

Edmonds Historical Museum: The Art Revamp Project

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Framing

The museum is implementing a renovation plan, and one of the larger goals is to change the entire Lower floor display as it has remained unchanged since the 1990s, resulting in less public interest and visitation. This thesis focuses on adding interpretation, and designing a rotating art exhibition as part of the lower floor display, transforming dated displays into educational and recreational exhibits that attract visitors.

Purpose & Impact

This thesis aims to increase traffic and relevance to the community, and build connections with community members by highlighting local artists, organizations, and home crafters. Interpretation was severely lacking previously, which is also an issue in both display and the in-house jail cell that this thesis wishes to address.

Process

This project is divided into three parts: jail cell panels, curate and install new art display, and evaluation. Jail panels was the first part as it could help estimate the amount of time to spend on panels for the next part. Research for the new exhibit began in January, followed by curating and networking with local artists and historians. During the process, we also created a quilting interactive to improve visitors participation. After installation in late March, an evaluation was conducted across two months to collect visitors feedback, which the result is shared with the museum for future reference.

Deliverables

Most of the jail cell remains unchanged, as we hope to keep its integrity and furniture as closely assembling the original arrangement as possible; however all panels on the outside are rewritten, and 19th century primary sources are added on the wall to construct a more comprehensive 1900s narrative for visitors. The first exhibit rotation theme is fiber art. With locality and inclusion in mind, we created a carefully curated quilt display, and arranged a talk with a local artist on opening day. On the side of the display is a photo wall comprised of historical photos that reflects Edmonds' art development.

Reflection & Next Steps

Total of 30 responses were received. As the evaluation suggested, visitors find the new display informing, and it triggered their interest in learning more about Edmonds' art scene.

Visitors found it pleasing to see different materials and colors in the objects highlighted. Many of them pointed out the lack of lighting in the lower floor, a structural improvement the museum should consider in their next exhibit. Overall, visitors found the new exhibit enjoyable, and they would love to see historical art or art of different genres in the next rotation.

Important References

Wilkes, B. *In Days Gone By*, My Edmonds News.
<https://myedmondsnews.com/category/columns/in-days-gone-by/>

Seattle Art Museum., Heard Museum., Royal British Columbia Museum., & Brotherton, B. (2008). *S'abadeb = The gifts: Pacific Coast Salish art and artists*. Seattle Art Museum in association with University of Washington Press.
<http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0820/2008024421.html>