

ABSTRACT

Illuminating Masterpieces: the Martin Museum of Art Collections Crowdsourcing Project

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The Martin Museum of Art Collections Crowdsourcing Project was designed to assist in researching and managing the museum's permanent collection. With a small staff and the obligatory demands of basic collections care, changing exhibitions, and administrative duties, research of the collection becomes less of a priority among the managing of the museum. The project adopted a blog site as a forum to post images of the collection each week for volunteers to present accurate and insightful information on the identifying information on the works of art to supplement and support the research of the collections staff.

Illuminating Masterpieces: the Martin Museum of Art Collections Crowdsourcing Project

By

Margaret E. Hallinan

A Project

Approved by the Department of Museum Studies

Kenneth Hafertepe, Ph. D., Chairperson

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts

Approved by the Project Chairperson

Julie Holcomb, Ph. D., Chairperson

Introduction

In the mid-2000s, a revolutionary step was taken by a few museums, archives, and other non-profit institutions to digitize artifacts and texts for publication online in an attempt to engage the public in a dialogue and to construct a set of identifying information for each unknown artifact to aid the non-profit institution in furthering its goals of providing educational information for the artifacts it is entrusted to safeguard. In addition, the institutions hoped to garner interest in the establishment itself by the portion of the general public that do not normally visit the museum or have an active interest in the subject matter. The engagement of the general public in generating primarily curatorial information has been dubbed crowdsourcing.

There is no definitive known creator of crowdsourcing, though it appears to have been first used by for profit companies as a means of promoting voluntary public participation in some aspect of product development. In museology, the greatest number of contributions to information sharing has taken place with natural history, science, and archival collections using a plethora of electronic platforms to enroll visitors in games, transcriptions, and other observation based projects. Art museums in particular ask volunteers to tag or label works of art in an effort to understand the popularity of certain artistic periods and mediums, coupled with participating in the formation of online exhibitions. The Martin Museum of Art collections crowdsourcing project began with the exploration and testing of crowdsourcing programs to develop the appropriate choice of crowdsourcing venue and interactive for the visitors of the museum. With the knowledge of concurrent art museum projects, the successive description outlines the process of designing and executing a professional project into a scholastic opportunity to gather collections research and subsequently form a virtual gallery.

Site History & Resources

Located at the heart of Baylor University in Waco, Texas for the last thirty years, the Martin Museum of Art is a gem in a sea of students and a myriad of academic institutions on campus. Staffed by three to five employees at any given time, the museum becomes a busy epicenter of exhibitions, publications, and programs. With such a small staff and minimal time for researching the thirteen hundred works of art in the collection, in addition to the basic collections management practices, volunteers become invaluable to accomplishing the research needed for the advancement of the collection and educational programs for the public's benefit. Therefore, inviting the community of Baylor University, Waco, and the nation to participate in the blog serves not only to fulfill the mission of the museum, stated below, but also to share in the process of bettering the collection as consultant curators.

The Martin Museum of Art, Baylor University, is committed to the advancement and understanding of art through an active program of collections, stewardship, conservation, innovative exhibitions, education, interpretive programs, and special events to serve and enrich Baylor University and the public communities of Waco and Central Texas. The Museum serves as a vital resource for teaching and scholarship in a broad variety of disciplines, including, but not limited to, art history, art appreciation and studio art.¹

At its core, the crowdsourcing project provides accessibility to the collection. A few years ago, a past Educational Coordinator began the monumental task of exhibiting some of the museum's permanent collection online as a resource for scholars. In a program called Pachyderm, she was able to publish a select few of the Martin's holdings with originating information and scholastic citations. The information gathered from the blog supplements the artifact summations on Pachyderm. The blog site is a temporary virtual gallery and primarily a researching tool, while Pachyderm forms a permanent sampling of the collection. Either program

¹ Martin Museum of Art, "Mission Statement," *Collections Management Policy for the Martin Museum of Art Baylor University* (December 04, 2012): 1.

could be expanded to encompass the collection, especially showcasing the rare and fragile works which cannot be readily displayed in the museum. Additionally, the museum receives name recognition, reaching a wider audience of individuals and institutions, who may not have known of the existence of the museum or its diverse collections. Although evaluating and site maintenance can be detrimental to an employee's time, it is an opportunity to become familiar with the collection. Certainly, knowledge of the collection will aid in developing accurate exhibition text and educational programs. Knowledge of the above available human resources, in conjunction with a limited budget and spatial restrictions, only one worktable in collections, aided in formulating the proposal for a crowdsourcing site in the following section.

The Proposal

The original intent of the crowdsourcing project was to excavate from the Martin Museum of Art's permanent collection those works of art in dire need of research, in particular those lacking basic identifying information being title, artist, date or of that nature. Commencement of the project began with what else, crowdsourcing, by posing a question to professionals and other students of museology through an email on the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries listserv. (Figure 1) I inquired as to how many of the representatives have used crowdsourcing techniques within their museum's community and in what type of museum they work. I garnered two responses; first that the majority of museums using this strategy were natural history or anthropological, and secondly, that there were endless possible electronic forums in which to manufacture a crowdsourcing platform. After months of experimentation and research, a blog ultimately proved to be an affordable and simplistic communicative setting for the museum's resources and my technical skill level.

With the selection of a platform, I focused on extracting works from the collection for digitization. Initially, my thought to generate the widest audience base was to publish two sets of the collection, from both western and non-western art, multiple days a week. Limited time and technological skills condensed the program to an image of an American or European work on paper once a week. To propel these works of art into the public sphere, I devised a marketing plan to fabricate three flyers: one for campus, one for the community of Waco, and one as an attachment in emails as a formal introduction to the museum and the project. I also intended to use our existing public forums, Facebook, Twitter, newspapers, and word of mouth to share the blog with the community.

The Collection

The preceding chapters will describe the preparation and execution of the Martin Museum of Art's collections crowdsourcing project, beginning with the selection and adaptation of the collection for posting online.

A. Search of the Collection

Of the multitude of steps taken to devise the project, the appropriate selection of works from the collection to publish online is the most significant stage. The appearance and a respectful reputation for the museum under Baylor University was of the utmost importance. Therefore I sifted through FileMaker Pro, the database or registration system, to unearth the pieces with incomplete records and conservative themes for the site. The museum maintains four prominent collections from which to begin a search: the permanent collection, the McMullen-Connolly Family collection, the Sallee-Alexander collection, and an unaccessioned works list. The McMullen-Connolly Family collection consists of over three hundred watercolors stored at the Faculty Center on campus with its own set of interpretation materials being written and

completed research on the collection's artists. The Sallee-Alexander collection is not owned nor is ownership of the collection being sought by the MMoA. The unaccessioned artwork and the Sallee-Alexander collection cannot be placed online due to ownership restrictions, possible copyright infringement, and lack of provenance. The choice was narrowed to the permanent collection, which contains donated and purchased sub-collections, which were in need of biographical and identifying research. The permanent collection which is currently at 1286 pieces, is comprised of a myriad of materials, cultures/nationalities, and stylistic periods.

The collection also contains certain cultural artifacts with insufficient provenance. It would be negligible to my duties as a museum employee and unethical for me to post artwork that could be considered by some as questionably obtained until further ownership identification is available.² Also, some artifacts should not be displayed based on cultural stipulations due to the spiritual nature of the object, in addition to the ideological guidelines on gender, age, and status of the individual allowed to view the item. These artifacts should not be exhibited in the museum and likewise on the internet, which constitutes as a public display of these artifacts.³

To expedite the process of selection, I exported the core informative fields into an organized and color coded spreadsheet, highlighting the areas of missing data for each work of art with the adoption of a specific color to a specific field. (Fig. 2) At this moment it is worth noting that during the gathering of works of art for photographing, I was able to allocate time to

² International Council of Museums, "Section 4.5: ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums," International Council of Museums (2013): 8, http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Codes/code_ethics2013_eng.pdf (accessed April 13, 2014).

³ American Alliance of Museum, "Code of Ethics for Museums," American Alliance of Museums (2000): 2, <http://www.aam-us.org/resources/ethics-standards-and-best-practices/code-of-ethics> (accessed April 13, 2014); See also section 2.5 of the ICOM Code of Ethics, page 2 or sections 2-6 for specifications.

produce new condition reports, conduct a spot inventory of the permanent collection, and update the database with the research from participants to the blog and the photographs from the project.

B. Photography

Once organization and prioritization of the collection was achieved, I began photographing the collection based on shared locations and stylistic resemblance to make miniature online exhibitions in addition to the acquisition of research. The majority of the collection does have existing photographs of the artwork, but those images are outdated, pixelated, unmarked (as property of the museum), or have not been taken at all. Furthermore, the museum had only obtained a photograph of the full view of the work of art, and not details of the signatures, inscriptions, or other distinguishing characteristics. I used the museum's digital camera to remedy the absence of those images and photograph the collection with my limited knowledge of photographing techniques and less than ideal conditions for a photographing station and excessive lighting. Distortions in the photographs were diminished by the aid of the Adobe Photoshop editing program with simple adjustments to tonal values, straightening, and lighting effects. The particulars of the process were recorded in the procedure manual compiled for the instruction and guidance of the museum staff for the continuation of the project. (Fig. 3)

C. Watermark

In an age of snatching and claiming imagery from any online source with limited consequences, I thought it necessary to safeguard the museum's photographs posted to the blog. With advice from the Curator of the Riley Digitization Center at Baylor University, I embedded a digital watermark on each photograph, stating "©2014 Martin Museum of Art." (Fig. 4) Within the metadata for the photograph on the blog and in a statement on the post, I reinforced the property rights of the photograph, "All photographs copyrighted Martin Museum of Art."

Despite best efforts, those individuals with equal or greater editing skills could still take the time to erase the watermark from the image, but at the least the museum has these “warnings” in place.

The Blog

The choice of a blogging platform was an affordable substitute for the more intricate and technologically advanced sites serving as games or word recognition programs. The university has an existing contract with Edublog under the WordPress platform, which provided security and maintenance beyond my technical capabilities. Certainly, I had insufficient knowledge of html coding, hypertext markup language, which was required for minor aesthetic and organizational fixes, but I learned based on trial and error practices and assistance from WordPress help pages.

A. Setting Up

Restructuring the settings of the blog refine the ability to monitor and promote an improved visitor experience. Under the general settings of the Edublog site, tasks as discussion board length, number of comments, and user presence, otherwise termed online accessibility, were altered to reduce complicating and cluttering the areas of the site traversed by participants. Open availability also entailed allowing search engines like Google or Bing to categorize and list the blog as an entry for specific tags or finding aids in a public search of key words. Unlimited access increased the need to protect the photographs of the artwork, but also monitoring for unsavory language and spam. In defining who the primary audience is, mainly community members and scholars, the choice was made to not press the exclusion of inappropriate words based on the reputable nature of the visitors. In addition, the demeanor of the text was formerly

thought too similar to an academic assignment, and after visitor feedback, a warmer approach was applied to elicit responses from the questions and summaries posted on the blog.

Besides adjustments to the comment settings, generating participants was also dependent on the aesthetic appearance of the site. The site presentation needed to reflect a cohesion with the social media sites to cement a connection between the blog and the museum's existing online presence. The museum's logo was used as the avatar of the museum staff if they so choose to comment on visitor research, asking new questions or congratulating the visitor on their success in uncovering information. Moreover, the theme adopted for the blog featured a gallery format of thumbnails as a means of viewing each post on the homepage. The snapshots allow for a sneak peek to lure visitors to reach deeper into the blog, viewing posts for their content with the hope of participation from the visitor, or at the least, as an online exhibit of the works of art rarely displayed in the permanent galleries of the museum. (Fig. 5)

B. Pages & Posts

The WordPress blogging platform allows for the implementation of pages, static informative documents located on the menu toolbar. The pages are a significant application as a means of offering the participant synopses of the museum and the project, bringing to light the importance of gathering research for the collection and why the museum needs volunteers to aid in the process. I created five pages: introduction, instructions, about the museum, contact information, and plan a visit. (Appendices 1-5)

Just as pages and the appearance serve to enrich the quality and clarity of visitation, posts provide the heart of the visitor experience. The first conception of posts insisted on a consistent format for easing staff time by utilizing a formulated template, however not all individuals learn or can engage in the prescribed manner. The beginning installation of the content for the post

combined an arrangement of photographs and contextual questions to lead the visitor to the desired research the museum requested for the completion of the collection records. A sample of the partnership is a detail of a signature paired with the question, “Could you transcribe the signature? If so, can you identify the artist and associated life dates”? (Fig. 6)

Upon receiving feedback from relatives and colleagues on the nature of the wording and clarity of instructions for participating in the blog, posts and pages were inspected and changes applied. As will be explained in greater depth in the succeeding text, I sponsored a survey to do further analysis to clearly identify what interests the visitors and what data could be changed. I transformed the posts to befit each of the suggested formats on the survey, derived from the original layout, fill-in entries, or only artwork. With the remaining posts, I varied the format and reduced the number of questions with the hope of eliciting visitor feedback. (Fig. 7) With a constant need to adapt to the public’s interests, scheduling and fabricating posts in advance saved time and ensured the posts are published consistently.

Evaluation

As previously mentioned, I reviewed the procedure and on occasion made changes to increase the effectiveness of individual components to enhance the visitor experience in the program. Much of this thought process came from experience in developing a successful educational program: determining the audience and need for a particular program, choosing relevant objects with the correct educational level and learning devices for that audience, conducting a logistical analysis, and finally invoking three forms of evaluation. For the constantly evolving elements of the blog, a formative evaluation adequately measured the success and performance of the project as it was designed and utilized. To ensure the

sustainability and continuation of the site, a qualitative evaluation should be conducted to add to the quantitative results discussed below.

A. Statistical Analysis

The most direct approach to quantifying the success of the blog is to equate the amount of visitors and comments published to the site. After three months of posts, the blog obtained comments on artwork and historical context. For example, in response to a query on the type of printing process for artifact 10, a participant wrote, “This is an engraving (linear elements) with aquatint for the toned areas.” I can only hypothesize that so few comments from visitors might be from a lack of promotion of a dialogue between patrons, and the uncomfortable feeling of being the first to speak about a topic. Another possibility might be the choice of vocabulary or an inappropriate selection of questions. Without definitive feedback from participants in direct correspondence it is impossible to say. Hopefully, with the recommended changes to the blog through a questionnaire on formatting and changes to a friendlier terminology, more comments will come.

Commentary on the blog was monitored and collected on a daily basis guided by a document titled “Checklist” to certify that I patrol and collect data from all areas of the site (Fig. 8) It became clear that initial standards, the ideal, had to be altered to meet the staff’s needs. With alterations to the format and content of the blog with an increase in the frequency of posting, perhaps more visitors will return and participate presenting the need to collect three times a day again. Comments will then be inserted into a document titled, “Blog Collected Information” to record the artifact, the questions and the responses. (Fig. 9)

The greatest analysis of visitor interest came from the statistical data of the traffic to the blog as collected on the Edublog site and Google Analytics. Edublogs has a built in statistical

report for the entirety of the blog and for individual posts and pages. (Fig. 10) The platform only records three month intervals so it was paramount that the staff note the changes manually each day in a spreadsheet for comparative discussions on the level of visitation to particular posts. (Fig. 11) Meanwhile, I employed Google Analytics to detail the kinds of visitors that frequent the blog. The program allowed the staff to see how many visitors were from Baylor University, how many were from Waco, Texas, and other such detailed fields that gave me a set of numeric data to understand the shift in the audience participating with the site. (Figs. 12-14) I could see if the general public were more interested than universities based on an aggregate total. For the purpose of this project, I kept the records limited to general visitation, Baylor University and the city of Waco. The results were accumulated in two segregated spreadsheets titled for their respective collecting sources. (Fig. 15)

B. Conducting a Survey

Prior to the start of posting for the blog, it occurred to me that quantitative results are not the only means of evaluating the effectiveness of the blog site. To improve visitor experience, I needed to know the audience, the average age, the educational level, and interests of the participants. I had anticipated a core audience of adults, students, and art enthusiasts as the primary source of aid in the project, but were they the actual visitors? Furthermore, I noticed after the third post visitation decreased and I had only garnered two comments. Despite theorizing with colleagues why participants were not commenting, I was startled by the realization I had made the assumption that all individuals utilizing the internet knew how to comment on a blog. The inclination then was to speak with the visitors themselves about the ability of the blog to meet their perception of the project and be user friendly.

The quickest means of discovering why visitors shy from commenting on the posts was to construct a survey to ask specific questions about the content, format, and interest in the blog. The greatest difficulty was then to narrow a multitude of questions to a short few. It is common knowledge that the public will not take more than a few minutes to complete a survey, and certainly nor will they want to write essays about their experience. How could I gather a plethora of data in only a couple of questions? There in that moment I realized my first problem with the posts, I was asking too many questions. This line of analysis became the first question for the survey, what kind of format would you like to see in a post about art. Concurrently, I asked what types of artistic periods and mediums should be shown, how often, in what way, for example with leading questions, fill-in the blank identifying information, or with no commentary from staff, and if the blog site was overall navigable and comprehensive. (Fig. 16)

Though the survey only received five respondents, their choices speak volumes in the methods needed to proceed with the site. (Fig. 17) Fifty percent of the respondents would like only artwork posted on the blog. Out of my research and tests of crowdsourcing websites at the beginning of the project, the majority of art museums restrict crowdsourcing to tagging and what would be likened to a virtual gallery, otherwise known as an online collections database. For some unexplainable reason, museum visitors appear to perceive art or by extension art museums as beyond the range of knowledge of the average person, and perhaps still as art for art's sake. Participants would rather view art for its beauty than spend time conducting research. Furthermore, respondents overwhelmingly selected contemporary pieces as the art of choice for posting, contradicting the statistical results from the blog that shows more interest in old master prints. Both of the comments listed on the site were posted under the Renaissance era print. Why is there a disconnection between the two evaluative programs? Lastly, four of the five

participants would like a greater frequency of posting, however the quantity remains in the hands of the museum staff and their ability to fulfill the request with the appropriate amount of time and resources. Unfortunately, I do not have a resolution for the remaining questions, or for those posed on the survey. With this information, I can however create hypotheticals as to the future success of the blog based on variety of adaptations.

Media and Publications

Visitation of the crowdsourcing blog could not be expected to manifest itself, certainly there was a need to probe for individuals and institutions that would have an invested interest in providing research for the collection. In order to inform the public about the project, I chose to maintain the traditional methods the museum used to reach the populace, social media, flyers, email, and word of mouth. The latter speaks for itself as one of the fastest and probably the most effective means of communicating. Following interaction with the public through the former methods of communication, word of mouth ensured the continual proliferation of the project to colleagues, professionals, academics, and the general public. Each of the succeeding sections outlines the manner in which I engaged the public.

A. Flyers

Traditionally, the Martin Museum of Art issued print media as the foremost means of dispensing with event information across campus and the city of Waco. Apart from the ease of constructing and distributing of flyers, continuing this type of proclamation lent to the validity of the project under the museum's name, and its recognition as a typical collegiate notification. The flyers were distributed across campus through the Living and Learning Center (herein LLC), which deposits a flyer on every bulletin board in the dormitories, dining halls and other student

oriented buildings. Additional flyers were placed in academic halls not covered by the LLC, and relevant to the research required for identifying and contextual information for the artwork.

For the sake of time, creation of a single flyer which could be easily altered based on revised thematic parameters would be more efficient for the staff. The publicity theme for the project was eschewing the sense of mystery or a puzzle to the visitor to promote curiosity in the reader in assisting with identifying art. The incorporation of a magnifying glass to highlight a featured detail of a full view of the work of art. By using snippets of the photographs to give little away of the actual image, but allowing enough detail to guess what it could be, would challenge the viewer to proceed to the site to reveal the full work of art and for the museum, protect the copyright of the image. (Fig. 18) I began the flyer with the phrase, “Can you guess...,” followed by the website address alongside questions inquiring whether the viewer liked puzzles, research or art. I kept the design clean and contemporary with colors mirroring the blog’s thematic appearance. The flyer’s construction allows for the ease of interchanging images to fit the current series of works of art.

Despite my efforts to create an appropriate campus flyer, I needed an additional flyer for the purpose of attaching to emails for academic departments and professionals in the field. The flyer was designed to be clean and formal, containing text to describe the purpose of the project in brief coupled with the museum’s mission statement and contact information. (Fig. 19) Electronic mail or email, became an effective tool in singling out academic departments within Baylor University while simultaneously reaching other academic and non-profit institutions.

B. Social Media

The staff have accounts with Twitter and Facebook as a means of building a relationship with a younger visitor, mainly the student population of Baylor University. Contrary to the

desired target audience, the staff gained favor with a range of visitors, students, professors, the community of Waco, and further throughout the country. Over the last few years, the users of the museum's pages have become familiar with a topical schedule, for instance "Trivia Tuesday" or "Collections Spotlight" on Wednesdays. The thought occurred to me to replace the current series of art from the latter program with snapshots of the artwork on the blog with accompanying witty phrases and questions to entice the visitor to find out more about the photograph by going to the blog site. (Figs. 20-21)

Although visitation of the site was aided by the use of "Collections Spotlight" and additional tweets on Twitter, two revelations passed. Most of the visitors to the blog site were perhaps participants of Facebook, but perhaps only from Facebook. This remains only a theory, as a means of identifying the ratio of the Facebook users to blog users is difficult to determine without advanced expensive statistical analysis. Secondly, I posture that the majority of Facebook seekers do not visit the blog site because the whole image of the work of art that week is on Facebook. As a recommendation to the museum, it may be wise to only incorporate a detail of the work of art to entice visitors to go to the blog to view the entire photograph as well as cropped, zoomed in portions of the artifact, such as the artist's signature.

In the meantime, two emails were sent to the American Alliance of Museums and the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG) announcing the commencement of the crowdsourcing program, to participate, share with colleagues, and provide insightful criticism of the format and content. AAMG subsequently submitted my project plug on their listserv. At present, the museum received response in an accumulation of traffic through the blog pages. Statistical analysis from Google Analytics revealed the influx of colleges and museum views

with the blog site, which could prove useful in making professional and academic connections for the Martin Museum of Art.

C. Newspaper

On occasion connections from previous collaborations can impact the success of a project, in this instance, an interview with a topical writer for the *Waco Tribune-Herald*.⁴ The writer, a connoisseur of all things historical, was fascinated by the unidentified object in the permanent collection and even contributed to the collection of research with a comment on the historical context of the print. The article was published within a week of the first post, leading to an increase in the traffic to the blog site.

Recommendations

As my time as the manager of the crowdsourcing site came to an end, I wanted to leave behind a list of suggestions to assist the museum in the continuation of the blog based on the statistical analyses, the survey, and experience developing the blog site. I wrote a procedure manual to be an instructional guide and reference material for the process by which I designed and revised each portion of the project. The purpose of the manual was to be instructional, meaning brief but comprehensive, and a step-by-step navigable process with sample images to compliment the textual summations. The following are additional optional recommendations towards improvement of the site:

Based on traffic analytics and survey responses, with available human and physical resources, the museum is advised to post works of art with more frequency, alternating between a variety of mediums, artistic periods and styles. Varying the post formats will increase the

⁴ Carl Hoover, "Baylor's Martin Museum of Art asks online viewers for info," *Waco Tribune-Herald* (February 20, 2014): 1, http://www.wacotrib.com/entertainment/accesswaco/art/baylor-s-martin-museum-of-art-asks-online-viewers-for/article_88e0d8ba-6397-58e6-bdf7-f9c64305a29f.html (accessed April 23, 2014).

interest of the participants of both scholars and amateur art connoisseurs. Although time consuming for a small staff, continuation of the quantitative analyses will help provide feedback on traffic through the blog. The visitation numbers which can be used to measure the success of the museum in reaching the public and meeting its mission of providing access to the permanent collection through exhibition, in this case electronic, and educational opportunities. For the most part, the project is lacking sufficient physical evidence of qualitative results, in other words receiving more input as to the benefits and interest of the blog to visitors, essential to its continuation and success. The museum will need to adapt the crowdsourcing site to retain its relevance, however small alterations like those mentioned in the latter recommendations such as format and content can make a world of difference to reaching a diverse audience.

Conclusion

The collections crowdsourcing project began as a simple idea that blossomed into a multi-layered and at times technically complicated device serving to benefit both the museum and the public. Each stage of the process worked effectively to promote the development of the blog site, but aided in the completion of a multitude of collections tasks that the museum would need to accomplish in the future, including inventories, condition reports, photographing the collection, and of course, much needed biographical and identifying research for augmenting educational programs, exhibition labels and publications. Unquestionably, the most considerable challenge faced in the course of the project was definitive communication. Effective communication of vision between the staff members with a consolidation and accepting of portions of all perspectives on the project may have quickened the activation and results of the project, but also the acknowledgement of the importance of clarity in summarizing the project for the community. However, as discussed throughout this paper, research was not the only

interest the project provided the public. The site garnered support for the museum through a dissemination of the museum's name across the nation. It received recognition from professional organizations, colleagues and academic institutions. In the meantime, the museum fulfilled its mission to be a beacon for art and historical scholarship, giving the public a glimpse at works of art that are rare, fragile or otherwise unable to be displayed in the museum galleries, a chance that may not be available again. With the adoption of the recommendations in the preceding section and other innovative improvements, the crowdsourcing program could obtain the status and loyalty needed to gather insightful research from the ever learned public whose act of volunteerism has aided the museum to achieve its mission and become a welcoming presence within the community.

Illustrations

5/6/13

AAMG-L : Message: Re: [AAMG-L] Master's Project - Crowdsourcing

Get new Yahoo! Mail apps

Mail My Y! Yahoo!

Search Search Web

Start a Group | My Groups | Find a Yahoo! Group

AAMG-L : Assoc of Academic Museums & Galleries

My Groups

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Messages

Post

Attachments

Files

Photos

Links

Polls

Calendar

Promote

The Yahoo! Groups Product Blog

Check it out!

info Settings

Group Information

Members: 2346

Category: Museums and Galleries

Founded: May 17, 2008

Language: English

Yahoo! Groups Tips

Did you know...

Hear how Yahoo! Groups has changed the lives of others. Take the tour.

Messages

Message #

Go Search

Search Advanced Messages Help

Message List

#6805 of 6809

< Previous

Next >

Start Topic

Re: [AAMG-L] Master's Project - Crowdsourcing

Posted By:

Mon May 6, 2013 5:12 pm | Options

Reply

We have only involved crowdsourcing when it comes to keyword tagging for works of art already in the collections, as part of the development of an expanded, browsable collections database.

On May 6, 2013, at 12:57 PM, M wrote:

Hello everyone,

I am a student in the Museum Studies graduate program at Baylor University looking at developing a master's project on crowdsourcing for museums. As you may know from experience, it is not always easy completing provenance research or even finding basic information with a variety of artifacts in your collection. It can be even more frustrating not being an expert on every oddity or foreign material you may come across. As an employee of a smaller university museum myself, I have come across items in the collection with no notations of the maker or origin of the object. I have reached out to other museums and academics in the past for aid in identification, but not necessarily the general public. I wanted to ask all of you if your institution has used crowdsourcing for collections research. If you have incorporated crowdsourcing, which methods, be it online or in print, have worked the best for you?

Sincerely,

Margaret Hallinan
Graduate Student
Department of Museum Studies
Baylor University
Margaret_Hallinan@...

Reply

SPONSOR RESULTS

Museums

Local.com/Museums - Looking for a Museum

Find a Top-Rated Museum Near You With Local.com!

Search by Twely

twely.co.uk - Dynamic search page. Find things easier

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Expand Messages

Author

Sort by Date

Master's Project - Crowdsourcing

Hello everyone, I am a student in the Museum Studies graduate program at Baylor University looking at developing a master's project on crowdsourcing for...

4:57 pm

Re: Master's Project - Crowdsourcing

We have only involved crowdsourcing when it comes to key word tagging for works of art already in the collections, as part of the development of an expanded...

5:13 pm

Re: Master's Project - Crowdsourcing

Hi there, This area of research is really interesting to me as I'm looking at ways museums are using crowd-sourcing. I've mainly

5:24 pm

1/2

Figure 1. Screen Capture. Email to Association of Academic Museums and Galleries Listserv.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD
To Do	Artist	Accession #	Birth	Date	Title	Description	Dimensions	Medium	Method of Acquisition	Inv. number																			
1	1	1	1927-	1970	Nuit Blanche	Black silhouette border	Pink H 17.375" x L 12.125" (44 x 30.5 cm)	Color Lithograph on F	Donation	1	Belgia																		
2	2	2	1927-	1970	Lithosphere	Zolotone border, greens and H 17.375" x L 12.125" (44 x 30.5 cm)	Color Lithograph on F	Donation	2	Belgia																			
3	3	3	1927	1970	Digital	Zolotone border, greens and H 17.375" x L 12.125" (44 x 30.5 cm)	Color Lithograph on F	Donation	3	Belgia																			
4	4	4	1927	1970	Beuf Gros Sel	Zolotone border, oranges, H 17.375" x L 12.125" (44 x 30.5 cm)	Color Lithograph on F	Donation	4	Belgia																			
5	5	5	1911	1973	Tidings	Landscape with gray sky, W H 22" x L 29"	Silkscreen	Donation	5	Belgia																			
6	6	6	1934	1973	Art Investment Report	Hand printed "report"	H 25.5" x L 19"	Lithograph	Donation	6	Belgia																		
7	7	7	1943	1973	Rainbow	Random writing all over, 16 H 18.875" x L 25.75"	Lithograph	Donation	7	Belgia																			
8	8	8	1943	1973	The Coat, Reaching for the Sleeve	Back view of a woman, 16 H 6" x L 4"	drypoint etching	Donation	8	Belgia																			
9	9	9	1902	1973	Untitled	Road running towards the H 15.875" x L 21.875"	paint on illustration	Donation	9	Belgia																			
10	10	10	1902	1973	Untitled	House with tropical setting	H 15.75" x L 22"	paint on illustration	Donation	10	Belgia																		
11	11	11	1902	1973	Untitled	A black train	H 15.75" x L 22"	paint on illustration	Donation	11	U. S. A																		
12	12	12	1902	1973	Untitled	Trees in foreground and mc H 15.25" x L 21.5"	believe the entire work to b H 19.5" x L 26.375"	paint on illustration	Donation	12	Belgia																		
13	13	13	1902	1973	Untitled	believe the entire work to b H 19.5" x L 26.375"	paint on illustration	Donation	13	Belgia																			
14	14	14	1902	1973	Untitled	brown, green, and black (ar H 19" x L 13.5" with change	Monotype	Donation	14	Roman																			
15	15	15	1906	1980	Mirific	belge face floating in pink/H 14" x L 10.25"	mixed media, paint on	Donation	15	Belgia																			
16	16	16	1906	1980	Untitled	Monster figure with green/H 14.375" x L 11.25"	paint on paper	Donation	16	Belgia																			
17	17	17	1906	1980	Untitled	Monster figure with green/H 14.375" x L 11.25"	paint on paper	Donation	17	Belgia																			
18	18	18	1904	1980	The Magic Butterfly and the Flower	Certificate of authenticity H 29.5" x L 21.5"	Lithograph	Donation	18	Belgia																			
19	19	19	1904	1980	Cover Page for Print	Lithograph of Dalí's signature H 29.5" x L 21.5"	Lithograph	Donation	19	Belgia																			
20	20	20	1904	1980	The Magic Butterfly and the Dream	A hand holding a bouquet H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Lithograph	Donation	20	Belgia																			
21	21	21	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	21	Belgia																			
22	22	22	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	22	Belgia																			
23	23	23	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	23	Belgia																			
24	24	24	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	24	Belgia																			
25	25	25	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	25	Belgia																			
26	26	26	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	26	Belgia																			
27	27	27	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	27	Belgia																			
28	28	28	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	28	Belgia																			
29	29	29	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	29	Belgia																			
30	30	30	1943	1968	Untitled	Inside view of part of flowe H 22.5" x L 17" w/o frame	Colored oil pastels	Donation	30	Belgia																			

Key for Colors	
Date of the Work	W
Life Dates	
Artist	
Untitled	
TBD	
Photographed	
Posted	
Missing	

Figure 2. Screen Capture. Sample from the Martin Museum of Art Collections Inventory Spreadsheet.



Figure 3. Original Photograph for Artifact 1. Unknown Artist. Untitled. Date Unknown. Etching. Martin Museum of Art. MM1114.

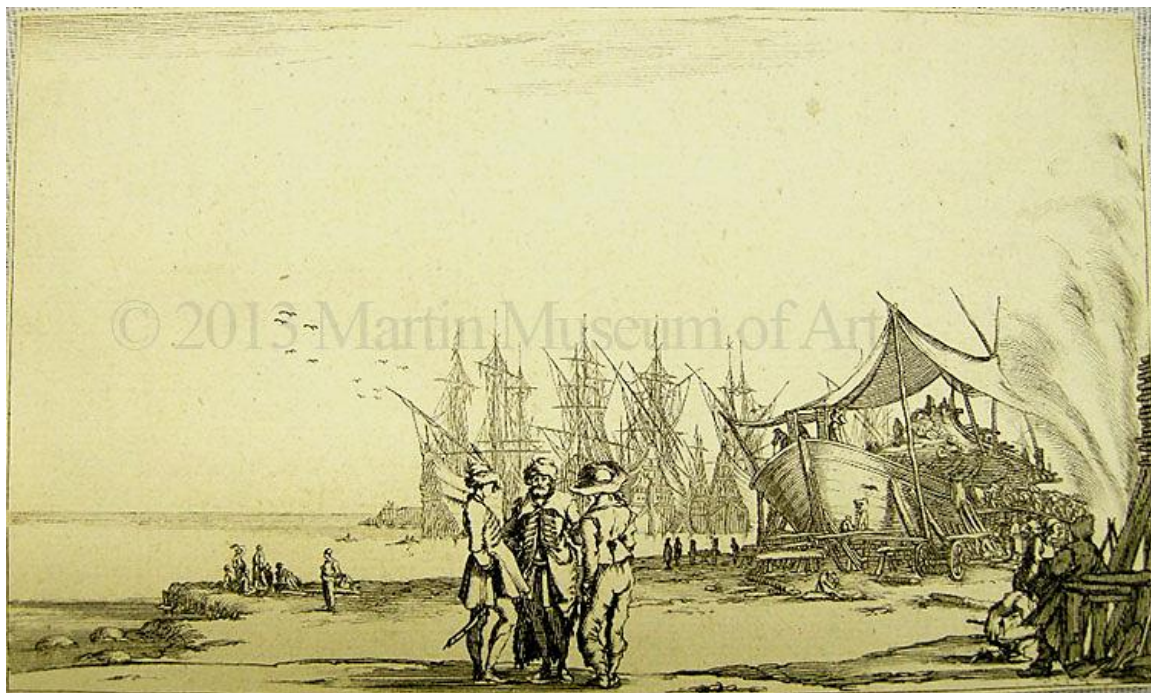


Figure 4. Watermark. Photograph of Artifact 1. Artist Unknown. Untitled. Date Unknown. Etching. Martin Museum of Art. MM1114.

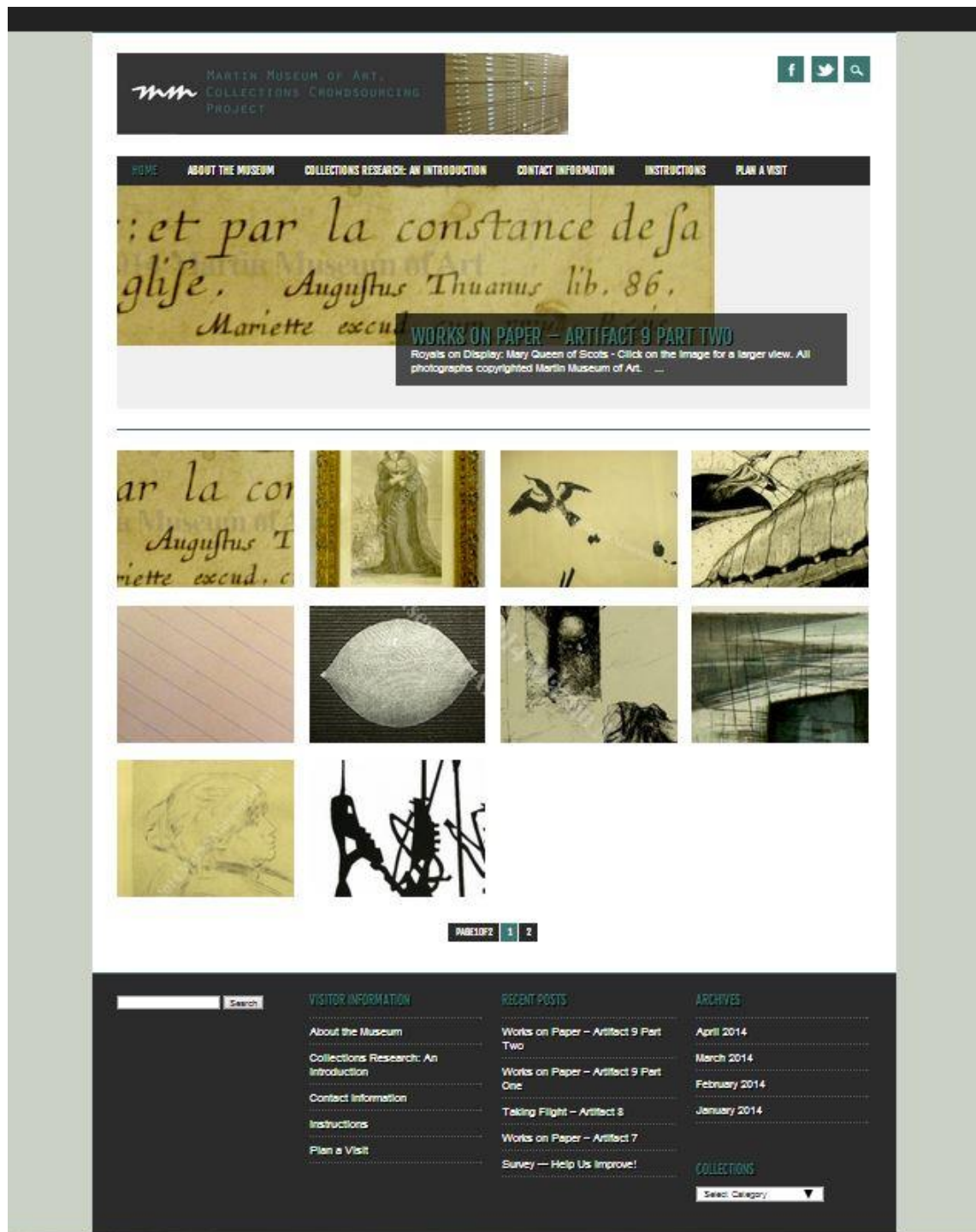


Figure 5. Screen Capture of Homepage. Martin Museum of Art.

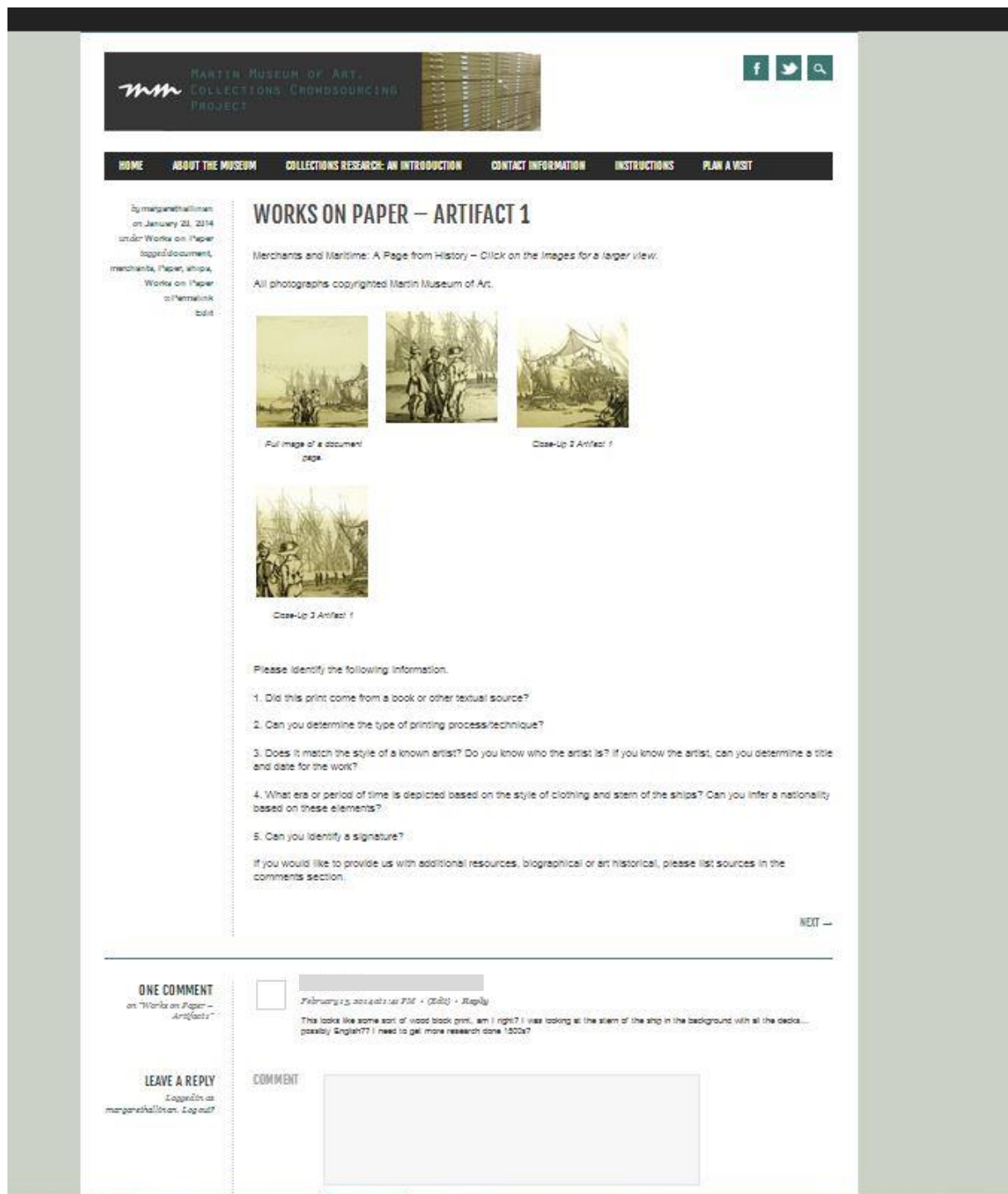


Figure 6. Screen Capture of Original Post. Martin Museum of Art.

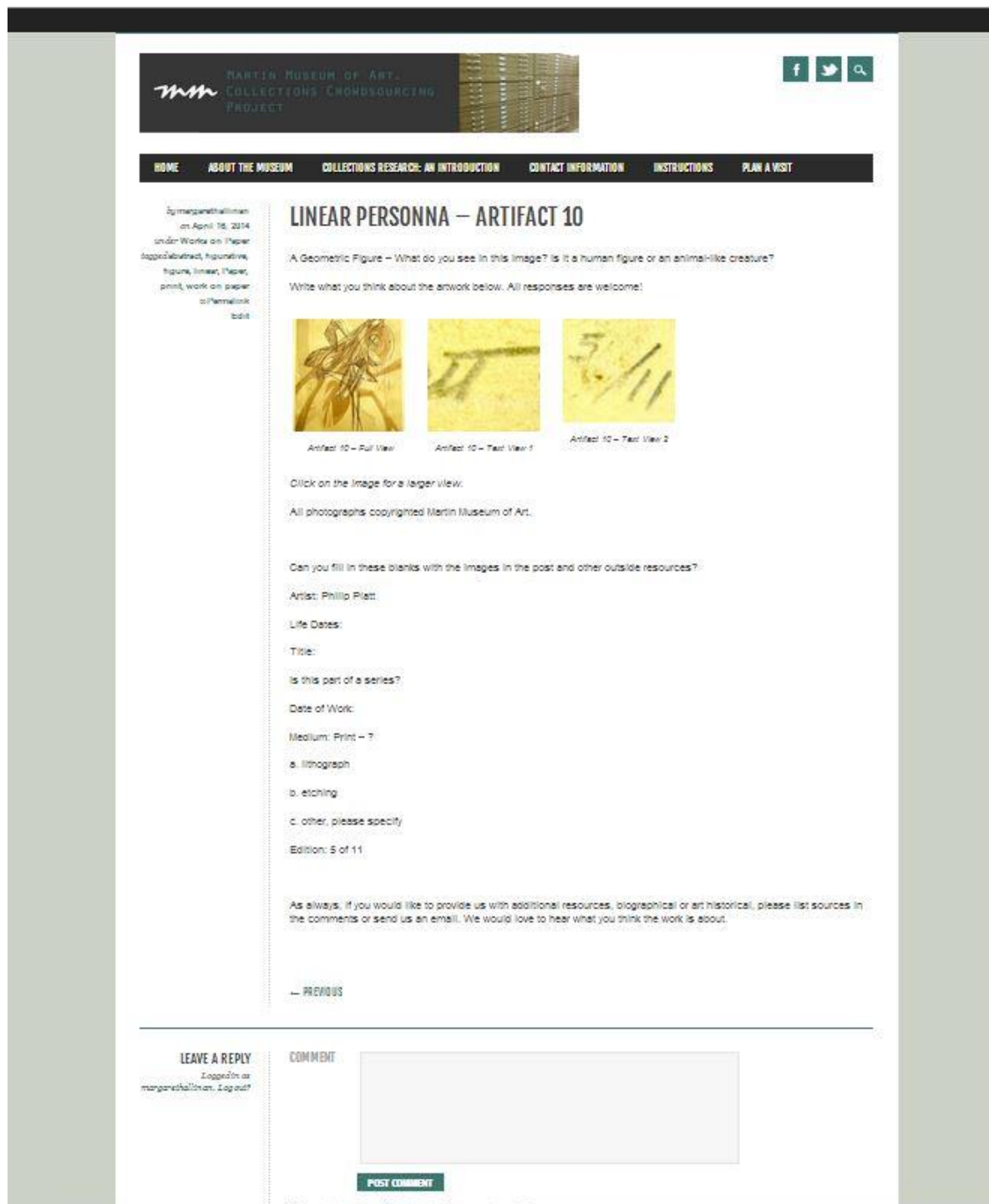


Figure 7. Screen Capture of Revised Post. Martin Museum of Art.

Blog Collection Checklist

1. In an excel spreadsheet marked “Blog Post Traffic Statistics” please record the data in the appropriate fields. Go to “Posts” in the left tool bar, then “All Posts” in the drop down menu. Scroll down to the post you would like to review and click on the title. Scroll down the page to show the statistics dialog and click the blue button to see the statistics. Record the information of the first three entries, “Visits”, “Unique Visitors”, and “Pageviews” in the last column on the right.
2. In a database log titled “Blog Collected Information”, record the date, artwork, post title, number of comments, questions, and new information gathered (Please enter the name of the commentator and the date they commented in the box to the left and in the right box the comment).
3. Check the blog at 10:00AM, 2:00PM, and 4:00PM - record the date and time it was checked and by whom.
4. Check related email, moderated posts in the queue, and the post itself.
5. Check for errors and troubleshoot at 4:00PM.
6. Check each day at the same times.
7. Check Google Analytics for results and enter the data into the appropriate or corresponding field in the spreadsheet titled, “Google Analytics Results.”

Frequency of posts is based on time, human resources, and public interest. It is preferable to post two images of different periods, ethnic background, or medium each posting.

The checklist is for maintaining and monitoring the blog site under measurable standards and for consistency. These standards should change dependent on time, human resources, funding, and public interest.

Figure 8. Blog Collection Checklist.

Example

Date of Post	
MM Inventory Number	
Art Descriptor	
Post Title	
Number of Comments	
Questions/Original Information	
Date(s) Collected	
User Research	

1.

Date of Post	02/12/2014
MM Inventory Number	1114
Art Descriptor	Paper; print; three merchants in front of tall ships
Post Title	Works on Paper - Artifact 1
Number of Comments	2
Questions/Original Information	
	1. Did this print come from a book or other textual source?
	2. Can you determine the type of printing process/technique?
	3. Does it match the style of a known artist? Do you know who the artist is? If you know the artist, can you determine a title and date for the work?
	4. What era or period of time is depicted based on the style of clothing and stern of the ships? Can you infer a nationality based on these elements?
	5. Can you identify a signature?
Date(s) Collected/ Staff Initials	2/17/2018, MH
User Research	
<div>Waco Tribune-Herald (02/12/2014)</div>	Email See Additional Form
<div>Familial Relation (02/13/2014--1:41PM)</div>	This looks like some sort of wood block print, am I right? I was looking at the stern of the ship in the background with all the decks...possibly English?? I need to get more research done 1500s?

***Note:** Artifacts 8-13 in the “Blog Collected Information” spreadsheet still retain the questions from the original formatting of those posts. The questions and formats were changed on March 25, 2014 to reflect the choices in the survey of March 19, 2014 to incite more visitor participation. These questions were recorded for future evaluation of these particular works of art.

Figure 9. Sample from the Blog Collected Information Worksheet.

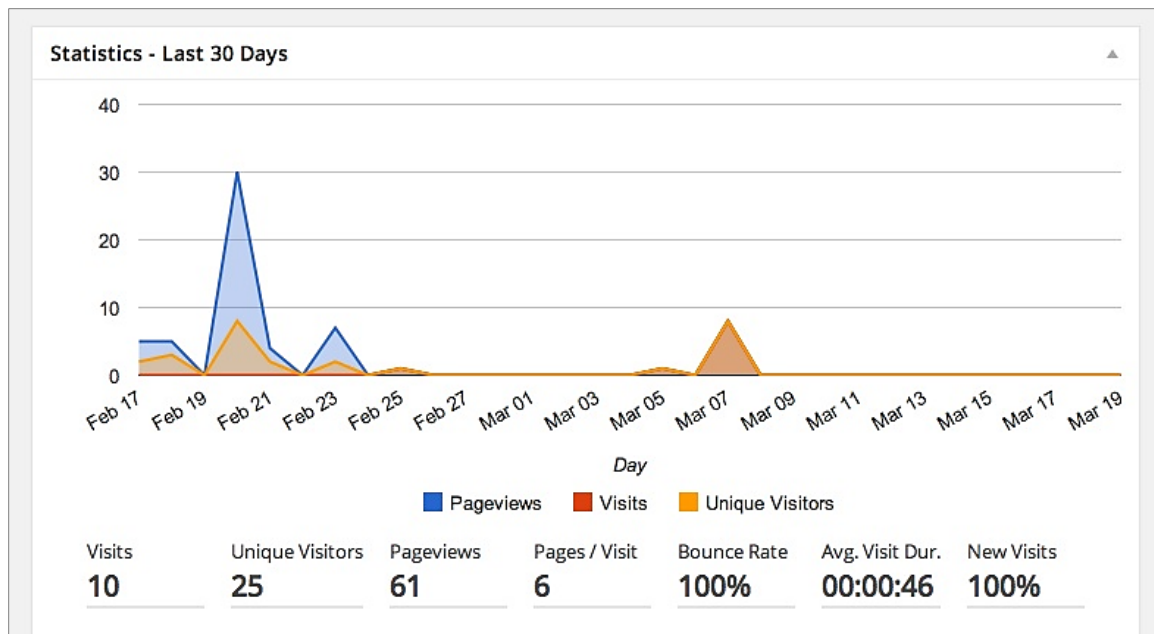


Figure 10. Screen Capture of Edublogs Statistics. from the Martin Museum of Art Collections Crowdsourcing Blog. Martin Museum of Art.

Blog Post Traffic Statistics

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Help Last edit was 4 days ago

<

Figure 11. Screen Capture. Sample from the Blog Traffic Statistics Spreadsheet.

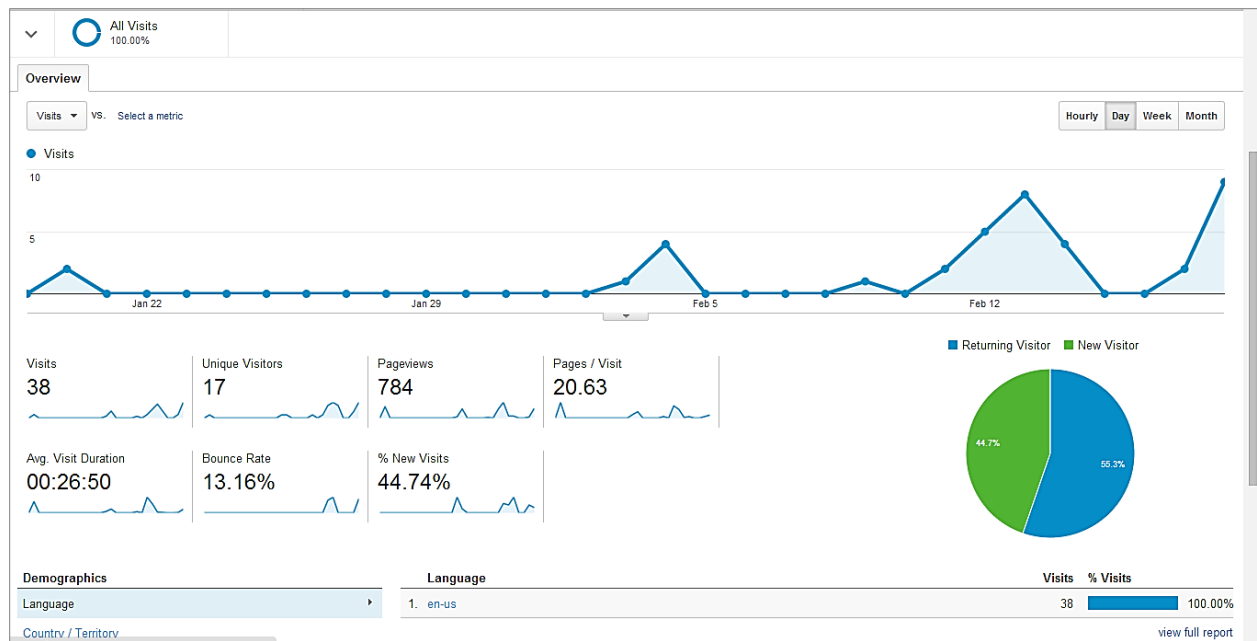


Figure 12. Screen Capture. Google Analytics. Statistics Homepage.

Demographics	Service Provider	Visits	% Visits
Language	1. baylor university	23	60.53%
Country / Territory	2. (not set)	4	10.53%
City	3. at&t internet services	2	5.26%
System	4. cfn pool attct-nmpl23	2	5.26%
Browser	5. waco tribune herald	2	5.26%
Operating System	6. deloitte & touche	1	2.63%
Service Provider	7. grande communications waco hub 4	1	2.63%
Mobile	8. service provider corporation	1	2.63%
Operating System	9. tel west communications llc	1	2.63%
Service Provider	10. university of pennsylvania	1	2.63%
Screen Resolution	view full report		

Figure 13. Screen Capture. Google Analytics. Service Provider Statistics. On-Campus.

Demographics	City	Visits	% Visits
Language	1. Waco	31	81.58%
Country / Territory	2. Austin	2	5.26%
City	3. Red Oak	2	5.26%
System	4. Chicago	1	2.63%
Browser	5. Philadelphia	1	2.63%
Operating System	6. Dallas	1	2.63%
Service Provider	view full report		
Mobile			
Operating System			
Service Provider			
Screen Resolution			

Figure 14. Screen Capture. Google Analytics. City Statistics.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Google Analytics Results							
2								
3	Note: Does Google count administrative visits?	Margin of error, counting my steps						
4								
5	Date Checked	Staff Member	Time Frame:	Visits	Unique Visits	Returning Visitors	New Visitors	Page Views
6	2/19/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 18 2014	38	17	55.3%	44.7%	784
7	2/20/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 19 2014	42	19	57.1%	42.9%	951
8	2/24/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 24 2014	68	42	38.2%	61.8%	982
9	2/26/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 26 2014	113	87	23%	77%	1027
10	2/27/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 27 2014	124	98	21%	79%	1038
11	2/28/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Feb. 28 2014	162	136	16%	84%	1076
12	3/1/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 01 2014	194	168	13.4%	86.6%	1108
13	3/3/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 03 2014	214	188	12.1%	87.9%	1128
14	3/4/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 04 2014	229	203	11.4%	88.6%	1143
15	3/6/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 06 2014	292	266	8.9%	91.1%	1210
16	3/18/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 18 2014	381	368	3.9%	96.1%	822
17	3/19/2014	Margaret Hallinan, G.A.	Jan. 19 2014 - Mar. 19 2014	414	401	3.6%	96.4%	855
18								
19								
20								
21								
22								

Figure 15. Screen Capture. Google Analytics. Sample of Google Analytics Results Statistics Spreadsheet.

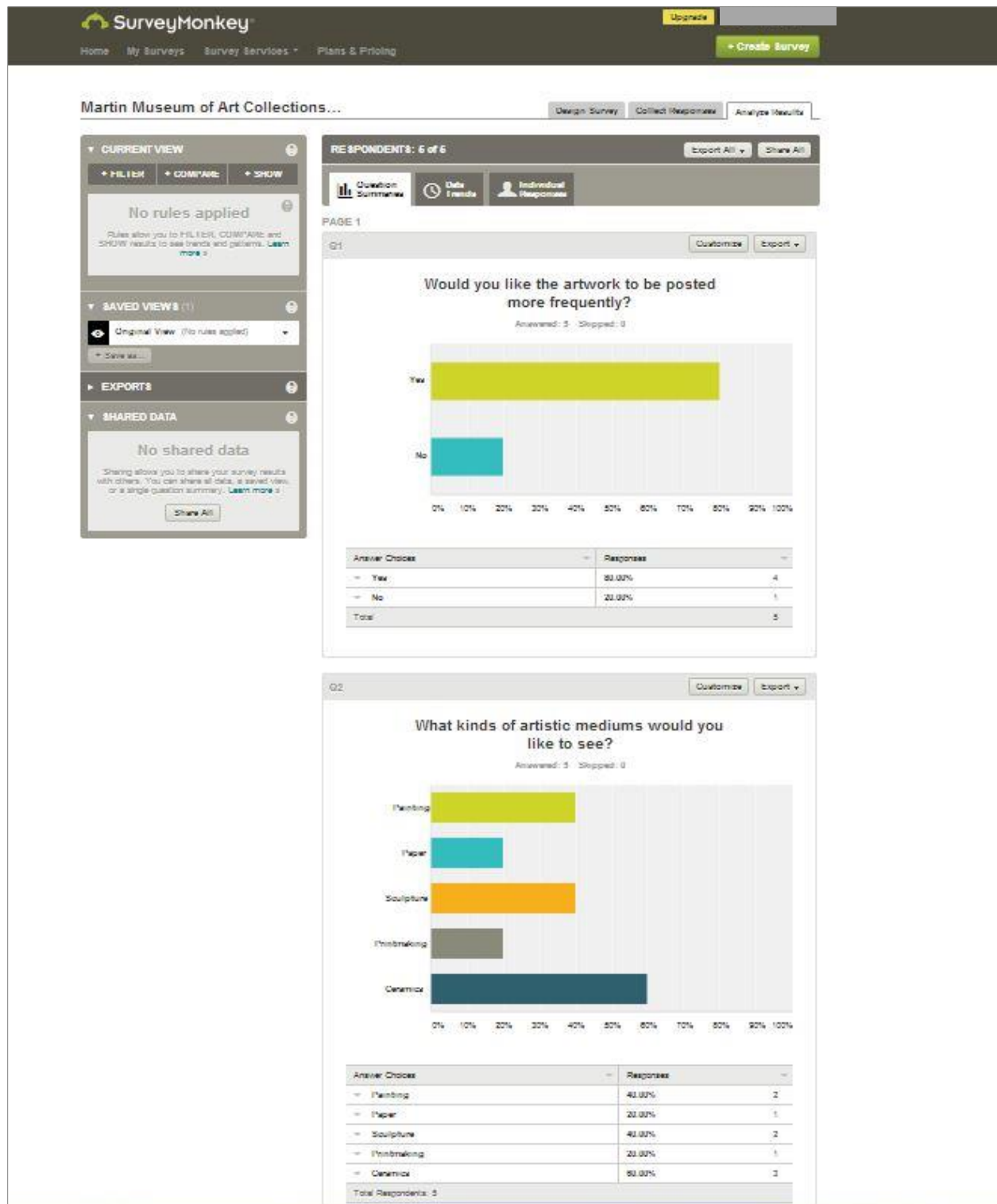


Figure 17.1. Screen Capture of Survey Results.

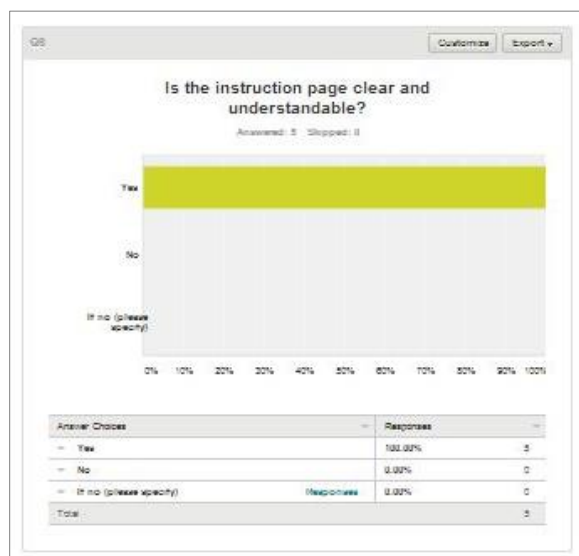
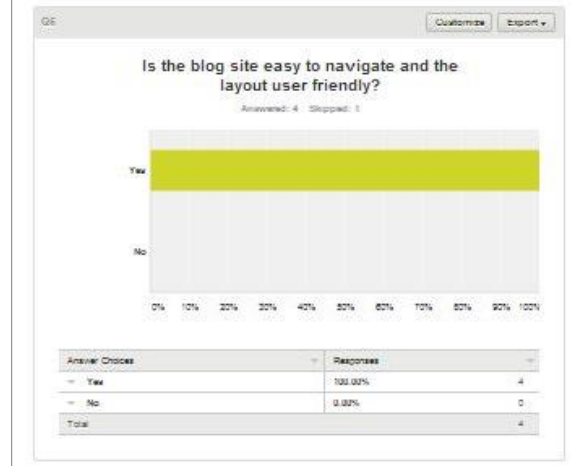
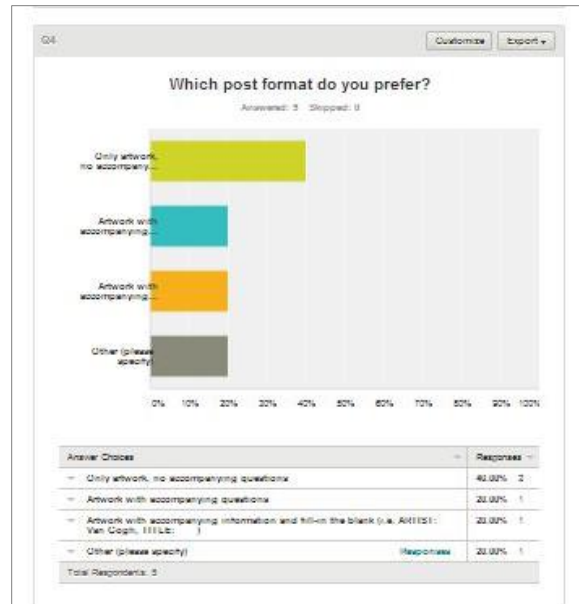
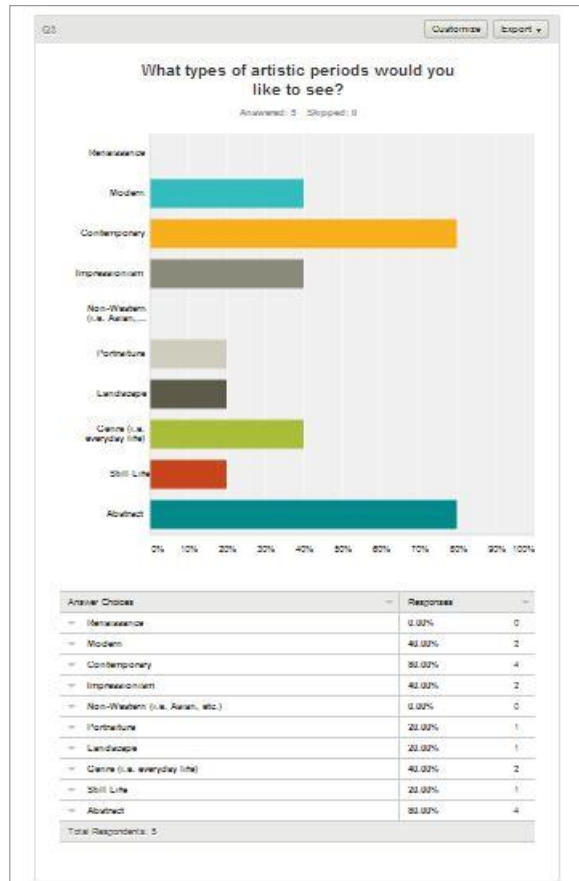


Figure 17.2. Screen Capture of Survey Results.

Can you identify
the object in the
image?



To find the answer, go to:
blogs.baylor.edu/mmoa_crowdsourcing

Do you like puzzles, problem solving, or research?
Do you like art and history?

Join the museum in discovering the artists and exploring the
details of their masterpieces from the permanent collection.

 Martin Museum of Art



BAYLOR

Figure 18. Campus Flyer.



Martin Museum of Art Collections Crowdsourcing Project

The MMoA collections forum was conceived by Margaret Hallinan to fulfill the requirement of a Graduate Thesis Project.

The Martin Museum of Art is embarking on a journey to fully research the art in its permanent collection. The goal is to create better programming, educational adjuncts, and improve the scholarship of the collection to better serve the needs of museum visitors and fulfill its mission.

The Martin Museum of Art, Baylor University, is committed to the advancement and understanding of art through an active program of collections, stewardship, conservation, innovative exhibitions, education, interpretive programs, and special events to serve and enrich Baylor University and the public communities of Waco and Central Texas. The Museum serves as a vital resource for teaching and scholarship in a broad variety of disciplines, including, but not limited to, art history, art appreciation and studio art.

We need your help in researching the works of art and spreading the word to your professional colleagues, students, other organizations, and friends about this new endeavor. As a small staff we appreciate all of the assistance we receive in collections research, granting us more time and resources to other collection and educational pursuits as well as the physical care of our collection.

To visit or participate in the project, please go to:

blogs.baylor.edu/mmoa_crowdsourcing

For more information on the project, please contact:

Adair McGregor, Collections Manager Adair_McGregor@baylor.edu 254.710.3503

Margaret Hallinan, Graduate Assistant Margaret_Hallinan@baylor.edu

For more information on the museum, please contact:

Karin Gilliam, Director Karin_Gilliam@baylor.edu 254.710.7263



BAYLOR

Figure 19. Flyer for Professional and Academic Correspondence.



Figure 20. Screen Capture of Facebook Post for Artifact 1. Martin Museum of Art.

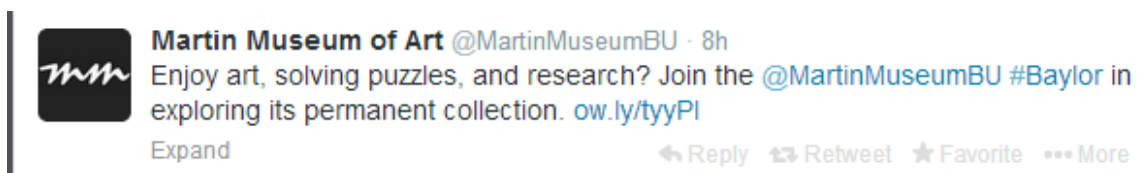


Figure 21. Screen Capture of Twitter Tweet. Martin Museum of Art.

Appendix 1.
Menu Page: Introduction.

Welcome to the collections crowdsourcing project forum for the Martin Museum of Art at Baylor University. The purpose of this project is to discover information on artwork presented from the museum's permanent collection. With a small staff maximizing their time and resources, efficiently researching each piece in the collection becomes difficult with such limitations. We need your assistance in translating and transcribing text, in addition to retrieving identifying information on artwork posted on this site. With this information, the museum can increase our educational resources for students who frequent our collections, the surrounding community, and create a connection between artists and art connoisseurs. Volunteers, such as yourself, make collection's research possible with your detailed observations, mastery of language, and knowledge of art history. Please join us in developing our collection's resources and furthering the mission of the museum.

All rights reserved.

Appendix 2. Menu Page: Instructions.

The purpose of this project is to garner as much accurate information on the artwork from the permanent collection posted on this site to better fulfill the mission of the museum as a teaching institution with a variety of resources available to the public. To do this, volunteers are needed to assist in discovering basic identifying information for the objects, such as artist name, life dates, title, etc. Though the museum may have some of this information in their records, it is important to have verification of facts for future use in exhibit labels and for visiting scholars.

Each week one or more works of art of varying mediums and cultural backgrounds will be posted on the site. A series of images will be posted for your research, a full view of the artwork and close-ups of any significant details. At the bottom of the post will be questions and information for which the collections staff is seeking answers. Your task as our research assistants is to use the comment section below to post the information you can gather from the images above, be it a translation of the text, a transcription of the artist's signature, or basic information such as the date of the work. All of which would be extremely beneficial to the museum!

A collections staff member will retrieve the information you have gathered at least twice daily and leave comments or further questions to aid with the research.

Thank you for all of your assistance and again, every ounce of data you can find will be beneficial to the research of the Martin Museum's collection.

Appendix 3. Menu Page: About the Museum.

The Martin Museum of Art (herein MMoA) has been a part of Baylor University's campus for the last thirty years, providing innovative and extraordinary exhibitions, programs, and speakers for the Baylor University community, the city of Waco, and Central Texas. The museum is primarily considered a teaching institution, serving the research needs of community scholars along with Baylor's faculty and students with the complementary display of the permanent collection and lecture series in conjunction with the studio art and art history courses taught within the Department of Art. The permanent collection consists of thirteen hundred (1300) works from a broad range of artistic media and periods of art, including old masters, modern American and European art, contemporary artists, and non-Western art to name a few.

For more information:

www.baylor.edu/martinmuseum

Mission Statement

The Martin Museum of Art, Baylor University, is committed to the advancement and understanding of art through an active program of collections, stewardship, conservation, innovative exhibitions, education, interpretive programs, and special events to serve and enrich Baylor University and the public communities of Waco and Central Texas. The Museum serves as a vital resource for teaching and scholarship in a broad variety of disciplines, including, but not limited to, art history, art appreciation and studio art.

Appendix 4.
Menu Page: Contact.

General Information

Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center
Baylor University
60 Baylor Avenue
One Bear Place #97263
Waco, TX 76798-7263

254.710.1867
martin_museum@baylor.edu
www.baylor.edu/martinmuseum

Project

For inquiries about the project and the blog
site:

Margaret Hallinan, Graduate Assistant Margaret_Hallinan@baylor.edu

Adair McGregor, Collections Manager Adair_McGregor@baylor.edu
254.710.3503

Museum

For general information on the Museum, exhibitions, or making a donation, please contact:

Karin Gilliam, Director Karin_Gilliam@baylor.edu
254.710.6390

For information regarding the permanent collection, please contact:

Adair McGregor, Collections Manager Adair_McGregor@baylor.edu
254.710.3503

To schedule a tour of the museum, to inquire about press relations and/or social media, please contact:

Jennifer Spry, Educational Coordinator Jennifer_Spry@baylor.edu
254.710.7263



Appendix 5.
Menu Page: Plan a Visit.

Martin Museum of Art is located at the Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center on Baylor University's campus at:

60 Baylor Avenue
Waco, Texas 76798-7263

Museum Hours

Tuesday - Friday 10:00AM - 6:00PM

Saturday 10:00AM - 4:00PM

Sunday 1:00PM - 4:00PM



The museum is closed on Mondays and University holidays.

All events are free and open to the public, unless specified

Directions and Parking

www.baylor.edu/martinmuseum

Parking passes will be available for certain daytime events.

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