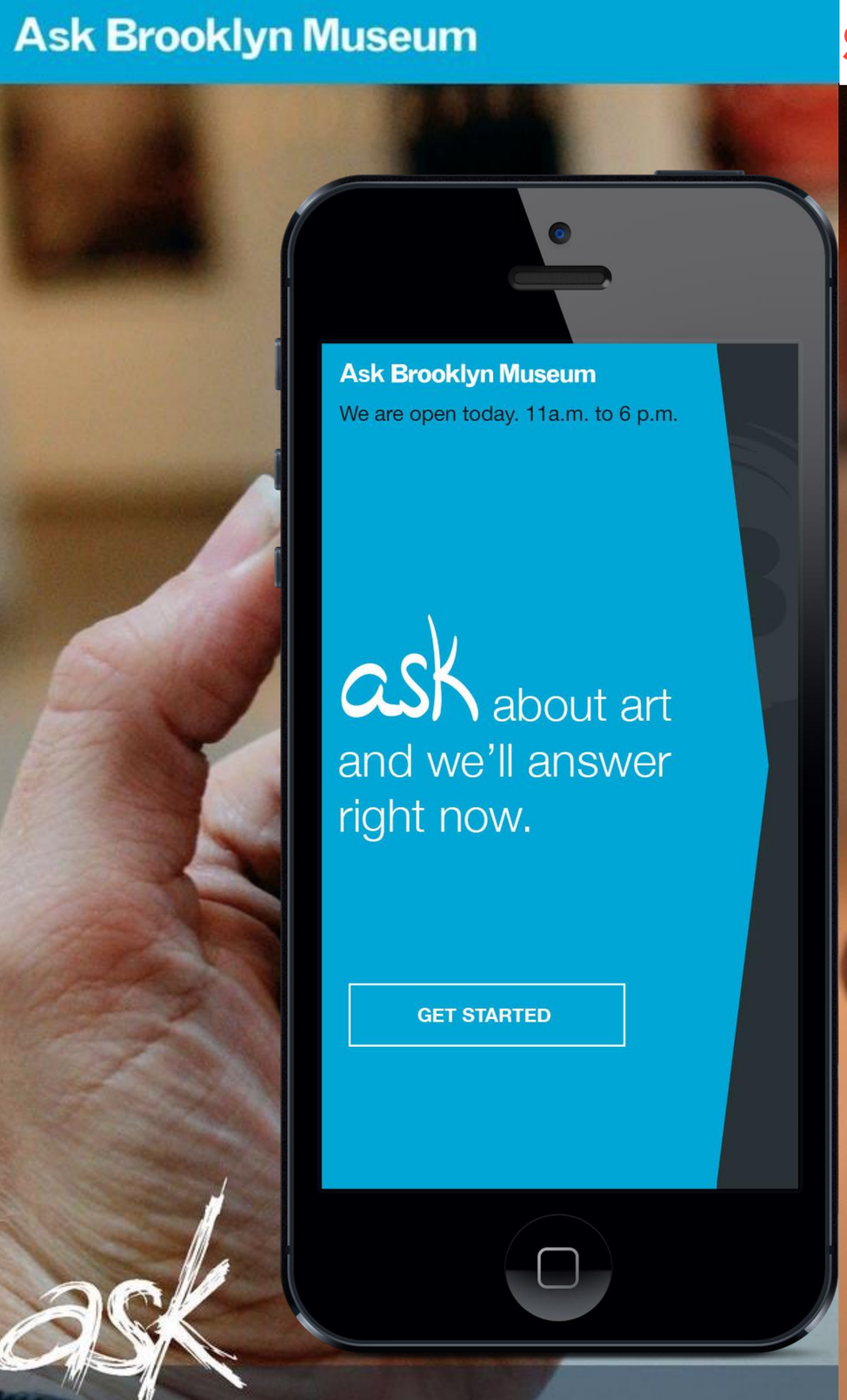
PICTURED: CANONICAL TONES BY NICO MUHLY FROM NICO MUHLY

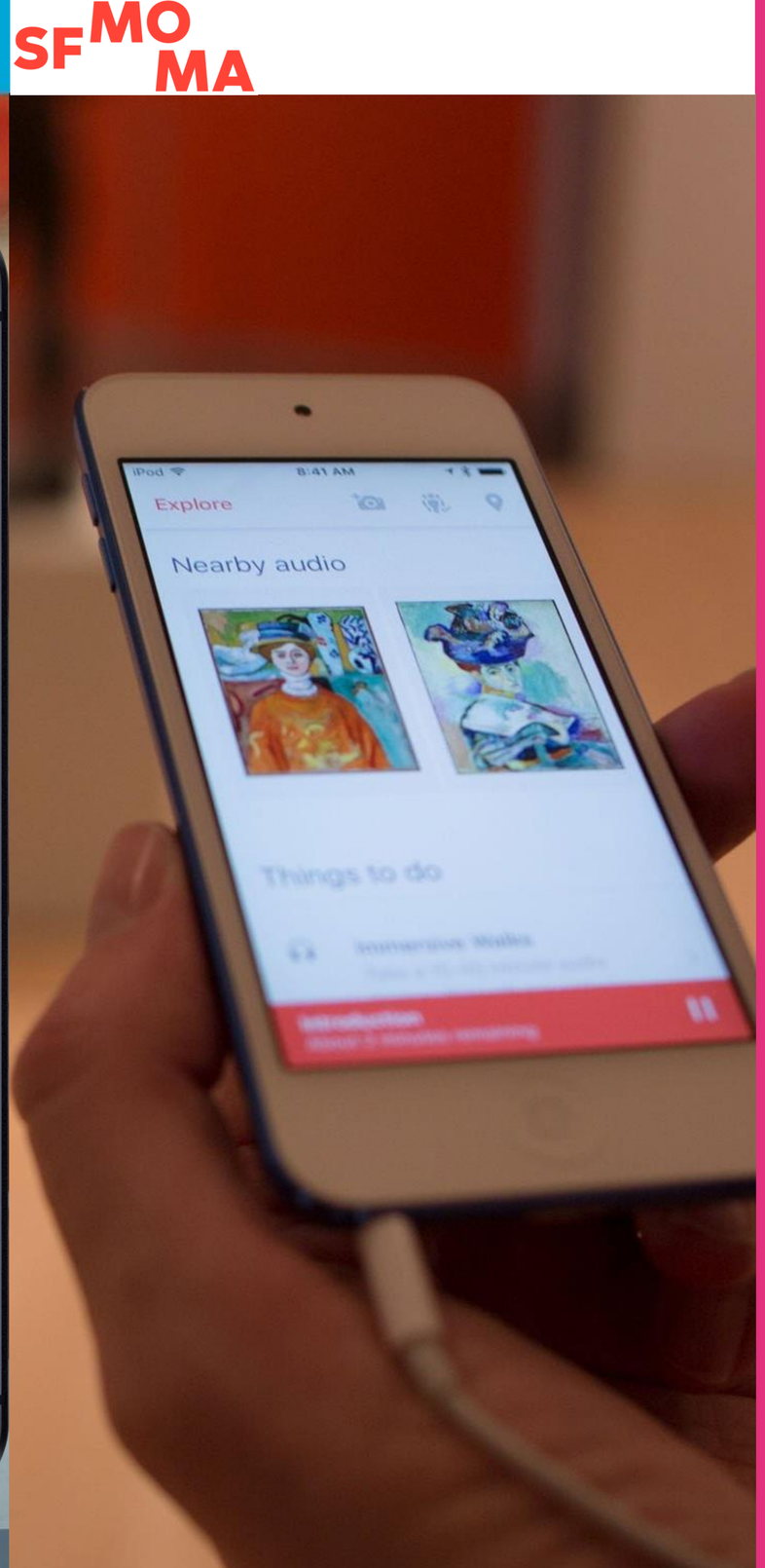
The Digital Museum . . .

promotes looking with heads up, not down.

makes the user smarter.

Example: Walker Art Center “Intangibles”





The Digital Museum . . .

promotes looking with heads up, not down.

makes the user smarter.

connects visitors with art and with each other.

Examples:
Brooklyn Museum ASK App, SFMOMA App

3. What is the role of the curator/expert in a crowd-sourced, user-generated-content world?

Audiences want to make their own meaning.

“What today’s potential arts audiences most want out of an arts event is the opportunity to co-author meaning . . . Like their forbears in the amphitheaters of fifth-century Athens and the vaudevilles palaces of nineteenth century America, they want a real forum—or several forums—for the interplay of ideas, experience, data, and feeling that makes up the arts experience.”

— Lynne Conner, *“In and Out of the Dark”*

Audiences are actively seeking experiences that will widen their frame of reference.

79%
participate in culture to expand their perspective.

Source: Culture Track 2014

However, many will not attend if they feel the programming is not for them.

56%
of cultural audiences stay away if they can’t connect to the content.

Source: Culture Track 2014

Museums can welcome both curious/novice and opinionated/experienced audiences by offering opportunities to both learn from the expert and take the reigns.

This is **“The Vision-led, Audience-centered Museum”**

The Vision-led, Audience-Centered Museum . . .

honors the curatorial voice and contributes expert knowledge.

Example: MFA Boston Exhibition, “Boston Loves Impressionism”

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The Vision-led, Audience-Centered Museum . . .

honors the curatorial voice and contributes expert knowledge.

offers opportunities to co-create meaning.

Example: The Museum of Innocence, Istanbul

The Vision-led, Audience-Centered Museum . . .

honors the curatorial voice and contributes expert knowledge.

offers opportunities to co-create meaning.

trusts the audience.

Example: Governor's Island

4. How can museums offer active social experiences, as well as meditative, transportive ones?

A range of experiences.

“If the museum is to flourish in the 21st century, it cannot afford to be solely a place of retreat from society. It must stimulate, provoke and engage, as well as offering a place for contemplation or consolation. It must be a place in which we can share in a commonwealth of ideas.”

— Nicholas Serota,
“The 21st-century Tate is a Commonwealth of Ideas,”
The Art Newspaper

Audiences enter your museum with a range of mindsets and desires. Some seek the social:

79% don’t go if they can’t find someone to go with.

Source: Culture Track 2014

Some seek the social:

62% are motivated to attend cultural activities for special events.

Source: Culture Track 2014

Others are craving respite:

66% seek out culture to escape stress.

Source: Culture Track 2014

In a chaotic world, museums can serve as a source of quietude and contemplation.

This is **“The Meditative Museum”**

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The Meditative Museum . . .

recognizes that audiences are not neutral upon arrival.

Example: The Clark Art Institute

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The Meditative Museum . . .

recognizes that audiences are not neutral upon arrival.

facilitates intimate communion with art and self.

Example: The Windhover Center for Contemplation, Stanford University

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To reach people who want to connect with each other, museums can be a hub of social activity.

This is **“The Active Museum”**

The Active Museum . . .

recognizes that audiences are inherently social.

Example: Guggenheim Mumbai

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The Active Museum . . .

recognizes that audiences are inherently social.

offers opportunities for audiences to participate and share their experience.

Example: Natural History Museum, London

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5. How can the museum be both mission-driven and market-driven?

The pull from mission to market.

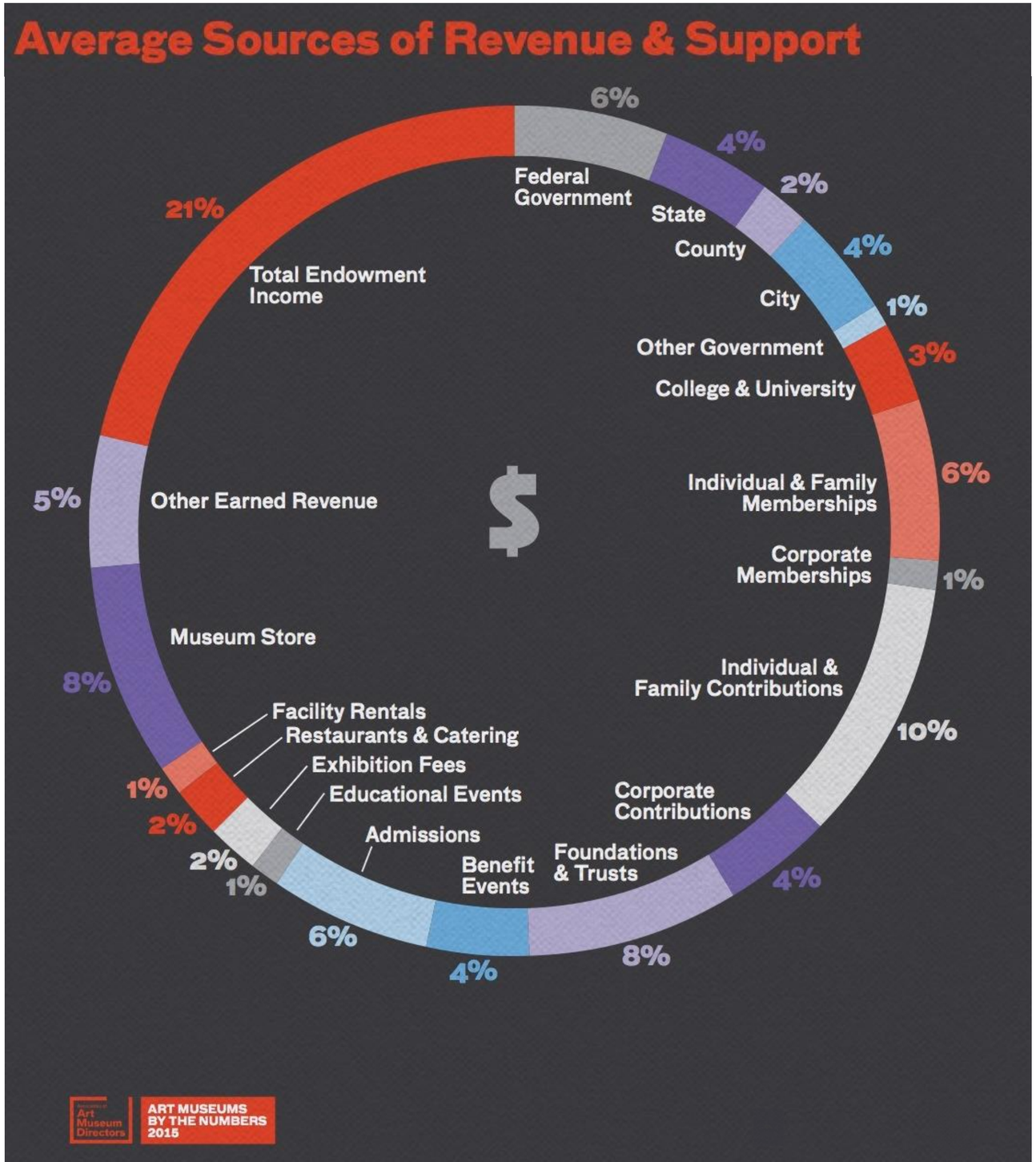
“Nonprofits are expected to play by for-profit rules. Current public and private funding trends are nudging arts nonprofits further toward more innovative ways of creating revenue while staying true to their mission, but too much focus on revenue generation can distract from the standing model of nonprofits as mission driven organizations for the benefit of society.”

— Robert J. Lynch, “Five Macro Trends That Arts

Museums are expected to generate income from a wide variety of sources.

Only **6%** of museums' revenue comes from admissions.

Source: Art Museums by the Numbers 2015, Association of Art Museum Directors



Audiences are more accepting of transparent corporate ties.

55% think highly of corporate sponsors.

Source: Culture Track 2014

To maintain both financial health and integrity, museums can adopt a portfolio approach to exhibitions and programming.

This is **“The Balanced Museum”**

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The Balanced Museum . . .

embraces both popular and challenging exhibitions.

Example: “Dream Cars” Exhibition at the Indianapolis Museum of Art

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The Balanced Museum . . .

embraces both popular and challenging exhibitions.

generates revenue creatively.

Example: LACMA 50th Anniversary Campaign

The Balanced Museum . . .

embraces both popular and challenging exhibitions.

generates revenue creatively.

puts its mission at the heart of every endeavor.

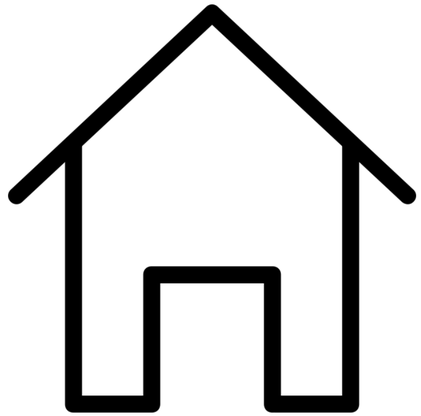
Example: “Here is the Met”

6. How can museums function as gathering spaces for collective experience in an increasingly dislocating and digitized world?

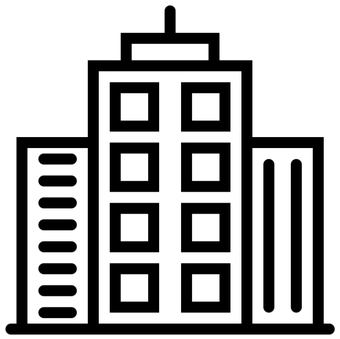
The Third Place:

In his book *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg argues that “Third Places”—informal, public gathering places apart from home and work—are crucial for fulfilling our deep need for community.

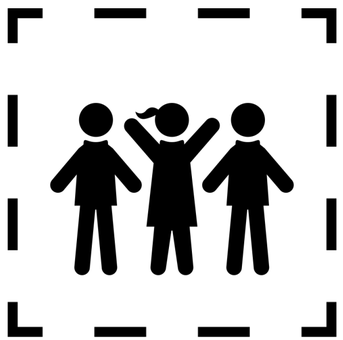
Museums are ideally situated to fulfill the role of convener, by acting as an anchor of community life and providing individuals with a sense of place.



Home



Work



The Third Place

Cultural spaces as civic anchors:

“The [Oslo] Opera’s main impact, since its opening, in 2008, has been civic rather than aesthetic . . . its roof—which slants upward from the harbor and seems to emerge from the water—has become a busy public square.

The doors to the Opera foyer are unlocked most of the time . . . The Opera’s success has strengthened Snøhetta’s interest in ‘keyless’ structures—public spaces that never close.”

Audiences want a place to gather.

83% make culture a part of their lives to spend time with friends and family.

Source: Culture Track 2014

Museums can satisfy the audience’s yearning for communal gathering by providing a “third space.”

This is **“The Civic Museum”**

The Civic Museum . . .

serves as a public square.

Example: Louisiana Museum, Denmark

The Civic Museum . . .

serves as a public square.

activates every space and service as a potential gathering site.

Example: The BRIC Arts Media House “Stoop”

The Civic Museum . . .

serves as a public square.

activates every space and service as a potential gathering site.

can be a community anchor.

Example: Centre Pompidou Mobile

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Re-cap: Future Museum Typologies

The Empathic Museum
The Digital Museum
The Vision-led, Audience-centered Museum
The Meditative Museum
The Active Museum
The Balanced Museum
The Civic Museum

Addendum: The Future of Museum Philanthropy

As a harbinger of future giving patterns in the United States, we look to the cultural philanthropy landscape in the Bay Area.

A new generation of philanthropists wants to change the world . . .

“The tech world is **home to some of the planet’s wealthiest entrepreneurs and most dynamic philanthropists** . . . who say they can apply the same ingenuity and zeal that made them rich to making the rest of the world less poor. Bay Area nonprofits pride themselves on efficiency and ‘scalability,’ applying sophisticated metrics to assess the success of social programs.”

— *The New York Times,* October 2015

. . . but many do not yet see the case for donating to the arts.

“Engaging the tech giving sector means **rethinking decades of philanthropic practice** … Organizations can no longer rely on donations because of intrinsic value and a loyal donor base. Instead they must focus on impact, and demonstrations of value to their designated community.”

— *Silicon Valley Struggle Report*, October 2015

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A recent report focused on Silicon Valley donors, The Giving Code, (funded by The Packard Foundation), outlines key shifts in the area's philanthropic community:

The Emerging "Giving Code"

Charity	→	Impact
Civic	→	Hacker
Deceased	→	Living
One-Channel	→	Multi-Channel
Local	→	Global
Legacy	→	Self-Actualization
Organization	→	Networks

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The Giving Code outlines four emerging dimensions of the New Philanthropy.

1. High Impact
   - *Focus on attacking root causes*
   - *Want to see real outcomes and data*
2. Innovative
   - *Desire to disrupt, displace or reinvent existing systems*
3. Connected
   - *Need to be actively involved*
   - *Not content to just write checks*
4. Diversified
   - *Take “portfolio approach” to giving*
   - *Use many types of capital for many causes*

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Discussion