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It's not Instagram

Pinterest Link:

<https://www.pinterest.com/eadipippo/>

According to the 2015 NMC Horizon Report, "Social media management has become a high priority [to museums] because of...how they [visitors] are engaging with museum-specific content."¹ Using the above social media platform, I have chosen to post a three part "paneled" representation of my family in the likeness of "my museum exemplar" '61 Pontiac by Robert Bechtle. Like Bechtle, I used a photo to sketch an image of my family members that was used in the process of painting a portrait of them. Although, it is not true to photorealism as is the case with Bechtle's exemplary three paneled oil on canvas, I have attempted to create my own memory in the likeness of his three-part process and display or "pin it" on Pinterest to share with others.

¹ "Increasing Focus on Participatory Experiences." In *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition*, pp. 18-19.

Social Media Features:

Pinterest is a social media platform that encourages users to share their memories through various visual media components. Dissimilar to Instagram which primarily invites photography devotees, Pinterest allows for a more mixed composition of artistic material making. Recipes, craft projects, and yes, photography are all aspects that comprise Pinterest's "boards." Geared towards the creative process, Pinterest "pins" illustrate and encourage physical art making, and this is why I have chosen it as my social media implementation.

Painting on canvas is an art making tradition that is still viable in our 21st century. The Whitney Museum of American Art still proudly presents this time worn approach, right next to its more contemporary sometimes digital works of art. Pinterest bridges the gap between physical art making and the virtual socially connected world. Its interactive features allow you to comment on other person's posts through its "Tried It" feature, sharing your successes and failures with the presented ideas. By inviting communities to share their thoughts through its Pinterest network and through other social media platforms as well, e.g. Facebook and Twitter, social media users become "connected," sharing memories and traditions.

Exemplar for Interactivity:

Robert Bechtle created *'61 Pontiac* between the years 1968 and 1969, decades before the advent of the World Wide Web and the concept of social media. According to the Bechtle's testimony, his choice of medium, oil paint, replicated his photographic image of his family unit.

In 2017, I have ventured to try the very physical process he performed, however this time, with acrylic paint. “The participatory experience in practice can be seen in museums where exhibits are designed for visitors to learn about works of art by doing.”² To this point, Pinterest creators seem to understand the importance of the creative process and that is why I have chosen their social media platform as a complement to my museum object. The Whitney Museum could easily engage audiences to work with physical art forms through this project, and Pinterest’s interactivity allows for users to add a social piece to this three-part process. When other Pinterest users try a hand at their own photorealism or “Bechtle” project depicting their family portraits, it is a tribute to Bechtle’s artistic genius. His three-paneled oil on canvas is celebrated in this three-part art making project employing photography, sketch, and painting.

Bechtle’s commentary on social class and prized possessions is also represented in my Pinterest Board. Before the stove and with the addition of the Kitchen Aid mixer, these possessions of my mom with her mom and sister beside her depict the no-compromise objects in their lives. Similar to the growing dependency on automobiles, kitchen appliances became necessities in my family. Sharing moments in the kitchen is a commentary on the lives of my family and many families for that matter. Choosing to depict this portrait is a way of socially acknowledging the mix of commercial products like Bechtle’s Pontiac and the non-commercial aspects of nutrition which are a part of a family’s life. Although the nation was facing a commoditization of the family unit’s growing need for products to sustain their competitive social “edge,” other components of the family unit have remained unchanged. My portrait project hopefully

² “Increasing Focus on Participatory Experiences.” In *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition*, pp. 18-19.

memorializes the contributions my deceased aunt and grandmother made to my family with the traditions of food as part of our cultural heritage. In 2017 socially sharing these traditions is now a common practice and users who try each other's recipes is a testimony to that.

Potential Audiences:

As Fantoni et. al. explain, "focusing on the visitors and supporting their participation is only a relatively recent trend in museums."³ The Whitney is no exception in their effort to involve its audience in its commitment to education and access. The Whitney Museum of Art could easily implement this three-part project in their Open Studio's Hearst Artspace. Children and their family representatives are two audiences that could easily bring a photo of their family unit as a model for their sketch and painting, using their image as a guide. In contrast to Bechtle's portrait they can be encouraged to include their most treasured intangible resource that represents what their family means to them. Based on the tenets of the Pinterest platform, children will then share their works online with the help of their family representatives in a collaborative effort with the hopes of sharing additional ideas in future pins and boards.

Social Media Technology has changed the way we interact with "strangers" and family members. Bechtle probably never realized his family portrait would be generated in multiple

³ Fantoni, Silvia Filippini, Kyle Jaebker, and Tiffany Leason. "Participatory experiences in art museums: Lessons from two years of practice." In *Museums and the Web 2014: Proceedings*, edited by Nancy Proctor and Rich Cherry, 2014. Silver Spring, MD: Museums and the Web. <http://mw2014.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/participatory-experiences-in-art-museums-lessons-from-two-years-of-practice/>.

iterations online. Even if he wished his painting to appear in galleries across the world, he probably never imagined it could happen without a freight plane. Social media like Pinterest help us formulate and construct new ideas that can be outside the realm of product consumption that Bechtle so vividly critiques. The “Solvable Challenge” discussed in the 2015 Museum Edition of the NMC Horizon Report, clearly states: “At the center of this challenge [digital transformation] is the notion of museums needing to be more aware and responsive to their audiences’ evolving behaviors to stay relevant.”⁴ The Bechtle project would integrate the very traditional art form of canvas painting by engaging visitors to view such a form and then act in its likeness in a real space and then share it in a virtual one. Staying relevant is at the core of my social media implementation. The Whitney Museum is a resource that could and is participating in the preservation of cultural heritage in our contemporary fast paced world.⁵ Once the Bechtle project artists post and access Pinterest with their newly created three-part family portrait boards, they can further their participation by sharing their family history traditions through recipes, crafts, and yes, photos.

⁴ “Developing Digital Strategies.” In *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition*, pp. 22-23.

⁵ Ludden, Jack. *Museums and the Web Asia 2014*. 1 October 2014.