



# Museums and Millennials: Tips for Successful Engagement

**Welcome!**

**The webinar will begin at 10:00 a.m. CT.**

**While you wait:**

1. Download PDFs of the slides and handouts under the “Handouts” tab of your control bar.
2. Confirm that your speakers are turned on and your audio is working by doing a sound check in the “Audio” tab of the control bar. Having problems? Exit and restart the webinar, or switch to “phone call” for a phone number and access code to hear the audio through your telephone.

The Museum Services Program provides support, resources, and training to museums in Texas.

- Consultations
- Webinars and workshops
- Resources

[www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services](http://www.thc.texas.gov/museum-services)

On our webpage:

- Webinars
- Workshops
- Grants and Fundraising
- Helpful Resources
- Connect and Learn

Laura Casey

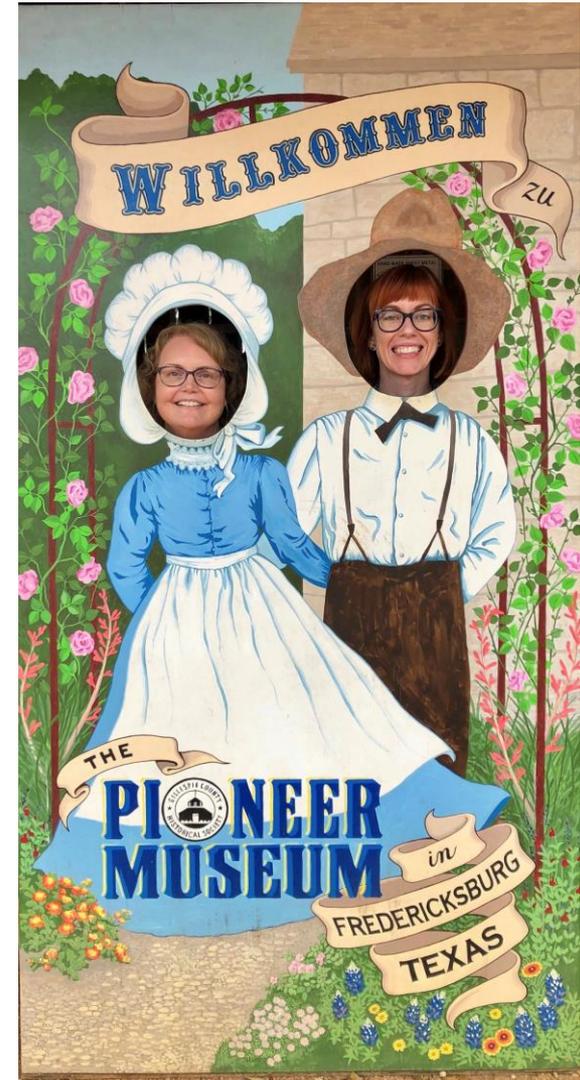
Museum Services Program Coordinator

[laura.casey@thc.texas.gov](mailto:laura.casey@thc.texas.gov)

Emily Hermans

Museum Services Program Specialist

[emily.hermans@thc.texas.gov](mailto:emily.hermans@thc.texas.gov)



[www.thc.texas.gov/awards](http://www.thc.texas.gov/awards)

- Applications due July 10
- Recognizes an individual or institution in the museum field for significant achievement in the areas of historical interpretation, museum education, conservation of collections, and/or community involvement
- Recipient receives monetary stipend for their museum

[www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars](http://www.thc.texas.gov/museumwebinars)

- **A Case Study in Creating a Successful Case Statement**
  - Thursday, May 21, 2:00 p.m. CT
- **Heritage Tourism and Museums: Collaborating for Success**
  - Tuesday, June 9, 10:00 a.m. CT

## Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

[www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections](http://www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections)

- *Staffing and Professional Growth*, April 29, 12:00 p.m. CT, AAM Ed-Com
- *COVID-19: Everything You Need to Know About FEMA Grants and Preventing Inspector General Findings*, April 29, 12:00 p.m., BDO International
- *Supporting Communities with Digital Programs During Coronavirus*, April 29, 1:00 p.m. CT, Cuseum
- *Attaining Corporate and Philanthropic Support During COVID-19*, April 29, 1:00 p.m. CT, Grantspace
- *Museum Closed, Open for Impact*, April 29, 1:00 p.m. CT, Association of African American Museums
- *Re-Creating Trust with Your Guests and Re-Training Your Team*, April 29, 1:00 p.m. CT, Gateway Ticketing
- *Insurance Best Practices*, April 29, 2:00 p.m. CT, AASLH
- *Avoiding a Travelling Exhibition Traffic Jam: Real-time Case Studies*, April 30, 10:30 a.m. CT, Travelling Exhibits Network
- *Building a Total-Value Proposal Budget*, April 30, 11:00 a.m. CT, Foundant
- *How to Do an Evaluation with No Evaluation Staff*, April 30, 1:00 p.m. CT, AAM CARE
- *How to Spot Opportunity When It Is Disguised as Chaos*, April 30, 2:00 p.m. CT, AASLH
- *Grant Seeking for Cultural Organizations During the COVID-19 Crisis*, May 1, 9:00 a.m. CT, Association of Midwest Museums
- *Trendswatch: Museums and the Future of Financial Sustainability*, May 1, 1:00 p.m. CT, Blackbaud

## Jackie Spainhour



# Museums and Millennials: Engaging the Coveted Patron Generation

---

By: Jackie Spainhour

Director, Hunter House Victorian Museum

Norfolk, Virginia

# Millennial Myths

---

- Millennials are primarily college-aged individuals
- Millennials are lazy and entitled
- Millennials prefer everything online
- Millennials will only attend alcohol-centric events
- Millennials prefer things over experiences

Let's Break Those Down.

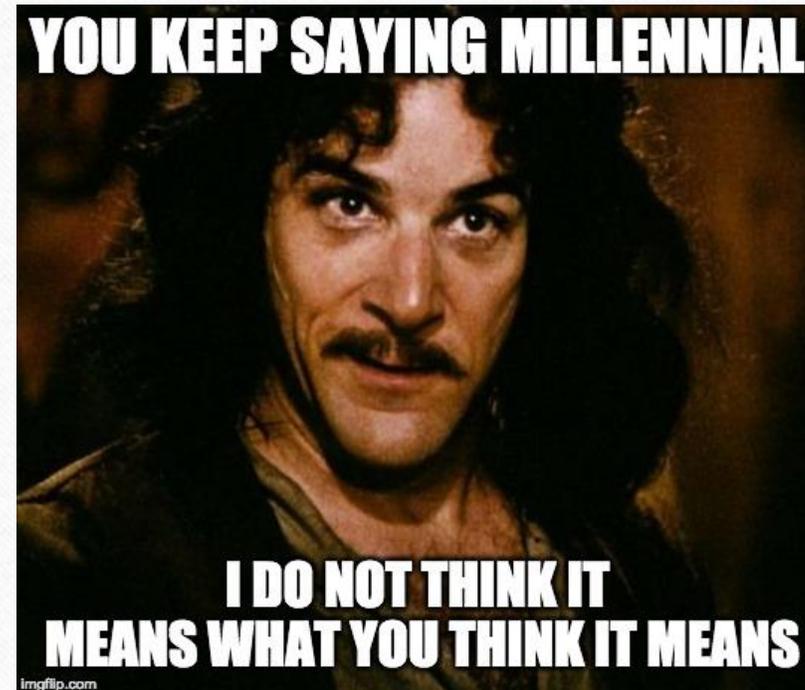
---

Millennials...

...are primarily college-aged individuals

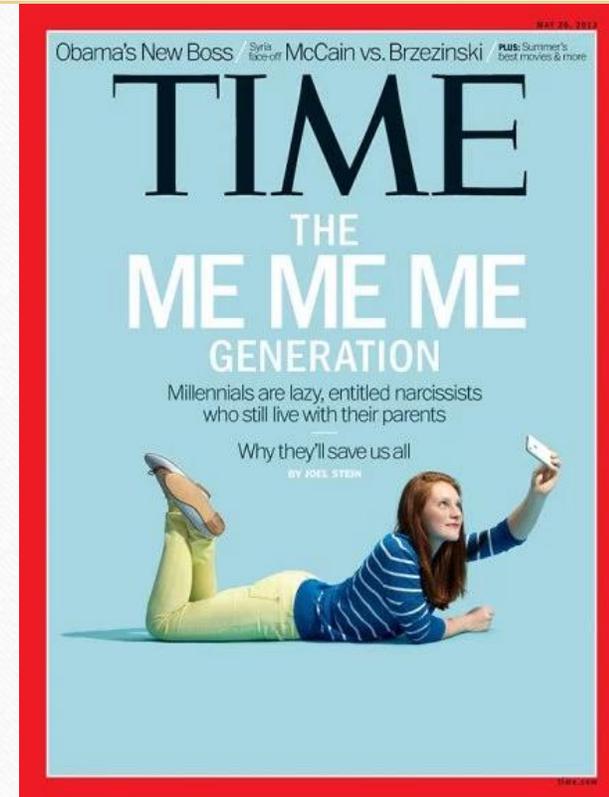
✘

- Millennials are actually working adults in their mid-twenties to late thirties
- Pew Research Center defines them as born between 1981 and 1996
  - This means millennials are actually individuals with mortgages, bills, 'adult jobs', and kids



# ...are lazy and entitled X

- Okay, while this is a matter of opinion, research suggests millennials do work (a lot)
- **Gig Economy**- multiple part-time jobs, many not during traditional working hours
- They do value themselves and their worth, so this might be where the myth of entitlement comes from



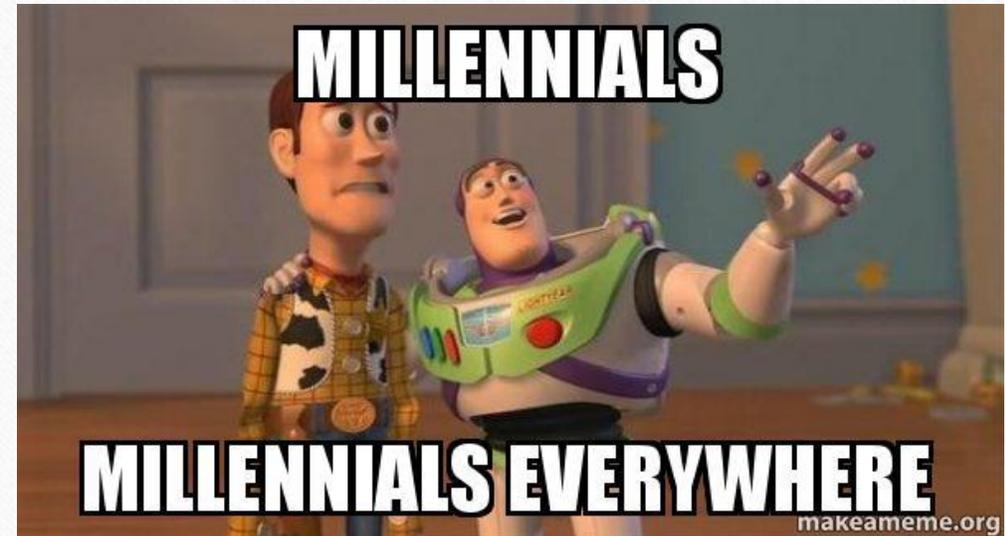
# Plus, they're in debt...a lot of debt

- As a generation, millennials are **financially unstable**
- Why? There are many root causes
  - The 2008 economic crash resulted in many millennials being granted loans they can now not afford to pay back
  - College costs are rising and many took out loans to obtain degrees
  - The cost of living is much higher than the average rate of pay
- The dream of a full-time career with a livable salary, benefits, and professional growth remains just that- a dream



# But don't despair!

- Millennials are still **major spenders** in our economy
- They are very conscientious spenders- they **care about ethical practices and sustainability**
- They assign value to their purchases based on their **impact** to their life experience



...prefer everything online ✕

---

- Millennials do enjoy the ease and accessibility of obtaining information online and using online platforms for connectivity, but....
  - They also **love paper products** (think custom invitations and art)
  - They want **personal experiences** that cannot always be duplicated in the virtual world
  - They enjoy being **hands on** and involved in your projects

...will only attend alcohol-centric events X



- Millennials do love craft beers and alcoholic beverages, but this is not the main reason they attend
- They value the feeling of **exclusivity**
- They appreciate the experience more than the alcohol itself
- **Nostalgia** is a key component for engagement

# ...value things over experiences ✕

---

- Millennials, above all else, value **EXPERIENCES**
  - If you take nothing else with you from this room, remember this.
- Millennials are willing to spend what money they have on making memories
  - Because extra cash is such a rarity, millennials **judge the perceived value** of an event versus the cost before committing
  - **Time is money** for millennials, who often work multiple jobs to make ends meet
  - Millennials **live in the now**- they plan less for the future because they aren't sure what they future will look like
  - **FOMO** (fear of missing out) and **YOLO** (you only live once) are real mantras for this generation that are lived out in their daily lives and buying choices

# Why Engage this Generation?

---

- I am not asking you to stop engaging other generations, just pay more attention to this one than you might be currently in your facility
- Millennials are currently the most **underserved generation**, even though they are most likely to support cultural organizations
- **“Millennial talk is really everyone talk”** - Colleen Dilenschneider, IMPACTS

# Millennials are the Future (and the Present)

As Patrons

As Museum Members

As Staff Members

As Volunteers

As Donors

As Government Officials

As Board Members

As Museum Directors

As Nonprofit Managers

As Community Partners



Okay, You Get It- Millennials are Important

---

Now What? (Help!)

# Accept that you can't reach everyone

---

- So, you must first recognize that every generation is comprised of individual people with different thoughts, wants, and needs
- This means you **cannot aspire to realistically attract all types** of people to your museum or cultural institution
- What you can do is **make a conscious effort** to insert the values of a generation into your programming to attract them to those programs

# What are Millennial Values?

---

Millennials are a diverse demographic. They:

- Do not want to be labeled
- Are open to change
- Value diversity and inclusion
- Come from varied families, many non-traditional
- Want to make the world a better place
- Incorporate technology into daily life
- Have a heart for charitable causes
- Are well-educated
- Value experiences more than 'things'

# Let's Look at Some Examples of Millennials as Patrons

---

Programs that worked (and some that didn't)

# It Worked! *The Art of Video Games*

- Location: Throughout US
- Travelling exhibit- I experienced it at the Chrysler Museum of Art in Norfolk, Virginia
- Attendance boomed amongst millennial audience



Image: Chrysler Museum of Art

# Why? It Was Relevant to Them



Image: Super Mario Bros., Chrysler Museum of Art

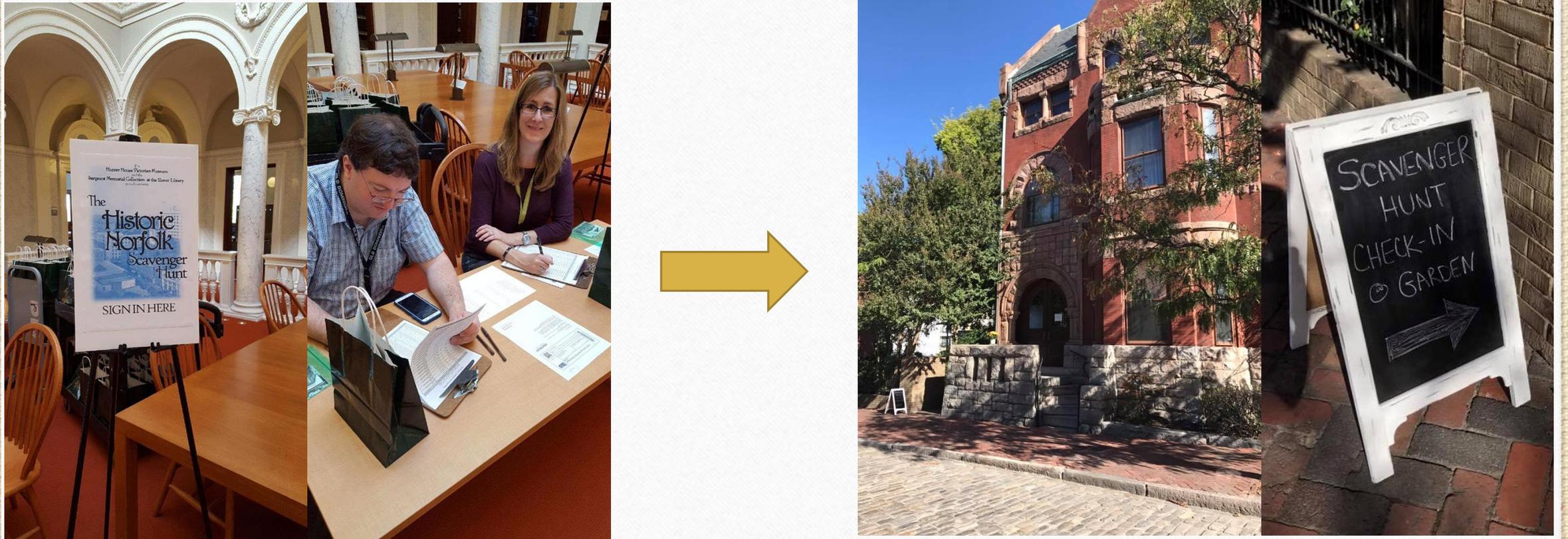
- Nostalgic- reminded millennials of a time early in their lives
- Escapism- allowed them to take a break from the struggles of daily life
- Offered something interactive
- Paralleled the millennial youth experience of growing up alongside technological development

# It Worked! *19<sup>th</sup> Century Scavenger Hunt*

- A small house museum organized a scavenger hunt in their historic neighborhood by utilizing interns and partnering with a local library
- Why this worked
  - The event was free, interactive, and focused on nostalgic elements while incorporating technology
  - Advertised through social media and community partners



# The Process



# Case Study

---

Hermitage Museum and Gardens

Burning Man Nights

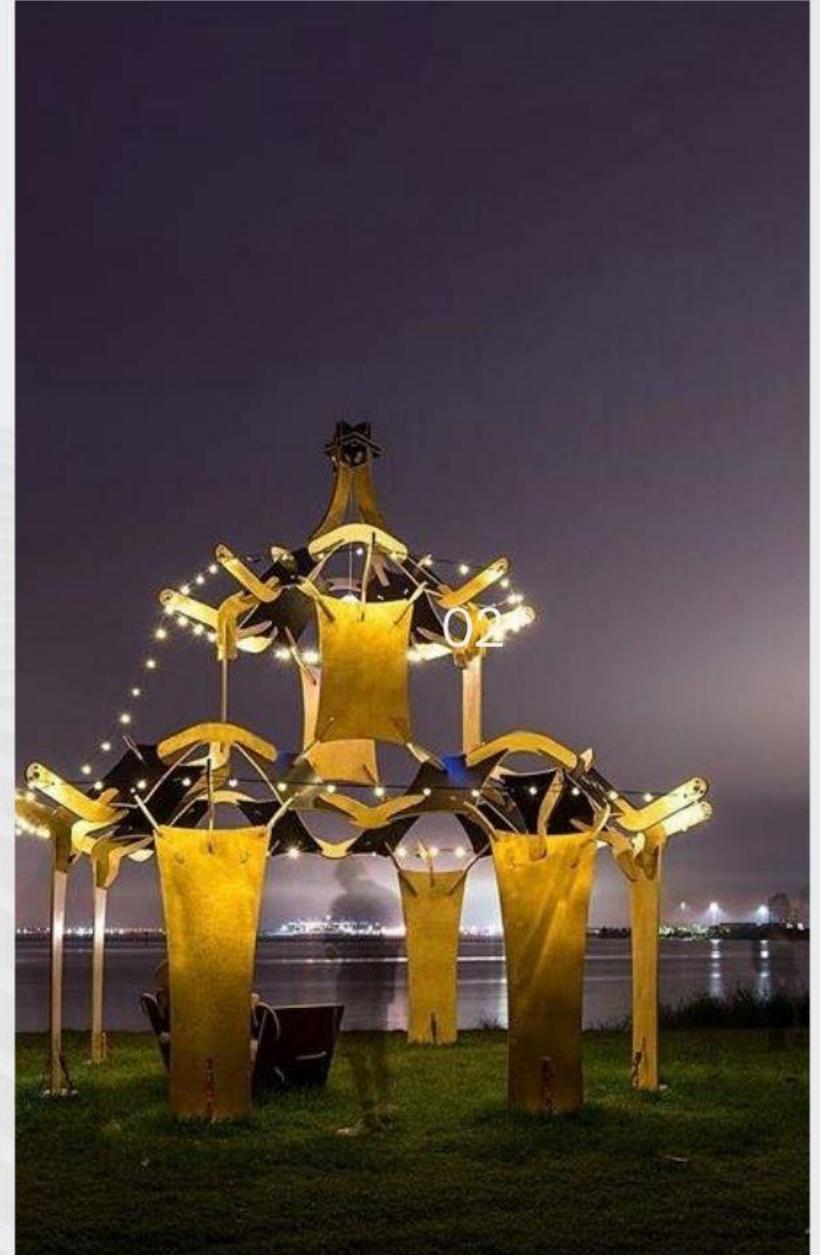
*Slides Provided by Jennifer Lucy, Marketing Manager*

## **CASE STUDY:**

### *THE ART OF BURNING MAN*

Hermitage Museum & Gardens, Norfolk, Virginia

- The first museum exhibit dedicated to the artwork of the annual event in Nevada. Open June 3 to October 14, 2017.
- Featured indoor and outdoor artworks from seven artist teams that exhibit at Burning Man.
- Featured programs: ticketed outdoor Opening and Closing parties, bi-weekly Burning Man Nights, and admission during annual summer concert series
- Over 7k guests from the region and out of state attended the programs, with millennials making up the largest majority. Over 25k attended the exhibition overall.



# KEY PLAYERS



## MILLENIAL STAFF

*9 women, 77% millennial*

Millennial staff shaped the exhibit and programs from its inception in 2015.



## NATIONAL PARTNERS

*Burning Man Organization  
Smithsonian Institution*

The museum secured the rights to use the Burning Man name in 2016 and worked extensively with the organization.



## LOCAL PARTNERS

*Alchemy, NEON, ERT, local businesses*

Collaborations with local influencers and organizations ensured millennial relevance and participation.



## COMMUNITY FORUM

In January 2017, the Hermitage and Burning Man invited Hampton Roads residents to share what THEY would like to see and experience at the exhibition.

# BURNING MAN NIGHTS

Following the forum, the museum invited locals to submit proposals for monthly evening event activities. The ideas that were realized included:

- NEON Night featuring comedy, live sketching, lantern making + more
- Multiple live music performances including an album release party with Sunny & Gabe
- Burn Ride along the Elizabeth River Trail to the event
- Obsessive Collective Craft and Jam Station
- Lunar and Sunset Yoga
- Art demos and art car activities
- Dance Studio performances
- Roaming magic





## AFFORDABILITY

- Prices were competitive with local museum events and nightlife prices (concerts, cover charges, etc.)
- Higher priced party tickets included benefits exclusive to the exhibit and the Hermitage
- Visitors could experience the outdoor artwork during the day for free
- Multiple discounts were offered for members, military, students, tour groups, etc.



## UNIQUENESS

- Each event embraced the 10 Principles of Burning Man and celebrated individuality and inclusion
- Burning Man Nights brought together local creatives for specialized experiences for one night only
- Waterfront location is unlike any exhibition spaces in the region
- Guests were invited to participate in unprecedented ways which led to radical acceptance and community building





## ACCESSIBILITY

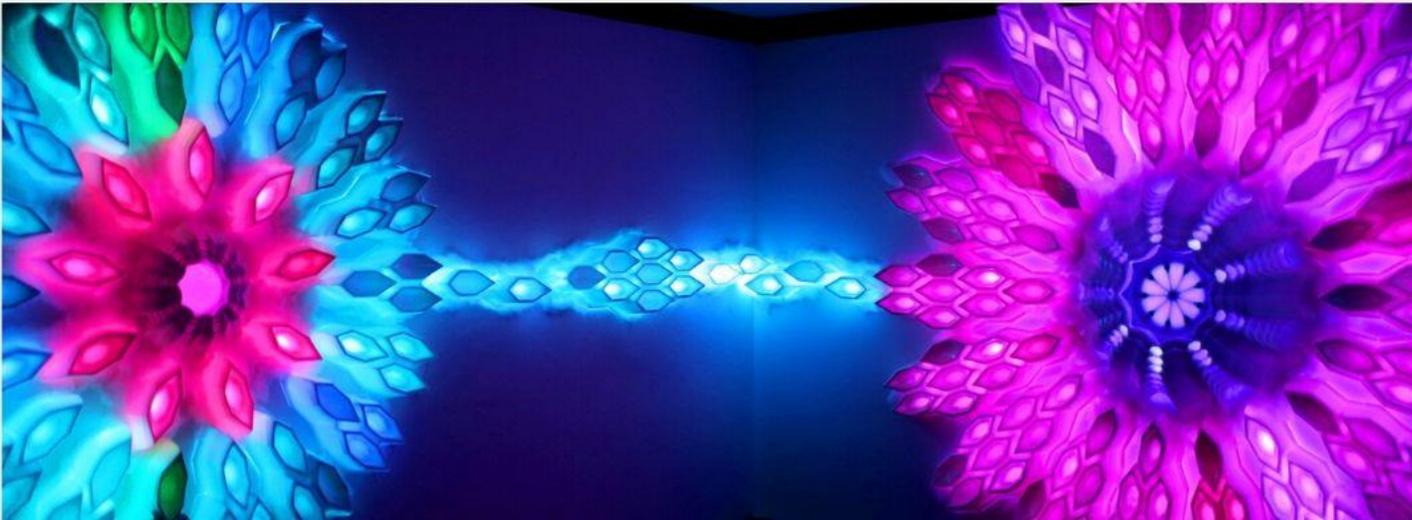
- The initial forum allowed the community to share input
- Burning Man culture and the exhibit by extension celebrated all patrons for their diverse backgrounds and unique perspectives
- Interactive artwork allowed guests to connect through technology
- Greeters celebrated each guest that arrived to the estate with welcoming affirmations
- All guests were encouraged to dress creatively which fostered a sense of belonging





## RELEVANCE

- Part of the Hermitage mission is to "promote an appreciation for art" in all of its forms. Our founder, Florence Sloane, was an advocate of contemporary art and performance in her time and we continue that legacy today
- Appealing to millennial audiences: opportunities for nostalgia, community building, interactivity with technology
- Burning Man by nature is experiential, and its name recognition suggested the types of experiences millennials could expect at the Hermitage



# Millennial Engagement

---

COVID-19 Thoughts and Ideas

# Put Faces to Names/Institutions

---

- Millennials value **authenticity** and relationships above anything else
  - During a time when we cannot physically be together, create a space for authentic engagement and conversations
  - Virtual tours are great, but only if there is a human side to the tour
    - Think live Q&A, behind-the-scenes of office spaces/archives, etc.
  - Now is the time to show your vulnerability; millennials will respect it

A purple rectangular graphic with a white outline of a laptop on the left and a teapot on the right. The text is centered within the purple area.

JOIN US FOR A

# Quaran-TEA!

APRIL 19, 2-2:30PM

**WE INVITE YOU TO BRING A FRESHLY STEEPED  
MUG OF TEA TO A VIRTUAL TEA PARTY WITH THE  
STAFF & PATRONS OF THE HUNTER HOUSE!**

Do something uniquely you and interactive

For us, this was teatime. We host teas regularly throughout the year and we were saddened to have to cancel them. They are our biggest fundraisers. We held a Zoom tea time wherein anyone could jump on and chat with us about our plans once we reopen.

For a \$5 donation, we mailed them a packet of our signature tea blend. We had over 30 participants the first time and are planning a second one now.

## Try a Virtual Silent Auction

---

Offer unique experiences for bid through a virtual silent auction.

Have nearby businesses, staff, and even patrons donate services for the auction.

We are hosting one every week on Facebook.

Every week we offer 3-4 unique services. This costs us nothing but time and in April we have made almost \$800. Larger organizations have the capacity to make much more.

We are a staff of three!



**ITEM #8**

**DRINKS ON US!**

**HAPPY HOUR WITH THE  
MUSEUM'S STAFF AT  
FREEMASON ABBEY**

**WITH JACKIE, RAVEN, & RENEE  
(FOR UP TO 2 PEOPLE!)**

---

**Value: Priceless**

**Comment Below to Place Bid**

# Some others that went well...



## ITEM #9

**PRIVATE TOUR OF OUR  
SUMMER EXHIBIT  
(UNDERWEAR AND  
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE)**

**WITH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
RAVEN HUDSON  
(FOR UP TO 6 PEOPLE!)**

---

**Value: \$150**

**Comment Below to Place Bid**



## ITEM #10

**PRIVATE CHRISTMAS IN  
JULY ORNAMENT CLASS**

**MAKE VICTORIAN PAPER AND  
DRIED FRUIT ORNAMENTS WITH  
OUR STAFF THIS JULY.**

**INCLUDES INSTRUCTION,  
MATERIALS, AND SNACKS.**

**(FOR UP TO 6 PEOPLE!)**

---

**Value: \$150**

**Comment Below to Place Bid**

Don't forget Instagram!

---

Create these free templates online that challenge followers to share what they are doing during the quarantine.

Then, they share them and tag friends. This acts as free advertising and is primarily by millennial audiences.

# Museum Lover Bingo

TEMPLATE BY @HUNTERHOUSEMUSEUM1894

WATCHED A VIRTUAL TOUR	PLANNED FUTURE MUSEUM VISIT	DIY ARTIST INSPIRED CRAFTS	STARTED ART PUZZLE	DONATED TO A MUSEUM
DID A SCAVENGER HUNT	STALKED MUSEUMS ON SOCIAL MEDIA	READ A PRIMARY SOURCE	BECAME A MEMBER	READ AN EMAIL FROM A MUSEUM
VISITED OUTDOOR EXHIBIT OR GARDEN	LOOKED UP HISTORICAL PHOTOS OF PANDEMICS	Free	FELL DOWN PINTEREST RABBIT HOLE	WATCHED AN ART DOCUMENTARY
RECREATED FAMOUS PAINTING AT HOME	MADE A FASHIONABLE MASK	DRAWING AND DOODLING	SHARED MUSEUM SOCIAL MEDIA POST	LOOKED AT HOPPER PAINTINGS
SEWED A HISTORICAL GARMENT	LOVINGLY DROVE BY MUSEUM AND WAVED	ZOOM CALL WITH ARTFUL BACKGROUND	STARTED A COLORING PAGE	PLAYED A HISTORICAL VIDEO GAME

TAG 3 FRIENDS WHO LOVE MUSEUMS:



# Quarantine Storytime Challenge

Join us for readings every Tuesday.

Remember, Many Millennials are Parents

Help us retain our sanity! Offer things to keep our little ones engaged.





## WIN A PRIVATE TEA AT THE HUNTER HOUSE!

*Become a member of the Friends of the Hunter House Museum Membership Program in the month of April to be entered into a drawing for a private tea for six people at the museum. Museum membership has the following benefits:*

- ✿ UNLIMITED MUSEUM ADMISSION FOR TOURS*
- ✿ DISCOUNTS TO ALL SPECIAL EVENTS*
- ✿ ACCESS TO MEMBER ONLY EVENTS*
- ✿ 10% OFF IN GIFT SHOP*

### *CREATE INCENTIVES*

*It might be the perfect time for a Millennial-Aimed Membership Drive!*

*Also, we make all of these graphics on Canva. If you don't use it, you should!*



**REFER A  
FRIEND**

*Get \$10 off your next tea when they join our Membership Program!*

# Engaging Millennials Internally

---

Inside the Belly of the Beast (or the millennial brain)

# Current Climate: Millennial as Staff/Volunteer

---

- You would be hard-pressed to walk into a large museum and not see millennials employed as gift shop clerks, front desk attendants, or part-time staff members
- Millennials also serve in social media/marketing positions across the country
- Many millennials also volunteer, especially in exchange for access to free admission to special museum events
- But, where aren't we seeing them?

# Museum of the Future: Millennial as Director

---

- We are **not seeing many millennials in executive leadership roles**, such as senior curators, directors, or managers
  - These individuals generally set the path forward for museums through strategic plans, donor initiatives, and marketing campaigns
  - **We need the millennial voice** here if we want millennials to engage with these places
- Seniority is important, but **innovation is just as needed for success**
  - A hungry millennial might be a good fit for your organization if there is a proven track record of progressive responsibility in the workplace

# Museum of the Future: Millennial as Board Member

---

- Why is it that when most of us look around at our boards, we see little diversity- not just in race, ethnicity, and sexuality, but in age?
  - Cost requirement might be an issue- dues, mandatory donations, etc.
  - The subject matter might be irrelevant to that demographic
  - The time commitment might be too high for a busy working adult
- Put the voice you are trying to attract into your leadership! New paths cannot be forged from the same voices you've heard for years

# Bridging the Gap: Millennial as Community Partner

---

- Millennials are now a generation of business owners and local advocates
- Millennials can also serve as advisors to your facility's leadership
  - **Millennial Advisory Boards** should be part of your future
  - This can take the form of a volunteer group of millennials who share ideas, or an actual 'boots on the ground' group who organize functions
  - Ex. Maymont's Dooley Noted Society and Mystic Seaport's Millennial Advisory Group

# Key Take-Aways

---

- Don't be afraid to tweak your programs that maybe didn't work well in the past- try new forms of marketing
- Millennials want to come to your organizations, you need to provide the incentive
- Successful programs for millennials are affordable, unique, relevant, and accessible- adapt current programs to check off these boxes

Want More Ideas? Grab my book:

*Museums and Millennials: Engaging the Coveted Patron Generation*

an AASLH publication through Rowman & Littlefield

---



Email Jackie to get more information on the book:

[info@jaclynspainhour.com](mailto:info@jaclynspainhour.com)



Thank you!

