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¹ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Two years ago, I came to Waco from Pennsylvania to receive a master's degree in museum studies from Baylor University. Thinking back to that first immensely hot August day, I could not have ever imagined the impact that a town 2000 miles away from home and its inhabitants would have on me. I am constantly amazed at the passion Wacoans have for their home and the energy they use to advocate for its change. I am amazed at the lengths they go to remember past events and to preserve historic buildings. I am amazed that there are almost a dozen cultural institutions in the area and, despite all of this, that zero of them are specifically devoted to the city's past.

In fact, Waco is the largest city in Texas that does not have a museum dedicated to local history – a fact that has certainly not gone unnoticed. One of the best attempts to rectify the lack of a city museum has been the creation of the Waco History App. Dr. Sloan and the staff at the Institute for Oral History have started to digitally collect and document the community's stories, photographs, and audio clips to share with the public. Unfortunately, without any tangible objects, the site's effect will always be limited by the restrictions of the internet. While studies have shown that there is interest for a permanent Waco History Museum, it seems like the time is just not right. In the interim, a possible solution could be a temporary space with an ever-changing location that relies on the items and stories that the visitors themselves provide.

The Museum Association of Waco (MAW) is a group of leaders from museums and cultural organizations located in and around McLennan County. The leaders meet bi-monthly to discuss the issues and challenges facing the city. The purpose of MAW is “to assist member museums in enhancing the museum community of Waco by facilitating educational opportunities and training, through the exchange of knowledge, through the promotion of the

cultural community, and by providing scholarships and grants in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws.”³

As of 2017, the association consisted of 21 member institutions. The association hosts an annual event entitled Museums Marketplace, which highlights its members to a variety of teachers from the surrounding area. MAW also provides workshops to members on proper museum techniques and to the public on identification, care, and preservation of objects; sponsors scholarships for students and members to attend museum conferences around the state and throughout the country; and presents awards at the Heart of Texas Regional History Fair. The future activities of the organization include working with more local schools and libraries to become more inclusive for public, as well as with other museums and historical agencies to help promote the history that they are all striving to save.

Proposal

I am intrigued by public and museum programs that are participatory and mobile. These programs completely transfer the power that museums have enjoyed inside of their buildings for centuries to the public. Being user-generated – or relying solely on contributions from participants to succeed – is just one facet of these types of programs. In her book, *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon states that the definition a participatory program is an event where visitors can “create, share, and connect with each other around content.”⁴ Mobile museums are traveling outreach programs that bring the museum to the public. Because they

³ The Museum Association of Waco was formed in 1992 as a 501(c)(3) organization after museums in the city had been working together in previous years to put on the annual citywide Celebrate Waco! event.

⁴ Nina Simon published *The Participatory Museum* in 2010 and has become a main source on the topic of participatory programs. Since then, over 25,000 people have bought the book and 200,000 have read it online. She has since published a quasi-follow up called *The Art of Relevance* (2016). She goes on to write: “*Create* means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. *Share* means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. *Connect* means that visitors socialize with other people – staff and visitors – who share their particular interests. *Around content* means that visitors’ conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and idea most important to the institution in question.”

are often outside of the norms of regular museum programming, mobile museums have a much greater ability to be participatory in nature.

For my professional project, tokened the Traveling Community Museum, I am proposing a mobile, outreach program that is composed of several participatory programs. Sponsored by the Museum Association of Waco, the project is going to consist of three stages where participants will be able to create, to share, and to connect with each other. Stage One will involve creation stations, which will be located at the city's Farmer's Market and Cultural Arts Fest. Creation stations are events where things are made and shared by participants. With a theme of love for Waco, such creations will consist of a wishing tree, a community quilt, and an identity tapestry.⁵ Each creation station will be sponsored by a MAW member to help provide materials and ideas and to act as a repository for the creations after the conclusion of each program.

Stage Two will consist of a specific participatory program called a pop-up museum, which, according to the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (SCMAH), is "a temporary exhibit created by the people who show up to participate."⁶ The pop-up museums will be located at local businesses (Gather Waco and Common Grounds) and special events (Deep in the Heart Film Festival and Preservation Texas Summit) around the city. Unlike the creation stations, which all had a common theme, each pop-up museum will have a different theme, but all will revolve around love for personal history. Some of the pop-up museums will have an open call to the public for objects, while others will be targeted to a particular group.

While Stage One and Two will occur approximately four times, Stage Three will be a onetime occurrence. During this stage, the entire project will come together in an event called Waco History Day. With its theme building upon the previous stages and being love for Waco history, Waco History Day will be a celebration of the city's past, present, and future. Items

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⁶ Pop-up museums were first tokened in Michelle DeCarlo's 2012 thesis, *Conversation and Community: An Exploratory Study of the Pop-Up Museum Concept*. Her definition of a pop-up museum is that it "is a participatory community event where people share a personal object, based on a theme, in order to spark conversation with other participants." She took the idea to SCMAH, who quickly became the leader of the movement and created a website and a how-to kit dedicated to the subject to help other follow suit.

from the creation stations will be on display, as well as objects from local museums and residents. The possibility of having other activities included within this event such as a community timeline and a station for people to record their love for their objects could be an amazing addition. Waco History Day will ideally again partner with the Cultural Arts of Waco, but this time at their April Art on Elm event in East Waco.

MAW's Traveling Community Museum will run from September to April, with plenty of room for adjustments in between. The ultimate goal of the project is to promote (or cultivate) a passion for the city, its past, and its residents' histories; to spread awareness of MAW and its members; and to simply make the museum experience accessible and inclusive for all. The project's vision, as stated on its Facebook page, is to "bring together MAW's members with Wacoans to create an inclusive, mobile museum."⁷ The use of participatory programs gives full responsibility to the participants and it will be interesting to see how they respond. If it is well-received, then MAW and other organizations can continue to host such programs in the future. If the project is not well received, then we will know that perhaps the city, and MAW, is not ready for such hands-on, participatory programs.



Image 1: The Museum Association of Waco's Traveling Community Museum logo

⁷ As of April 2017, the Traveling Community Museum's Facebook page had 28 likes and its Instagram profile had 53 followers. We had the handle be @MAWMuseum and often used #ourwacomunity.

INSPIRATION

Participatory Programs

Participatory programs have been occurring for decades, but have recently become more relevant to museums with their quests to turn more inclusive and hands-on in order to attract a larger audience. While researching institutions from across the country and around the world, I found some very interesting and creative programs that had garnered successful public responses. I modeled many of my programs off of those forward-thinking institutions and noted helpful tips and tricks that made many other participatory public art projects prosper.

From the programs and projects that I researched, I created three categories to easily classify them: *make something*, *bring something*, and *take something*. The *make something* category consists of programs that asks participants to either create an object or to add their thoughts to a collection. The *bring something* category demanded even more from participants by asking them to either donate an object or to share a story to exhibit. The final category, *take something*, is the most radical and asks participants to either swap or take an object that is on display. The Traveling Community Museum attempted at least one program that falls within each of these three categories.

The *make something* category is the easiest of the three because it does not demand any preparation from the visitor. For instance, at the Salvador Dali Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida, visitors are asked to simply write a wish on their wristband and add it to the colorful wishing tree on their way out of the complex. At the San Francisco Mobile Museum, visitors were also asked to contribute by writing a prayer on an ema plaque and adding it to the overflowing spiritual wall at the Free Shrines exhibit. At SCMAH, participants of the *Memory Jar Activity* were asked to bottle a memory and to place it with the 600 other entries on the wall shelving. The fact is that the urge to make something to add to a collection is attractive. The enormous success and popularity of public projects such as the 2000 *Before I Die* walls around

the globe, the 50,000 *Subway Therapy* sticky notes in New York City, and the 800-feet of messages left at Wrigley Field in Chicago can testify to the validity of that statement.⁸



Image 2: *Memory Jar Activity* at the SCMAH

Photo Credit: Museum 2.0

The most demanding category is the *bring something* category because participants have to have thought about and known of the program before happening upon it. Events such as the pop-up museums at SCMAH and the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) ask participants to bring an object to create a temporary display. Exhibits in Oregon at the Portland Art Museum's *Object Stories* and in New Mexico at the Albuquerque Museum's *Story Kiosk* ask visitors to document themselves with their object on video to share with other guests. Even with their

⁸ The *Tampa Bay Times* covered the wishing tree (and its wishes) at the Salvador Dali Museum in their article *Dreams Mingle in the Breeze on Dali Museum's Wish Tree*. The San Francisco Mobile Museum existed for a few months in late 2009 to be a "moveable feast of local culture. The *Memory Jar Activity* at SCMAH was thoroughly detailed by Anna Greco in her 2014 thesis, *Participatory Exhibition Design: Memory Jars at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History*. Cindy Chang's simple *Before I Die* project now spans over 70 countries and is chronicled both online and in a book. Created by Matthew Chavez after the 2016 election, *Subway Therapy's* sticky notes are now being preserved by the New York Historical Society. Fans of the Cubbies left messages to deceased loved ones who never witnessed their beloved team win a World Series.

obvious challenges, these type of participatory projects can be successful, as well. Another overwhelming effective example is at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. where visitors have brought and left over 400,000 objects.⁹



Image 3: *Object Stories* at the Portland Art Museum

Photo Credit: ARTS FWD

The *take something* category may not be demanding, but its uniqueness may actually act as more of a deterrent to participants than the previous two categories. Some museums start slowly such as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, which asked visitors to take a piece of paper from an artwork in an Andy Warhol installation. Others do not hold back. NYC's Jewish Museum ran an exhibit titled *Take Me, I'm Yours* where "visitors are encouraged to participate, touch, and even take home works of art..." Usually, though, programs in this category are more of a swap rather than a take. For instance, two New York City museums recently took advantage of the new fad. The Museum of Art and Design turned its "lobby into a flea market"

⁹ MPM has joined SCMAH as one of the leaders in hosting successful pop-up museums. I actually spoke with the pop-up museum coordinator at MPM, who provided many helpful tips. Started in 2010, *Object Stories* rejects the telling of a single story in museums and actually won ArtsFwd "Business Unusual" Innovation Story Contest. The *Story Kiosk* was designed by Brad Larson and has traveled the world collecting stories. The Washingtonian did an excellent story, *The Things They Leave Behind: Artifacts from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, about the recent curatorial process of the items collected at the site.

during its *Take One / Leave One* program; the New Museum encouraged its visitors “to exchange their own unique items for others” in its *A Pot for a Latch* installation. The resilience of the Little Free Libraries in neighborhoods nationwide also points to the joy people have of swapping.¹⁰



Image 4: *Take Me, I'm Yours* at the Jewish Museum

Photo Credit: ArtNet News

Mobile Programs

I was first intrigued by the idea of mobile museums when I came across an article on the *Philadelphia Public History Truck*. Erin Bernard, creator of the mobile museum, explained in the article that her project is different because “instead of having a public history exhibit where academics have constructed it, the exhibit is community curated.”¹¹ Attending Temple

¹⁰ The *Take Me, I'm Yours* exhibit, designed by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Christian Boltanski, has actually been touring Europe since the 1990s, but only made its first appearance in the United States in 2016. The *Take One / Leave One* program was nicknamed a ‘flea market’ by *The Atlantic*. *A Pot for a Latch* was designed by Pia Camil and has six public swap events scheduled for the 2017 season.

¹¹ The *Philadelphia Public History Truck* was created in 2013 by Temple University student Erin Bernard. Its mission is to make, share, and deliver culture through creative community building based in Philadelphia neighborhoods via history exhibits. For more information, *The Philadelphia Magazine* did a question and answer article with Bernard that is a very helpful starter.

University in North Philadelphia, I knew of the rough neighborhoods that Bernard was traveling into and the challenges that she would be facing, but also the enormous potential for success her project had in collecting these important stories and memories. A year before, in 2012, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) published their annual TrendsWatch report. Included in the publication was a piece called “Takin’ It to the Streets,” which spread a statement that most professionals already knew: that “community encounters can take place beyond the walls of museums.”¹²

Of course, museums have been doing this for a long, long time. In fact, Jamie Rees, a museum studies student at the University of Kansas, argued that the mobile museums’ roots can be traced back all the way to the 1983 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago.¹³ Projects like *Shark on a Bus* in Australia, *Museum on the Move* in Louisiana, *Van of Enchantment* in New Mexico, *Mobile Arts Project* in California, and *PlayCube* in New Hampshire are just a few modern-day examples.¹⁴ These programs are successful for a variety of reasons. Richard Anderson wrote on the National Council for Public History’s (NCPH) blog that “at a pragmatic level, traveling exhibits promise to reach audiences that lack the financial and logistical resources to visit traditional brick-and-mortar museums, while also offering immersive, participatory experiences. They also place ordinary people in the driver’s seat of public history,

¹² TrendsWatch is published every year by AAM based on research done by the Center for the Future of Museums. Each report, which is shared publicly online, explores how each trend is playing out in the world, investigates what this means for society and for museums, shares examples of how museums are engaging with this trend, and suggests how museums might respond.

¹³ In 2016, Rees’ thesis, *A Brief History of the Mobile Museum: What It Is, What It Was, and What It Can Be*, was published. In it, she provides a very helpful six-page appendix listing all of the programs that she considers mobile museums.

¹⁴ Paul Sharp, a museum curator and creator of *Shark on a Bus*, travels around Western Australia with curious objects and a great white shark named Frankie. Each year, graduate students in the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s public history program develop and install a new exhibit in the 1954 Airstream for *Museum on the Move*. Traveling more than 15,000 miles a year, the *Van of Enchantment*, an educational program on behalf of the Statewide Outreach Department within the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, is a mobile museum of the New Mexico state museum system. The *Mobile Arts Platform* is a Bay Area artmaking and curatorial team founded in 2009 by Peter Foucault and Chris Treggiari with the goal of creating mobile exhibition structures that engage the public. *Playcube* is a mobile laboratory on the grounds of Dartmouth College doing research on the role games play in social change.

empowering citizens to curate their pasts and articulate their communities' present needs and challenges.”¹⁵



Image 5: Philadelphia Public History Truck

Photo Credit: *The Philadelphia Magazine*

Anderson points out that these mobile programs are often inexpensive, immersive, and, most importantly, participatory, which is where the two concepts of the Traveling Community Museum meet. Mobile programs are not required to be participatory, however. Margaret James, educator at the MPM, has two different approaches for her mobile, outreach programs. James organizes a successful series of pop-up museums, but also hosts what she calls “pop-out museums,” where the museum provides all of the objects and information. The subjects that have been covered in these installations range from historical items to reproductive rights to even soft serve ice cream.¹⁶ Guests can often see these popular exhibits around any town (or

¹⁵ Richard Anderson is a doctoral student in 20th-century American history at Princeton University and a frequent contributor to NCPH’s blog.

¹⁶ Cities around the country have seen pop-out (often-called pop-up) exhibits that not only range in topics, but also in the types of organizations behind them. The Museum of Ice Cream, which is “a place where flavors are mysteries, toppings are toys, and sprinkles make the world a better place, is opening a new exhibit in Los Angeles. The pop-out museum in Washington D.C. shared items relating to reproductive rights and was organized by the women’s rights group UltraViolet. In 2013, the New York Public Library hosted a series of historical pop-outs.

airport) that they are visiting as many museums and businesses are interested in attracting people who do not often come to their building. Pop-out museums are perfect for reaching new audiences and disseminating information, but are not necessarily great for engaging passersby.

While the categories of the participatory programs may seem vastly different, their core is based around the same concept. From making to adding to bringing to swapping to taking, every category institutes some form of a participatory component. I used each of these examples as inspiration while planning the participatory programs for the Traveling Community Museum. In addition, I also took participatory elements from successful mobile museums to complete and compliment the project, as well.

PLANNING

Much of the planning process of the Traveling Community Museum occurred during the spring semester before any of the programs occurred. I collected and organized a few of my scattered ideas and scheduled a couple of meetings. I met with Eric Ames, my project supervisor, and Dr. Julie Holcomb, the museum studies graduate program director, to see if such a project would meet all the professional project guidelines. To further assist everyone after our meetings, I drafted a proposal of the project and sent it to both of those individuals for review. It was accepted and my work developing the programs and making crucial contacts could begin in the late summer months.

Initially, I approached Don Davis, director of the Historic Waco Foundation (HWF), for his institution to sponsor the entire project. Since HWF is the local historic foundation, it made sense that it would be a perfect fit to sponsor such a project. However, Davis's reaction was indifferent. I then brainstormed some more and thought about what other organization could benefit from the project. I approached the officers of MAW (Raegan King of the Waco Mammoth National Monument, Jared Mosley of the Texas Sports Hall of Fame and Museum, Steven Sielaff of Baylor's Institute for Oral History, and Rachael Nadeau-Johnson of the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute). They were immediately on board for any project that would help the organization continue to grow. Nadeau-Johnson, who was my supervisor while volunteering at the Dr Pepper Museum, became my main contact with the group and was so helpful throughout the entire process.

The next step was to meet with members from the community and from the local museums. I met with Sara Martin of Gather Waco, Doreen Ravenscroft of Cultural Arts Waco, Louis Hunter of the Deep in the Heart Film Festival, Jessica Emmett of the Waco-McLennan County Library, Taylor Torregrossa of Common Grounds, Nicole Stark of the Waco Downtown Farmer's Market, and Kim Patterson of McLennan Community College. I also had conversations with some of Waco's museum professionals: Sam Moody of the Lee Lockwood Scottish Rite Library and Museum, Meg Gilbert of the Art Center of Waco, Allison Syltie of the Martin Museum of Art, and Emily Clark of the Mayborn Museum.

I shared with them an informational packet that included scholarly articles on pop-up museums that were published in the National Association for Museum Exhibition (NAME) journal and SCMAH's more informal pop-up museum how-to kit. Some pictures and instructions of other projects that we were potentially interested in doing for the programs were also included in the packet.¹⁷ We discussed the procedure for hosting the creation stations and pop-up museums and the dates that they could potentially occur. Some of the conversations led to future relationships that blossomed, while others brought up too many challenges to make such a program possible at the present time. Fortunately, the aforementioned planning really prepared us throughout the entirety of the project.

¹⁷ Two extremely valuable articles that I tried to share during each conversation were published in the NAME journal, *Exhibitionist*. The articles, *Design for Participation* and *Pop-Up Museums: Participant-Created Ephemeral Exhibitions*, were both written by staff members at SCMAH and both are available online.

CREATION STATIONS

Wishes with the Lee Lockwood Library and Museum

On September 24th, we had our first creation station at the Farmer's Market.¹⁸ Collaborating with the Lee Lockwood Library and Museum, we collected wishes. There were three different types of wishes that visitors could make: a personal wish, a wish for someone that they love, and a wish for Waco. The personal wishes were collected on a piece of cardstock. The participants then wrapped them in twine to make a scroll and safely placed in the wish jar. They were essentially kept a secret. The wishes for someone else were collected on tags and then hung on our little (artificial) wishing tree. The wishes for Waco were written on the back of photos (of Waco locations) and attached to a clothes line. In the end, we collected over 100 wishes during the event from about 75 different people. To be more precise, there were 36 personal wishes, 46 wishes for someone else, and 27 wishes for Waco.



Image 6: Wishes at the Farmer's Market

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

¹⁸ Every Saturday, the Waco Downtown Farmer's Market offers a non-vendor booth to a local non-profit for free. Called the community booth, organizations from all over the area take advantage of the great opportunity.

The activity seemed well received as everyone has wishes. The unfamiliarity of the concept of the project scared some people away, though, since this was our first program. Some passersby thought that they had to pay for the activity and one individual even tried to give us her change. The location of our tent at the Farmer's Market was right by the entrance. We found that most people were so intent on getting their coffee and brunch that they walked right by us without even a glance. When visitors did stop, they definitely fell in the categories of college students and families. The younger kids actually seemed to put more thought into their wishes than anyone else did. As a result, there were not many scribbles or irrelevant responses, which helped with the validity of the program. It also gave us a chance to talk more in depth with the parents about MAW and Lee Lockwood as the children kept themselves busy.

A few days later, the jar, tree, and line were all delivered to Sam Moody, curator at Lee Lockwood, for display. We made use of a vacant kiosk in the lobby and the final product resulted in a wonderful and accessible participatory exhibit. The best part, however, was that visitors to Lee Lockwood could add to our wish collection because all of the supplies needed were left at the kiosk. The wishes were on display for a couple of months until the beginning of December. After a steady stream of events at the location, the total wish count swelled to 141.



Image 7: Wishes at the Lee Lockwood Library and Museum

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

Community Quilt with the Martin Museum of Art

During the Cultural Arts Fest, we piggybacked with the Martin Museum of Art to have a joint program.¹⁹ The Martin staff came up with the idea of doing an activity with their new printing press for the weekend event. We decided to have guests to our joint booth sketch a scene on a plexiglass surface, print it on a piece of paper, take that design to home, and give us the piece of glass (which had a hole in each corner) to create a community quilt. We gave the participants three prompts: what does Waco mean to you, why does Waco feel like home, and what does home mean to you. There were some great responses that followed the prompts, but also some that were completely unrelated that we had to include.



Image 8: Community Quilt at the Cultural Arts Fest

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

The Farmer's Market attendance dwarfs that of the Cultural Arts Festival. The organizers were estimating that 10,000 people/day would come to the Festival and they were not disappointed. We ended up making about 300 prints on both Saturday and Sunday. The setup

¹⁹ The 13th annual Waco Cultural Arts Fest was held on October 1-2 of 2016 and is sponsored by the Cultural Arts of Waco. The massively popular event takes place in the Waco Convention Center and in Indian Spring Park and has grown to consist of an artsfest, a wordfest, a dancefest, and musicfest, a filmfest, and a sciencefest.

was grander so there were more stations and a lot more activity. Because of that, there were not as many opportunities to communicate to most guests about MAW and the Martin. While the participants created the tiles, they were often not included in the process of tying the quilt together. Unfortunately, the print needed time to dry for about ten minutes before being hung so that the ink would not spread everywhere. Most people did not want to wait there to (literally) watch paint dry and left before their tiles were added. However, some people stayed and even came back to see where their prints were finally placed, which created an opportunity for conversation.

With the help of Jennifer Spry (educational coordinator at the Martin) the massive, completed quilt was tied together and hung in the lobby of the Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center. It was displayed for the opening night of their new exhibit featuring Lilian Garcia-Roig and was taken down when a new exhibit opened in November. The amount of tiles that were completed made the community quilt an exhaustive program. The biggest takeaway was that these type of participatory programs are definitely suited for smaller gatherings. They seem to do better popping up at less populated places because the communication is more active.

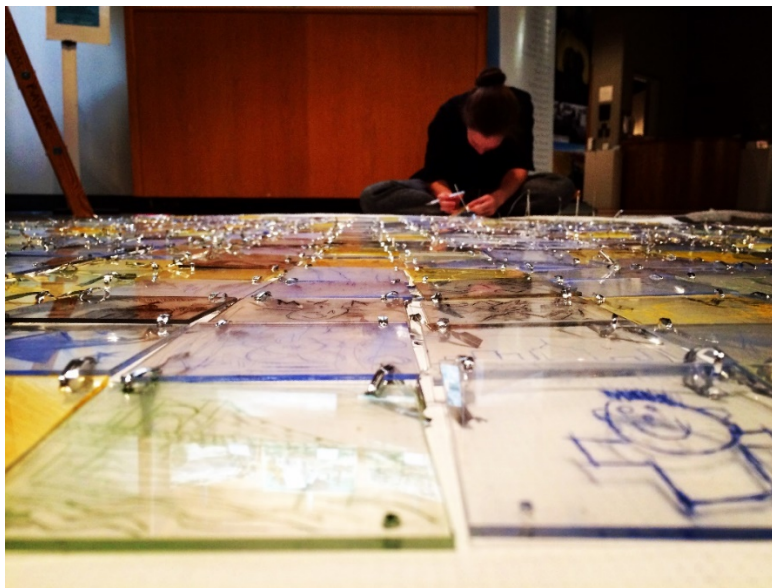


Image 9: Community Quilt at the Martin Museum of Art

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

Stop Motion Waco with Design Den

On October 29th, we had our next creation station, called Stop Motion Waco, at the Farmer's Market with the Mayborn Museum's Design Den. During this program, we tried to incorporate some of the popular Maker Movement concepts that I have been learning during my time as a graduate assistant in Design Den. There were two stop motion animation stations made by reconfiguring some old Ikea boxes to create a couple of backgrounds. In front of the backgrounds, there were four different pictures on 16x12 pieces of glossy paper that were professionally printed with assistance from the university's Copy Center. The large pictures were then glued onto rectangular pieces of cardboard to create backdrops. The pictures were of popular local spots: Baylor University, the You Look Nice Today Wacotown mural, the Suspension Bridge, and the Brazos River. A popular (and free) stop motion app was downloaded on the Mayborn's two iPods, makeshift stands were created, and cookie cutter stencils and other materials were gathered for participants to use.



Image 10: Stop Motion Waco at the Farmer's Market

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

In the 3+ hours of the event, we gathered 25 videos and had about 35 creators, which meant that there was a great deal of teamwork. The fact that we were limited to only two iPods meant that only two groups could be creating at the same time. Unlike our first two events, this event mostly attracted children, which could have been because of the lightheartedness of the cookie cutters or their interest in the iPods. The activity also might have been seen as daunting from some, as well, since it was not as simple as writing a wish down on a tag. Emily Clark, Design Den coordinator, was huge in helping coordinate and evaluate the event. She ended up sharing the videos on the television in her space and used them as prototypes for her January event, Design Den: Stories.

Creation Station #3						
October 29 (9-1)						
Farmer's Market						
Stop Motion Waco w/ Design Den						
Time	# of Creators	# of Spectators	General Mood		Notes	
9:00-10:00						
10:00-11:00						
11:00-12:00						
12:00-1:00						
9:00-1:00						

Image 11: Stop Motion Waco observation sheet

Identity Tapestry with the Art Center of Waco ²⁰

²⁰ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com.

The final creation station was on November 19th at the Farmer's Market with the Art Center of Waco. The program was an adaption of Mary March's identity tapestry; an identity tapestry, "Each participant chooses a color of yarn they feel represents them... They unravel it, wrapping statements on the wall that they feel show something about who they are."²¹ The program was perfect for an organization like the Art Center to sponsor. The statements, like "threw a tortilla off the Suspension Bridge" or "saw the sunset from Lover's Leap," in our iteration were all about things that people could have only done in and around Waco, Texas. Meg Gilbert, director of the Art Center, helped us print them out, attach them to a foam board, and cut them out in rectangles. From there, we purchased a 4x8, half-inch board of birch wood and some roofing nails with flat heads. We predrilled each hole, hammered each nail in, and then hot glued each foam board statement to the head of each nail. After a few favors from some Mayborn friends (Trey Crumpton and Drew Triplett), we transported the large board and some easels to the Market and were provided with lots of yarn balls courtesy of the Art Center.

The early morning began very cold and misty as the Bears took the field down the street at McLane Stadium for their last home game of the season. After a slow start, participation in the program blossomed by mid-morning. We estimated that around 50 people participated and that about another 100 people spectated. The exact count was not taken because we were all so busy conversing with visitors because of the popularity of the tapestry. It was even spotlighted on several social media profiles: the Art Center of Waco, the Wacoan, the Farmer's Market, and Creative Waco. Many of the visitors and participants that gathered had conversations about what they have done in Waco and what they still need to do. It really brought together people who have lived in and experienced Waco compared to those tourists who stopover for a few hours to see Chip and JoJo. The locals could participate in the tapestry, while the visitors could find out the other amazing things that the city had to offer. It was a great participatory program that started conversations about more valuable topics.

As the day wore on, though, the tapestry slowly started to fall apart. Statements needed to be glued back onto the foam board, nails needed to be hammered back into their holes, and

²¹ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com..

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NOTE ON IDENTITY TAPESTRY ²³

After the completion of the project, the Museum Association of Waco, the Art Center, and I were approached by an attorney representing Mary March. Ms. March claimed the identity tapestry infringed upon the copyright of her artwork. ²⁴ At the time of the identity tapestry, I was not aware that the artwork was not considered a participatory program and, therefore, was protected under copyright law. ²⁵ We used one of Ms. March's pictures and the identity tapestry name to promote the event to the residents of our small, but amazing city. ²⁶ I apologized to Ms. March, but, as of May 4, 2017, the legal process is still proceeding. I would encourage any museums that have been inspired by a particular project to reach out to the creator and do research before embarking on their own adaption of the project. We live, we learn, and we move on smarter than we were.

²³ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com.

²⁴ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com.

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EXCHANGE

Valentine Card Exchange with Design Den

On February 12th, we had our first event of the new year at a local coffee shop, Common Grounds. Baylor's favorite college hangout venue was hosting a Valentine's Market and invited us to be a vendor, which cost \$15/table. With businesses like Gather Waco, Wildland Supply Company, and Magpie Writes on hand, we were the only booth that was not selling anything, which seemed to help us attract more visitors.²⁷ The Traveling Community Museum being there was the result of many emails to Common Grounds' marketing director, Taylor Torregrossa, who came to our Stop Motion Waco event. She was immediately on board with involving us in any fashion and remained helpful throughout the entire process.

The Market was located in the back courtyard of the shop, ran for about four hours on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and saw a couple hundred people make their way outside. There was even a raffle that every vendor contributed to, which included multiple museum passes graciously donated by MAW members. We had a little different approach for this program compared to the others. During the creation stations, participants created something and then we took that something to a local museum. For this exchange, visitors still created something, but we encouraged them to leave their creations at the booth and take a creation that has already been made. In short, it was a program based around swapping.

Design Den again partnered with us, but this time to make LED paper circuit Valentine's Day cards. They provided colorful cardstock paper, LED lights, copper tape, scissors, tape, markers, and stencils. About 40 people, most of them being female college students, visited the booth and made a cute card. While the numbers may not be staggering, the program did help the Design Den realize that college students do like making and tinkering if the activity is convenient for them. In addition, the swap element was not a huge hit. Many of the participants never made a paper circuit before coming to the booth. Because of that, once they

²⁷ The full list of vendors at the Valentine's Market included Deeply Company, Magpie Writes, EM Jewelry and Design, Midwest Handcrafted Goods, Laura Lee Blackburn Photography, Pure White Jewelry, Museum Association of Waco, Gather Waco, and Wildland Supply Company.

got the LED to light up, they were so proud of their card that they wanted to keep it. No one traded, but everyone did have fun, learned about circuits, and heard about MAW and Design Den. Their sense of accomplishment made up for the lack of swapping. The leftover cards did make their way back to Design Den and were used to decorate the space during the Design Den: Circuits event.



Image 13: Valentine Card Exchange at Common Grounds

Photo Credit: Emily Clark

POP-UP MUSEUMS

Pop-Up Museum of Film at the Hippodrome

On February 18th, we were part of our first pop-up museum. During the Deep in the Heart Film Festival at the Hippodrome, we prearranged with the Festival's organizers to have the film's directors bring items to display in the lobby.²⁸ For this program, we were more prevalent during the planning stages than during the actual duration of the pop-up museum. We met with Louis Hunter, one of the co-directors of the Festival, and provided him helpful resources for running such an event. The materials helped Hunter and his team create the labels and the display for the program.

The pop-up museum ran throughout the entirety of the festival, which was Thursday to Saturday, and had objects from seven directors. Most of the objects were given on Thursday afternoon during the opening of the Festival and Hunter wanted to display them immediately. Because I was working during that time, I was unfortunately unavailable to help with the display. The objects were awesome, though, because they were either used in the film or were handwritten director's notes. Some of the objects included a lantern, a newspaper, and a crowbar. Hunter mentioned that many of the directors brought items to help them with advertising their films, which was not the main purpose of the program, but was a tactic that worked as an incentive nonetheless.

We did learn a lot through this first pop-up museum. The program reinforced that the display should be in a highly populated area. The pop-up museum at the Hippodrome was in a great area because it was surrounded by other movie memorabilia that the building always has on display. We also learned that we needed better signage to help people find the exhibit and know what exactly it is and a way for to provide the public a chance to contribute to the exhibit without an object. Most importantly, we learned that these types of programs could most definitely be successful in Waco.

²⁸ The Deep in the Heart Film Festival was Waco's first film festival and screened 70 short films and six full-length movies during the three-day event at the downtown theatre.

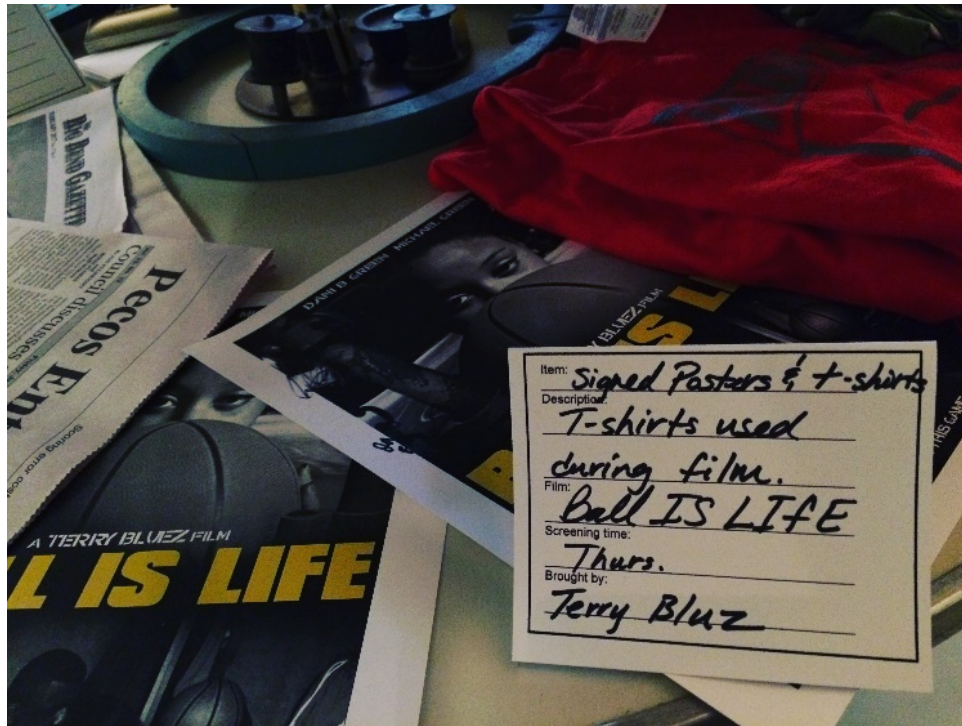


Image 14: Pop-Up Museum of Film at the Hippodrome

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

Pop-Up Museum of Waco at the Waco-McLennan Central Library

Our next pop-up museum was held on March 18th at the Waco-McLennan Central Library. We worked with Jessica Emmett, the library's community services supervisor, to have a program at their Austin Avenue branch. Each month the library has a theme that all of their events are centered around and March's theme was You Are Where You Live. Going off of that, the theme for the pop-up museum was all about Waco, as well. We asked participants to bring an object that answers the following question: What does Waco mean to you? The pop-up museum was just a small part of the library's full day of events, which included a historic walking tour of the Castle Heights neighborhood with the Waco Walks group and a Lego Lab where kids were given a challenge to build some of the city's landmarks.



Image 15: Pop-Up Museum of Waco at the Waco-McLennan Central Library

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

We received ten objects for the pop-up museum, which was displayed at the library for the following two weeks. The objects included a softball, a book, a picture, and a medal. For those that were not able to provide an object, there was still a way to participate. We had cards printed out with the word “WACO” spelled out vertically on the left hand side. Participants could make an acrostic poem using the same prompt that we gave for the objects. At the program, there was also another small participatory element, which Emmett created, and stickers of the MAW logo to reinforce the association as an organizer. To strengthen the idea that these objects were important, we placed them in a case in the library’s Local History Room. The creations from the Lego Lab were placed nearby the pop-up museum, too.

It is hard to know how many people looked at the objects after we left, but those that did take notice of them during the program were genuinely interested and talkative. When we retrieved the objects, Emmett noted that many visitors commented on the pop-up museum. Luckily, the Local History Room is located in a popular area because it is next to a series of computers that are usually in constant use. Despite those comments, no other objects were added to the display besides for some historic items from the library’s permanent collection.

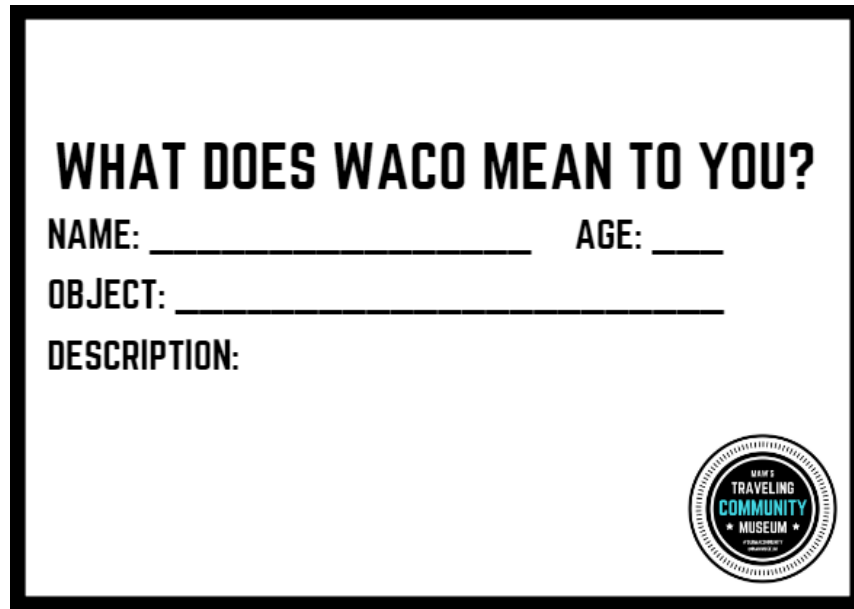


Image 16: Pop-Up Museum of Waco object label

Pop-Up Museum of Childhood Memories at McLennan Community College

On the night of April Fool's Day, we had our last official pop-up museum. The program was at the Ball Performing Arts Center for McLennan County College's (MCC) opera performance of Hansel and Gretel. Its theme was childhood memories. We organized the pop-up museum with a group of MCC's staff members, including Kim Patterson (Executive Director of the MCC Foundation), Marylaine Driese (College Archivist), Jennifer Norman (Associate Director of Marketing and Communications), and Lise Uhl (Director of the Division of Visual and Performing Arts). We also coordinated with Dr. Bronwen Forbay, director of the performance, to bring some objects, as well as to create a table of cast pictures and free candy next to our table of objects to attract more people. Glenn Downing, professor in MCC's Visual Arts department, also let us use some old frames that were collecting dust in his storage closet. We made the frames available to place the objects in and to make the table look fuller, but no visitors made use of them.

Viewers of the performance were required to purchase their tickets at the college's box office. We placed a sign (made by Norman) there to help promote the pop-up museum, as well as mentioned it to the box office staff. The table was located in the lobby and the staff provided

tablecloths, backdrops, and stands for the evening. The pop-up museum temporary collected six objects. Some of objects included were stuffed animals, a t-shirt, and a book. It also gave an opportunity for others to participate, much like the previous one, by providing a card for visitors to share the best advice their parents had ever given to them. The pop-up museum was stationed in the lobby of the Arts Center so a few dozen visitors stopped by the table to look at the objects. In the end, however, only a couple of them contributed to the pop-up museum.

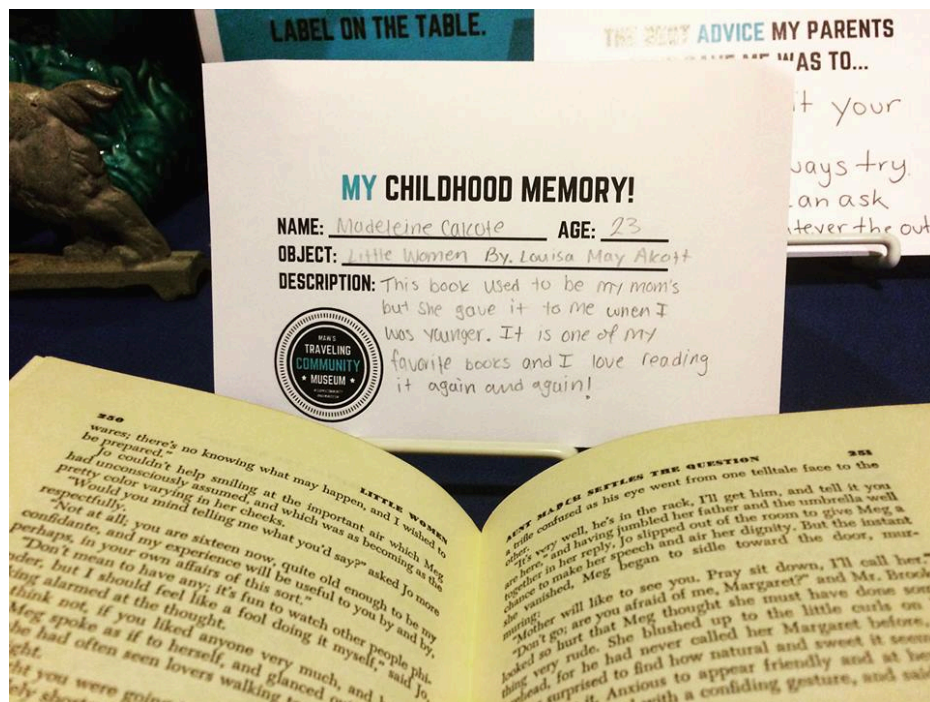


Image 17: Pop-Up Museum of Childhood Memories at MCC

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

We did learn many valuable lessons during this particular program, including one that is sure to stick. The MCC staff members that we were working with and I thought that it would be a great idea to include the performers into the pop-up museum in some kind of fashion. Without consulting with them first, we decided on our own to ask them to bring a photo of themselves during their first theatric performance. We thought that many of them have grown up under the glow of stage lights. We did not realize that this was unattainable until a couple of days before when Dr. Forbay relayed the message that this was the first play for many of the

actors. While we had a good idea in theory, the lack of communication and collaboration between everyone resulted in a prime opportunity missed.



Image 18: Pop-Up Museum of Childhood Memories advice card

CONCLUSION

The Traveling Community Museum project was primarily a successful adventure. We made adjustments along the way, but stayed true to our goals and vision. We planned to have nine programs, but officially downsized to eight. We had four creation stations, three pop-up museums, and one exchange. There are a few challenges to address and some changes to be made if MAW decides to go forward with this project in the future, but a successful template has been laid out and shown to work.

One of the goals of the project was to promote (or cultivate) a passion for the city, its past, and its residents' histories. I cannot help to feel that this was accomplished in some small way. While each program was not solely created around this goal, almost every one of them had at least some sort of Waco in their blood. The wishes at the Farmer's Market included a wish for Waco. The community quilt at the Cultural Arts Fest had one prompt that asked why Waco felt like home. Stop Motion Waco at the Market had backgrounds of popular area locations and the identity tapestry was one hundred percent about Waco.²⁹ The pop-up museum of Waco asked participants what the city meant to them, while the pop-up museum of childhood memories inquired about participants' personal histories.

Another facet of the project was to spread awareness of the Museum Association of Waco and its members. While Stage Three was removed, this was still achieved in a variety of ways throughout the project. MAW was mentioned in conversations with participants during each event, as well as the member institutions that were acting as the sponsors. MAW was featured on a number of different public advertisements created by different organizations – including Common Grounds, the Waco-McLennan Libraries, and McLennan Community College – and on local calendars, too. The creation of two social media accounts and the publishing of a post on Act Locally Waco's blog also helped achieve this goal.³⁰ Finally, awareness of MAW was

²⁹ The Identity Tapestry was created and copyrighted by Mary Corey March and was used without permission throughout the project. More info can be found on marymarch.com.

³⁰ *Sharing Special Stories at Pop-Up Museums* was shared on Act Locally Waco's blog on Sunday, April 15. The organization's leader, Ashley Thornton, who was actually introduced to me and Sarah by Charlie Walter, director of

spread simply through having the activities. The project acted as an outreach program for the organization to get its name in front of people who may not be aware that they even exist and to provide a base for future events. In the end, the Traveling Community Museum was located at ten diverse locations throughout the city.



Image 19: Common Ground Valentine's Market ad

Photo Credit: Common Grounds

The final part of the Traveling Community Museum was to simply make the museum experience accessible and inclusive for all. While the programs were located across the city, none of them cost any money and almost all of them were at events that were free and open to the public (besides for the pop-up museums of film and of childhood memories). The programs were simple enough that they could be completed by and be relevant to most people. The fact that things made during the creation stations were placed in museums also helped make them a more welcoming place for all. In the future, I would like to see the project partner with an even more diverse group to promote our goals to areas that were not targeted.

the Mayborn Museum, to create a conversation about having pop-up events downtown, has participated in a number of different programs hosted by the project.

Stage One, the creation stations, were extremely successful. The majority of the people who experienced the Traveling Community Museum was through the first stage (especially during the Cultural Arts Fest). In some kind of manner, each program was located at two locations, which meant that they had the ability to be in front of more people. Participants seemed to enjoy the easy and simple activities that demanded no pre-thought. The visitors could simply stumble upon the activity, create something, and add it to the collection. They were creating. They were sharing. They were even connecting. The creation stations were the quintessential participatory programs.

The hope was that the momentum from Stage One would carry over to the next stage. However, Stage Two, the pop-up museums, was not as popular as its predecessor. The pop-up museums were supposed to be the pride and joy of the project. Instead, they ended up being small participatory programs that were advertised to specialized groups. The problem with the pop-up museums was that visitors needed to know to bring something before they came to the program. They could not just stumble upon it and fully participate. Because of that, very few objects were collected and displayed. Even many of the organizers of the programs did not participate.

There are changes that I would make if this project, or another one like it, were to exist in the future. I would suggest that a more established organization partake in these types of programs. It was confusing for visitors as to who was behind the programs, whether it was MAW or the museum sponsor. An established museum would also have an already built-in community of people that follow its programs and recognize its logo. It was simply difficult to build a brand out of nothing. I think that it would also be logical to partner with a specific group that spearheads the items in the pop-up museums. The group would choose the topic, bring the objects, and have a built-in audience, as well. If we let them do all of this, then they would bring a special type of passion that pop-up museums need to succeed.

Despite the difficulties that we experienced, I believe that the Traveling Community Museum was still a success. We affected over 1,000 people, much of who participated in one of the programs. MAW's name was posted throughout these projects and was located inside places and in front of faces that are completely foreign to the organization. There were

conversations that I observed through which people connected and shared stories over the creations that they made or were looking at while speaking.

Stage Three, Waco History Day, was removed because I did not want a large event where it would seem that the project would be concluding. I want to project to continue to operate and benefit MAW. Now that the foundation has been built, the future of the project will be much easier to maintain, if indeed the organization decides to go in that direction. There is a pop-up museum scheduled for the immediate future at the Farmer's Market with a theme of PLAY. We are inviting participants to bring something that all visitors can play with and enjoy. After that, however, no other programs are scheduled... as of yet.

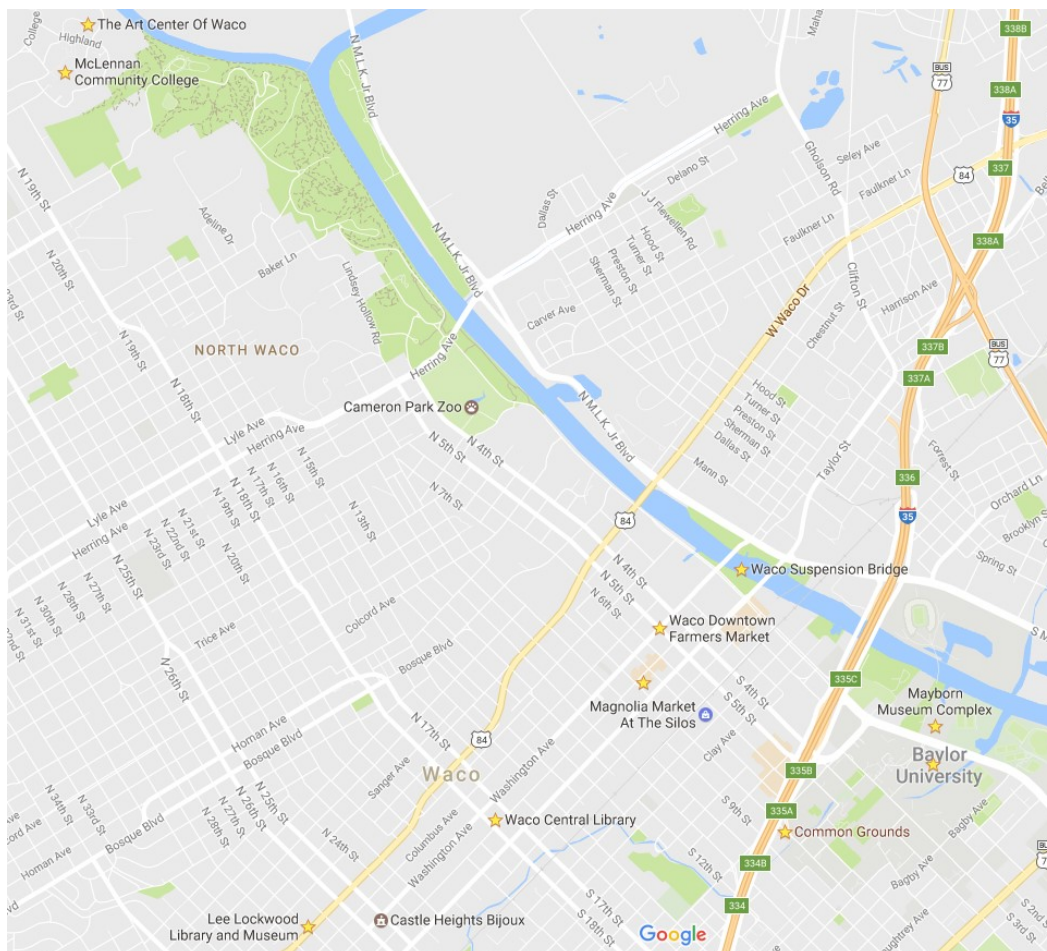


Image 20: Map of the Traveling Community Museum locations

PERSONAL NOTE

Completing this project helped me in more ways than I ever could have imagined. Participatory programs have become part of my daily life. First, my planning and involvement in the project helped me to be selected to SCMAH's MuseumCamp.³¹ During this three-day unconference in Santa Cruz, I learned so much about the importance of community engagement and involvement from Simon and her crew, as well as from the other incredible attendees. Once back, I used those lessons learned to create different participatory and relevant programs and activities at the Mayborn Museum. I helped decorate Design Den with Christmas wish garland, participated in the heart bomb craze, and tried to make the Emergence of Man room more relevant.

³¹ MuseumCamp is an annual professional development event hosted by SCMAH. "Each year we bring together diverse, passionate people for a sleep-away camp for adults where we learn together through active, creative workshops and activities." The 2016 theme was changemakers. "We will spend 2.5 days together exploring the ways we make change in our work, our communities, and the world. We will focus specifically on how we can use creative projects as catalysts for community action and change. Whether you are dreaming about change, making it happen, or have battle scars to share, we want you here this year." Our special project, community zines, can still be viewed online.



Image 21: MuseumCamp in Santa Cruz, CA

Photo Credit: Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History

My work also inspired some much needed changes to my and Sarah Miller's brainchild, *Junior Curators*. During this program, we asked students to create a display with their objects, write labels, create field journals, and tour the museum. During the second phase of the program, we incorporated more personal and hands-on elements. Our experiences even provided us with the opportunity to participate at the Texas Association of Museums Annual Meeting in Abilene. We created a joint poster on participatory programs and making/tinkering and were on a panel for the session *Program Development on the Fly: Using Evaluation to Improve Programs and Exhibits While They're Happening* with Emily Clark, Raegan King, and Meredith Doby.



Image 22: *Junior Curators* at the Mayborn Museum

Photo Credit: Matthew Doyen

I would like to thank so many people who made this project possible. For starters, a big thank you to my advisors – Eric Ames, Dr. Julie Holcomb, and Rachael Nadeau-Johnson – who helped immensely before and during the project. I also could not have done without all of the help from the Mayborn staff – Trey Crumpton, Charlie Walter, Rebecca Tucker-Nall, and Emily Clark and the other MAW chair members – Raegan King and Steven Sielaff – who gave me the opportunity to accomplish this project. I have also met so many great Wacoans – Jessica Emmett, Louis Hunter, Kim Patterson, Meg Gilbert, Sam Moody, Allison Syltie, Nicole Stark, Taylor Torregrossa, and Ashley Thornton – throughout this project that have dedicated so much of their time and energy to the Traveling Community Museum. Of course, none of this would have ever gotten off the ground without everything that my amazing friends have done, especially Sarah Miller and Madeleine Calcote. Y'all are the best!

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