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# Calls for Action: Exhibition Interactives as Method to Promote Civic Engagement in Community-Centered Museums

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Calls for Action: Exhibition Interactives as Method to Promote Civic Engagement in  
Community-Centered Museums

Keywords: museum studies, civic engagement, interactive, community-centered, visitor  
empowerment, progressive education pedagogy, social change

by  
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Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of  
Arts in Museum Studies

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## Abstract

This Capstone explores the potential for museums to be agents of **social change** in their communities through exhibition **interactives** that promote **civic engagement**. Derived from two linked movements of the **progressive education pedagogy** and the **community-centered museum**, these interactives allow museums to take an active role in their communities. Three recent case studies that encouraged and **empowered** their visitors to take action in their communities are analyzed. This analysis reveals key factors that enabled the three institutions to collaborate and co-create with community members to create these interactives. The implementation of such interactives presents the **museum studies** field another method with which to create spaces for dynamic interactions and contribute to building healthier communities.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

This capstone aims to address the potential of museums to serve as agents of social change. Specifically, through an analysis of exhibit interactives that call for action, I emphasize the need for museums to take an active role in creating more civically engaged individuals. In an increasingly fragmented society, this capstone argues that museums have a responsibility to address the needs of their communities. The development of interactives that encourage visitors to take action for an identified cause in collaboration with community partners marks a new moment in the museum field towards a more activist approach.

This capstone contextualizes these interactives as emergent from two connected movements: progressive education pedagogy and the community-centered museum. As museums have developed from institutions focused on progressive education and the community, the next logical role of museums, according to the 2002 publication by American Alliance of Museums titled *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums*, is one that promotes civic engagement (Hirzy). Emphasizing the value of community collaborative and co-creative exhibitions in which these interactives are most impactful, I analyze three interactives that encouraged visitors to take informed actions such as to vote, volunteer and advocate for an issue addressed by the exhibition.

Some key sources informing this capstone include John Dewey and George E. Hein's writings on progressive education, Nina Simon's work on interactives and community participation models and Margaret Kadoyama's writings on museums and communities. In

addition, this capstone was heavily influenced by my summer 2018 internship at the Oakland Museum of California and the museum's mission and work.

Chapter Two of this capstone lays out the literature review where key terms are defined, and the development of the interactive is contextualized within the progressive museum pedagogy and the community-centered museum. The review then continues by discussing recent scholarship on interactives and museums as catalysts of social change. Chapter Three analyzes three case studies of recent interactives in issue-driven exhibitions at the Oakland Museum of California; the Jane Addams Hull House Museum in Chicago; and the Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz. Based upon the literature review and analysis of the three case studies, I make suggestions in Chapter Four on best practices for museums seeking to take on such interactives. Finally, Appendix A describes a proposal for such an interactive for the upcoming Black Power installation at the Oakland Museum of California that I presented to the museum this past summer as part of my 2018 internship.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

In this capstone, I aim to address the potential of museums to promote civic engagement, specifically through participatory interactives in exhibitions that empower visitors to take action. These actions can range from those that help visitors better understand the exhibition topic to others – such as voting, volunteering or participating in various events or social gatherings — that ultimately contribute to building a more democratic society. In our current era of social rupture – especially in the United States — museums have the potential to be healthy and safe places for important interactions between diverse members of the public. In fact, in this capstone I advocate that museum engagement efforts that inspire visitors to take action for the betterment of society once they leave the museum are more important than ever. Among various sources of information in the United States such as the media, nonprofit researchers, and federal and local government, museums are deemed the most trustworthy (Blankenberg & Lord 2015). Scholar George E. Hein, whose work advocates for promoting progressive education in museums, asserts that in fact, it is the responsibility of museums to use their social cache and resources to promote civic engagement: “...if education is acknowledged as the fundamental responsibility of museums, and museums acknowledge their progressive origins, then they must also accept their responsibility to work towards building and supporting a participatory democratic society.” (Hein 2015, p. 12)

However, not all museum professionals agree that museums need to prioritize public service. Getty Museum Director James Cuno has stated that scholarship rather than public service should be the priority of the art museum (1997). According to Cuno, the community focus of museums is “the biggest problem facing art museums today” (1997, p. 7). Philippe de Montebello,



former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, agrees that when museums focus on the experiences of their visitors, they dilute their scholarly content ultimately harming their stature (2003). Despite these opposing voices many more professionals and scholars have embraced the idea of museums as places of social service (Weil 2002, Gurian 2006, Black 2010, Silverman 2010).

The museum field has made great strides to countering these beliefs and opening their doors and practices up in ways that appeal to the public and serve them better with the goal of shared authority. According to Graham Black, shared authority refers to the museum's recognition of community involvement as "a partnership of equals" (2010, p. 274). Kathleen McLean, former director of exhibition at the Exploratorium, writes of the various ways visitors are now involved in exhibitions as committee members, co-creators, and participants (1999/2004). Likewise, Nina Simon identifies various models of partnerships between museums and their community seen today, discussed later in this chapter. Visitor interactives allow ways with which to form these various levels of partnerships with community members and visitors as co-creators and participants that enhance museum content.

This emphasis on civic engagement directly related to community life can be found today in exhibition interactives. The promotion of civic engagement through interactives stems from the development of two connected movements, progressive education pedagogy and the community-centered museum. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss these ideas in more detail. I begin by defining key terms and then discuss how the theories of progressive education pedagogy and civic engagement connect. Finally, I end with the discussion of literature written on the topic in recent history.

## Definitions

The Smithsonian Institution defines an exhibition **interactive** as a physical activity that requires visitor involvement engaging them intellectually and emotionally by promoting deeper involvement with a subject (Button et al. 2002). Interactives in museums can range from sticky note boards where visitor are asked to respond to exhibition related questions by writing out an answer on a sticky note and placing it on display in the exhibition to others such as *Official Unofficial Voting Station* the 2016 exhibition at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum (JAHHM) in Chicago which focused entirely on the interactive encouraging those without voting privileges to cast a ballot at the official unofficial voting stations installed by artist Aram Han Sifuentes and fifteen collaborators around the U.S. and Mexico (Aram Han Sifuentes, JAHHM). Although there are various types of interactives, this capstone specifically focuses on those connected to the promotion of education through experiential learning and civic engagement.

Authors Lee, Lugalia-Hollon, and Silva in their essay “Making Incarceration Visible: The Unfinished Business of Hull-House Reformers” define **civic engagement** as “individual and collective action directed towards working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities” (2011, p. 41). The authors discuss the action stations in the 2010 exhibition, *Unfinished Business- Juvenile Justice* at JAHHM. The exhibition provided expansive ways to take action in order to promote civic engagement. Visitors were invited to take part in various interactives including the two actions described below. (Lee, Lugalia-Hollon, Silva 2011). One interactive encouraged visitors to write about a mistake they had made in their past and then erase it. This action of writing and erasing aimed to show that while we are able to erase our mistakes easily, many juveniles, who served time, aren’t aware of or don’t have the resources to erase their sentences from their

records. Rather than simply stating this fact, this act of writing and erasing likely had a more memorable effect on the visitor helping them retain the exhibition content.

Another interactive in the same exhibition was organized with the Tamms Year Ten activist organization. The organization consisted of activists, artists, attorneys and ex-convicts calling for the reform or closure of Tamms Supermax prison (Tamms Year Ten n.d.) that was known for keeping their inmates in isolation for lengthy periods. During the exhibition, visitors were invited to write poems to the incarcerated individuals in order to alleviate the trauma of prolonged isolation (Lee et al. 2011). According to the authors, those who received the poems expressed gratitude for them (Lee et al. 2011). Visitors were able to take part in advocating for social issues through this act of writing poems of solidarity. Through the efforts of the Tamms Year Ten advocates, the Tamms CMAX closed finally in 2013 (Amnesty International 2013).

Gail Dextor Lord and Ngaire Blankenberg define **contextual intelligence** as the knowledge gained from exhibitions that allows visitors to understand the past and adapt to the present environment in flux (Blankenberg & Lord 2015). Interactives that call for action are based upon the exhibition content that provide contextual intelligence and provide visitors ways with which to act upon this intelligence. These exhibitions provide opportunities for reflection while also empowering visitors to act upon the new-found knowledge.

One such interactive that used contextual intelligence to spur action was included in the Children's Museum of Indianapolis exhibition in 2010. *The Power of Children: Making a Difference* presented three exceptional children who fought against social injustices: Anne Frank (who documented her experience as a holocaust victim in hiding), Ryan White (who fought for his right to be able to attend school despite an opposition to those with AIDS in the 1980's) and Ruby Bridges (who faced prejudice as one of the first children to attend a desegregated school during

the civil rights era) (Wood 2013). Through their stories, the museum intended for families to explore issues of racism and intolerance and introduce ideas of “empathy and commitment” to children to generate positive change in their communities (Wood 2013). From the contextual intelligence gained from the exhibition, guardians and children were then asked to employ it in an interactive. The interactive titled *Tree of Promise* invited visitors to identify a social injustice and write a promise to take action on a slip of paper. The promise of action was then exhibited on the *Tree of Promise* and later emailed to them as a reminder.

A necessary piece of building an interactive that promotes civic engagement is visitor **empowerment**. Lois Silverman describes empowerment as a process in which someone “becomes aware of the impact of social factors on their experience, confident in their ability to foster change in the social environment...and effective through action in doing so” (2010 p. 124). What necessitates this group empowerment, according to Silverman, is the stratification of society where people have unequal access to resources that range from education to money to social capital (Silverman 2010). In a society where there is unequal power over resources, civic engagement is the only way to balance the scale and preserve democracy (Black 2010).

These projects are well received when taken on in museums that are centered around community. Community as defined by Peter Block is a sense of belonging (2008). **Community-centered museum**, according to Mike Murawski, Director of Education and Public Programs at the Portland Art Museum, is one that strives to be an agent of change for their target community (2018). All of the interactives discussed in Chapter III of this capstone have committed to take on the role of the community-centered museum.

## **Two Linked Movements**

The potential of interactives as tools for promoting civic engagement within museums builds on two connected movements, progressive education pedagogy and the community-centered museum.

### **I. Progressive Education Pedagogy**

In the 1930's, the writings of the educational philosopher John Dewey were highly influential in helping museums evolve as educational institutions. Dewey defines progressive education as a purposeful learning environment where active participation from the learner is essential (Dewey, 1938). In order for visitors to learn, museums must provide them ways with which to take on active participatory roles like interactives do rather than only presenting information to be consumed passively. Since interactives bolster the use of experiential learning by encouraging visitors to take part in activities, Dewey's writings support the use of interactives in museum exhibitions.

In addition to active participation, Dewey believed all learning spaces must connect to the realm of public life. In his book, *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy*, George Hein writes of Dewey's consistent theory of museums as educational spaces, like schools and libraries, that are most desirable and successful when linked to life outside of the museum (2012). When museums place their content within the context of public life, visitors can make better connections on the relevance of the content. Hein further expands on Dewey's view of the ideal museum which is not based on the contents of the collection but rather on the ability of the contents to bring forth local experiences and reflect back on the local community (2012 p. 49).

Following the progressive education model, Hein assesses museums in the 21st century and their role in engaging their audiences. According to the author, museums today have the

potential to follow suit in areas like exhibitions incorporating experiential learning and public programming that connect to a world beyond the museum walls (Hein 2012). The two categories specified by Hein here are: 1. active learning and 2. connection to public life. It has become common practice in museums such as the Jane Addams Hull House Museum to incorporate these moments of experiential learning. Museums today provide visitors ways with which to include their voices and opinions that eventually contribute to their own experiences with the exhibition content.

For example, the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA), often includes an interactive sticky note board for their *History Now* installations. For the *Free Speech or Hate Speech* installation, OMCA asked their visitors to answer to the following question: “What do you think about the new National Football League rule that fines teams if their players kneel during the national anthem?” Visitors wrote their opinions on sticky notes, commenting on both sides of the argument which created a lively discussion as some were responding directly to a previous visitor’s responses (LaShaw C. Personal Communication, Aug 8, 2018). Interactives that promote civic engagement take from the progressive education model and incorporate topics that link to life outside the museum. The community-centered museum, thus, stems from the evolution of progressive museum practice.

## **II. Community-Centered Museum**

While art museums listed education as their primary public service role as far back as 1908 (Hein 2012), in reality, they were described as places that provide aesthetic and emotional pleasure until the late 1960’s (Weil 2002). It wasn’t until the 1980’s that museums began prioritizing this initiative. According to Stephen Weil, a prolific commentator on the evolution of museums in the

20<sup>th</sup> century, museums have shifted their focus from objects to people and public service (2002). Weil expounds on this public service role as “the ability to envision how the community’s energy and or emerging needs in all their dimensions - physical, psychological, economic, and social - might be served by the museum’s particular competencies” (2002 p. 48). From their focus on education, museums eventually became conscious of their potential as instruments of social change.

This emphasis on people and public service eventually led to the AAM’s push for civic engagement in 2002. The AAM published *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums* in 2002 encouraging American museums to actively pursue community partnerships to promote civic engagement (Hirzy 2002). While museums have always been establishments in pursuit of public service by means of education (Hein 2012), the 2002 publication marks a moment in history when the topic of civic engagement was given primary focus in the museum field. Hirzy writes that the “logical next step for museums is to learn and master the process of civic engagement” and that this is crucial for “their evolution, their relevance and their survival” (2002 p. 10).

Elaine Gurian, another advocate for museums as public service institutions, was writing alongside Weil emphasizing the museum sector’s potential to serve the needs of their specific communities (1991/2006 p. 86). According to Gurian, the museum field’s idea of social responsibility had long been simply the “passive imparting of knowledge to a willing self-selected visitor audience...” rather than the “more direct, more activist” intended aims of social service programs (1991/2006 p. 83). While some museums might still be attached to the more passive role in fulfilling their social responsibility, many are taking a more direct and activist route as seen in public programming and interactives in museum exhibitions today. As discussed before, this direct and activist form of civic engagement can be seen in exhibitions such as *The Power of Children:*

*Making a Difference* at The Children’s Museum at Indianapolis and the *Unfinished Business-Juvenile Justice* at Jane Addams Hull House Museum.

### **Visitor Participation and Interactivity**

According to Kathleen McLean, who received the AAM Leadership Award for her influence on the museum field in 2018, in order to understand how to involve visitors, museums need to take steps to learn more about them. McLean writes that this emphasis on visitors and assessment of museum programs started in the 1930’s; however, it did not gain momentum until the 1980’s (1999/2004). In addition to the new emphasis on education and funding agencies requiring such studies, more vocal visitors were among the key factors in launching serious efforts to understand the museum audience (McLean 1999/2004). Once visitors were only seen as vessels to hold the information provided by an authoritative voice of the museum as a temple, later visitors sat in community committees, generated content alongside museum professionals, and willingly contributed to assessment programs (McLean 1999/2004). McLean concludes that when museums cater to the needs and interest of the people, they become more vocal and willing participants.

Nina Simon, making the same argument for interactivity in museums, authored *The Participatory Museum* in 2010. In the book, Simon explores examples of interactives and museums working with community members in order to transform museums into more dynamic and relevant spaces while adhering to their institutional missions. Her work involves community-centered museums that encourage shared authority in museum exhibitions. When speaking on shared authority, Simon mentions the OFBYFOR ALL model that the MAH has adopted during her time as executive director (Simon 2018). The contents of the museum tell the story **OF** the diverse Santa Cruz population, created **BY** the same community **FOR** the “enjoyment of **ALL** visitors” (Simon



2018). For example, the *See, Be Seen: Community Portraits* was an art exhibition of portraiture that invited prominent artists as well as those in the community that identified as artists to exhibition their work for the show (See, Be Seen, MAH).

In *The Participatory Museum*, Simon describes four different models of community participations in museums: contributory, collaborative, co-creative and hosted; where no one particular type of model is superior over another. In fact, how a museum or exhibition decides to implement the project will depend upon the “amount of ownership, control of process, and creative output given to institutional staff members and visitors” (Simon 2010). According to the author, contributory museums ask for visitor input to test new ideas and cultivate projects with invitations to add to programs, tours and comment boards. Contributory projects tend to develop committed relationships with participating institutions or groups for their specific expertise, connections with a certain cultural group or representation of a specific audience for the project. While Simon admits that there are similarities between contributory and co-creative projects, she distinguishes the two by pointing out that these projects begin not only with institutional goals but also with community needs. Finally, hosted projects hand over the museum setting or program entirely to the community group. (Simon 2010).

### **Museums as Agents for Social Change**

In her book, *Museums Involving Communities*, Margaret Kadoyama explores ways with which museums can actively engage community members and contribute to community building (2018). Kadoyama points to sociologist, Robert Putnam, who introduced the concept of social capital defined as the relationships that those in a community foster with one another, which is at once inclusive and exclusive (Putnam 2000). The act of bridging relationships brings together a

network of diverse groups, while the act of bonding strengthens the relationships between an existing group (Kadoyama 2018). Interactives that involve civic engagement tend to pursue this act of bridging and bonding, in an attempt to foster a network of community members that can take action to build their community.

Ngairé Blankenberg and Gail Dexter Lord refer to this idea of building and bridging community networks as one of the key characteristics of museums that take on the role of cultural accelerators (2015, p. 222). The authors further explain that this method of bridging and bonding comes from the museums' ability to attract those of similar life stages, identities while also connecting those of different identities brought together by similar interests.

According to Kadoyama, museums can occupy a significant role within their communities (2018). The civic engagement promoted within the museum can help build a healthier community outside the museum walls. Kadoyama discusses various ways with which community well-being has been defined. For example, The University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality & Healing describes community well-being as the fulfillment of three factors: connectedness, livability, and equity (Kadoyama 2018). In communities where these basic factors are not met, museums and cultural institutions can identify specific needs and address them using their resources. The examples of interactives promoting civic engagement are doing exactly this. They have identified a need within their own communities and are attempting to address it with their exhibitions. By doing so, such Museums in the past few decades have taken on the role as a "beacon of public engagement" (Black 2010) through civic engagement efforts centered around the community. The next chapter will focus on three different museums using participatory interactives to work towards this goal.

### Chapter III: Analysis of Three Case Studies

In this chapter, I analyze three recent exhibitions that used interactives to promote civic engagement. The three exhibitions analyzed include *Oakland, I want you to know...* at the Oakland Museum of California (2016), *Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't* at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum in Chicago (2016) and *Lost Childhoods: Voices of Santa Cruz County Foster Youth and the Foster Youth Museum* at the Museum of Art and History at Santa Cruz (2017). When analyzing the interactives in these three exhibitions, we can find a few characteristics in common. All three museums have worked hard to foster connections with their local community, with relevant topics that engage visitors in civic discourse through visitor actions. These exhibition interactives will be analyzed for the following three categories: 1) empowerment, 2) active participation opportunities for visitors and 3) community connection.

#### *Oakland, I want you to know...*

The Oakland Museum of California exhibited *Oakland, I want you to know...* from July 23<sup>rd</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup> of 2016. The exhibition aimed to spark conversations around social, economic and demographic changes facing West Oakland and the rest of the city. *Oakland, I want you to know...* was a community-led exhibition developed with artist Chris Treggiari and Evelyn Orantes, previous Curator of Public Practice at OMCA. According to Chris Treggiari, the exhibition sought to amplify the conversation around gentrification in Oakland and the Bay Area “through art and [provide] another way to enter [the] complex conversation (“Oakland, I want you to know...,” n.d.). Orantes added that the goal of the exhibition overall was for Oakland residents

to connect to their neighbors and feel equipped to discuss the changes facing their neighborhoods with others within and outside the exhibition (E. Orantes, personal communication, November 8, 2018). The exhibition received positive coverage on the press. KQED described the exhibition as a “worthy example of social practice at its best” (Edalpour 2016).

Visitors were presented with a way to voice their opinions through the interactive titled *City Officials, I want you to know....* The interactive called on visitors to write letters to their city officials about their concerns. It took the form of an installation that included a map of the Oakland districts, a list of the city officials in those areas, a prompt with pencil and paper to write a letter and a mail slot for the letters to be mailed to the officials by the museum. This letter writing interactive encouraged and empowered visitors to act if they wished to do so. Orantes hoped that “on a bare minimum...[Oakland visitors] would know who their city council representatives were” and “if [they] felt inspired to take some kind of action, [they] could write to [the council representatives] then and there” (Orantes 2018).

The exhibition was curated with community members in order to bring forth the most pressing issues they felt they faced. Over 700 individuals contributed to the exhibition with the goal for Oakland neighborhood residents to “[educate] OMCA visitors about themselves” (Edalpour 2016). In addition to the letter writing interactive, there were also community boards in the exhibition. Orantes explained this was a space where visitors could post town-hall meetings to continue the conversation about gentrification outside the exhibition (Orantes 2018). Thus, the exhibition presented its visitors with a variety of ways to get involved in the conversation within as well as outside the museum walls.

The active participation in civic discourse through the act of writing letters allowed the conversation to move beyond the walls of the exhibition. As mentioned above, one of the desired

visitor outcomes was for them to feel equipped to engage others on issues such as the social, economic, and demographic changes in Oakland. An internal summative evaluation of the exhibition revealed that although most visitors deeply appreciated the inclusion and “hearing from community groups, artists and activists,” some visitors commented that they wanted to learn about “concrete ways of getting involved” (Jones 2016).

### ***Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for Those Who Legally Can't***

In September of 2016, The Jane Addams Hull House Museum (JAHHM) opened their exhibition titled *Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Who Legally Can't*. JAHHM is a dedicated memorial to Jane Addams, a social reformer and the first American woman to be granted the Nobel Peace Prize. The Chicago-based museum serves to preserve her story and the stories of her colleagues who helped improve the lives of the immigrant population through national and international public policy. As a site of preservation and interpretation, JAHHM continues to work towards the vision of the settlement house by “linking research, education and social engagement” (JAHHM 2018). Aligning with the mission of the institution, Aram Han Sifuentes and fifteen other artist and “radical thinkers” launched this co-creative project that established temporary voting booths open to all but specifically targeting disenfranchised voters (Donner 2016).

Sifuentes states that, in 2016, about 106 million individuals who resided in the United States and its territories were disenfranchised including “youth, non-citizens, incarcerated, ex-felons (depending on the state), residents of U.S. territories, and those without proper IDs (also, depending on the state) (Donner 2016). Fifteen voting stations were created throughout the country

and Mexico where the main feature was the voting station. Depending on the collaborator, each station took on other interactive elements and program events.

At JAHHM, Sifuentes collaborated with artist Lise Haller Baggesen to turn the museum space into their voting station titled, VOX POP: The Disco Party. This particular station took inspiration from “marginalized spaces, like the disco club, where a plurality of voices energizes and empowers” (“Aram Han Sifuentes” n.d.). The voting station was adorned with a disco ball with large hand dyed batik fabrics hanging from the walls and ceiling with slightly altered forms of the typical American colors and symbols. On November 8, the space was transformed into a party with music by DJ Sadie Rock. According to Sifuentes, Election Day is the day when people who can’t legally vote “are meant to stay silent and invisible,” so on that day the Sifuentes and her collaborators “made an effort to create a big event and party where [the silenced voices] could be as loud as possible” (Personal communication, Nov 15, 2018) While the voting stations in the US shed light on the disenfranchised voters, the voting stations in Mexico became a symbolic gesture to “acknowledge that what happens in the US [2016 elections] also affects Mexico” (Sifuentes 2018).

This exhibition is unique in that its main focus was entirely on an interactive, the voting station. The aim of the exhibition was to provide space that empowered visitors to cast unofficial ballots especially for those not legally allowed to do so. During the exhibition, the artist had been among those barred from participating in the democratic process. Sifuentes explained, “Being disenfranchised, we’re silent. We’re invisible. So, for a day, at these stations, we have a place to be visible and voice ourselves, even though it’s just a gesture.” (Ladd 2016). According to Ross Jordan, curatorial manager at JAHHM, the exhibition was impactful in its use of “symbolic power to [critique] political bureaucracy” (Independent Curators International [ICI] 2016). Visitors were

empowered to voice their opinions and participate in a discussion about those affected by local and federal legislation but powerless to participate in choosing those who make the decisions.

The aim of the voting booth was to cultivate awareness and to empower visitors to speak up through active participation during a tumultuous presidential election. Visitors were willing to participate because the exhibition addressed a topic that was relevant in a timely manner. According to Jordan, from the fifteen voting stations, the museum collected over two thousand unofficial ballots from “disenfranchised and discontented voters.” (ICI 2016). After the 2016 elections, the space was used as a suggestion station where visitors wrote critiques and suggestions to the Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel and the president elect. (“Aram Han Sifuentes: Official...,” n.d.) Later, JAHHM also became a banner making station for the Women’s March on Inauguration Day in 2016.

This exhibition was deeply connected to a specific community, those who were disenfranchised and discontented with the 2016 elections. Not only did this fit the mission of the JAHHM by continuing a conversation regarding the disenfranchised, this exhibition was also collaborative and served the needs of their surrounding community during a tumultuous election season and its aftermath (Shields, xiii). The collaborators that hosted the other voting stations included: Roberto Sifuentes (Chicago), Verónica Casado Hernández (Baltimore/DC), Lilah Thompson (Philadelphia), Mara Baldwin (Ithaca), Brandon Bullard (Detroit), and Maritea Daehlin (Oaxaca/Chiapas, Mexico) (“Aram Han Sifuentes: Official...,” n.d.) Through these community collaborators, the exhibition was able to engage the disenfranchised in other locations and reach a wide audience on the topic of civic engagement.

### ***Lost Childhoods: Voices of Santa Cruz County Foster Youth and the Foster Youth Museum***

In July 2017, the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History (MAH) opened the *Lost Childhoods: Voices of Santa Cruz County Foster Youth and the Foster Youth Museum* exhibition. It was co-created with over one hundred local foster youth, artists and advocates including the Foster Youth Museum and MAH's Creative Community Committee ("Lost Childhoods" n.d.). MAH's mission is "to ignite shared experiences and unexpected connections" which it aims to accomplish by "[bringing] people together around art and history through dynamic exhibitions, events, partnerships, and programs" ("Mission and Impact" n.d.) This exhibition fits the definition of a co-creative exhibition, as mentioned in the literature review, since it collaborated with the foster youth community to serve their needs. It also fits the mission of the museum by creating opportunities for visitors to connect with and support foster youth in their community.

This opportunity for connection and support was created through the interactive titled, *Take Action*. Nina Simon recounts that one of the visitor outcomes for the exhibition was for them to "feel empowered to take action and know how to do so." (Simon 2017). The question then became how visitors could take action meaningfully to help the local foster youth. In fact, the answer came from a former foster youth, part of the exhibition development team, who suggested visitors could take smaller actions (Simon 2017). These smaller actions were printed on business cards where the front listed the action to be taken and the back shared the contact information of the individual or the organization to accomplish the task. The museum made sure that the cards were "clear, brief, bilingual, and granular" for the visitors to use (Simon 2017). These actions ranged from donating pajamas to homeless children to giving free haircuts to tutoring and mentoring.

Empowerment was a specified goal for MAH when creating this interactive. The content of the exhibition was powerful and emotional at times, which in turn motivated the visitors to take



action. Issue-based exhibitions leave visitors aware of the specific topic and the injustices or unfortunate circumstances involved. By providing them with concrete ways to act on their gained knowledge, the exhibition interactive can link museum visitors to organizations that serve and support the issue at hand.

The museum tracked the number of responses the organizations received from visitors who had taken a card and then called or emailed the contact information to follow up. Over 355 visitors took action to assist foster youth. These actions moved beyond making donations to charities. They ranged from bringing a friend to the exhibition to providing foster youth lodging during college breaks (“Impact & Press: Lost Childhoods” 2017). One visitor took a card that suggested baking a cake through an organization called cak4kids. She mentioned she was inspired by the exhibition to organize a “volunteer event for [herself and her] coworkers to bake 300 cupcakes for a holiday party for foster kids and for recently adopted foster kids” (“Impact & Press: Lost Childhoods” 2017). Others who took action chose to donate warm jackets and even helped foster youth develop important skills for job interviews (“Impact & Press: Lost Childhoods” 2017).

## **Conclusion**

All three interactives discussed above address urgent issues, collaborate with target communities, and link visitors to civic organization and actions outside the museum. As John Dewey and George Hein discuss, these exhibitions with their urgent topics were able to address issues that linked directly to public life. *Oakland I want you to know...* created with contributions from Oakland residents, included letter writing stations and community boards where visitors could voice their opinions and continue the conversation about the changes taking place in Oakland with their neighbors or city officials. *Official Unofficial Voting Station*, created in collaboration

with fifteen other artists and activists, invited all visitors to cast a ballot during the 2016 elections in order to shed light on the millions that are excluded from taking part in the democratic process. *Lost Childhoods* provided several small concrete examples of how visitors could take action outside of the museum to support local foster youth. It connected the visitors to organizations working on the same issue and acted as an agent that bridges the gap between the two. All three interactives were developed in exhibitions that had strong community collaborations. Each institution in these three cases are committed to serving the needs of their community and in each case this involvement significantly enhanced the exhibition.

What seems new is the undertaking of projects that connect visitors directly to the public realm through civic issues addressed in collaboration with a community partner. *Oakland I want you to know...* sought to highlight the residents of Oakland as well as the changes in the city. The community boards and letters to city officials aimed to connect the community and its resources. *Official Unofficial Voting Station* also aimed to empower visitors and bond the disenfranchised and discontented residents of the U.S. and Mexico. *Lost Childhoods* linked visitors willing to take action to a wide range of organizations and community members creating a network of activists and advocates for foster youth. In all three cases, both anecdotal and formal evaluative feedback indicates that visitors were open to participating and engaging with serious community issues. This response by visitors and the willingness of the museums to take on such co-creative and collaborative exhibitions to inspire action points to a shift towards a more activist approach in museum work.

## Chapter IV: Implementing Interactives that Call for Action

### Goals:

The following are some broad goals listed for institutions who may wish to pursue an interactive that promotes civic engagement. These are broad goals and objectives since each goal and objective will be specific depending on the issue-specific exhibition.

1. Actively engage visitors within the exhibition.

#### Objectives:

- a. Develop a meaningful method with which to invite visitors to take action to support the cause of the topic.
  - b. Provide clear scaffolding for visitors to follow instructions.
  - c. Provide varied ways with which to take action to encourage those who are new to the issue at hand as well as those who are familiar.
2. Use institution agency to bridge gaps between visitors and community organizations working to address the specific topic.

#### Objectives:

- a. Research community organizations to identify community stakeholders whose input would be beneficial to the exhibition.
  - b. Collaborate with those in the community addressed in the exhibition by holding listening sessions.
  - c. Invite community organizations to co-create the exhibition with the institution.
3. When discussing the action stations, authors Benetua, Simon and Garcia at the Museum of Art and History Santa Cruz suggest that they should be measurable in order to track the data and impact (Benetua, Simon & Garcia 2018). If the action station is to be tracked, the evaluation process should be determined in advance.

#### Objectives:

- a. Determine the purpose and then the method of evaluation, which will vary based upon the type of actionable interactive and the institution goals. The method of evaluation for the interactive may differ from the evaluation method for the exhibition itself.
- b. If the community partners will be involved, create a documentation method that is easily accessible for the primary institution and the community institutions.

### **Stakeholders:**

When creating an action interactive that promotes civic engagement, the most meaningful ideas of actions to take seem to come forward when the community being served by the topic is involved. This means that any museum planning on taking on an issue specific exhibition should consider expanding the exhibition to community stakeholders. Stakeholders on issue specific exhibitions will be the museum itself, exhibition staff, the HR department, community committees (if the museum has one) and finally, community members who are affected by the issues addressed in the exhibition.

1. The museum as stakeholder has made a commitment to address the needs of their surrounding community usually through the focus of their collection.
2. The exhibition team tasked with creating the exhibition will need to consider the time and resources to allot for the community involvement. In addition to time and resources, the team will need to provide clear and specific guidelines for the community involvement to ensure a smooth and trusting partnership where the collaborative, co-creative or contributory roles are clearly defined.
3. Other internal stakeholders will include the Human Resources department. The Human Resources department will need to work with the exhibition team if any of the community members are paid for their contributions. For example, the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and

History paid for the community members for their time and contribution to the exhibition (“Impact & Press: Lost Childhoods” 2017). Foster youth were hired as interns and guides for the Lost Childhood exhibition as well (“Impact & Press: Lost Childhoods” 2017).

4. The Design department may be another internal stakeholder. If a museum was to implement take away action cards, graphic designer would need to work to come up with a cohesive design for them.
5. If there is a community committee, the role of the committee will need to be defined as well. The community committee may be heavily involved based on the type of exhibition.
6. Finally, the community members themselves will be stakeholders as possible co-creators or collaborators. As mentioned above, clear guidelines will need to be provided for a transparent and trusting relationship between the museum staff and the community members. The issue specifically addressed may be something that largely affects their lives and of interest to those seeking ways to actively promote civic engagement on the topic.

### **Resources:**

As civic engagement interactives tend to be part of exhibitions with community partnerships, the budget of the overall exhibition can cost twice or three times a normal exhibition (Benetua et al. 2018). The authors, Benetua, Simon and Garcia, point to a few factors that can incur special costs such as additional staff, payment to participation stipends, artist fees, supplies for community meetings and increased programming (Benetua et al. 2018). When searching for funding they suggest pursuing:

- Foundation grants related to the issue, especially where “public awareness” is a primary funding objective.
- State or local grants related to the issue, often through “community development” funding streams.

- Contracts with state or local agencies that have existing funds to target public awareness and/or action around the issue.
- Community partners may have dedicated funding streams for public awareness and/or to support impacted community involvement in public activities.

(Quoted from Benetua et al. 2018)

## **Evaluation**

Evaluating such interactives that move beyond the museum can be difficult. Yet it is essential to evaluate the interactives to find out if the goals for the interactives were fulfilled. Different approaches can be taken.

1. One way to evaluate an interactive with a “take away item” would be to internally count the number of cards taken by visitors each day when the cards are restocked for the next day. This will help facilitate updates to the exhibition interactive. The count takes into account the most appealing take away cards and adjustments that follow accordingly.
2. Another way to evaluate the interactive would be to partner with the outside organizations to document the number of visitors they receive from an exhibit and report back to the museum. This method relies heavily on the community organizations to keep count of the actions taken. There are several variables in this case that could bring in incomplete data such as the limited time and resources of the partnering organization, as an accurate count would need diligent follow ups. However, diligent followup might result in anecdotal information that might be useful for future planning.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

One aspect of our fragmentation is the gaps between sectors of our cities and neighborhoods; businesses, schools, social service organizations, churches, government operate mostly in their own worlds...Our communities are separated into silos; they are a collection of institutions and programs operating near one another but not overlapping or touching... it is this dividedness that makes it so difficult to create a more positive or alternative future... The work is to overcome this fragmentation.

(Block 2008)

This capstone argues that museums have the potential to be agents of social change in their communities. In fact, as seen in the case studies I discussed, some have already taken steps towards fulfilling this potential. When museums take active roles to promote a more civically engaged community, they contribute to cultivating a more democratic society. Museum exhibitions can be spaces for visitors to reflect upon the information provided through museum objects and wall texts. Interactives go further and allow visitors to become active participants in this learning process. Interactives calling for action connect the visitors directly to public life taking it another step further.

Of course, not all exhibitions topics are appropriate for a call for action for visitors. But interactives in issue-driven exhibitions can be successful when they are collaborative or co-created with the community affected by a specific issue. Although these projects may increase staff's workload, this collaboration when accomplished with clear expectations can truly enhance the exhibitions involved. Community collaboration is an essential piece of this type of interactive as it aims to garner visitor action for a particular cause.

The interactives discussed in this capstone work towards bridging the fragmentation that Block identified in his book, *Community the Structure of Belonging*, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Many of the exhibitions discussed collaborated with other organizations to work towards a common issue, for example, social, economic and demographic changes in the city of

Oakland, issues facing foster youth in the Bay Area, and the large disenfranchised population who are legally barred from voting in the U.S. When exhibition content empowers visitors to take action, interactives such as the Take Action station at *Lost Childhoods*, MAH push the envelope further building a network of organizations working towards a similar goal and ultimately towards a better future.

Although out of the scope of this capstone, it would have been interesting to explore evaluation methods for such interactives. As mentioned above, evaluating such interactives can be difficult as they extend beyond the museum. Community partners would be heavily relied upon to gather data for such evaluations. Museums have explored this area but improvements on these methods could be a great topic for another research project. While this capstone addresses the museum's ability to fulfill the needs of the community through interactives created through collaborative and co-creative practice, it would be intriguing to take on a project to identify a specific museum's target community, their needs and assets and then test and evaluate that specific research.

As mentioned above, according to the University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality & Healing, a healthy community meets three criteria: connectedness, livability, and equity (Kadoyama 2018). Museums have the capability to identify the needs of their communities based on these three criteria and use their resources, collection, staff and trusted position in society, to serve these needs. Through this practice, museums can take on more activist roles to serve community needs, and ultimately democracy.



## Appendix A:

### A Proposal for the *Black Power* Installation at Oakland Museum of California

The Oakland Museum of California is currently in the process of planning an installation titled *Black Power* for the Gallery of California History. Scheduled to open in February 2019, the installation explores the Black Power movement in California with a focus on the Black Panther Party which was founded in Oakland, California in 1966. *Black Power* aims to present a glimpse into the movement of self-definition and agency that formed in an environment of systemic racism and oppression in Oakland and greater California. Inspired by the popular 2016 exhibition, *All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50*, this installation filled an important gap in the permanent Gallery of California History.

As part of my summer 2018 internship at the Oakland Museum of California as the Exhibit Experience Development Intern, I was tasked with proposing an interactive for *Black Power*. When researching previous interactives, one interactive from the *All Power to the People* exhibition was particularly striking. The interactive invited visitors to respond to the following prompt in notebooks: “What Issues Addressed by the Black Panthers Do You Still Find Relevant Today?” Many visitors wrote that they were all still relevant. The Black Panthers addressed several civil rights issues such as housing equality, education rights, political representation, police brutality and created community survival programs that provided free breakfast to children and provided medical and legal services (Silberstein 2017).

The proposal this past summer followed closely the idea behind the Take Action interactive in *Lost Childhoods* at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History discussed in Chapter III. The interactive proposed an invitation for the visitors to continue to think and learn about the Black

Power movement and its resonance with today. Take away cards would be available in the exhibition space. Each card would have an action on it. Some would suggest actions that could support local organizations and address contemporary issues similar to the Black Panthers and the Black Power movement. Other cards suggested actions for visitors to learn more or come to better understand the Black Power movement such as books to read, historic places to visit in Oakland etc.

The proposal aligns with the mission of the Oakland Museum to “inspire all Californians to create a more vibrant future for themselves and their communities” (About Museum, OMCA). The interactive encourages visitors to take action to continue the legacy of the Black Power movement in connection to local organizations working on the same issues today. These actions empower and encourage visitors to work towards the betterment of their communities.

Based on the institutional goals identified by the Oakland Museum of California, this interactive fulfills the following:

1. Extend beyond the Museum walls to understand community needs and partner with other organizations and networks to create a more vibrant Oakland (OMCA Strategic Plan 2014-19). The interactive aims to identify and invite community partners to contribute concrete actions for visitors to take related to their organizations.
2. Catalyze dialogue on urgent and compelling issues in California, inspiring action for the state’s future that is grounded in an understanding of our history and heritage (OMCA Strategic Plan 2014-19). The interactive connects the Black Power movement, an important part of the state and city’s history, to current issues and organizations working on those issues.

3. Incorporate community needs in areas of Museum exhibitions (OMCA Strategic Plan 2014-19). The interactive addresses the community needs as it pertains to several issues addressed by the Black Power movement and identifies community partners in a museum exhibition interactive.

Finally, the interactive proposal also aimed to provide visitors with varied opportunities to take action. Visitors with different knowledge of the story of the Black Panthers and the Black Power movement would encounter this permanent gallery exhibition. By providing them with actions that range from reading lists to better understand the Black Power movement to those that link visitors directly to local organizations, the interactive takes a more inclusive approach.

## Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography

“Aram Han Sifuentes, Official Unofficial Voting Station” Jane Addams Hull-House Museum.

Accessed: September 10, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.hullhousemuseum.org/vox-pop-the-disco-party/>

The exhibition titled *Official Unofficial Voting Station: Voting for All Those Who Can't* allowed those who were excluded by law to vote in the 2016 elections an opportunity to cast unsanctioned votes across the US and Mexico. The votes were then counted by the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum. The exhibition also featured another participatory element called the US Citizenship Test Samplers. Samplers were used to teach children the alphabet and how to sew. Non-citizens learned questions on the naturalization test by sewing questions on these samplers that were then sold for \$680, which is the cost of a naturalization test. I am using this exhibition at the Jane Addams Hull-House Museum as another case study for my research as it also involves community participation on a civic issue.

Black, G. (2010). Embedding Civil Engagement in Museums. In *Museum Management and Curatorship* (25)2, 129-146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647771003737257>

In this article, Graham Black addresses the role of the Urban history museum and their potential to present the past in a manner that is relevant to our present and future. The author lays out five core roles the urban history museum should aim to fulfill, the urban history museum as: memory institutions, learning institutions, social institutions, democratic institutions, and responsive institutions. According to Black, civic engagement, democracy and community building is the answer to the social fragmentation in the Western society. The author addresses specifically a history gallery's responsibility to

encourage users to actively explore their communities to develop a deeper understanding of their communities.

Blankenberg, N. & Lord, G. (2015). *Cities, Museums, and Soft Power*. Washington D.C.: The AAM Press.

Blankenberg and Lord in this chapter propose that museums are undergoing a change that transforms them into centers of soft power. The authors state that the museum's soft power lies in its ability to influence behavior as part of the nonprofit sector. The chapter discusses how museums exercise soft power based on community partnerships to amplify civic discourse, accelerate cultural change and provide contextual intelligence. This contextual intelligence, according to the authors, allows visitors to understand the past and changes in the present with which to adapt to a changing environment and act on it. This source provides background on the museum's capacity to influence communities. I plan on arguing that the participatory interactives in the case studies that call for action provide the visitors with options to act upon the contextual intelligence gained from the content of the exhibitions.

Hein, G. E. (2012). *Progressive Museum Practice: John Dewey and Democracy*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

George E. Hein traces the work of John Dewey and links his theories on progressive educational methods to 21st century practice. Hein traces progressive museum educators and their effort to advancing a democratic society within the museum field. Hein explores the educational goal to give students knowledge so that they can contribute to creating a more just society. This idea of knowledge which gives students power to create a more just society links directly with Blankenberg and Lord's idea of contextual intelligence. Hein's

discussion of museum education as derived from John Dewey's theories which pursues a more democratic and just society links directly with the idea of community building and civic engagement. This source will be instrumental in establishing the civic engagement work (and the project proposal) in the theory of progressive education.

Hirzy, E. (Ed.). (2002) *Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums*. Washington DC: American Association of Museums.

This publication by the American Association of Museums explores the potential to expand the museum's civic role. With this publication AAM challenges museums to pursue community partnerships to play a more active role in the community. The various contributing authors reflect on the civic landscape during 2002 and report on the various efforts made by ethnic and community based museums towards community involvement. This source marks a call to action for museums in the U.S. made by the American Association of Museums. Following the 1998 establishment of Museums and Community initiative, this publication reports on the possibilities on museum and community partnerships, marking a key historic moment for my research.

Kadoyama, M. (2018). *Museum Involving Communities: Authentic Connections*. New York: Routledge.

Kadoyama explores the vital role that museums can take for their communities. Placing her work within the context of building healthier communities, she grounds her work with relevant community theories by Peter Block on community connections and invitations, Robert Putnam on creating trusting relationships and Andrea A. Anderson on the theory of change. The author lays action plans with which museums can collaborate with local communities and tackles challenges and outcomes. This particular source is particularly

relevant as I explore the museum's capacity to connect visitors with their local communities. The theories discussed by Block and Putnam are also relevant to my research as well as the various definitions on the topic of community building.

Murch, D. J. (2010). "City of Migrants." In *Living for the City : Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Part one in Murch's book, titled the "City of Migrants", traces the migration of the African American population from the rural south to the urban north for employment opportunities like the Wartime defense industry in Oakland. At the end of WWII, industrialization began leaving a large number of the African American population without employment. In addition to the lack of employment, the influx of migrants created a hostility towards the new migrant population. Many saw this population as the source of economic decline rather than victims, adding to the discriminatory hiring practices, aggressive policing, housing and educational segregation. This environment became fertile ground for a new generation of youth activists to emerge as activists against social inequality. Murch establishes solid ground of social injustice in Oakland from which the Black Panther Party came about.

Rosen, J. J. "WORK FOR ME ALSO MEANS WORK FOR THE COMMUNITY I COME FROM": Black Contractors, Black Capitalism, and Affirmative Action in the Bay Area." In G. David and G. Trevor (Eds.), *Black Power at Work: Community Control, Affirmative Action, and the Construction Industry*, 68-89. ITHACA; LONDON: Cornell University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v804.7>.

In this chapter, Rosen lays out a history of exclusion in postwar Oakland's construction industry. Due to discriminatory practices, independent Black contractors emerged during this period and began advocating for their rights within a unionized system. This advocacy resulted in few actions taken by the city, which inevitably failed to accomplish its goals. This particular source delves very deep into specifically the discriminatory employment policies of the construction industry in Postwar Oakland. It highlights that members of the construction industry were also involved in advocating for their community which was unfairly excluded from employment.

Silberstein, Lisa. (Fall 2017). Exhibiting in Crisis- All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50. Exhibition 36, no. 2. 62-69.

In this article, Lisa Silberstein, Experience Developer at Oakland Museum of California, presents the development of the *All Power to the People: Black Panthers at 50* exhibition. Silberstein points to the number of community voices incorporated into the exhibition, which made for a dynamic story with the seamless inclusion of multiple voices. These voices included members of the Black Panther Party, as well as those working towards the same issues addressed by the Black Panthers today. This article helps put the Black Power exhibition into context as both exhibitions deal with the same topic very relevant to the Oakland community.

Simon, N. (2010). *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.participatorymuseum.org/read>

Simon's book is an essential guide to participatory interactives in cultural institutions. In her book, she presents ways with which to work with community members in order to transform museums into more dynamic and relevant spaces while adhering to the



institutional missions. The participatory museum, according to Simon, is centered around three theories including the audience centric institution that is useful and accessible, the self construction of meaning by visitors and the benefits of integrating visitor voices. Simon's work is essential to include in the bibliography. Her exploration of various theories and their relevance to participatory interactives will be useful when making connections in the literature review and contextualizing the project proposal.

Simon, N. (July 18, 2017). "How Do You Inspire Visitors to Take Action After They Leave?" Museum 2.0. Retrieved from <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2017/07/how-do-you-inspire-visitors-to-take.html>

Nina Simon blogs about the participatory interactive in *Lost Childhood: Voices of Santa Cruz County Foster Youth and Foster Youth Museum* that inspired visitors to take action with take away cards. These cards provided with small actions visitors could take with which to support local foster youth. The main idea of the Take Action installation was to empower visitors to take action and present them with opportunities to do so. As the case study for the literature review this blog post is very helpful for its documentation of methodologies and discussion of an interactive that promoted civic engagement.

Spencer, Robyn C. (2016). *The revolution has come: Black power, gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland*. n.p.: Durham; London: Duke University Press.

In this book, Spencer meticulously lays out the history of the Black Panther Party tracing the organization's origins in Oakland, CA. Spencer chronicles the loss of jobs, housing discrimination, police brutality, issues on education as well as others that contributed to the desperate situation in the postwar Oakland flatlands. In addition to the context, she also traces the rise and fall of the Black Panther Party until the end of the last Panther organized

program in the 1980's. This source is vital for the background the author provides to shape the formation of the Black Panther Party. Spencer provides statistics, accounts from government issues reports, COINTELPRO as well as various other pertinent sources.

Wood, E. (2013). Museums and Civic Engagement. In V. Golding and W. Modest (Eds.), *Museums and Communities*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

This chapter in *Museums and communities* explores museum's potential to promote civic engagement with *The Power of Children: Making a Difference* at The Children's Museum of Indianapolis as a case study. The Power of Children presented three historic stories of "extraordinary children" in order to inspire visiting children to fight discrimination and intolerance to make a positive impact in their community. This exhibition included an interactive where parents and children could identify a social injustice and make a promise to take action. This action was then emailed to them and also exhibited on a Tree of Promise. This particular case study is very similar with its interactive installation that inspires actions for its visitors.

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