

Kate Curto
Graduate Thesis

Designing with Civility



A System of Consideration for Museum Spaces

A thesis submitted to The University of the Arts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Museum Exhibition Planning + Design.

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Designing with Civility

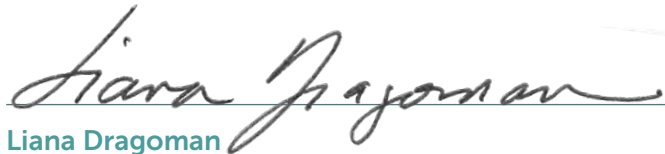
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The University of the Arts

Museum Exhibition Planning + Design

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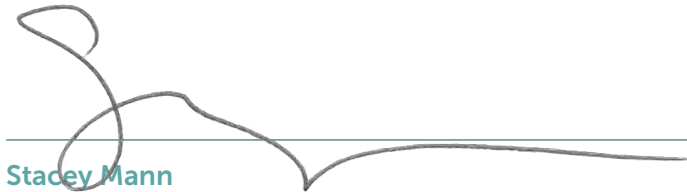
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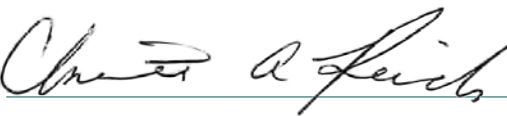
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Abstract

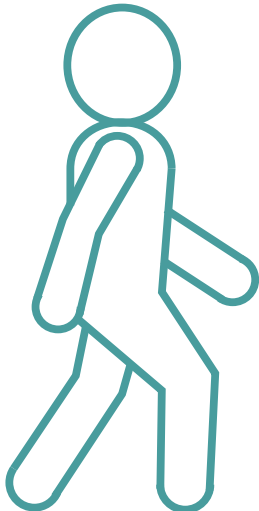
Museums, as historically exclusive spaces, are in a moment of reassessment—reevaluating their relevance to their surrounding communities and their audiences. Museums, overall, strive to provide comfort, but often don't provide for the diversity of abilities of people that come through their doors. How can looking at the museum more holistically provide opportunities for the co-creative planning of institutional spaces? This research draws from a broad field of study that includes various design methodologies, accessibility and inclusion, and civility and social infrastructure.

Examples of this ideology come from both larger museum projects, as well as smaller moments throughout the space, and are framed in conversations with museum

professionals who are actively striving to create in these ideals, often without defining their work as such. This thesis provides a framework for designing with civility that is not a checklist, but an introduction to tools that help prototype change in the museum. By driving home the power of human connectedness and providing spaces to those often excluded from the conversation, this civil approach reinforces the need to better empathize with and understand audiences, relationships, and how civility works within the broader museum system.

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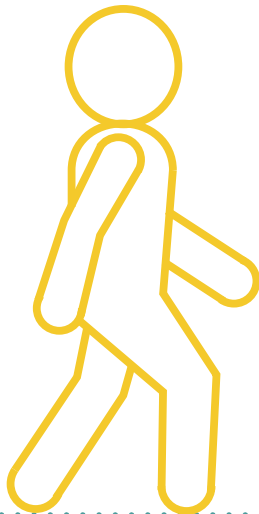


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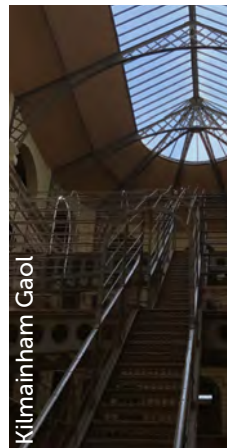
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Mom, Dad, and Bry: Last, but not least, thank you three for your never-ending support and encouragement. You listened to me go on about my challenges and breakthroughs throughout this entire process more than anyone, and not once did you hang up on me! It means more than I can put into words.

Personal Statement

With a background in industrial design and sustainability studies, I have long been curious about how designers can successfully create things for both the people that may use them and the systems that they live within. As an undergraduate student, I had the opportunity to study abroad at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland, where I increasingly became interested in

utilizing design research in my process and designing within the scope of services. After finishing my undergraduate degree, the thought processes that became essential to my work through the application of these various thought and design influences did not reflect in the design opportunities I saw in the industrial design field. I found myself gravitating past areas of traditional industrial



design and object making, and instead toward design grounded in research and concerning the creation of experiences that could be loved, shared, and for all. **From my travels throughout life, and especially from my time spent abroad, museums were spaces of comfort, providing opportunities to learn from and engage with content, as well as interact with other visitors.** As I tried to navigate the path forward, I saw museums as designed spaces striving to create accessible experiences and opportunities for their visitors—combining information, exploration, and fun. These built experiences and the meaning they shared with their visitors seemed to tie into the thoughtful design I was striving to create. I have come to acknowledge that most museums are trying to be more considerate of their visitors, their

free time selectively spent in these spaces as opposed to doing other recreational things, and the topics covered in exhibits. The concept of civility that this thesis tries to define within the museum space was first introduced to me during my senior year of undergrad in a design studio focused on creating civil products. The research and understandings I gained during that design process are elements that I have revisited and have reignited my interest in this museum context. These ideas have helped me to further understand myself both as a designer and as a citizen. I am hopeful in forging forward, toward discovering and creating more considerate museums and museum experiences, a journey I am certain will continue through my career.

Civility, politeness, it's like a cement in a society: binds it together.
And when we lose it, then I think we all feel lesser and slightly dirty
because of it.

—Jeremy Irons *(English actor)*



(Figure 1.1)

SECTION 1

Introduction

Museums once stood as places that simply presented collections, telling visitors what curators wanted them to know about a range of different topics. The shift of museums toward becoming spaces of co-creation has been a slow transition for many years now as the drive to become *places of the people* grows more central to many museums' missions. More recently, museums, in their exhibits, tend to focus less on just a subject expert's ideas and the stories they want to tell, and more on how the visitor will receive and potentially interpret the information that is presented to them. Institutionally, museums now ask visitors what they want to see, how they learn, and what they think the exhibit and museum could look like in an even broader sense. This opportunity of reassessment that is currently being seen in museums is the best

chance we may get to take full consideration of a best practices approach in planning for a better future in these spaces. Museum spaces don't exist in isolated spheres, but instead, they are part of a more massive ecosystem—a tangle of exhibit galleries, ticketing areas, cafes, restrooms, and more. (see Figure 1.1) It is certainly possible to start projects that just focus on one exhibition or a new admissions counter, but what is missed when the focal point becomes so narrow and does not take into consideration other museum elements? Each connection or relationship within this museum system interacts with the other parts and without this give and take, the museum and its multitude of talented staff cannot properly strive to achieve their people-focused missions.

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility - the qualities that enable access for people, regardless of their abilities¹

.....

Civil Design - courteous and polite; existing in the interactions and relationships something has with the people, spaces, and environments around it²

.....

Civility - is the reminder of something bigger—a sense of human and object connectedness in all of the greater systems throughout space and society³

.....

Co-Creation - any act of collective creativity adding value to a project, product, idea, etc; has also been called participatory design⁴

.....

Design Thinking - a systematic approach to design problems in which one defines needs, problems, and insights in order to ideate, prototype, and test possible solutions⁵

Empathy - the ability to understand and have compassion for the feelings of others⁶

.....

Holistic Design - viewing something as part of an interconnected whole and more than just the sum of its parts—incorporating all aspects of the ecosystem in which the design is used⁷

.....

Inclusive Design - a method for designing a diversity of ways for people to participate so that everyone has a sense of belonging⁸

.....

Service Design - a systematic approach to the creation of services that focuses on customer experience, quality of the holistic service, and iteration of process⁹

Thoughtful Design - design that is for the majority of people, ecologically conscious, backed up with research, has a keen eye on interaction and produces treasured things or experiences—very intentional and tied to the idea that people will use it¹⁰

.....

Universal Design - creating for usability in products, environments, and experiences for all people, regardless of age, disability or other factors¹¹

.....

1. Graeme Hardie, Ronald Mace, and Jaine Place, *Accessible Environments: Toward Universal Design*. (Raleigh, NC: The Center for Universal Design-North Carolina State University, 1990), 10.

2. Katelyn Curto, "Tripp Trapp+: All-Ages Chair," *Furniture Design Development*, 2016.

3. Bill Stumpf, *The Ice Palace That Melted Away: How Good Design Enhances Our Lives* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), xiii.

4. Elizabeth Sanders and Jan Stappers, "Co-Creation and the New Landscapes of Design," *CoDesign* 4, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 6.

5. Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt, "Design Thinking for Social Innovation," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter (2010): 33.

6. Jon Kolko, *Well-Designed: How to Use Empathy to Create Products People Love*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014), 75.

7. "Holistic Design," *Interaction Design Foundation*, Accessed April 10, 2019, interaction-design.org/literature/topics/holistic-design.

8. Kat Holmes, "The No. 1 Thing You're Getting Wrong About Inclusive Design," *Fast Company*, October 16, 2018, [fastcompany.com/90243282/the-no-1-thing-youre-getting-wrong-about-inclusive-design](https://www.fastcompany.com/90243282/the-no-1-thing-youre-getting-wrong-about-inclusive-design).

9. Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider, *This is Service Design Thinking: Basics, Tools, Cases*, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: BIS Publishers, 2010), 29.

10. Katelyn Curto, "5 Essential Points for Thoughtful Design," *Design Manifesto*, 2016.

11. Graeme Hardie, Ronald Mace, and Jaine Place, *Accessible Environments: Toward Universal Design*. (Raleigh, NC: The Center for Universal Design-North Carolina State University, 1990), 10.

Thesis Statement

Designing with civility, in the application of the museum, is a means by which to infuse human connectedness in the process of creating and planning for spaces that are usable, comfortable, and considerate of and for all.

Area of Inquiry

How might the museum use design thinking principles to apply and spotlight inclusion and empathy in order to strengthen the civility present in the overall museum system? If one were to break down the connections or relationships in a museum, what would the mapping of these points look like? (see Figure 1.2) Furthermore, what would a systematic

framework for including all of these points in the decision-making process show? Every design decision must be made with consideration of the effects and influences of many factors. These include: aligning with museum and project intentions as well as looking holistically at the process, the space, and the impact of the message or messages

RELATIONSHIP MAPPING (Figure 1.2)



being shared. Can cultural institutions create consistency across the whole of the museum in a form that allows its staff to work from a vantage point that best helps them position the museum to be relevant and to provide the most good for society?¹² In order to strengthen the civility present in the museum system, what steps can be taken to account

.....
This research puts forth a new design approach for co-creating and designing in museums with consideration, understanding, and compassion—in the form and application of civility.

for these spacial relationships? Along with this, how can design principles, in combination with the drive for greater inclusion

and thought of people, then guide the conversation and co-creation of more civil museum spaces? This research puts forth a new design approach for co-creating and designing in museums with consideration, understanding, and compassion—in the form and application of civility.

Museums as institutions generally aim to be courteous in how they welcome and provide accommodation for the various types of people that come through their doors. They have the ability to also be thoughtful in their physical designs, developing their spaces with a holistic approach. Within the larger context of ongoing inclusionary conversations, AAM’s *Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion Working Group*, The Empathetic Museum’s *Maturity Model*, and the *MASS Action Toolkit*

have already been working on drawing attention to such issues and providing problem-solving approaches. This thesis explores a new way of thinking through these challenges, drawing from theory around the future in these institutional spaces, various design methodologies, spatial inclusion and access, and the essence of civility. This research focuses on the functionality of a space, providing examples that trail ADA because of the movement’s success in raising awareness to injustice and then creating policy change—a process that many of these other movements are going through the motions of. This does not mean to say that other identity aspects should not be approached in the same way, with civility, but for the sake of this project, the scope of this work is built around functional space as an

introduction to the application of this theory in museum spaces.

Delving into the processes, principles, and applications of different thought methodologies allows for the examination of different ways in which design tools from various approaches can be melded together. It is essential to then fortify empathy and compassion in courteous and efficient ways as these are vitally important values in designing for people in a manner that is truly created for them as individuals. Emphasizing the role of iteration and prototyping in the discovery process, combined with feedback from and co-creation between stakeholders, helps to identify and strengthen the design path that can work best for your project. Creating harmony in museums is trying to

.....

Creating harmony in museums is trying to find a better solution to problems that arise—there is no guaranteed or perfect design solution.

questioning, and prototyping, opportunities for iteration, efficiency, and access can appear and be applied within and around the museum. This is all in the attempt to create a more relevant and comfortable experience, reinforcing the overall civility of the museum and together bolstering the intention of the museum as a space for all.

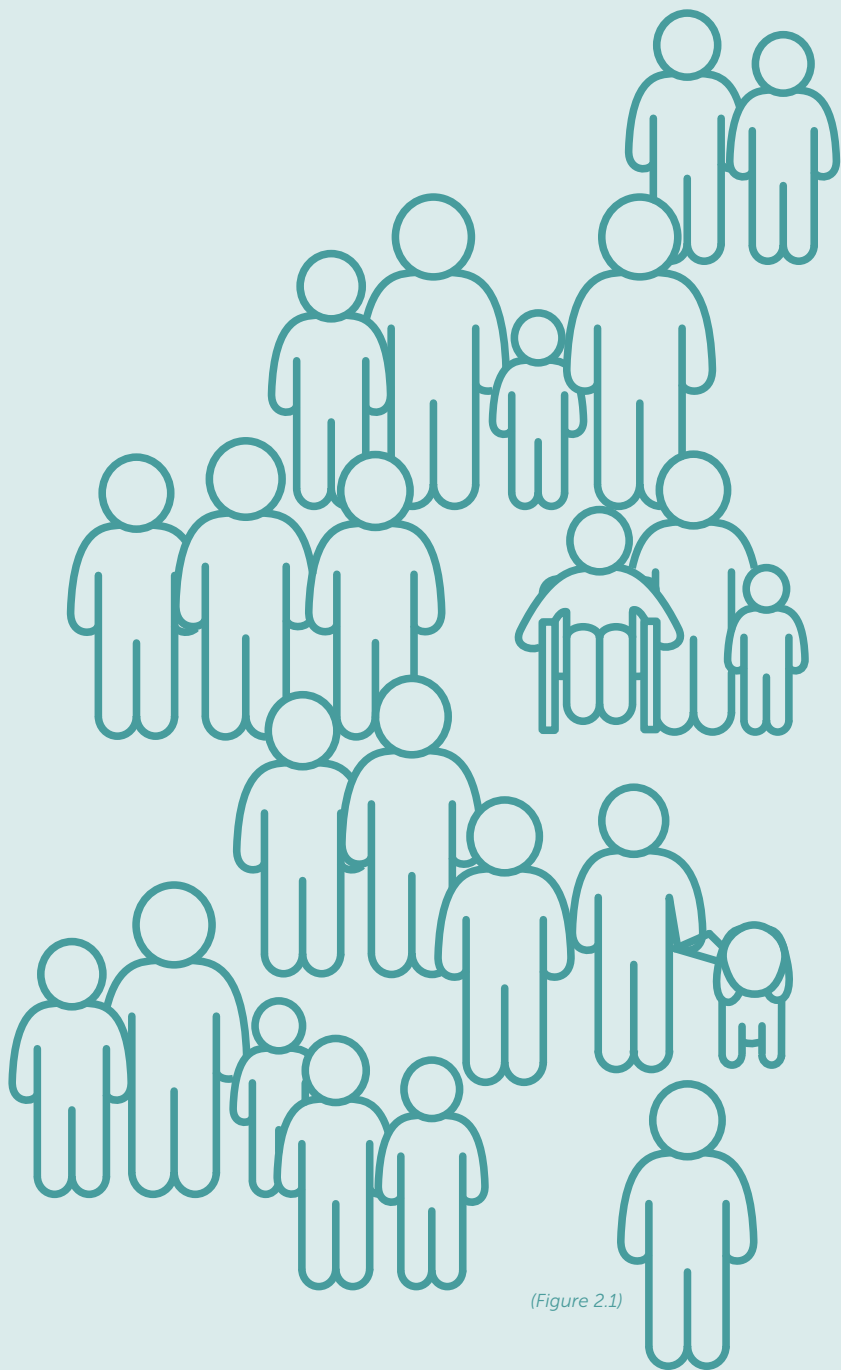
find a better solution to problems that arise—there is no guaranteed or perfect design solution. In observing,

.....

12. Gail Anderson, *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), 1.

Project & Impact Goals

- Understand the dependencies in the relationships that are created and can be strengthened in the museum space
- Inspire a more holistic way of looking at the museum—not just from designers, but from staff throughout the museum
- Reinforce the intent of the museum as a cornerstone of community and reflect upon this relationship while creating in the ideals of understanding, comfort, and accessibility in all aspects of designed form
- Design by intent as to make sure decisions reflect the mission of the museum, what it is striving to be, and the inclusion it is trying to promote
- Better understand what designing with civility can mean and what it looks like in application and practice
- Highlight successful civil approaches already pursued in the museum and other public spaces



(Figure 2.1)

Civility... is the reminder of something bigger—a sense of human and object connectedness in all of the greater systems throughout space and society.

(Definition synthesized from Bill Stumpf)

SECTION 2

Rationale for Civility

"I think of civility in three ways—things of civility, places of civility, and paths of civility. Civility is comfort, hidden goodness, social lubricant, personal worth, helping others, play—civility is the joy we take in our human achievements and the compassion we show toward our all-too-human faults. Civility can be extended by technology and can be obliterated by it. Civility is toleration, understanding. It is the integration of differences, not the heightening of them."

—Bill Stumpf¹³

Civility should inherently be a part of all design. It is the reminder of something bigger—a sense of human and object connectedness in all of the greater systems throughout space and society. Framed in understanding and compassion, civility is not necessarily found in the grand design

gestures, but in the seemingly small ones. It is a collective personal responsibility for "not just what we own, but what we all share"—and in this case, the museum.¹⁴

If a museum does not consider the even larger system it works within, in a given landscape, its relevance to that location becomes lost, confusing, and unclear. The relationship a museum has to the surrounding community and its citizens needs to exist in a certain context in order for people to actually return again and buy into the museum, its mission, and its messaging. Civility is an attitude, a state of mind, an awareness, a consideration—all things that the museum can strive to include in their design process and daily operations.

Needs Statement

What could a holistic approach to museum design look like and what could it help achieve? This strategic process of combining design thinking tools with an emphasis on inclusion and empathy is meant to frame projects within their civil intentions. Initially rooted in the act of designing and planning for museum spaces, this proposed design theory aims to go beyond the ability to provide outstanding customer service in the form of human-to-human exchanges, but strives to look more broadly—to highlight and review the spatial interactions that happen in the museum and to co-creatively design for them. This concept looks toward the museum as a whole in order to design for it, and the people that connect to it, more holistically and thoroughly.

Framing the museum within civility comes in

the form of identifying the working system that the relationships within the museum space create and then taking steps to identify needs and make consideration for all of the other parts. This includes, but is not limited to: visitor comfort, staff needs, the interaction between exhibition spaces, access and ability to get to basic comforts, functions of a space, and a balance with the land and community around the museum. Museums have a responsibility to strive to be civil and considerate, as they are, in theory, public spaces that function as community assets and aim to be places of comfort for surrounding society. Museums throughout the United States are going through changes in how they present the histories and stories they tell. In this time of change, museums are also starting to see the value in updating the

accommodations of their space and the value it can provide. This needs to be approached systematically, because consideration in planning for individual elements in the museum, in the long run, does not provide the best structuring for future relevancy of the whole. All parts of the museum need to be planned for in collaboration, in order to strengthen the museum as an entity and increase its connection to and acceptance by its visitors and the surrounding community.

This investigation will initially impact exhibit designers and museum planners as a methodology that can be applied to their

work. The aim of this project is to reach all staff of the museum—all individuals who create and problem solve in the museum space. This civil topic is looking at how we can do better as museum professionals for the people and spaces we are working to improve, by approaching any project through a wider lens. In looking at the more extensive system it could be, museums can be made usable, comfortable, and considerate of and for everyone.

13. Bill Stumpf, *The Ice Palace That Melted Away: How Good Design Enhances Our Lives* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), xiii.
14. Ibid., 141.

CHANGE MAKERS OF CIVILITY (Figure 2.2)



Literature Review Overview

Many industry leaders, both in museums and in other fields, touch on ideas and thought applications that reflect civility, often without mentioning the word itself. The following topics lend themselves to the defining of civility, and the work of writers referenced serves as influence in this new thought approach.

RETHINKING THE MUSEUM - Over the years, what has the museum been defined as and what does it seem to be striving to change? How can we start to look at and consider the museum in new ways?

APPLYING DESIGN - What is design, and how can one go about the process? What design thought processes can be applied to the planning and design of museum spaces?

PROVIDING INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES - What does it mean to include all people and why is this a relevant approach? What does the future of access look like?

THE MANY FACES OF CIVIL - What is civil and why should this be a element critical to design in all of its forms? How does this focus lend to the museum as a social space?

Rethinking the Museum

MAIN SOURCES FOR THIS FOCUS

Nina Simon - *The Art of Relevance*
Lynn Dierking and John Falk - *The Museum Experience Revisited*

David Fleming - *Creative Spaces*

Understanding the museum as a space, and its relevance to people, is an essential first step in creating a new lens through which to look at it. Over the years, many writers have come to define these places in what they strive to do and what they actually accomplish. Nina Simon argues that relevant experiences are those connected to the needs, assets, and interests of the community. *"If it's so easy to visit, and the experience yields value, your work is bound to be relevant. But if it's difficult to visit, and the value of the experience is hard to describe, why would*

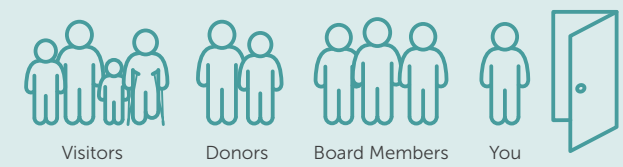
*anybody care to try?"*¹⁵ Connecting to the needs of visitors and the ease of access, Simon's words reinforce how, in striving to examine the museum's relationships, the museum could be set on the path to maintain and strengthen its relevance and forward thinking only if these

.....
Relevant experiences are those connected to the needs, assets, & interests of the community.
—Nina Simon

key elements are consistently taken into consideration. If spaces are accessible and working to the benefit of everyone, these basic aspects of comfort won't actually be acknowledged in their experience. People tend to only really notice when problems arise for them in a situation.

Putting a broad emphasis on the word "we," Simon shines a light on both the people we hope the museum will be relevant to, regarding visitors, donors, and others that have an interest in the space, while simultaneously presenting a reminder to look at the relevances in our own lives. "Relevance determines most of what we do. The paths we walk. The choices we make...If we deem something relevant, we'll open the door."¹⁶ (see Figure 2.3) While this statement points to the personal nature of giving a voice to ideas

AT THE DOOR OF RELEVANCE (Figure 2.3)



and approaches that are relevant to each of us individually, it also brings to the surface that it seems to stand that most people who design within museums and have the decision-making power over spaces are able-bodied individuals. Fundamentally, it takes a restructuring of one's thought and design processes—along with the emphasis of empathy—to not only design for oneself and to one's abilities. The vast majority of able-bodied designers and museum professionals, coupled with the inherent drive to design for self-relevance, may be one of the reasons

why accessible and universal design is not the norm across public spaces. Indicating the connections between relevance and empathy, in understanding what matters and what works best for your audience, Simon reinforces the notion that museums do not have all the answers. They should strive, by observing and working with their audiences, to create spaces that work for anyone and everyone.¹⁷

It is important to consistently question why people go to museums, what they do there, and what they take away—if it is anything. Lynn Dierking and John Falk are strong advocates for freedom and choice in how visitors interact with and go through museum spaces, but the pair calls out museum professionals for their seemingly

obvious lack of co-creation in the design process. As well-intentioned as designers and museum executives may be, their separation of museum decisions—frequently labeled as "audience-focused"—only extends to certain places, not often including places such as the gift shop, admissions, and food concessions.¹⁸ (see Figure 2.4) That being said, Dierking and Falk are also proponents of looking at the museum as a system and not a series of need-based projects. Dierking

OFTEN FORGOTTEN SPACES (Figure 2.4)



and Falk advocate for designing to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialization of design or experiences.¹⁹

In furthering the idea of the breadth of the museum space, David Fleming dives deeper

..... • **The museum space [is] the sequence of rooms, voids, and bits in between that a visitor encounters having entered the museum... the physical environs of the building, the exterior..., and its immediate surroundings. —David Flemming**

into spatial relationships from shops, cafes, stairways, to coatrooms, toilets, and offices. He defines museum space as “the sequence of rooms, voids,

and bits in between that a visitor encounters having entered the museum. But museum space is also the physical environs of the building, the exterior of the building itself, and its immediate surroundings.”²⁰ Fleming emphasizes with an importance that we cannot disassociate museum design from the drive for inclusiveness, accessibility, and diversity, especially when creating for physical designs and providing spaces of comfort within the museum.

..... •
^{15.} Nina Simon, *The Art of Relevance* (Santa Cruz, California: Museum 2.0, 2016), 35.
^{16.} Ibid, 43.
^{17.} Ibid., 51.
^{18.} Lynn D. Dierking and John H. Falk, *The Museum Experience Revisited* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 31.
^{19.} Ibid., 128.
^{20.} David Fleming, “Creative Space” in *Reshaping Museum Space: Architecture, Design, Exhibitions*, Suzanne Macleod (London, UK: Routledge, 2005), 54.

Applying Design

MAIN SOURCES FOR THIS FOCUS

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Don Norman - *The Design of Everyday Things*

Tim Brown - *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation*

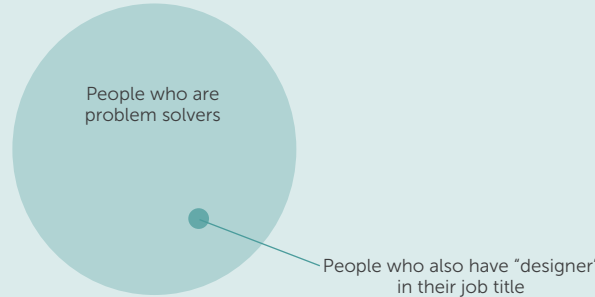
John Darzentas and Jenny Darzentas - *Systems Thinking in Design: Service Design and Self-Service*

Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider - *This is Service Design Thinking: Basics, Tools, Cases*

Jay Rounds - *The Museum and Its Relationships as a Loosely Coupled System*

“We are all designers because we must be—based simply on the fact that designers are problem solvers, structuring our world to support ourselves.”²¹ While some people may have job titles that proclaim “designer” as a position (see Figure 2.5), design firmly stands as a verb and is a process that all people who work toward bettering an object, interaction,

FINDING DESIGNERS (Figure 2.5)

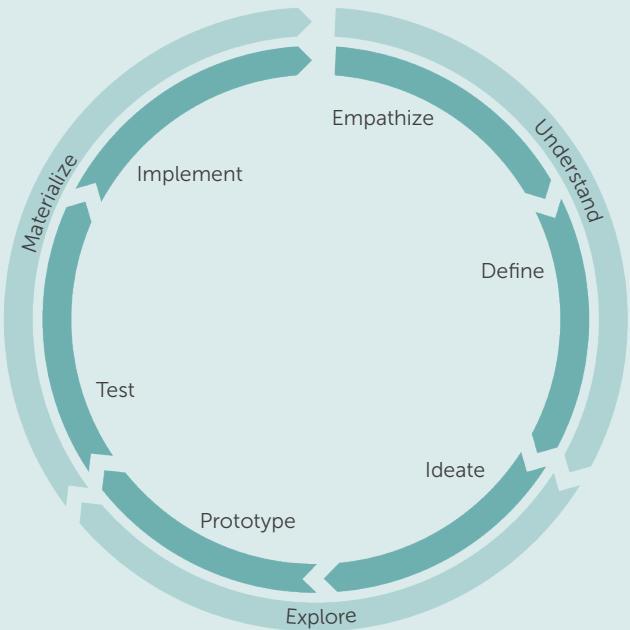
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experience, etc, can have a hand in defining and creating.

In formulating and applying principles in working through any project, design thinking taps into the “capabilities we all have, but that can be overlooked by more conventional problem-solving practices.”²² One cannot talk of design thinking without mentioning IDEO, the design firm that put a spotlight on this systematic approach that they utilize and have branded in their work. They have come to define design thinking as an application that focuses on creating products and services that are human-centered, in a process that itself is also deeply human.²³ Tim Brown, current President and CEO of IDEO, says that “the evolution from design to design thinking is the story of the evolution from the creation of products to the analysis of the

DESIGN THINKING PROCESS (Figure 2.6)

Slightly modified from the Nielsen Norman Group ²⁴



relationship between people and products, and from there to the relationship between people and people.”²⁵ The philosophy of IDEO is clear in that design thinking is not an exact science. It is instead a methodology

How might we?
—IDEO

of overlapping steps, sequenced only by how well they lend to the process. (see Figure

2.6) With every new challenge, projects conducted at IDEO begin with the phrase, “How might we?”²⁶

The act of design *thinking* and then design *doing* can emphasize a design’s holistic nature to fundamentally exist within a fabricated system. Corresponding with that, systems thinking is all about seeing the bigger picture—looking to the relationships

that all of the connecting points in an organizational system have, and examining how they influence and impact various other elements. In the broader sense, Darzentas and Darzentas define the process of systems-based thinking as human-centric by nature and a crafting of interactions through the design of

intangible ‘products’—like services.²⁷ They also highlight the necessity for design interventions to focus on the ‘larger picture’ if

The task of service designers in to enable co-creation of value between all stakeholders by helping to create the right conditions for interactions and relationships to emerge.
—John Darzentas & Jenny Darzentas

they are ever to be accepted, and in order not to lose sight of important relationships between smaller parts.²⁸ Darzentas and Darzentas present systems thinking to be not just a new way of looking directly at design problems, but arguably also as an approach to confronting situations in a holistic manner. They understand it to be no longer possible to “ignore the complexity surrounding the design of services and design problems in general.”²⁹ This statement highlights the pair’s belief that the task of service designers is to enable co-creation of value between all stakeholders by helping to create the right conditions for interactions and relationships to emerge.

Within the context of its use-systems, service design is the design of services. While Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider argue that

defining service design in one single way might constrain the evolution of what service design is and can be, they are firm in its basis—common language and an approach that generally results in “the design of systems and processes aimed at providing a holistic service to the user.”³⁰ (see Figure 2.7)

Stickdorn and Schneider present a framework and tools to apply service design thinking to any type of service, from government institutions to coffee shops to hospitals. They emphasize the greatest need in viewing the system through the eyes

In actuality “museums do their work in the midst of an extremely complex network of relationships and interdependencies.” —Jay Rounds

SERVICE DESIGN DRIVERS (Figure 2.7)

Based on five principles of service design and systems thinking, Stickdorn and Schneider identify the following as driving concepts in striving to innovate existing services and create new ones:



User Centered

1. User-centered - aims for a true understanding of habits, culture, social context, and motivation of users



Co-creative

2. Co-creative - takes consideration of all the various stakeholders—both people and interfaces



Sequencing

3. Sequencing - the breakdown of service processes into single touchpoints and interactions that assists in understanding the rhythm or paths of a service



Evidencing

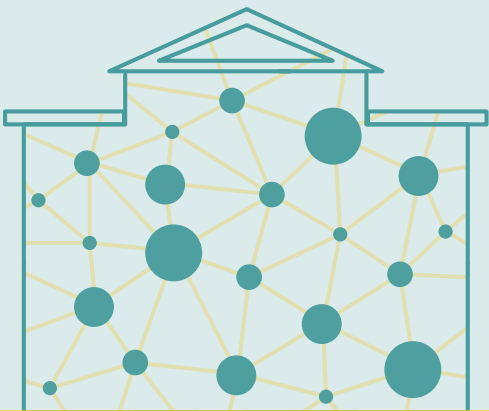
4. Evidencing - enhances and prolongs services through physical artifacts that can provide an increased customer understanding and appreciation of the service



Holistic

5. Holistic - intends to see the wider context and alternative approaches to how a service process can take place³¹

MUSEUM NETWORK (Figure 2.8)



How can [museums] do useful work within a larger flow of events that is only partially under their control?
—Jay Round

of all of the individual stakeholders in order to design consistently and holistically.

Bringing that holistic view to the museum, Jay

Rounds presents the idea that museums often try to produce “a tightly coupled sequence of controlled events leading to predicted, desired outcomes,” when in actuality “museums do their work in the midst of an extremely complex network of relationships and interdependencies.”³² (see Figure 2.8)

He contends that failure of any one part of the system can cripple the whole and therefore, consideration of the entire system must be taken. Rounds is realistic in stating that purpose and circumstance are the driving elements in understanding the intertwined nature of some museum elements. He says that museum staff must focus on how they can do useful work within a larger flow of events that is only partially under their control, instead of unsuccessfully trying to operate individual and controlled smaller parts.³³

21. Donald A. Norman, *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2004), 226.

22. Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt, “Design Thinking for Social Innovation,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter (2010): 33.

23. Ibid., 33.

24. Sarah Gibbons, “Design Thinking 101,” *Nielsen Norman Group*, July 31, 2016, nngroup.com/articles/design-thinking/.

25. Tim Brown, *Change by Design: How Design Thinking Transforms Organizations and Inspires Innovation*. (New York, NY: HarpersBusiness) 41-42.

26. Ibid., 184.

27. John Darzentas and Jenny Darzentas, “Systems Thinking in Design: Service Design and Self-Service,” *Form Academic: Research Journal of Design and Design Education* 7, no.4, (2014): 1.

28. Ibid., 2.

29. Ibid., 1.

30. Marc Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider, *This is Service*

Design Thinking: Basics, Tools, Cases, (Amsterdam, Netherlands: BIS Publishers, 2010), 29.

31. Ibid., 33.

32. Jay Rounds, “The Museum and Its Relationships as a Loosely Coupled System,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55, no. 4, (2012): 414.

33. Ibid., 420.

Providing Inclusive Experiences

MAIN SOURCES FOR THIS FOCUS

Jon Kolko - *Well-Designed: How to Use Empathy to Create Products People Love*

Chris Downey - *Design with the Blind in Mind*

Center for Universal Design, NC State University - *The Principles of Universal Design*

Microsoft Design - *Inclusive Toolkit*

Jeremy Price, Christine Reich, Ellen Rubin, and Mary Ann Steiner - *Inclusion, Disabilities, and Informal Science Learning: A CAISE Inquiry Group Report*

What does it really mean to provide inclusivity or accessibility? There is more to it than just inviting people with a range of abilities into a space. Spaces can be designed to work seamlessly for the people that may interact with them, and have a responsibility to do so. The planning and design of space should look to meet the need to accommodate and provide comfort for anyone. It's a layer of consideration—meeting people where

they are³⁴—and must be an ideology infused into infrastructure and design choices. Understanding and empathy play large roles in the desire to design for all people. As Jon Kolko puts it:

"Understanding is about gaining knowledge. You may have no knowledge of a particular context...When the goal is to learn, the research output will typically be factual

statements. These factual statements can identify design opportunities—these are the places where design can help.

Empathy is about acquiring feeling. The goal is to feel what it's like to be another person.

The goal is kind of strange because it is *unachievable*. *To feel what someone else feels, you would need to actually become that person. You can approximate [their] feelings, so product research intended to build empathy is really trying to feel what other people feel. This consideration is still analytical, it's about understanding. You need to get closer to experiencing the same emotions, so you need to put yourself in the types of situations they encounter."*

—Jon Kolko ³⁵ (see Figure 2.9)

Kolko emphasizes the simple act of spending

EMPATHETIC IMPOSSIBILITY (Figure 2.9)



time with your user audience, with the goal of both understanding and empathizing with them.³⁶ The gist of designing with empathy is an approach to thinking of design in the context of providing welcoming and comfortable experiences. In the museum, visitors shouldn't be fundamentally excluded from participating in experiences based on their ability. It is only once we approach the

museum and its visitors and staff, in the ideals of inclusion and understanding, that the interactions we create—between the parts of the museum system and within the space—can be considered elements created for all people.

SYMBOLS OF ACCESS (Figure 2.10)



The original *International Symbol of Access* designed by Danish graphic design student Susanne Koefoed in 1968.³⁷



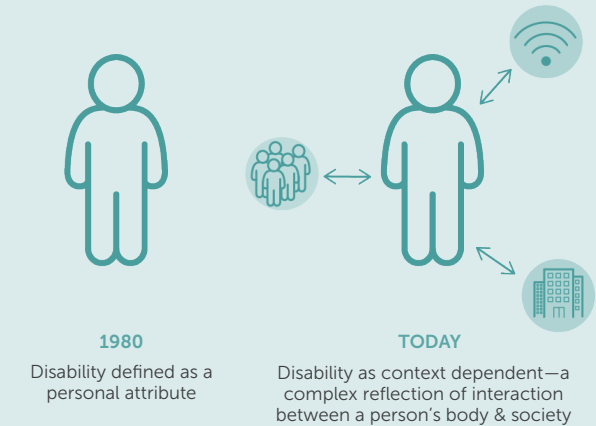
Started as guerrilla activism, the *Accessible Icon Project* continues to gain traction and public application as a social design project.³⁸

In mandated requirements—on the legal side of things—the *Americans with Disabilities Act* or *ADA*, was signed into law in 1990. It still stands as a piece of legislation that

prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities.³⁹ *ADA* guidelines are a government-issued, seemingly all-inclusive document that gives baseline spacial measurements to follow when planning for various public elements in order to make them accessible. In modern society, one can most easily spot the impact of this law in ramps, curb cuts, and accessible public restroom stalls. Prior to *ADA*, in 1980, the *World Health Organization (WHO)* defined disability as a personal attribute and, in the context of health experiences, as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.⁴⁰ (see *Figure 2.11*) As our understanding of disability continues to change as we reevaluate it, is the act of implementing spatial add-ons

WHO'S DEFINITION OF DISABILITY (Figure 2.11)

Slightly modified from the *Microsoft Inclusive Design Toolkit*⁴¹



enough in providing for individuals with an array of ability? If one were to just follow *ADA* guidelines in the planning of a space, they theoretically could create spatial elements that are deemed by the government to be legally accessible. This approach does not

mandate prototyping and evaluation with actual people who possess a range of ability and so what is missed when there is no direct buy-in from your audience range, especially when it includes often-excluded individuals? Does this process and the utilization of only this government tool actually provide for people of varying abilities in the best way or does it ignore their insights and direct needs?

“Nothing about us without us” is a saying adopted by the disability rights movement. It highlights the importance of respecting the abilities of people with disabilities to speak for their rights and needs—bringing their life experiences and accessibility expertise into what can be a co-creative process.⁴² Allowing a sense of ownership by

Nothing about us without us.

visitors of varying abilities, the inclusion of diverse perspectives also tends to influence more positive attitudes overall toward disability.

This inclusion of often-excluded stakeholders lends to staff seeing past disability as a design constraint and instead introduces them to the people who they'll want to design great experiences for. It helps core team members to design with a person's story in mind, putting a face at the forefront of design and utilizing an individual's strengths and knowledge as not just a symbolic gesture in this working process.⁴³

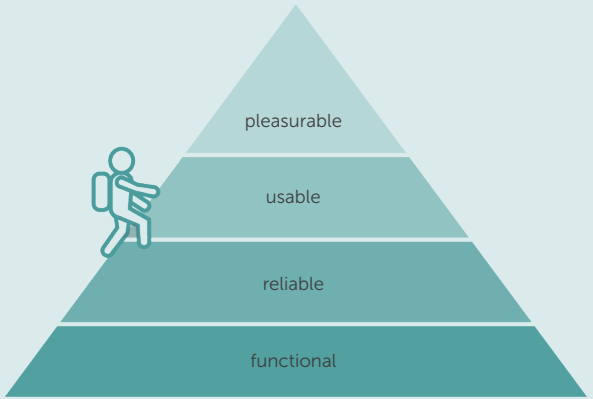
Our collective understanding of what it means to be able-bodied or disabled continues to grow more expansive as well. Chris Downey says he has actually become a better

architect since he lost his sense of sight. In the disability community, he has heard it said that "there are really only two types of people. There are those with disabilities, and there are those that haven't quite found theirs yet."⁴⁴ The time element of disability is also becoming more widely considered. The state of being able-bodied is only a temporary state of being, one that can change at any minute. This transference is an essential part of the human condition, so it becomes necessary to inclusively plan and design for this inevitable

"There are really only two types of people. There are those with disabilities, and there are those that haven't quite found theirs yet."
—Chris Downey

ITERATING UPON MASLOW (Figure 2.12)

Slightly modified from *Designing with Emotion* by Aaron Walter⁴⁵



How can we ensure our spaces are meeting visitor's most basic needs before we try to provide them enjoyable experiences?

phase of human life more holistically. More recently, the *World Health Organization* has also come to update their definition of disability, as now context dependent—not just a health problem, but a complex

phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society.⁴⁶

Considering the broad range of people's abilities and striving to best serve them all through design, universal design found its roots at North Carolina State University in 1994, in what is now called the *Center for Universal Design*. There, this approach to design was defined to include seven principles.

- 1. Equitable use** - useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities
- 2. Flexibility in use** - accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities
- 3. Simple and intuitive use** - easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or

current concentration level

- 4. **Perceptible information** - communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities
- 5. **Tolerance for error** - minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions
- 6. **Low physical effort** - can be used efficiently and comfortably, with a minimum of fatigue
- 7. **Size and space for approach and use** - Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.⁴⁷

Summarized, universal design is the design

of products and environments that are to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, and without the need for adaptation or specialized design.⁴⁸ A key figure in the development of these principles, Ron Mace promoted universally designed solutions as ones that created no additional project cost or noticeable change in appearance. These solutions can benefit virtually anyone, highlighting their "lifespan design" and provided comfort.⁴⁹

Along with this growing understanding of disability as a part of the human condition, *The Institute for Human Centered Design (IHCD)*, has shifted from the language of *universal design* and have replaced it with *inclusionary design*. This is following the lead of their UK colleagues, who saw the change as fundamental to the work they do.

.....

There may not be a single solution that works best for all, but a quest for a balance of everyone's needs matters.
—IHCD

for the widest breadth of people across the spectrum of ability, age, culture, and socio-economic status.⁵⁰ They have framed its vocabulary shift in the following points:

- "in a world in which human diversity is not celebrated, but often threatened, inclusive design more directly states a commitment to not only acknowledge but celebrate diversity"
- it "resonates with a wide audience who can

IHCD sees this seemingly subtle term difference as one that highlights design that anticipates

intuitively grasp the idea."

- it "more accurately communicates the conviction that this practice is a continuous process of evolving ever more responsive solutions to a changing human reality. There may not be a single solution that works best for all, but a quest for a balance of everyone's needs matters."⁵¹

IHCD states that the social art of design must find a way to respond to the modern day, one where difference in ability has increased to become a

predictable human experience and not an assumed outlier.⁵²

.....

Difference in ability has increased to become a predictable human experience and not an assumed outlier.
—IHCD

Continuing with this shift to inclusionary design, *Microsoft* instituted a new department—that of Inclusive Design. The newly founded team has developed an *Inclusive Design Toolkit* to be used within the UX work that *Microsoft* creates, as well as to serve as a resource for utilization outside the company. It presents a design methodology that looks toward meaningful change and draws on the full range of human diversity.⁵³ The toolkit pinpoints the problem with a lot of design—that we use our “own abilities as a baseline, making things easy to use for some people, but difficult for others.”⁵⁴ It is central to *Microsoft’s* mission to see human diversity as a resource for better design and as a feature that reflects their actual and potential customer bases. Their design team approaches constraints as a way to make

designs better and often more beneficial to a larger number of people. Learning how individuals adapt to the world around them means spending time understanding their experience from their perspective—not relying on simulated abilities using blindfolds, earplugs, and wheelchairs.⁵⁵ Kat Holmes, who was the Principal Director of the Inclusive Design team, has also stated that disability should be thought of more as mismatched interactions. This puts the responsibility on the designer to examine the choices they make in how they increase or decrease those mismatched interactions between people and their world.⁵⁶

.....

When designing for people, there simply is no such thing as “normal.”
—Microsoft Inclusive Design

It is crucial to understand that when designing for people, there simply is no such thing as “normal.” The opportunities we design within space must not ignore the range of humanity and must instead, embrace it. Everyone has abilities and limits to those abilities. Focusing on what is universally important to all humans can combine with an understood language that sits central to your mission with stakeholders who possess a range of ability.⁵⁷ This can create a considerate approach that truly does work for and around all of the potential people that may come into contact with your institutional spaces and designs.

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34. Liana Dragoman, interview by Kate Curto, February 19, 2019.

35. Jon Kolko, *Well-Designed: How to Use Empathy to Create Products People Love*, (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, 2014), 75.

36. Ibid., 73.

37. “International Symbol of Accessibility,” *RI Global*, Accessed April 26, 2019, riglobal.org/about/intl-symbol-of-access/.

38. “The Accessible Icon Project,” *The Accessible Icon Project*, Accessed April 14, 2019, accessibleicon.org/.

39. “Introduction to the ADA”, *ADA: United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division*, Accessed March 28, 2019, ada.gov/ada_intro.htm.

40. World Health Organization, *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps: A Manual of Classification Relating to the Consequences of Disease*, (Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 1980), 28.

41. Shum, Albert, Kat Holmes, Kris Woolery, et al, “Inclusive: Microsoft Design,” (Design Toolkit, 2016), 18.

42. Jeremy Price, Christine Reich, Ellen Rubin, et al, *Inclusion, Disabilities, and Informal Science Learning: A CAISE Inquiry Group Report*, (Washington, DC: Center for Advancement of Informal Science Education, 2010), 60.

43. Ibid., 20.

44. Chris Downey, “Design with the Blind in Mind,” filmed at TEDCity2.0 in October 2013, *TED video*, 11:36, ted.com/

talks/chris_downey_design_with_the_blind_in_mind/transcript?language=en#t-624955.

45. Aaron Walter, *Designing for Emotion*, (New York, NY: A Book Apart, 2011), 6.

46. World Health Organization, "Health Topics: Disabilities," *World Health Organization*, accessed January 5, 2019, who.int/topics/disabilities/en/.

47. Bettye Rose Connell, Mike Jones, Ron Mace, et al, "The Principles of Universal Design," *NC State University, The Center for Universal Design*, Last modified April 1, 1997, projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciplestext.htm.

48. Ibid.

49. Graeme Hardie, Ronald Mace, and Jaine Place, *Accessible Environments: Toward Universal Design*. (Raleigh, NC: The Center for Universal Design-North Carolina State University, 1990), 10.

50. "Inclusive Design: History," *Institute for Human Centered Design*, accessed December 3, 2018, humancentereddesign.org/inclusive-design/history.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. Shum, Albert, Kat Holmes, Kris Woolery, et al, "Inclusive: Microsoft Design," (Design Toolkit, 2016), 11.

54. Ibid., 6.

55. Ibid., 32.

56. Kat Holmes, "Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design," (presentation, GeekWire Summit, Seattle, WA, October 2018).

57. Shum, Albert, Kat Holmes, Kris Woolery, et al, "Inclusive: Microsoft Design," (Design Toolkit, 2016), 34.

The Many Faces of Civil

MAIN SOURCES FOR THIS FOCUS

Eric Klinenberg - *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*

Elaine Heumann Gurian - *Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian*

Bill Stumpf - *The Ice Palace That Melted Away: How Good Design Enhances Our Lives*

What is civility and why is it the guiding principle of this thesis research? In its reminder of something bigger and a greater sense of connectedness, what makes civility such an important lens to view the museum and the design of such spaces through?

Palaces for the People was a term first coined by Andrew Carnegie as a concept

for the creation of social institutions and infrastructure that helped people get ahead in their lives. These instances of social infrastructure have been discovered to be a glue that binds communities together and shapes the way people interact.⁵⁸ Eric Klinenberg, an NYU Professor of Sociology, says that when an investment is made into social infrastructures, we all reap many kinds

PALACE FOR THE PEOPLE (Figure 2.13)



Museums = Social Infrastructure = Palaces for the People

of benefits, including a higher probability of interacting with the people around us and connecting to the broader public. These physical places are crucially important because “local, face-to-face interactions are the building blocks of public life” and play a critical yet underappreciated role in modern society.⁵⁹ Klinenberg identifies public institutions, like museums, (see Figure 2.13) as vital parts of social infrastructure, establishing

physical space where people can assemble.⁶⁰ His research reinforces the essential nature of this social infrastructure in building strong communities, creating empathy between people, and maintaining a view of oneself as part of something larger.

Elaine Heumann Gurian has spent many years in the museum field musing on topics such as civic responsibility, social service, architectural spaces, exhibits, spirituality, and rationality.⁶¹ In her work, she discusses the museum’s potential as a space that can foster societal cohesion and civility in the inherent public responsibility it has.⁶² She also addresses the need for museums to make further strides to implement inclusion and to take the necessary steps to comprehensively infuse this into their existing museum

systems. Heumann Gurian contends that we must rethink the museum’s relationship to the public. What the museum provides to its visitors is a service, and therefore we must encourage a sensitivity of space, designing around making it clear that all people are welcome.⁶³ This commitment to building a socially responsible institution—one that is constantly tended to and is a true advocate for the audience—is a difficult task, but one that must happen in order for civility to prevail.⁶⁴

Civility branch[es] into three directions: things of civility, places of civility, and paths of civility —Bill Stumpf

In the mind of industrial designer Bill Stumpf, he saw civility branching into

three directions: things of civility, places of civility, and paths of civility. Stumpf inherently saw civility as a principle that promoted trust and goodwill in places, and as an element that protected the idea of community.⁶⁵

In defense of civility, he argued that it created the feeling that people are part of something bigger, a connection to one another that branches across space and stands firm in

Civility ...created the feeling that people are part of something bigger, a connection to one another that branches across space and stands firm in public respect for all of the individuals who are part of the relationship. —Bill Stumpf

CIVILITY STEMMED FROM (Figure 2.14)

The intersections where design comes into the picture.



Buildings



Environments



Attitudes



Programs

public respect for all of the individuals who are part of the relationship.⁶⁶ His defining of civility stemmed from the expression of understanding and compassion in

buildings and environments, as well as in attitudes and programs—the intersection where design comes into the picture.

Civil solutions are what we as designers and advocates for the museum relationships should strive to discover.

—Synthesized from Bill Stumpf

"I have spoken a great deal about the past... both, its civility and its inconvenience. I've also dealt with the present, its incivility and its achievements—technical and otherwise. Design should preserve the best of both—mediate extremes without destroying them—and thus build a new civility. Designers and design could arrive at much more civil solutions." —Bill Stumpf⁶⁷

Civil solutions are what we as designers and advocates for museum relationships should strive to discover. In creating new ways to understand and design for the inclusion of people and spaces, this can directly lend to a strengthening of the overall museum system and build for more relevant futures in these spaces.

58. Eric Klinenberg, *Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polarization, and the Decline of Civic Life*, (New York, NY: Crown, 2018), 15.

59. Ibid., 15.

60. Ibid., 30.

61. Elaine Heumann Gurian, *Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian*, (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 1.

62. Ibid., 48.

63. Ibid., 125.

64. Ibid., 88.

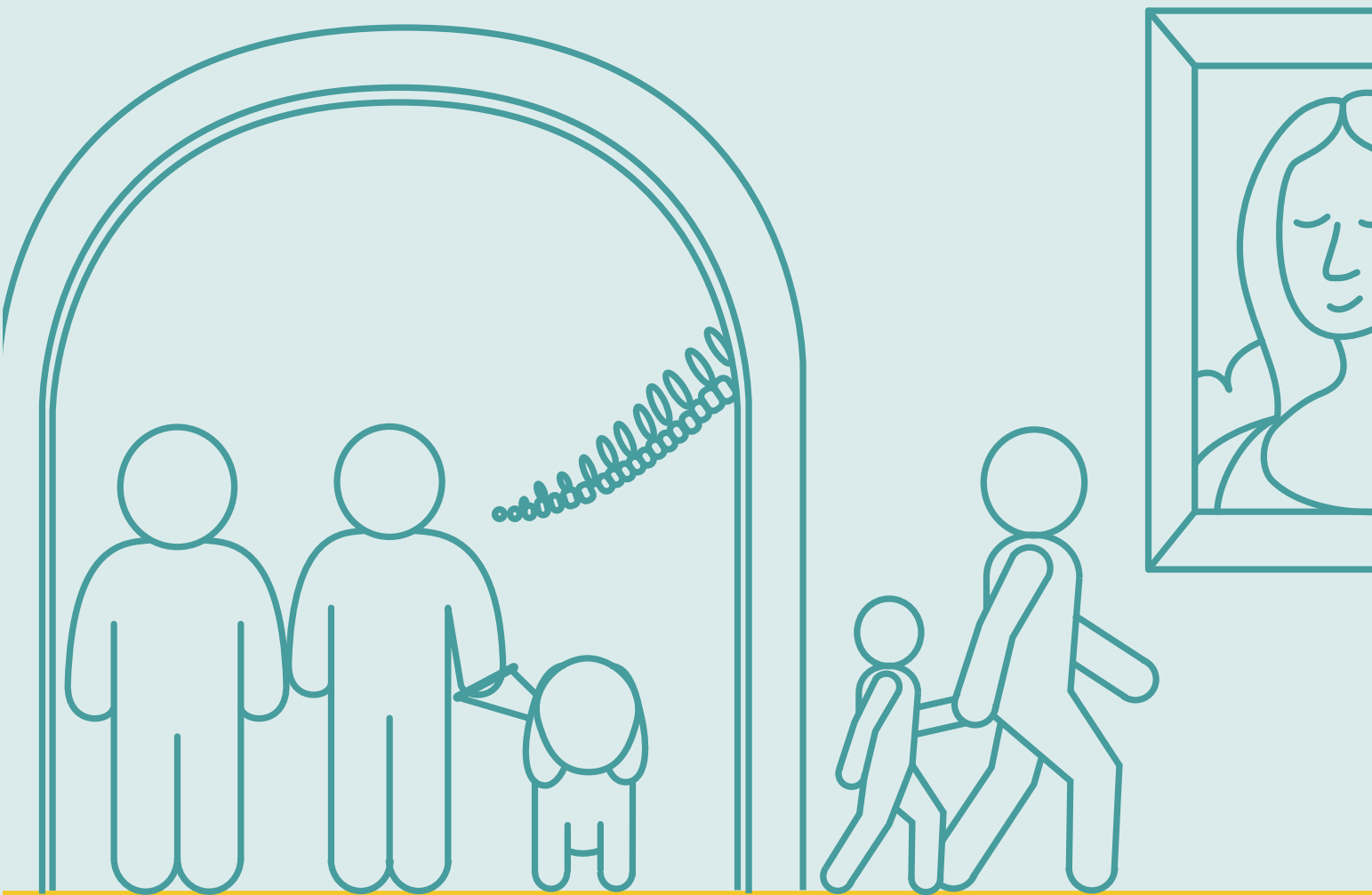
65. Bill Stumpf, *The Ice Palace That Melted Away: How Good Design Enhances Our Lives* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), xvi.

66. Ibid., 127.

67. Ibid., 159.

Civility is the art and act of caring for others.

—Deborah King *(Author & Meditation Teacher)*



(Figure 3.1)

SECTION 3

Creating with People

So what does civility look like out in the world? Civility is an intention, a continually iterated upon a process, and a feeling infused into decisions across the museum space. That being said, the following points outline what civility can look like in the museum as reference for the application of thought in any project. This can essentially take many forms and appear in various touchpoints in different institutions.

The understanding of civility with visitors and within the museum space may constantly be in flux, changing along with the individuals that come through the doors. In the long run, striving for civility in the museum is not

an approach that deems to just check all of the boxes on a list. It is a continuous process, consistently working toward solutions, and the infusion of understanding, empathy, and comfort into spatial and experiential design and into the mission of the institution.

Civil Intentions

- Design not just for yourself and your staff, but for all people who could see your museum as relevant to their lives. Update this understanding of relevance over time and continue to examine direct connections to the needs, assets, and interests of the community
- Maintain an awareness and consideration of the relationship between the spaces in your museum, as well as of the various people who experience, interact with, and work within them
- Strive, in your mission and guiding principles, to provide comfort above all else. Plan for the needs of visitors and the ease of access to your spaces, experiences, and ideas
- Create a system of communication across museum departments—provide the space and an open dialogue that helps staff work through problems together and share ideas
- Work toward being open to trying and prototyping new ideas early on and often in the design process. Be prepared to admit error or failure of approach, reflect upon design decisions, and continue to try again
- Provide for transparency of process, with both staff and visitors
- Create new ways to understand and design for inclusion of people and spaces. Build systems for gaining diverse insights and work toward designs for all people
- Aim to strengthen the overall museum system, in terms of function, participation opportunities, and co-creative buy-in

Implementation & Interviews

This set of case studies, interviews, and interventions encompass a small sampling of the approaches that a handful of institutions and creative professions are taking in striving to infuse design intention in their work that is along the lines of civility. These brief introductions highlight insights into how these intentions are being implemented into museum spaces, as well as the thinking behind these decisions.

Additionally, civility seems to be an easier topic to bridge within the context of science museums. This is thanks, in part, to the nature of these institutions and their often already established mission statements and strategic plans open to such ideas. These institutional guiding principles regularly contain central messages of experimentation,

testing, retesting, with many of their exhibition elements also aligning with these ideals. Because of this, the following introductions are detailed moments of design process implementation, prototyping, and creating with people, in a mostly science museum focus.

Jeanne Maier

Principal and Creative Director
12Squared Design



Also: Former Director of Exhibits & Design at The Franklin Institute, with many years of experience creating environmental museum graphics.⁶⁸

Take on Civility: It really comes down to comfort. Any person that enters the museum has a general expectation for comfort provided by the overall space. The museum should be striving to consistently maintain certain levels of comfort and project a message of inclusion in all that it offers to all the people that interact with the space—from visitors and staff, to contracted individuals and even those that just pass through the building.

Industry Insights: Prototyping is essential to

the design process. At its most basic level, even paper prototypes provide insight into visitor understanding before spending money on more final interactives and designs.

What Museums Need to Work on: Creating a system that allows departments across the museum to see the value in prototyping with and observing visitors. Dialogue must exist across departments and throughout the design and planning processes. Additionally, all museum staff should step into the role of the visitor fairly often, going through the museum as visitors in order to help foster empathy in the museum-going experience.

Final Thoughts: Exhibits are less about something, than they are for someone. They only come to life when people interact in these space, so it is essential to design with the consideration for all possible people.⁶⁹

Small Moments of Civility

Various Locations

BRITISH MUSEUM

London, UK



Points of Civility: This signage is placed next to a stairwell where the bottom cannot be seen. This bit of information lets the visitor judge beforehand if believe they can handle the amount of stairs or if an elevator is a better option for them.

NEW YORK THEATER WORKSHOP

New York, NY



Points of Civility: Going to the bathroom can seem like a small thing. For individuals whose gender identity or expression falls anywhere outside of the strict binary characterization, this public restroom division is not always the friendliest. This signage presents from a purely functional perspective and assures visitors that they are welcome to chose what best represents and works for them.

New York Hall of Science (NYSCI)

New York, NY

About the Museum: Occupying one of the last remaining buildings from the 1964 World's Fair, the *New York Hall of Science (NYSCI)* stands as New York City's only hands-on science and technology museums. Their mission is to nurture generations of passionate learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens through an approach they call *Design Make Play*.⁷⁰ The *Design Make Play* approach fosters problem-solving and critical thinking skills with inquiry-based experiences that are student driven and lead to material literacy, divergent solutions, meaningful reflection, and creative collaboration.⁷¹

Project Overview & Points of Civility: *NYSCI* is currently undertaking a large project that consists of replacing some of their older permanent exhibits, the first of which is the very popular, *Sports Challenge*. As the

NYSCI team works through the exhibit design process, they have planned out a specific approach to prototyping and testing interactives in the spaces in which they potentially could be installed in the future.⁷²



A sort of pop-up prototyping showcase will grow and expand as ideas are worked through. With stations of a select number of interactive concepts and ideas put out on the floor and evaluated, iterated upon, and then reevaluated, the team hopes to work



their designs toward better solutions, all with direct insight from visitors. This process will continue with more interactives and exhibit elements added as the exhibitions grow upon themselves and ideas are worked through as the plan for these future spaces develops and expands.

Takeaways: Time should always be made to prototype throughout the designing and planning process. The earlier you prototype an idea or an interactive, the sooner you will determine what needs to still be worked on, or if an project is even feasible. Testing assumptions provides for working through how visitors will use them, but also will highlight the critical nature of testing for testing's sake and not putting too much time or too many resources into an idea if its not fully considered.

Dana Schloss

Director of Exhibit Experience
New York Hall of Science



Also: UArts professor of prototyping, and an experienced facilitator and participant of charrettes and design sprints.

Take on Civility: It's about treating people like they have human need, and like they are humans in your space. With visitors, it is about trusting them, designing around the interactions they have, and providing equitable experiences.

Industry Insights: Prototyping is authentically responsive to how people react to what you put in front of them. Observation provides real feedback on interaction. At NYSCI, prototyping is done around other existing exhibit elements so that interest and appeal

are genuine and not directly guided by interactives in a space where there wasn't anything before.

What Museums Need to Work on: More opportunities for cross-department collaboration and idea sharing that is a built upon process and not a one-off meeting.

Final Thoughts: Work with and be respectful of your staff's time donated to charrettes or design sprints. While these relatively short-form design workshops can be a great opportunity to kickstart projects and design directions, they can be a lot to handle on top of other work. It's not that staff tend to be disinterested in the creation process, but they can't give their limited time to it very often. All projects should also start from visitors with a fundamental care for their needs.⁷³

Small Moments of Civility

Various Locations

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

New York, NY



Points of Civility: Found in the museum's *Our Senses* exhibit, this sign is placed before a room of optical illusions that could render a visitor quite dizzy. Giving notice of what lies ahead also provides an individual the opportunity to avoid this experience altogether. This concept lends to more than just disorienting spaces, but also potentially upsetting content and graphic imagery. It is a consideration that gives the visitor the power of choice to proceed or opt out.

UNDETERMINED RESTROOMS

Undetermined Location



Points of Civility: Being in a bathroom stall is a very private experience. No one feels comfort in the instances where someone knocks, or worse jiggles the handle, while you are in there. Indicators like the above display the availability of the space from a distance, providing clear signs and removing the potential of such uncomfortable interactions between users of public bathroom spaces.

Museum of Science, Boston

Boston, MA

About the Museum: The mission of the Museum of Science, Boston is to play a leading role in transforming the nation's relationship with science and technology. To do this, the museum:

- Promotes active citizenship informed by the world of science and technology
- Inspires lifelong appreciation of the importance and impact of science and engineering
- Encourages young people of all backgrounds to explore and develop their interests in understanding the natural and human-made world.⁷⁴

Project Overview: The Museum of Science, Boston has for many years delved into the research and implementation of universal design throughout their space. More recently,

they took to design the spacial wayfinding of routes taken to get to the box office, as visitors can enter by their main doors or by



walking down the concourse leading from the parking garage.⁷⁵ Each direction offers three path options to visitors looking to get tickets from the box office: Member Tickets, Prepaid Tickets, and General Tickets. These three paths are indicated by color, text, and shape texture, the third primarily as a wayfinding system for someone without color vision, but a design element helpful for all.

In addition to the wayfinding graphics, the accessibility of the space was a major



element in the planning of the experience. Roped stanchions are wide enough for wheelchair riders as well as those pushing strollers, and are cane detectable for visitor who are blind. Once through the ticketing line, the ticketing counter experience was also considered. The new counters are at an accessible height, providing wheelchair riders adequate space on either side of the counter, as either visitor or staff.

Takeaways: Additional clarity is helpful in any situation, especially when it comes to entering new spaces. Thinking broadly about the diversity in your visitors, but also in your potential staff, design and planning should always be respectful of all. If the norms of the museum no longer reflect best practices, change those norms to create more functional spaces.

Interview

Ben Baker

Producer and Resource Manager
BlueCadet



Also: Recent graduate of Drexel University's Museum Leadership masters program where he published his thesis, *Physical Accessibility in*

Philadelphia Museums:

*Looking Beyond the ADA.*⁷⁶

Take on Civility: It's all about providing equity and giving everyone what they need to be successful, regardless of their ability.

Industry Insights: Older museums and historic sites often find it harder to provide fully accessible spaces. ADA is seen as a requirement in public places, but that doesn't mean that institutions can't try to build off of the idea of creating better spaces that work for all.

What Museums Need to Work on:

Accessibility as an institutional mission and a core tenant of the executive team's goals for the museum—not just a smaller checkpoint on a project. Accessibility responsibilities should be written into job descriptions and not just become considerations that staff should make in their work on a project-by-project basis. A realistic understanding of the balance of staff's time commitments in their workload also needs to be considered in order to plan for the iterative nature of design as well as the evaluation of work.

Final Thoughts: Be sure to share project responsibilities and make voices heard in the decision-making process. Trust your experts and keep honest communication open as a means to continue to iterate on the measure of a project's success.⁷⁷

Intervention

Small Moments of Civility

Various Locations

TENEMENT MUSEUM

New York, NY



Points of Civility: The museum offers *Shared Journeys*, no-cost educational workshops to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) individuals.⁷⁸ The classes provide the opportunity to practice vocabulary, listening, and conversation skills, and also help students add their own immigration experience stories to the discussion as they work on their English skills.

NMAAHC

Washington, DC



Points of Civility: The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is dedicated to telling the history of the African-American experience. This is a visit that can easily be overwhelming for many visitors. Museum planners created the *Contemplation Court*, as a relaxation space that provides for reflection and calming after viewing the heavy content of the museum.⁷⁹

The Franklin Institute

Philadelphia, PA

About the Museum: Founded in honor of Benjamin Franklin, The Franklin Institute is one of the oldest science museums in the country. In the spirit of inquiry and discovery embodied by Franklin, the mission of the museum is to inspire a passion for learning about science and technology.⁸⁰

Project Overview & Points of Civility: In 2015, the Franklin Institute opened a redesign of one of their most popular exhibits, *SportsZone*. The exhibit, previously presented a variety of sport related interactives. This

new iteration deepened in its exploration of the science of the human body, the laws of motion, and technical innovation.⁸¹ Along the same lines of increased access to science, this exhibit makes strides in the diversity of stories it presents. The central interactive of the space, *Race Against Professional Athletes*, pairs visitors up with professional competitors in a 40-foot race. The pairings include Paralympic Medalist in Wheelchair Racing, Tatyana McFadden and Paralympic Medalist Sprinter, Robert Browne. Visitors are



introduced to these extraordinary athletes, not in a separate or “special” exhibition, but instead incorporated into this one permanent gallery story.

Takeaways: Representation matters. Presenting a diversity of athletic ability, as well as a diversity of any other identity topic, reflects and reinforces the variety of real people—ones that may already be your visitors or one’s looking to call themselves such.

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Civility is not a specific code of behavior as much as it is a call to unrelenting preemptive thought, and steady effort to care about influence on others.

—John R. Dallas Jr. *(Business Leader & Alignment Strategist)*



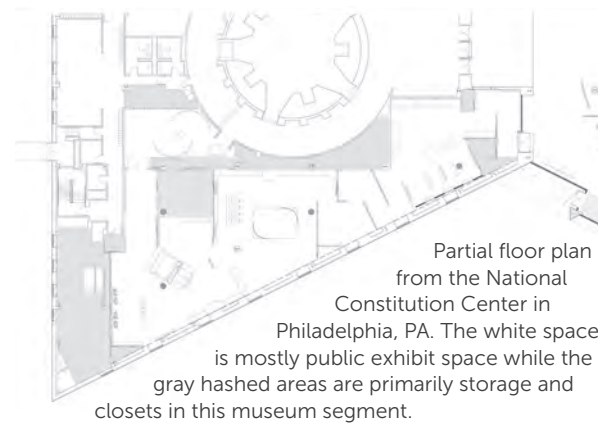
(Figure 4.1)

SECTION 4
Toward Civility

Aligning with the criteria previously outlined, the following framework presents an overview of the steps one could take in approaching design with civil intentions. This process of designing and planning museum spaces is set within the context of an agile design process, one that is iterative and incrementally built upon. This methodology is not the linear waterfall design process that many are used to, but instead is a more flexible path. One that can be seen as “messy,” but lends to quicker turnaround and identification of problems earlier on, when prototyping is cheaper and before large amounts of money are spent on more final products. The following is not an all-inclusive methodology and it itself is meant to be added to. This framework is created as an

inspirational approach and as a starting point on a path towards civility-infused design decisions. While this form and the research that precedes it in this thesis project speak directly to museums and cultural institutions, and their spaces, this thought process has the ability to be applied to any type of design that is meant to be usable, comfortable, and considerate of and for everyone.

Setting the Foundation



Before embarking on this journey into design and planning your space with civility, there are few foundational reminders. These checks are meant to make sure that the system you are working within is set up to best account for this holistic approach.

First you need to gain a spatial understanding of your institutional space. Find architectural drawings of your entire museum and identify

all of the spatial components, labeling everything from the exhibits, bathrooms, and ticketing area to offices, conference rooms, and storage. Mark the map, working toward visually laying out how these spaces interact and connect with one another. Don't forget to also examine the exterior environment of the museum.

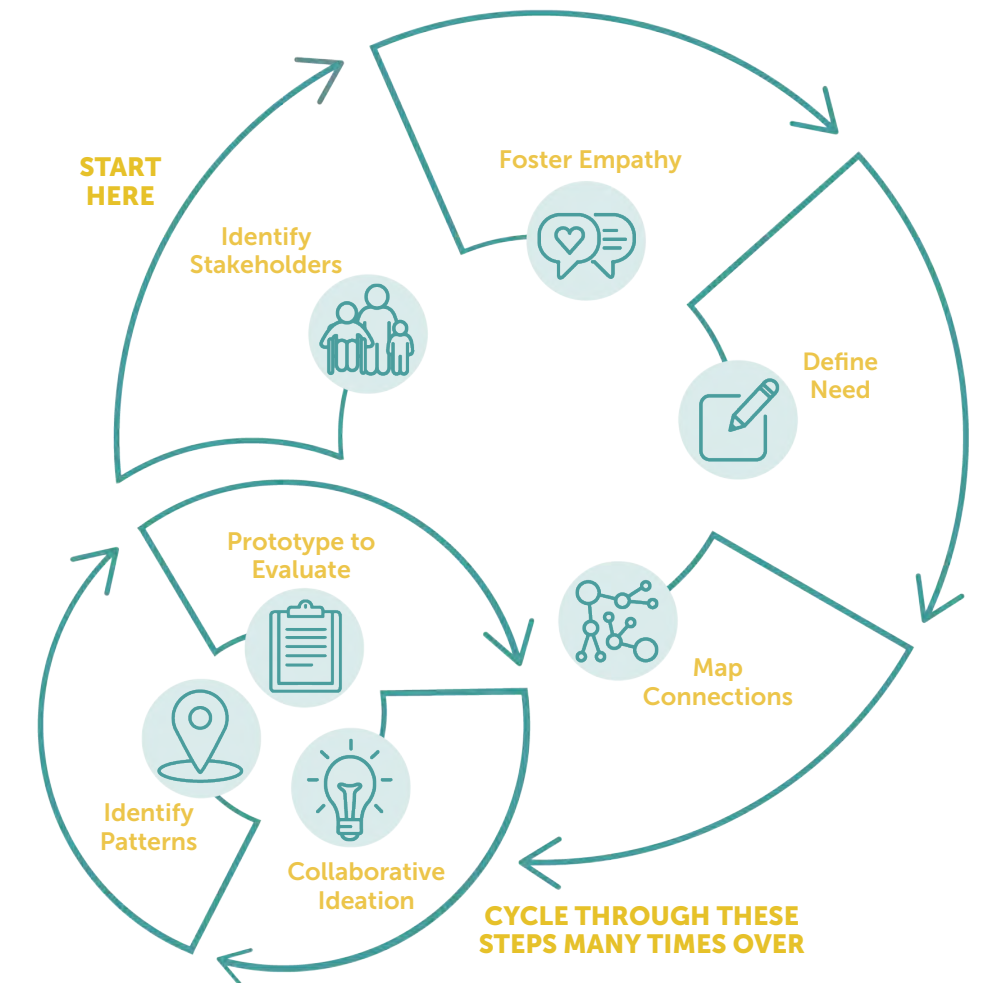
As a reminder, designing for people is a learning process. One in which failure is not a bad thing. Each element identified as "not working" helps redirect toward a better solution.

Finally, museums are for people—for them to learn, play, have fun, be in awe, experience something they love or something new. This is true for all stakeholders, so design for them but also include them in this process.

Cycle of Civility

Also, see Appendix for *Civil Intentions Reference* one sheet

How to use this framework: the presented seven steps are a place to start thinking about how to apply civility to the design and planning of your space. Take the process step by step, but understand that it is meant to be cycled through many times and not walked-through in one fell swoop. The breakdown on this process can be found on the following pages.



Identify Stakeholders



Who are the active participants in your design process? These are individuals who will want to have a say in any new project, and you'll want their input as any new initiatives will have a direct impact on their experience in the space. These individuals at the surface level can be broken down into:

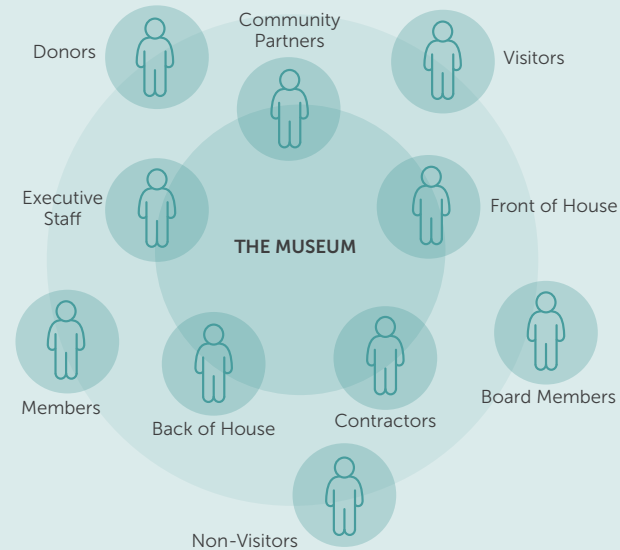
Internal Assets: front of house, back of house, and executive staff, community partners, contractors, and consultants.

Internal assets all get paid for their time. They obviously can't donate the ideal amount of time that either of you would like to this process, but they are closer to the core. Your team of planners and designers should be the core of the project with a revolving schedule of check-ins with all of your identified stakeholders. Utilize the skills and insights that

these stakeholders can provide the process and direction of the project.

External Assets: visitors including members, donors, board members, non-visitors.

STAKEHOLDER ROUND TABLE (Figure 4.1)



These are the people that can buy into the experience and the idea of the project you are considering. Make sure that the diversity of this group of assets is widely considered.

In framing external assets, one of the most critical tools to utilize is that of **Personas**. A persona helps to frame a segment of your audience. It is a profile of an "individual" whose needs can be referenced consistently through the design decision-making process. This "individual" is not a made up person or an idealized visitor to you space, but is a figurehead of data collected on your audience base, usually based on the observation and interviewing of real people. Personas are an internal tool that make sure that the project stays aimed at its target audience and allows for an understanding of the true needs and priorities of your

stakeholders, and not just assumptions.

Additionally, this step is not just project dependent, but a step in the process that can be used for other projects and build upon over time. It can serve as a reference point in mapping the people in the museum system.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Personas - Usability.gov
usability.gov/how-to-and-tools/methods/personas.html

TAKEAWAYS

- Identify your institution's specific internal and external stakeholder assets—meet with these groups
- Create personas for external assets, as they are unable to always be present

Foster Empathy



Empathy, more realistically approached, is all about concern for others. It is directly tied to understanding people, gaining behavioral insight, and ensuring that you are focusing on the people that will experience what you are putting out into the museum space. In front of house spaces, this main priority of the visitor needs to be considered in terms of the diversity of people that can come through your institution's doors. This can tie directly to the persona creation that was previously mentioned, but at its core, this step of fostering empathy serves as a reminder to utilize and listen to your audience. Your visitors will greatly appreciate you taking the time to gather their insights and actually listen to what they are saying. If you implement from this, there is a greater chance of them buying into the experience and feeling ownership in the space.

Another way to foster empathy for the visitor is feel what it is like to be them. Have team members take the time to go through the museum as a visitor, exploring and experiencing what your space has to offer. Allow them to see how a visitor goes about their time in the museum, in the hopes of gaining a greater appreciation of the challenges of your space, especially when interactions might not always be positive.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Microsoft Inclusion Toolkit
microsoft.com/design/inclusive/

TAKEAWAYS

- Utilize and listen to your audience—people like to share what they know, but they want to know they are actually being listened to.

Define Needs



To start here, what is the mission of your museum? Your project probably first has to align with this to get the ball rolling.

Now, in looking at the project that you are embarking on, what are its goals and what do you see it achieving? What impact do you see it potentially having on your space and your stakeholders? Do these align with your mission? Where do you see this project in six months, a year, and beyond? Approach this step by starting with the question “**How might we?**”

In delving further in to defining needs, many organizations have a long list of projects they would like to see accomplished. Many are larger projects, that take much more time and money. If you are looking to apply this civil theory, perhaps in a smaller scale, to slowly

work into this thought process, that's great! Civility is often found in the small gestures.

Perhaps check comment cards, online forums, or any place where visitors would post their grievances. Collect ideas for smaller projects that have clearly made a visitor uncomfortable enough to tell you about it. Listen to them.

TAKEAWAYS

- Approach this step by first asking “How might we?”

Map Connections



Now, look back at the space you've identified in the floor plans you analyzed before starting this project process. Also, make sure to walk through the spaces to understand them in a physical sense and not just on paper.

After identifying all of the connecting spaces around where your project may be situated, you should analyze how the space is used in connection to its adjacencies. **Journey maps** can help to identify the flow of visitors. Account for a variety in ability, group breakdown, and ages that could impact travel and try it out yourself. Consider starting in one space, or even in different locations within a space, and then try to find your way to the nearest bathroom, a different exhibit hall, or back to the main entrance. Is the path straightforward, are the most likely directions

marked, is there a map nearby, and—most important—do people look confused?

Wayfinding: This is also the time to look into existing wayfinding and signage around your space. What is already there? Does this also need to be a part of the project you are embarking on?

TAKEAWAYS

- Create journey maps to understand the flow of visitors through your space. Account for a variety in ability.
- Assess the wayfinding in and around your space. Does this need to be revisited as the project continues?

Ideate Collaboratively



Next is the time to gather all of the staff that you can, even if that is just the design team to start. You'll want to seek the insight and creativity of those not on the creative team as well, especially at this early point in the process. **Quick tip:** Identify a portion of a wall somewhere, probably in a back of house space that everyone has access to. This will be where thoughts and ideas should stay posted throughout the ideation process. A place where everyone can read what is posted and be given the opportunity to see and add to the growth of others ideas. Ideas can come from anywhere and at anytime, and can incorporate research, direct questioning, observations, and musings.

Headline your ideation space with your goals and the big ideas of what you are setting out

to create as a driving reference for all. Allow for ideation space and the opportunity for all stakeholders to collaborate. No idea is a bad idea in this step. Allow for openness, honesty, and no judgment. Everyone's ideas are valid and you must reinforce that fact.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days by Jake Knapp
- AJ&Smart: blog.ajsmart.com/

TAKEAWAYS

- Allow for openness, honesty, and no judgment. Provide the opportunity for all stakeholders to have a say and be involved in this collaboration.

Identify Patterns



Look over everything collected. Are there consistencies in the ideas that overlap? Are there leanings in the grouping? Are there any seemingly wild ideas that would be interesting to test out?

Map the overlap and then look to see if deeper exploration can be done in the in-between spaces of those ideas. Perhaps ideas can also be combined or divided and reconnected. This is the opportunity to take in all that you have been presented with.

TAKEAWAYS

- Map the overlap. This is the opportunity to take in and assess all that you have collected thus far.

Prototype to Evaluate



Start simple - always have paper and large markers on hand. If it's a spacial project you're are working on, grab masking tape—if it's an interactive, perhaps grab some cardboard. This is the point to create a physical thing to get people to respond to. It doesn't have to be graphically designed or beautifully constructed, it just needs to get your point across. It is better to test to see if what you thought would work actually does before it gets too far in the production process. Do the outcomes of the prototype actually connect to the established goals? This is where evaluation is key. Prototypes left on the museum floor without staff observation are not helpful. Even after evaluation with a handful of visitors, insights and patterns will probably become clear, providing direction for next steps in what a new prototype should be or provide.

Later Iterations - as you work further on prototyping a idea and it slowly becomes more realized, keep going. Prototype until you truly think you've worked out all of the bugs (or more realistically, you've run out of time). As you progress your prototypes, you can work your way out of paper and cardboard and closer to real materials models. It is not ideal to make it just as designed and floor-ready as a final model would be, but feel free to use closer to final materials. Also make use of existing elements in your prototyping. The idea is not that you must build from scratch—you are not remaking the wheel. Use the innovations of others to work smarter, not harder.

TAKEAWAYS

- Start simple. Try ideas out before they get too far into the production process

Civility is not simply about manners.

—Jim Leach *(Former Chair of The National Endowment for the Humanities)*



(Figure 5.1)

SECTION 5

Civil Conclusions

Designing with civility, in the application of the museum, is a means by which to infuse human connectedness in the process of creating and planning for spaces that are usable, comfortable, and considerate of and for all. The application of civility in the museum is important because it lends to the potential in creating spaces that are truly created for people—places that are driven by providing comfort, usability, and consideration to the diversity of people.

In this context, civility offers a path of potentially maintaining relevance for the future and presents an approach for applying base-level comfort in these spaces. The understanding and mapping of the relationships within the museum space are essential to view this mission holistically. Not only can the framework outlined in this

thesis help museums reinforce their value to their visitors and the larger community, but it presents a method of rethinking what the museum is and what its provided interactions and experiences can foundationally mean. As a theory, designing with civility creates opportunities to test thoughts, share ideas, examine and re-examine contexts, and iterate what your museum has been, in planning for what it could be to and to whom. Designing with civility serves as a reminder that when planning and designing spaces, there must be a deeper connection and understanding of and with intended audiences. This consideration is started with an investigation into how people interact in the relationships they have with one another, as well as with the institutional elements and spaces they exist within.

Future Considerations

If I had more time to further investigate civility I would like to:

In talking with industry experts:

- Expand upon the baseline questions I asked to those interviewed, perhaps on how they could see their understanding of civility being applied to the museum
- Interview more individuals working toward this intention, and not just those in the museum sector.

In researching online and on-site:

- Explore more literature on design, inclusion, emotion, and the history of civility
- Look closer at the concept of civility within art or history spaces more directly.

- Visit and analyze more spaces and their civil contexts, from the larger projects to the smaller implementations. All museums think about their visitors, therefore civil intentions should be found everywhere
- Potentially examine the relationship of objects in museum spaces more
- Provide a project scenario that could walk through this framework for civility—more admirably, working through a real museum project following this thesis.
- Look into the nuances of different types of design and planning projects—wayfinding, exhibit development, new spaces, etc.

MOST IMPORTANTLY

- I would like to prototype this framework with designers and planners of museum spaces. This is not an entirely new design approach as it is framed in design thinking and service design, but I feel the emphasis that this approach takes in bringing civility to the forefront, has not yet been fully considered in the museum space. Prototyping also comes down to discussion—a co-creative analysis of this presented research and a culmination of the knowledge and expertise of many other museum professionals on this topic would greatly lend to the theory and potential in inspiring institutional change.

- Additionally, I would like to explore organizational change, to gain a better understanding into how this theory can be best implemented into museum dynamics.
- As I move forward with this new approach for designing in museum spaces, I know the only way to see a change is to get this idea in front of others and grow connections in the network of individuals who are striving to create in the same ideals.



Civility, awareness, and a common foundation of considerate conduct are crucial to our future.

—Cindy Ann Peterson (Designer & Author of *The Power of Civility*)



(Figure 6.1)

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Appendix

Additional Interview Insights



Megan Becker

Access Programs Specialist at the Penn Museum & Cultural Accessibility Consultant

Major Takeaways: Accessibility is able enabling more people to engage meaningfully, and in this case, in the museum. It is the museum’s duty to do this, but it must be a call to action that comes from higher up in the organization. Small acts of access—creating touch tours and other accessible programming lets often-excluded audiences feel that they can be part of this conversations. These are only a start as true change to the museum is a larger battle and access needs to be infused into the whole space.



Jason Manning

Design Director Metcalfe Architecture & Design



Aaron Goldblatt

Partner, Museum Planner, & Senior Exhibit Developer Metcalfe Architecture & Design

Major Takeaways: The design that Metcalfe focuses on is experiential. It is meant to evoking feeling and meaning, and ultimately be playful. Planning must be approached in the context of the entire ecosystem and although this process will get messy, success stems from a firm stance on intention at the heart of the project.



Robert Langhorn

Owner at Robert Langhorn Office for Design

Additional Context: As my professor, Robert first introduced me to civil design thinking.

Major Takeaways: Civil is not one specific thing. It is a process, a feeling, an intention—to be civil is to create larger meaning.



Christine Reich

Vice President of Exhibit Development & Conservation Museum of Science, Boston

Major Takeaways: Museums have long been in the same cycle, making it difficult to often see or even look for new ways of doing things.

It’s the museum’s duty to strive to create for all people and create a space that respects all members of your audience. This is the time to create new norms by which the field should accept in moving forward toward greater inclusion and access.



Liana Dragoman

Director and Service Design Practice Lead Office of Open Data & Digital Transformation

Major Takeaways: Meet people where they are, and not only that, but work with them to find better solutions. If you ask for insight from an invested group, make sure to utilize what they say. Make people feel heard, and also help them to act on the strength and knowledge they already possess.

Civil Intentions Reference

Not to Scale—to print a copy, find this file at katecurto.com

- Maintain an awareness and consideration of the needs, assets, and interests of the community time and continue to examine direct connections to the Update this understanding of your relevance throughout who could see your museum as relevant to their lives.
- Design not just for yourself and your staff, but for all people

Civil Intentions

It is the reminder of something bigger—a sense of human and object connectedness in all of the greater systems throughout space and society, framed in understanding and compassion.

What is Civility?



A System of Consideration for Museum Spaces

Civil Intentions Reference

- Create new ways to understand and design for inclusion of people and spaces. Build systems for gaining diverse insights and work toward designs for all people
- Aim to strengthen the overall museum system, in terms of function, participation opportunities, and co-creative buy-in
- Provide for transparency of process, with both staff and visitors
- Create a system of communication across museum departments, providing a space and open dialogue that helps to work through problems together and share ideas
- Work toward being open to trying and prototyping new ideas early on and often in the design process. Be prepared to admit error or failure of approach, reflect upon design decisions, and continue to try again

How might the museum use design thinking principles to apply and spotlight inclusion and empathy in order to strengthen the civility present in the overall museum system?

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For more information, feel free to contact:

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Cycle of Civility

Identify Stakeholders
Who are the active participants in your design process? These individuals can be broken into:
Internal Assets: front of house, back of house, and executive staff, community partners, contractors, and consultants
External Assets: visitors including members, donors, board members, non-visitors
In this step, **personas** are helpful in framing a segment of your audience. They are a profile of an "individual" who's needs can be referenced consistently through the design decision-making process.

Foster Empathy
It is directly tied to understanding people, gaining behavioral insight, and ensuring that you are focusing on the people that will experience what you are putting out into the museum space. At its core, this step of **fostering empathy serves as a reminder to utilize and listen to your users**. People like to share what they know, but they also want to be sure that they are actually being listened to.

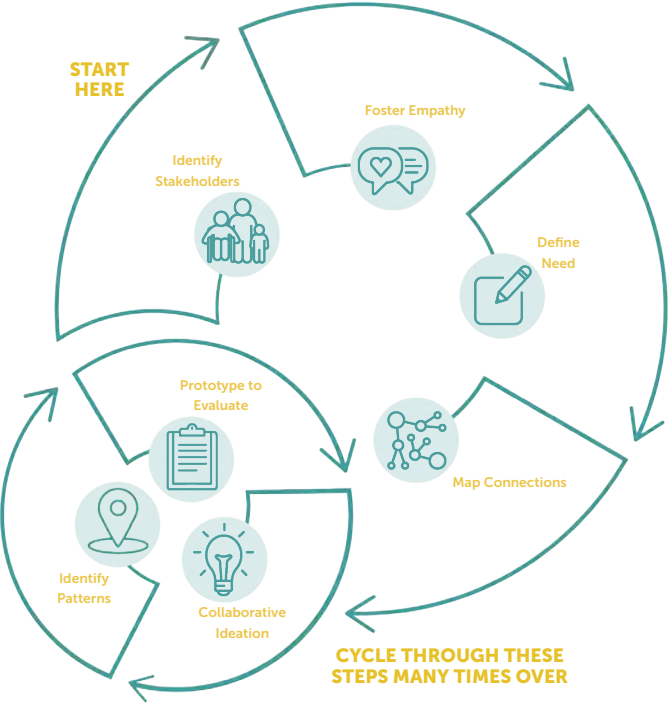
Define Need
To start here, what is the mission of your museum? What are the goals of the project you are looking to embark on and what do you see it achieving? What impact do you see it potentially having on your space and your stakeholders? Do these align with your mission? Where do you see this project in 6 months, a year, and beyond? **Approach this step by starting with the question "How might we?"**

Map Connections
Analyze how the space is used in connection its adjacencies. **Journey maps** can help you see the flow of visitors. Account for a variety in ability, group breakdown, and ages that could impact travel and try it out yourself. This is also the time to look into existing **wayfinding and signage** around your space

Collaborative Ideation
Headline your ideation space with your goals and big ideas of what you are setting out to create as a driving reference for all. No idea is a bad idea in this step. **Allow for openness, honesty, and no judgment.**

Identify Patterns
Are there consistencies in the ideas that overlap? **Map the overlap** and then look to see if deeper exploration can be done. This is the opportunity to take in all that you have been presented with.

Prototype to Evaluate
Start simple - always have paper and large markers on hand. This is the point to create a physical thing to get people to respond to. It doesn't have to be graphically designed or beautifully constructed, it just needs to get your point across. **It is better to test to see if what you thought would work actually does before it gets too far in the production process**—do the outcomes of the prototype connect to the established goals?



Word Cloud

This word cloud set a basis for the different disciplines and terms that I first found myself encountering and delving into.

