Bringing Objects and Artifacts to Life

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 2:00 p.m. CT
TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES
The Museum Services Program provides support, resources, and training to museums in Texas.

- Consultations
- Webinars and workshops
- Resources
www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services

• On our webpage:
  • Webinars
  • Workshops
  • Grants and Fundraising
  • Helpful Resources
  • Connect and Learn
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Upcoming Free Webinars

- Appraising and Insuring Historical Treasures
  - *Tuesday, March 3, 2:00 p.m. CT*

- Social Media and Your Cultural Organization: Where to Start
  - *Tuesday, March 24, 10:00 a.m. CT*

- Organizational Practices: A Digital Repository's Perspective
  - *Wednesday, April 22, 10:00 a.m. CT*
Hannah Kellogg and Jodi Larson
Hannah Kellogg & Jodi Larson

www.museumsunbound.com
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Changing the way we change the world!

Bringing Objects & Artifacts to Life
TEN of our favorite tools for bringing objects and artifacts (and historic rooms, and scenic vistas, pieces of art, photographs, etc) alive:

In 3 sections!
“Get Cozy”
“On the Move”
“Different Every Time”
“Get Cozy”
Tool #1
Close Reading
What does the object look like?
What is the shape of the object?
What is the size of the object?
What colors are visible?
Does it have a visible texture (shiny? rough? etc)
Do you know what the object is made of?
Is there more than one material used?
Describe the form of the materials (thickness, structure, etc)
Does this object have a smell?
Does this object have a sound?
Does this object have a taste?
What is the texture of the object?
What is its weight?
Does it have moving parts?
Is this object created by natural process or human process or both?
What observable evidence is there of its creation?
Are there marks, tags, or signatures that identify a maker?
Is an individual or company responsible for making this object?
Are there marks, motions, or other evidence of use or wear?
Is there evidence of breakage or repair?
Does the breakage, repair, or wear reveal anything about the object?
Do you know if this is a unique item?
Was this item mass-produced or do similar versions exist?
Are there any symbols or writing on this object?
Does the object have a cultural, historical, or personal significance?
Tool #2
Ask The Object/
Ask Each Other
(the collaborative close reading)
Tool #3
Get Downright Nosy
(getting creative and even somewhat silly with your close reading)
What is this object afraid of?

If this object had sound effects, what would it sound like?

What verbs would you use to describe this object?

If this object could dance, what song would it choose?

What is this object’s favorite color?
Tool #4
Visual Thinking Strategies (for Objects!)
Visual Thinking Strategies
How-To "Read" an Image

1. What is going on in this picture?

2. What do you see that makes you say that?

3. What more can we find?

Facilitator Tips
- Paraphrase neutrally
- Point at area being discussed
- Link & frame student comments

More About VTS
- Students discuss observations
- Students back up ideas with evidence
- Students discuss multiple interpretations
- www.vtsonline.org

VTS strategies: www.vtsonline.org

closest: http://pragdf1rml7h8
What's Going On In This Picture?
Feb 26, 2020

Look for the most interesting details in the picture and take notes on what you see and what you notice.

In THE COMING STORM
“Get cozy” with your object by:

Really looking at it with a close reading

Collaborating with others to get a better understanding of the object and adding a bit of creative problem solving to the activity

Getting creative and making connections by asking the object how it would respond

Ask the three VTS questions so everyone can use observation and critical thinking to understand artifacts, objects, and sites
“On the Move”
Tool #5
The Friendly Alien
Observation Piece. 2018

First, grab some people. Everyone take 10 minutes to wander alone, without talking, around a small, pre-defined area. Observe and notice your surroundings: surfaces, negative and positive spaces, patterns, detritus. Follow your curiosity. Search for everyday beauty and the overlooked, go forth with a sense of affection for the place.

Second, regroup and tour the same area for 15 minutes, sharing things that you noticed during your observation and why they stood out to you. Beware the urge to be critical and prescribe fixes. Stay in the present and focus on the everyday beauty you observed.
Tool #6
Explore Like a Child
Tool #7
Fresh Eyes
Tool #8
Accessibility Check
CAN'T BRING AN OBJECT OR ARTIFACT TO LIFE

IF YOUR VISITORS CAN'T GET TO IT OR ACCESS IT
How being “on the move” helps bring objects to life:

Looking through someone else’s eyes (an alien’s, a child’s, a person with different needs) can make for new discoveries for yourself (and new discoveries about other people!)

A new lens will always reveal a new layer of understanding, or help form new questions, or lead someone in a new direction.

Making sure your objects can be seen and experienced by all visitors will increase their availability and make visitor engagement much more likely.
“Different Every Time”
Tool #9
Tag!
A Zen-like one player tagging activity — be as specific and accurate as you can to earn high scores. Oh! in the “next evolution” of Zen Tag, you can tag audio and video clips, too. Plug in your headphones and get ready!

Work together with a stranger to identify images in this fast-paced guessing game. Give great hints and you’ll both score big!

One Up
Challenge a friend and see if you’re smarter than they are! The best descriptions win, but be careful not to be One Upped in this competitive game for Apple and Android devices.

Pyramid Tag
A competitive one player game — we asked random people to describe the image you are about to see in a single word each. How many of these words can you match in 2 minutes?

Stupid Robot
Stupid Robot looks at everything but understands nothing. Can you help? Teach it as much as you can about the image. As it learns, it’ll want to know longer and longer words!

British Library Collaboration

Ships Tag

Book Tag

Portrait Tag
Tool #10
Motel of the Mysteries
MOTEL OF THE MYSTERIES

DAVID MACAULAY
FIGURE 2  Detailed drawing of the fabulous discovery made in the inner burial chamber.  
(David Macaulay)
The Sacred Pendant

This exquisite piece of jewelry was found lodged in the silver-rimmed hole in the floor of the sarcophagus, where it had apparently been dropped. The beautiful pendant was carved out of rubber (now petrified) and has been inscribed with the marking 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$. It is connected most delicately by a silver ring to a beautifully formed silver chain. The symbolic derivative of the pendant’s form has yet to be determined.
Interpreting an object is “different every time” because:

Everyone will have a different perspective, a different experience, and a different background and understanding to bring to the process.

You can USE these differences in your interpretation instead of fighting against it. Everyone has something to say and that CAN be a benefit and a challenge!

What we can guess and what we can know about an object may be broad or limited but the journey to those understandings can reveal just as much about ourselves as the object
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