Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at the Mesa Arts Center, One East Main Street, third floor, south Studios conference room, on September 25, 2014.

Members Present:		**Members Absent:**	**Staff Present:**	
Nancy Aposhian	Dr. Robbi D. Venditti	Steve McCance	Rob Schultz	Tom Wilson
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.	Karina Wilhelm	Robert Valverde	Sunnee O'Rork	Jean Kaminski
David Dean	Margaret Wilson	Merlin Ellis		
Melissa Sue Johnson	Alyssa Yingling			

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, asked if there were any additions/corrections to the minutes from July 24. There being none, David Dean made a motion to approve the minutes as written, and Margaret (Peggy) Wilson seconded. The Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of July 24 and they will be posted on the city's website.

Public Comments: Catherine Ellis, a non-resident of Mesa, is a history writer and has written articles for the Journal of Arizona History (she also serves on their Board), as well as writing for Acadia Publications. She is working on a project right now that is not a history or Arcadia book, but involves pioneer women in the state of Arizona. She has been working with repositories that have pictures of Apache, Navaho, and other native women in Arizona counties. There are some photos that she would like to have from Mesa that reside in the Arizona Museum of Natural History's library. The website had posted library hours, but when she went to the Museum, she was unable to find someone to assist her. She was asked to call back, but received no response. She feels the following needs to be addressed: make sure the website is accurate in stating library hours, and if an appointment is necessary, it should be stated, and consider what will be done with the photos that in her perception are off-limits and have been for several years. She feels there should be a way for the public to access these photos and acquire a digital copy or a printed copy when requested and would like to see these issues addressed.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, chair, asked Ms. Ellis to send her contact information to Jean Kaminski so that she and staff can look into this issue and follow up with her as soon as possible.

Staff Reports

i.d.e.a. Museum – Sunnee O'Rork

- Sunnee O'Rork distributed passes to the Museum to those present.
- The Museum continues to see success of the re-brand and re-imagined Museum.
- "Bon voyage: Art Goes on Vacation," which recently ended, had a total attendance of 28,186 exceeding the target goal of 22,775; also exceeding revenue goal of $66,611 and receiving $75,080.
- Museum staffs and Mesa Arts Center (MAC) staff attended the Arizona Innovation Summit and Sci-Tec Festival Kick-off event and conference at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts – thank you to MAC for funding so staff could attend.
- The Museum was represented at Pointe Tapatio Cliff's "Staycation;" Adelante Healthcare Back to School Bash event in Mesa; ASU Internship Fair in Tempe; and participated in the Mesa Arts Center's annual Educator Preview event.
- "Jeepers Creepers: Bugs in Art" opens on Thursday, October 2, with a VIP reception from 5 – 7 p.m. Board members are invited to attend. This exhibition was presented at the Museum nine years ago, but is being presented in a different stance concentrating more on science than the one from the past. Staff met with Melody Basham, M.Phil, and Ed.D., who is a Learning/Outreach Specialist and in charge of the Franz Insect Lab and Project Director at the Insectarium at ASU, and she has been a tremendous support in assisting with the exhibition. Staff received a tour of her new facility in Tempe.
- The Museum conducted a tour for the new Dean of ASU Herberger, Steven Tepper, and to the Lincoln Center Group with Patrick Walsh of Mesa Public Schools. A special thank you to Cindy Ornstein for bringing these guests to Mesa.
- Museum staff has participated in Active Shooter Training with Commander Dave Hagar of the Mesa Police Department, Emergency Preparedness Training, and Lost Child Protocols with Dave Matta and Terri Rettig from Mesa Arts Center. These trainings are necessary due to the increase in attendance being 38 – 40% over last year. As part of the training, it was found that front-line staff needs to be increased and staff is recalibrating everything to make sure the Museum is safe and secure for their patrons.
- Staff has cleaned up the shop courtyard area at the Museum, moving surplus items to the East Mesa Surplus Center.
- Kailey Pedersen was interviewed for the vacant Galley Educator position.

- Tarjani Patel accepted the position of Museum Accounting Specialist and will start on October 6. She was selected from a pool of 147 applicants. A special thank you to Teri Siggins and Beth Bartholow for keeping the Museum afloat financially during the recruitment process.
- Interviewed the top two candidates for Office Assistant I from a pool of over 300 candidates; Desiree Adair accepted the position.
- The Museum exhibition design team met with Sandy Stechnij from partner Mesa Recycles to assist with the recent updating of the Recyclery activity within the HUB gallery. A team from ASU is also doing some mapping of the galleries to assist in making revision decisions; one finding was that the face frames were popular, so the Museum will double the size of that activity.
- Ms. O'Rork distributed an article on the Museum that appeared in the *Hand to Hand Journal,* an Association of Children's Museum's periodical, titled "Metomorphosis: A Musuem Re-Imagined." See Exhibit A.

Karin Wilhelm noted that the Museum is part of the Pogo Pass – a one year pass that gives a specific number of admissions into specific organizations that are participating (for example two visits to The Phoenix Zoo, one visit to Sun Splash, two Diamond Back games, two visits to the i.d.e.a. Museum, etc.). Ms. O'Rork replied that the Museum is trying it on a trial basis at this time. The advantage is it brings people into the Museum, but the Museum is not sure they can afford to continue on a long-term basis. Ms. Wilhelm said she does use the Pogo Pass and posted information about it on Face Book. She said a friend picked up on it and decided to visit the i.d.e.a. Museum, and as a result, became a member at the Museum – her family loved it.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The Museum basement flooded out during the heavy rain a few weeks ago. Six employees, including the part-time staff that assists in the library, who have offices in the basement had to be moved out and find another space to be for the time being. Walls need to be torn down and "de-molded," computers and phones need to be moved, etc. Facilities Maintenance is estimating this will take two to three weeks to restore, and are looking for a solution to the stairwell filling with water when there is a heavy rainfall. There has been considerable disruption throughout the Museum. This is one of the main reasons why Ms. Ellis was not able to find someone to assist her when she came to the Museum and why she didn't get a return phone call right away.
- A new exhibition, "Cultures of the Ancient Americas" opens Friday, September 26. Tom Wilson invited the Board members to the opening from 6 – 8:00 p.m. The exhibition contains materials of the southwest from Mesoamerica, Central America, and the Andes region that have come into the Museum over the past three/four years. Images from the exhibition are posted on the Museum's website. Visitors will be able to scan the titles of the pieces on their cell phones and receive more detailed information on each piece – this is something new to the Museum. To add architectural signature to the regions, Museum staff built a west Mexican shaft and a Peruvian wall to add architectural signatures to each of the regions. The Museum expects that their website will catapult this exhibition into the first line of Museums who have this type of materials on-line.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, chair, asked how the new animated dinosaur's project was coming along. Mr. Wilson said that they have not been ordered just yet as the first priority was to get the new exhibition up and open, take care of flooding issues, and relocate staff. Staff was told it would take approximately 45 days of production to create the dinosaurs and this is now the next priority. The dinosaurs will be geographically appropriate and indigenous to our region.

Karina Wilhelm noted that the Museum is participating in the Smithsonian Museum Day on Saturday, September 27. She was wondering if the Museum expected a large number of people. Mr. Wilson said yes, it is one of the Museum biggest days of the year.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz

- Mesa Arts Center's (MAC) eighth annual Day of the Dead (Dia de Los Muertos) festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26. The festival is co-presented along with the Consul General of Mexico in Phoenix Office with the altar contest and a breakfast with the Consul General and Mayor Giles that will kick-off the festival. Approximately 15,000 are expected. Mesa Arts Center was named the best Day of the Dead festival in the Valley by *New Times* last year and is the second largest festival of the year at MAC.
- Latino Town Hall will be at Mesa Arts Center on Saturday, October 25, during the Day of the Dead festival, bringing in approximately 300 – 400 Latino leaders in the community – this is the first time the Town Hall will be at MAC.
- MAC was recently notified that the Black Board Members Project is awarding MAC the diversity 2014 award based on our efforts to diversify the Mesa Arts Center Foundation Board and the programs and activities presented throughout the year at MAC. The presentation will take place on October 28 at Pointe Tapito Cliffs.

- Mesa Encore Theatre, one of MAC's Founding Resident Companies, was recognized on Monday, September 22, at the City Council meeting for their 75 years in the community; the state's longest running community theater program in the Valley.
- Rob Schultz distributed a flyer (see Exhibit B) with information on the "Artspace Mesa Lofts" project listing the meeting of the Zoning Application Overview and Comments Meeting, Community Meeting & Comments, and the Planning & Zoning Board Hearing date. Peggy Wilson asked if people were allowed to attend the Planning & Zoning Hearing. Mr. Schultz replied that if the Board were interested in being there to show support that would be fine. Mr. Schultz added that the project is still in process and the final presentation will go before Council, when ready, for approval.

David Dean asked if any talking points regarding the Artspace Mesa Lofts project were available for the Board when speaking to the public. Mr. Schultz said that he would check with NEDCO, our city partner on the project, to see if that has been addressed and will provide talking points to Board members; however, he added that there has been no opposition to the project to date and neighbors in the site area have been notified of the project and the community meetings.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti asked about the annual 10 x 10 event. Mr. Schultz said yes, it was coming up on October 10. Every year Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum does a fundraising event asking artists to create artworks in a 10 inch x 10 inch format. The artwork is put up for sale for $100 on October 10 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Director's Report – Rob Schultz reporting for Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein fell and broke her knee several weeks ago. Rob Schultz, reporting in her absence, distributed a blog that Ms. Ornstein wrote giving an update on 21st Century Café Society Project – see below

September Blog from 21st Century Café Society, Mesa, AZ – Submitted by Cindy Ornstein

Updates

Since our last blog we've finalized and begun work with the designer for the 21st Century Café Society Shade Sculpture, and are so pleased to share that we are working with the internationally-acclaimed artist, designer and engineer, Cecil Balmond. Cecil's amazing conceptual design for our shade sculpture, called The Cloud, will create an iconic entry point to the north end of Mesa Arts Center and visitors arriving on Light Rail, and will create a welcoming and exciting environment for community gathering. Cecil and his colleague, architect Ryan Szanyi, visited Mesa and met with community members this week, and had a chance to see our campus highly activated during our Season Kickoff Festival, *Ten-in-One: A Cirque-ish Event.*

We have also moved forward with beginning from scratch with concept development for the major work of interactive art that will be featured at 21st Century Café Society. We have enlisted the astounding creativity and sensibility to community needs and wishes of Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat of *Daily Tous Les Jours* from Montreal, to work with our community in developing an idea and implementation plan for the artwork. Today they complete a four-day visit to our community, where they have led community workshops, and immersed themselves in our environments and social and cultural experiences. We're so happy they also got to share in the enormous vitality and success of our Season Kickoff event, which was enjoyed by about 8,000 visitors in just four hours! These experiences and conversations will get their wheels turning about experiences that will respond to our very special place and people. * see the end of blog

This coming Friday, we begin the first in a pilot 10-week series of Friday night free music events called FreeFall Fridays on the Alliance Pavilion Stage. Each evening will feature the terrific band *Ear Candy,* featuring Vaughn "SWIF" Willis, a soul/R&B/pop/funk band that will perform two sets each Friday night, 6-8pm and 9=11pm, in configurations from quartet to septet (with backup vocalists "The Sweet Things"). The evenings will sometimes feature art activities as well, and the bar and concession stand just inside the theater lobby will remain open for the events. A perfect social gathering opportunity for Friday nights after work!

Challenges

The biggest challenge is the perennial one—so much going on that our heads are spinning! With ArtPlace Project Coordinator Angela Pinholster leaving to prepare for next year's opening of a (very exciting) arts integrated charter school, and her successor Julie Rada getting a prestigious fellowship that takes her away to another state for two years, we are seeking a new coordinator and keeping everyone on our core team and among our partners extremely busy with all our activity. We wish Angela and Julie the best success in their endeavors, and thank them for their contributions to this project! We gladly take on the challenges—even the onerous task we will soon begin of fundraising about $1.5 million for

the shade sculpture and plaza renovation—because we believe strongly that we are doing the right things for our community and our downtown.

Recent Wins

We received nice coverage of the announcement of Cecil Balmond as the designer of our shade sculpture. This was followed up by good attendance at our public meetings with both Cecil and Ryan, and Mouna and Melissa this past week. The 8,000 people in attendance at last Friday's festival is a testament to the engagement our community has at MAC, as are the record early season sales for our presenting series, the record number of members (approaching 1,000) and the third year of funding from the NEA for our Jazz from A to Z Program. We also were one of only three organizations in Arizona to get the highest level of General Operating Support available from the Arizona Commission on the Arts! We are proud and pleased about this, and about our extraordinary new programs this year, including a Spoken World Series emceed and guest curated by spoken word artist and creative genius Marc Bamuthi Joseph and a Classical Music Inside Out Series guest curated by cellist Zuill Bailey. We are also proud of the work of several of our key partners—Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) is continuing their Arts Entrepreneurship Training Program for local artists AND hosting five community art and placemaking projects in downtown Mesa, and Downtown Mesa Association will officially launch, this coming Friday (alongside our FreeFall Fridays), a new Flash Park Friday event, every third Friday in downtown, featuring temporary mini parklets incorporating art and art-making.

Insight

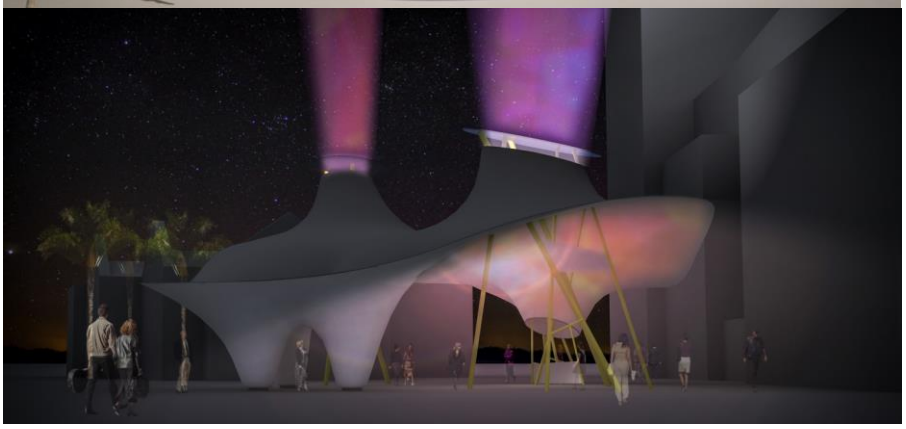
If you stick with it, truly invite the community into the process, and stay true to your values and vision, the important work of community building through the arts will grow and keep growing!

Three photos attached:

1. "The Cloud," Cecil Balmond's conceptual design for a Shade Sculpture for the 21st Century Café Society at Mesa Arts Center.

2. A group of community members meets with Mouna Andraos and Melissa Mongiat of *Daily Tous Les Jours* to explore their ideas, feelings and desired experiences for a new interactive work of art for the 21st Century Café Society, which DTLJ will develop with the community.

3. Crowds enjoy a tiny tightrope walker at MAC's circus-themed Season Kickoff Event: *Ten-in-One: A Cirque-ish Event.*



- Daily Tous les Jours compiled information while here on the active component of the project and will return with ideas from what they learned from the community.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Peggy Wilson shared that she went to see Southwest Shakespeare's "Equivocation." She loved the set they created and enjoyed the performance; signed up for a portrait class at Mesa Arts Center; and went to see the exhibitions in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum.

Nancy Aposhian reported that her family came for the Season Kick-off event and they loved it; enjoyed the circus theme.

David Dean said that he attended the Dream Theater show in April – fun and loud!

Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, stated that she tried to attend the workshop with Cecil Balmond, but arrived just as it was ending; she visited The Store instead and accomplished some holiday shopping.

Melissa Sue Johnson reported that she attended Mesa Arts Center's Educator Preview Night and had a great time; dragged her 18 year old son to the Season Kick-off event and he wound up really enjoying the event; attended the workshop with Daily Tous la Jours, and she really enjoyed the interaction; and plans to attend the opening at the i.d.e.a. Museum next week for the new exhibition "Jeepers Creepers: Bugs in Art."

Karina Wilhelm said that she attended the "Ten in One – A Cirque-ish Event" season opener with her children and all had an amazing time. Rob Schultz reported that approximately 8,000 people attended and loved the event. Ms. Wilhelm said she also saw the previous exhibition in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, "Boundless," and it was great. She has made reservations for the Smithsonian Museum Day at Arizona Museum of Natural History.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr. reported that he visited three museums in New Mexico: Seaton Museum; Nuclear Museum in Los Alamos; and the Philmont Museum in Cimarron.

The next scheduled meeting date is November 20, 2014, at the Arizona Museum of Natural History, beginning at 4 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ornstein

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department

Metamorphosis: A Museum Re-Imagined

Sunnee O'Rork, i.d.e.a. Museum

What's in a Name?

In 1978 the Children's Fine Art Center opened in Mesa, Arizona. In 1981 it was renamed the Museum for Youth; in 1985 it became the Arizona Museum for Youth (AMY).

In 2004, the museum added its first permanent exhibit, *Artville,* which occupied about a third of the museum. Popular with kids ages zero to four, *Artville* expanded the museum's target age range, but confused parents seeking creative experiences for all of their children—older siblings now weren't sure the museum was for them anymore.

A few years later the Mesa Southwest Museum, located a block away, became the Arizona Museum of Natural History. Now AMY visitors asked, "Where are the dinosaurs?" thinking all museums for kids had dinosaurs and further stumbling over the two unrelated museums' similar names: Arizona Museum for Youth and Arizona Museum of Natural History. Finally, in 2008 the Children's Museum of Phoenix (CMoP) opened, which further diluted AMY's identity with the public. The child of a museum member, who was also a CMoP member, would ask, "Are we going to the art museum or the play museum today, Mommy?"

In addition to its now blurry name, the museum was facing significant challenges in a community filled with changing demographics and competing cultural institutions. All of these factors led to a single conclusion: the museum had an image and branding problem, which in turn impacted its future sustainability.

Creative Approaches/Financial Challenges

Although AMY's "hands-on, minds-on" learning opportunities were extremely popular with families and schools, the museum struggled to maintain a positive bottom line.

In 1987, the museum board, known as the Arizona Museum for Youth Friends, entered into a successful partnership with the City of Mesa: museum operations were funded 100 percent by the city, while the Friends supported special projects like *ArtVille.* In July 2006, however, due to city budget constraints, the museum lost 50 percent of its annual support. Every year since then, the Friends have replaced anywhere from 35 to 100 percent of those lost city funds. By 2014 city leaders restored about 35 percent of the lost funding and partnered with the museum for what became known as the Image for the Future project.

Image for the Future was charged with re-branding the museum for greater sustainability and community impact, resulting in increased membership, visitors, donors, and an enhanced reputation. This three-phased project was designed to create a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy to update the museum's name, graphic appearance and messages to reflect the changes that had gone on inside the museum.

Assembling the Team

In 2011 a museum founder, John Whiteman, and executive director Sunnee O'Rork met with Judy Mohraz and Carol Kratz of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust to discuss support for the project. Phase one would involve hiring James Chung of Reach Advisors to analyze the museum's audience before developing a strategy for future growth. (See Reach sidebar.) Phase two would utilize Creative Engine, a rebranding firm led by John Willie that had successfully branded the Arizona SciTech Fest and several other Valley organizations. Phase three, led by AMY's marketing director Latonya Jordan-Smith and Steve Carr of KurCarr Group would develop a marketing, communications and social media plan. The Trust enthusiastically signed on to support the development of a comprehensive marketing and communications strategy.

Phase I: Profile of the "Before" Museum

Although staff regularly conduct focus groups and surveys, the Reach survey was different because it focused on identifying opportunities for strategic competitive advantages over other organizations that serve families with leisure time offerings. Phase one survey participants included visitors from the Mesa Arts Center, the Arizona Museum of Natural History, the Mesa Parks & Recreation Department, the Desert Botanical Garden, and the Children's Museum of Phoenix. While it was not surprising to learn that people were confused by the AMY name and were uncertain about what they might experience during a visit, there were positive discoveries as well. From observations staff believed that adults enjoyed the museum as much as children, but learning that 78 percent of adults actively participated in all museum activities with their children was knowledge to build on. The survey's stated top reason why people visit was to see the changing exhibitions; *ArtVille* was a strong second. Chung and Willie led facilitated conversations with staff, board, key donors, and city leaders that confirmed goals, and using survey results, shaped a strategic plan. All ideas were valued; nothing was sacred. Staff and board members alike loved the ongoing dialogue as they created the "new baby" and tested out ideas with members/visitors.

Phase II: New Name, New Look

Based on survey results, Creative En-

gine's John Willie conducted internal stakeholder interviews and developed a creative brief about AMY's core assets and future goals. To address the issue of the under-performing name, he narrowed a long-held list of fifty potential museum names down to five: 1) The Creative Experience Museum, 2) Creative Freedom Museum, 3) Imagination Museum, 4) the Creativity Museum, and 5) the i.d.e.a. Museum, which were then tested with stakeholders and audience ambassadors, a sounding board group.

The name i.d.e.a. Museum was chosen because it stood for imagination, design, experience, and art, representing the thirty-five-year museum legacy while signifying growth in newly identified areas of science and technology. Staff leadership created a mission-based rubric: to inspire children of all ages to experience their world differently through art, creativity, and imagination. For the first time—and essential to reinvention conversations—the museum had a lens through which to view exhibit and programmatic decisions. The rubric includes educational research and learning theory as well guidelines for developing interactives. For example, technology is selected for either its learning value or how it can support social interaction between family members.

The Power of Branding

Although most staff knew branding was more than a logo, they were less clear about what a brand promise was. The museum's director of marketing, Latonya Jordan-Smith, knew the importance of making a deeper emotional connection with our core audience, but John Willie informed everyone that a logo identity can help an organization achieve separation from the competition and gain "share of mind." Providing added value to marketing communications and advertising images, a logo identity is the graphic statement of a brand that is memorable and provides meaning.

According to Jay Walker-Smith, president of the Chicago marketing firm Yankelovich, the average person, exposed to about 500 ads a day in the 1970s, is now exposed to between 360-5,000 ads/day. Consumers' ability to even remember advertising twenty-four hours later is at its lowest level in the history of the advertising business. New media with its potential to deliver even more saturation and clutter only worsens marketing resistance. Clearly, creating a brand that would stand out from the rest and be memorable was vital.

Willie developed a second creative brief based on the rubric and posted it on CrowdSpring.com, a design development website. With a $1,600 prize for the winning design, over 500 designs from 394 designers around the globe were submitted during a four-week period. Twenty-five designs were selected and then narrowed down to four finalists which were presented to all stakeholders for a vote. Beyond merely yes or no, stakeholders were asked what the design meant to them, did they have an emotional reaction to it, and after viewing it, what did they expect to experience when visiting the museum? The winning logo design was created and further refined by Paul Barugh of Educated Design UK. A brand standards guide, detailing how the trademarked brand identity would be used, included a new tag line, "For your child and the child within you," and spelled out the brand promise: "i.d.e.a. Museum is an exciting, hands-on, welcoming place to create, learn, and dream; a place to pretend, wonder, explore, imagine the future; a place to rekindle memories and make new ones. A place to engage children of all ages."

Phase III: Taking It to the Streets

Jordan-Smith worked with Steve Carr to develop a marketing, communications, and digital media plan. Traditional (TV/radio/print) and earned (PR/free) media, marketing materials, partnerships, news collaborations, and pop-up museums for the new brand were designed and developed. Constant Contact, dual websites (old and new websites ran simultaneously during the transition), Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Vine, Pinterest, Mommy/Granny bloggers, and eNews media outlet campaigns were part of the expanded digital media plan. Other tools included creating a "brand documentary," a video about who/what they are; a KickStarter campaign for the new HUB Gallery; and talking points for the museum board, staff, volunteers, and City of Mesa leadership. New exterior and interior building signage was created, including street banners and billboards. Targeted direct mail campaigns went to neighbors and residents in strategic areas. The Gallery Shop became the i.d.e.a. Shop, thanks to assistance from the manager of the Desert Botanical Gift Shop. During this time the plan was developed to refresh *ArtVille* and add a *Tot Depot,* as well as securing *Art of the Robot* as a feature exhibit.

ArtZone, a gallery that featured art elements and favorite interactives from past

GOING DEEPER

Susie Wilkening, Reach Advisors

In initial conversations with Sunnee, it became clear that AMY needed more than a name reboot, but a whole new strategy.

In addition to rising competition for the leisure time of families, there was a bigger issue: the number of children in Maricopa County, which includes Mesa, was in decline. There was a significant drop in the number of White children that was not offset by an increase in the number of Hispanic children. (The drop in the number of White children is a national trend; unless your community is experiencing massive growth, this demographic change is likely facing you as well.) Like the vast majority of museums across the country, AMY was serving a predominantly White family audience. To compete in a shrinking market, AMY needed not only a new image and message but a new museum that excelled at providing creative, engaging, and truly meaningful experiences for a broader range of children and adults.

It was crucial to understand not only what today's local parents and their children sought for their leisure time pursuits, but the underlying drivers that motivated them, at a level far beyond what they could easily articulate. To suss these out, we fielded waves of research including an online survey of regional cultural consumers and intense qualitative work.

We dug deep. We asked research participants to delve into memories of their own most meaningful childhood art experiences, so we could understand what "stuck" with them, had a long-term impact, and what that impact was—while also locating emotional touchpoints. We also asked them to reflect on the value of both creativity and innovation and how they tried to instill both in the children in their lives. Ultimately, we uncovered deep-seated feelings about their personal identities as creative individuals, which further revealed complex feelings about how family connections are cultivated through the passing down of a creative culture from generation to generation. We used these findings to help AMY determine and realize a new strategy to go from being a "good" children's museum to a fantastic one.

This new strategy was built on the premise that the most memorable and meaningful museum experiences result from viewing original objects and artworks that serve as launchpads for substantive hands-on experiences. This combination builds upon the best of what museums do: create one-of-a-kind learning experiences that are engaging and fun, serve a variety of interests and preferences, reinforce creative identity, and promote multi-generational connections.

From the actual experience to the new name and identity, this work has created a new museum that is having much greater impact in Mesa. And isn't that what we all strive for?

exhibits, was transformed into the HUB, a semipermanent new i.d.e.a. brand gallery that demonstrates the rubric and how it delivers the brand promise. Steve Tornallyay director of creative growth strategies at Gyroscope, Inc., helped the museum's eight-person, in-house design team, led by Curator Jeffory Morris and Curator of Education Dena Milliron, think through what they did and didn't want in the gallery. New tools such as Smartsheet project management software and Mural.ly, an online whiteboard "designed to visually organize ideas and collaborate in a playful way" helped them develop eleven different mini-exhibits for the HUB. A members' workshop assisted the team by drawing doodles on big HUB Gallery letters, stringing 150 strings of beads for the ceiling design, creating glass and bottle chandeliers, and designing eyeglasses as examples of what could be created by visitors. In the process, families shared insights and stories about their love of the museum. An eleven-year-old boy talked about visiting the museum since he was one, growing up in *ArtVille,* and sharing his love of art.

After months of work and planning—and one month's closure—the transformed i.d.e.a. Museum opened on February 7, 2014 with a weekend-long series of festivities and rave reviews!

Looking Back

A museum director can be impatient; sometimes the project took longer than expected, but overall, the process went very well and was worth the wait. However, there were several key factors that led to its success that can be shared.

Young visitors to the i.d.e.a. Museum are encouraged to contribute to a creative environment in which everyone's ideas and artistic expressions are valued.

- Ongoing research provided a rock solid foundation on which to make decisions. Continuous surveying and test marketing during and after the branding process was a must: live data helped avoid mistakes and wrong turns.
- Smart graphic/branding design displayed movement and shape, and revealed effective details about the true nature and content of the museum.
- Brand collateral—everything that represents the brand, not just brochures, website, etc. but all of it, including shop merchandise—must effectively communicate brand promise and be relevant, functional, and efficient.

As a result of this project, the i.d.e.a. Museum has experienced a 45 percent increase in attendance, a 31 percent increase in memberships, and a 100 percent increase in paying customers. In addition, it has gained new and renewed donors and increased support from the City of Mesa. Reach Advisors conducted a post-opening survey that revealed the following statistics compared to survey results pre-brand change:

- 22 percent of respondents more likely to participate with their children;
- 37 percent more likely to say the museum was a good value (our fees are unchanged);
- 51 percent more likely to say the museum brings the community together; twice as likely to say they visit multiple times in a month.

While the research data is great, it doesn't tell the whole story. The i.d.e.a. Museum has a renewed relevance in the community, a secured/expanded support network to deliver greater impact, and is serving a broader audience more meaningfully. The City of Mesa has four innovation areas and the i.d.e.a Museum is one of them. Former Mayor Scott Smith stated that he wanted Mesa to be a "city of ideas." The i.d.e.a. Museum is becoming a hub for that, which helps the city to accomplish its goals for the citizens of today and tomorrow.

Sunnee O'Rork is the executive director of the i.d.e.a. Museum.

hand to hand

This article first appeared in *Hand to Hand* (Spring 2014, Volume 28, Number 1), a quarterly publication of the Association of Children's Museums. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

To learn how to obtain the full publication, visit **www.ChildrensMuseums.org.**

Exhibit B

artspace mesa

Project Update

September 2014

Join us in October! Learn more and be heard!

Artspace, City of Mesa Arts & Culture Department, and NEDCO would like to invite you to a series of public meetings to learn about and discuss **Artspace Mesa Lofts**. We are still in the early development stage and we value your input.

The **Artspace Mesa Lofts** project includes the new construction of clustered live/work housing and community facilities on 1.7 acres of real property located in downtown Mesa near 2nd Avenue and Hibbert Road at 155 South Hibbert. Artspace estimates constructing 61,000 square feet of live/work housing and more than 1,200 square feet of community space in three or more three-story buildings. A mix of 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom homes will provide approximately 48-52 units for artists and their families.

Zoning Application Overview

Mesa Contemporary Arts
Dobson Lecture Hall
1 E Main Street, Mesa, AZ
Wednesday, October 1
6:00pm

Meeting Description: To develop the right project, we are rezoning the property from T4N to T4NF, to allow us to have the possibility of small non-residential uses. Join us for an overview and the opportunity to make comments on the rezoning efforts.

Artspace Public Meeting & Comments

Mesa Contemporary Arts
Dobson Lecture Hall
1 E Main Street, Mesa, AZ
Tuesday, October 14
6:00pm

Meeting Description: Join Artspace as we give an overview of **Artspace Mesa Lofts**, take a first look at unit layouts and sizes, the overall project and give your input and opinions! Meet our architects and hear more about this exciting project!

Planning & Zoning Board Hearing

City Council Chambers
(upper level)
57 E 1st Street, Mesa, AZ
Wednesday, October 15
4:00pm

Meeting Description: Join us in support of the rezoning effort to help make Artspace Mesa Lofts a reality!

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