

Alina Gainetdinova
LIS 258. Museum Informatics
Dr. Christine M. Angel
Info-matic blog link: <http://info-matic.org/interactive-tech...arts-and-culture/>

Interactive Technology

1. An interactive exhibit that will be explored in this paper and could be an interesting addition to my object is a virtual tour to the Peacock Room, the renowned decorative interior by American artist James McNeil Whistler at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art on the National Mall, Washington DC.

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/smithsonian-freer-sackler> - the link provides an access to the page of Freer and Sackler Galleries on the Google Arts and Culture website. To see the exhibition, the viewers must download the Google Arts and Culture app and use Google Cardboard, a virtual reality platform with a head mount for a smartphone. Just to have an idea how the exhibition will look like viewers can scroll down while on this page and click on the icon that says *explore*. By clicking to that icon viewers will be able to see the 360 degrees moving image of Peacock Room and all objects that are represented within the Room's space. However, by using the app together with Google Cardboard head mount viewers get a chance to fully immerse into the Peacock Room environment and feel as if they are within a real museum walls.

2. The virtual exhibition of the Peacock Room is a part of Google Art Project, a digital platform that enables users to virtually tour museums, have access to high-quality image reproduction, and interact with the database, and, at the time, curate their own online collection from across the various participating museums and their collections. The Google Art Project is launched by Google through its Google Cultural Institute

and now features more than 6 million objects and artifacts from hundreds of museums¹.

This numbers keep growing everyday as more museums start to collaborate with the Project.

Virtual reality is a three-dimensional, computer generated environment which can be explored and interacted with by a person². The virtual reality is implemented using computer technologies and additional tools such as glasses, headsets, and gloves to create the illusion of being in the different from the actual reality place. It is only recently that virtual reality became a highly desired digital tool in the field of museums that brought new opportunities in the development of the cultural institute.

The virtual reality tours are affordable experience for those who cannot visit a museum in person. To be ready to explore the exhibition virtually the viewer needs to buy VR headset and download the Google Arts and Culture app. Despite the various types of virtual reality headsets that can be too expensive, there is a Google Cardboard headset, that is made from cardboard and paired with Android phones. The tool is easy to use and inexpensive, about ten-fifteen dollars per one headset. What is more, the headset specifications such as tool's details, schematics and instructions freely available on Google's website so that everyone can build their own Cardboard from readily available parts³.

3. I believe that the virtual reality exhibit of the Peacock Room can serve as a good example of interactivity for my type of collection. First, the gallery contains similar to my Dragonfly Lamp objects such as vases, lamps and other items of décor, and the objects are successfully shown in the virtual tour. What is more, the Freer Gallery is a

¹ D'Angelo, Adrienne. *Museums Without Walls: Smarthistory and the Google Art Project— A Mission Possible Prophecy*, p.18, 2017

² "What is Virtual Reality?" *Virtual Reality Society*, <https://www.vrs.org.uk/virtual-reality/what-is-virtual-reality.html> . Accessed 20 March 2018

³ "Get you Cardboard" *Cardboard*, <https://vr.google.com/cardboard/get-cardboard/>. Accessed 20 March 2018

part of Smithsonian Institution as well as Cooper-Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, my museum-partner, which means that Cooper-Hewitt can consider the implementation of virtual tours following the example of its colleague.

As it says in *Expanding the Concept of Visitors Short-Term Impact: Driving technology adoption in museums for the next one to two years* of the NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition, [the Google Cultural] Institute had more than 19 million unique visitors and 200 million page views in one year. Museums are building their relevancy and reputations through this type of online access” (16). According to the number of online visits that prevails over the number of visits to the brick and mortar museum, online audience becomes as relevant as onsite museum visitors (NMC Horizon Report: 2015 16). That is why such virtual exhibitions as the Peacock Room at the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art should be implemented throughout as many museums as possible and create opportunities for openness and accessibility for everyone in the age of advanced technologies.

4. Among the potential audiences for my interactive exhibit are, first, those who interested in interior design and decorative art and second, everybody from children to adults who wants to experience a new way of looking at the museum object through a lens of virtual reality.

References

D’Angelo, Adrienne. *Museums Without Walls: Smarthistory and the Google Art Project— A Mission Possible Prophecy*, p.18, 2017

“Expanding the Concept of Visitors Short-Term Impact: Driving technology adoption in museums for the next one to two years.” *NMC Horizon Report: 2015 Museum Edition*, <https://bbprod.stjohns.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-1478466-dt-content-rid->

[9462124_1/courses/LIS-258-0-15411-](#)

[201810/NMC_HorizonReport2015MuseumEdition.pdf](#). Accessed 20 March 2018

“Get you Cardboard” Cardboard, <https://vr.google.com/cardboard/get-cardboard/>. Accessed 20 March 2018

“What is Virtual Reality?” Virtual Reality Society, <https://www.vrs.org.uk/virtual-reality/what-is-virtual-reality.html>. Accessed 20 March 2018