

TEENS IN THE MUSEUM: ARE WE HAVING FUN?

Recommendations for offering playful learning experiences for teens

PROJECT METHODS Museum Sessions • Site visits with pilot group teens provided by foundry10 to 4 Seattle museums, in which they answered a questionnaire at the end of their visit about the experience and connections to play. • ~15 Teen Participants x 4 Museums = 28 Responses Landscape Review • Divided U.S regionally, looking at 10 museums per region that contained topics of play and teens on their websites. • 70 museums total • Included other publications from the museum field surrounding teens. Interviews with Museum Staff • Asked staff from different departments about barriers, setbacks, lessons learned, or positives regarding teen audiences + topics of play. • 5 Interviews Total	PURPOSE • To find out what kinds of playful learning experiences museums are offering teens. • Explore how teens actually enjoy engaging in play inside museums, and get their opinons on what kinds of experiences they would like to see. • Explore how design and expectations in exhibit spaces contribute to teen engagement. FRAMING • The museum field offers experiences for teens through programming, responsibility-based internships, and artistic outlets. • There is not much research on the combination of teens and play in museum settings. Overall, most research regarding teens and play in general is related to technology, games, and mental health. • This project hopes to be illustrative of an untapped subject.	KEY TAKEAWAYS • Museums are sufficiently providing creative outlets for teens through programming, especially surrounding art (typically considered Symbolic Play). • Museums are not accounting for the experiences of their daily visitation teens both in content design and inclusion. • The most common ways teens engaged in play in museums were Play with objects and Games with rules. • Teens expressed wanting more opportunities to engage in Pretend play. • Teens made it clear that they are interested in <i>learning by doing</i>, and engaging with “real stuff.” Playing in a museum allows them to connect with content in a unique way.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Thank you to Ellie and Dillyn from Museum of Northwest Art, Nancy from Highline Heritage Museum, Blake from The Wing Luke Museum, and Alissa Rupp, FAIA Principal, FRAME Integrative Design Strategies Thesis Committee: Chair: Dr. Jessica Luke Rachel Gaudry - Creativity, Design, and Play Team Lead at foundry10 Jamie Bonnett - Director Of Education at KidsQuest Children's Museum	NEXT STEPS • This project created a set of recommendations for both museum professionals and foundry10 to implement successful playful learning opportunities in museums. • For museums, the next step would be to assess your relationship with teens using the Youth250 Toolkit and utilizing recommendations from this project. • There is discrepancy on a national level in how museums view their teen audience from ticket types to content which would be useful to research. • Further projects surrounding what creates permission to play in a space, and the environmental cues that lead to inclusion in museums would be beneficial. • Teens expressed apathy towards screens inside museums in favor of analog experiences. This would be a useful topics to conduct further study regarding technology
IMPACT • Teens feel supported and included in museums. • Play is a beneficial form of learning for teens, and finding ways to increase that will help their development in the long run. • Foundry10 will be better equipped to implement learning through play in both exhibits and programs should they choose to fund or connect with local museums. • Museum professionals will have a starting place for creating playful experiences designed specifically for teens. • Explore how museum spaces can be more inclusive to all visitors, as well as engaging. Utiliize the uniqueness of the museum as a informal learning space.		RECOMMENDATIONS - DELIVERABLE • The deliverables of this project are a document of actionable recommendations for both museum professionals to utilize, and foundry10 to support future projects with. • The recommendations for the types of play teens want to experience are built off of the museum sessions and direct opinions from a group of pilot teens. • Recommendations for how to include teen audiences are built from staff and museum professional interviews, as well as illustrated from the landscape review and other field publishings.		