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It's Just Caring: Improving the Museum Experience for Visitors with Autism through Social Narratives

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IT'S JUST CARING: IMPROVING THE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE FOR VISITORS WITH AUTISM THROUGH SOCIAL NARRATIVES

By

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DEDICATION

For my brother Sam.

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ABSTRACT

REAGAN STONE: It's Just Caring: Improving the Museum Experience for Visitors with Autism Through Social Narratives (Under the direction of Kariann Fuqua)

This project explores how museums can improve the visitor experience for visitors with disabilities, more specifically for visitors with autism. In general, museums are environments that have a specific set of rules, guidelines, and built-in social interactions that visitors are expected to understand and follow. These guidelines, as well as the sensory overload that exists within a new environment, can make visiting the museum a stressful, and even negative experience for individuals with autism and their families. A social narrative, a simple written and visual guide that explains characteristics of new environments and various aspects of social situations, is a preparatory resource museum can create and provide that can help visitors with autism more successfully navigate the space. Social narratives require very few resources to create and there are many free materials, including learning modules and examples, available for museum to utilize when creating their own social narrative. Any museum, regardless of size, funding, or staffing, can create this resource. Along with analyzing how social narratives can improve the visitor experience, a survey was conducted to gain insight regarding the museum experience of individuals with autism and family members of individuals with autism and their familiarity with social narratives. The survey found social narratives to be a helpful resource, particularly for families of individuals with autism. This project culminated in the creation of a social narrative for the University of Mississippi Museum (UM Museum). The social narrative features topics specific to the UM Museum such as parking, entering and exiting, and rules associated with the museum's galleries.

PREFACE

As a sister to someone with autism, I have always been interested in accessibility and passionate about supporting and creating spaces that are accepting of and accessible to all people, no matter what needs they may have. Because my brother is non-verbal, I became an advocate at a young age. But I also understood that certain spaces were not for my family. I quickly learned which spaces could be difficult for my brother to navigate and potentially embarrassing for my family to visit. My personal perspective, coupled with my experience working at the University of Mississippi Museum (UM Museum) in multiple capacities, inspired me to investigate how museums can better serve visitors, particularly visitors with autism.

When deciding what to write my thesis about, I knew that I didn't want to just write about a topic; I wanted to create something that could leave a lasting impact. I set out to create something that could be useful for families like my own and that would give back to a place that has given so much to me throughout my college career. Creating a social narrative for the UM Museum was the perfect way to achieve this goal. My hope is that by having this resource available at the UM Museum, the visitor experience will be improved for at least one visitor. Even if only one visitor's experience is improved, I would consider this resource a success. Every person that walks through the UM Museum deserves to have a positive experience, and I hope this social narrative will help visitors, particularly visitors with autism, to enjoy their visit.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAM	American Alliance of Museums
ABA	Architectural Barriers Act
ADA	American with Disabilities Act
ADDM	Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
ICOM	International Council of Museums
MAC	Museum, Arts and Culture Access Consortium
MoMA	Museum of Modern Art
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UM Museum	The University of Mississippi Museum

INTRODUCTION

Museums have been, and continue to be, a cornerstone of society for preservation, culture, art, and education. With the unique ability to provide both entertainment and education to the public, museums serve as hubs of knowledge and wonder for communities worldwide. Every visitor that enters a museum comes with their own background and their own set of needs, from first time visitors with no prior museum experience, to school groups, to visitors who may have visual impairments, a diverse group of people enter the doors of museums. Because the museum is a space with many opportunities for enjoyable experiences for the public, they should also be places without barriers to participation. Museums should be accessible to all members of society, no matter what their needs may be.

Accessibility in museums is a broad topic that has not only evolved over time but varies from one institution to another. While accessibility at all museums in the United States has improved over the past fifty years, there is still work to be done in order to ensure that all people, regardless of their ability, can find enjoyment from their visit. Over the course of the next three chapters, this thesis investigates accessibility in museums and how museums can improve the visitor experience for visitors with disabilities, specifically visitors with autism. Visitors with Autism Spectrum Disorder may find the museum overwhelming and could experience "sensory overload within a new environment." [1] Specific resources like a social narrative, a tool that d

[1] Woodruff, Anthony Wayne. "Finding Museum Visitors with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Will Art Help in the Search?" *Museum and Society* 17, no. 1 (2019): 83–97. https://doi.org/10.29311/mas.v17i1.2586.

escribes social situations, can help visitors with autism to become familiar with the museum prior to their visit, providing the opportunity for a more enjoyable visit.

Chapter one focuses on the role of the museum in society as well as a history of disability as it relates to museums. This chapter provides context about how the museum experience has changed for visitors with disabilities and what can be done to improve the museum experience today. In chapter two, specific strategies to improve the visitor experience are investigated and examples of these strategies are illustrated through work museums across the country are doing to be more accessible, such as unique programming and specialized resources. Chapter two also delves into autism spectrum disorder and the unique characteristics, needs, and desires of museum visitors with autism. This chapter introduces social narratives as a resource that can be used to improve the museum experience for visitors. Chapter three is comprised of information about the UM Museum, findings from a survey conducted in order to gain insight regarding the usefulness of social narratives in museums, and an explanation of the process of creating the social narrative. Finally, this thesis culminates in the creation of a social narrative specifically for the UM Museum.

Social narratives are one way that museums can show visitors with autism that they are considering their experience and care about the enjoyment they find from their visit. In addition, social narratives require minimal resources to create and can be a tool any museum, regardless of size or funding, can employ. Through the creation and implementation of this resource, museums can provide visitors with autism the tools necessary to prepare for their visit, increasing the likelihood that they will have a meaningful and enjoyable museum experience.

MUSEUMS AND VISITORS

For close to fifty years, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) has defined a museum as a "non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development" that "acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purpose of education, study and enjoyment"[2]. While this definition encompasses many aspects of the museum and how it should function, the first, and arguably most important purpose listed, is education. Although museums are meant to be educational institutions in the service of all aspects of society, not all members of society have always felt welcome, particularly people with disabilities.

While this definition has been steadfast, museums have also proven to be malleable; changing the ways in which they educate the public, allowing them to become more active participants in the education process along the way. In Museums and Their Visitors, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, a prolific author and expert in the museum visitor experience, describes this malleability as a "change in function," with museums shifting from being "static storehouses for artifacts into active learning environments for people."[3] With this shift came a greater responsibility to participate in the education of all visitors. Museums are not only public gathering spaces but are also educational spaces with a responsibility to engage and educate all aspects of the public.

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[2] "Museum Definition." International Council of Museums, September 1, 2021. https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/.
[3] Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museums and Their Visitors*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994.

Since their inception, museums have been exclusive spaces. Beginning during the age of Enlightenment, when collections of art were available only to royalty or wealthy families, museums were introduced to the world as private indicators of wealth and status. An invitation into these spaces not only required the right societal status, but also a certain level of education and a "mastery of critical terms and history."[4] Largely considered the first museum "established by a public body for a public body," the Ashmolean Museum, which opened in 1683, marked the first time that the broader public was invited into a museum.[5] Throughout the 18th century, more museums were opened to the public, including the British Museum in 1759 and the Louvre in 1793. By providing free admission to all who wished to enter, the Louvre broke another barrier of accessibility. Although visitors didn't pay an admission fee, the museum, or rather the French government, gained an opportunity to sell their message of French patriotism to all the museum's many visitors.

In America, museums were not established with the support of the government, but rather from the work of early American collectors like Charles Willson Peale. Peale's cabinet of curiosities, officially titled Peale's Museum and Gallery of the Fine Arts, opened to the American public in Philadelphia in 1794, but was short-lived and eventually sold to entertainer P.T. Barnum, blurring the lines between education and entertainment. With the creation of institutions like the Smithsonian and The Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 19th century, the focus of American museums eventually shifted back toward better educating the public. In an

[4] MacClellan, Andrew. *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007.
[5] Stringer, Katie. *Programming for People with Special Needs: A Guide for Museums and Historic Sites*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014.

address delivered in 1887 on the practical value of American museums, the Met's first director General Luigi Palma di Cesnola declared the museum to be an "indispensable" tool for teaching.

> So the Museum, in any of its branches, is a magnificent, an unsurpassed, library and school of object-teaching; making the casual visitor learn something whether he be so inclined or not, giving innumerable hints to the book student and filling countless gaps in his knowledge; a perpetual fountain of riches to the teacher and lecturer, a source of untold improvement to the special student, a mine of gold for the author and the pictorial illustrator, both popular and learned, and last though by no means least, a resource whence artisanship and handicraft of all sorts may better and beautify our dwellings, our ornaments, our garments, our implements of daily life.[6]

General Cesnola was impassioned by the many possible functions of a museum, most notably, a museums' ability to educate a larger public, even if the visitor came into the space with little to no intention of learning anything new. Throughout the 1900s, museums in America expanded upon this mission of education by creating educational programming for school-aged children, hiring museum education professionals, and implementing mission statements with education at the core. In a 1992 report by the American Association of Museums (now known as the American Alliance of Museums) titled *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums,* education is identified as the primary responsibility of museums, stating that the "educational role of museums is at the core of their service to the public."[7]

[6]An address on the practical value of the American Museum: delivered at Round Lake, N.Y., July 12th, 1887/ by Gen. L. P. di Cesnola, Rare Books in The Metropolitan Museum of Art Libraries, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, N.Y. https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16028coll4/id/9122/.
[7] Hirzy, Ellen Cochran. *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*. Washington (D.C.): American Association of Museums, 1994.

Establishing education as the core mission of museums in the United States was key to making museums in the country more broadly accessible. But what kind of publics did the museum have a responsibility to educate? While implementing broad educational initiatives for the public opened the doors of the museum to many, it was obvious that museums weren't truly for everyone. It wasn't until as recently as the 1990s that museums even began the process of making their spaces accessible to visitors with disabilities.

2020 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that there are 61 million adults in the United States living with a disability. This equates to approximately 26% of the American adult population, meaning that one in four people in America has a disability of some kind.[8] The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines an individual with a disability as a person who has "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment" and protects any individual with a disability and anyone that has a relationship with or is associated with, a person with a disability.[9] While people with disabilities make up a sizable percentage of the population, their attendance at museums is disproportional. A survey of Public Participation in the Arts, conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 2012, found that adults with disabilities comprised just under seven percent of all adults attending performing arts events or visiting art museums.[10] As described by Lucy Andrus, "many individuals with special needs do not perceive an art

[8] "Disabilities Impacts All of US - Centers for Disease ..." Centers for Disease Control. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/documents/disabilities_impacts_all_of_us.pdf.
[9] "A Guide to Disability Rights Laws." ADA Beta. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Accessed March 27, 2022. https://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm.
[10] United States. Bureau of the Census, United States. Bureau of Labor Statistics, and National Endowment for the Arts. Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA), 2012 [United States]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2015-10-22. https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR35168.v1.

museum as a place where they can feel comfortable" and are often "unaccustomed to thinking of themselves as museum visitors."[11] These exclusionary notions may be more ingrained in persons with special needs precisely because they have been outside the mainstream or on its fringes for so long."[12] Clearly, museums have a long way to go when it comes to improving the visitor experience for people with disabilities. However, much progress has been made over the past five decades. Through the diligent work of disability activists and the passage of legislation, change, slowly but surely, has been made.

Disability History and Museums

Before legislation like the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed, people with disabilities faced many challenges when it came to participating in society. For example, many people using wheelchairs were often unable to enter or navigate buildings. Prior to the signing of the ADA, any place of employment could legally pay people with disabilities less, even if they were doing the same work as other employees, or they could simply refuse to hire a person just because of their disability.

In *A Disability History of the United States*, Kim Neilson tells the story of Clara Clow, an activist of the disability rights movement, in the 1970s.[13] Clow used a wheelchair and was inspired to join the disability movement after hearing people with disabilities speak at a government hearing about discrimination. "The '70s were exciting for disabled people," she said.

[11]Andrus, L. (1999). Opening the doors: Museums, accessibility, and individuals with special needs. In A. Nyman & A. Jenkins (Eds.), Issues and approaches to art for students with special needs (pp. 63-86). Reston, VA: National Art Education Association

[12] Andrus, 67

[13] Nielson, Kim E. "I Guess I'm An Activist. I Think It's Just Caring. Rights and Rights Denied 1968-." Essay. In *Disability History of the United States*, 161. Beacon Press, 2012.

"In the beginning, people really did think we were outrageous. It's been kind of a long fight."[14] In 1976, Clow and her husband established the Disabled Citizens of Frederick County. When describing her work to remove barriers for people with disabilities, Clow remarked, "I guess I'm an activist. I think it's just caring."[15] Spearheaded by activists like Clow, grassroots movements were able to speak at government meetings, organize local activism groups, and legally challenge discriminatory practices, altering the trajectory of the disability movement. Through the work of disability activists and the passing of groundbreaking civil rights legislation, the museum experience for visitors with disabilities began to change for the better.

The government's first attempt at improving accessibility came in the form of the 1968 Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). This law established uniform federal accessibility standards for the design, construction, and alteration of all future public buildings and buildings "significantly altered with federal funds."[16] But with no enforcement arm, this law did very little to actually improve accessibility, leaving buildings unaltered and many people with disabilities (particularly physical disabilities) unable to access public spaces. The legislation did however pave the way for further activism and future legislation. In 1973, the Rehabilitation Act was finally passed after a year of congressional debates. The passage of the Rehabilitation Act, most notably Section 504, stating that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that either receives Federal financial assistance," meant that museums who received federal funding had to begin the process of becoming more accessible for visitors with

[14] Nielsen, 161
[15] Nielson, 161
[16] "U.S. Access Board." Architectural Barriers Act. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://www.access-board.gov/law/aba.html.

disabilities.[17] While the Rehabilitation Act was an important step toward equity, the act was vague, and efforts to improve accessibility were based on how that particular institution interpreted accommodation and accessibility. The language of the act also proved to be problematic. By using language that threatened loss of funding as a result of non-compliance, many museums only did exactly what was necessary in order to create compliance, making adjustments that would make current practices comply with the loosely outlined guidelines.[18] Much like the ABA, the act was not widely enforced, resulting in disability activists staging sit-ins and demonstrations in protest.

Perhaps the most impactful piece of legislation passed that aimed to improve the experience for museum visitors with disabilities was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 1990, the ADA, a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all aspects of public life, became law.[19] This law applied to all public institutions, including museums. The ADA codified that all public accommodations "must comply with basic nondiscrimination requirements that prohibit exclusion, segregation, and unequal treatment."[20] In addition, museums were given new requirements related to architecture, as well as the requirement to modify "policies, practices, and procedures; effective communication with people with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities, and other access requirements."[21]. Finally, the ADA requires public institutions to make changes only where it is attainable for them to do so "without

[17] "Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973." United States Department of Labor. Accessed March 28, 2022.https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/centers-offices/civil-rights-center/statutes/section-504-rehabilitation-act-of-1973.
[18] Starr, Ruth Erin, "Accessibility Practices & The Inclusive Museum: Legal Compliance, Professional Standards, and the Social Responsibility of Museums" (2016). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology.
[19] Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended with ada amendments act of 2008. U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm.
[20] Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
[21] Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

much difficulty or expense, given the public accommodation's resources."[22] With the passage of the ADA came a more definite push for museums to improve the experience for visitors with both physical and mental disabilities, and more importantly, consequences, including the loss of funding, for institutions that did not comply.

Manuals like *Everyone's Welcome: The Americans with Disabilities Act and Museums*, published in 1998 by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), were designed to help museums "in becoming more accessible to all individuals, including people with disabilities" and in being "in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990."[23] A plan for museum accessibility is outlined in *Everyone's Welcome* and strategies for establishing new policies and practices are discussed. The second chapter of the manual outlines a specific strategy for accessibility, including what is referred to as the "Nine Building Blocks for Accessibility." The building blocks include (1) Accessibility Statement, (2) Accessibility Coordinator, (3) Accessibility Advisory Council, (4) Staff Training, (5) Review of Existing Facilities and Programs, (6) Planning for Accessibility, (7) Promoting and Advertising Accessibility in Museums, (8) Grievance Process, and (9) Ongoing Review of Access Efforts.[24] It is recommended that museums approach accessibility in this nine-step process as both a more manageable approach and as a way to avoid being overwhelmed by what can seem like a daunting task, especially for small institutions. According to the guide, "The short-term goal is compliance with the law's minimum requirements. The longer-term, universal-design goal is totally accessible programs and facilities at every level."[25] In response to the Rehabilitation Act,

[22] Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
[23] Salmen, John P.S. *Everyone's Welcome: The Americans with Disabilities Act and Museums*. Washington, D.C.: American Alliance of Museums, 1998.
[24] Salmen, 45
[25] Salmen, 34

the National Endowment for the Arts also created guidelines to help museums achieve compliance. In the '90s, the NEA created two resources including *The Arts and 504* and *Design for Accessibility: An Art Administrators Guide.* Today, the NEA offers *Design for Accessibility: A Cultural Administrator's Handbook*, an updated version of their resources from the '90s, as a free pdf on their website. The handbook includes information that can help institutions ensure that they are following the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA, as well as recommendations for architectural access, program access, and guidance specifically for accessibility in arts and humanities activities at museums and exhibitions.

With the help of guides like *Everyone's Welcome* and the work of organizations such as the AAM and the NEA, museums became better equipped with the knowledge and resources necessary to begin the important work of improving their spaces for all. Over the past few decades, many strategies, theoretical frameworks, and resources have been developed specifically aimed at helping museums become a place that visitors with disabilities can enjoy.

Accessibility in Museums

Although often misunderstood as something that can be achieved simply by checking off boxes on a list, accessibility is a process in which museums must be active participants. Actually, creating and facilitating a meaningful experience for visitors with disabilities is different than just providing accessibility accommodations. Put simply, "inclusion is most meaningful when it is purposeful."[26] Creating an accessible space goes beyond having the accommodations, like physical changes to the building and equal access to employment, programs, and activities required by law. It requires intentionally involving visitors with disabilities in the decision-

[26] Pressman, Heather, and Danielle Schulz. *The Art of Access: A Practical Guide for Museum Accessibility*, 33. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.

making process and creating opportunities for engagement for all visitors. “Nothing about us without us,” an activism term that gained popularity amongst disability activists in the 1990s, is a helpful way museums can frame conversations surrounding disability. The slogan proclaims that no decisions should be made for any group without direct input from the group of people the term applies to. In *Disability in American life: an encyclopedia of concepts, policies, and controversie*s, the slogan is described as one that “emphasizes the central role disabled persons want to play regarding the issues, services, policies, and programs directly affecting them. The slogan emphasizes control and voice.”[27] When it comes to accessibility, especially when decisions directly impact individuals with disabilities, museums should understand that the individuals themselves know what is best for them, more than anyone else ever would. Ideally, museums should involve people with disabilities and allow members of the disability community to advise or provide their perspectives when planning programs and exhibitions. Employing staff members with disabilities through equitable employment opportunities is another way museums can ensure that the perspective from a person with disabilities is represented. “Listening to and working with people with disabilities and the community groups serving them is very important for ensuring that museums’ programs and offerings are meeting the needs and interests of their intended audiences.”[28] When museums seek out the opinions and perspectives of visitors with disabilities, they affirm their commitment to meaningful inclusion. When museums fail to involve the community in the process, they not only miss out on critical insight, but this

[27]Heller, Tamar, Sarah Parker Harris, and Carol J. Gill. *Disability in American Life an Encyclopedia of Concepts, Policies, and Controversies*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2019.

[28] Braden, Caroline. “Welcoming All Visitors: Museums, Accessibility, and Visitors with Disabilities,” 2016.

exclusion can be interpreted as a performative measure with no intention of actually consulting the community these decisions will impact

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The process of improving the museum experience for visitors with disabilities can include the implementation of various strategies and tools including but not limited to, universal design, person-centered thinking, and programming. In *The Art of Access - A Practical Guide for Museum Accessibility*, Universal Design is described as "the process of embedding the choice and needs of people into the spaces and things we create."[29] Universal design as a concept requires museums to create an environment that has the greatest level of usability for all people, regardless of ability, and is a strategy museums can utilize when creating exhibitions, programs, and resources. By improving the museum experience for people with disabilities through universal design, the museum experience is improved for all people. For example, having ramps as a part of the museum facility not only makes the space accessible for people who use wheelchairs or mobility aids, but it also improves the space for others, like people pushing strollers, and removes the potential danger of tripping on stairs. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework that was developed in the 1990s as a way to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people. UDL expands upon the concept of Universal design for physical spaces by applying the idea to education and engagement with learning. In *Providing Access to Engagement in Learning: The Potential of Universal Design for Learning in Museum*

[29] Pressman & Schulz, 56

Design, a journal article written for the World Health Organization, the UDL framework is described as follows:

> The UDL framework advances the design of learning environments by providing flexibility in goals, methods, and materials. Variability is assumed so that learning environments are designed from the outset to meet the needs of as many learners as possible, making costly, time-consuming, and after-the-fact changes unnecessary.[30]

By creating educational materials in museums that are flexible and designed from their inception to educate all visitors, museums provide an educational experience that is welcoming for all types of learners. UDL is just one example of the many approaches museums can take to bettering the museum experience for all.

In the years following the enactment of the ADA, person-centered thinking, a "theoretical approach that represents the shift from large-scale institutional to individually tailored care," began to gain popularity.[31] Person-centered thinking emphasizes putting individuals with disabilities at the forefront of the decision-making process and prioritizing their voices. When considering person-centered thinking in regard to museum accessibility, it is important that museums consider this approach when creating and planning programming for their visitors. Key features of person-centered planning include placing the person at the center of the plan, including the person throughout the planning process, and allowing the person to choose who or what they involve in the process.[32] In a study conducted at the University of Arizona, person-

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[30] Rappolt-Schlichtmann, Gabrielle, and Samantha G. Daley. "Providing Access to Engagement in Learning: The Potential of Universal Design for Learning in Museum Design." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 56, no. 3 (2013): 307–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12030.

[31] Douglas, Hillary F. 2015. "Voices of Individuals with Disabilities in Art Museum Programming: A Person-Centered Approach." Order No. 1589571, The University of Arizona. http://umiss.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/voices-individuals-with-disabilities-art-museum/docview/1688329304/se-2.

[32] Sanderson, Hugh, Guy Goodwin, J. O. Kennedy, and Pete Richie. *People, Plans and Possibilities: Exploring Person Centered Planning*. Edinburgh: SHS Ltd, 1997.

centered thinking was used as a strategy for inclusion that allowed three visitors with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience an art museum through the utilization of a person-centered plan[33]. By allowing each individual to plan their own trip to the museum, beginning with a discussion about what they wanted to see and do before the visit and ending with a reflection on what they thought about their visit, person-centered planning empowered the individuals and gave them a voice. The success of the programming came from the fact that the plan was created by the participants, rather than for them.

Programming is another area where museums are given an opportunity to expand their reach. By providing museums with the opportunity to develop unique experiences for visitors with different disabilities, programs allow museums to attract and engage with these audiences. For example, museums can develop specific programs for visitors with memory loss, visitors who are blind or partially sighted, visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing, visitors with intellectual disabilities, and visitors on the autism spectrum. Since the 1990s, great strides have been made in museum accessibility throughout the United States, especially in regard to programming. The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and the Smithsonian, three of the most prominent museums in the United States, all have established impressive accessibility programming. At the Whitney, programs are available for visitors who are blind or have low vision; verbal descriptions provide detailed accounts of the works on display, while touch tours allow visitors to experience a selection of objects through touch.[34] In addition, the Whitney provides tours in American Sign Language and hosts a program

[33] Douglas
[34] "Verbal Description and Touch Tours." Whitney Museum of American Art. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://whitney.org/education/access/touch-tours.

specifically for children on the autism spectrum and their families every three months.[35] The MoMA provides similar programming for visitors who are blind or have low vision and visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing.[36] The MoMA also hosts Create Ability, a monthly workshop for children and adults with learning or developmental disabilities and their families.[37] In an informational video about Create Ability, the MoMA educators emphasize their "commitment to working with visitors with disabilities of all sorts because people with disabilities are part of the general public."[38] In regard to programming for visitors with developmental and learning disabilities and those on the autism spectrum, the Smithsonian hosts Morning at the Museum, described as a "free, sensory-friendly program for families of children, teenagers, and young adults with disabilities including intellectual disabilities, autism, sensory processing disorders, and other cognitive disabilities."[39] Morning at the Museum provides visitors with disabilities the opportunity to explore the museum before it opens to the public and participate in activities designed specifically for them. Families are also provided with "pre-visit" materials to help them prepare for their visit including sensory maps and social narratives.

Person-centered thinking and UDL are a few strategies that museums can use to improve their accessibility programming. While there are ways in which museums can better their already existing programming, there are also ways that the overall experience for visitors with disabilities can be improved. Bettering the museum experience for individuals with disabilities starts with educating employees and staff. Maria Zedda, a disability access consultant, writes

[35] "Access Programs." Whitney Museum of American Art. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://whitney.org/education/access.
[36] "Accessibility: Moma." The Museum of Modern Art. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://www.moma.org/visit/accessibility/.
[37] Accessibility: Moma.
[38] Accessibility: Moma.
[39] "Morning at the Museum." Access Smithsonian. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://access.si.edu/program/morning-museum.

that often, "many of the access barriers" that visitors experience, "staff members unwittingly create for disabled visitors because of sheer lack of awareness of disability issues."[40] It is important to train museum staff to provide service to all visitors in order to avoid "misguided attempts at customer service that are inappropriate."[41] Because all museum staff members are responsible for the accessibility and inclusion of the space in some way or another, training can go a long way in making the museum a place visitors with disabilities feel welcome. At the very least, museum staff should be knowledgeable about the laws about accessibility and the etiquette surrounding language such as person-first language. Person-first language is the linguistic act of putting the person before their disability, by describing what type of disability a person has instead of making the disability the identifying characteristic (e.g., saying "person with autism" instead of "autistic person"). While the disability community is diverse, and there are various preferences of how people like to be identified, it is typically best to use person-first language unless a person specifically voices their preference.[42] Training for museum staff is vital, and strategies can range from tip sheets to short training sessions to all-day workshops. Too often accessibility initiatives are placed on one staff member, especially in small museums with limited staffing. While it can be helpful to appoint a staff member as the point person for disability issues (or to hire an expert in this field to serve in this capacity), accessibility is achieved when all members of a museum's team are trained and ready to welcome all visitors.

Accessibility for Visitors with Autism

[40] Lisney, Eleanor, Jonathan P. Bowen, Kirsten Hearn, and Maria Zedda. "Museums and Technology: Being Inclusive Helps Accessibility for All." *Curator: The Museum Journal* 56, no. 3 (2013): 353–61. https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12034.
[41] Lisney, Eleanor, Jonathan P. Bowen, Kirsten Hearn, and Maria Zedda, 353-361.
[42] Pressman & Schulz

As is the case with other individuals within the disability community, visitors with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or autism have their own unique characteristics, needs, and desires when it comes to their museum experience. Autism spectrum disorder is a "neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact with others, communicate, learn, and behave."[43] According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), a guide created by the American Psychiatric Association that health care providers use to diagnose mental disorders, people with ASD often have difficulty with communication and interaction with other people, restricted interests, repetitive behaviors, and symptoms that affect their ability to function in school, work, and other areas of life.[44] Autism is typically referred to in terms of a "spectrum" because there is a "wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience."[45] According to the latest estimates from CDC's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network, 1 in 44 children has been identified with Autism Spectrum Disorder.[46] The National Institute of Mental Health provides a list of social communication and interaction behaviors, as well as restrictive and repetitive behaviors that are often associated with ASD. While not all individuals with autism display all of the behaviors described, it is likely that they may have several of the behaviors. Some of these behaviors include (but are not limited to): "being more sensitive or less sensitive than other people to sensory input, such as light, sound, clothing, or temperature, becoming upset by slight changes in a routine and having difficulty with transitions, having trouble understanding another person's

[43] "Autism Spectrum Disorder." National Institute of Mental Health. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed March 28, 2022. https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/autism-spectrum-disorders-asd#part_2279.
[44] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2017.
[45] "Autism Spectrum Disorder." National Institute of Mental Health.
[46] "Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, January 11, 2022. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/addm.html.

point of view or being unable to predict or understand other people's actions, and difficulties adjusting behaviors to social situations."[47].

While these behaviors can obviously impact a person with autism's ability to interact in many different types of settings, they pose a particular challenge when it comes to interacting with museums. In general, museums are environments that have a specific set of rules, guidelines, and built-in social interactions that visitors are expected to understand and follow. These guidelines, as well as the sensory overload that exists within a new environment, can make visiting the museum a stressful, and even negative experience for individuals with autism and their families. Additionally, museums can be spaces with unique elements such as limitations on touch (most pieces cannot be touched), specific lighting requirements, and large groups of people (especially when it comes to group tours or field trips) in one space at a time, that can even further complicate the experience. Because of these characteristics, which in this context exist as barriers, museums can be perceived as inaccessible to visitors with autism and/or their families or caregivers. Many individuals with autism or parents with a child with autism look to attend special programming specifically for visitors with autism or visitors with disabilities. Research conducted by Kulik & Fletcher found that these events can provide parents "the opportunity to have a safe and manageable community outing with their child(ren), free from potential judgment and criticisms of other visitors."[48] A research study conducted in 2019 with the goal of determining what concerns families that include children with autism have when it comes to museum visits found "parents often decide to exclude their families from museum visits in order to avoid the stress or sensory overloads associated with a visit."[49] However, museums have the

[47] "Autism Spectrum Disorder." National Institute of Mental Health.
[48] Kulik, Taylor Kelsey and Tina Sue Fletcher. "Considering the Museum Experience of Children with Autism." *Curator (New York, N.Y.)* 59, no. 1 (2016): 27-38.
[49] Woodruff, 83-97.

opportunity to reach these families by working to develop programs and create experiences specifically for this audience. Additionally, parents "expressed a desire for intervention materials like social narratives, pre-visit orientation materials, and accessibility hours for children with autism in order to create more positive experiences."[50] Pre-visit materials, like the aforementioned social narratives, are a cost-effective and impactful way museums can become more accessible to visitors with autism and their families, as well as the myriad of other types of visitors that can benefit from preparatory materials.

Social Narratives

A visit to a museum is an experience that comes with a multitude of unspoken rules and expectations. From the moment a visitor enters the space, they are inundated with "various social conversations, cues, etiquette, and interactions with other people, objects, and spaces."[51] Visitors who seem to have an automatic understanding of this type of expected behavior are often individuals who have prior experience visiting cultural institutions like museums. In *The Art of Access*, these unspoken rules are described as something that can often "create serious barriers to a positive museum experience for someone with affected cognitive ability."[52] Having the ability to discern which behaviors are suitable in the museum environment takes "skill in perception, reasoning, and comprehension, which can be impacted for individuals that have affected cognitive ability."[53] In addition to being an environment with a specific set of behavioral expectations, a visit to the museum involves a "series of decision points," including where to go

[50] Woodruff, 95
[51] Christidou, Dimitra. "Social Interaction in the Art Museum: Connecting to Each Other and the Exhibits." *The International Journal of Social, Political and Community Agendas in the Arts* 11, no. 4 (2016): 27–38. https://doi.org/10.18848/2326-9960/cgp/v11i04/27-38.
[52] Pressman & Schulz, 63
[53] Pressman & Schulz, 63

in the museum and how to navigate exhibitions.[54] These subtle social cues and the decision-making process involved with a visit to museums create yet another barrier, not only for guests with autism or disabilities like cognitive impairment, but also for first-time visitors or visitors with limited experience with these spaces. Pressman & Schulz describe a successful museum as one that considers "how to prepare and guide their visitors safely and confidently throughout their space without disorientation or anxiety."[55] Preparatory resources like social narratives can be instrumental in changing the visitor experience for the better. By explaining these rules and guidelines and providing the answers to the multitude of questions that can arise before their visit, visitors can arrive better equipped to have an enjoyable museum experience. Transparency from museums can empower visitors to feel comfortable and confident while navigating the space. By providing information about the museum in an easily accessible way, whether it be on the museum's website or inside the museum building, visitors with disabilities (and caregivers) can "better regulate their encounters" and engineer an experience that best suits their individual needs.[56]

Social narratives, often referred to as social stories, are evidence-based practices "designed to increase prosocial behaviors by making important contextual characteristics and expected behaviors more explicit and salient for a specific activity or event."[57] In *The Art of Access*, Pressman and Schulz describe social narratives as "written guides that describe various social interactions, situations, behaviors, skills, or concepts."[58]. These guides use a combination of text as well as photographs to help prepare individuals for various social interactions. In the

[54] Pressman & Schulz, 61
[55] Pressman & Schulz, 61
[56] Pressman & Schulz, 65
[57] Gray CA, Garand JD. Social Stories: Improving Responses of Students with Autism with Accurate Social Information. *Focus on Autistic Behavior*. 1993;8(1):1-10. doi:10.1177/108835769300800101
[58] Pressman & Schulz, 69

context of museum accessibility, social narratives can help visitors by preparing them for various situations they may encounter while at the museum and explaining the processes involved, including ticketing, checking bags, and finding the restroom. Social narratives can be reviewed by individuals with autism, their families, or caregivers prior to visiting. This resource provides accessibility for guests before they even enter the museum building by creating a way in which visitors can prepare themselves to have the best possible experience based on their own needs and preferences.

Social narratives were originally introduced by Carol Gray as Social Stories™ in the early 1990s. Gray developed the concept of Social Stories™ as a way to improve responses to new social situations from her students with autism. As described in Gray's article *Social Stories: Improving Responses of Students with Autism with Accurate Social Information,* Social Stories™ are defined as "short stories that describe social situations in terms of relevant social cues" that often "define appropriate responses."[59] In the aforementioned article, Gray provides guidelines for how to effectively write Social Stories™. Gray establishes that Social Stories™ should always be written with the perspective of the individual with autism in mind and should include the following three sentence types: descriptive, directive, and perspective.[60] Descriptive sentences are those that describe the setting or "paint the picture" of what's happening in a scenario and who or what is involved, while directive sentences are those that describe what an individual should do to be successful in a social situation.[61] Perspective sentences describe the various responses that can be involved in social situations.[62] Gray provides several other recommendations, including keeping individual concepts contained to their own pages, adding

[59] Gray & Garand, 1
[60] Gray & Garand, 3
[61] Gray & Garand, 3
[62] Gray & Garand, 3

photographs when appropriate, and positively stating desired behavior, for example using "I will walk" instead of "I will not run."[63] At the conclusion of her recommended guidelines, Gray reminds the reader that creating a Social Story™ is "an art, not a science."[64] While guidelines can be helpful when thinking about creating an effective social narrative, it is far more important to be creative, deviating from the suggested format when necessary in order to create a more individualized social narrative.

While social narratives are most commonly used by people with autism as a preparatory tool to help "manage expectations and even reduce potential sources of anxiety in advance of the visit," social narratives can be a powerful preparatory tool for many different types of museum visitors.[65] Social narratives have proven to be useful for "teachers preparing their classrooms for a field trip, first-time visitors, or even people with dementia."[66] This is true for many accessibility resources. Often, features and resources that improve accessibility for people with disabilities also make life easier and more convenient for people without disabilities. Put simply, "a person does not have to be disabled to benefit from access."[67] When museums shift their thinking away from framing accessibility resources as additional accommodations that only benefit a small group of people toward the integration of accessibility resources for the betterment of the overall visitor experience, it becomes easier for the museum to see the obvious benefit of creating and providing these resources.

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[63] Gray & Garand, 4
[64] Gray & Garand, 5
[65] Price, Phil. "Learning Module: Creating a Social Narrative for Visitors with Autism." Museum, Arts and Culture Access Consortium, November 7, 2018. https://macaccess.org/rescources/learning-module-creating-a-social-narrative-for-visitors-with-autism/.
[66] Pressman & Schulz, 70
[67] Salmen, 12

In addition to the guidance provided by social narrative experts like Carol Gray, there are multiple resources available for institutions seeking to create their own social narratives. The Museum, Arts and Culture Access Consortium (MAC), a New York-based organization working to "increase access to NYC's cultural institutions for the disability community through connection, education, and advocacy," offers a free module on their website on creating social narratives for visitors with autism. Some of the tips provided by the MAC's module include breaking down the visitor experience step by step, writing the narrative in the first person, showing and describing where entrances are located, and anticipating and identifying visitor needs.[68] The National Professional Development Center has another free online module for anyone seeking to learn more about creating effective social narratives. The module includes an overview of evidence and literature surrounding social narratives, steps for implementation, and a checklist that guides the reader through the actual creation and implementation process.

While improving the accessibility of a museum can seem like a daunting task, especially for under-staffed museums or museums with limited resources or funding, social narratives are a simple, cost-effective, and significant way to improve the accessibility of any institution. With various free resources and modules available online to help museum staff learn how to effectively write social narratives, as well as the limited number of supplies actually required to create this resource, social narratives are a resource that most, if not all museums should be able to provide. The barrier to making a social narrative is low, but the reward is immense. Perhaps the greatest barrier to this resource is time, an asset that small, under-staffed museums may have limited amounts of. But even then, a simple social narrative is a project that can be started and completed in a short amount of time, especially if the resources and templates available are

[68] Price

utilized. If museums can appoint just one staff member and allot a few days (maybe even just a few hours) to the creation of this resource, it is guaranteed that there will be a return on the investment of time and resources. Investing in accessibility can go a long way to connect the museum to its community and to create a new following of loyal visitors.

UM MUSEUM SOCIAL NARRATIVE

The University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses

The University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses (UM Museum) is located on the University of Mississippi campus and has an art and antiquities collection that features Greek and Roman antiquities, folk art, American fine art, and 19th-century scientific instruments. Opened originally in 1939 as the Mary Buie Museum, the museum was born from the vision and personal collection of Mary Skipwith Buie, an artist and avid collector. The city of Oxford operated the original museum until 1974, when the museum was deeded to the University. Since then, the museum has grown immensely, especially through the 1977 opening of the Kate Skipwith Teaching Museum to house the Robinson Collection of Greek and Roman Artifacts, and the 1988 addition of the Seymour Lawrence Gallery to showcase American art. The museum complex also includes Rowan Oak, the historic house that was once the home of William Faulkner, the Mississippi native, and Nobel and Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

Located on the University of Mississippi campus, the museum serves as a cultural center for the university and the Oxford community. The museum's collection, perhaps most notably its Greek and Roman antiquities and Rowan Oak, make the museum a hub for research and a space for hands-on education at the university.

The museum reaches many Oxford community members through an extensive list of programs. In 2019, UM Museum education programs reached over 11,500 participants, with 8,000 participants reached through on-site programming and tours and over 3,500 through off-

site programming.[69] The museum reaches school-aged audiences through programs such as Art Zone, an afterschool program for students K-4 where students have the opportunity to visit the galleries and create art inspired by the art they view. In addition to Art Zone, the museum reaches a diverse audience through partnerships with many organizations in the community. These groups include Leap Frog, a program for over 100 at-risk children in Lafayette and Oxford Schools, and a partnership with the Oxford High School special education program to provide museum-inspired programming.

Visiting the University of Mississippi Museum: A Social Narrative

Throughout my college career, I have worked at the UM Museum in multiple capacities. My sophomore year, I joined the UM Museum team as a Student Marketing Assistant. Shortly after beginning in that role, I became interested in the education department and the programs the museum provided. As a person who has always enjoyed teaching and is comfortable interacting with children, I was eager to expand my involvement with the museum by serving in another capacity. Throughout the past three years, I have had the opportunity to work as an instructor for a variety of educational programs, including Art Zone, summer camps, and the Oxford High School special education program. This experience opened my eyes to the thousands of people (over 11,500 in 2019 and over 5,000 in 2021, despite being closed for half of the year) the museum is able to reach through its programs. Programming and the UM Museum's ability to reach Oxford community members are the museum's greatest strengths.

When investigating the potential need and usefulness of a social narrative for the UM Museum, it was important to gain the perspective of people with autism and their families

[69] Rep. *Education at the University of Mississippi Museum*. University of Mississippi Museum, 2020.

regarding social narratives and their use in spaces like museums. Through a survey designed and conducted by myself, insight from individuals located in Oxford, Mississippi who were self-identified as personally affected by the availability of this resource (by either identifying as a person with autism or a family member of someone with autism) was gained. In order to gain this perspective, primary research was conducted in the form of a survey. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Mississippi and created using the University of Mississippi Qualtrics account. The survey, titled "Museums and Visitors with Autism," was distributed via email to individuals who self-identified as either a person with autism or a family member of a person with autism. Responses were recorded anonymously. The survey consisted of ten questions total, with four of the questions featuring text-entry boxes for open-ended responses. The questions included multiple-choice questions regarding the survey participants' museum experiences like, "How often do you visit museums?" and "What resources (if any) have been provided to you during museum visits?" as well as open-ended questions about their experiences and accommodations. When asked "How would you describe your experiences with museums as a person on the autism spectrum or a family member/caregiver visiting with a person on the autism spectrum?" one survey participant responded, "Museums are often crowded and can be loud and sensorily overwhelming. Some (art museums) are quieter, but others (science museums) can be too much for my autistic child. This can lead to meltdowns and/or lack of engagement with the collections." Question eight and nine of the survey focused specifically on social narratives, asking survey participants if they were familiar with social narratives and if they (or their child) found them useful. All survey participants were familiar with social narratives and found them to be "very helpful." This insight not only illustrates the usefulness of social narratives, but because the responses came

from individuals located in Oxford, it ultimately shows that a social narrative could improve the visitor experience for frequent, local visitors of the UM Museum.

Guided by the knowledge surrounding social narratives gained through my research and with support from the museum, I created a social narrative specifically for the UM Museum. After learning extensively about the usefulness of this resource, I was eager to use the knowledge gained to bring a social narrative to life. Through my work as an intern, I knew that the UM Museum did not currently have this resource. I also knew that this was a resource that could improve the museum experience for a considerable number of visitors, especially considering the hundreds of school-aged children that visit the UM Museum each year. This resource has the potential to be used not only by visitors with autism and their families, but also by teachers preparing their students for their first visit to the museum or parents preparing their children for a visit. While it is clear that social narratives have the ability to improve the visitor experiences for many different types of visitors, even if this resource only improves the experience for a handful of visitors, it is worth having.

In order to create the social narrative, I gained insight from free resources including the Museum, Arts and Culture Access Consortium learning module on creating a social narrative for visitors with autism. I also viewed and was inspired by many examples of social narratives created by other museums, including The Met, Minneapolis Institute of Art, and the Whitney. Because I was very familiar with the layout and procedures associated with the UM Museum, writing the content for the narrative was straightforward. In total, the social narrative is ten pages in length with information about parking, the front desk, security, food and drinks, restrooms, and gallery rules. I incorporated the recommendations provided by Carol Gray, the creator of Social Stories™, including keeping individual concepts contained to their own pages, adding

photographs to accompany each concept, and positively stating desired behavior. I took all of the photographs included in the social narrative and designed the resource keeping the museum's colors, logos, and fonts in mind. With the goal of placing the social narrative on the museum website and having physical copies available at the museum in mind, this resource will have the potential to reach many visitors

CONCLUSION

Museums have a public duty to include and make provisions for all parts of society. While educating society is arguably the most important purpose that the modern museum has, enjoyment is also a part of the definition. It is the museum's duty not only to provide an accessible space, but to also create an environment where people, no matter their disability, feel welcome, comfortable, and are at home. It is only after those provisions are met that all visitors can enjoy themselves. It is only then that the museum is truly fulfilling its purpose in society. Social narratives are one way to ensure that visitors, specifically visitors on the autism spectrum, find enjoyment from their visit.

Over the past fifty years, museums have made great strides when it comes to accessibility. From changing the physical space to creating resources and introducing programming specifically for visitors with disabilities, museums have become more inclusive spaces. However, resources like social narratives have yet to make their way to all institutions. While many larger, more well-funded museums (i.e., The Met, the Smithsonian, the MoMA) do have this resource, many smaller museums, including university museums like the UM Museum, do not. While it is clear that the limitations of small museums, such as staffing and funding, are inhibitors when it comes to creating accessibility resources, a social narrative is a simple, cost-effective resource that any museum can create. Accessibility is a complex topic that can be overwhelming for museums to tackle, especially when museums have limited resources and staff members take on multiple roles. But at its core, accessibility is about caring. Accessibility is

caring about how individuals of all abilities will be able to participate in and enjoy a space. A social narrative is a great way museums can show visitors that they care. Even seeing that the resource is available shows that the museum is thinking about how they can provide the best possible experience to all people who enter its doors. While a social narrative is not a catch-all solution to making a museum accessible for people with autism and their families, it's a simple way for museums to start on their journey of becoming more accessible to this audience.

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APPENDIX


UM
museum
Visiting the
University of
Mississippi Museum
Social Narrative

Welcome

Today, we will be visiting the University of Mississippi Museum. Inside the museum, there are many things to see including art and ancient artifacts!

Parking

Parking at the museum is free. There are accessible parking spots at the front of the parking lot.

2

Entrance

When we get to the museum, we will enter through the front doors into the lobby. There, we will be greeted by museum staff at the front desk. Museum staff members are friendly and are there to answer any questions we may have!

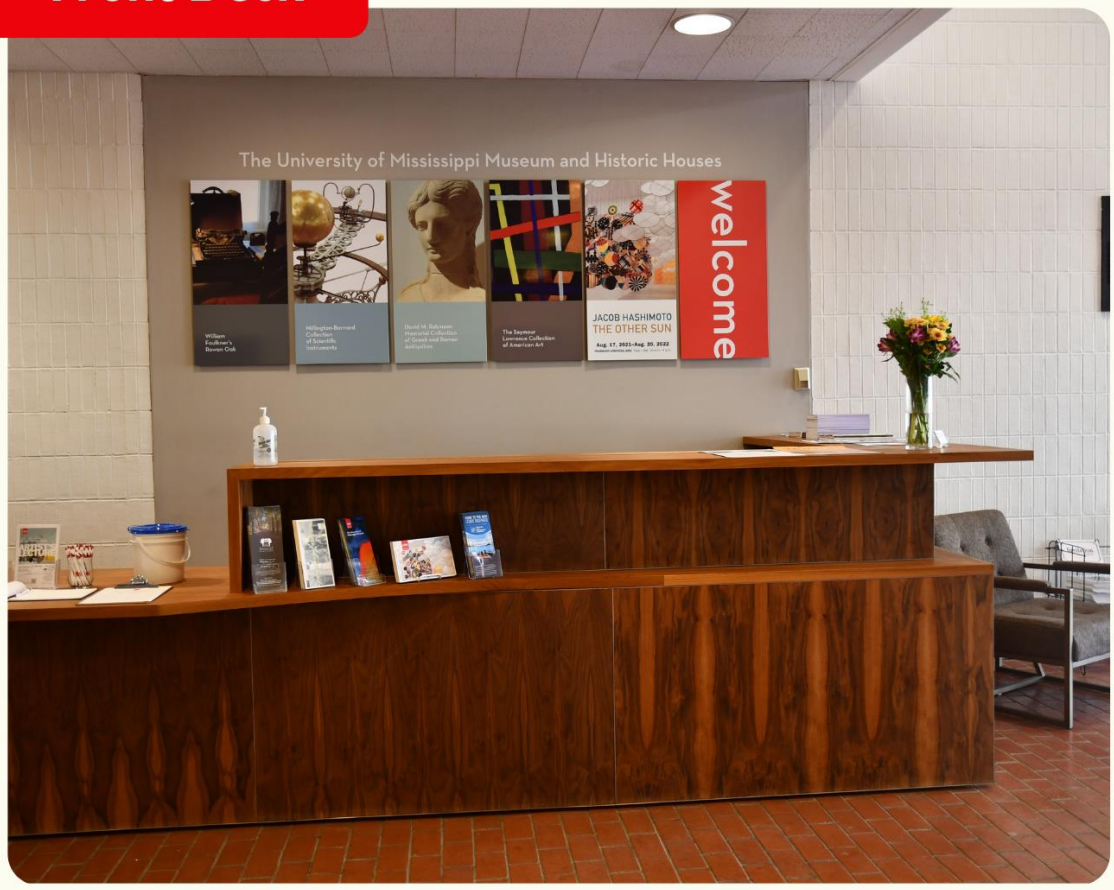
3

Security

A friendly face we may see when entering the museum is the security guard Mike. Mike will welcome us into the building. He is there to make sure the museum and all of its visitors are safe!

4

Front Desk



Admission to the museum is free. At the front desk, we can pick up a museum guide so we can plan where we would like to go.

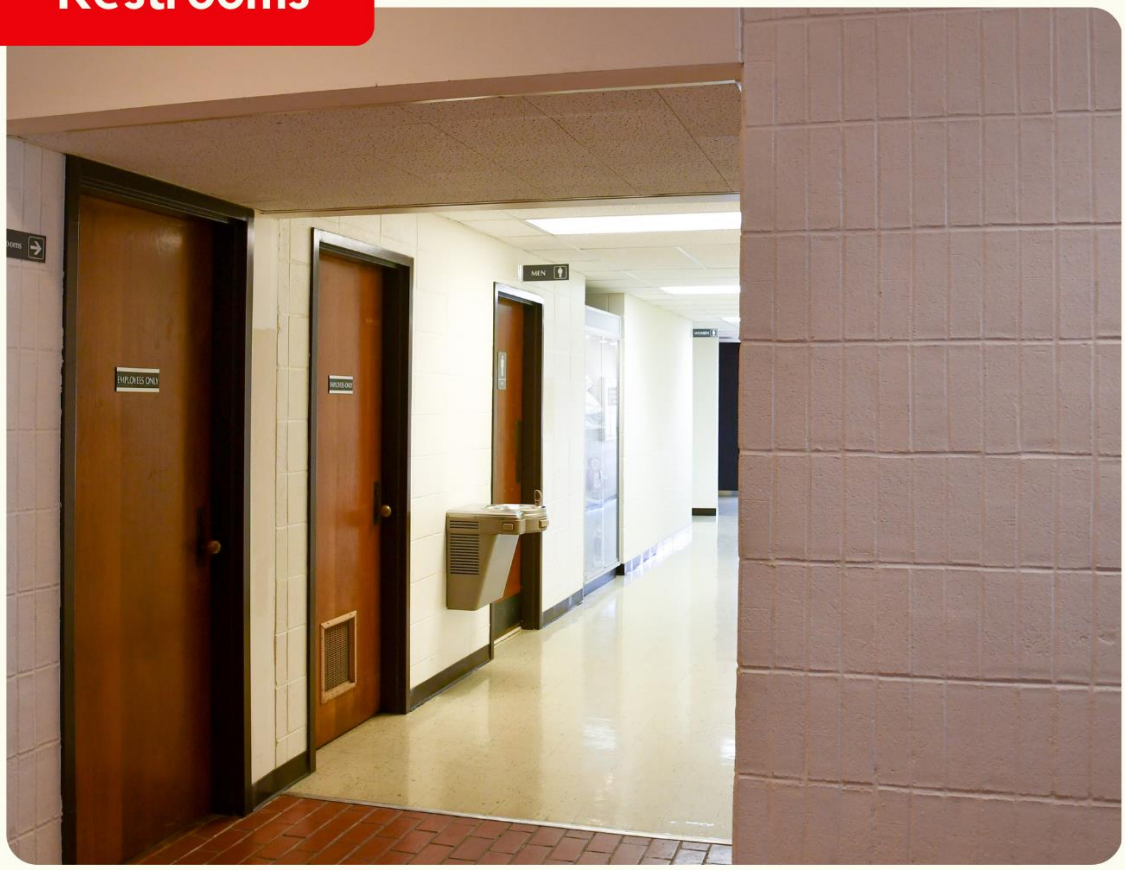
5

Food & Drink

Food and drinks are not permitted in the galleries. If I need a snack or a drink of water, I can take a break in the lobby! I can also use the water fountains in the lobby.

6

Restrooms



If I need to use the restroom, I will use the restrooms located in the hallway right off of the lobby.

7

Navigate

There are many different areas of the museum to see! If I came with a group I will stay with my group during my visit. If I came alone, I can use the museum map to help me navigate the space.

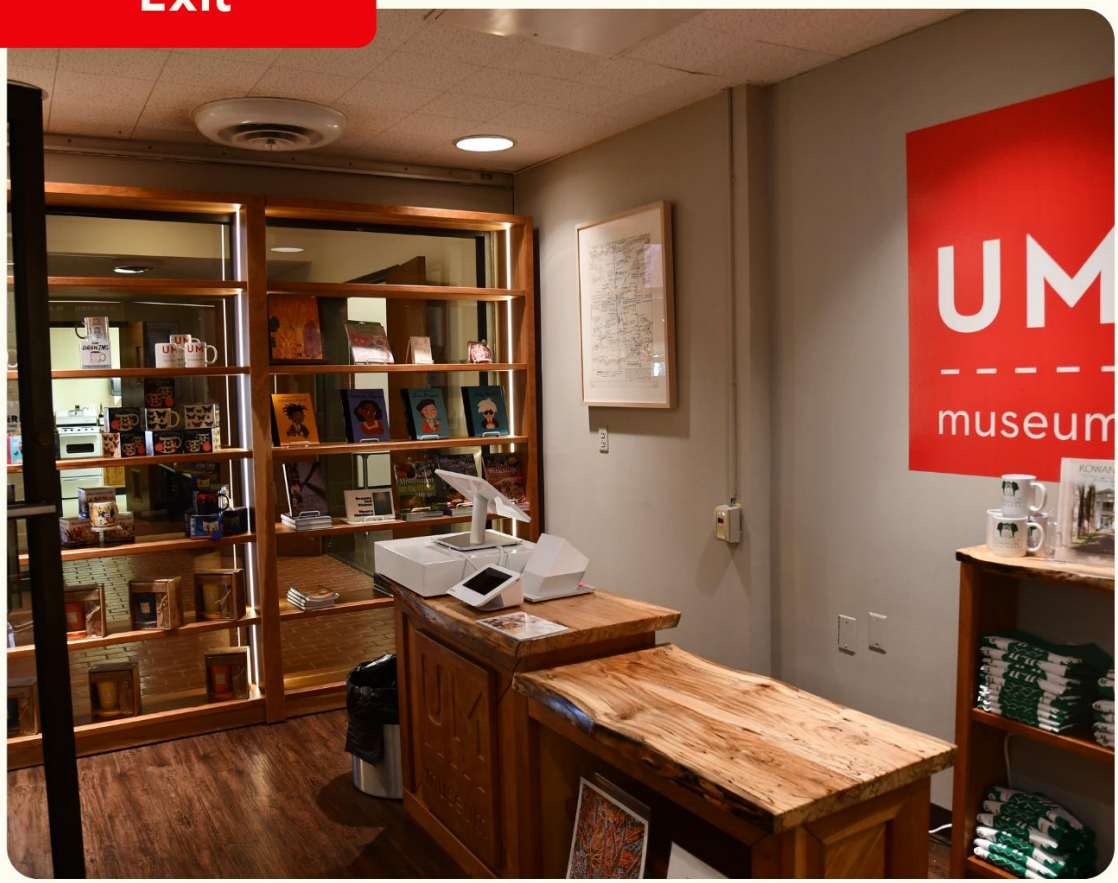
8

Gallery Rules

When we go into the galleries, we will remember these rules:

- We will walk slowly in the galleries. This will keep us and the art safe! It will also allow us to see all of the art.
- We will keep our hands to ourselves.
- We will speak quietly.

Exit



Some people will stay longer than others at the museum. The amount of time we stay does not matter. What matters is that we enjoy our visit!

When we are ready to leave, we will exit through the same lobby doors we entered. In the lobby, there is a museum gift shop we can visit if we would like a souvenir from our visit.

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The University of Mississippi Museum
University Avenue and 5th St.
Oxford, MS 38655

For information about accessibility, accommodations, and programs for visitors with disabilities:

Telephone: 662-915-7073.
Email: museum@olemiss.edu