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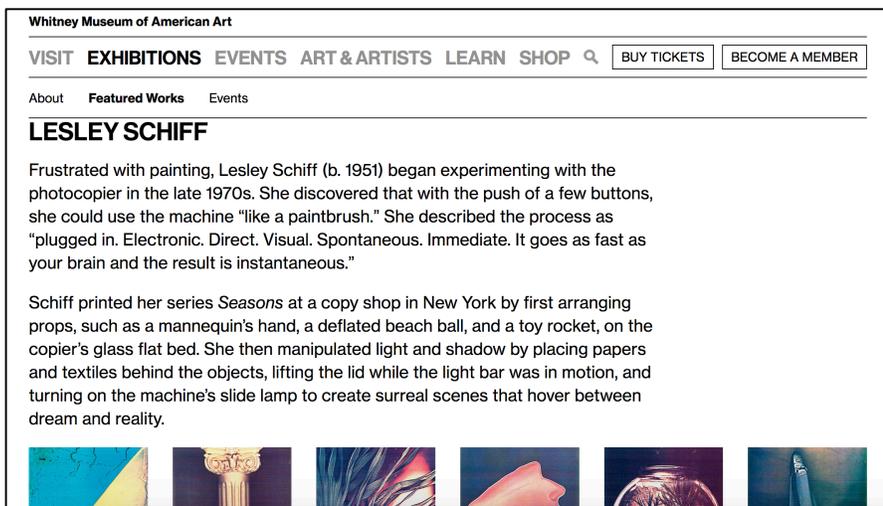
Museum Observation 2

Interactive: Museum Access Online & Onsite

<http://info-matic.org/taking-digital-strategies-seriously/>

Taking Digital Strategies Seriously

In a policy report documenting their digital strategy for museums, the Science Museum Group (n.d.) focuses on audience engagement and gearing every aspect of administration toward increasing impact with digital audiences. This plan includes a central focus on audience and sets out detailed principles and objectives for museums to achieve the kinds of digital experiences that are fulfilling for their communities.



(Meng, 2018)

The Science Museum Group's digital principles are: audience centered, sustainable and scalable, open reusable and shareable, and embedded across the organization (Science Museum Group, n.d.). These principles are strategic in that they all look forward, anticipating collaborations,

shared data, and growth. One way in which the Whitney museum embeds digital development across all aspects of the institution is with rigorous use of their content management software The Museum System (TMS). The records and content created for objects and exhibits in TMS are consistently applied throughout the institution. As seen in the exhibit *Experiments in Electrostatics*, the curator-written content is the same in-person and online when viewing the exhibition. This cohesiveness and ease of transferability would make sharing information with

other institutions a straightforward process. If the Whitney wanted to create an exhibit for the Google Arts & Culture application, for example, the content and records that they already created for the in-person exhibition could be exported and shared for the application.

The specific objectives in the report are broken into categories of experience (for the audience), culture (as an institution), collection, narrative content, and infrastructure (Science Museum Group, n.d.). The objectives create a vision of an institution functioning for multiple platforms harmoniously by integrating digital measures at every level of museum work. Museum professionals today can look to these objectives as clear examples of how cultivating and sustaining a digital audience requires development and dedicated planning not just in one department but in every department. The component parts of Objective 3: Collection all point to policies of sharing digital objects in the museum's collection in order to increase access and foster user interaction (Science Museum Group, n.d.). If the Whitney were able to provide digital objects through open content licenses, the experience for users would be transformed. Rather than an environment of passive viewing, visitors would be able to receive something back and participate in the life of the museum.

The principles outlined by the Science Museum Group work in synergy to provide experiences for visitors inside and outside of museums that are equally rich. They state that for most people, the museum is first encountered online, so paying attention to the digital audience is a way to establish the relationship with the visitor (Science Museum Group, n.d.). Presenting a consistently interesting and informative experience online and in-person solidifies the visitor-museum relationship and connects museums to the communities they serve.

References

- Meng, R. (Photographer). (2018, March 7). *Screenshot from Whitney.org* [digital image].
Science Museum Group. (n.d.). Digital strategy 2015–2017. Retrieved from
<https://group.sciencemuseum.org.uk/policies-and-reports/digital-strategy/>