

Understanding Contradictions in Times of Change: A CHAT Analysis in an Art Museum

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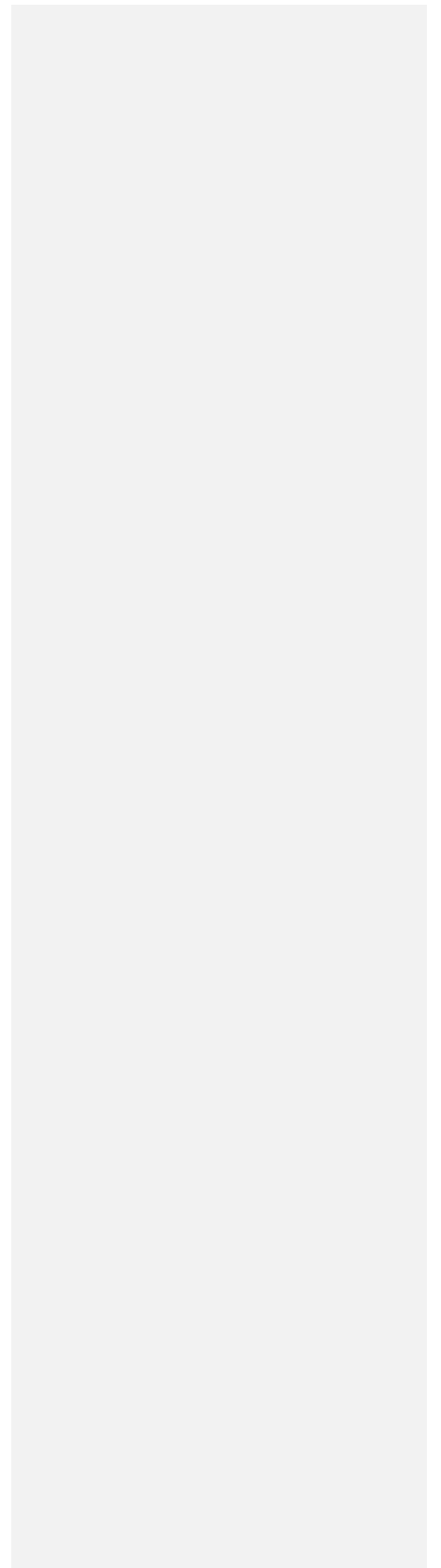
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**Abstract**

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Art museums are moving increasingly toward community and experience-based practices and away from traditional modes of operating. This research explores change at an art museum through the lens of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), specifically as it relates to the education department. By employing a multi-level look at the contradictions that lie beneath the activity system, this research demonstrates how tensions in the system can aggravate those contradictions and lead to or inhibit change. In addition, this research explores the extent to which educators can become organizational change agents through their work.

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## **Dedication**

To: Alex and Lillie,

May you seek honesty and kindness

in all that you do,

but above all, seek joy.

Reminding yourself that your joy  
does not take away from anyone else.

Do brave and brilliant things,

my sweet, adoring, hilarious,

brother and sister.

## Chapter One: Introduction to Art Museums and Research

I grew up in a town that was not known for being particularly progressive. About a mile from my house was a sculpture park. I used to frequent the park during high school and use it as a place to unwind, reflect, and just be. Aside from groups of preschoolers catching tadpoles, no one else I knew ever went there.

In the park was a giant boat like structure called The Ark. It was made of fallen bark and tree debris. The artist who created the sculpture said that after seven years, he would return to take The Ark apart and have a bonfire with the materials. Sure enough, when I was home from college one summer, the artist came back and my community was invited to the bonfire.

And the community did in fact show up.

During the event there was a celebration with people dressed in elaborate, bright costumes, dancing to drummers. I was reminded of Max in the children's book *Where the Wild Things Are*, suddenly in a world quite like the one I'd always known but so very different. There were other exhibition openings as well, including a piece about Islam and the Muslim struggle (this wasn't long after 9/11). And community members talked about it. For the first time that I could remember, I saw the same people I had grown up with talking about something other than town gossip. They were engaging in big ideas and joy in ways that pulled me up short. I learned something that night about the power of art, objects and experiences, to mediate conversation, generate experience, and possibly transform narratives.

This experience at the Art Park affected me in two separate but intertwined ways. First, it affirmed the idea that art can exist to shape people's experiences and

understandings. Art has the ability to convey something deeply personal and simultaneously universal about the human experience (Dewey, 1934). But this experience also altered the way that I looked at museum spaces meet the public and the generative potential that exists within that relationship.

I am often faced with the question: Do museums really matter? When it comes down to necessity, perhaps not. You can't eat a museum; you can't live in a museum. Museums aren't institutions that are equipped or expected to provide social welfare or a full educational experience for that matter. But museums are a part of the fabric of a community and as such, they have the ability to generate meaningful experiences that impact learning and identity formation (Falk, 2006; Falk & Dierking, 2008), and protect and produce culture.

In 1989 the Department of Finance argued that museums are valued because they are institutions that contribute to social value. As such, they don't simply hold objects but also the intellectual heritage, the history, values and traditions of society. They can enhance the wellbeing of a community by providing opportunities for increased engagement, learning, and access to resources (Silverman, 2010). By collecting objects across cultures, museums by their very nature can provide a platform for voices that other institutions can't or won't and because of that, they have the ability to foster dialogue and understanding across cultures and experiences – something that becomes increasingly important as the world becomes more and more globalized. The more we understand the experience of the other, as well as recognize shared experiences, the more we can address the issues that threaten the global community.

But museums not only offer the opportunity to foster global understandings but especially pertinent to this research project, museums shape and convey a sense of local identity. And museums do this work in tandem with the object, or in the case of this research, the art. Museums provide visitors the chance to experience art and as such, they design and shape those experiences in ways that only museums are equipped to do. These are just a handful of ways that museums matter, but more so than that, each of these reasons points toward the *potential* for museums to increase their public value by creating opportunities for these community impacts to exist and flourish (Munley, 2010).

Museum professionals and supporters also believe in the potential of the type of work that museums are capable of and thus they are experiencing a paradigm shift in their work as they try to meet those potentials (Korn, 2007; Burton & Scott, 2003; Weil, 1999). At this particular moment in history, museums are reconsidering the ways that they engage with their public, questioning and assessing their role within the community landscape (Falk & Dierking, 2008). Echoed in so many of these initiatives and changes are Weil's (1999) words describing the shift in museums as moving from being about something and toward being for somebody. There are a number of reasons why this shift is happening including cuts to public funding (Falk & Dierking, 2006; Burton & Scott, 2003), an increased awareness and concern of social issues and inequities (Silverman, 2010; Korn, 2007), changing and diversifying communities, and mission driven changes that require an increased in focus on communities (Falk & Dierking, 2008; Korn, 2007). Particularly relevant to art and cultural institutions has been the push back from social practice artists, or those artists doing work that involves cooperation and collaboration with outside parties, to work outside of the museum walls (Lind, 2012). Thus, art

museums have attempted to identify ways to remain relevant with the work of those artists. No matter the reason, or combination of reasons, museums are moving toward social practice models that are meant to positively affect their community and their world.

In light of all of this seemingly progressive change, picture for a moment a typical art museum visitor. I would guess that you pictured someone from a specific socioeconomic status (upper middle class), with a particular skin color (white), with perhaps a particular political belief system (liberal). Echoing that sentiment is the 2008 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) survey which found that from 2002 – 2008 public participation in the arts declined but more worrying to the arts world was the clear and persistent connection between race and ethnicity and the slow but steady decline of participation. White Americans were over-represented among adult art museum visitors in 2008 (78.9 percent of visitors, while just 68.7 percent of the U.S. population) while Hispanics and African Americans were significantly underrepresented (Hispanics were 8.6% of art museum visitors, 13.5% of U.S. population; African Americans were 5.9% of art museum visitors while 11.4% of the population). Museum visitors tend to be well educated, affluent and versed in deciphering museum code (Burton & Scott, 2003), in other words, those that have a history of going to and being accepted by museums. Even though museums are trying on new practices, they continue to perpetuate their old ways of being in the world.

An example of how museums perpetuate those ways of being is the way that they have traditionally viewed the community through a deficit model lens (Falk, 2006), that is to say, museums have understood the community as lacking something that the

museum could provide, rather than acknowledging the unique assets the community brings to the relationship. In doing so, the museum has revealed a center/periphery view of its communities in which the museum is placed firmly at the center (Lynch, 2009). This is especially detrimental to communities that have been traditionally marginalized from society and museums. For example, museums often “own” objects that have been stolen or forcibly accessed from communities such as Native Americans. Museums then present these objects to the public in a manner that suits the museum, not the creators of the objects.

The NEA’s Survey of Public Participation in the Arts is the only periodic national survey that we have on arts attendance and participation and these results are a clear indication that despite efforts to become more community focused, something isn’t working. Museums are simultaneously trying to boost attendance, attract new audiences, and keep the audiences they have, and they are struggling to do so (Burton & Scott, 2003). While this would appear to be an indication that museums are experimenting and taking risks, often this work comes across as haphazard and unfocused (Korn, 2007) and the changes that have been made aren’t enough.

Shifts toward becoming more community focused and centered are unprecedented. As such, museums have no roadmap with which to learn to do this work and they can’t rely on outdated operating models internally while doing meaningful work externally. This kind of institutional change work is not easy, nor is learning to do it. It requires an alignment between outward community practices with internal museum practices. Korn (2007) refers to the development of this alignment as developing holistic intentionality. She says that “A museum striving for intentionality knows and respects its

institutional self; it knows exactly who it is, who it wants to serve, and how it wants to serve” (p. 259) which leads us rather abruptly into the problem that many museums face: in times of change “knowing” the answers to these questions, or even how to develop the answers to these questions, is not always apparent or evident.

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

For too long, cultural institutions have thought and behaved as if they were isolated jewels, with inherent value based on their longevity, privilege or financial worth. Museums, orchestras, theatres, and galleries are increasingly appreciating that they are but one piece of a very complex community fabric, in fact, not just one fabric but a series of intersecting community fabrics – communities of geography.

(Falk & Dierking, 2008, p.236)

As the quote above highlights, museums have traditionally behaved one way and are increasingly aware of how that “isolated jewel” behavior is no longer working or, put another way, the inherent value of museums is not quite as inherent as it once seemed. Given contextual and internal pressures, museums are attempting to change their practices and their identities, putting social responsibility at the forefront of what they do (Gurian, 1998). The problem is that while perhaps necessary, change is not easy and museums have generally not been renowned for their willingness to embrace change or even for their capacity to engage with change processes (Keith, 2012; Sandell & Janes, 2007; Hushion, 1999; Janes, 1999). Yet, as Sandell & Janes (2013) remind us, “resistance and inaction have proved to be untenable positions to maintain and museums have been forced to confront the challenges, navigate the obstacles and adapt to the opportunities presented by ever more complex, unpredictable and highly dynamic operating environments” (p.17).

Due to the need to respond to the increased complexity and unpredictability of these new environments, change processes remain necessary yet difficult because they require a kind of death to the way things were (DePree, 1992). Moments of change and transition that go beyond cosmetic changes uproot organizations and while at their best they move organizations toward practices they have not yet developed that are in line with their new goals, there is an inherent fear in doing what has not yet been done, or deviating from what “works.” Change, therefore, must be approached at the very least with intention and care, and with balanced inquiry and action (Janes, 2009). The paths that organizations follow when they approach change processes are seen by many leading management thinkers as powerful determinants of the organization’s ability to succeed or to fail (Sandell & Janes, 2013). Museums are simultaneously being faced with the tasks of needing to change, as well as the need to learn how to change.

Learning, Janes (2009) argues, is at the core of this work. For him, all efforts at change are about learning including: “learning from the experience, learning from people, and learning from successes and failures” (p.79). As such, how museums learn to take up new ways of being in the world and new community based practices, must stem from an internal learning practice. In other words, in order to change, museums must learn new ways of being a museum both internally and externally. When those don’t align, museums create enduring difficulties.

“In particular, the failure to ask ‘why’ museums do what they do discourages self-critical reflection, which is a prerequisite to heightened awareness, organizational alignment and social relevance” (Janes, 2009, p.16). As Janes points out, museums do not often ask ‘why’ and in not doing so they discourage self-critical reflection. If

organizational alignment and social relevance are the goals of institutions then it cannot be said enough that survival in this new context depends on connection to the ever-changing community and the ability to develop new practices in light of community responses (Falk & Dierking, 2008), as well as the ability to create synchronicity between internal museum practices and engagement of their communities.

So what does it mean to change? And how do we understand that change so that it can be cultivated with intention and care? I approached this research looking to study the catalysts of change—how moments of energy even if they are embedded in contradictions and tension might fuel, or inhibit, growth. Museums won't do this community-based work well or address the concerns that they face without changing their internal structures to reflect their outward practices. There are barriers blocking this kind of alignment though, such as lack of time and money; a lack of examples to follow; and above all questions concerning whether or not they will lose their legitimacy in the wider museum-field.

Museums aren't simply buildings that house objects. They are organizations that are made up of people with different goals and motivations who must work together to achieve various objectives. In addition, museums have a history that affects how they change and the extent to which they can change because being a museum carries with it a particular kind of responsibility toward maintaining its museum-ness to the community and to the field at large. As systems, they are multi-voiced, complex, and contradictory, and they have the power to impact individuals, as well as collectives such as communities or other organizations.

As a museum takes up a more deliberate public practice model, they naturally affect cultural change on their own practices, as well as in the community. Learning to create and navigate those changes well is crucial to both the continued existence of museums, and also important for communities who can possibly have something to gain from access to art and the institutions. The ability to imagine a new way of participating and contributing to the world is the first step to the creative production of new practices that are of value to the organization and the community.

The purpose of this study is threefold. I aim to understand:

1. Resistances to and potential for change in an art museum
2. How a museum's education department understands itself as a change agent
3. And, how museum professionals can use data to co-develop organization-specific solutions to problems of practice

In order to address these purposes, I propose the following research questions:

- What is the nature of an art museum as an activity system?
- How do contradictions in the system afford and constrain the work and agency of the educational department?

Golding (2013) poses the question: "Might museums be led by a strong ethos of collaboration while at the same time maintaining strong curatorial integrity? Can museums be *both* about something *and* for someone?" (Golding, 2013, p.25). Given the power of art to transform experience and create shared meaning, rather than looking at the current museum dilemma as a dichotomy but instead as something that is substantially more complex and intertwined we may be able to shed light on creating stronger institutions. Weil (1999) reminds us that the most critical new skill that a

museum can have is the ability to imagine the ways that a museum can potentially respond to the community's ongoing and emerging needs. Museums have the potential to work with communities in ways that move beyond tokenism (Golding & Modest, 2013).

### **Personal Stance and Assumptions**

In order to address the problem faced, I would like to first point out there are a handful of assumptions about museums and research that frame this study. First and foremost is the assumption that museums are, and always have always been, social institutions, and as such their legitimacy and existence has been derived from museum professionals, museums visitors, and other community members. Scholars who study organizations have pointed to the need for organizations to be seen as and remain "legitimate" in their fields of practice (Senge, 2013; Meyer & Rowan, 2006). This understanding of a museum is different from previously held understandings that viewed the museum as a static place where important objects exist (Golding, 2013; Korn, 2007; Weil, 1999). While museums have been understood as such, I argue that museums have never simply been shelters for objects. New Institutionalism theory understands organizations, including non-profits, as imbued with the meaning that people give them, and thus are inherently social (Senge, 2013; Meyer & Rowan, 2006). In the case of museums, people create museums and people use and experience museums, people decide what goes into a museum, and other people are affected by those choices – therefore museums have always been social institutions. In addition, museums by their very nature have "both intentionally and unintentionally facilitated the expression and transformation of individuals and their sense of identity and contributed toward the development and maintenance of friendship, family, and other important social bonds"

(Silverman, 2010, p.13). As they move toward more deliberate models of social engagement, they are faced with the necessity to do so responsibly and with intention.

A second assumption is that while different from objects, experiences are just as real as objects and they should be treated as both equally important and inseparable from the object or the art (Dewey, 1934). What a visitor experiences when they are in a museum is more than just viewing a handful of objects deemed important, they also have an experience in relation to those objects, to the space, to the other people in the room. Their experience is shaped by any number of factors including who they are and how they are feeling, the content of the exhibition and the understandings that they bring to the space (Falk and Dierking, 1992). Museum educators actively plan for their visitors to have a particular kind of experience. While this work is more often than not in the realm of the education department, curatorial staff is increasingly curating experience as well and because of that we see a new kind of value placed on the role of experience that traditionally did not exist. While it was true that all visitors have an experience when they enter the museum, as museums attempt to intentionally change their practices, they are both directly and indirectly affecting the experience of the visitor. To curate or program experience leaves the museum in a place where they can't plan on exactly what will happen, shifting the balance of power in ways that museums are not accustomed to. Museums are used to be curating objects and expecting a particular kind of decorum from its visitors, but when museums ask visitors to participate differently and they engage in creating experiences, there is little telling what might happen.

A third assumption of this study relates back to the first. Since museums are social institutions, they are embedded in a particular cultural-historical practice and need

to be reflective and critical of those practices in order to move forward (Senge, 2013; Ogawa, Crain, Loomis & Ball, 2008; Meyer & Rowan, 2006; Engeström, 1987; Vygotsky, 1978). It is not enough for a museum to suddenly decide to engage a community and then do that work, they must face who they are and who they have been in relation to the community before they decide to take this initiative. This is an all too often forgotten practice in museum evaluation and programming and relates back to Janes' (2009) suggestion that museums must learn to be more critical of their practices.

A fourth assumption of this study relates to museums and their internal practices. Much like Korn (2007) calls for a commitment to holistic intentionality, I suggest that what a museum does in its community engagement initiatives has the power to change the museum's internal practices. If those internal practices don't change in light of community pressure, museums run the risk of at best isolating themselves from their communities and at worst harming their communities.

A final assumption of this study relates to the research methodology: personal experiences and stories can be powerful sources of change and growth because they allow people to relate to them in ways that traditional forms of data collection and analysis may not (Barab et al., 2014; Burr & Sitorius 2007; Simon & Dippo, 1986). Using stories and data from the participants to navigate change is unlike traditional museum evaluation. That sort of summative focused evaluation tends to affect change in the museum context through the researchers' understandings. It is often driven by audience research and quantitative data. Using stories and shifting the interpretive agency away from myself, the researcher, and back to the participants allows them to create meaningful and active change in ways that a traditional evaluative report would not.

These five positions guide this research project. The following chapters will illuminate why these assumptions exist and include a review of the relevant literature and scholarship that will explore museums and participation in museums, as well as social practice and forces of change. The conceptual framework that I use will situate the work in a sociocultural perspective that places the emphasis on the cultural-historical conditions that museums exist in as well as orient practices toward the future.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

My study builds on research in the museum field to situate the problem. I bring attention to the calls for change from museums professionals and organizations in order to place the work within a 30-year history of moving museums toward more community-based practices. Then, I address the ways that museums and publics interact by exploring participation structures and actual museum practices that exist in museums today. Finally, I examine education departments in museums and their role in advocating for and creating change.

### Museums as Social Institutions

Over the course of a mere 61 years, the publicly defined purpose of a museum and what constitutes a museum has changed in significant ways. Since 1946 the International Conference of Museums has changed the definition of a museum a total of 8 times. Since 2007 and the 21<sup>st</sup> General Conference in Vienna, Austria, the definition has been:

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.

The original definition from 1946 was:

The word "museums" includes all collections open to the public, of artistic, technical, scientific, historical or archaeological material, including zoos and botanical gardens, but excluding libraries, except in so far as they maintain permanent exhibition rooms.

It wasn't until 1961 that the word "education" entered the definition, and it wasn't until 1974 that the phrase "in the service of society" was adapted to the definition (ICOM). Up until that point, that a museum could serve society was merely an added bonus (Weil, 1999). Traditionally, the relationship between the museum and the

community has been unidirectional. The museum chooses the content to deliver to the public for consumption and the public consumes. At the end of World War II American museums took it upon themselves to collect, gather, and archive the records of human and natural history for study purposes (Weil, 1999). Nearly three quarters of museums were opened after 1945, applying pressure to government agencies for support and funding (Hudson, 1998). The public drives the American economy, however.

In the late 1960s and 1970s the language used to describe museums began to change as a result of a number of cultural factors including: anti-authoritarianism movements that viewed the museum as associated with the privileged elite, a general irreverence toward property, the civil rights, women's and antiwar movements, and the cultural rebellion of young people. These factors made the collecting of material objects according to hierarchical rankings offensive to some audiences (Hein, 2006). At the same time that this was occurring two other factors were in play: the growing professionalism of the museum sector (Hudson, 1998), and especially relevant to art museums, the deliberate movement of artists away from museum walls and into the public sector. These artists developed social practices that sought to make art meaningful to communities and individuals.

Historically, cultural institutions have developed their programming around helping communities better understand the content the museums deem important – whether that is contemporary art, science, history or classical musical (Falk & Dierking, 2008). The collection, up until recent years, had been the museum's pillar and purpose. Over the past 30 years, however, the museum field has witnessed a shift in museum focus from a collections-based institution and toward an experience-based institution. At the

core of these understandings exists the notion that in today's museum collections are critical to the production of experience (Hein, 2006). In light of this turn, greater emphasis has been placed on the interpretive, educational, and exhibition functions of a museum and yet up until recent years, the museum has continued to regard itself and behave as a transmitter of knowledge.

While museums are undergoing this turn, there are critiques which begin with the argument that museums were already created inherently good and are lacking a reason to change, particularly if that means diminishing the preeminence of the collection (Weil, 1999). For example, James Cuno (1997), one of the world's leading curators and art historians states, "The emerging consensus among politicians, community activists, funding sources, and engaged academics that the art museum is first and foremost a social institution..." is "the biggest problem facing art museums today – and the gravest threat to the quality of their scholarship" (p.7). This kind of opinion is rooted in a history of valuing curatorship above all else, arguing that if the museum field is to continue to move toward a social model, the integrity of the collection will suffer. Further concerns about doing this kind of intentional social work include the fear of patronizing people and of diverting money from more effective service vehicles. The idea that public funding could instead go toward institutions and organizations that are already set up for this kind of work, rather than to museums, remains a point of contention. Along similar lines, since museum professionals are not trained to work with the public in ways that promote social good and welfare, there is the risk of those professionals harboring prejudice, stereotypes, and fears about dealing with people who face serious challenges or who seem different from themselves (Silverman, 2010).

While these critiques exist, I argue that museums are both inherently social and moving toward deliberate community-focused, social practice models. They are inherently social because they serve and engage the public and are comprised of individual participants who interact with one another in order to achieve tasks and activities that make a museum a museum. In addition to that, museums have historically tried to alter and influence public knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. In other words, they have always been institutions of social change (Silverman, 2010).

### **Calls to Change**

Even if it is the case that museums are inherently social, there are plenty of calls to change toward more intentional community-based practices, encouraging museum professionals to take up a socially deliberate agenda.

Peter Vergo (1989) wrote a book titled *New Museology*, which is not only the title of the book, but also an approach to museum work whereby museums are understood as places that promote contextualizing objects, while putting the audience experience at the forefront of museum practice. In doing so, the practice attempts to reconsider museology theory and practice as less of a transmission model, and increasingly as a mode of engagement (Keith, 2012). Transmission models, those which place power and authority in the hands of the museum so that the museum can “transmit” its knowledge as it chooses, are seen as positioning the visitor in a deficit model (Falk, 2006). The goal for this radical theory of museology was to position the visitor as an active meaning and sense-maker, that comes to the museum with their own understandings and thus, the experience of the audience should take precedence (Vergo, 1989).

In addition to changing practices with what happens between the visitor and the object, voices from the field began to demand that museums no longer cater to the frivolous so long as there is injustice in the world. Curator Rex Ellis (1995) declared:

“We cannot afford another monument to a small cultural elite that is in no way reflective of the people and times in which they live. We can no longer aspire to the heights of esthetic sensibilities when we, and our children and our wives and husbands, our friends, and those we love, cannot walk down the street safely. We can no longer have a lovely discussion about ladderback chairs, Chippendale tables, candied violets and baroque music when we may not make it back to our homes as we leave this place” (p.15)

The cry to change practices is one that the field has been slow to pick up but quick to agree with, at least theoretically. Editorial after editorial has been written about why change is necessary. The quote above is from a manifesto Ellis wrote about where museums are and where they should be headed as it relates to modern experiences and times. It is a call for museums to be more and do more out of social responsibility. He positions the museums of the past as frivolous and disengaged, focused on objects like Chippendale tables that bear no relevance to the modern cultural climate and as he says, he is no longer interested in museums that aren't committed to this kind of work and don't want to take on societal issues such as hate, bigotry, AIDS, violence, genocide, abortion, drugs, oppression or slavery. Additionally, he says, he is certainly not interested in museums that claim that those issues don't match with their collections, or mission.

In 1999 Stephen Weil wrote his seminal piece, *From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum*, which takes a historical analysis of the relationship between museums and their collections and museums and their communities. He argues that American museums are no longer meant to be for something but instead are about someone. In it he states,

In the emerging museum, responsiveness to the community not an indiscriminate responsiveness, certainly, but a responsiveness consistent with the museum's public-service obligations and with the professional standards of its field must be understood not as a surrender but, quite literally, as a fulfillment. The opportunity to be of profound service that museums truly have to use their competencies to enrich collecting, preserving, studying, and interpreting objects the quality of individual lives and to enhance their community's that the well-being must certainly out dazzle any satisfactions old salvage, warehouse, or soda-pop business could ever have offered. (p.254)

The notion of providing a public service or public good continues throughout the next decade of editorials. In 2010 Munley states that, "All types of museums set their sights too low" and that in order "to get unstuck from the critique of being elitist and removed from real world issues and people, adopting a public value framework and stepping boldly and unashamedly into the social arena and public service domain holds promise" (p.30). She also argues that museums take for granted the idea that they provide public value simply through their existence and further emphasizes that missions are not the same as a museum's statement of public value because missions are simply an articulation of that intent, they say nothing of the realization of the intent. Additionally, she argues that success in public practice must take into account social issues:

"But if museums want to claim that they create public value, then something needs to change. It is the difference between passing a beggar on the street and dropping a dollar in his hat, and wondering what it is that creates homelessness and working to address it. It's the difference between proudly reporting 225,000 school visits and asking the harder questions about why the public schools are not coming" (Munley, 2010, p.26).

Each of these museum professionals seems to contend that museums have a responsibility to their publics by providing services that create meaningful spaces. What

is of particular interest to this research is that these professionals are not calling for museums to explore how they may have perpetuated particular perceptions within the community, they are solely forward facing. Additionally, these calls are from twenty years ago yet are still being cited in museum articles about change, alluding to the fact that change is both difficult and slow.

The call for change is now not just coming from a handful of influential museum professionals; it is also being supported by major museum organizations and is based on actual work that is happening in museums. For instance, in 2013, the Museum Association published *Museums Change Lives*, a research report that looks at the ways that museums change visitors' lives as well as their communities. The report is built on earlier work from the Association that explored learning in museums. The authors encourage museums to contribute back more intentionally to their communities. They argue several cases for this kind of work stating that museums can and should support social change, especially since individuals and communities are under stress and museums have the ability to help. They acknowledge the current financial climate and the fight for funding and stress that if museums are to remain their publics must find them a valuable enough resource to support them. Finally, the authors argue that active participation from the community makes museums better, not just the community better (Museum Associations, 2013).

According to the report,

“Museums change people’s lives. They enrich the lives of individuals, contribute to strong and resilient communities and help create a fair and just society. Museums in turn are immensely enriched by the skills and creativity of their public.”

In order to do so, they conclude that while all museum's are different, they can all find ways of maximizing their social impact by encouraging active community participation, positioning social justice work at the forefront of the museum impact, allowing audiences to be creators, not just consumers of knowledge, building relationships with community partners, encourage questioning, debate and critical thinking, offer programs that meet community needs, and capitalize on the local distinctiveness that defines the essence of the community that the museum resides in.

In addition to the MA report, the following excerpt is from the Institute of Museums and Library Services, a US federal agency that supports the cultural sector and awards gives awards for museum excellence. Their guidelines for the award, which Falk & Dierking (2008) also point to as a sign of changing practices, include:

The principal criterion for selection is the museum's commitment to public service through exemplary and innovative programs and community partnerships. Nominations should describe the institution's goal in serving its community, the target population served, the community partnerships and efforts undertaken to achieve the goal, the outcome of these efforts during the last two to three years, and projections for future efforts in this area. Achievements that might be highlighted include programming that demonstrates how the institution has attracted new audiences; innovative programming that addresses current educational, social, economic, or environmental issues; and positive effects of the institution's collaboration with other organizations in the community. (IMLS, 2005).

Exemplary practices are no longer defined by the traditional museum objectives of preservation and conservation, nor are they defined necessarily by exciting and

innovative programming and education, but are instead focused on the museum's commitment to public service. While there is still outspoken push back to this paradigm shift, pushback that claims museums are inherently good and pushback that is fearful that a focus on public service will lead to shoddy museum practices (Cuno, 1997; Weil; 1999; Appleton, 2001), the resounding call for change remains.

### **Museums, Publics, and Patterns**

If all of museum practice is inherently social, it goes without saying that how museums operate in regards to their publics varies across individual museums and communities. In the following section, I aim to make sense of patterns of practice in relation to museums and their communities. First I frame the discussion in terms of forms of participation, then I give examples of the ways that museums are engaging with their publics, and in particular examples of museums that are known for doing community-based and change work well. I will also provide a critical view of community engagement efforts and demonstrate how museums perhaps aren't doing this work well.

**Public participation in museums.** There is a wide range of ways that museum visitors participate in museums. On the one side, there are institutions that exist to hold and collect objects, and while those institutions are social in that it is people that decide what to hold and collect and what meaning to make from those exhibitions and collections, the traditional museum feeling is palpable. On the other end of the spectrum are institutions that are built by and for the community, those that address community needs and issues. If these are the extremes, you can rightly imagine the multitude of layers in between which include museums that run community engagement programs on the weekends but still maintain a heavy traditional curatorial hand, those that have

community advisory boards, and those that run programs in schools. There are interactives that visitors can use while they are at the museum and participate in that way, and sometimes museums encourage participation through social media projects tied to an event or an exhibition. These are just a few of the ways that museums invite participation from visitors, and you can imagine any number of other ways.

Since the range of how museums engage with their publics is so big, it is important to remember that for museums all participatory projects are based on three institutional values: the “desire for the input and involvement of outside participants, trust in participants’ abilities, and responsiveness to participants’ actions and contributions” (Simon, 2010, p.183). Additionally, there are always three key stakeholders: the institution, the participants, and the audience. In *The Participatory Museum*, Simon (2010) defines four different possible ways that museums can and do create participatory experiences. Drawing from the Public Participation in Scientific Research project (PPSR) and the three original categories of public participation from that work, contribution, collaboration, and co-creation, Simon includes a fourth, which she calls hosted. The differences between these types of public participation align roughly to the extent that the public is involved in the project. For example,

- In *contributory* projects, visitors are solicited to provide limited and specified objects, actions, or ideas to an institutionally controlled process.
- In *collaborative* projects, visitors are invited to serve as active partners in the creation of institutional projects that are originated and ultimately controlled by the institution.

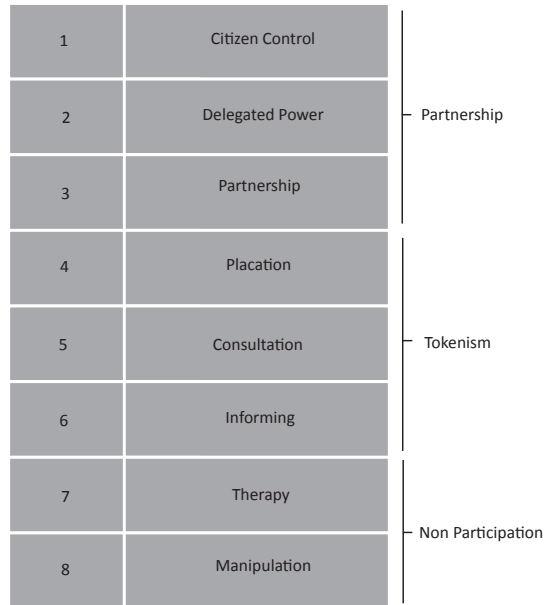
- In *co-creative* projects, community members work together with institutional staff members from the beginning to define the project's goals and to generate the program or exhibit based on the community's interests.
- In *hosted* projects the institution turns over a portion of its facilities and/or resources to present programs developed and implemented by public groups or casual visitors. (p.187)

These four types of participation categories help to organize some of the activity that takes place in museums. While Simon argues that there is no "right" kind of participation, she does argue that:

Participation has the most impact when designers can scale up collaborative opportunities to all interested visitors. This means offering every visitor a legitimate way to contribute to the institution, share things of interest, connect with other people, and feel like an engaged and respected participant (p.4).

Taking a broader view of community participation, Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Participation is a typology of eight different levels of participation based, similar to Simon's four levels of participation, on participant power. As demonstrated in Figure 1, the ladder's bottom rungs (1&2) include manipulation and therapy, which have the least amount of participant power. The top rungs, partnership, delegated power and citizen control, have the largest amount of participant power. Unlike Simon's scale, Arnstein's isn't directly related to the museum field but instead to government and citizenship. Where Simon's levels do not seem to imbue judgment, levels such as "manipulation" and "nonparticipation" do. By including those levels, we don't just understand museums as

inherently good, but that because of their inherent power, museum actions may prove to also hurt and affect their communities negatively.



*Figure 1.* Arnstein's 1969 Ladder of Participation, a typology of 8 levels of citizen participation.

Museums have a long history of tokenizing cultures and excluding communities, a history that they have rarely grappled with (Keith, 2012). These practices were established under power relations that put the communities in a deficit model (Falk, 2006). While these theories of participation are useful in conceptualizing participation, they don't describe the complexity of power nor how power gets negotiated and renegotiated in systems. In order for participant power to shift, the museums must also shift their power structures. As Keith (2012) points out, a "museum's status of responsibility feeds the elitist and exclusive connotation of the institution" (p.248) and to begin to unravel that notion is more complex than either of these representations allow

for. In addition, while an education department might work with a community partner at the citizen control level, that does not necessarily mean the museum as a whole is seen as a valuable community asset. The following examples of museums working with their communities demonstrate how different these practices can look across time and context. By thinking about practices in terms of patterns that are created, we begin to see how these power dynamics play out across in the relationship and across practice.

**Museums working with communities.**

A museum should be the two-way street that brings art and public together. A museum should both remember and remind us that the art is there for the public and that the public is there for the art. (Talking about Museums in Public Report)

Community is presented as a means of advocacy that will, hopefully, ensure the relevance and sustainability of the museum. On the other hand, many will write about how museums help form community by expressing and representing community identities. This simple duality suggests that communities need the histories and identities preserved and interpreted in museums; and the museum sector needs the people, in the many communities, to recognize the value of museums and justify their presence. (Crooke, E., 2008, p.1)

The above quotes highlight the relationship between the museum and its public.

Community as advocacy that ensures the continued existence of the museum is a particularly relevant point: museums must serve their publics, or they will cease to exist because of a lack of relevancy and connection. Bringing together a group of Portland, OR based artists, organized by Jen Delos Reyes, the Portland Art Museum launched Talking about Museums in Public, a series of art installations, participatory projects, and community conversations about the role of art museums in the public throughout the month of June in 2014. The quotes above from Paul Ramirez Jonas find that the public and the art go hand-in-hand, and while this may go without saying for many museum professionals and citizens, what he doesn't account for is that while the museum might be

a two-way street, that street and the patterns people walk on it look different across place and across time. The following section explores some of the ways that the museum and its public meet.

Art and cultural museums are engaging in community-focused social practice models in several ways. For instance some are doing this from a curatorial driven perspective where artists become the vehicles for museums to connect with their publics. Examples of this include: exhibits that feature artists who do social practice are one way that museums are taking up this work and calling on artists to design amenities such as bars and reading rooms in museums, and then presenting these amenities as art, as well as a way to engage the public.

Also stemming from a curator driven approach to engaging publics is the work of curators such as Hans Ulrich Obrist, Barbara van der Linden, and Nicolas Bourriaud who promote “laboratory” work – that is to say, work that is open-ended, interactive, and resistant to closure. This kind of work often appears to be “work-in-progress” rather than a completed object, “rather than the interpretations of a work of art being open to continual reassessment, the work of art itself is argued to be in perpetual flux” (Bishop, 2004, p.52). The goal of this laboratory work is to begin to disassemble the traditional walls of the museum – to essentially shake up the notions of conceptual, structural, and relational space. There are issues with this kind of practice however, not least of all the “effect of this insistent promotion of these ideas of artist-as-designer, function over contemplation, and open-endedness over aesthetic resolution is often ultimately to enhance the status of the curator, who gains credit for stage-managing the overall laboratory experience” (Bishop, 2004, p.53).

Engaging publics also happens in other parts of the museum including, and most typically, education departments. This kind of work might include programs such as community festivals and new ways of interpreting the art including making the effort to have visitors create a personal connection to their collections (Williams, 2010). In this sense,

The art museum becomes important, not because of the monetary value of its holdings, or even for the rarity and impressive quality of the works of art. The works of art are seen to matter as manifestations of human experience, aspirations, and wisdom. Members of a group come to know one another better during a "Personal Response" tour – learning how they might offer support to a friend or colleague, gathering the seeds of future conversations. All it takes is the invitation and a sense of safety (Williams, 2010, p.95).

This kind of engagement is different from traditional museology practice because it is the visitor who is deciding what is important. Similar to this program, Seattle Art Museum has a My Favorite Things tour which is a volunteer, community member led tour that goes through the museum based on that person's favorite things, or something as simple as using Visual Thinking Strategies during a tour to allow for participation and connection to the artworks (Adams, Foutz, Luke & Stein, 2006).

Instead of museum directed and created work, some efforts to bring community-generated content into the space of the museum are occurring in museums such as The Queens Museum of Art which hosts community events and programs directly in its space and even has a community organizer on staff to form community/museum relationships; The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and its programming of a four-acre field outside

of its building with museum-curated events but also with music, performance, and workshops programmed by public participants; and finally, the Dallas Museum of Art and its 12,000 square feet of space in the middle of its galleries dedicated to participatory work and community exhibition space.

Then there are programs as museums designed for specific groups of people that use the museum's space and collections in new ways. For example both the Frye Art Museum's Here/Now program, which allows dementia patients and their caregivers the chance to explore the art and then create art. Similarly, The Tank Museum offers opportunities to young offenders by partnering with the Dorset Community Service Unit and teaching them to clean and conserve vehicles in the museum's collection which allowed them to achieve basic engineering skills and qualifications (Museums Change Lives Report).

Beyond redefining their own space, museums are entering their communities in unprecedented ways with things like pop up museums and other educational and engagement initiatives. All of these efforts are ways of reaching new audiences. Some of them are tied directly to a social justice agenda, and some are not. To the extent that a museum is attempting to generate new ways of participating in the world, being able to be critical of its own practices and histories seems to be a key component to cultural and institutional change.

The above examples are just some of the newer ways that museums work with their publics and are not, by any stretch, meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the ways that museums engage their communities. I have chosen to describe the following museums in more depth based on their distinct way of working with both target audiences

and the broader communities in which they are situated, and the renown they have for doing so in the museum-field at large as they are noted for their particular dedication to changing practices and working with the community in new ways.

The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is known for several of its programs, but perhaps most notable is their teen program, which was the first of its kind. For over 15 years, The Walker has developed a model for engaging teens and young adults, audiences that are traditionally marginalized (Cohen, 1997; Giroux, 2009; Wyn & White, 2000). At the core of the model is the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council (WACTAC), which according to the museum's website is "a diverse group of 12 young artists and art enthusiasts who ensure that events for teens are part of the Walker's overall program throughout the year." WACTAC meets weekly after school to design their own creative projects, develop exhibitions and programming, showcase teen artists, develop marketing materials and strategies, and worked directly with artists to give talks and lead classes. WACTAC members identify opportunities in the Walker's exhibition schedule for teens to connect with contemporary art and artists. They also design their own creative projects to augment the institution's offerings. In the past, WACTAC has developed exhibitions and events to showcase teen artists, invited resident artists to give talks and lead classes, developed marketing materials and strategies, written and published original work for print and online, planned regional film festivals, and partnered with local groups to present programs throughout Minneapolis and St. Paul. A handful of the teens have gone on to other institutions such as the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York to set up similar programs at those institutions.

This kind of initiative challenges traditional museology because it allows teens, who are often considered to be nuisances, with little to contribute (Cohen, 1997) to play a meaningful role in museum practice. The teens are not simply present “at the table” but instead are active members of the community who are valued and heard.

The Queens Museum of Art is perhaps the quintessential museum for museum/community success and is known worldwide for representing the diversity of their borough, which is the most culturally diverse county in the country. Few art museums have done as much as the Queens Museum in terms of changing toward community-based practices. The borough of Queens is incredibly diverse by ethnic groups, but also by generations. The local neighborhood is divided by old and new paradigms. The old Queens being the community of working and middle class—black and white—families that account for 30% of the residents in the neighborhoods nearest to the museum. New Queens accounts for 7 out of 10 residents in the Museum’s tri-neighborhood community and includes mostly South and East Asian and Latino immigrants from countries such as India and Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico.

In 2002 when the new director, Tom Finkelpearl took over, the museum was still firmly entrenched in old Queens, as was evident by the fact that no one on the staff spoke Spanish and the museum audience was older and whiter than the surrounding community. The question for Finkelpearl was how to not abandon old Queens while simultaneously embracing new communities and the energy that came with them. Soon after, 2002 the Public Events Department was founded at the museum and began to hire “community organizers.” Since the start of this department, the museum has increasingly been able to

reach communities not well versed in museum culture and museum-going habits. They have developed around 40 partnerships with other community organizations and co-produces and co-presents events.

The current mission of the Queens Museum focuses in on the Queens community by saying that the museum “is dedicated to presenting the highest quality visual arts and educational programming for people in the New York metropolitan area, and particularly for the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse, ethnic, cultural, and international community” and emphasizes the importance of educational programs that relate to the community by saying, “The Queens Museum presents artistic and educational programs and exhibitions that directly relate to the contemporary urban life of its constituents, while maintaining the highest standards of professional, intellectual, and ethical responsibility.” It is a mission that the museum continues to live through its programming, exhibitions, and educational initiatives.

The Wing Luke in Seattle is a national model for creating and developing community-based exhibitions. The museum has created Community Advisory Committees that serve as more than tokenism in the planning of exhibitions and programming and has developed an active practice of going beyond their own walls by getting to know local business owners and providing guided neighborhood walking tours through an ethnically diverse part of Seattle, the International District.

In order to develop exhibitions, partners are a part of the process from start to end beginning with identifying the audience, messages and theme for an exhibition, creating a storyline, and the refining the look and feel of the exhibition.

This process of working with community partners readjusts the traditional museum power structure in which the museum knows best and the community is simply brought on to weight in on final decisions.

The Denver Art Museum (DAM) like other museums across the country was tasked with targeting new audiences, specifically young adults. Specifically, the museum was encouraged not only to reach new audience, but to create meaningful and ongoing relationships with them. In the report *Creativity, Community and a Dash of the Unexpected*, the Denver Art Museum states its goal of being the community's "front porch." DAM educator Lindsey Housel says that, "It's like having a party at your house. It's your space, but you don't entirely control what happens. It's also about the people who are coming and what they bring to the table. You can't always be sure of the outcome, but as long as you are being true to who you are, that's okay." The focus on staying true to itself is perhaps one of the more successful aspects of the programming that happens at DAM – while they had to had change their practices, they didn't lose their identity.

Each of these art museums each demonstrate new ways of being in the world. Many professionals herald them as being particularly good at community based work, and institutional change. The following three research examples, however, explore how sometimes these initiatives fall short of their intended goals and purposes. I use these research articles to continue to identify what participation looks like in an art museum because while the example are demonstrative of field-wide examples of "good", they do not encompass all participation within the field of museology.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation commissioned a study of engagement in 12 museums and art galleries in the United Kingdom. Instead of measuring outcomes of particular exhibits and programs, the study asked staff and community partners what was understood about engagement and participation in the 12 organizations, how well it was working, and where they thought that work was headed.

The designers of the study used participatory theater techniques that allowed participants to “open up courageously to dialogue and debate” (p.3), as well as document analysis. Unlike other reports that measured the outcomes of the community-based initiatives, this study brought the participants back together to explore what actually happened. In spite of all of the participatory and engagement initiatives undertaken by the museums and the galleries over the years, the researchers found that the community partners remained fundamentally separated from processes within the museums and galleries, “rather than engaging at every level of their work, they are relegated to mere consumption of museums’ and galleries’ products” (p.5). In this sense, the museum reveals a center/periphery view of its communities in which the museum is in the center. Even with a focus on legitimate participation, this power dynamic is not new for museums; it is how they have historically operated.

The researchers found that in some cases, the organization’s knowledge of local needs and opportunities was lacking, with “an assumption of information coming in rather than having in place a proactive system of finding out” (p. 6). In other cases, the community partners felt used by their museums and galleries as a means to access further funding. The authors refer to this as an experience of “empowerment-lite.” Other ways that the organizations came up empowerment-lite included averting or subtly

discouraging challenges, rushing through the organization's agenda or manipulating group consensus. In empowerment-lite situations, "the concerns, complexities and messiness" of every day life and reality are filtered out.

The second research article focuses in on race in the museum. Keith (2012) reported her findings from her ethnographic research on museum acquisition processes as it relates to race. During the research, she explored how educators and curators in an art museum in the UK imagined and engaged with difference, particularly the black subject when working within a collaborative project that included the acquisition of art objects. The project was a collaboration between the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Black Cultural Archives and emphasis was placed on the practice of educators, "as they engage directly with audiences and organizational partners as well as providing the conduit between the curator and the public. As such, they carry the major portion of engagement with difference in the art museum" (Keith, 2012, p.250). She analyzed the data through a power and authority lens and found that creating change is always difficult but doing so within the exhibition was especially difficult because of personal and professional values at play and the inherent tensions and hierarchical difference between individuals in distinct positions, such as curators as operating from positions of power. Her final findings indicated that the museum did not collect the images in a new and innovative way and as such, the potential to change the thinking or inform the museum was undermined. Furthermore, "they illustrate how socially and politically charged topics can be difficult to define and contend with, and how those difficulties can result in an abrogation of a project's objectives" (Keith, 2012, p.254).

Finally, the third research project I explore is the one of my own that led me to my current work. I examined one art museum's attempt to engage their local neighborhood in an exhibit-driven project (Ward, 2013). My purpose in undertaking this research was to understand the unique perspectives of the people actually doing the work – the “groundworkers” – as they navigate between their personal vested interests, the community, and the museum. “Groundwork” is a term that signifies the basis or foundation; therefore a “groundworker” is someone who is working at the site, creating the foundation for future work. I wanted to know what could be learned as they moved between these different worlds with competing interests.

At the start of an art museum led community engagement initiative, the educator, Rose and the artist, Phil wanted to avoid what they call “helicopter programs” where:

“You fly in an artist and they come in and implement this thing and then the artist can walk away and be like ‘I do social engagement work, I’m amazing!’ And the museum can be like, ‘Look, we bring artists in to do social engagement work, and look at this impact, and here’s a picture of all of these black kids that we worked with,’ right? We create poster children and poster programs.”

Phil and Rose both believed that the creation of poster children is about the extent to which museums engage in social practice work, and is in large part detrimental to the community, as well as to the museum. In this research study, the relationships between the museum and the community are fraught with instances of *disconnection*, whether they are cultural and historical based perceptions and misconceptions, or instances of disruption caused by the context of the project and the players. Although the community is only four blocks away from the museum, none of the adult partners, nor any of the student participants or their parents, had been to the museum before. They did not realize that it was free or even that they could go inside. Phil and Rose, were charged with the

task of what Rose calls, “demystifying the institutional walls of a museum, those white fancy walls that you can’t do anything to.”

By the end of the project the community partner felt that the whole credit went to the museum, “There was a huge article in a local newspaper and we don’t exist at all, just a comment at the end. We’re a partner, not a sidebar.” Additionally, each groundworker was certain that a real relationship didn’t exist between the museum and the community, Rose even discusses the possible harm the program caused on the community and yet the museum grant report says:

“An ongoing rapport with new intergenerational audiences was established along with new expectations and commitments that the [museum] will continue to serve both the arts community and its neighborhood in a meaningful way.”

This case was a clear example of the ways in which disconnection between the museum and the community exists. It also highlights the ways that those disconnections affect the project and the work in tangible ways. The results of each of these studies is strikingly similar: the art museum sets out to do good in the community without being self-critical or reflective, and the community is at best untouched by the museum, and at worst feels as though they have been tokenized, misunderstood, or simply not heard.

The patterns that institutions individually and collectively carve across the field of public participation are diverse, to say the least. While museums are being called to do work that creates public value in their communities, there is little research on how to foster successful change that gets at the core of how museum must navigate those changes. In the following section, I explore why change is difficult for organizations, and emphasize the role that museum educators, those who are equipped to think about the visitor experience, might become leaders in initiating change in their organizations.

## Museums and Change

Changing museums is difficult and slow work (Janes, 2009). While there are these instances of museums working with the communities, there is also a much longer history of tokenism and community relationships based in a power imbalance (Keith, 2012) that crops up time and time again in museum practice.

Little work has been done in the field to address issues of community practices. In large part, there has been a more or less editorial encouragement for institutions to engage in practices that build public value, but there is an overwhelming lack of information on how to begin that change. One way that the field is trying to take that up is the push for new performance measures that focus less on attendance and more on community impact (Suchy, 2004; Falk & Sheppard, 2006). While these steps are encouraging, they often are focused on one particular program or educational initiative rather than a more complete, systemic understanding of the museum. In addition, the art of being self-critical and reflective remains absent from the majority of these measures. While there are several arguments that exist about why museums are slow to change, two are particularly relevant to this research. First, there is the difference between external and internal practices in museums. Several museums have pushed for new performance measures that focus less on attendance and more on community impact (Suchy, 2004; Falk & Sheppard, 2006). Korn (2007) argues that in order to succeed, museums should take an intentional stance that aligns internal and external actions with one another. She focuses on the importance of *intentions* as the driving and motivating force of museums. Intentions, she says, “are similar to program objectives in that they are written in measurable terms. However, intentions are about the whole museum, not an individual

program. They are statements that reflect the museum's aspirations as well as its pragmatic realities" (Korn, 2007, p.258).

Secondly, insightfully drawing attention to the tension between change and stasis as an identity crisis, Roberts (2013) argues that the relationship between the two might generate some understanding of the distance between the field-wide call to change and the slow pace at which individual museums actually change. For her, the difference is in whether or not museums define themselves by their activities or by their purpose, arguing that any change in activity might be perceived as a threat to identity and "resistance to change is likely to increase" (Roberts, 2013, p.91). Roberts echoes ideas from the field of New Institutionalism, a theory that is a reaction to more traditional forms of institutional scholarship. This break from previous institutional models was due in part to "a widespread disenchantment of social scientists with models of social and organizational action in which relatively autonomous actors are seen as operating with unbounded rationality in order to pursue their self-interests," (Meyer & Rowan, 2006, p.1). The key constraint for institutions according to New Institutionalism is not efficiency, but legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). It is "the need to maintain the trust and confidence of the public at large, in short to maintain legitimacy by conforming to institutionalized norms, values, and technical lore" (p.5). When an institution picks up new practices, its legitimacy is jeopardized and in a time when legitimacy receives funding, legitimizing histories becomes an important part of an institution's work. On the other hand, according to Roberts, "if museums define themselves by their underlying purpose, rather than by their activities, then changes to form may be less likely to be understood as a

threat to identity and more likely be seen as a path to increased possibility” (Roberts, 2013, p.91).

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) assert that it is critical to distinguish that which is essential from what is expendable – or to know what is so precious about an organization’s identity that to lose it would be to lose the organizations. What this means for art museums, is that it is not only worthwhile to look at what changes need to be made, but how they can do so in a way that honors who they have been, creating a safe, and intentional, space for change processes to take place. Failure to do so will pull museums into a trap of diminishing their potential value by meeting needs that are attainable and perhaps even valuable, but not using their “unique resources to the greatest potential” (Roberts, 2013, p.91).

### **Museum Education Departments and Change**

Striking balances between old practices and change, and internal practices and external practices require a time of reflection, but they also require members of the museum that are able to imagine and realize the changes. Change is hard, but Munley (2010) reminds us that lack of public value is the price that museums pay for institutional timidity.

The work of the museum educator has expanded beyond crafting an effective range of programs suitable to particular audiences to creating dynamic, inspirational experiences that are both timely and relevant to the museum's community. The museum educator is called on to work both within the institution and within the community connecting institutional resources to community needs. (Munley & Roberts, 2006)

Roberts (2013) reminds us that at their epistemological core museums are about creating the possibility for direct interpretive experiences with art and objects, with people, and with the self. These experiences then create the opportunity for reflection and understanding. Creating these experiences is by and large, in the realm of education departments in museums. It wasn't long ago that museum educators were considered the orphan in most museums (Munley, 2006) and while they are still sometimes fighting to prove their worth, she notes the way that educators are called on to work both within the institution and within the community. Traditionally, educators play many roles including assisting communities, partnering with schools, planning programs, generating income, and staying away from controversy that could jeopardize attendance or relations with donors (Munley, 2006). Playing so many parts however, has led to an identity crisis for museum educators for while they've proved their worth in educational initiatives that are directly related to schools and programs, they are still negotiating these other roles. If we understand the problem of change as it relates back to aligning internal and external practices, then it becomes apparent that the museum educator would in large part be the position to challenge the status quo.

According to Munley & Roberts (2006), institutions are in need of a reality check because despite bottom line measures of museum attendance, museums continue to face erratic attendance and severe financial challenges because they have yet to prove public value (Munley & Roberts, 2006). This is where they argue that museum education departments can step in to change institutions because it has never been about numbers for museum educators given the nature of their work. Instead, educators focus on learning, community service, public value and relevance to people's lives – the kinds of

things that are nearly impossible to measure with traditional museum-success assessment tools.

My research builds on the idea that education departments are negotiating new ways of being in the organizational contexts, specifically as they turn toward changing traditional, institutionalized museum practices. In the following chapter, I build a conceptual framework that uses sociohistorical and cultural theories to position organizations in a landscape of becoming, in which they create and recreate their identities and their positions within the world. I argue that change can happen in a forward thinking education department but that change is dependent on the systems that affect the department.

A more holistic and systemic view of museum change is needed. It is not enough to measure the community impacts of program designed by the educational department – for starters, the museum/community relationship is not relegated to solely the education department, or worse, one program of the department. While museum educators can be facilitators of institution-wide change, there is a need to surface the tensions that they might face in relation to this work and how those tensions might affect their work. In the following chapter, I propose a more holistic interpretation of the museum as a system through a conceptual framing that understands organizations as living and breathing structures that have the ability to grow, impact and affect communities, and change.

### Chapter 3: Conceptual Framing

In this chapter, I describe Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) which is a perspective that underscores the ways that learning and development are simultaneously rooted in history, recursive, and ongoing. CHAT, which falls under the umbrella of sociocultural theory, considers the implications of Vygotsky's work in the world of collectives, emphasizing mediated activity, or an activity system, as the unit of analysis.

Change and development are always creative endeavors. These theories equip researchers and their participants with the tools to examine the roots of the system they are involved in and explore how they might change the system by giving them the chance to imagine what's possible and orient their action toward that in a formative intervention called a Change Lab (need to cite relevant E. work). Museums are rarely reflective or critical of their practices (Janes, 2009), which inhibit their ability to organize toward meaningful and lasting change. These theories provide scaffolding for museums to do that work as they engage in the creative production of new ways of being in the world.

#### Cultural and Historical Activity Theory

Most psychological approaches are shaped by the individual-centered work of Freud, Erikson, and Piaget. In cognitive psychology the focus is similar; for instance, information processing is concerned with activity in the brain. The same is true of evolutionary psychology, which has attracted great popular attention. These theories emphasize biologically driven development [...] I present a different theoretical framework. It is a life-span approach. Social, cultural, historical and biological conditions together contribute to the realization of human possibility. Central to such an approach is the principle that *humans come into being and mature in relation to others*. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 187).

Social practice theories stand in contrast to traditional learning theories in foregrounding social aspects of learning, as opposed to individual processes, and in the extent to which learning is situated within everyday practices (e.g., play, work), as opposed to imagining learning as a process isolated from the values, dilemmas, and practices that are part of everyday life. (Mørck, 1987)

Ideas about learning and development as fundamentally rooted in sociocultural and sociohistorical activity are founded on the work of L.S. Vygotsky, a Marxist. As these quotes describe, prior to Vygotsky researchers viewed learning and development as an individual process, devoid of connection to context, history or the social context. Vygotsky can be seen as a forerunner to a psychology of becoming in which people experience both the social nature of their existence, as well as the collective creative activity that results in the making of new tools for individual and social use (Holzman, 2006). This perspective assumes that learners and social organizations exist in recursive and mutually constitutive relation to one another across time. CHAT extends this line of thinking to the analysis of collective activity, and to analysis of learning and change in social organizations.

CHAT is founded on three main ideas: 1) Humans learn in collectives, by doing and communicating in and through their actions; 2) Tools, material and psychological, mediate human learning and action; 3) Community is central to making and interpreting meaning (Vygotsky, 1978). It also proposes a unit of analysis that includes the dynamic interplay of the social, cultural, and historical aspects of development. From this perspective, development is an ongoing, dynamic process of becoming that is situated in a cultural-historical context (Holzman, 2010; John-Steiner, 2010; Wertsch, 1998; Cole, 1988).

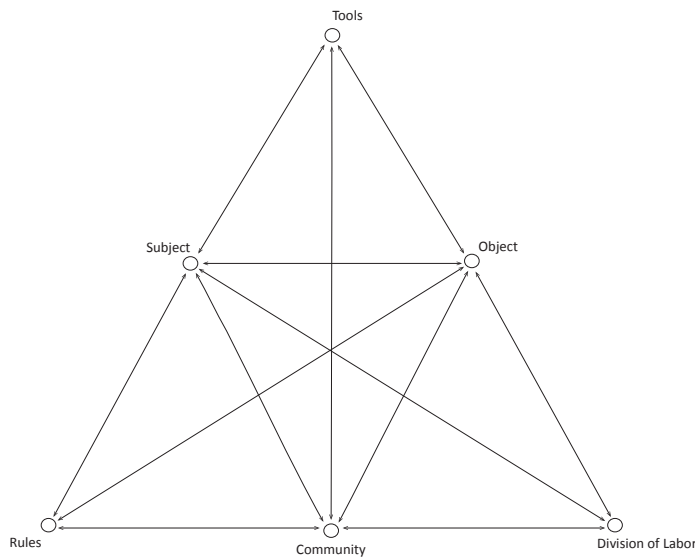
While Vygotsky's work focused on individual development in context, the contemporary work of Yrgö Engeström describes how collectives and organizations rather than individuals develop through activity in context. Its unit of analysis, the activity system, is a representation of the social and historical organization of "object-

oriented, collective, and culturally-mediated human activity” (Engeström & Miettinen, 1999, p.9). Original CHAT texts were written in German and Russian and there is no English equivalent of the word “activity.” For CHAT scholars, activity is not simply a behavior; it is a process-as-a-whole, rather than a linear sequence of discrete actions (Foot, 2014). Thus, activity systems are understood in their completeness as a unit of analysis and cannot be disaggregated (Leont’ev, 1978). This focus on the collective positions the work that people do and how they build organizations as greatly affecting how the work is done and how it is received in the world. CHAT theorists understand the context of the activity system as not a container or shell in which people behave certain ways, instead it is the activity itself. For example, walking into a museum affects how individuals act, behave and feel. It impacts their agency and their being. In turn, the choice to walk into a museum affects the museum, as does the agency expressed by the individuals who walk in. In this way, the context is both internal and external, shaping the experience of the visitor. This relates back to Vygotsky’s process of mediation. In this sense,

People consciously and deliberately generate contexts (activities) in part through their own objects; hence context is not just “out there.” Context is both internal to people—involving specific objects and goals—and, at the same time, external to people, involving artifacts, other people, specific settings. The crucial point is that in activity theory, external and internal are fused, unified. (Nardi, p.38)

CHAT delivers a conceptual lens for understanding how activities are generated within the context of an art museum and how the individuals and the organization are mutually recursive. To elaborate, CHAT provides a framework for analyzing interactions between museum professionals and their visitors that includes not only the interpersonal aspects of those relationships, but also the cultural, historical, political, and economic

dimensions (Foot, 2014). This means that individuals come to museum work with particular motives and goals that are afforded and constrained by the context of the museum and vice versa – in other words, we create museums and museums create us. The first step in understanding this is to understand the activity system and all of its components.



*Figure 2.* Engeström's model of an activity system (1987, p.78)

The activity system is always evolving through learning actions that result as a response to the emergence of systemic contradictions, contributing to a multidimensional look at complex work practices. Activity systems reveal the potential of internal tensions and contradictions as the driving force behind change and transformation. In the above diagram of the activity system (Engeström, 1987) we see the: subject, object, motive, division of labor, rules, tools, and community. Each of these six components is in a

transactional relationship with one another and the relationship between them creates various tensions that affect the system.

To illustrate these six components, let's take a short example of a school group in an art museum. Imagine a teacher taking his class to an art museum on a field trip. The teacher wants to be able to use the art museum as a resource for connecting back to concepts he is teaching in his classroom – this is the *object*. If we understand the class, including the teacher, as the *subject*, the teacher uses his curriculum and the objects in the museum as *tools* to mediate student learning. Imagine also, that the class takes a tour with a docent; the docent and the museum are both part of the *community*, all of which are engaged around the object of teaching the students. Requirements, such as having to have chaperones and a pre-lunch school return time, as well as only being able to use pencils in the gallery; all make up the *rules* of the system. Finally, *labor is divided* in this system between the docent giving the tour, the teacher, and the students and what they've been asked to accomplish.

As it is currently understood, there are five principles that guide activity systems (Engeström, 2009):

1. Activity systems, which are realized and reproduce themselves, are seen in their network relations to other activity systems as a new unit of analysis. As such “goal-directed individual and group actions, as well as automatic operations, are relatively independent but subordinate units of analysis, eventually understandable only when interpreted against the background of entire activity systems” (Engeström, 2009, p.56).
2. Activity systems are made up of multiple points of view, traditions, and interests.

The division of labor in an activity creates different positions for the participants who bring with them their own histories and experiences, creating multiple layers of history. These can both be a source of trouble and innovation.

3. Activity systems are created and transformed over lengthy periods of time, a concept referred to as historicity. The problems and potentials of the system can only be understood against their own history.
4. Activity systems change and develop through contradictions which are not the same as problems or conflicts, but instead “are historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2009, p.57).
5. Activity systems may transform through relatively long and qualitative “expansion”. As the contradictions of an activity system are provoked, individual participants begin to question and deviate from established norms creating possibilities for the object and motive of the activity are to be reconceptualized.

These five principles help define how activity systems manifest and function. They also address several of the concepts I’d like to take a closer look at for the purpose of this research including: *contradictions*, *expansive learning* and *transformative agency* which are intricately linked in the ever-evolving, historically rooted activity system. Finally, I position *creative production* as the ability to recognize and use the tools and artifacts available to create a new way tool, way of being, or other product. Doing so begins with the ability to imagine the experiences of another. Transformative agency is the ability to be critical and affect change on a system (Haapasaari, Engeström & Kerosuo, 2014). These concepts are fundamental to this work because as the museum begins to imagine new ways of being in the world, being equipped with the ability to understand and

critically explore the historicity of the system, the underlying contradictions of the system.

**Contradictions.** One of the fundamental propositions of CHAT is that changes to the system are sparked by contradictions as they materialize in daily activity (Foot & Groleau, 2011). Contradictions are systemically, structurally, and personally experienced. They “manifest themselves as problems, ruptures, breakdowns, and clashes” and yet, are viewed as “sources of development; activities are virtually always in the process of working through contradictions” (Kuutti, 1996, p.34).

CHAT acknowledges the inevitability of contradictions and as Foot (2014) explains, can be understood as “places” in the activity system from which innovation is born. Contradictions are aggravated by tensions in the system and turn into concrete manifestations that affect the daily work of participants. The extent to which members of the activity system can resolve or transcend the contradictions determines how an expansive cycle will be constrained or flourish.

An important note is that contradictions are not understood as places of failure; nor are they problems to be fixed through technical, practical solutions. Foot (2001) describes contradictions as *illuminative hinges* from which participants can gain new vistas of understanding. She uses the term “hinge” to describe how contradictions link fixed entities to a mobile entity, for example a door (mobile) attached to the frame of a house (fixed) (Foot, 2014; Foot, 2001).

Although few studies explore all four levels of contradiction put forth by Engeström (1987), Foot & Groleau (2011) and Bonneau (2013) return to the original idea of contradictions as multilevel. The four levels: primary, secondary, tertiary, and

quaternary; are present in every collective activity and identifying the tensions in the interactions within the activity system can illuminate the four levels. By doing so, it is then possible to “reconstruct the system in its concrete diversity and richness” (Foot & Groleau, 2011, p.3) and thus be able to make inferences about the development of the system (Engeström, 1987).

The primary contradiction occurs between the use-value and the exchange-value of a system and is foundational to all other contradictions within a system (Foot, 2014; Foot & Groleau, 2011; Engeström, 1987). Marx’s ideas about the use-value, or that which gives work its inherent worth versus the exchange-value or that which makes work a commodity underline the primary contradiction. For example a doctor provides a service of helping the ill (use-value) but in order to do so, gets paid for that work (exchange-value). This contradiction is always present within each node of the activity system and it reveals itself when tensions arise “from the dual construction of everything and everyone as both having inherent worth and being a commodity within market-based socioeconomic relations” (Foot & Groleau, 2011, p. 6).

These next three levels of contradictions form a sequence that explains the cyclical development that CHAT accounts for. Secondary contradictions exist between the nodes of the system and cause the dormant primary contradiction to emerge as tension forms between two different parts of the activity system. Tertiary contradictions become apparent when the object of a more “culturally advanced” activity (Engeström, 1987) is introduced to the system. While not articulated in Engeström’s work, Foot & Groleau (2011), as well as Groleau & Mayère (2009) contend that “when the object from another activity system is introduced by one of the actors within the activity system, this sets in

motion the very different dynamic in which power relations become central” (p.7). In this sense, the object from another activity system serves as the introduction of a “more culturally advanced” way of knowing, being or doing that increase tensions through power dynamics. As such, they believe that power relations, as they exist within the division of labor, “determine whether the alternative object catalyzing a tertiary contradiction results in a change in the central activity” (Foot & Groleau, 2011, p.7). Finally, the quaternary contradiction is when two activity systems intersect. The quaternary contradiction arises when the effect of attempts to resolve a tertiary contradiction is felt in neighboring activity systems (Foot & Groleau, 2011; Engeström 1987). In other words, when a new form of practice is employed based on a reformed and/or expanded object.

Primary contradictions are fundamental tensions that keep the activity system in constant tension. The other three contradictions form a sequence that explains development as cyclical and ongoing (Foot, 2014; Foot & Groleau, 2011; Engeström 1987). By identifying the levels of the contradictions and not treating the contradictions as all the same, we can begin to understanding how aggravating one level leads to another aggravated level while uncovering some of the interconnectedness of the system in question. To do this kind of work requires two different focuses: one that takes into account the historicity of a system, and another that allows the system a chance to imagine what it can become.

A key feature of an expansive cycle is that there is no predetermined course of development. This means that under conditions of uncertainty often caused by the contradictions in the system, decisions and learning movements happen in context and in

real time. There is no path for the participants to follow. Activity systems are comprised of multiple voices and histories, it is only natural that different understandings and goals will emerge during an expansive cycle and may contradict one another (Engeström, 1991). Engeström (1991) argues that models for future activity that don't address the contradictions in the system will lead to a non-expansive cycle.

**Expansive learning.** Expansive learning, which can be understood as “the capacity to reinterpret and expand the definition of the object of the activity” (Daniels & Johnson, 2014, p.144), is epistemologically grounded in dialectics that move from the abstract to the concrete (Sannino & Ellis, 2014). In this sense, it “begins with individual subjects questioning accepted practices, and it gradually expands into a collective movement or institution,” (Engeström, 2008, p.130). As an abstract object becomes progressively more cultivated into concrete systems – such as a collective moment or institution – it is transformed into a material object that resonates with the needs of other human beings (Sannino & Ellis, 2014). An abstract object is simply a theoretical idea, for example an art educator who wants to include more social justice work into their practice. Eventually, through resolving tensions in the system where he teaches, he is able to make that object more and more concrete in his pedagogy and ultimately, through his students projects.

Before exploring expansive learning too deeply, I first want to explore the object of the activity, or the main thing that distinguishes one activity from another (Leont'ev, 1978). It serves as “a centering and integrating device in complex, multi-voiced settings; it becomes the way of conceptually framing diffuse professional groups, individual agents, and complex practices and services” (Daniels & Johnson, 2014, p.144) and

bridges the arbitrary distinction between subject and object. In this sense, the object of activity is simultaneously what engages and motivates the participation of groups of people, as well as the thing that is transformed through their participation (Sannino & Ellis, 2014). When the object is defined, we don't only understand what people are doing, we understand why they are doing it. Expansive learning is the process of creating new objects of activity, those that have not yet been defined. New objects then affect the determined direction of an activity system (Foot, 2014). Let's take the example with the art teacher again. His original object was to teach art to his students, which was what both he and the students in the system worked toward. Through the object of teaching art to students, we could walk into his room and not simply see students painting and sculpting, we would understand why they were painting and sculpting (because the object is to teach art). When that same teacher decides a new object is to be more social justice minded in his pedagogical practices, the new object affects the previous object because no longer is painting and sculpting enough, now the painting and sculpting might have an end goal of creating social change or awareness.

When we seek to understand situations in which “whole collective activity systems, such as work processes and organizations, need to redefine themselves, [and] traditional modes of learning are not enough” (Engeström, 1999, p.3), expansive learning becomes a powerful concept. “Nobody knows exactly what needs to be learned. The design of the new activity and the acquisition of the knowledge and skills it requires are increasingly intertwined”(Engeström, 1999, p.3). This concept relates back to Vygotsky's concept of the ZPD as collectives learn to do what there is no roadmap for yet.

Expansive learning is achieved through specific epistemic or learning actions that form an expansive cycle or spiral (Engeström, 2014). An ideal-typical sequence of these actions is as follows:

1. *Questioning, criticizing, or rejecting* aspects of the current accepted practice and wisdom
2. *Analyzing* the situation through mental, discursive, or practical transformation in order to understand what's happening. This occurs through either or both: a historical-genetic analysis which seeks to explain the situation by tracing its origins and evolution; or an actual-empirical empirical analysis that seeks to explain the situation through the representation of the activity system's inner systemic relations.
3. *Modeling* the discovered relationship through some publicly observable and transmittable medium
4. *Examining and experimenting* on the model to understand its dynamics, potentials, and limitations
5. *Implementing* the model in practice, enrichments, and conceptual extensions
6. *Reflecting and evaluating* on the process
7. *Consolidating* the outcomes into a new and stable form of practice

(Engeström, 2014)

Expansive cycles begin with an individual or individuals within the system questioning current accepted practices or wisdom as a result of a contradiction within the system being aggravated. The cyclical nature of expansive cycles point to how after a

new model is put into place, eventually it too may change as the contradictions inherent within the system become once again aggravated.

### **Transformative agency.**

As changes in work organizations are profound and often destructive, agency that acts proactively to initiate and steer changes is needed, and all the innovative potential in the organization should be mobilized. In order to envision and implement sustainable transformations, employees must have an active role in the development of the organization. Thus, an idea or a suggestion related to changes and made by an employee or group for employees is an important resource, which should not be wasted. (Haapasaari et al., 2014, p.233)

The above quote is referring to the type of agency that individuals or groups of individuals employ within organizations. This type of agency, known as transformative agency, occurs from encounters with and an examination of disturbances, conflicts, and contradictions in the activity system (Haapasaari, et al, 2014). It challenges individual oriented theories of agency (Engeström, 2006) because it “develops the participants’ joint activity by explicating and envisioning new possibilities” for collective activity (Haapasaari et al., 2014, p. 233).

Within CHAT, agency is a fundamental characteristic of human beings. Transformative agency occurs both within the realm of individuals, as well as collectives and can be understood as a breaking away from traditional practices and activities, or as taking the initiative to transform it through questioning the status quo of a system (Haapasaari et al., 2014). A goal of CHAT based formative interventions known as Change Labs, is the development of transformative agency among participants (Engeström, 2007).

Transformative agency occurs though resistance to management or the interventionist. This resistance from the participants occurs in five ways. First is the

resistance to the interventionist or the management through criticism, questioning, opposition or rejection. This includes pushing those who traditionally hold power to reconsider their decisions, actions or initiatives. Secondly, a form of resistance is the explication of new possibilities or potentials in the activity by relating past positive experiences as evidence. This gives power to the participants because they are able to use their experiences as motivation to change their futures. Third is the action of envisioning new patterns or models of the activity, which includes using imagination to explore what the system, could be. Fourth, is the commitment to concrete actions that change the activity and finally, transformative agency occurs when the participants actually take action to change the activity (Haapsaari, et al., 2014). Being able to move through these five stages, or even just some of the stages is directly dependent on the structural agency within the system. If, for instance, the participants have little agency in their work because of how the system is structured, their ability to be exercise transformative agency will be hindered by the system or require more effort than for participants who work in systems where they have more agency. In addition, often the structure of the system is not fully realized until the participants push against its boundaries.

### **Moving Toward Change**

These three concepts, contradictions, expansive learning, and transformative agency help to describe the conditions under which activity systems change and grow. CHAT simultaneously positions organizations as firmly rooted in their histories and with expansive possible futures. I believe that by focusing both on historicity, as well as the possibility of what could be through the exploration of contradictions, individuals and

organizations can become increasingly agentic in an expansive cycle leading to meaningful creative and cultural production.

The capacity to construct imaginary worlds proves the centrality of person in any social setting. The person is both part of the here-and- now setting (as it exists) and outside of that setting (as it is re-thought through importing imaginary scenarios, daydreams, new meanings). Creativity becomes possible thanks to such duality of contrast between the “as-is” and “as-if” fields that the person lives through in each setting. (Valsiner, 2006, p. 13).

Cultural development is dependent on engagement with the minds of others. The capacity to make connections between objects, events, and tools is directly defined by how much an individual can imagine someone else’s experiences, as well as what could be possible in a given context. Imagination “becomes the means by which a person’s experience is broadened, because he can imagine what he has not seen, can conceptualize something from another person’s narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced” (Vygotsky, 2004, p. 17). As organizations engage pressures for change, they must create the space to imagine what they could be, and as they do so they may affect cultural change on their own practices. The change that they affect may in turn affect the community and thus, the museum must be able to imagine how their changes might impact not only their internal system, but the community as well.

The ability to imagine a new way of participating and contributing in the world is the first step of the creative production of new practices for both individuals and organizations. Creative and cultural production includes the process by which cultural tools, including intangible ones such as participation structures, are taken up and interacted with by members of a society. When these tools and symbols do not serve the needs, new ones may be created. The creation of tools is critical for social and individual development but when the “focus of society privileges cultural and social stability over

cultural transformation and progress... cultural possibilities are often inhibited” (Moran, 2010). By privileging stability between the already existing museum/community relationship, possibilities for new ways of being in the world are prohibited.

In the case of the museum/community relationship, reproducing a culture that looks like the already accepted, socially agreed upon understanding of what a museum is and what a museum does and can do, can be seen as an enactment of a history that is embedded in a specific cultural tradition and meaning. Individuals who make up both the museum and the community can continue to reproduce the culture that they are already familiar with, perpetuating a learning process that reifies norms and meanings that already exist. This is juxtaposed with originality, which is conceived of as the spawning of new possibilities that emerge from existing materials (Moran, 2010). To the extent that a museum shifts toward a public practice model, its learning process falls within the realm of originality.

### **Developmental Work Research**

Developmental Work Research is a research approach developed by Engeström (2007) that is used to study complex learning environments, or activity systems. The crux of this work happens in what is called the Change Lab, a process that gives practitioners the opportunity to organize and plan for change by allowing them to reflect on data collected by researchers, as well as their own objects and motives.

The Change Laboratory, which takes place on site, is used for envisioning, designing, and experimenting with new forms of activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) in order to unravel tensions and disturbances in current work practice, and construct new models of activity (Engeström, 2007). Creating a deliberate and active

space for this kind of work has the potential to expand agency. By acting as something of a studio or a safe place to play with new ideas it provides the boundaries necessary to study participants as they undergo change.

The Change Lab is a process that was derived from Vygotsky's method of double stimulation as a basis for formative interventions (Engeström, 2007). Engeström (2007) states that: "double stimulation is, above all, aimed at eliciting new, expansive forms of agency in subjects. In other words, double stimulation is focused on making subjects masters of their own lives" (p.363.) This form of intervention is different from others because it gives agency back to the participants. The subject is put into a structured situation where a problem exists and they are provided various sources of guidance as they construct a new means to find a solution (Vygotsky, 1978). The first stimulus is the problem; the second stimulus is the mediating means that allows them to solve the problem. Engeström (2007) gives the example of alarm clock: the first problem (stimulus) is the need to wake up on time in the morning. The second stimulus is the alarm clock, which is used to mediate and direct the activity toward a solution. The person waking up has the agency as they decide how to use the alarm clock. The alarm clock example is a simple demonstration of the double stimulation method, but we can imagine much more complex ones as well. Engeström (2007) also gives the example cheating slips that students use. The first stimulus is the exam questions. The second is the cheating, usually a small piece of paper. There are rules to creating a good cheating slip – it must be small, easily hid, and contain the right amount and kind of information. By learning about the cheating slip Engeström posits, we uncover much more about student learning than the results of the test would allow.

The DWR approach involves the creation of a double stimulation in the Change Lab. Doing so, allows participants to act as agents in the development of new objects that lead to an expansive cycle – or not. The introduction of the second stimulus, in this case data, gives the participants a chance to interact with the contradictions inherent in the system and potentially engage in the transformative agency practices of questioning, critiquing, all the way to developing and testing new objects and solutions to problems. The Change Lab becomes a tool to engage participants in the possible creative production of new practices.

## Chapter Four: Methodology

### Approach to Methodology

Formative interventions in the Vygotskian sense need to be understood as a formation of *critical design agency* among all the parties: researchers, teachers, and students or, respectively, researchers, managers, workers, and clients. Such critical design agency includes the will and courage to say “no” – to challenge the designs offered previously... Students form specific “endpoints” in complex learning ecologies and actively make sense of and reconfigure the tasks and the context of the tasks among the participants. In other words, what is initially presented as a problem or the task is interpreted and turned into a meaningful challenge several times over in the process of the intervention. (Engeström, 2007, p.370)

I approached this research with a Vygotskian understanding of formative interventions that is to say; I was focused on the importance of facilitating an environment that supported participants’ engagement. This process involved critiquing and designing their practices; facilitating what Engeström calls *critical design agency*. While the quote above considers students to be the endpoints of the design, for this research it is the museum employees, specifically the education team that actively made sense of and reconfigured the tasks and the context. Stemming from Vygotskian theory, Developmental Work Research (DWR) is a research approach that was developed to study complex learning environments, or activity systems. The crux of this work happens in what is called the Change Lab, a process that gives practitioners the opportunity to organize and plan for change while allowing them to reflect on data collected by researchers, as well as their own motives (Engestrom, Sannino & Virkkunen, 2014; Engestrom & Sannino, 2010; Engestrom, 2007).

CHAT researchers use this formative intervention process focused on transforming activity and expanding the agency of participants (Penuel, 2014). Penuel

(2014) argues that for these researchers, and unlike other forms of formative intervention in the learning sciences field,

The design process begins with a problem of practice as encountered by participants in an activity system, rather than with researchers' goals for the improvement of teaching and learning. In producing innovations, researchers do not prescribe designs, either. Instead, the process stimulates participants in the work setting to construct designs and supports their implementation. The primary object of design is not to arrive at completeness or finality, but rather to expand the agency of participants, that is, enable new forms of collective activity to emerge through direct engagement with the contradictions embedded in practice (Penuel, 2014, p.100).

Unlike other methodologies, CHAT-driven formative intervention work directs researchers' engagement by dilemmas of practice, rather than gaps in the literature. In doing so, this shifts the power away from the researcher, and back on the participants. The literature is not lacking in its call for museums to be more intentional, more deliberately social, but putting rhetoric into practice is a problem that many institutions are facing, including the institution involved in this study. This research methodology addresses that problem of practice. Additionally, since the goal is not to arrive at a final product, but rather to expand the agency of the participants, encouraging them to be leaders in institutional change through their own individual and collective practices, one goal of this research was to enable participants to continue to engage in this work after the research ends.

Within the DWR framework and Change Lab process, I drew on some of the precepts of critical design ethnography research methods as a starting place for fostering change during this case study. Critical design ethnography is useful for the purposes of this study and the DWR methodology because within this methodology the ethnographer's goal is to empower groups and individuals and foster social change

(Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Squire & Newell, 2014; Reason, 2004). By focusing my research collection and analysis on designing for change, I was able to hone in on data that was useful in pursuing an empowerment agenda over a short time period. Using critical design ethnographic tools such as interviews, document analysis, and observations that were focused on expanding agency and change allowed me to iteratively review the data and present it in a way that encouraged the participants to consider the ways that they might be change agents within their museum.

### **Case Study**

I chose to do a qualitative case study to explore my research questions. Generally speaking, the object of a case study can be a person, a program, a group, a movement, an organization, an event, a concept or a project (Merriam, 1998). It can test or build theory, incorporate random or purposive sampling and include both quantitative and qualitative data (Merriam, 1998). According to Yin (2003) a case study should be used when the following conditions are met: the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; the behavior of the participants cannot be manipulated; you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Each of these conditions existed in the case I studied. “How” questions guided this research from beginning to end: How does museum staff understand their role within the community? How does the community understand the role of the museum? How can the museum create better, more sustainable relationships? How can we build practices focused on change? Answering these questions at the site of museum became essential because by

accounting for the day-to-day practices of the participants, I was able to see where their ideas aligned with their practices, and furthermore, where they didn't.

While there are several types of case studies, I conceptualized this effort as an “instrumental” case study. An instrumental case study is used to accomplish something other than an understanding of a particular situation. Instead, it aims to provide understanding into a bigger issue or to help refine a theory. The case itself plays a supportive role in facilitating our understanding of the bigger issue (Stake, 1995). For the purpose of this work, the goal was not to provide a step-by-step guide to change that any institution could incorporate into its own practices, but instead to use the data I collected as a resource for participant-guided local change, and to use the “case” as a resource contributing to a larger conversation about museum change and positioning within the local community.

Qualitative case studies equip the researcher with multiple data sources that afford the chance to study a phenomenon in context. An instrumental case study became a way to ground the research in a localized problem of practice with multiple perspectives. It was important to recognize the ways that the contextual conditions under which this research took place were critical to understanding what was happening. For example, the Milwaukee Art Museum has a different community than the Denver Art Museum and while there may be something to be learned about how the Milwaukee Art Museum engages with their community, it would be impossible to simply replicate the Milwaukee approach in Denver and get the same results.

Case studies are also understood as a constructivist approach, that is to say that truth is relative and dependent on one's perspective (Baxter & Jack, 2008). As such,

emphasis is placed on gathering data from multiple sources who affect and are affected by the context the phenomenon occurs in. Multiple data sources “ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather, a variety of lenses which allows for multiples facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p.544).

### **The Change Laboratory**

The Change Laboratory engages participants in dialogue and debate amongst themselves, and the researchers, using data as a mediating tool. It is a toolkit that is used for envisioning, designing, and experimenting with new forms of activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). The Change Laboratory takes place at the work site in a room or space with various kinds of representational tools used to unravel tensions and disturbances in current work practice, and construct new models of activity (Engeström, 2007). Creating a deliberate and active space for this kind of work has the potential to expand agency. By acting as something of a studio or a safe place to play with new ideas, it provides the boundaries necessary to study participants as they undergo change.

Change Laboratories are unique to the local situation and are deliberately designed to engage participants in the change process by providing a rich set of tools available for the analysis of contradictions and the constructing a new model of the work activity. The central tool of the Change Laboratory Process is a 3 x 3 set of surfaces that can be seen in Figure 3.

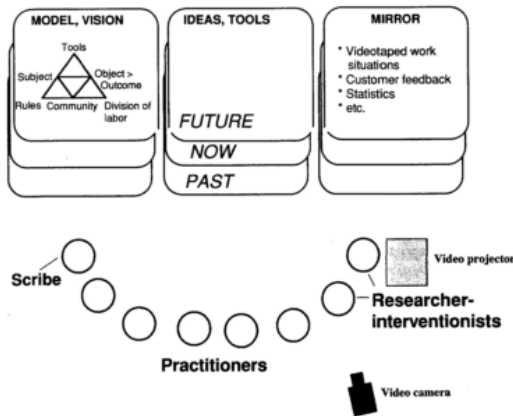


Figure 3. Prototypical layout of the Change Laboratory (based on Engeström, 2007, p.371)

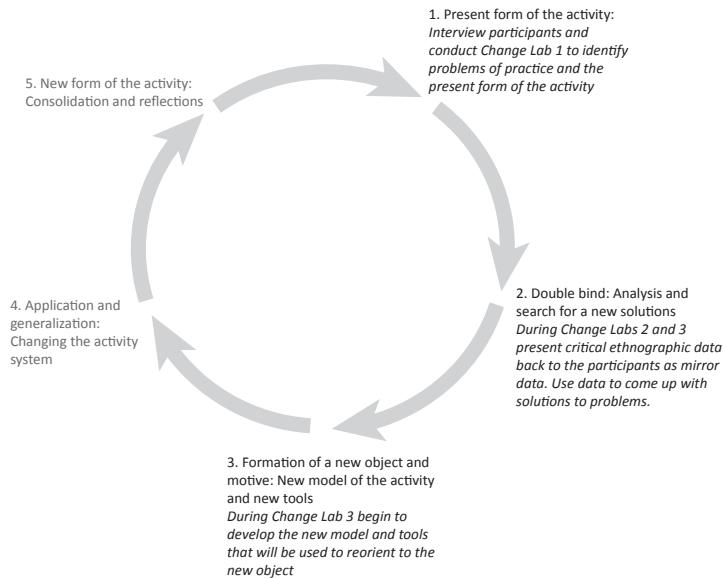
Practitioners face one another and the surfaces. The horizontal dimension of the surfaces represents the different levels of abstraction and theoretical generalization (Engeström, 2007). Mirror data is used to represent and examine the initial data derived from the work practices of the participants. The model/vision surface is held for theoretical tools and conceptual analysis. Traditionally Engeström's (1987) triangle model is used to analyze the development and interconnections of the activity. Finally, a third surface is used for ideas and tools that include the design of a new model of activity. This can include schedules, flowcharts of processes, idea generation, and diagrams.

The use of "mirror data" in the initial design process, or interview and ethnographic data presented back to the participants, aids in illuminating the object of the activity by presenting findings from different perspectives, different actors and their key actions (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Mirror data is ethnographic and is used to represent and examine the experiences of the participants. Since it is typically ethnographic, it provides vivid, detailed evidence that highlight the nuances of the

experiences of the participants, and limits the voice of the researcher. Because of this focus on the participants, "the claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on its author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or carving, but on the degree to which he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement" (Geertz, 1973, p. 16).

Using open-ended interviews, observations, and document analysis provides the chance to uncover the core cultural patterns that the activity systems subscribe to including the meta-narratives they tell themselves. For instance the history and culture of what a museum is and what it can be is projected by the museum just as much as it is projected on the museum. In this sense, "Institutions as well as organizations that carry no inherent ties to place of origin also develop core cultural patterns and meta-narratives about their 'culture'" (Brice Heath & Street, 2008, p.9). Uncovering these meta-narratives through the voices of the participants directs the research toward expansive learning and contradictions and can be used in the Change Laboratory to instigate a form of learning that produces new objects; new concepts; and new stable forms of practice.

A traditional Change Lab formative intervention, which would have included 8 – 12 Change Lab Sessions, was beyond the scope of this project. By shortening the cycle but expanding the time to gather initial data, I was able to go deeper into the history and context in which the tensions driving the change process were situated. Figure 4 demonstrates the general framework and plan for this project.



*Figure 4.* The cycle of expansive transformation of an activity system for this research.

### **Critical Design Ethnography**

In addition to using DWR, I used critical design ethnographic tools to strengthen the case study and choose pertinent mirror data that included vivid, detailed ethnographic evidence from the field that helped reveal the phenomena at hand. In order to study the phenomenon, ethnographic tools such as interviews, observations, and document analysis afford the researcher the chance to uncover the core cultural patterns that organizations subscribe to. “Institutions as well as organizations that carry no inherent ties to place of origin also develop core cultural patterns and meta-narratives about their ‘culture’” (Brice Heath & Street, 2008, p.9). These meta-narratives are bound up with the history and culture that the museum projects, as well as what is projected on the museum. Uncovering and understanding these meta-narratives was a fundamental approach to this

work. Neither, the participants, nor myself, could understand whom they were becoming if they didn't understand who they were and the stories they tell themselves.

Unlike traditional ethnography, critical design ethnography is useful for the purposes of this study because the ethnographer's goal in critical design is to empower groups and individuals and foster social change (Barab et al., 2014). This work goes beyond the description of what is and looks at what could be (Simon & Dippo, 1986). Frequently, this kind of work invites the research participants to critically reflect on their positionality (Lather, 1986). Sources of tension are often brought to the forefront when participants aim to choose a new course of action (Barab et al., 2014). Burr & Sitorius (2007) go so far as to argue that to make collaboration meaningful and not simply fulfill a requirement of having a number of people around a table, talk among participants needs well-crafted ethnographic material to frame the focus of the conversations.

Burr & Sitorius (2007) argue that, "provocation through well-crafted ethnographic material can instigate, and at the same time provide for an ongoing dialog between organization, participants, and design team" (p.146) as this process alleviates the traditional logics of rational argument and provokes questioning and engagement instead. In this sense, we are challenged to think of ethnography as not only text, but also as physical form in which "the product in a sense *embodies* the ethnography" (p.155). They conclude that developing ways of engaging the organization in sense-making through the use of visual and physical material is crucial.

Above all, critical design ethnography helped me focus on my goal of expanding the agency of the participants rather than myself. Using these methods, the goal was to present data back to the education department that was well crafted, in order to instigate

conversation and dialogue during the Change Labs that were collaborative and participated. My methodological strategies for doing this were further supported by including several tools and procedures drawn from Engeström's Developmental Work Research. These are described below.

### **Method**

Using critical ethnographic tools including interviews, observations, and document analysis to gather and analyze data, this instrumental case study took place over a 7-month period. This research also utilized the Change Lab method and included three Change Labs at the site of the museum, each of which ran approximately 3 hours long. Data were collected and analyzed iteratively as they were prepared for and responsive to the Change Labs.

**Setting and Participants.** This research took place at a mid-sized regional art museum in the Pacific Northwest. The museum was chosen for this research based on the following criteria. I was seeking:

- A cultural or art museum
- An explicit commitment to engage local, specific communities
- A clear tension involving changing internal and external practices and,
- A willingness to participate in the Change Lab process

I had a pre-existing professional relationship with the Director of Education at this institution. The two of us met on two occasions and discussed some of the problems of practice that were occurring at the museum. At the second of those meetings the Community Engagement Manager also joined the conversation. During this period, the

department was going through a major period of change and was tasked with creating a new 5-year strategic plan. Some of the initial problems of practice included:

- An entirely new education staff that was seeking to understand and build from inherited practices
- Various new leadership positions in the museum at large
- A new physical addition to the museum structure
- Concerns within the education team and the museum at large about how to renew commitment to engaging communities
- Wrestling with the difference between targeting audiences and doing community-based work

The city that the museum is situated in is a city with an estimated population of 205,159 people (2014 census). After experiencing a long decline in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the city, in particular the downtown corridor where the museum is located, has seen a slow and steady revitalization since the 1990's. The 2010 census bureau reported the racial make-up of the city as: 64.9% White, 12.2% African American, 11.2% reported being Hispanic or Latino, 8.2% Asian, 1.8% Native American, 1.2% Pacific Islander, and 8.1% reported being from two or more races.

Participants in this research included:

- Members of the Education team including the:
  - Director of Education, Kathryn
  - Community Engagement Manager, Kate
  - Education Assistant, Maria
  - Youth Educator, Brittany

- Adult Learning Educator, Ashley
- Museum staff including:
  - the Director, Allison
  - the Deputy Director
  - 2 members of the Curatorial Department
  - the Visitor Services Director
  - the Director of Marketing and Communications
  - the interim Director of Finance
- One long time Community Partner

These particular participants of the museum staff were chosen because of their leadership positions, which afford them the ability to speak for their departments. Additionally, while it had been my intention to interview several community partners, the community partner was chosen because she and her organization, a LGBTQ nonprofit, had an ongoing relationship established over several years with the museum.

Over the course of the seven months that I spent researching the museum, several events occurred at the museum including the opening and closing of an exhibition addressing the AIDS epidemic and the role the arts played in the epidemic, A(rt)IDS, two community festivals, and a protest at the museum of the A(rt)IDS exhibition.

**Research design.** Data were collected iteratively over seven months using a variety of research methods including: semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observations. In this section, I first describe the overall data collection process, and then go further in depth into each methodological tool. Doing so allows me to both present the iterative nature of this research, and then explain why these methods

were chosen for investigating the research questions. Figure 5 demonstrates the data collection and analysis process timeline.

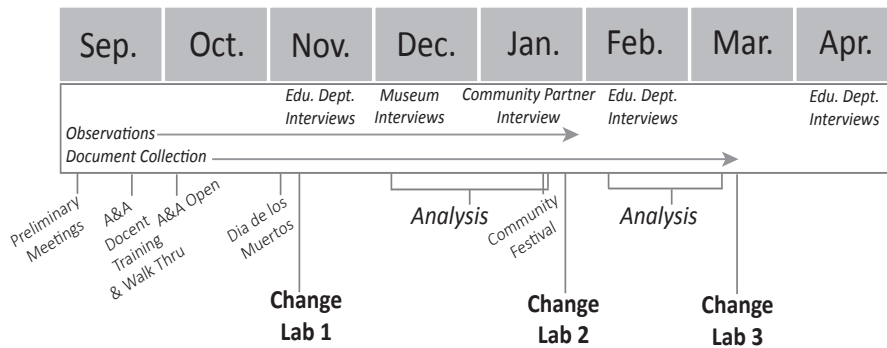


Figure 5. Data collection and data analysis timeline.

During the first month of this research project, I met informally with the Director of Education twice to define problems of practice and goals of the research. At the second of those meetings the Community Engagement Manager joined the conversation. Following that, I met with the full education team for Change Lab 1. During this Change Lab, I explained the research process and facilitated a conversation about possible goals for the research, while giving them the space to talk about their own individual and collective problems of practice, as well as goals for their practices and the future of the team and the museum. The agenda of this meeting is outlined in Appendix A. Following this meeting, I interviewed the members of the education team (Appendix B). Information from the first Change Lab and the two previous informal meetings was used to design those interviews. During this time, I also observed various events at the museum including a staff walk, a docent training and a member opening of the A(rt)IDS exhibit, as well as the Dia de los Muertos community festival. During these events and

those that followed, I observed education department members interactions with one another, the community, and the museum staff. I took observational notes in a notebook.

Once all members of the education team were interviewed, I began to interview the members of the museum that do not work on the education team (Appendix C). At this time, I also reached out to various community partners in the hope of interviewing them as well. By the end of data collection I was able to interview the long-term community partner about their experiences partnering and working with the museum on two exhibitions of interest to the LGBTQ community, including the A(rt)IDS exhibition.

Each of these data sources were analyzed and presented back to the education team as mirror data during the Change Lab 2. Mirror data focused on tensions that were occurring between the Education Department and the other departments, as well as between the Education Department and the larger community in the past, present, and future. It was deliberately chosen to provoke conversation among the educators. Since I interviewed the educators first, I had a sense of what they thought the other participants might say or not say, thus I often chose data that I knew would be surprising to the educators during the Change Lab. Furthermore, I came to this research with some understanding of the challenges that art museums face in terms of changing practices from my personal experience working in the museum field, but also from my literature review and conceptual framing. Those previous understandings also shaped the data I chose to present back to the educators. Since this research is an instrumental case study whereby the goal is to speak to a wider issue, drawing on my previous knowledge and experiences became a useful way to engage the educators in field-wide conversations by having them contextualize those conversations to their own experiences. Examples of

mirror data can be found in Table 1 and the agenda from Change Lab 2 is outlined in Appendix D.

Topic	Mirror Data
Museum/Community Relationship	We offer something of value to the people and they come and utilize all the resources that we can provide them with. Some resources would be adjusted based on the feedback that we receive
Programs	When we do these community focused events, we tend to bring a non-traditional museum going audience and it puts the artworks at risk.
Change in the Education Department	S1: It has been insanely focused on K through 8 for as long as I've been here with the exception of the last year... There are these little glimmers of things that indicate interesting change [because of new team]  S2: That's maybe the battle that we have a lot is that sometimes education wants to go there and be the 'let's open it up and be more free' but we're always going to have a kind of stuffy thing when it comes to art that needs to be protected and is being held in reverence
Community Partners	Frankly, there are areas where we have less expertise, where we need communities to come in and tell us what they need and how they want to go about it and frankly even make the relationship for us.
Visitor Goals	I want the boundaries of the museum to dissolve. I want people to come here, remember that they saw something, go home, look online and find that thing then find the deeper context or information about the artist, about the image, the painting, the whatever. I want to figure out a way to keep the museum as a resource for folks, not just a place where you go and have an experience
Community Success	That is a mark of success: as if the community owns the facilities, as if it is their event [an event that is community based but takes place with the museum] and that we have received a little bit.
Interaction in Museum	You go over to the children's museum and it's full because it's all about interaction, it's an entertainment based thing. There's learning as a part of that, but it's kind of a trick. We don't have that trick, that trick is not readily available in our toolbox because we can't interact with the art in that way. Unless we do some really philosophically different things.

*Table 1.* Example of mirror data presented to the educators during Change Lab 2.

To prepare for the third and final Change Lab, I analyzed the data from Change Lab 2 in relation to the data that had already been analyzed. The agenda for this meeting can be found in Appendix E. During Change Lab 3, the participants focused in on some

of the more generative data from Change Lab 2 and worked toward solutions to their problems of practice, but also more deliberately toward expanding their agency. An explicit description of how I made these decisions can be found in Chapter 6: The Change Labs. They used a worksheet that described a problem of practice, and then provided a space for them to brainstorm where this problem came from and how it might be resolved. The worksheet provided an opportunity for the participants from within the system to create solutions to problems of practice that were meaningful to them.

Examples of the worksheets can be found in Appendix F.

***Semi-structured interviews.*** The semi-structured interviews with the museum and the one community partner that are described above were held over the course of seven months and audio recorded. Each interview lasted between 40 minutes to an hour. While there was a guiding set of questions and themes, interviews were held in a style that was as close to everyday conversation as possible in an effort to build a relationship with the participants so that they answer openly and honestly instead of what they think I “wanted” to hear from them (Russ, Lee, & Sherin, AERA, 2009).

***Document review.*** I gathered internal memos, information pamphlets, and media publications in order to understand how the museum positions itself and how it is positioned in the world. Documents were pivotal to this work because they exemplify what the institution says it does both internally and externally which could be compared with the interviews and observations.

***Participant observations.*** Participant observations provided me the opportunity to see the participants in their day-to-day work lives and triangulate interview and document data. The observations occurred at the museum and included events such as a community

festival, a docent training, and an exhibition opening. During these events I took field notes capturing the activity of the participants and the community as they interacted with one another.

**Change Laboratories.** The Change Laboratory sessions occurred at weeks 10, 22, and 27 and each lasted for approximately two to three hours. The details of these meetings are explained in Table 2. Using small group breakouts, large group discussions and representations, the participants were presented with mirror data that was used to recognize contradictions, highlight multiple voices, and co-construct new forms of activity. Mirror data provided an opportunity the Vygotskian notion of double stimulation – the problem of practice being the first stimulant, and the data excerpt being the second. The Change Laboratories allowed participants a chance to work with the data and their own understandings to explore where change could take place in light of both internal and external pressures. Change Labs 1 and 2 were audio recorded and Change Lab 3 was video recorded.

Change Lab	Structure	Data Presented	Data Collected
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduced the education team to the DWR process</li> <li>- Began to define motives</li> <li>- Depictions of ideal museum/community relationship</li> <li>- Defined goals of research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observation data from community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio recording of the meeting</li> <li>- Representations of the “ideal community and museum relationship”</li> <li>- Individual Reflections</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilize 3 surfaces and mirror data to identify the subject and object of the education department</li> <li>- Used mirror data from the interviews to generate a conversation about existing tensions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal museum interviews</li> <li>- Community partner interview</li> <li>- Change Lab 1 data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audio recording of the meeting</li> </ul>

3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilize 3 surfaces and mirror data</li> <li>- Finalized subject and object</li> <li>- Employed worksheet as a tool to stimulate participant-led change and discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community interview</li> <li>- Patterns that came out of the data collected thus far</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video recording of the meeting</li> <li>- Co-constructed definition of compassion and empathy</li> <li>- Co-constructed Patterns</li> <li>- Individual reflections</li> </ul>
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*Table 2.* Change Lab process including the structure and the data that was presented and collected during the Change Lab.

While the Change Labs were participant driven in a sense, I had to plan and prepare for each one based on my theoretical understanding of what was happening, but also on the emergent data and analysis of that data over the course of the project. This meant that for each Change Lab, I had to personalize the intervention to the experiences of the educators. For example, I came to Change Lab 1 with preconceived notions about the museum field and how it handles change (Janes, 2009). Furthermore, I had an idea of what these participants, even those I hadn't met, would be like based on my relationship with Kathryn and Kate. As such, I expected them all to basically agree on more conceptual issues but thought that there would be nuanced differences between them that were reflective of the wider museum field. In order to bring out some of those tensions and move them toward a more concrete conceptualization of their work and their goals, I planned two drawing activities that served as tools to open up conversation: one of their ideal museum/community relationship, and a second of where the education department stood in relation to the rest of the museum. This gave them something tangible to link their ideas too that they could continue to return to and refine. Another example is during the third Change Lab I gave them a tool for discussion that included a description of the difference between community engagement and targeting audiences (Appendix G). I did this because I knew several things based on my experiences and the data. Firstly, the

educators were having difficulty defining “community” and what that meant to their work. Secondly, this was based on my own theoretical understanding of the difference between community engagement and targeting audiences, a notion that I believe is often confused in the museum field. Finally, in the previous Change Labs, the educators remained mostly at a conceptual level and I wanted to guide them increasingly toward the concrete. Having a tool that already had the definitions they were looking for allowed them to do that.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis procedures for this research required a several phase plan in order to account for a description of the museum as an activity system with underlying contradiction, and for the Change Lab process. While both of these analysis goals were related and contingent upon one another, they yielded different tools and results.

In order to analyze the data for the description of the activity system and the contradictions, I initially coded the data sets, looking for emerging themes from the data to create codes. The original list included 37 low inference codes that I identified as I went through the data (Appendix H). By creating low inference codes from open coding, I was able to let the data speak to me, rather than prescribe meaning which allowed me to “formulate any and all ideas, themes or issues” (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, p143) from the data and generate several possible codes.

Following the initial open coding, I refined the codes that were pertinent to the emerging understandings and connections to my research questions and theoretical framework. I then did a close coding based on these understandings. This close coding allowed me to identify data that was germane to the nodes of the activity system. It also

allowed me to explore the nature of the tensions in the system by further developing the data I originally coded as “Conflict.” For example, I identified all excerpts that had been coded as a Conflict. Using the original list of codes, I then identified what the conflict was between, and if I could, I also identified what the conflict was about. For example, the excerpt, “Are we talking about the education department, are we saying that the museum as a whole is community centered because again I don’t always believe that those things match” was coded as Conf: EduT vs. Museum: Comm meaning, this is a conflict between the education team and the museum about the community.

Each of these conflicts was then identified by the level of contradiction they present in the system (Foot, 2014; Foot & Groleau, 2011; Engeström, 1987). These levels include: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary. An example of the levels of contradictions can be found in Table 3. This provided me with the opportunity to describe which of the conflicts had the power to affect the activity of the system and potentially lead to an expansive cycle. One aspect of an ethnographic study is that data collection and data analysis are iterative and interwoven processes that occur simultaneously as the research progresses. While I started with a guiding theoretical framing derived from museum literature and CHAT, I had to continually analyze the data as I moved between the incoming data and the theoretical concepts, noting potential links in the emerging analysis and reevaluating the ways with which to test these emergent ideas.

In addition to analyzing the data for description, I also had to use the data to prepare for each Change Lab, especially to identify mirror data for the Change Lab process. Due to the nature of the work being participant driven, it was imperative for me to set up the conditions under which the participants could engage with the data, rather

then use the data as a prescriptive for what they should change according to me.

Primary Contradiction	Secondary Contradiction	Tertiary Contradiction
Use-Value vs. Exchange Value  Museum as a community resource versus museum as a business	<b>Nodes of AS in Contradiction:</b> Subject/Community <i>[Education/Curatorial]</i>  Education has the desire to use the galleries to bring in non-traditional museum audiences (those who are maybe not well versed in museum behavior); curatorial has responsibility to keep the artwork safe.	Brittany comes with a bigger understanding of what is possible in galleries with youth and pushes both the Education department, and the Curatorial department to reconsider their previously held understandings.

Table 3. Example of multi-level contradiction analysis.

By carefully considering the data and tools I presented and how it was presented (in a way that was useful and yet digestible and moved the participants from the abstract and toward the concrete), the iterative approach to analysis afforded me the ability to really consider what was emerging from the data and how to use the most salient excerpts to prompt dialogue with the team.

The data that I presented to the educators was designed to provoke them toward conversations and new understandings. I used my analysis to identify the data that was most capable of doing this by first tracking major themes and trends from the educators, and then comparing those trends with what the other participants were saying and experiencing. This helped me determine where the educators' experiences and understandings were in relation to the rest of the museum and the community partner.

### **Chapter Five: The Museum as an Activity System**

In this chapter, I introduce and describe the museum as an activity system. First, I define the components, or nodes, of the system including the subject, the object, the community, the division of labor, and the rules. Each of these nodes represents a vital and inextricable component to the activity system. For example, one of the fundamental assumptions of CHAT is that the behavior of participants in an activity system cannot be understood without knowing their goals, the tools that they have at their disposal to complete their work, and how the rules in the system might affect how they use the tools and resources available to them. Understood in their completeness (Leont'ev, 1978) rather than by their components, activity systems are continuously evolving through learning actions. In addition, because I am studying the museum as an activity system, this chapter will situate the educators' work during the Change Labs in the larger context of the system. Studying museum change from an activity system perspective offers a more holistic and nuanced understanding of the work of the participants, as well as how change might be understood.

Engeström (1987; 2001) argues that activity systems have inherent tensions within them that may accumulate over time, leading to both organizational stress, and to opportunities for expansive learning—or systemic change. In this chapter I also explore the tensions and systemic contradictions inherent in the system. I describe a protest that took place in December at the museum concerning the A(rt)IDS exhibition. The protest served as an example of an accumulation of tensions within the system that affected the activity of the system, and more specifically the Education Department. I then present a more thorough analysis of the museum's underlying contradictions and how they were

brought to life through tensions inherent in the system through data that explores issues of community and diversity. This data are organized around three main themes that each relate back to the protest. How tensions and contradictions are understood and resolved matters because it affects the extent to which the department pursues their object of activity.

### **The Activity System**

The activity system in this study is a mid-sized art museum described by the executive director, Allison (2015, December 7), as “the most visible and prominent of the museums” in the downtown city area. For her, the museum has “an important role in holding the cultural history” of the city. In addition, Allison wanted the museum to be “hopefully part of what people feel good about, proud about when they think about the city.” The museum’s commitment to its city is intended to be visible and visceral through its programing, the use of the space, and its exhibitions.

The museum has been in operation for 80 years. Its collection includes over 4,500 objects. In recent years, the museum underwent a major renovation, expanding their gallery space by twice its original size. The \$15.5 million project caused the staff to turnover at a higher than usual rate, hiring several new positions at the management level and beyond, including an entirely new Education Department.

“With any transformation there are all kinds of expected and unexpected impacts... Then naturally there is change over on the staff if it was a big accomplishment to finish this and it was exhausting and it was a big stretch for many people and they could also put it on their resumes as something that they had done. Not surprisingly we had change over in the development and the fundraising team because it also marked the completion of a big fundraising push and that's a big accomplishment to take out on the road” (Allison Interview, 12/7/15).

In addition, during this research the museum received another major gift from a local philanthropist of \$14 million to expand the space by nearly a quarter. This also included the acquisition of 225 artworks from the philanthropist family's private collection.

The museum is largely thought of as a progressive institution that leans toward being community-centered more than other arts organizations. For Emily "the museum was already leagues ahead of other museums that I had been a part of, because these conversations were even being entertained" (Emily Interview, 2/19/16). Brittany seconded that opinion saying, "A lot of museums take lip service to that idea and say, 'Of course we're invested in the community. Of course we care,' but they don't really know how to do that or what that means but... I really feel like the museum is really living out that community centered value through their collection, programming, and their exhibition programming" (Brittany Interview, 11/18/2015).

An example of the museum's progressiveness occurred a few years ago the museum had an exhibition about LGBTQ art. The museum was encouraged by a small number of funders and board members to not do the exhibit. At the risk of losing those funders, Allison told them the exhibition was too important and provided too much community good. The exhibition was the first of its kind, and as the community partner remembered it, was a profound statement. She felt that for the first time she saw all "people like her" (she identifies as LGBTQ) up on the walls of a museum, a memory that influenced her greatly.

The activity system triangle below [Figure 6] demonstrates the way that each aspect or node of the activity system exists in tandem with one another. The relationship

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**Comment [1]:** More description of the actual museum and the museum in the community.

between the nodes signifies tensions between different motives that are anchored in history and context, creating the possibility to both inhibit and fuel expansive learning.

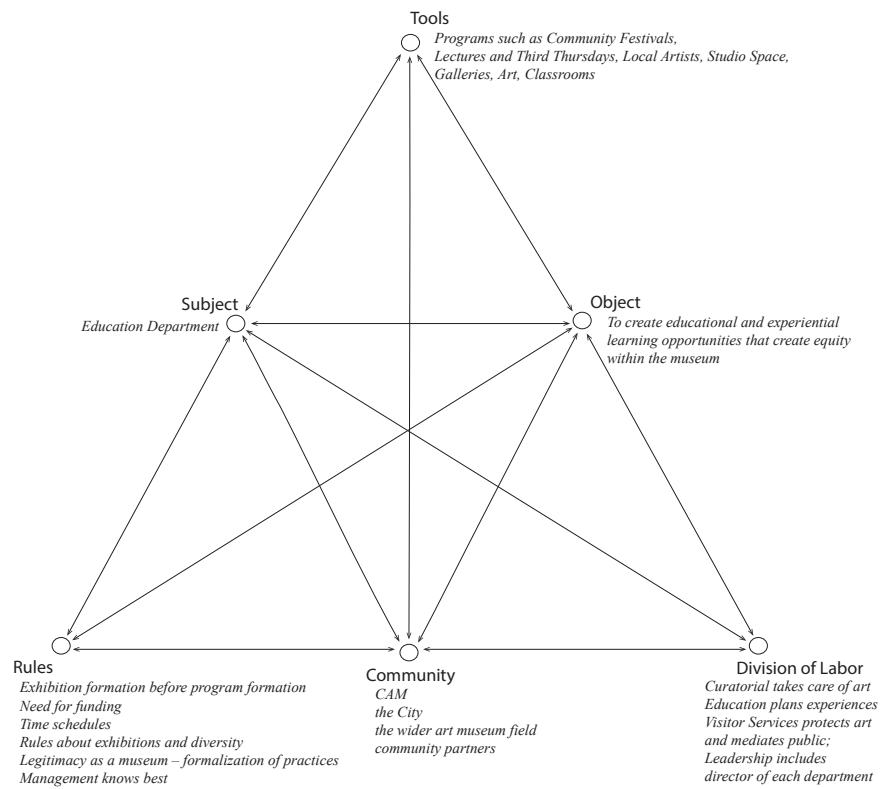


Figure 6. The museum as an activity system.

**The Education Department as the subject.** The subject of this study was the Education Department within the museum because I am interested in how change is generated specifically through their work. There are five members of the Education Department: Kathryn, the Director of Education; Maria, the Education Assistant; Kate, the Community Engagement and Studio Manager; Brittany, the Youth Educator and

Emily, the Adult Educator. Excluding Maria, their reasons for coming to the museum were similar. Each member of the department was looking for a smaller institution that was truly invested in their community and their mission. Kathryn, Emily, and Brittany talked about how different the museum is from other institutions and their previous experiences. Kate saw the unification of their department and said: “museum educators are very like-minded” and “I feel really supported in the department. Like I said, I feel like we're all on the same page. We have the same ideas about where things should go. A part from small little logistical hang-ups or differences of opinion, which are inevitable I feel like, again, there's that philosophical word. Philosophically we're all on the same level” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15). Kathryn’s commitment to hiring a philosophically aligned and social justice oriented team is apparent in each individual, their identities and their practices.

Investing in education became a goal at the board level of the museum. During a retreat in the summer of 2015, board members determined new audiences to reach out to and identified a recommitment to education goals. Allison was looking for a national leader to take over the department and believed she had found that when she hired Kathryn as the Education Director. Allison saw Kathryn as a “dynamic person who brings a lot of museum experience” (Allison Interview, 12/7/15). The circumstances that led Kathryn to be able to craft her entire team were unique, she noted that she “wanted to be really careful that as we brought new people in that it was both a personality fit, because let's face it we're a business and we all have to work together,” she continued saying that there must also be a “skill fit and a just a point of view fit” (Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15).

Kathryn, the Director of Education, came to the museum in August with 18 years of experience of advancing new trends in museum education such as incorporating technology, encouraging conversation and shared dialogue, and introducing a tiered approach to interpretation for different audiences. Her position required her to work with the Senior Management team within the institution, as well as with her own department, dual roles that she sometimes found difficult to reconcile. As part of senior management, she helped set the strategic plan and goals for the whole institution including as it related to curatorial, financing, and of course, education initiatives.

Soon after Kathryn joined the museum, previous employees in the department began to leave because, according to Kathryn, major changes tend to push previous employees out of their positions because they are burnt out from the work that goes into making the change. In addition, Kathryn acknowledged that her new leadership might also have pushed out previous employees because she brought goals, objectives, and work that were fundamentally different from the previous education team. This afforded Kathryn the opportunity to build an entirely new team from scratch. She was looking for “a team that shared my passion for what a museum can be, and the power of art. A team that wants to work hard, and that isn't afraid of hard work,” which she had to try to “balance out the fact that just because I'm a maniac and will work like, way too many hours a week that not everybody else needs to be doing that” (Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15). In short, she wanted to build a team that brings ideas that she doesn't have because which she has some expertise “it would be a really boring museum if my voice was the only one you know, directing all the programs and everything” (Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15).

Maria was the first of the four employees in the department to be hired. She began her time at the museum as a fellow for the Native American gallery and moved into an interim “education helper” followed by the part-time Education Assistant position she held at the time of this research. As the only person of color in the department, and one of the few in the museum, Maria felt that often her role was to provide a critical but necessary voice “as a way to try to make movement forward or figure out what to do” (Maria Interview, 11/17/15). She made it a point to mention that she’s “basically lived a white girl life” and acknowledged that she’s not in “the throes of underserved communities” but is the “closest thing” the museum has to diversity and therefore finds herself “tasked with being the watchdog” (Maria Interview, 11/17/15).

Kate joined the Education Department in February as the Community Engagement Manager. Her background is in anthropology, so connecting people has “always been a thing” for her (Kate Interview, 11/18/15). In her role at the museum, she speaks to the importance of listening, of being in the community, and of not always having, or wanting, to wear her “museum badge” every time she is at an event because she believes community partnerships are built between people, not organizations. On a day-to-day basis, Kate’s job consisted of “emailing people, calling people, and talking to people incessantly” usually concerning planning for a program. “Sometimes it’s just spit-balling on ways we can partner with an organization that we had been intending to work with in the past that just hadn’t managed to collaborate. Sometimes it’s heading offsite to a partner program or not a partner program, just a community organization that we have relationship with and just being present” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15). She was responsible

for figuring out the six community festivals that the museum has each year, as well as managing community art installations, and running the free to the public studio space.

Brittany joined the museum in June as the Youth Educator. In that role she was “in charge of basically our K-12 programs when kids are out of school. So that means after school programs, summer camps, any sort of teen program that we decide put together, family programs, family interpretation, youth workshops, anything with kids that isn't a field trip basically” (Brittany Interview, 11/12/15). She spent her days “collaborating with different departments within the museum, and in a lot of different meetings working with different community partners.” At the time of the first interview she had only been in the museum for three months and was excited about making ten strong connections with local schools for the Art After School program, but by the second interview she was excited about a handful of projects she had been a part of. She is particularly passionate about social justice.

Emily was the final member of the Education Department to join the team. Hired in the fall she moved from the east coast, after working in museums in Boston and Baltimore, and began her position in January. In her role as Adult Educator, she found that she felt “very responsible to visitors” (Emily Interview, 2/19/16) and was concerned about having to make choices about how those visitors learn without fully understanding their needs and wants. Because of this concern and her natural tendency to assess and read a situation and to move slowly, Emily had given herself a 90-day plan to get to know the culture in the institution and the community. In her current role at the museum she was charged with both preparing self-guided and docent guided moments in the museum. For example, she put together training materials and organized monthly docent training

meetings. In approaching her work, she asked “big, philosophical” questions like “What does it mean to guide your own learning experiences?” and “When does learning start and stop?” (Emily Interview, 2/19/16).

While the subject of an activity system is seen as a unit, identifying each member of the departments elucidates how individuals create collectives and vice versa. At the start of this research, each member of the Education Department felt aligned with one another and the goals of the department. Kathryn talked about how they can be individuals in the system, but still be unified:

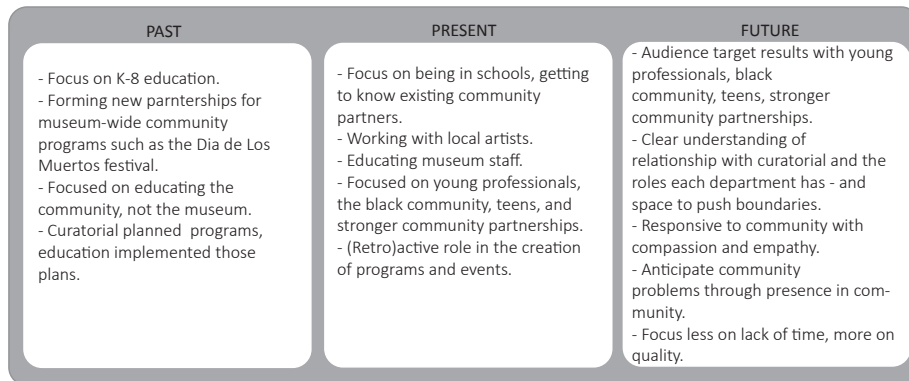
“You heard at the steering meeting, everybody approaches even the subject of art, the subject of artists, the subject of what it means to be engagement, or community, or this or that. We all have our own perspectives on that, and they can sound quite different. At the heart I think they're all very much aligned, but the fact that we have this really nice mix of aligned but different passions is great.”(Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15).

By the time I began data collection Education Department members were busy developing educational programming for an exhibition that had been ten years in the making, “A(rt)IDS”, preparing for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Dia de los Muertos community celebration, developing their After School program, and preparing for upcoming exhibits and community events. In addition to that, the A&A exhibition put the words “compassion and empathy” at the forefront of how the museum aspired to related to the community, and the Education Department decided to use those words to define their work. Each member of the department was tasked with carrying out this work through their own particular focus, so for example, planning for Dia de los Muertos for Brittany required her to focus on opportunities for youth engagement, but because it was a community event, the bulk of the planning and preparing fell on Brittany.

**The object of activity: Orienting the work.** The object of the activity is the

main thing that distinguishes one activity from another (Leont’ev, 1978). It serves as “a centering and integrating device in complex, multi-voiced settings; it becomes the way of conceptually framing diffuse professional groups, individual agents, and complex practices and services” (Daniels & Johnson, 2014, p.144). In this sense, the object of activity is simultaneously what engages and motivates the participation of groups of people, as well as the thing that is transformed through their participation (Sannino & Ellis, 2013). When the object is defined, we don’t only understand what people are doing, we understand why they are doing it.

For the educators, the primary motivation in this system was to create educational and experiential learning opportunities that create equity within the museum. This meant targeting new audiences such as teenagers and young professionals, but also incorporated what Kate referred to as being a “reflection of the community” (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). During the Change Labs, the educators used the data and their experiences to create the following chart (Figure 7).



*Figure 7.* A co-constructed version of the educators changing object of activity as it relates to past, present, and future practices.

While each member of the department is tasked with different responsibilities, they each center their work on a common goal, or object. The outcome for them is to be more “outward facing” and to be a space that engages and respects the diversity of the local community. This object, however, is not the only one in the activity system. For example, there is also the object of keeping the art safe while it is in the museum. As one curator noted:

“When we do these community focused events we tend to bring a non-traditional museum going audience and it puts the art works at risk. Part of my core mandate is to protect the artworks from damage and destruction and so it’s often challenging and there’s been things around people deciding that they could manhandle sculptures, to touching things, to breaking stuff, to putting their feet on the wall.” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/2015).

In addition, there is the object of keeping the organization financially stable by focusing on the art. The interim financial director described the Education Department as a department that is not always aware of how their programs affect the budgets of the other departments.

“I kind of feel like education is taking this high road occasionally where they're like, ‘Oh our budget is like no one can touch our budget.’ I'm still really coming from the mindset that the art comes first. I love education, but the art is always going to be the first and foremost thing. We're not school. We're here about the art. So maybe that is a change in attitude just a little. It's not a bad thing, it's just I think it forces a different kind of conversation. Which is only a little frustrating from a development side because we're trying to help fund it.” (Interim Financial Director Interview, 12/4/2015).

These two examples reflect way that multiple objects of activity, which are often in tension with one another, direct the work of the museum as an organization and affect the work of the Education Department.

**How community context impacts museum practices.** The communities that the museum is situated in include: the rest of the museum, the city, and the wider art museum field. While there are several art museums in the region that I could have chosen, I was specifically seeking a mid-sized art museum that was considering its impact on their community in an intentional way, as well as the community's impact on the art museum, and a museum that was navigating changes to its system. After experiencing a long decline in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the city, in particular the downtown corridor where the museum is located, has seen a slow and steady revitalization since the 1990s. Maria, who grew up in the city, described the city as: "all about itself and it is very psyched on its own art scene" (Maria Interview, 11/11/2015), a theme that is echoed throughout the song and the interviews.

In addition to being situated in the city, the museum is also situated in the wider world of art museums. The changing art museum field also affects the museum, especially in relation to the changing roles of curatorial and education.

"I think it speaks to this larger shift in museums of being collectors of objects and that's their role and that's what they do really well, to being spaces for people to come and exist in, and yes engage with the objects but that the people are the primary as opposed to the object." (Kate Interview, 11/18).

Kate acknowledged these changes in the above excerpt, noting that not only are roles shifting, but so too is the focus from art to experience. These two communities that the system is situated in both impact the activity of the work in seen and unseen ways but the museum can't be understood as an organization without being situated within their communities. That nearly 35% of the city's population is not white, but the participants feel as though most of their visitors are white, matters when they educators are trying to be reflective of their local community.

In addition, the rest of the museum staff is also part of the educators' community. The decisions that the educators make impact their colleagues, as well. During the course of this research I interviewed lead museum employees including the: marketing and communication director, the interim director of finance, the deputy director, the visitor services manager, and two curators.

**Organizational division of labor: how roles matter in defining the work.** As

Kathryn described, the museum is “a workplace like any place else, and there are different agendas, and there are different priorities, and there are different things like funding that shift things around.” The roles and responsibilities are split similar to most art museums. Each department has separate goals, agendas, and responsibilities.

Allison, as the director, was responsible “for the collections, and the budget, the staff, and all in service of the museum's mission and directional guidance that the board provides through approved policies” (Allison Interview, 12/2/2015). As director, she worked most closely with the museum board and each of the departmental directors.

The deputy director had been at the museum for just over a year at the time of the interview. In her role, she oversaw “almost everything that's not programmatic so HR, finance, the café, the store, Visitor Services, all those kind of behind the scenes things” (Deputy Director Interview, 12/3/2015).

The Visitor Services Manager had been with the museum for three and a half years but in this particular role for 9 months. As part of his responsibility he managed front desk staff and monitors the galleries. “It's essentially a front line of the museum, and we work a lot with visitor experience. I'm kind of in charge of the folks who run the visitor experience” (Visitor Services Manager Interview, 12/10/15). He described his role

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**Comment [2]:** Developed more to account for all of the different

as managing “the staff who run the front desk and monitor the galleries as well. It's essentially a front line of the museum, and we work a lot with visitor experience. I'm kind of in charge of the folks who run the visitor experience” (Visitor Services Manager, 12/10/2015). He also discussed working closely with both education and curatorial in order to ensure the safety of the artworks, and the experience of the visitors.

Curatorial held much of the power as they were in charge of the exhibitions and acquisitions – roles that legitimize art museums as art museums, separating them from other kinds of institutions and work. For the chief curator (Curator 1 in these data) his main responsibility is to lead the “exhibition programming as well as premier collection, acquisition, care and oversee a staff of about 6 people” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/15). He also discussed his role of protecting the art and working with various community groups.

The marketing and communication director described her sole focus as: “bringing visitors into the museum” (Marketing and Communications Director, 12/4/2015). For her,

“Attendance is a big factor in the success of the museum, not financially but success. We want to make sure we're a community museum. The other thing that I look at frequently on a weekly basis is budget. In my position, in particular, is looking at where are dollars going, where is it best put, how are we using the dollars the best way possible, and promotion because it's very limited. I don't have a big budget. Unfortunately, because of that, we have to get really creative in our spending” (Marketing and Communications Director Interview, 12/4/2015).

In addition, as she described earlier, she views the role of her department as being able to “spin” information and make it relevant for bringing the community through the doors of the museum.

**Organizational rules: How policies, norms, expectations affect the work.** The rules that affect work practice within the system are both internal to the museum's operations and external. For example, the museum has a rule about not having any

writing or drawing utensils in the galleries besides markers, but there are also perceived rules about how to behave in the museum and what “good museum etiquette” looks like.

These perceived rules about how to be in a museum are fueled by the expectations of what it means to be an art museum, which “tend to have a more formalized structure around them” (Emily Interview, 2/29/16). Within this notion are rules that define the work of the employees such as having to go through a management structure before making changes. This appeared in the data when an educator makes it clear that the most salient reason she didn’t reach out to a community complaint was because she “had two bosses telling me don’t do it” (Kate Interview, 2/12/16).

There are rules that surround exhibitions and programming. Traditionally, the curators plan the exhibition and the educators then take that curatorial vision and turn it into programming. Another example of the rules that define the exhibition planning include what one curator describes as “problematic” because it is “the fact that it's like: OK, it's three years, we have to have another African-American show or something like that” and that “there's also this assumption that that's all that we can do that will potentially bring the African-American community to the museum... It's like we think that they'll only come to see art by black artists” (Curator 2 Interview, 12/18/15). While at the same time, the curator said:

“We know that the white women audience, a lot of them are older and more conservative of their taste, and the A&A exhibit is not what they want to see. We don't want to lose them to the museum either, so we deliberately thought about the exhibitions that come after and put back in some things that they enjoy and will come to too” (Curator 2 Interview, 12/18/15).

In addition to these rules, there are also rules about how the museum functions as a business that affect the system. As Kathryn described:

“We totally have to worry about money. I mean we have revenue goals. I mean there are things that we all happily cash our paychecks, cashed into our bank accounts and none of us are giving it back and complaining. So with that comes a responsibility to finding this balance between the practices and values of the museum and the new things we want to push for” (Kathryn Interview, 3/29/15).

**Organizational tools: Art, space, and programs.** The most prominent tool that exists in this system is the art itself. The mission of the museum is to connect people through art. The participants in this study each believe in the power of art to connect communities, foster dialogue, and affect change in a positive way. In this sense, art is a vehicle through which they do their work. “Full disclosure, I will tell you that I love the visual arts but when it comes to me it is a vehicle for that, for building stronger, empathetic communities” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15). Yet, how the art is used and what makes it important is a source of tension within the system. Kate went on,

“I feel like it does have a way of connecting people. I feel that that end goal, to me, is more important than the vehicle but I also love and respect the vehicle. I'll be championing for this too, to have these difficult conversations... or not difficult conversations, just being more collaborative. I think that we can still honor our mission by doing that because it's two sides of the same coin” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15).

The art as a tool also reflect another tension concerning the community. Brittany described this when she said,

“I think you have to have a lot of support and scaffolding in place for a lot of people to get them to a position where they want to walk through the doors they want to look at a work of art they know how to look at a work of art they want to engage in a conversation with someone about it they understand why this matters to them and they can make their own meaning. I feel like that's where the disconnect is in a lot of places and I think we can do all these other things like bringing in speakers and performers and have all these other programs which I think are really great but to me those are more of a conduit to get people to a place where they can just stand in front of a work of art and have conversation about it and that be something that's meaningful to them” (Brittany Interview, 11/12/15).

Other tools in the system include programs such as community festivals like the Dia de los Muertos celebration; Third Thursdays; and school and youth programs. The structure of the museum also provides tools for the subject to use such as gallery space, classroom space, and the free open studio space. In addition, the museum invites lecturers and speakers that usually relate back to the art.

Each of these nodes interacts with one another in significant ways. In addition, they are all held in constant tension with one another so that changes in one, have the potential to affect changes in another. To understand what makes this education department so capable of aggravating tensions in the system, it's important to explore how they are different from the previous education department. In addition, how the educators understand their community is markedly different than how the other participants understand community by nature of the very work that they each do and the roles they are responsible to.

#### **A Look Backward: How the Education Department Has Changed**

One curator noted that their department has “had problems in the past where it [the Education Department] was a very passive department” (Curator 2 Interview, 12/18/15). This led to a situation where the previous Education Department had simply received information and ideas from the curatorial department about the kind of educational programming they should do and then they implemented this programming. “What they wanted us to do was tell them what we wanted in terms of programming, and then they would implement it.” The curator recalled how they would give the educators “all this content and ask them to help us interpret it more broadly for different purposes”

but the educators would expect the curators to simply tell them what they wanted (Curator 2 Interview, 12/18/15).

The new education department doesn't work like this, however. They viewed themselves as unique experts in their field and the most adept at doing the kind of work that they are expected to do.

The current Education Department was tasked with using their unique skill sets to design and create the programming and interpretation. This work involved working with the schools, but it also included community programs, lecture series, working with local artists, and forming community partnerships. Brittany recounted a meeting with a curator in which she showed up to the meeting with thoughts and plans about what might be a good direction for programming for a particular upcoming exhibit "and she [the curator] was like, 'Oh, you're like coming with things to this.' I was like, 'Yes, you are not trained to engage families so I'm not expecting you to figure out how to do that.'" Brittany stated that there needed to be increased understanding of why the educators are there and what they are "bringing to the table" if things are going to get things done (Brittany, Change Lab 3, 3/4/2016).

A curator described that because of these changes, tensions were being aggravated. She explained:

"It's nice to have that back too, that it's a real give and take. It's funny, because we're still having to figure out how that works because there are places where curatorial still needs to have some kind of touch on content or control of where it happens or how it happens, and yet we don't want to be in education space all the time, so we're all still trying to sort out" (Curator 2 Interview, 12/18/15).

Yet, the Interim Finance Director pointed out that the education department often wants to push the museum in ways that the museum isn't ready to be pushed.

“Maybe the battle that we have a lot is that sometimes educational programs want to go there, be the let's open it up and be a little more free, but we're always going to have kind of a stuffy thing when it comes to art that needs to be protected and is being held in reverence” (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/2015).

In addition though, the Marketing and Communications Director saw the role of the educators within the organization shift as well. She noted that,

“Once Kathryn had started, what I've noticed is now that department educates us. Granted, I've only been here five years or I could speak to it more in-depth. What I love is that they take that holistic educational approach to ‘not only are we here to educate the community about exhibitions, but we're also going to educate the staff.’ That, to me, has been great. I haven't seen that, and I think that's wonderful and that should be the role of an education department in a museum. It's not just about the community. Educate us too. Certainly that's what the curators do. I mean they tell us about the exhibitions, but they're very scholarly. Not all of us can understand that, and our job in marketing is always to distill that information to make it more accessible out in the real world for people to understand what these pieces mean or how do we spin it so that people go ‘Oh yeah.’ Our department spins things” (Marketing and Communications Director, 12/4/2015).

The tensions that the new education department put on the system, and the underlying contradictions they provoked, will be further described in the section on contradictions. The educators understood some of these tensions as relating to the roles and responsibilities that each department had, particularly as they related to reaching out to new audiences and becoming more community-centric, might ripple out throughout the system. This is nowhere as true as it is within the tension created by the relationship between the education and curatorial department. Kate viewed this tension as in part related to the curatorial department feeling threatened by new practices:

“I think it's an embodiment of ownership and authority that people [curators] really cling to and feel really passionate about, that they're afraid to let go of. They're afraid if they let the community in more then that will somehow diminish their authority, expertise, and control.” (Kate Interview, 11/18/2015).

## Making Sense of Community

As the educators push toward increased community practices it's important to note what that means for each department. Table 4 identifies how various participants understood the community.

Participant	Community
Director, Allison	<p>I don't think about community as a singular. I think of communities, and different groups of communities, and I would say different communities use us differently. There are communities of artists, and they come hopefully for inspiration. They are often celebrated through exhibitions and participate in programs. They can be supporters of the museum as well or they meet with staff. They also provide services for us sometimes. Example, in the jewelry community they often come together when we ask them kindly to help us to polish works and prepare them for display, because they have unique knowledge and insight and perhaps even knew some of the artists who's work we care take who are no longer with us</p> <p>There's an African American community. Often I find that they come for projects that are particular interest to their own African American history, artists, educational programs, community festivals. I make a point of inviting the black community primarily by attending the Black Collective at least once a year to share upcoming programs that I think will be of particular interest, or ask them for input, or feedback on certain questions we have... I would say different communities use us differently. Those being just 2 examples.</p>
Deputy Director	<p>"I mostly think about community in terms of staffing and diversity. My sort of mindset is about risk management because that's part of my job. Trying to understand what's happening in the community that could have an impact on us or what do we need to think about ahead of time about things that we're going to do that could have a potential reputational risk or things like that" (Deputy Director Interview, 12/3/2015).</p>
Curator 1	<p><i>(Examples of the ways the curator works with the community.)</i></p> <p>A variety of ways where I'm asked to do things because I'm a curator participate in a city committee as a community member. I work at the University of Washington and UPS frequently. I'm an affiliate faculty member at the university so I spend a lot of time doing credits with the grad students.</p> <p>We did things like the golf event this past summer with the city. That was a way to work with a broad spectrum of local artists and then talk to the Rotary every now and again.</p>
Marketing and Communications Director	<p>I think they could use it more. I think the community is proud that there is a museum of this caliber and that they feel that "We're proud of the museum. It's an asset to the community."</p> <p>We're an anchor establishment. I think they say all the right things, and I think a good portion of the community comes, but I also think a greater portion doesn't come. I look at the data and I see that it used to be about 60% of our attendance comes from Pierce County, which is good. It's starting to decline a little bit but not much. I'd now say it's probably like in the 50%, 55%.</p> <p>We're getting more interest like tourism because of our expansion, which is great. I always think it's interesting when I'm still out in the community and they said, "Oh, where's the museum?" I know that we've been here in this particular spot for 10 years, but that tells me that they haven't been back in 10 years. They all love the museum. They think we do great work for the museum. I just don't think enough people come.</p>

Table 4. Participants identifying and making sense of "community."

These differences are related to each participant's work within the system. The goals and motives that drive their views on the community and how their work relates to the community is important to identify as help reveal differences and possible points of disruption.

As Foot & Groleau (2011) note, individuals attempt to change the activity system in order to alleviate tension as it surfaces in disturbances and conflicts. For the purposes of this research, the tensions that occur within the activity system are all intricately related to the work that the educators are trying to do and the way in which they are trying to change their system. As the educators attempt to negotiate their goals and work toward being more community-centered and focused, they naturally create tensions within the museum, a system that has been historically working in a different way that runs counter to the new object of activity. By identifying tensions, Engeström (1987) argues that it becomes possible to reconstruct the system in a concrete and rich way, thereby anticipating its likely trajectory of development in what he terms "expansive learning."

#### **Contradictions: How Accumulating Tensions Become Opportunities to Learn**

In this section, I explore systemic contradictions as they related to four themes regarding diversity and community. The themes include: perceived norms for museum participation, exclusionary practices, institutionalism and legitimacy, and scarcity of resources. Tensions have the ability to accumulate, aggravating the underlying contradictions of the system. In this section, I thematically explore three levels of contradiction with the museum as an activity system.

The primary contradiction is understood as a dialectical tension between the exchange-value of a system, which understands work as a commodity, and the use-value

of a system, which gives the work personal and professional meaning (Foot & Groleau, 2011; Engeström, 1987). Engstrom (1987; 2001) argues that this contradiction is always present within each node of an activity system and reveals itself when tensions arise from the dual nature of everything having both an exchange-value and a use-value within market-based socioeconomic relations. In the case of the museum, the primary dialectical contradiction is situated between the dual objects of serving the community and generating revenue. While museum professionals may wish to better serve the community, they are also a business that needs to generate income and resources in order to sustain and legitimize itself.

“I also think that there is this idea that museums are these like completely idyllic places where everything is just like all about art, it's all you know like, love and hearts and all. I mean, it's a business. It's a workplace like any place else, and there are different agendas, and there are different priorities, and there are different things like funding that shift things around” (Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15).

This contradiction was exacerbated by changes within the organization, the ever-changing community that the museum is situated in, and changes in funding sources. Secondary contradictions exist between the nodes of the activity system and cause the dormant primary contradiction to emerge as tension forms between two different parts of the activity system. Tertiary contradictions, on the other hand, represent the introduction of a more “culturally advanced” perspective that has an impact on the activity system. Both secondary and tertiary contradictions can be understood as concrete manifestations of the primary contradiction.

**Community and diversity.** The four themes that emerged from investigating and data on community and diversity were interrelated and reveal tensions and contradictions in the system. By focusing on these systemic contradictions, the protest can be

explained not as an isolated incident, but as a result of the accumulation of tensions that are specifically related to issues of community and diversity.

***Perceived norms for museum participation.*** During an observation one day, I noticed two women walking into the galleries with five children. As they walked into the gallery one of the women turned toward the children, who weren't being particularly noisy, and said, "Shhhh, we are going into the museum now so we have to be quiet" (Observational Field Notes, 1/14/15). Rules about how to behave in a museum run throughout community perceptions about how to be in a museum, an idea that is not lost on the employees. One curator spoke about the perceived rule about how to behave in a museum and said:

"I'm fascinated that people still come in here and feel like they have to be hush, like in a library. They have to whisper in the galleries. If their kid is running a little bit or even being a little bit of a typical toddler, they're all freaked out that the kid's acting inappropriately. Of course, we don't want them running races up and down the hall. Even that kind of sense that it's a place you aren't welcome in or you can't act like a normal person in is still prevalent still for people" (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15).

When I described the story about the women and children to the educators, they recognized this as a perception about "how to behave in a museum" that they were hoping to dismantle.

During interviews, participants considered how community members might feel excluded from the museum simply because of the perception that there is a particular way of being in the museum. If visitors come to the museum space believing that there is a particular way of behaving, changing those long held perceptions and engaging the community in a new way becomes increasingly challenging for the educators to pursue their goal of changing those preconceived ideas.

In addition to behavioral constraints, perceived ways of being in the art museum might include the idea that there is a particular way of interacting with the art. Kate made note of this and said,

“There are so many people who doubt their ability to look at art and are afraid to come into museum because they're afraid of saying the wrong thing or interpreting something incorrectly, or not understanding it... All of these barriers to access, right, this perceived and real barriers that keep people from coming in” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15).

This excerpt from Kate indicates that visitors come to an art museum with a predetermined notion about art and their abilities to both engage with and create art. This affects how in turn they experience the art that hangs on the walls, but also the open community studio space, and the museum as a whole.

Whereas Curator 2 wasn't comfortable with visitor perceptions of the museum that define the museum as “a place you aren't welcome in or you can't act like a normal person” (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15), when I asked a curator what appropriate museum-behavior looked like he said:

“If it's a painting show you walk through the gallery, you look at the paintings and then you maybe have some conversation. It sounds so stupid and boring but if you have hundreds, if you have say 250 million dollars' worth of insured value on the wall you want a certain kind of decorum by all of the visitors” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/15).

The Visitor Services Manager acknowledged this tension between curatorial and education and said that,

“Curatorial has opened up a little bit, but education often wants to do things in the galleries and with events and what-not that make it more difficult for curatorial staff and visitor services staff to potentially protect the artwork that's on display” (Visitor Services Manager Interview, 12/10/15).

An example of what an educator might do is set up a drawing station, which cannot have “any wet media, markers, crayons, or anything like that.” Pencils are

allowed, but even then the Visitor Services staff “will find drawing on the wall sometimes that we have to take care of” (Visitor Services Manager Interview, 12/10/15).

Yet the educators are actively working against these preconceived notions in two ways. First, they were trying to work with audiences and communities that may not be well versed in museum behavior. Secondly, they were questioning the traditional way of being in the museum and argued that while that is one way to participate, it is not the only way. For example, while Brittany sought to expand what it means for youth to participate within the galleries, she reflected on the possibility that other departments might fear for the safety of the artwork.

“That’s not something that is a new thing for me to hear. Maybe here at the museum, but I’ve heard it at other institutions, particularly around teen audiences. ‘Teens are going to touch things and break things. They are going to jump around and break everything. We can’t have teens running around the galleries.’ I expect that resistance when proposing to do thing with my youth audience. That’s the response that I anticipate from people. When it doesn’t happen, I’m like awesome, you’re a great open-minded person who’s on my team” (Brittany Interview, 2/12/15).

Brittany said that in order to build trust with the rest of the staff she does sketching activities with the youth in the galleries. “I do this activity with die cut sheets where kids have to lay them in front of works of art that they respond to and the sheets mean different things,” she described.

“So sometimes guests will come around the corner and be like, ‘What is all this crazy stuff on the floor?’ and I’m like ‘It’s fine, we’re only going to be in here for ten minutes it’s OK.’ I think it’s just that sometimes things are different and so people are like ‘Oh, but you’re not doing anything that’s going to be bad so it’s fine’ and people kind of hang out and they watch what kooky things I’m having the kids do” (Brittany Interview, 2/12/15).

This example highlights how the perception of what “good museum behavior” looks like is affected by what “good museum behavior” traditionally has been, and the

reasons it has been that way (to protect the exchange value of the art). Brittany serves as someone invested in changing how the museum engages new publics by fostering trust with other departments and visitors by being transparent about her work, pushing the boundaries of what's allowed within museum walls.

*Exclusionary practices.* Traditionally, a particular socioeconomic and ethnic group attended and in turn, funded, museums. They were well versed in museum behavior because of their experience of being in museums. The director of the museum, Allison, said that “in the museum field there are certain communities that are hard to reach and for a whole host of perfectly good reasons” (Allison Interview, 12/7/15). She gave the examples of teens who cannot yet drive and people who work during the day. She also names the college community “except for those who have specific interests and their professors point out it's important to come to the museum or make an assignment of that.” Men, she said, come less frequently to the art museum than women, however with the new addition of the Native American collection, she was seeing more and more men in the galleries. While it is unclear from these data precisely why various communities aren't coming to the museum, there is a clear tension between the historical purposes of the museum as a place to preserve and exhibit art, and the emerging organizational motives to make the museum a place that is useful and used by a broader segment of the community.

The Interim Finance Director described the hurdle to doing more meaningful work within the community as a problem with the city's overall demographics, rather than an issue with particular communities.

“I think just based on the demographics, the idea of going to lecture dismisses like 95 percent of the people. It doesn't have to be that way. I don't know. I'm not

saying that the city is anti education, but are we entertainment? Or are we an education institution? Or are we solely trying to preserve and provide culture to a place? I think that's a hard sell" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15).

The notion that the city's locals aren't interested in events that aren't purely entertainment exemplifies and reinforces the idea that museums are for some people, some of the time, particularly those types of people who go to lectures for fun. When questioned on whom those people are, he said affluent, white and educated people. This perception harkens back to the idea that museums are only for a small subset of people, and the tension created by the idea that perhaps the art museum can be for all kinds of communities aggravates the primary contradiction. The inclusion of new audiences and new ways of being in the museum space runs counter to traditional museum visitors, and for the curators, puts the art at risk which is a financial liability.

"When we do these community focused events we tend to bring a non-traditional museum going audience and it puts the art works at risk. Part of my core mandate is to protect the artworks from damage and destruction and so it's often challenging and there's been things around people deciding that they could manhandle sculptures, to touching things, to breaking stuff, to putting their feet on the wall" (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/15).

While it is not clear exactly which non-traditional museum going audience the curator was referring to, he does touch on a contentious point within the museum at large: new audiences may threaten established museum policies and practices. The same curator said that he would like to see the "boundaries of the museum dissolve" signifying that he too is on board with community initiatives, so long as they fit into his mold of what makes a well-versed museum-goer. This runs counter to the Education Department's goal of being "a reflection of the community" – racially and economically. Kathryn asked: "How do we get to a place where, if we are a community center, when we look inside the museum, we see the community in which we sit?" (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15). This push for

a more representative audience is situated within a long history of what one curator refers to as “tokenism” and the perception that art museums are for a particular kind of person – “older white women.” These beliefs didn’t just exist outside of the organization, they were embedded in practice and philosophy within the museum as well.

The educators were also concerned with the museum demographics, but felt as though they could not speak to who is or isn’t coming through the door because the work that they do for the organization is done in an office, removed from the actual public as they use the museum. As Brittany described it,

“I feel like I really don’t have a great handle on who a the museum visitor is and what that looks like, what are our real demographics. I feel like I have an idea kind of but I don’t just sit up on the galleries all day” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

The problem of not knowing who is or isn’t coming through the door means that the educators can’t really identify with their community in any certain way. In order to get to know their community, the educators need the time and space within their work day to visit with those coming through the door but daily work pressures and responsibilities of their roles keep them from being able to do that work even though it directly addresses their goals.

Participants expressed concern at how often museum programs are just one-off events, such as the Dia de los Muertos community festival.

“Are there are communities that we specifically target? Oh, absolutely. There's definitely this interest in trying to diversify the audience and trying to get to either under-served or people that just haven't been connected in various ways. It's an ongoing thing. It's like having a single community festival in a year does not mean you've connected to that community in a deep sort of way” (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15).

These one-off programs, while often seen as successful, were also problematic for a number of reasons including, as the educators understood it, they don’t indicate any real

and lasting connection between the museum and the community. While community programs are intended to foster a deeper relationship with the community, they often provide the opportunity for the museum to reach a targeted audience once, rather than creating a sustained relationship. As the curator pointed out, having a single community festival doesn't mean that the connection to the community is deep.

Community programs bring with them the potential for new communities to become comfortable in the museum space, but they also create an opportunity for the museum to check diversity off of their list of things to do simply because they held the program. For example, in these community programs, success for Allison was marked by how much the community owns the space. Allison described a moment of pride as when there was a news article about a Native American festival.

“And the museum wasn't being quoted. The museum was just listed as the place that all this happened at and that there were members of the Native American community really were the spokespeople for the event” (Allison Interview, 12/7/15).

In addition to identifying the types of people who do or do not regularly attend art museum events, during their interviews participants noted the lack of diversity in the museum, particularly related to the local black community. Allison said that the black community shows up to the museum when there are “projects that are of particular interest to their own African American history, artists, educational programs, community festivals.” Yet, almost every other participant noted the distinct lack of black community members in the museum – on staff, or as a visitor. Brittany put it most simply saying that she doesn't believe that the museum “serves the black population particularly well because I don't see black people in the museum” (Brittany Interview, 11/12/15).

In the previous chapter, one curator identified an implicit organizational expectation about when and how to have exhibitions that engage the black population. It's "the fact that it's like: OK, it's three years, we have to have another African-American show or something like that" which she sees as "problematic" (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15). This is tied to assumption that the only way the local black community will come to the museum is by bringing in exhibitions and programs that interest them. This relates back to the problem of having community festivals that while potentially generative, lack meaningful connection with communities because of the constraints created by the system on employee's resources, objectives, and motivations.

The idea that the museum is not for certain communities and audiences is problematic for a whole host of reasons, and yet similarly, the same curator commented on the museum's "bad habit of trying to be all things to all people." She said, "it gets really scattered. We had a pretty painful history of tokenism in terms of diversity and things like that too that still plays itself out in all kinds of ways, including the exhibition schedule" (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15).

Finally there are issues with the museum staff itself. While most participants noted the lack of the black community, and have been working on building a relationship with youth and young professionals, externally, there are also few people of color on the museum staff. Curator 2 talked about how unfair it is to those few people of color who are on staff, specifically Maria.

"I think we're expecting her [Maria] to carry the weight of the world in some ways. She's the lone Native American representative on the staff and she's supposed to stand in for all of Native Americans and know what everybody's opinion is going to be and how they're going to react and whether we're saying that right and all that sort of stuff. That's really unfair on her. Then also, people

want to treat it as the checkbox. Oh, we've done the checkbox. There we go. It's a lot bigger than that. I don't know" (Curator 2 Interview, 12/8/15).

Maria also felt this tension, especially when she noted that she can't design a program for black people, just because she is a person of color on the museum staff. Given the structure of the museum, Maria wanted there to be people of color on the museum staff, but based on her experiences, she recognized that it will be "really uncomfortable for a person of color to be hired" both for the employee, and for the museum (Maria Interview, 3/11/16).

***Institutionalism and legitimacy.*** The educators viewed the role of the community in the museum as a generator of positive change. Brittany believed that communities can "radically change" museums and that "they can shake them up in a really, really great way" (Brittany Interview, 11/12/15). But this idea doesn't account for the pressure put on the museum to stay as it is and as it has been. As the Interim Finance Director understood it, "We're not really shedding the idea of being overly proper and institutional. We can't kid ourselves in saying that we're like, 'Come in and have a good time and relax'" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15). That art museums are a particular kind of museum that doesn't encourage good times and relaxing separates them from other museums. He also identified the difference between being an art museum compared to being another type of museum:

"You go over to the children's museum and it's full because it's all about interaction, it's an entertainment based thing. There's learning as a part of that, but it's kind of a trick, oh have fun and learn. We don't have that trick. That trick is not readily available in our toolbox because we can't interact with the art in that way. Unless we do some really philosophically different things" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15).

This focus on maintaining institutional structure and culture runs throughout these data and reveals the primary contradiction between generating revenue and being community focused. The idea that art museums have historically been successful in one particular way makes change that privileges the community even more difficult. The legitimacy that continuing to use structures and practices that have a history of working in terms of gaining support is in tension with new practices that some view to threaten the legitimacy of the museum. The staff from other departments were not the only ones experiencing this dichotomy, the educators were as well. Kate described how important it is to “honor the strengths of being an art museum” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15) and all that being an art museum entails. For the participants, this was different than the role of a children’s museum. This need to remain an art museum within the changing landscape of museum practice was indicative of changes in the curatorial and education departments and the roles that they play.

“I think it speaks to this larger shift in museums of being collectors of objects and that’s their role and that’s what they do really well. To being spaces for people to come and exist in, and yes engage with the objects but that the people are the primary as opposed to the object. While I feel that very strongly, and I would argue that that shift is occurring, I’m sure there’s a vast, many people who would say that that is not happening, that’s not the way it should be. Of course you think that if you’re in education. That’s not at the museum specifically, I think that’s across the board, still” (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

The idea that “of course” education believes that there is a push toward better community-based practices signifies a clear division of labor, but also a philosophical divide about the museums purpose, one that impacts how the museum functions. The Interim Finance Director, who had been with the museum for a decade but left in the middle of this research said,

“I've heard Kathryn say that City Art Museum is an education based institution which actually to me is kind of a shocking statement because I really still, it's an art institution. It is a cultural institution that's focused on preserving and protecting art and providing access to the community” (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15).

The tension created by the art versus experience debate is symbolic of the changing relationship between curatorial and education. Allison understood that curatorial departments and education departments are often at odds with one another which is why she “resolved that I want them to work well together.” In order to foster that relationship she has them do things “like sitting next to each other, ensuring that there are good lines of communication and they are treated equally, the expectations are clear about where the curators role ends and the educators begin.” For her, the departments must work well with one another to make “the collection come to life for people” (Allison Interview, 12/7/15).

The following two excerpts come from an educator and a curator. I asked them to define what their goals for visitors to the museum.

“For me, from a museum educator standpoint, it would be people coming and learning something and making connections with what we have on view in the gallery. I think that's really, really important, and I think the more personal, visceral and meaningful it can get the better. That's an ideal world situation, but the other thing is people just feeling comfortable coming to museum, wanting to come to the museum, feeling like they can hangout in the museum, that's success to me. Again, that's not something that needs to just happen on our festival and program days. I feel like that could be an always thing” (Kate Interview, 11/18/15).

“My hope is that as a curator I want the boundaries of the museum to dissolve, I want people to come here, remember that they saw something, go home, log online and look for that thing and then find the deeper context or information about the artist, about the image, the painting the whatever and figure out a way to keep City Art Museum as a resource for folks not just a place where you go and have an experience” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/15).

The difference in these goals for the visitor is emblematic of the difference of philosophy and practice for each department, and in turn represents tensions within the object of activity as they are different for each department. Where the educator is looking to build comfort and community within the walls of the institution, the curator is looking for the visitor to use the space to see art, leave and continue on with a deeper love of art.

By and large, the departments do believe that they work well together. It is equally where they find potential to do better work but also where they have to confront these philosophical ideas about how a museum should be – and what it should be. The curators identify that they are there for the public. The Marketing and Communications Director also believes that engaging communities gives the museum purpose. “If they're not engaged, then why are we here?” she asks.

“The reason we're here is to provide that safe place or dialogue for education for you to think beyond your scope, to broaden your way of thinking, or just to enjoy and have these things that you can see that you normally wouldn't be able to see. If we're not of the purpose of the community, then we have no purpose either” (Marketing and Communications Director Interview, 12/4/15).

Yet, this is also the most prevalent tension within the system.

“I think some of the problem with this kind of community driven change in the museum is that it often comes from education. It almost always comes from education, it's coming from a community group but that's the realm for which it's funneled to the rest of the museum and I think a lot of departments probably don't understand really what education is doing or trying to do or what the goals are. I think a lot of people oh it's just you do arts and crafts projects and kids come to the museum on field trips but it's a lot more complicated than that and I feel like that's probably fair to say. I think anybody who works in the museum can probably say that about their job people don't really understand what I do” (Emily, Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

Emily's idea that people don't understand what it is that she does connects back to the excerpt about being “shocked” that Kathryn called the museum an educational institution. In theory, everyone is on board with what the Education Department wants to

do, but in practice it looks much different, again identifying tensions within the object of activity. For example, the marketing and communications director makes the following comment about being seen as an empathetic and compassionate institution within the community:

“I think, though, it is a shift for us to be leading with that outwardly, so that is something that we in the marketing department haven't quite rolled out yet. It's a new way of thinking. I shouldn't say it's a new way of thinking. It's just a new way to promote the museum about what we do. We haven't done it that way before” (Marketing and Communications Director Interview, 12/4/15).

The idea that compassion and empathy are something to be promoted, rather than practiced, runs counter to the motives of the educators. Divides such as this make the work of the educators more difficult, because not only do they have to bring their colleagues to the same conversation they are having, they also have to do that in the community which is something that Kate worries about everyday.

“I don't have the answers either. I don't have some magical or formula that can make that happen. That's not necessarily a failure as much continuously missed opportunity to think of ways that we think make the museum a more ubiquitous supportive collaborative environment for the community” (Kate Interview, 2/12/15).

Due to Kathryn's experience working in museums, and in particular, in management positions, she is also well aware that museums are businesses just as much as they are anything else. For her, change moves slowly, like “molasses” (Kathryn Interview, 11/20/15) and different stakeholders have different goals. Educators do not represent the full museum; they represent a portion of the museum with a particular object of activity. If the object of their work doesn't match to the work of the rest of the institution, at least to an extent, their ability to address community concerns is hindered. Kathryn's long time experience in museums is also represented in how she views

museums as a business, not just a community resource. This alludes to the tension between resources and funding which aggravated the primary contradiction of generating revenue and engaging the community.

*Scarcity of resources.* As Kathryn was well aware, the museum faced time and resource constraints that affect the work that they were able to do.

“And I think honestly, I think more than anything it’s time. It takes time to have those conversations, which is terrifying because we don’t have it right now. I would wager a bet, because I have spent enough time with [curator], and he and I commiserate about this all the time, there isn’t time to have the thoughtful conversations to do the good work that we all want to do, so we keep putting it off. Which then feels like we don’t care, or it feels like we’re dismissing it or it feels like we don’t want it to happen. When the truth of the matter is it’s going to take time and we don’t have it” (Kathryn Interview, 3/29/15).

Lack of time and funding led to the museum not being able to answer to community concerns or even their own goals. It reflected both the primary contradiction between needing to generate revenue and wanting to do good work in the community, but this tension also reflected secondary tensions between the object of activity and the rules and tools of the system. While lack of resources often constricts the museum from being able to pursue their goal of being community oriented, there is one example of how the museum did expand beyond the predicted practice. A few years ago the museum had an exhibition about LGBTQ art. The museum was encouraged by a small number of funders and board members to not do the exhibit. At the risk of losing those funders, Allison told them the exhibition was too important and provided too much community good. The choice between risking losing funders and serving the community by addressing the changing community and its needs was a marker of success for the Interim Finance Director. He argued that even though by and large those new communities do not

produce the funds needed to sustain a museum, being able to respond to them shows conviction to do community-based work (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15).

Lack of time to do the work that they wanted to do was a major theme for the educators. As described earlier, because of the constraints that exist within their day-to-day work, the educators rarely spend time on the floor with the actual visitors. As Kate said, doing this work is slow work.

“It’s just going in the right places and us being out in the community in the right places and it’ll materialize, but for me it’s hard because that’s slow work. It’s good work, and it’s so slow. In the meantime, we have all of these deadlines so there’s a little bit of that. That’s hard” (Kate Interview, 2/12/15).

The underlying primary contradiction between generating revenue and doing community based work is again aggravated by tensions created by what is perceived to be a lack of time. By the end of this research, they were concerned with a new labor law that would affect their work as well.

“They have that new labor law that’s coming out on July 1 where if you make under, it’s either fifty or sixty grand a year, you are now hourly, so you can get paid overtime. Something that has come of this is that we tend to, and many museums, tend to overcommit and do too much. That has been a great moment to start talking about that, like what programs can we let go of? What can we ease up on so we’re not working all the time and also paying out overtime to all of the employees on the education team” (Kate Interview, 2/12/15).

Earlier, there was an excerpt from a curator about how the museum tries to be all things to all people. This new labor law is a tension that puts increased pressure on the resources of the institution carries with it the power to either develop stronger, more meaningful programming or for the museum to continue to develop with the communities it feels most comfortable with.

In addition, there are different goals for engaging communities. For the development and operations department “any time we have somebody new giving money

to the museum I kind of feel like it's a success moment because those new people are who we need to keep things going" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15). This focus on money and income is related specifically to the work of the developers, not the educators. "The established money is fine. They're great generous people. I appreciate it with all my heart. I realize that we have to keep those relationships healthy, but I really would like to spend more time focusing on the new people coming in and encouraging them to be a part of the community" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15). This is a particularly difficult task, however, when the community feels barriers to the museum. If a goal is to get money from the community, this could run counter to the work that the educators are trying to accomplish. He also noted how "wealthy families seem to have that ability to teach philanthropy in a way that other classes don't spend much time talking about. So it's a much harder sell" (Interim Finance Director Interview, 12/4/15).

These four community and diversity themes, perceived norms for museum participation, exclusionary practices, institutionalism and legitimacy, and scarcity of resources, are intricately related. While I have separated them for analytic purposes, it is important to understand that, for instance, how a visitor might believe that they are unwelcome in the museum space is potentially affected by how much time and money the educators can put into a broader outreach. The interrelatedness of these three themes shows up is evident in the protest and the reactions to the protest.

### **The Protest as an Accumulation of Tensions Leading to a Quaternary Contradiction**

In December a protest occurred at the museum in response to the A(rt)IDS exhibition and the lack of black artist representation in an exhibit about AIDS, a disease

that disproportionately affects the black population. Accumulating tensions, such as those that were described within the previous chapter, may be seen as important factors contributing to a protest staged by local community artists in response to the exhibit.

The educators were excited about the A(rt)IDS show. It allowed them to do the kinds of thoughtful programming that they wanted to do with their work. For example, after the initial staff walk-through of the exhibit, Kathryn brought a therapist in to explore the staff's experiences with the art. The therapist offered them the opportunity to anticipate what visitors might experience and how the museum could prepare for emotional reactions to the show.

While the museum was excited about the exhibit and all that it had to offer to the community, the educators remained critical over the idea that the museum holds an inherent importance. As Brittany described,

“I think a lot of people would argue the fact that we're having the A(rt)IDS show is an example of how we're a community driven museum and I would say yes but I mean if you build it they will come doesn't really hold a lot of water with me. So just because we're putting on a show that we think is groundbreaking and really important and relevant to the community at large ... it doesn't mean that people are going to come in and see it. It doesn't mean that it's going to change lives through the work on view” (Brittany Interview, 11/12/15).

In this statement, she acknowledged that it takes more than the art to bridge the gap between the museum and the community, which is where she feels the role of the Education Department becomes critical.

Other museum members, including the Deputy Director and one of the curators recognized the new approach as well. The Marketing and Communications director said,

“What I love is that they take that holistic educational approach to "not only are we here to educate the community about exhibitions, but we're also going to educate the staff." That, to me, has been great. I haven't seen that, and I think that's wonderful and that should be the role of an education department in a

museum. It's not just about the community. Educate us too" (Marketing and Communications Director Interview, 12/4/15).

The exhibition opened in October. During observations of the exhibition opening and ongoing observations at the museum, I noticed several visitors who would touch one another as they walked through; a hand on a shoulder here or on the back there. The educators were heartened by the initial success of the show and the awareness it created. However, during the first Change Lab in November, Kate reported out to the team that a local community artist was frustrated with the exhibition.

Kate: Yeah. I talked to you guys about that today. We were going to do a The City art walk for that response show that's happening starting November 19th, and one of the artists' feedback was that he was concerned that there wasn't enough ... There weren't people of color represented in A&A

Researcher: Did he say enough or any?

Kate: I don't know. I don't know-

Maria: There are artists inside of that.

Kathryn: Quite a few actually, I don't know how you define people of color but yeah.

Kate: Right. Exactly. I don't know. I wasn't there but there just wasn't ... I think the message is that there could have been more and so he was very upset and kind of called out one of our community partners who had nothing to do with it but his work was not selected for the partner program show so I think there was an added level of disappointment. Almost like perhaps there was this silencing of that particular kind of voice. Just so you guys know, we didn't have anything to do with the jury process of that. So yeah there's a little dissonance for you (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

When Kate first heard the complaint, she wanted to speak with the artist directly. Kathryn encouraged her to talk with the Curatorial Department first as they are responsible for exhibitions. Kate then spoke with the curator who developed the exhibit and he told her that he didn't believe that the particular artist in question needed to be addressed. At this point, she walked away from the situation because "when two senior managers are telling you 'Don't do this,' or they seem hesitant, it's going to freak you out" (Kate Interview, 2/12/16).

The protest, which made national news when it was published in a leading national arts news source in early January, was built off this momentum in the local artist community. It occurred in mid-December during the monthly Art Walk at the museum and employed an historical art-activist method of demonstrating lives lost by AIDS called a “die-in”.

According to the news source, “They [the artists] take issue with the lack of black representation within the exhibition as well as the systemic racism they see within the museum’s operations.” In an interview with *The New Inquiry* one of the protestors, who was part of a larger group that referred to themselves as the City Action Collective, said

“An exhibit about AIDS in America that just about excludes the largest group of people that are affected really shocked and saddened us all. Instead of just talking about how disappointed we were, we immediately took action” (The New Inquiry, 2016).

The protestors created t-shirts that said “Stop Erasing Black People” and used the hashtag, #StopErasingBlackPeople on social media platforms. At this point, the Collective behind the protest demanded three responses from the museum, including:

- That the museum works with the other venues that will be showing “A(rt)IDS” to include more black artists in future editions
  - That the museum continues the discussion of the HIV/AIDS epidemic beyond the city’s exhibition closing date on January 10, 2016
  - And that the museum invests money and time in staff-wide diversity training
- “Our die-in was about so many things that affect Black people. Mass incarceration, described as “the new Jim Crow,” is fundamental to the HIV crisis that persists among Black and Latino populations. Black people are still not afforded access and equality. This goes for art. This goes for the telling of our

history. This goes for healthcare. This goes for education. These are all things we are fighting for with #StopErasingBlackPeople... We're fighting to tell our own stories and fighting to represent ourselves because we are the most impacted by this both here and across the globe" (The New Inquiry, 2016).

The protest wasn't simply an accumulation of tensions. It also created a quaternary contradiction by which I mean that a second activity system caused change in the museum's activity system. To contextualize, the local artists and the collective involved (the second activity system) were also existing during the Black Lives Matter movement.

Over the course of three years, several events occurred in the United States specifically related to the black community that eventually found their way to the museum's doorstep. These events were couched in one way or another in the international political movement Black Lives Matter (BLM). The movement began as a direct response to the acquittal of the police officer that shot Trayvon Martin at a time when police officers shooting unarmed black men was increasingly raising concern for the lack of care about black lives. The founders used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media platforms and it soon went viral. In the summer of 2015, activists began to publically challenge politicians, including those running for office, to state their positions on BLM issues including mass incarceration, poverty, and a corrupt justice system. While the movement has no formal structure or hierarchy, activists have held formal protests such as the "Black Lives Matter Freedom Ride" in 2014. By January 2015 the American Dialect Society declared #blacklivesmatter the word of the year.

The BLM movement calls us to individually and collectively consider our position and contribution to systemic and institutional racism. In doing so, community members, black or otherwise, and artists of color have called for equal representation at awards shows such as the Oscar's and demanded answers from the current presidential candidates. It is important to remember that the movement is also situated in the larger context and history of human rights, particularly as they relate to race. On December 24, 2015, George Yancy published an opinion column in the *New York Times* asking white people to consider their inherent, inescapable racism:

“If you are white, and you are reading this letter, I ask that you don't run to seek shelter from your own racism. Don't hide from your responsibility. Rather, begin, right now, to practice being vulnerable. Being neither a “good” white person nor a liberal white person will get you off the proverbial hook” (Yancy, *New York Times*, 12/24/15).

All of this momentum supported the local artists in confronting the museum and asking it to critically examine its privilege and history in a systemically racist society. The protest occurred just days before the Yancy editorial was published and only a week after a *New York Times* op-ed about black women and the AIDS crisis. The op-ed criticized the nation for ignoring the needs of black women with AIDS, which was the number one cause of death of that population in 2004. The only black female artist in the exhibition, Kia Labeija, posted this piece of work to her public Instagram account in response to the protest and the exhibition:



Figure 8. Kia Labeija, *Your White Walls Can Kiss My Black Ass*, 2015

The weeks between the protest and the closing of the show were tense. The protest felt both like a personal and professional attack on the individual museum employees and the institution as a whole.

I think that the work that I do is, inherently, socially conscious. And I've thought more about how to make that more evident to others. And about how to do that work in a more meaningful and intentional way. It's also hard not to take something like this personally, as I'm invested in the institution I work for. If people are protesting TAM, it feels like they are protesting me. And that can be hard to feel (Brittany Email Correspondance, 1/28/2016).

Maria was particularly incensed by the museum's response to the community, which she believed was inadequate and slow. In addition, she felt as though her voice, which tended to be more critical, was heard less and less within the institution. By January the educators were frustrated and tired. Emily, who had just joined the team, was put off by the work climate at the museum and the other educators felt as though they were "spinning" (Personal Communication with educators during a lunch after Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

The protest also impacted community partners who were involved in the show. For instance, for one community partner, both the exhibition and the response from the museum to the protest was a letdown. She discussed how once the protest happened, the museum could have used it as a moment to build a deeper connection with their community. She was particularly disappointed because it seemed as though the museum didn't address any of the concerns until the closing show.

“I think things like that could be really exciting, but I also think about it like that shouldn't have been the closing show. That should have been the midstream show to reinvent and be like ‘We're here. You have to see this.’ It could've been really exciting right there, so I think thinking about how do you engage while the show's still up. We did great the first month, and then died” (Community Partner Interview, 1/14/15).

While she conceded that pulling in black voices was better than not pulling in black voices during events at the closing show, it almost felt like more of a slap in the face to wait until the end. In fact, the morning of our interview, she had a meeting during which several community members asked her to pass on their message to me about how they felt disenfranchised by the museum and the experience.

She did, however, note that the ability to take ownership of the museum space existed and did lead to some positive outcomes for her organization and community members. “At the same time I would tell you as a community partner, we went to the fashion show and stuff and we had an entry in the fashion show and that was a really dynamic crowd at the museum,” she recalled. “It had 20 year olds and 30 year olds and 80 year olds, and people in their original Act Out t-shirts. I was excited to see that diversity in there” (Community Partner Interview, 1/14/15). This experience affirmed that the museum is in some ways achieving the goals Allison, the museum's director, had set

out for them – to be a place where the community feels that it can take ownership – but it is not reaching the educators’ goal of being truly reflective and open to the community.

In a debrief about the protest, the educators, excluding Kathryn, became increasingly frustrated with their colleagues and the museum leadership both for lack of action and the way that they were making sense of the community and the protest. During a lunch after Change Lab 2 (1/29/15), the educators talked about the all-staff meeting that occurred after the protest and how discouraging it was to hear that members of the museum are not on board with being social justice oriented and why that might be the case.

To unravel how the museum got to a place where the protest could take place and the participants respond the way that they did, I take a step back to identify the ways that the tensions within the system aggravated underlying multi-level contradictions. The protest in many ways is illustrative of the aggravation of what Engeström (1987) has termed underlying primary, secondary, tertiary contradictions.

**Breaking Point: Aggravated contradictions and the protest.** Rather than exploring the protest as an event divorced from the context and history of the museum in the community, this analysis views the protest as an accumulation of historical tensions in the system. As such, in some ways the protest and in particular the internal reactions to the protest were inevitable because of the build up of tensions within the activity system that provoked the underlying primary, secondary, and tertiary contradictions. The three themes that address community and diversity are intricately related to the tensions that led to the protest. Kate didn’t feel as though she had the power to address the artist who would eventually lead the protest because of the tension between the curatorial and

education departments. The community members that protested explained that they protested because of a long history of removing black voice and black experience from the art museum, a tension that aggravated the underlying contradictions between the changing needs of the local community and the historical ways of participating in the museum.

After the protest occurred, the educators felt the museum was a place of intense tension. By the time the end of the research, they felt as though things had calmed down at the museum. As things calmed down, they were better able to focus on how to fight for change and the barriers that they were facing to fostering that change. For example, Kate reflected on her role in not pushing harder for the museum to listen to the complaints of a community member and said:

“I had two bosses telling me don’t do it. I kind of regret that, I do. I feel like something that has come out of all of this is that many found their voice. I feel like I definitely found my voice in all of this and I don’t just mean around issues of diversity and inclusion, I mean just institutionally. If I could go back, I would have handled it differently” (Kate Interview, 2/12/15).

In this example, we see how Kate might position herself as a change agent in the future because she is more aware of how and when to push harder. When I asked Kathryn how she felt about her team finding voice and power within the institution as a result of the protest she said she feels good and comfortable with that, but also contrary to Kate, she noted that they [the educators] “don’t have a ton of agency. I mean, they can’t just like start making institutional changes” (Kathryn Interview, 3/29/15). She believed that in order for real change to occur, it needs to be brought to the management team from a management position, specifically herself. She focused on the importance of avoiding “cubicle gossip” and addressing issues as they arise within the department so that she can

bring it to the attention of the senior managers if she feels it's important enough. This is an archetypal example of how change in organizations is slow: where Kate found voice, Kathryn, who is in a position of power, expressed intention to exercise her power in order to maintain the working structure of the institution, believing that the educators weren't yet able to push for change unless it's through her.

Yet the educators do begin to push back in some ways. For instance, Brittany talks about the decision to not engage youth and plan for youth programming for the A(rt)IDS show as especially problematic. It was a decision that was made before she came on staff and so she didn't have the time to push against that decision before the show started, but during an all staff meeting she was able to. She said:

“We had an all staff de-brief about the show, I brought it up then and I said, ‘I understand there were reasons the choice was made, I'm not saying those were bad reasons not to engage youth around the show.’ But I said, ‘My hope in the future is that we don't shy away from engaging youth with challenging content.’ I said my piece and I'm happy with that.”

This is another instance of Brittany acting as a tertiary contradiction by bringing in her knowledge and experience from other organizations to change the organization from the inside. Kate also was able to use the protest and the show as an opportunity for growth. She reflected on her own privilege and said,

“If I could go back, I would have handled it differently. Also, even going back any further you know, this was the golden child, our A(rt)IDS [exhibit]. Because of my position of privilege and all of our positions of privilege, it didn't occur to any of us that this was a problem. In fact, I absolutely should have pushed, but I didn't think to then, so yes, there's all kinds of missed opportunity” (Kate Interview, 2/12/16).

In an effort to get the rest of the museum on board with this kind of critical thinking, the museum also created a Diversity Panel, which Brittany took a leadership

role in. Kathryn views it as a good position for her because of her interest in social justice.

“She probably of everybody on my team, had the best vocabulary and also the most recent social practice from her Master's degree experience. In that sense, I think she is the best ambassador for those conversations anyway because she had been having those conversations in grad school which is kind of where they happen and so really putting that to real world applications” (Kathryn Interview, 3/29/16).

Yet Kathryn also pointed out the distinction between knowing about social justice and actually putting it into practice. She commented on how even though the museum created the panel, no employee of color joined, nor did the original protestor who was offered the opportunity to use his voice in that way. In addition, Maria, who for weeks after the protest, felt discouraged and eventually quit the museum, says “they can't figure it out. It's like the same mistakes over and over again” (Maria Interview, 3/11/16). As she reflected on why she was leaving, Maria made the point that she now recognizes that the problems she faced at the museum aren't specific, but instead are industry wide.

“I know like it's not even a team management problem, I know it's an all museums world problem. That this isn't a thing that's getting addressed or being talked about effectively, that change is hard for everyone everywhere and that it's difficult to disrupt the status quo. But I feel unwilling to compromise and part of that is my age and because I can peace out. I'm 24, I don't need this job. But I know this is also again not about Kathryn or some really hurt feelings, it's a larger realizing that the industry is not what I want personally. And I don't want to have to wait” (Maria Interview, 3/11/16).

These discrepancies in fostering actual change hints at how perhaps the internal structure of the museum doesn't feel worth the investment from diverse voices. Maria was also hopeful that her colleagues, Emily, Kate, and Brittany, could continue to push for institutional change. When discussing a meeting with senior managers, Kate talked

about how she was concerned that the managers were talking about the community in such a fearful way.

“It was so weird for me, but it also reinforced all of the work that you had done and all of that data. After we left, I went to Kathryn and I was like, ‘That was weird.’ Everybody was really upset and actually in the meeting I said, ‘Before we transition to the next I just want to say that I think that this is a really good thing and good things will come out of this and I appreciate you sharing your fears, but I feel like overall it’s a positive step.’ One of my colleagues approached me afterwards and she was like ‘I hope you didn’t think I was being negative or felt like the community was an awful thing and we don’t want to invite them in.’ And I was like, ‘I just want to make sure that when we are talking about the community institutionally, because it starts there, it starts with your tone. If we’re all like Oh no, we’re going to invite these people in and what will they say and what will they do? That’s not a good place to start.’” (Kate Interview, 2/12/15).

The increased awareness that the protest brought to the educators of both their own tendencies, as well as the barriers facing them pursuing their object of activity is described in this excerpt from Kathryn. The extent to which the educators can view the protest was an example of how museums are responding to their changing communities and how that affects their own practices is a potential source of power and change for some of the educators. In addition, it demonstrates how the three themes of contradictions built on one another until they reached a sort of critical mass that both fueled and prevented change, much of which is still being worked out in the museum.

## Chapter Six: The Change Labs

In this chapter, I look specifically at the Change Labs and the activity of the education department as they sought to make sense of their work in context and in relation to one another. Change Lab 1 offered the participants the chance to reflect on their ideologies, their role within the organization, and how their relationships within and to the local community exist and shift. Change Lab 2 occurred six weeks after the protest. It was the first time the education department was presented with mirror data. This Change Lab was marked by the realization that change is in fact difficult, especially at the organizational level, but it also pushed the educators to consider how they experience one another and their colleagues. By Change Lab 3, the participants were ready to take what they had experienced both in the research project, as well as because of the protest, and began to move toward concrete changes that are tethered to the more abstract notions they wrestled with in Change Lab 1.

This chapter outlines the three Change Labs, identifying themes and changes across each of them, moving, as best as possible, from the abstract to the concrete. This is not to say that all tensions and contradictions were resolved by the end of the Change Lab process; in fact, any resolution still elusively existed on the horizon – a continuously evolving endpoint that changed as new experiences, relationships, and understandings emerged. Each section begins with a table that identifies how I prepared for the Change Lab, the tools I used (and the rationale behind them), and what my goals were. The Change Labs are then described in detail.

## Change Lab 1

Change Lab	Preparation for Change Lab	Tools Used and Rationale	Goals of Change Lab
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drew on experience working in art museums and literature review to anticipate what might happen in the meeting</li> <li>- Reflected on conversations with Kathryn and Kate concerning the changes the educators and the museum were facing</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tool:</b> Drawing of ideal community/museum relationship  <b>Rationale:</b> I wanted to open up conversation about community and ground the conversation in something tangible.</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Drawing of the education department within the museum  <b>Rationale:</b> I wanted to open up conversation about the role of the educators in the museum and museum practice at large and again, ground the conversation in something tangible.</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Building on ideas exercise (one participant writes about community engagement, another participant reads and adds on)  <b>Rationale:</b> I wanted to again make their opinions and ideas tangible and concrete, as well as provide the space for them to push back on one another rather than assume they all come from the same ideologies.</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Individual reflections about their goals and concerns for the research and their work  <b>Rationale:</b> I wanted to be see what they would say about what they thought their work was capable of without the constraint of having others agree or disagree with them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce the educators to the DWR process</li> <li>- Define goals and motives for research</li> <li>- Define problems of practice</li> <li>- Begin to levitate differences in abstract and concrete ways across individuals and departments</li> </ul>

*Table 5.* Change Lab 1 preparation.

The first of the Change Labs was also the first time that I met both Maria and Brittany (Emily didn't start working at the museum until January). My goals for the first Change Lab were to position the educators to identify their goals for the research, as well to begin to examine their work within the system. The Change Lab focused largely on what it means to be community centered and the relationship between education and the

rest of the departments, predominantly the curatorial department, within the museum. The agenda for Change Lab 1 can be found in Appendix A.

I began the meeting by explaining and discussing the research process. The focus of the research was still largely unclear at this point, so the meeting was designed to foster ideas about where the research should go and what problems of practice were most opportune to focus on. While I knew that the educators often talked about issues surrounding community and diversity, Kathryn and Kate also told me that those conversation had largely been ideological, not tethered to any concrete problems of practice, and that they were struggling with how to turn those ideologies into effective collaborative practices (Memo from meeting with Kathryn and Kate, 9/2015).

Since she was the director, and the original participant that brought me into the organization to conduct research, Kathryn explained to the team what she hoped for as a result of participating at the start of the meeting.

“I feel confident from this from our strategic planning conversations this summer, is that we all believe that the museum has all these values and priorities of being community centered, civic minded, gracious, these words. And then in education, we came up with additional words which did include empathy and supportive, building a supportive and empathetic community. For me then, the question I am left with which is something that we’ll dig into as we have more of these strategic retreats, how do we take the statement that we want to empower our visitors, we want to connect to the community and we want to build this empathetic and supportive community, what is that? What does that look like? And how do we be that? Is that like twenty years from now maybe we’ll get there? Or as what are we doing now and how do we move the needle? Big picture, that is what really where I am in this and as far as, really as far as we’ve talked about it” (Kathryn, Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

Not knowing where the change process would lead, and what her team might say or do as a result of participating in change-driven research, Kathryn opened up the meeting by acknowledging that she was thinking “big picture” and how to “move the

needle” – identifying a level of abstraction not necessarily tied to concrete practices. Expecting this, I designed Change Lab 1 to both acknowledge everyone’s big, abstract ideas, but also to begin to narrow down toward concrete examples and problems. To do so, I asked them to draw their ideal museum/community relationship, followed by how they viewed their department within the organization (Appendix I). In addition, each individual participant wrote down their goals for the community on an index card and when they finished, they passed their card to another participant who then commented on their ideas in a different color marker. Discussions during this Change Lab revolved around these personal and individual material tools and understandings, yet I asked them to do this because of my preexisting knowledge of the larger context of museums, organizational change, and community engagement. Because they came to the first Change Lab believing that they were all in sync with one another’s ideologies and experiences, it was important not only to examine their positions within the organization and then within the community, but also to provide the opportunity for each of them to individually generate and then witness difference across their own understandings and work.

Within the organization, the educators talked about feeling isolated both physically from the rest of the museum staff (they have their own separate wing within the museum), as well as in practice. Education departments, Brittany noted, are often considered to be the “ugly red-headed stepchild” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15) of an organization because the work they do is so different from the work of the rest of the institution. Yet they also each had a shared goal of wanting:

“Education’s goals to be widely known in the institution as a whole and for the rest of the museum to be supportive of what we’re doing and that is certainly one

thing that we all care very deeply about” (Kate, Change Lab 1, 11/16/15).

Kathryn seconded that stance and posited that if the museum had a shared language around these ideas, they could begin to productively move forward.

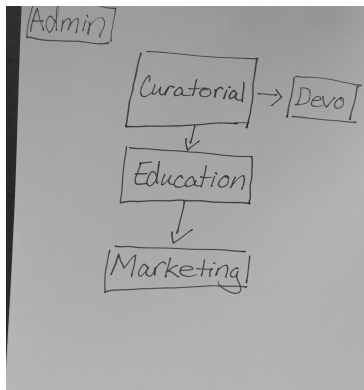
“Before institutional change can happen, the change that can happen is making sure that when we use this vocabulary, which isn’t vocabulary we’ve just made up... These words are emblazoned in our strategic plan. They are not five-year words, they’re institutional values. Really I think teasing apart what everybody means when they say them and then what each department is doing or not doing to make that happen and if we’re not on the same page, get us on the same page and then what is it, every department willing to do” (Kathryn, Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

The motive to create a shared language is reflective of how the educators wanted to begin to position themselves within the change movement at the museum. The push toward leading change that isn’t just conceptual but that actually shifts practices, including creating a shared language, created tensions within the system. Kate acknowledged how as the educators pushed for changes, they affected the practices and relationships with other departments.

“I think our new and energetic team is willing to do more and more and more and that will naturally put stresses on other departments. I think that’s where there might be some serious needs. Particularly with marketing I know, I think that they just have a lot more on their plate now with what we’re trying to do” (Kate, Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

While they believed they were mostly in sync with one another, the educators were uncertain as to where other departments stood in relation to their work and their goals involving the community. Brittany felt that the education department is “excited to do a lot of different things and kind of push the boundaries of what may be a normal traditional thing to happen at the museum” but acknowledged that the rest of her museum colleagues may not be “as comfortable with those ideas” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/2015). Whereas Kathryn talked about the need to create a shared language, the other educators

saw the creation of a shared language as not only a way to encourage cooperation with their goals, but also as a way to identify potential tensions and where they may need to educate the rest of the staff. Notably, Brittany talked about how for her a shift toward community-centeredness means rethinking “what is and isn’t allowed or is or isn’t supposed to be happening in an art museum” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/2015). This began to move the conversation away from abstract ideologies and toward actual museum structure and practices.



*Figure 9.* Brittany’s drawing from Change Lab 1 demonstrating the relationship between departments within the museum.

In their sketches, Brittany (Drawing 1) put curatorial at the top of a flowchart because “they’re in charge of the art, that’s what it should come back to” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15). The second box of her flowchart is education because she believes that the art has to be filtered through education “because we should be about the visitor and that’s where, I mean if we want to come back to this idea that our mission is connecting people through art, we’re the people part, they are the art part” (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15). Putting the art first, as traditionally art museums have, created tensions with the education department’s interest in the experience and the visitor, making them feel on occasion, misunderstood and isolated within the museum.

Kate: I do think that it starts with the art and I think why I've been, that's been a challenge for me sometimes because I feel like I don't have a great handle on some, like on these long term ideas of what the art is going to be and that is where I want to always start a program, is what's the art and then how can that speak to a visitor? That is huge. It has to start with the art.

Maria: Is the community informing the art?

Brittany: Yeah. That would be where the community would, I think.

Kathryn: You believe the community should inform the art we have in the museum? Just to clarify what you all are saying?

Brittany: I think at a certain level, I think you [Maria] probably think it should a lot more than I do, I think that you-

Maria: Say what?

Brittany: I think that you-

Maria: Oh, it should a lot more?

Brittany: Yeah, and I think that maybe at some level there should be some view around that and I would think that curatorial probably does not feel that way.

This excerpt demonstrates how the educators address their own differing opinions concerning the relationship between the art, the community, and the traditional roles of curators and educators. It is reflective of traditional power structures that firmly place the art as the most important aspect of being an art museum, creating a tension that affects the extent to which the community can impact the structure and operation of the organization. While they moved away from a higher level of abstraction, the educators remain nebulous in this example saying things such as "at a certain level" and "at some level" without identifying what exact level the community should impact the curation process. In addition, Brittany notes that while they may believe this should happen, she acknowledged the curators probably do not agree. For Kate, it became a question of being able to do her work as the Community Engagement Manager well. Confusion about how the art comes to be at the museum affects the programming that she can plan around the art.

Beyond the concern of identifying the extent to which the community should or shouldn't affect the art, this excerpt also identifies the education department's lack of

understanding about how exhibitions come to be and in effect, reveals the position of the department within the museum. It underlines the sentiment of feeling isolated, but it also signifies the tension that exists concerning the importance of the art.

Kate: I think that's a good question too. I don't fully understand how and why we get certain exhibitions. We are not part of that process and so you and you I'm sure are-

Kathryn: I am. I'm actually ... I know a lot ... I'm trying to figure out how can I do a better job of downloading all of the stuff that I know and that I'm involved in.

Kate: That's the piece I don't understand and maybe that would illuminate some of our questions like is it coming from a community place? Is it coming from curatorial, for lack of a better term, in a vacuum? I don't know where these conversations come in. That's why from my perspective it's like, we're handed these exhibitions and then it's like how do we make it pertinent, exciting and relevant to the community once it's already there? I'm like I'm not part of that conversation... I'm trying to retrofit it to be something that's about the community versus starting there but who knows maybe it does come from the community. I really and truly don't understand what that process looks like.

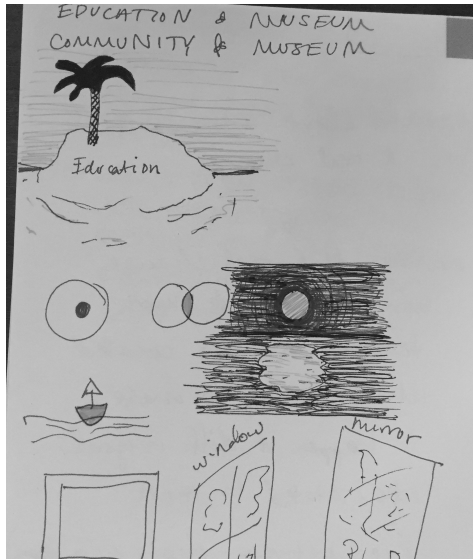
Kathryn told the department that the museum has:

"Some structures in place to decide how shows are selected and how shows are prioritized, how we think about and build around shows, how we make sure that we're addressing community needs with shows and that all the departments are having voice in that" (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

To that end, this excerpt describes how the rest of the department doesn't experience those structures. Kathryn told her department that "the community meetings don't always happen effectively, they don't always happen when they should and the trickle down for what happens in those meetings is obviously not super transparent right now." She encouraged her team to be "laser focused about making sure that the goals of those meetings are being met and communicated" within the organization (Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

In addition to encouraging her team to act as agents in the museum to make sure that community goals are being met, Kathryn also recognized what she believed to be a failure on her part as their boss to bring information back to them. When asked to sketch

the education department within the museum, Maria draws the department as an island with the rest of the museum surrounding them (Drawing 2).



*Figure 10.* Maria's drawing from Change Lab 1 describing the Education Department as an island within the organization

"I have a very clear sense of where the museum is versus that island but I'm just involved in so many conversations than you all aren't, so how do I better bring you all in or maybe it's not just me but how do we make sure that I'm not the only one that feels like I know where that island is, you know in relationship to the rest of the museum" (Kathryn, Change Lab 1, 11/6/15).

As the team members sorted through their feelings of disconnection, Kathryn identified her position of power because she sat on the leadership team and made a objective for herself to be better at bringing her team into the discussions she has at the management level. When she realized that a part of the isolation her team was feeling could have been a result of her leadership, she apologized profusely and was visibly upset.

Change Lab 1 concluded with a silent, written reflection about the process they were about to enter into through the research, and what they thought about organizational

change more generally. The participants expressed both hesitation and optimism when it came to pushing for change.

“[I’m] excited about actionable results and real change. [I’m] nervous that real change won’t happen and more tension will be created when we try to make it happen” (Maria, Written Reflection at the end of Change Lab 1, 11/6/2015).

No one expected there to be any major rifts in their department, but they did believe that some would occur throughout the rest of the museum staff. These more abstract and ideological positions became increasingly rooted in everyday practices and changes as the Change Labs went on, but they also became increasingly complex in their own right.

### Change Lab 2

Change Lab	Preparation for Change Lab	Tools Used and Rationale	Goals of Change Lab
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyzed interview data from each participant</li> <li>- Identified major themes across the data</li> <li>- Identified data that could intentionally “spark” discussion among educators (based on difference of opinions)</li> <li>- Researched the protest that took place and analyzed it in relation to existing data analysis</li> <li>- Sent email interview questions to the participants before the Change Lab to address their individual understandings of the protest</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tool:</b> Mirror data</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Mirror data was specifically chosen for its ability to provoke the educators to discuss difference in opinion and practice across the museum and with the community partner. It was presented on the 3 surfaces (that is to say, tracked across past, present, and future) and I tried to choose enough data to present back so that the educators could pick what seemed most relevant, interesting, or safe for them to talk about</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utilize 3 surfaces and mirror data to identify the subject and object of the education department</li> <li>- Used mirror data from the interviews to generate a conversation about existing tensions</li> <li>- Address the role of the protest and how that impacted the museum</li> </ul>

Table 6. Change Lab 2 preparation.

To prepare for Change Lab 2, I had analyzed the interview and observation data, as well as Change Lab 1, over the course of December, identifying themes that related to our conversation during Change Lab 1. My original plan for this Change Lab was to present the department data that I felt would help them identify tensions, particularly those they didn't seem to be aware of, and to continue to lead them toward identifying their own goals and paths to reach those goals within the context and history of the museum. The protest, however, interrupted that plan. This second meeting took place six weeks after the protest. The work environment was still electric with disappointment, frustration, anger, and exhaustion from having to sort out the protest personally and professionally, as individuals and as an organization. The educators were struggling with how to develop who they were and what they wanted the museum to be in the face of the protest.

I met with Kathryn and Kate four days before the Change Lab. During that meeting we discussed what had happened, how they were feeling, and their concerns about the Change Lab. Kathryn in particular felt discouraged and expressed significant concern over the upcoming Change Lab. In an effort to prepare myself and reexamine the mirror data, I sent the team an email of questions concerning their experience with the protest. Maria responded as follows:

[I am] Especially disturbed by what appears to me to be active spreading of misinformation or incorrect information internally and externally, and tokenization of staff (ie. we felt the need to list all the black people/exhibitions we have worked with in the news, and listed number of employees of color even though that information was supposed to be confidential). Doesn't feel like a safe space to have real and direct conversations about race. I have been criticized for being too intense, disrespectful, and unproductive when bringing up issues of race, and it doesn't seem like any of the conversations go anywhere so I am now choosing to opt out whenever the issues come up. I will likely not talk much at the Change Lab because this issue has become really emotional for me and I feel

really exhausted, but I don't want you to think it's you or anything, I'm excited you are coming. (Maria, Email Interview Correspondence, 1/27/16)

In addition to Maria, Kathryn also informed me that she wouldn't be speaking much, especially about the protest, because she felt as though things had become too hostile within the department. This was also the first time that I met Emily, the newest staff member. Finally, Brittany came to Change Lab 2 with a migraine. It was a quiet Change Lab.

"I think there's a little bit of this idea of we have so much to offer all these communities if they'd just come through the door. They desperately need all of our art. People are doing fine if they don't walk through the doors of CAM. We have to make a case for why it's worth someone's time or energy or money to come here and make sure that that's something that matters to them and is important to them. I think it would be great for everybody to come here because I think that art is good for the soul" (Brittany, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

Whereas during Change Lab 1 the participants were mostly concerned with how to preserve the integrity of the art, in this Change Lab they focused on their own unique perspectives and expertise that they bring to the museum as educators. As they worked through the data, they also inadvertently addressed several of the underlying tensions and contradictions they experienced in their work.

The idea that the museum is so important and that the community desperately needs the art runs counter to the work that the department is trying to do. Kate encouraged the educators to think about what they want, "if this is what the reality is, what do we want it to be as not just an education department, but as an institution in a very real and specific way? Not like we want more diversity – what does that mean? What are we really after here and why?" It's not enough for Kate to have an organization that wants diversity "just because everybody else seems to think that's a good idea so we should do it." She thinks there are bigger questions that need to be addressed.

“What are the real reasons? I don’t think that people don’t have those reasons, but I don’t think that that’s really been defined. What is the value in having a diverse visitorship? What is the value in engaging the community and all of that? I don’t know that I’ve heard the reason why we think that that’s a good idea” (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

These kinds of overarching questions and concerns, paired with the mirror data and the aftermath of the protest, encouraged the educators to focus in on concrete experiences and possible solutions, particularly in comparison to the first Change Lab. Being presented with mirror data (Appendix J), the educators were confronted with several instances where they felt they held fundamentally different beliefs than the rest of the museum. For example, one data excerpt that the educators continued to return to was:

“It’s tricky because I think it’s actually less about... I think there is a huge desire to have diversity in the museum, but there’s an aesthetic snobbery that happens when you’re in a cultural institution” (Interim Finance Director, 12/4/15).

Brittany responded to this quote and said, “I feel icky about the idea that having diversity is not being in line with the high aesthetic ideal. That feels gross to me” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). But Emily interpreted the quote differently.

“To me what this means is that the museum is less community. I’m looking at it from this framework, the community-based versus art museum. I interpreted this as it’s less community-based and there’s more of the snobbery and that’s the point they were trying to make. That’s why I think that industry wide we’re looking at about a 7 out of 10 on that scale” (Emily, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

The 7 out of 10 that Emily referred to is how far (on a scale from 1-10) the educators believe that the museum as a whole is invested in the community. This statement is indicative of how they feel about the museum field in general, because they believe that their museum is more progressive and community-minded than the rest of the field. Brittany described a staff meeting during which she heard a colleague from another department say that they didn’t believe the museum was a community museum. She

responded to that arguing that for her, “being a community-based museum and being an art museum aren’t mutually exclusive” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). She went on to say that she didn’t know if everyone feels that way but that when she hears someone say that CAM is not a community-based museum it discourages the work that the educators do.

“It’s almost like a label. What do you want to label this institution as? What do you label your work as? I’m very interested in the realities of what we do and what does that mean and how will that shape or form our labels, or our mission, both as an education team, but also institution wide” (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

As the educators moved from a more theoretical conversation and toward a more practical one, they began to place themselves and their work at the center of institution wide change. For example, a second excerpt that they wrestled with in this Change Lab was:

“I want the boundaries of the museum to dissolve. I want people to come here, remember that they saw something, go home, look online and find that thing then find the deeper context or information about the artist, about the image, the painting, the whatever. I want to figure out a way to keep CAM as a resource for folks, not just a place where you go and have an experience” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/3/15).

Kathryn and Kate analyzed the excerpt, and argued that, “that’s not the experience that everybody is going to have with a work of art. That’s not what we should be holding up as the pinnacle of a great museum moment” (Kathryn, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). Kate again pushed for clarity amongst the departments, but this time it was less about shared language, and more about the goals of the education department. As they came to terms with the tensions inherent in the system, they pushed harder for their agenda to be understood and valued within the institution.

“I think that maybe that needs some clarity amongst departments about that’s not necessarily what we’re going for here. We’re honoring the fact that some people want that, but others don’t” (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

A specific example of how the department used the data to build an understanding between themselves and how the rest of the museum viewed their work concerned the tension between inviting the community in and keeping the art safe.

Kate: It could be actual things that have happened in the galleries.

Kathryn: That was my question. What has happened on community festivals or on Thursdays?

Brittany: Exactly, we don't hear about it.

Kathryn: We don't know about it, and then where is that moment that we can build in structures to have those communications with visitor services and curatorial, because clearly there are some concerns.

This excerpt demonstrates their surprise that keeping the art safe came up in the interviews, and Brittany notes that she also feels like these sentiments were “tinged with this subtext which is that education doesn't think about those things. We do think about those things” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). This conversation allowed them to identify their first actionable solution.

“Building trust isn't an action item. That's super nebulous. Asking visitor services what has happened that we don't know about and what specifically they're afraid of and why is an action item” (Kathryn, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

Having access to the data provided them with what they later described as an emerging understanding of what their colleagues were thinking and feeling and how different it was from their own perceptions of their work. Kate said that, all of “the answers have a tension because all the answers are quite pertinent, I feel. We want to be something, maybe, maybe not, but then there's this history. All the answers speak to that, this reputation or this...” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). For the department, the “aesthetic snobbery” that the museum inherently brings fills them with frustration, especially because it feels so entrenched in the history that Kate mentions.

Being confronted with data, however, was not an entirely pleasant experience for

the educators. Already raw from the protest, they were defensive of what they were seeing and reading and less likely to engage in productive conversation around the data. Knowing that this could happen, I prepared extra data for them to work through because I wanted to see where they were most interested in engaging. Instead, however the team worked through all of the data presented and found it to be discouraging. Kathryn pointedly noted several times that the excerpts weren't being read in context during the Change Lab. The educators agreed, yet the following excerpt illustrates one instance in which the data actually became a tool that identified the lived realities of the team.

Kathryn: I think there is probably not consensus. Look at how people are using any of these words. I think that those words mean different things to different people. I'm also really uncomfortable dissecting a quote completely out of context. I don't even think this quote... I don't know...

Kate: It was re-reflected in that other quote. I don't just think it was out of context or something.

Maria: It is re-reflected a few times.

This moment gave the members of the team the opportunity to push against Kathryn's understandings of how the rest of the museum felt about community based work. In addition to working through the data, I attempted to scaffold a conversation about the protest and their experiences.

Researcher: Do you think that in the institution there is a role for education to play a leadership role in leading these conversations?

Kate: It could potentially feel too tense and hostile right now.

Kathryn: Brittany has been appointed as the head of our new committee, which has yet to be named, to start to address some of these issues internally.

Brittany: I think yes, but to your point, we're all now aware at some level or another that there's a problem, probably a long list of problems, that aren't necessarily unique to CAM but now what do we do? I don't know.

Kathryn: I think I'd push a little deeper on your point where you, if you'd been more aware, you'd have raised a stink and what? Demand that the artist roster change? Or demand that we would look more ... Where does the stink make sense for education?

Kate: What I mean by that is I think that I would have asked more questions and pushed for more dialogue.

Kathryn: I think that's where we can do.

Kate: That's why I was saying that I feel confident that I know I can do going forward. (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

This excerpt demonstrates why the protest was particularly challenging for the education department. Kate noted that the department doesn't have the capacity to address the concerns of the protestors. This indicates the tension that is based in a long history of a particular hierarchy within the organization.

"Education's not going to be the one to fix that" and it's "hard to be faced with a request that we couldn't do anything about... I think it's like yes, we need to keep looking at our own work and how we can be doing our work better, but it's like some of the things we just can't do or I don't know how I can be speaking to that" (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

For Kathryn, her understanding is different because she sits in a leadership role. She was able to see "the good news about all of this" within the "bigger institutional context" (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). As such, she noted that while they are being discussed, the department has not yet finished their strategic plan, nor has the entire institution.

"There is a huge opportunity to make sure that what we know now can actually be fundamentally built into that, and I would say not only on our department level, but also institutionally" (Kathryn, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

And because museums move slowly, for her having more time is "exciting" because it allows them to be "very thoughtful." Thus she saw the protest as an opportunity for the education department to lead the rest of the museum into creating the shared language she had pushed for in Change Lab 1.

For Kate, the protest and being able to look at data collected in the November that identified the lead up to the protest, made it very evident that she sits in a position of power.

"I think that had I, if I were a person of color, this conversation would have gone very differently. Rather than making a comment like, 'Oh, well, there are people

of color [in the exhibit],’ I think I would have been more investigative. I think I would have dug into it more. I think I would have raised more of a stink, basically. I appreciate that you brought that [the data] because, again, it’s showing us that one, we don’t fully understand and that, two, there is a historical social hierarchy that I hope we’re all more aware of going forward” (Kate, Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

Here Kate reflected on her position of privilege as white, and how that may have affected her perception of the events leading up to the protest. When asked what the department should do moving forward, she said: “I haven’t gotten past the awareness, frankly, being more aware and advocating for others, and making room for people to speak and to take action. That’s as far as I’ve gotten. I can’t answer that” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16).

By the end of Change Lab 2 the participants didn’t know where they wanted to begin but they knew they wanted to move forward with change in real and actionable ways. The most poignant moment was at the very end when the conversation had come full circle, and the participants, especially Emily, were discussing the merits of CAM and how different it is from other organizations that they had worked in. Maria then joined the conversation and asked, “But how do you know CAM is doing so well compared to other museums?” (Change Lab 2, 1/29/16). Each participant told stories from previous institutions they had worked in where the museum wasn’t focused on the community in the slightest except to secure a grant. By the start of Change Lab 3, Maria resigned from CAM saying that museums weren’t for her and she didn’t really believe that lasting change could occur, at least not at the moment.

### Change Lab 3

Change Lab	Preparation for Change Lab	Tools Used and Rationale	Goals of Change Lab
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analysis of second round of interviews with the educators</li> <li>- Analysis of Change Lab 2</li> </ul>	<p><b>Tool:</b> Mirror data from Change Lab 2  <b>Rationale:</b> Using mirror data from Change Lab 2, particularly that which the educators most gravitated toward allowed them to revisit their initial reactions after a reasonable amount of time had passed and they felt less vulnerable</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Community Engagement vs. Targeting Audience sheet (Appendix G) &amp; Dictionary definitions of compassion and empathy  <b>Rationale:</b> Both the Community Engagement vs. Targeting Audience sheet as well as the dictionary definitions provided tools for them to further define what they mean when they use the words, something that seemed difficult to do beforehand</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Solution worksheets (Appendix F)  <b>Rationale:</b> The solution worksheets were based in data and aimed to provide the educators with a tangible and practical way to address problems of practice by keeping them tethered to the data.</p> <p><b>Tool:</b> Individual reflections  <b>Rationale:</b> The final reflections were intended to give educators one more opportunity to address change and to mark how their original goals and ideas may have changed in relation to the research and the protest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalize subject and object</li> <li>- Explore what “community engagement” means at this particular museum</li> <li>- Define compassion and empathy</li> <li>- Employ worksheet as a tool to stimulate participant-led change and discussion</li> </ul>

Table 7. Change Lab 3 preparation.

By the final Change Lab Maria had quit and was in her final week of work. Tensions within the system created by the protest had calmed down and everyone was feeling as though they could finally return to their work and move forward. This Change

Lab was spent once again discussing the data from the previous Change Lab, but also identifying solutions to problems of practice and philosophical tensions.

After Change Lab 2, I conducted a second interview with each of the educators so I was able to plan Change Lab 3 around all that had happened in the previous Change Labs and interviews, but also with a new understanding of where the educators were in their work, personally and professionally. During those interviews, they each noted that the tensions in the museum, and in particular their department, had subsided and they felt that they were able to get back to “business as usual” work.

At the end of Change Lab 2, Kathryn expressed concern that she didn’t see where the research could go. The educators were tired of “talking in circles” and about their beliefs (Memo, 2/2). To prepare for the final Change Lab, I wanted to provide the educators with tools to guide them toward practical “solutions” to their problems of practice while simultaneously allowing them to reflect on their bigger goals and beliefs.

Focusing in on their own work was easier in this Change Lab than in the other two where they were more likely to focus on the whole institution. In doing so, the department addressed what it means to be an educator.

“I think this goes back to perceptions about what it means to be an educator and feeling that there is perhaps a lack of respect... I think most people understand that to get art into a museum you need a curator but most people outside of that realm don’t understand what educators also are beyond a school setting” (Emily, Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

This doesn’t just reveal itself within the community, but also within the museum as an institution. For example, Emily described a meeting where it felt “like there’s a lack of understanding of importance of the work... that there’s not a shared understanding of what we’re both [curatorial and education] doing at that table is important” (Change Lab

3, 3/4/16).

Brittany returned to the museum's mission, which is to connect people through art. She asked, how can they use the art as a tool to "connect people and connect with people around issues that are important to them and very relevant to them, how can we support their work?" This kind of work she believed is "inherently a social justice act" (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16) which runs counter to the experience in Change Lab 2 when the educators were in a meeting and shocked that the museum felt they weren't community oriented.

Change Lab 3 demonstrates how at least at this point, the educators chose to continue to push for change, at least within their own work. While Brittany focused on using the mission to connect with the community, Kate said that for her being authentic is critical and "part of authenticity is caring about the community outside of our mission, outside of our goals, outside of our programs" (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). These excerpts represent the differences in opinion even within the department, serving as a reminder that each member of the museum comes with particular goals and agendas and working individual perspectives into mutual goals becomes an important aspect of the work.

The conversation, while hopeful, once again began as nebulous. During this Change Lab I continued to ask, "What does this mean for your work?" and "Can you describe that in an experience?" and "What does that goal look like in practice?" So, for example, both Brittany and Kate recognized the fear that community-based or social justice work provoked in other departments. Rather than feel defeated by it, they began to identify ways to build interdepartmental trust so that they can reach their goals. Brittany granted that for some within the organization that can be "a very scary thing" to make that statement but she feels "like you have to be engaged in those kinds of things, as part

of the work that's being done" and that education can lead those initiatives (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). One suggestion for building trust is through a practice of transparency.

"All of this comes back to the idea of how do we build trust and shared understanding of what it is that we do and what are goals and values and all of those things are? What are the actionable items for building that with our colleagues. I mean, we've spent six months putting together this document [strategic plan] and we are still the only ones we've seen it and now it has different language and it's on all of these things and that's probably why it's still sitting on my desk so how as a team can we provide both voice to our colleagues so that there is fundamentally an understanding of what we do and why and how that fits into larger institutional goals" (Kathryn, Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

Kathryn questioned the usefulness of creating a document that has only been shared within the education department. Kate pushed the idea further and talked about treating the strategic plan "as a living document" something they haven't fully committed to, but are still working on, so that it can serve as a point of alignment between them and other departments allowing other departments the opportunity to weigh in. A second goal of this suggestion was to provide other departments an opportunity to begin having these dialogues amongst themselves, as they looked toward the next five years.

At the beginning of this research, the educators wanted to explore how compassionate and empathetic they were in their work. Compassion and empathy, however, turned out to be vague goals. During Change Lab 2, Kathryn expressed surprise at the lack of responses in the data that concerned the museum and community relationship. Instead, most of the responses were about internal relationships. As such, I positioned the educators to discuss what they meant when they said "compassion" and "empathy." I presented them with dictionary definitions of the words and took notes on the whiteboard while they made sense of how their definition was different than the dictionary definition. This provided the team the opportunity to define how to be

compassionate and empathetic within the institution and with their community relationships. Their final agreed upon definition, as a result of reflecting on their experiences was:

*The Education Department acknowledges that we will never have the same experiences as someone else but we will honor and remember those differences as we approach those we work with and those we work for. In doing so, we embrace a shared humanity, and pursue a goals of mutual understanding. We aim to be conscious and considerate to others' emotional states, day-to-day lives and responsibilities without pitying or trying to fix something.*

*We view being compassionate and empathetic as an opportunity to learn about ourselves and our community by imagining what it's like to be someone else. The goal of being compassionate and empathetic is to be authentic to ourselves, our work and others. Being compassionate and empathetic is not just a label, it is a practice that we continue to build.*

*In order to do so we will:*

- *Listen first*
- *Thoughtfully respond*
- *Practice being compassionate and empathetic across departments and up and down hierarchies*
- *Listen to voices that you don't agree with and imagine being first in their position*
- *Be mindful about looking outward*
- *Continue to privilege cultivating civic-mindedness*

- *Aim to approach all of our relationships in the museum and outside of the museum with this mindset and deliberate practice*
- *Think about being with someone, not just for someone*

The team talked about transparency and respect for one another's positions, work, and emotions. Kathryn talked about fostering "mutual understanding" between departments and approaching conversations with a willingness to listen. They also once again stated the need for clear lines identifying where their work ends and another departments' begins. As Brittany noted,

"I think it comes back to that piece of having a respect for what our colleagues do too though because there are certain things that exist within the capacity of the education team and other things that are going to be curatorial that we, can't speak into, right? So building a collection is not something that's part of our responsibility" (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

Kate viewed "circumstances as opportunities" – opportunities to "dig deeper and ask questions about, 'Well, why? Like why did you say that? What are the reasons behind that?'" (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16) so that the educators might increase their understanding and capacity to be compassionate and empathetic of their colleagues.

In terms of work with the local community, Maria talked about "passing the mic" as the first start to being seen as compassionate and empathetic. For her, this addressed issues of diversity and she notes that, "We can't make a program for black people... in a bubble" (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). This push toward shifting the authority away from the museum and into the hands of the public is identified as what makes each of them, and most likely the rest of the museum nervous, and yet they see it as necessary to the work that they want to do.

"Passing the mic" was one way the educators considered reaching out to the

community. Kate also argued that taking a position in which they are facing “outward” is also crucial to building trust within the community. For her, “there’s something very revolutionary about being preemptive, looking again, looking outwardly and seeing like what is happening... We have a responsibility to respond to or address [community issues] and I don’t think we do that now” (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

Doing this kind of work requires a step away from the work that is customary of traditional art museums. Kathryn articulated this point when she said, “We have an institutional value of excellence and quality and to me, scrappy is the antithesis of excellence and quality” (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). The idea about what it means to be a little more “scrappy” in practice and execution is debated for much of the meeting.

Brittany described the difference between the two by saying:

“Art museums, in my experience, tend to have a more formalized structure around them and whereas local, smaller arts nonprofits are more nimble and they may be less resourced and may have smaller staffs but by virtue they can be more immediately responsive to the community or just do things in different ways and they are not as beholden to a broader stake holders” (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16).

As the educators negotiated how to simultaneously embrace “scrappier” practices, while maintaining their legitimacy as an art museum, it became clear that there may not be an answer and that identifying where the parameters of scrappy exist, something that Kathryn would like to do, may change across contexts. Kate said that “scrappy can be disappointing” but that it can also be “crazy responsive to things like the methanol plant”<sup>1</sup> (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). Having “words that have like multiple emotions or associations with them” can be difficult to enact, but each member agreed that scrappier

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<sup>1</sup> The community is currently in the midst of a debate about whether or not to allow a methanol plant to be built. While it would bring jobs, it also carries the potential to affect the local environment and community in major ways. When I asked them if they had any intention of addressing this in their work with the community, the educators said they hadn’t even thought about it as a possibility.

practices were necessary to being truly community-centric.

At the end of this final Change Lab, Kathryn stated that, “it’s on us to take that and figure out how do we take all this great research and actually solidify our values?” (Change Lab 3, 3/4/16). This focus on the future of the department alluded to how the process that they engaged in can help them continue to push forward with increased resolve.

## Chapter Seven: Discussion

This qualitative case study explored an art museum as an activity system as the participants, specifically the education department, navigated change in relation to the local, continually changing community. While there is a plethora of information on what successful community-based museum practice looks like, as well as numerous calls to move forward with that change, there is little information on how to do so, and how programs might identify and navigate obstacles to change. In addition it is worth noting, museums are notoriously slow to change (Janes, 2009) and community engagement is often seen as a one-off in a grant, or reduced to a part of education initiatives or programming.

The purpose of this study was to investigate resistances to and potential for change in an art museum. I was interested in how an education department understands itself as a leader in museum-wide change, and how museum professionals might use data to co-develop solutions to problems of practice. In order to address these purposes, I proposed the following research questions:

1. In what ways do contradictions in the museum as an activity system show up in museum practice?
2. How can museum education departments become leaders in museum change, particularly as it relates to community-based practices?
3. How do the contradictions inherent in the system affect the imaginative understanding of what the education department believes is possible?

I framed this study using theoretical precepts from Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), in which the unit of analysis is the activity system as a whole. Drawing

on this theoretical perspective, I used contradictions, expansive learning processes, and transformative agency, as concepts to help illuminate change problems and processes. I employed Developmental Work Research (Engestrom, 1987) as a framework for formative interventions to engage participants in dialogue and debate amongst themselves, and myself as a researcher, using data as a mediating tool (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). I also used critical design ethnographic tools for data collection including interviews, document analysis, and participant observations.

My research led to significant findings. First and foremost, studying this museum as an activity system revealed the ways in which the different goals and motives that shaped how each department worked, how the work was divided, the tools and rules that were created were each contingent upon one another. The activity system analysis also allowed me to look at the underlying contradictions in institutional policy and practice, particularly as they related to issues surrounding community and diversity. As the museum moved increasingly toward community-based practices as a result of changing communities and the changing landscape of art museum, pressures were put on the traditional structures of museums that aggravated these tensions and affected the work of the educators. During the three Change Labs, members of the museum education department were given the opportunity to explore their practices and beliefs in relation to those they work with. By creating the opportunity for the educators to engage with data and move from the abstract to the concrete, or from ideological stances and toward their actual day-to-day experiences and practices, the educators were able to engage in ways that increased their agency.

### Significance of Findings

The findings that are summarized above contribute to the literature on art museums in several ways. First, there is the notion of museums as systems, and how that is different from the ways that these programs have traditionally been studied. Secondly, there is the change process, and all that impedes and fosters progress, particularly as it related to change that engages communities. Finally, there are implications about using DWR as a tool for museum based change.

**The museum as a system.** By exploring the museum as an organizational system, complexities and interconnected and interdependences were brought to the forefront. While there is an array of ways that art museums may participate in their communities, anything from mobile exhibitions, free admission days, and working with specific groups of people such as teenagers, museums are rarely evaluated as a whole. Aside from a few hallmark examples, such as the Queens Museum and the Wing Luke Museum, museum professionals and funders tend to justify “good community engagement” through the evaluation of particular programs. This means that it is possible for a museum can simultaneously engage their communities from Arnstein’s (1969) ladder of citizen participation by tokenizing them in one exhibition, and partnering with them in a program. For example, within the museum that this study took place at, the Dia de los Muertos community festival was celebrated for its ability to allow the community partners and members to take ownership of the community space. Simultaneously, Maria, as the education department’s only person of color, often felt that her voice was not heard, and merely tokenized within the organization. In this sense, the museum was able to be seen as both complex and contradictory providing the opportunity to see the

organization more holistically. Had I studied only the A(rt)IDS exhibition, I might not have been able to uncover the underlying contradictions in the system that were aggravated by tensions in the daily work of the participants.

The identification and exploration of different goals and motivations, the tools available, the norms in the work place, the organizational rules, and the different people involved helped to identify tension and conflict in the system. In doing so, rather than existing and analyzed in a vacuum, the educators' work was affected by and had the power to affect the work of others. The identification and analysis of systemic contradictions within the system, particularly as they related to issues of community and diversity, aided in capturing the protest as not solely as a moment in time, but related to a long history and practice of marginalizing particular communities for particular reasons. The exploration of the museum as a system provided the educators the opportunity to situate their work and their future goals within a greater understanding of the challenges they faced and the potential that existed. In addition, as the educators worked through the Change Labs and the contradictions and tensions within the system became more apparent, they were able to expand their understanding of the problems of practice they faced, and identify potential strategies for change.

These data demonstrated how the activity of the educators affected each of the other parts of the system, and how their push for change reverberated throughout the work of the other participants and vice versa. In addition, understanding the museum as a system with a particular sociocultural and sociohistorical history allowed the participants to reflect on the changes they wanted to make to the structures that existed, and why those structures might have existed. This more nuanced understanding gave the educators

the chance to expand their goals and accompanying strategies for affecting change in the museum's practice. They created solutions to problems of practice and created new tools for disrupting the culture of the museum by defining what it means to be empathetic and compassionate in practice. As they began to understand the system they were working in, the educators, in particular Kate and Brittany, began to feel less intimidated and more likely to speak their mind and push for change. Kate talked clearly about finding her voice and realizing that the boundaries and rules that are set in place may be more easily pushed than she had believed before the protest.

**Change processes.** Change is hard, personally and professionally. It is also often slow, inevitably destructive in some ways, and sometimes scary. As the educators took on the role of change agents, they were met with pushback from leadership and the existing structures. They identified a need to deepen their relevance in the local community, and to do so they began to produce new tools, or new ways of using the previous tools. For example, how the educators thought of the art, the community festivals, and their community partnerships was different than the work of the previous education department, and different than how museums have traditionally used those tools.

There are several obstacles confronting museums that are looking to do more community-based work. In this study, participants identified ongoing commitments to isolated modes of operating and the marginalization of dissenting voices as two main obstacles. Additionally, a fundamental problem was identified of the educators and other museum staff not knowing how to identify their communities, or what that looked like in practice. This acknowledgment amongst the staff in Change Lab 3 resulted in a more

deliberate consideration of how they participate in their local city and what that means for their work, the work of the organization, and the local communities or targeted audiences. As the educators attempted to affect change in their system, they experienced both moments of feeling outside of the larger institutional goals, isolated from the work that was happening, but also moments where they were able to use their experiences and the Change Labs to question, critique, and examine the current organizational structures. So, while Brittany and Kate were able to find their voice in the system, taking on new roles and feeling as though they gained more power through a greater understanding of the system and their experiences of the protest, Maria was not. She instead left the institution because she believed that museums like CAM cannot do the kind of work that they need to do in order to reach their goals with the community and for change. As members of an activity system are never part of only one system, “their participation in multiple and intersecting activity systems increases the potential for generative contradictions to be experienced, surfaced, and examined both between and within systems” (Sannino & Ellis, 2014, p.9). Maria’s participation in other systems – that of the local artists and her Native community, generated tensions that couldn’t be overcome in the museum setting.

By exploring marginalization in the system, we confront one of the problems of Engeström’s analytic CHAT framework: it was not particularly useful in examining subject-subject relationships. The relationship between Kathryn and Maria and what each of them represented was particularly telling of larger conversations within the museum field. Where Kathryn was an art museum veteran, Maria was new to the field. Kathryn was white, new to the city, and felt like a museum person; Maria was Native American, born in the city, and not especially attached to museums. Kathryn held power as the

director, Maria had the least amount of power as the education assistant. Kathryn believed that change is necessarily slow, while Maria believed that change can happen through revolution and immediacy.

Mørck (1987) understands marginalization as a complex, multilayered process that has implications for a person's position across various contexts. Expansive learning, then, is a kind of learning that may partly transcend marginalization through changed participation and recognition by others of participants in their changed communities. By the end of the research study Maria had developed an understanding that organizations are slow to change and revolutions are hard to come by and even harder to start, yet she felt increasingly marginalized from the system.

According to Holland et al. (1998) relational identities “have to do with how one identifies one's position relative to others, mediated through the ways one feels comfortable or constrained, for example to speak to another, to command another, to enter into the space of another to touch the possessions of another, to dress for another” (p.127). Positional identities, on the other hand, “have to do with the day-to-day on the ground relations of power, deference and entitlement, social affiliation and distance – with the social-interactional, social-relational structures of the lived world” (p.127). These two forms of identity can be used to analyze the ways in which individuals position themselves in the museum through a power/agency lens. The degree to which the structure of the museum allows for individual agency is tied up with how the individual behaves in the museum and comes to understand what the museum is and what it is capable of. Examples of marginalization, with Maria, the protestor and the Interim

Finance Director, are each indicative of how individuals are positioned and position themselves in relation to one another and their work.

**DWR as a tool for museum-based change.** DWR was a powerful tool for identifying different goals, work, and objectives within the system that could then be used to inform the activity of the educators. DWR also provided scaffolding to help build the educators' transformative agency, allowing them to use the data to disagree with one another and explore possible tensions that needed resolving in order for them to move forward with their change work.

The educators used the data to question and push back on Kathryn when the data reiterated their experiences. Kathryn also grew as a leader as a result of recognizing her own patterns and ways of working. When the educators explained that they didn't understand how the museum came to decide which exhibitions it would be receiving or putting together, Kathryn recognized that as a problem of practice and the ways in which she was limiting their access to knowledge and participation. By Change Lab 3, she had put a practice in place of meeting with her team before and after any major meeting she had so that she could both bring her educators' concerns to the meeting, and information from the meeting back to the educators.

**Reflection of researcher participation.** This research was messy and complicated and laden with the personal. My role as the interventionist within the DWR methodology was significant. Choosing which data to present and how to present it, particularly as that data was meant to intentionally provoke the participants, carries the possibility of perpetuating the very power dynamics that this kind of formative works to dismantle.

I came to this work with various understandings about museums, organizational change, community engagement, and museum educators. These understandings allowed me to plan and prepare for each Change Lab in ways that were unique to the context, but also to my own development as a museum practitioner. It would be an over simplification to say that the educators moved seamlessly from the abstract to the concrete and that I knew how to yield my power throughout this intervention.

“The third fundamental condition that must be met by critical ethnographic work is that it must reflexively address its own situated character. This means that we must acknowledge that the knowledge we produce is inevitably limited by our own histories and the institutional forms within which we work. This is again not simply an admission of inevitable ‘bias.’ Rather, it is raised to justify the third central feature of critical ethnographic work, a commitment to study the character and bases of one’s own work practices and their relation to the knowledge such practices produce. This is not a narcissistic turn, but rather a fundamental questioning of how the structured relations within which we live are implicated in the constitution of knowledge we put forward. It is a call for the development of a political economy of social research as well as a collective attempt to negate and transform the institutional forms that regulate and shape what will be produced as knowledge of our social world” (Simon & Dippo, 2015, p. 1986).

Thinking about this work from a critical design ethnographic perspective helped me recognize my own position and goals with the context of the research. While “ethnography as a general term refers to a range of possible procedures for structuring one’s experience of a social situation and transforming that experience into a systematic account” (Simon & Dippo, 1986, p.201, critical ethnographic work is tethered to additional perspectives including historical and structural, that support conditions that lead toward emancipatory concern (Simon & Dippo, 1986). That is to say, the data I collected were not simply a systemic account of what was happening, it was intentional and often, provocative. This understanding of ethnography adds to the DWR

methodology because requires the researcher to actively consider herself as part and parcel of the research process.

### **Limitations**

There were a handful of constraints that impacted this study including the level of institutional buy-in at the beginning of this research (having only the educators encouraging change). In order to address these issues, I focused on the educators who were facing problems of practice and were ready to negotiate and push for change at the organizational level. In addition, while implementation of a full DWR model may include 8-12 Change Labs and take place over a year or more, the participants and I were able to hold three Change Labs while I spent the remaining time interviewing and observing at the site.

One limitation of this research is that I cannot determine if the changes I observed were episodic or ongoing and transformative. A more longitudinal research design would be needed to determine whether or not the participants went through a full expansive cycle.

A second limitation of this study is that because of the research design, I am not able to say whether or not the team can affect change within the broader organization because I was unable to attend museum-wide meetings.

A third limitation of this study was that I was only able to gather a limited amount of data from the community to uncover community perceptions of the museum and therefore had no way of addressing change how outside perspective could change practice within the institutional walls.

## Conclusion

There are several areas for future research. First and foremost, the present findings suggest that research that explores museums as organizational systems and follows them through an entire change cycle is likely to be helpful to understanding how change can be better understood and navigated. In the future it will be important to investigate more closely how initial ideas evolve into practical solutions and what this kind of agency and movement entails. In order to truly understand movement through a transitional period for individuals and the activity systems they are a part of, power must be critically analyzed and understood as it is seen through the emergent actions of the participants.

By exploring a full cycle of systemic change, I also propose that the development of tools that help art museums use in critical change practices is a necessary task. For example, while there are museum evaluators, there are few tools that have been developed that promote critical reflection in organizations. In addition, art museums are constrained largely by their resources. The development of research-derived tools that address these concerns is an important step toward moving the field forward. Finally, research that uncovers community perceptions of the museum is key to moving the museum forward in line with both the community, as well as continuing as an art museum.

Further explorations of change processes in art museums not only can address a gap in the literature, but also can add to change literature more generally. Creative and cultural production includes the process by which cultural tools are taken up and interacted with by members of a society. When these tools and symbols do not serve the

needs, new ones can be (and are) created. As the educators looked to change the system, they attempted to address the ways that the system no longer served the needs of the community. When the “focus of society privileges cultural and social stability over cultural transformation and progress... cultural possibilities are often inhibited” (Moran, 2010). By privileging stability between the already existing museum/community relationship possibilities for new ways of being in the world may be inhibited.

The stability that was promoted is directly related to the primary contradiction between the museums’s interests in remaining legitimate and revenue producing and its interests related engaging new communities. In order to move toward more community-based practices, museums and those individuals leading change initiatives challenge previous, and often comfortable ways of working. In many ways what surfaced in this research through the analysis of contradictions was a struggle of becoming. The education department wanted to be able to embrace “scrappy practices”, without letting go of the “aesthetic snobbery” that inherently makes an art museum an art museum.

I am reminded of the book the Velveteen Rabbit. In it there is a quote that says:

“You become. It takes a long time. That’s why it doesn’t happen often to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in your joints and very shabby. But these things don’t matter at all, because once you are Real you can’t be ugly, except to people who don’t understand” (Williams, 1922, p.5).

The Velveteen Rabbit quote is demonstrative of the conversations the educators had about becoming scrappy. While they viewed scrappy practices as responsive to the community and a good thing to do, they also recognized that by letting the community in there is the chance that the museum will lose it’s legitimacy and become shabby, like the Velveteen Rabbit. The work of educators in art museums is to figure out how they might

move forward with change that can embrace and push both of these ideas. To do so, recognizing the system that their work exists within becomes critical.

One line of work that is calling for a greater exploration of critical history, as well as transformative agency, is from Bang et al. (2015), which calls for future work that disrupts reifying normativity in ways that continue to drive historical inequity. This kind of work shifts CHAT oriented object, or motive and goal related formative interventions toward relationally-oriented interventions, or axiological innovations.

Axiological innovations for the researchers and theorists, include: “the theories, practices, and structures of values, ethics, and aesthetics – that is what is good, right true and beautiful – that shape current and possible meaning, meaning-making, positioning and relations in cultural ecologies” (p. 2). Axiological positionings, in this sense, emerge from conceptual and affective states of being and “shape intersubjectivities and possible futures in interaction” (p. 2). This kind of work positions organizations and individuals to do better than they had before, to push against their histories and become critical of current and accepted practices.

The accepted axiological normativity of art museums that assumes stability is related and indicative of the primary contradiction between being revenue driven and legitimately engaging new communities. In addition, while CHAT is typically oriented around motive and goal, this axiological innovations focus on the relationships. While identifying different and often competing motives and goals was important for the purposes of this research, exploring these data through relationally-oriented analysis could lead to a deeper understanding of the positionings of the participants. Furthermore, to understand where museums are headed, an increased focus on axiological positionings

that works to effectively dismantle previous ways of being in the world is important for moving forward, particularly as it relates to formative interventions. This kind of work has the potential to further position the organization toward an imagined future which they can work more effectively toward.

Even those organizations and institutions we consider to be “progressive” are capable of not addressing a community need, and frankly, being blind to it if their current structures don’t allow them to see it. These organizations can participate in society in ways exacerbate inequality by privileging particular kinds of voice, especially if the voices they are privileging are those “well-versed in museum behavior” (Curator 1 Interview, 12/4/15). One way for organizations to become “more real” is to continue to bring in voices that push the boundaries of the work that they do. Yet, as these data suggest, simply bringing in different voices may not be enough. Activity systems can expand agency, but they can also marginalize particular voices. Broadening participation in the art museum world is necessary if art museums want to remain relevant, yet broadened participation is not the same as creating seats at the table, it is a careful dismantling of the structures and culture that continue to leave diverse voices out.

There is one final space that warrants a more careful consideration and exploration. Museum educators have long been change agents in organizations and they have also long privileged object-based learning. At its core, museum education is about learning with and through the objects, which serve as a mediating device for exploration. The protest at this museum raises the age-old museum question of whether it is the art or the experience that matters more. It seems to be increasingly difficult for educators continue to teach solely from the object while limiting their ability to see the bigger

societal picture (for example, the educators in this study not connecting the protest back to the #blacklivesmatter movement). The need to remain relevant may rest in a shifting of educational practices that not only privileges the object, or in this case, the art, but also the object's position within the changing landscape of the "out there" – the communities that exist beyond the walls of the organization. This is a critically important question for museum educators to wrestle with as they move forward in promoting and prompting change processes

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## Appendices

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## Appendix A: Change Lab 1 Agenda

### Agenda

9 – 9:30 Introduction to Sarah and the Research

- Who is she?
- What is the research?
- What will it involve?
- What will individual contributions look like?
- Human Subjects considerations

9:30 – 9:40 Individual Dream Big Break Out Reflection:

- What might this research do for you?
- Where would you like to see this research focused?

9:40 – 9:50 Dream Bigger with a Partner Share

- Swap ideas with a partner
- Build off of those ideas

9:50 – 10:05 Dream Biggest with Whole Group

- Put ideas up and everyone adds on
- Where is there overlap?
- What are you most excited about?

10:05 – 10:25 Ideal Museum/Community Relationship

- What does it look like?
- Draw together

10:25 – 10:55 Change Lab

- Sarah to explain the Change Lab process and protocol
- Start to brainstorm some issues that might come up concerning planning for

change

10:55 – 11:00 Individual Reflections

- What are YOU specifically feeling about this process? Excited about? Nervous about? Where do you think there will be success? Possibly failures or difficult moments?

## Appendix B: Education Team Interview Protocol

### Interview I Education Department

So, like I had explained to you, I'm going to be asking you some questions about community engagement and participation and how it relates to you, your work and the museum as a whole. I'm also going to ask you a bit about museum change and the education department, nothing that we didn't hit on during the steering meeting. I'm going to have the recorder running but I'll also probably take some notes because it helps me think things through. Ready to go? Ok.

1. What is your current role at the museum?
  - a. What does that role entail?
2. On a day-to-day basis, what does your job look like?
  - a. On a day-to-day basis, where are your successes?
  - b. On a day-to-day basis, what do you struggle most with at work?
3. Now, you're new to the museum, how did you come to this position?
  - a. When did you start?
  - b. Where did you work before?
  - c. What drew you to The City?
4. In your opinion, who makes up the community that you serve as a museum?
5. How does the community use your museum?
6. In what ways does your position work with the community?
7. Tell me about some of the community driven work you have been doing either here or elsewhere?
  - a. Of the programs that you have mentioned, which do you think was the most successful?
  - b. Who participated?
  - c. What did their participation look like?
8. What was the rest of the organization's response to those programs?
9. In your opinion, what impacts do or can communities have on a museum's practices?
  - a. Internal?
  - b. External?
10. In what ways do you think the museum is or isn't meeting your idealized version of community engagement?
11. Where do you see the most room for improvement in the museum at large?
  - a. In the education department?
12. During the steering meeting, you wrote about certain behaviors potentially not being accepted within the institution walls, can you talk more about that?
13. One of the things that you mentioned wanting to value in this research are the unique strengths of the museum, in your opinion what are those strengths?
  - a. What would weaken those strengths?
14. How do you envision the unique strengths of the museums meeting the communities changing needs?

## Appendix C: Example Museum Staff Interview Protocol

### Interview I Curators

So, like I had explained to you, I'm going to be asking you some questions about community engagement and participation and how it relates to you, your work and the museum as a whole. I'm also going to ask you a bit about museum change and the education department, nothing that we didn't hit on during the steering meeting. I'm going to have the recorder running but I'll also probably take some notes because it helps me think things through. Ready to go? Ok.

1. What is your current role at the museum?
  - a. What does that role entail?
2. On a day-to-day basis, what does your job look like?
3. What's your curatorial philosophy?
  - a. How do you see that play out?
4. How does the community use your museum?
  - a. How would you like them to work with the museum?
5. In what ways does your position work with the community?
6. In your opinion, who makes up the community that you serve as a museum?
  - a. Is there a community that your museums targets?
    - i. Who?
    - ii. Why?
7. Describe a time when you felt you (or the museum at large) successfully worked with the community?
  - a. Can you describe a program that wasn't successful?
8. In your opinion, what is the purpose of engaging communities?
  - a. What are the purposes of the museum in engaging communities?
9. Over the past decade or so, museums seem to be taking up the identity of being more socially engaged and aware. In your experience how has the identity of the museum as an institution changed?
10. In your opinion, what is the role of the education department in the museum?
11. How do you see the relationship between education and curatorial functioning?
  - a. What makes that relationship successful?
  - b. Unsuccessful?
12. There has been talk in the museum about leading with compassion and empathy. What does this mean from a curatorial standpoint?
13. What would you like to see CAM become?

## Appendix D: Change Lab 2 Agenda

### Goals for today's meeting:

#### Identify:

- *Who were you? Who are you now? Who do you want to become?*
- *What have you been doing? What are you now doing? What do you want to be doing?*

### Agenda

#### 9:00 - 9:10

Introduction to Change Lab:

- Review materials in front of them
- Set up goals for the day
- Talk about 3 surfaces
- Focus in on EduTeam (not full museum)

#### 9:10 - 9:25

Wish Review: Education Team and Museum

- Look for places of overlap and tension together in pairs

#### 9:25 - 9:35

Whole Group Discussion:

- Focus back in on museum goals and current draft of plan with an awareness of where tension may lie in the museum

#### 9:35 - 10:00

Current Tensions Discussion and Data Review

#### 10:00 - 10:30

DIE-IN as a Learning Example to Work with

#### 10:30 - 11:00

Three Surfaces

## Appendix E: Change Lab 3 Agenda

### Agenda

3:00 – 3:15 Go over plan and Preliminary Report

3:15 – 4:15 Whole Group Workshop:

- Past, Present, Future
- Brainstorm
  - What do you need to get you there?
  - What stands in the way?
  - Who does this affect?
- Compassion & Empathy

4:15 – 5:45 Patterns

- 4:15 – 4:35 Brainstorm Pattern with Sarah leading
- 4:35 – 5:45 Small Group Patterns

5:45 – 6 Next Steps and Reflections

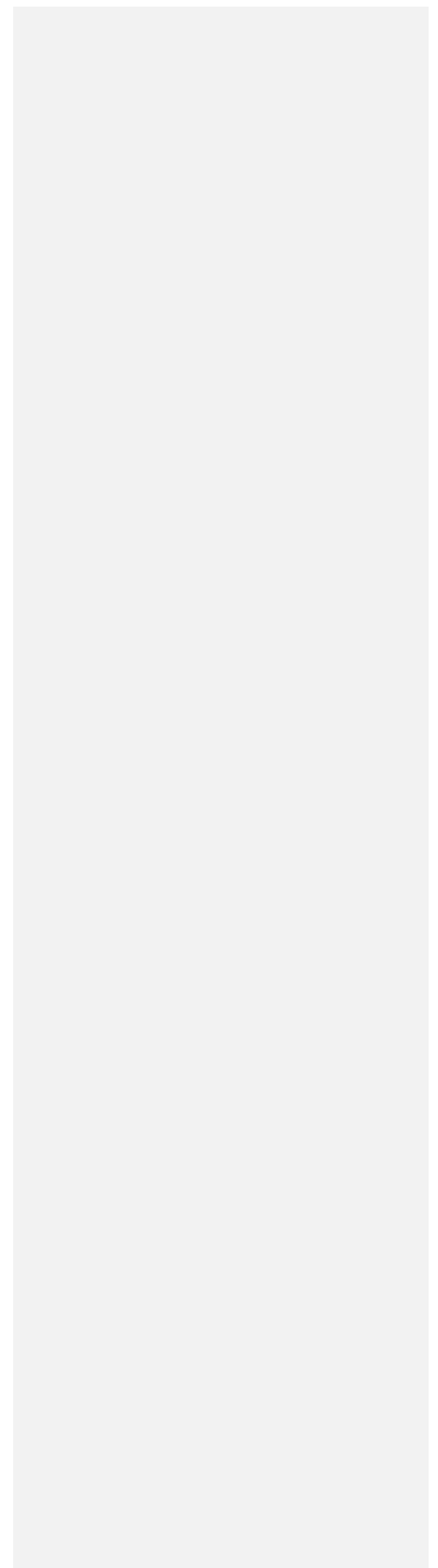
### Goals for Today:

- Define Compassion & Empathy
  - Conceptual and practical definitions that guide work within the department, within the museum, and within the community
- Review Past, Present, Future boards and make any corrections, additions, or other changes
- Identify what stands in the way of progress, what tools are needed to move forward, and who is affected by these changes
- Use the process of coming up with Patterns to address real and meaningful change

**Appendix F: Examples of Solution Worksheet from Change Lab 3**

Title	Being an art museum
Context	There is a long history of what it means to be an art museum. As CAM changes, they are faced with staying true to what makes an art museum an art museum, but are also faced with new practices that don't fit neatly in those boxes.
Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship with curatorial and understanding who does what with local artists and engaging the community</li> <li>• Relationship with community and the community's perceptions of the museum and art museums in general</li> <li>• Staying true to the work of education teams</li> </ul>
Solution	

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Title	Being an art museum
Context	There is a long history of what it means to be an art museum. As CAM changes, they are faced with staying true to what makes an art museum an art museum, but are also faced with new practices that don't fit neatly in those boxes.
Tension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Relationship with curatorial and understanding who does what with local artists and engaging the community</li><li>• Relationship with community and the community's perceptions of the museum and art museums in general</li><li>• Staying true to the work of education teams</li></ul>
Solution	

### Appendix G: Community Engagement vs. Audience Development

Audience Development	Community Engagement
Short term marketing strategy to increase the number of people who visit your organization: builds and broadens your audience, which can turn into support for your organization	Long term strategy organizational development to build community ownership, participation, relationships, and support for your organization: builds a better community, which in turn, builds your audience and position of importance in the community
Looks at who is and who is not coming and why or why not; identifies potential audiences for marketing existing museum services	Looks at what matters to the community and how your organization is or is not responding; identifies how existing museum services are relevant or could become more relevant
Focus on increasing visitation numbers from existing and new groups, and building membership numbers, the relationship with community remains the same as it is currently	Focus on developing relationships and increasing partnerships and collaborations with a variety of community groups, benefiting all participating partners
Internally focused approach: how can the community serve us and our needs (this approach potentially closes doors as it does not address what other organizations need—it is all about your organization)	Externally focused approach: how can we serve the community's needs, working with others (this approach opens doors as it is a shared goal with other community organizations—it is about what we all need)
Involves education, marketing and development staff members	Involves all stakeholders, including staff, trustees and volunteers
A consultant can complete the bulk of the work, working on your behalf, conducting interviews in the community and facilitating focus groups and then summarizing salient points (a consultant goes to the community and reports back to you)	A consultant can facilitate and guide the initial conversations and summarize the collective input from community participants, but your staff needs to be actively involved to make it work (a consultant helps to bring the community to you for collective dialogue)
Organizational identity, goals and priorities remain essentially the same, as does the organization's current reputation, public service, value and standing in the community	Organizational identity, goals and priorities could be fundamentally transformed in response to community input and ideas, substantially increasing reputation, public service, value and standing in the community
A more conservative approach, with more predictable and focused outcomes, if completed thoughtfully, impacting a limited portion of the organization	A more risky approach, but if completed with sincerity and honesty, outcomes can far exceed initial expectations, impact all aspects of the operation and last longer

Developed by CTM Professional Services, Candace Tangorra Matelic, Fall, 2011

## Appendix G: Low Inference Codes

### Low Inference Codes: Set I

Code	Description	Data Sample
Art & AIDS (A&A)	Any mention or document related to the Art & AIDS exhibit	Marketing and Communications Director: So most recently--I'll take "Art & AIDS." She took that into consideration and said, "Maybe we should have a psychologist here to talk to how you guys feel about the exhibition." Brilliant.
Art (Art)	Any mention of the importance or purpose of art in general/at large	Curator 1: The history of art is not a fixed narrative and I have the opportunity and responsibility to tell a fuller and broader narrative than the mainstream line of our history.  Brittany: I do think it comes back to the art. In my very not exciting drawing, that's why I put curatorial kind of at the top here because I feel like that's their charge of the art,
Change (Chng)	Mention of change in CAM, the community or the education team (internal or external)	Allison: Then naturally there is change over on the staff if it was a big accomplishment to finish this and it was exhausting and it was a big stretch for many people and they could also put it on their resumes as something that they had done. Not surprisingly we had change over in the development and the fundraising team because it also marked the completion of a big fundraising push and that's a big accomplishment to take out on the road.  Kathryn: Yeah, I know, but it's not what we do. To me that before institutional change can happen, the change that can happen is making sure that when we use this vocabulary, which isn't vocabulary we've just made up, it exists in our strategic

		<p>plan, which I gave you that document. These words are emblazoned in our strategic plan they are not 5 year words they're institutional values. Really I think teasing apart what everybody means when they say them and then what each department is doing or not doing to make that happen and if we're not on the same page, get us on the same page and then what is it, every department willing to do.</p>
Communication (Cmnt)	Any mention of a communication (internal or external)	<p>Kate: I think that's a good question too. I don't fully understand how and why we get certain exhibitions. We are not part of that process and so you and you I'm sure are-          Kathryn: I am. I'm actually ... I know a lot ... I'm trying to figure out how can I do a better job of downloading all of the stuff that I know and that I'm involved in.</p>
Community (Comm)	Reference to the "community" (perhaps a specific community or target community)	<p>Allison: First of all, I don't think about community as a singular. I think of communities, and different groups of communities, and I would say different communities use us differently. There are communities of artists, and they come hopefully for inspiration. They are often celebrated through exhibitions and participate in programs. They can be supporters of the museum as well or they meet with staff. They also provide services for us sometimes. For example, in the jewelry community they often come together when we ask them kindly to help us to polish works and prepare them for display, because they have unique knowledge and insight and perhaps even knew some of the artists whose work we care take of who are no longer with us.</p> <p>There's an African American community. Often I find that they come for projects that are particular interest to their own African American history, artists, educational programs, community festivals. I make a</p>

		<p>point of inviting the black community primarily by attending the Black Collective at least once a year to share upcoming programs that I think will be of particular interest, or ask them for input, or feedback on certain questions we have about about moving [inaudible 00:03:04]. I would say different communities use us differently. Those being just 2 examples.</p>
<p>Community Living Room (CLR)</p>	<p>Museum is aiming to be the “community’s living room” this code is for references to that term</p>	<p>Teresa: I think people will engage for those very specific things, but I don't know that ... We talk about like, "We're the community's living room" and things like that ... But does the community know that or do they see us that way?</p> <p>Sarah:: Can you describe if you were to walk into the museum on just any given day, can you describe what would look like success around the idea of being a living room? What does that look like?</p> <p>Allison: I would want our visitors to be greeted by people, I would like them to find a comfortable atmosphere that would be well lit and clean, that there be comfortable seating. There would be different pathways so that they would encounter other people, they would be invited to experience the museum at whatever level they like with an audio guide, with a tour, walking by themselves, reading, encountering videos. Whether they participate in an education program is fully, I think over 50% of our visitors participate in the education programs which is really a wonderful mark. I think it's about seeing themselves at the museum as well and coming to see both familiar things and come across something that's new.</p>

Compassion & Empathy (C&E)	Museum is aiming to lead, program and curate from a place of “compassion and empathy”	Marketing and Communications Director [ <i>on compassion and empathy</i> ]: Within the museum? Oh, well, that's easy. I do that all the time, and that's just the nature of who I am. I think, though, it is a shift for us to be leading with that outwardly, so that is something that we in the marketing department haven't quite rolled out yet. It's a new way of thinking. I shouldn't say its a new way of thinking. It's just a new way to promote the museum about what we do. We haven't done it that way before. I would say it's a new way for us, and I like it. We just haven't done it yet from an outwardly perspective.
Conflict (Conf)	Moments of conflict internally and externally; theoretically and practically	Brittany: Where I see that tension happening is the fact that to me when I say we want to be community centered, it's not a scrappy art center, it's how do we do the thing that I love.
Curatorial (Cur)	Mention of the curatorial team role or decisions	Curator 1: My hope is that as a curator I want the boundaries of the museum to dissolve, I want people to come here, remember that they saw something, go home, log online and look for that thing and then find the deeper context or information about the artist, about the image, the painting the whatever and figure out a way to keep Takoma Art Museum as a resource for folks not just a place where you go and have an experience.
Dia de Los Muertos (DLM)	Any mention, reference or document related to the Dia de Los Muertos day	Curator 1: The most obvious for us on an annual basis is the Day of the Dead Family Festival and bring up to 4000 of our closest friends into the museum on a single day. It's one example we have a more esoteric example would be collection groups that we're trying to form whether it's people interested in contemporary non-west arts or western art, people who have specific interest in all of that material.
Diversity		Maria: Yeah, I'm also curious to know and

(Div)		I don't know if this is even possible but I feel like sometimes we do really cool programs that would bring diverse audiences but then they don't come. I don't know if it's because they don't know about it or if it's just proving that they don't actually care about it, but how do we advertise more effectively
Education Team (EduT)	Mention of education team, role or decisions	Marketing and Communications Director: I will say that once Kathryn had started, what I've noticed is now that department educates us. Granted, I've only been here five years or I could speak to it more in-depth. What I love is that they take that holistic educational approach to "not only are we here to educate the community about exhibitions, but we're also going to educate the staff." That, to me, has been great. I haven't seen that, and I think that's wonderful and that should be the role of an education department in a museum. It's not just about the community. Educate us too. Certainly that's what the curators do. I mean they tell us about the exhibitions, but they're very scholarly. Not all of us can understand that, and our job in marketing is always to distill that information to make it more accessible out in the real world for people to understand what these pieces mean or how do we spin it so that people go "Oh yeah." Our department spins things. The education team says, "But this is what it really means." Oh okay. It's been nice.
Exclusion (Exc)		Jeff [ <i>on the EduT</i> ]: Yeah, yes. I think geographically they isolated themselves. I don't think they did, I think they became isolated and that has created a bit of a weird dynamic, but I don't think it's ... So that's one thing. It's not bad. I mean it's not like they're unattainable, but you do feel like you're going into their part of admin and that kind of can be intense. Not intense, bad word.

Exhibits (Exh)	References to other exhibits besides A&A	Marketing and Communications Director: If we have something special going on, they want to come. It's not about what we have on view. I think it's really hard for museums, and it's also pretty frustrating on the marketing side that the only reason you come is because we have a blockbuster exhibition. Why is that? We have Norman Rockwell. When was the last time people talked about "Oh, I liked that show." Why
Galleries (Gal)	References to specific galleries or activities that occur within a gallery	Brittany: For me it's about youth, and I want them to feel like they can come and swing by the museum after school and hang out with their friends at the museum and yeah, they go into the galleries and look at some art, maybe even make some art, but that they feel like this is a place that they can come and hang out with their peers.
Goals (Goa)	Museum and community goals for future work	Kathryn: It sounds like what Brit said is similar to what you said this idea that we really want the reflection of the community inside of CAM, art in youth and people and then making sure that we really are representing the northwest demographics. I think I am interpreting that in the same way. How do we get to a place where if we are a community center and when we look inside the museum, we see the community in which we sit in the museum as well as outside.
History (His)	Reference to who and what the museum has historically been	Speaker 1: What's the role of the education department? Curator 1: What is it now or what has it been? Speaker 1: Both, I want both. Curator 1: It has been insanely focused on K through 8 for as long as I've been here with the exception of the last year. Given the attrition and small staff that Kathryn has had to work with there's just not been a chance to re-define that as of yet.

Inclusion (Inc)		<p>Interim Finance Director: I've been hoping to establish a connection with JBLM for a little while and I can't. So we signed onto the blue star program which is starting an initiative to have military families in the museum for free between memorial day and labor day which is great. We haven't seen a lot of traction on that so later or I guess it was in September I went to a function at JBLM. I just tried to get my face in front of as many commanders as I possibly could. Made a connection with one.</p> <p>Now we're on the break of [crosstalk 00:35:12] we're going to be part of the honorary commander's leadership program which I think is a good opportunity. To have an art museum at the table or represented at these events that the military puts on because I would love for that to be an option. I know that, I just think it's a good opportunity. Even if we're having families that come through and are only here for three or four years, if they leave here going to the next place and going into museums, we win. That's the goal.</p>
Institution (Ins)	References to being an "art museum" (not specifically being an art museum in The City)	Brittany: I mean more like deeply embedded but we do have a responsibility to show art at the heart we are an institution that collects and presents art to the public and so what is that, that's the challenge for me.
Leadership (Lea)	Mention of leadership within the museum and community	Kathryn: I want to say something that will be a goal for change, is that, I have a very clear sense of where the museum is versus that island, but I'm just involved in so many conversations than you all are, so how do I better bring you all in or maybe it's not just me but how do we make sure that I'm not the only one that feels like I know where that island is, you know in relationship to the rest of the museum. That is, I would say as a department head,

		<p>I'm interested in making sure that we all feel good, I mean maybe not all feel good, but we at least all feel the same about where things are institutionally and how are the best ways that I can help either personally or that we can build in structures to make sure that that's not a vacuum that lives in my experience and not yours too. The way that I look at it doesn't have to be the way that you look at it, but I also, I'm aware that I probably just have more access to conversations than everybody else does.</p>
Local Artists (LocA)	Mention of the role of local artists in the museum and the community	<p>Maria: Yeah, like I said before there, I have heard from this one artist that there's a lack of The City art in the museum.  Kathryn: I would say that that is true for every museum in every city.  Maria: The City is also ... If we're talking about The City specifically and the city's identity, it is all about itself and it is very psyched on its own art scene and being from The City and not being Seattle. If we are reflecting community needs, maybe it's not relevant than other museums but if that's what we decide is important for this place</p>
Management (Mgmt)		<p>Sarah: Do you see either one of those playing out within the institution?  Jeff: No. I don't.  Sarah: What would it look like if you did or why don't you see that playing out?  Jeff: I think because top down there are high expectations about what we're doing and how we do. I don't think compassion, I don't think that culture of compassion and empathy could ever thrive in that. It may go laterally in the departments. I think there's a lot of that, but laterally or vertically no.  Horizontal, yes.</p>
Marketing and Communication (M&C)	Mention of Marketing and Communication and their role within	<p>Marketing and Communications Director:  Well, we work very closely together because what they want to do means we</p>

	the museum	<p>have to implement it. I mean everything that they want to do comes to us, but that's what marketing is. Marketing is that catch-all, so what everybody wants to accomplish comes in to marketing, and we're the ones who produce it. If they want a gallery guide, we'll collaborate sometimes and say, "Well, how about thinking of it this way?" because they have the education arm and we also have the arm to be able to say "but it actually would sound better like this," so we have to work very closely together. They come up with the content. We just kind of massage it a little bit and then we produce it in a way that we both agree would work best to translate on paper or for the vehicle.</p>
Money (\$)	Any reference to money, funding or budgeting	<p>Interim Finance Director: I don't have any say on how much they spend in education on a program. Yet, I'm asked to raise the money for it. If they start to go way over, I have the same problem with curatorial. Art &amp; AIDS is over budget. That's the reality of it. I'm stuck with the bill. That's a challenge that really effects me and our efforts in development. I feel like education is on the precipice of we're going to do this initiative, we want to do this this and this. It's like wait. Have you explored funding. Instead of letting us find it, help us.</p>
Non-Museum Arts Organizations (NMAO)	References to arts organizations such as grassroots organizations that don't identify with being a museum	<p>I've been think about this idea that we are an art museum so as much as we say that we want to be this community based organization and I think that we really and deeply feel that and want that to be what we are, we are an art museum so what does it mean for an institution like that to have that role because we are not a scrappy community arts organization, we are something different and so that's where the tension is.</p>
Partnerships (Part)	References to existing or potential	<p>Speaker 1: Can you describe a time when you felt like you or the museum at large</p>

	partnerships; as well as partnerships in general	<p>successfully worked with a community?</p> <p>Curator 1: We've done a number of things regarding problems within an exhibition where we've dealt with images of that's the era of concentration camps in Europe, we've brought the holocaust studies group and PLU here. Had some interesting conversations about social justice. I mean people weren't using that word then, but a variety of community groups came in, we were able to share their projects with people that came on the festival day.</p> <p>Then we had presentations by the key community groups so that was fairly successful. Another example is we did a fishbowl conversation with a bunch of faith leaders about gay marriage a couple of years ago when we had the Hide/Seek exhibition. People were able to express contradictory views in a respectable kind of way and everyone sort of moved, you could see people move a little bit so that was useful.</p>
Programs (Prog)	Programs that have taken place at the museum	<p>Kate: Yeah, I think that's step one or step two is getting them to come back and I think that's where the relevancy piece starts to come in. For me there have been moments during festivals or third Thursdays or whatever else where people would just hang out in the space and I think that is a measure of success for me, is the hanging out.</p>
Race (Race)	<p>Mentions of race</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to be looked at through all of the document data about A&amp;A and the die in as well</li> </ul>	<p>Maria: But I also mean it more philosophically so if a northwest history collection. I mean that's why museum was founded and that is a reflection of our community and like having black artists in the museum and not just put in one corner with other ... Well like all the native artists are always in one little section, but like the way the art is displayed-</p> <p>Kathryn: Is that how we do it?</p> <p>Maria: I think sometimes it's integrated but</p>

		<p>even when it's in a larger retrospective show, it's usually kind of together. The ones I've seen at least.</p> <p>Kathryn: Here?</p> <p>Brittany: Mm-hmm (affirmative), I'm thinking with Northwest in the West</p> <p>Kathryn: It's so long ago now. I don't even have a sense of what it is but ... Interesting. Was there a native corner in Northwest in the West?</p> <p>Brittany: There was but I think that's still got it in the native glass display which is important but it shouldn't always be about tokenizing things but a reflection of human beings.</p>
Relationship (Relat)		<p>Jeff: Okay. So I think for me, making those connections is paramount to what we do. I mean if we can't build those relationships, it's impossible to engage somebody and hope that they can want to fund our mission. I mean it's really the basis of everything.</p>
Relevancy (Rel)		<p>Kathryn: I mean I have an Art History degree because I love art and I love that history and that trajectory, I don't want to write labels all day long. How do we take what is great about the type of institution we work in and make that relevant to a 21st century audience which is for me The City, how do we make it relevant for the people in The City?</p>
Research Wishes (RW)	Education team's goals and wishes for the research	<p>Brittany: I think for me that just basic demographic information about The City would be helpful but then and I don't know if this is really within the scope of what this is for you. I feel like I really don't have a great handle on who a CAM visitor is and what that looks like, what are our real demographics. I feel like I have an idea kind of but I don't just sit up on the galleries all day. That I think having a starting point and then we can really use that as a metric to gauge change, I mean we</p>

		should be able to start moving in a lot of those areas but we are not going to demonstrate if that's really happening unless we know where we are right now.
Responsibility (Resp)	Job descriptions, responsibility to each other, responsibility to communities	Teresa: I mostly think about community in terms of staffing and diversity. My sort of mindset is about risk management because that's part of my job. Trying to understand what's happening in the community that could have an impact on us or what do we need to think about ahead of time about things that we're going to do that could have a potential reputational risk or things like that.
CAM (CAM)	Specific references to CAM mission, goals, culture, etc	<p>Jeff: When I first started working at the museum it really was even more corporate than it is now I think. It was very institutional minded. We couldn't say CAM. CAM was a bad word. I still have one of the original things, it's CAM and it has a red circle, a line through it. It was like a no no. You could never say CAM.</p> <p>Kathryn: We all believe that CAM has all these values and priorities of being community centered, civic minded, gracious, these words and then in education we came up with additional words which did include empathy and supportive, building a supportive and empathetic community.</p>
The City (Tac)	Specific mention about the city of The City, not just targeted communities	<p>Marketing and Communications Director:</p> <p>I know or they remember the old days of it being an awful place in The City. If people in Gig Harbor who have lived here for a very long time know The City as a bad place, it still has that stigma with it. People that live in The City are very proud of The City and think that they come to the museum until you ask them when was the last time they've been and it's been over five years, and then you've got your regulars.</p>

Time (Time)	Comments about time (the lack thereof, the use of, etc)	Curator 1: It's usually only unsuccessful when the time pressures are so tight that there's never enough time and energy to find a creative solution and we get back to it, time crunch you just have to do something. That's where the conflict usually comes from.
Visitor Services (VS)	References to the visitor services staff and department	N/A
Volunteers and Docents (V&D)	References to volunteers and docents and their role in the system	N/A
Youth (Yout)	Mention of youth in the community	Allison: More work that the board thinks is important with middle and high schoolers and also early career professionals as an audience. They have a mandate where we develop a three year plan and we can support that

Appendix H: Drawings from Change Lab 1

