

Workshop report

TRANS- MEDIA STORY- TELLING

*School of the Art Institute of Chicago -
04/24/2017*



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01 Workshop overview



Planning for the day

Morning

- Icebreakers
- Presentations
- Context
- « [What is transmedia storytelling?](#) »
- Brainstorming

Afternoon

- Creative warm-ups
- Ideation
- Feedback
- Finalizing ideation and prototyping
- Presenting projects
- Final discussion and conclusion

Participants

Wezitcampers

AKINOLA Motolani
BARRETT Quenna
JUNELL Olivia
KAUFMAN Carolina
LOPEZ Brenda
MARTIN Jordan
NICHOLSON Quinn
PEREZ Paul
RHYNE Marquez
TANI Sean Han
TONSKI Jacob

Facilitators

GERMAN Ronan
JACQUES-CASANOVA Alexia



02

Key takeaways



Relevance and stickiness

Experience and content must reach a **difficult balance between “stickiness” and relevance**. They must be able to catch the audience’s attention but also be relevant to this audience. The question of identity and the need to recognize oneself (or to recognize one’s history) in the museum’s collections came up many times during the workshop’s conversations.

Co-creation and participation

For storytelling, the need to **involve the audience in the content creation process** has been mentioned many times. This led to a conversation about the relationships and trust between museums and their audience. As a visitor, can I entrust the museum with my story? Who am I to say that the museum (or another person) can deem my story useful or interesting?

During the workshop, participants also discussed the need for the museum to **let go of the scenario**: participants can not (always) be told what to do or what they should gain from an experience. The scenario of the experience should be left open-ended and its outcome should not be determined in advance. Finally, regarding co-creation, the problem of **the use of participants’ data and testimonies** arises: how are they used by the museum and in what form?

Ressources

Should the museum create its own platforms or use existing ones (Soundcloud, Instagram and other apps)? What about the involvement of docents and guides? If we want the public to behave differently in the museum environment (to play, participate, speak, create) how do we establish confidence? How do we inform them of their rights as visitors? Budgetary constraints also need to be taken into account especially when a board of directors finances the program. There is a risk they might not understand this type of participatory or community-driven approach.



Transmedia differently

Transmedia must extend outside the museum. The **user-centric design approach** in this type of experience is crucial. **Transmedia can be analogue** (as opposed to digital). The rabbit holes (or entry points) can also be analogue and **take the form of partnerships**. For instance, a partnership between the museum and existing associations which act as the entry point of the young people into the museum. **The “media” in transmedia can also be a place** (the museum itself, the school), **a means of transport** (school bus bringing children to the museum), or anything else.



03 *The day in details*



Methodology

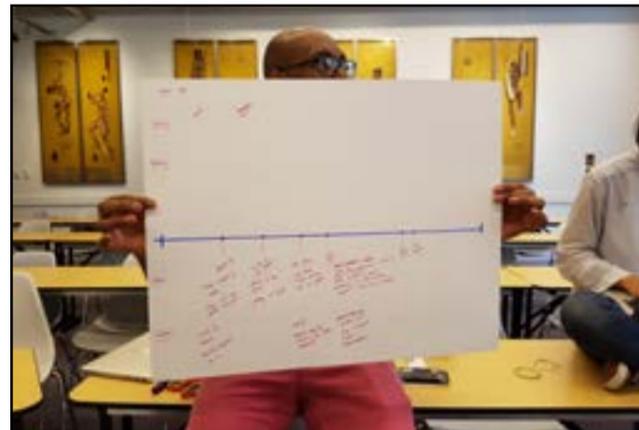
Brainstorming

Participants were invited to brainstorm individually on the concepts of “transmedia” and “storytelling”. After each one wrote all their ideas on post-its (a post-it by idea), they then pasted them on a wall. Once everyone was aware of the ideas of others, the participants worked collectively to group all these post-its into clusters.

To discover all the ideas of the participants during these brainstorms, see our [transmedia post-it board](#) and our [storytelling post-it board](#).

Ideation and prototyping

Participants were divided into two groups. Each group randomly picked a work from a selection of paintings, sculptures and objects from the collection of the Art Institute of Chicago. They then chose a target audience. The aim of the activity was to imagine a transmedia storytelling experience which included a visit at the museum. Participants had to define the trajectory of the user / visitor throughout the experience, from the entry point to the end.



Team 1 :

the Etruscan mirror

Audience : teenagers

Creation of a scenographic proposal for a participative exhibition intended for teenagers. The exhibition is organized in partnership with local non-profits already working with teenagers.



Main challenges of the project

- Knowledge (or transmission of knowledge) relating to the Etruscan mirror.
- How relevant is it for teenagers today?
- “What does this object mean to me, visitor?”
- Point of entry for this experiment: how are young people brought into this environment?
- Difficult audience: does not open easily and even less in a museum.
- Budgetary constraints: the influence of funders or of the board of directors who may not understand the “radical” approach of such participatory exhibitions, or do not wish to see waves of youngsters rushing to the museum.

Theoretical considerations

Participants discussed contemporary practices of selfhood and more particularly the practice of selfies, but also themes surrounding death, as well as gender and the power relations that result from it.

It would be interesting for teenagers to leave an object telling their own story in this museum, which in general gives them a feeling of isolation, distance or even exclusion.

It is necessary to make the museum welcoming and to favor partnerships with existing local non-profits and institutions already working with teenagers.



Project details

The exhibition space includes :

- An audio or augmented reality booth in which the visitor can create their own story in images, via a playlist, or an audio recording.
- A space where exhibits encapsulate stories and testimonials from visitors.
- DIY crafts spaces where visitors can create their own altar, their own personal object to display.
- A workshop to customize their own smartphone into an Etruscan mirror and take selfies (pictured below).



Final Feedback

- Is it preferable for the museum to aggregate stories and testimonials on existing platforms (Tumblr) or should it create its own platform?
- Experience and exposure are not necessarily in the museum (pop-ups or itinerant museums).
- It is crucial to: involve young people in the exhibition planning; not tell them what they should learn from this experience but give them a space to express themselves; and therefore, leave the scenario open-ended. When collaborating with youth, the museum must see them not as junior staff but as real welcomed and supported personnel.
- The marketing of this experience must be in tune with the intended audience, both on the platforms used and in the content and style. Here again, members of the intended audience should be involved in the creative process.
- Include relevant and attractive tools: a live Twitter wall next to the selfie station.
- Link with schools: students often arrive at the museum on a school trip. Work with school standards and curricula. The bus journey itself can be part of the transmedia experience.

Team 2 :

Gonzanze Myo

Audience : children

Creation of an experiment based on miming statues to encourage children to express their emotions through their body and then in words. The goal is to express one's emotions through the metaphors presented in a series of works. When young visitors come in they are asked (via an app) "What is your dominant emotion right now? / How do you feel ?" Their response automatically directs them to an artwork representing a divinity in connection with their emotion, and they are then invited to illustrate / represent this emotion and imitate the corresponding divinity. On the photo created, an artwork label is generated with the name of the child / divinity, her age etc.

Main challenges of the projet

- The entry points to the experiment (how are children / families brought to the museum?)
- Obstacles to knowledge about – or understanding of – artworks



- Rhythm: concentration can be problematic for children
- Ability to identify with the work (empathy)

Final feedback

- Issues raised by museums collecting data from these children (images and potentially email addresses of parents who wish to retrieve images)
- How to make this experience immersive? What colors or musics are used?
- Transmedia can be simple, no need for ultra-complex technology.
- Artifacts that children bring home are important (3D prints, double portrait child / divinity).



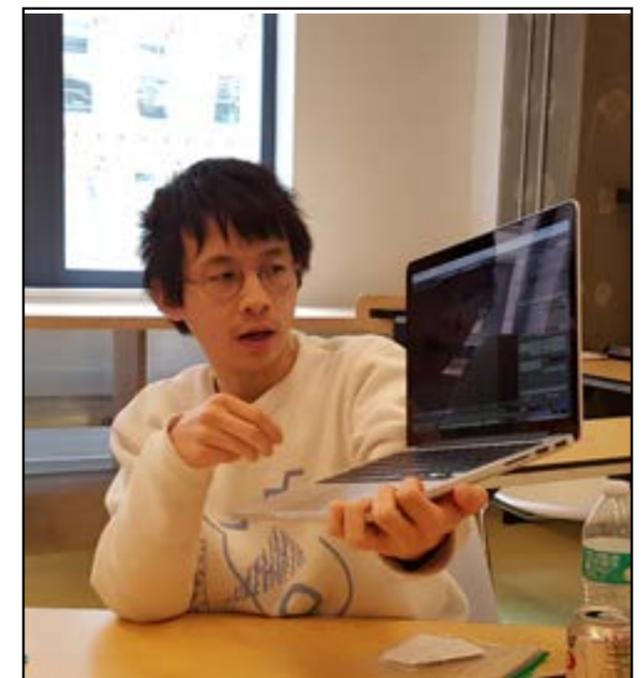
04 Conclusion

Finale discussion and conclusions

The museum does not need to be at the center of the transmedia experience. The museum may be a medium in itself.

The museum must move away from existing exclusively to show its collections and start presenting itself as a public space. This is a radical step that can be difficult to take for some institutions.

Stickiness ("I want to be part of this community / experience") is essential: fans of transmedia experiences do not see their participation as a burden.





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