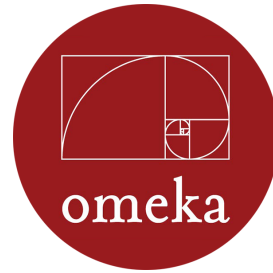# ASSIGNMENT #3:

Museum of the Moment:
Curating a Digital Exhibit
Final Due xx/xx/xx

At this point in the semester, you have learned how different audiences require different writing styles, structures, and genres. We have looked at the past from the perspectives of different authors and media, and discussed how historical narratives are shaped by their various choices and conventions. We have analyzed how media engages with an event in contemporary history, resulting in the history paper you turned in for your second assignment. Now, we will consider how institutions like museums and archives describe historical narratives to the public.

For this assignment, you will **transform the historical event from your second paper into a DIGITAL EXHIBIT**. Together, we will discuss what our "Museum of the Moment" will look like. Who is its audience? What is its mission statement? Then, on your own, you will create a museum exhibit by selecting 5-7 items to best educate the museum's audience about your historical event and providing a description (100 words) and select information (metadata) for each item, plus a brief introduction (500 words) to the exhibit as a whole. By considering concerns such as layout and order of presentation, and navigating the digital archival software Omeka, you will learn to tell a story through objects and curation, rather than language alone.

WHAT WILL THIS ASSIGNMENT TEACH ME ABOUT WRITING?

- How to identify an **audience** and understand how it impacts our writing style, structure, etc.

- How to **translate and transform** our writing and ideas for new audiences and purposes

- How to **"read" cultural objects** like museums, archives, and artifacts critically

- How to communicate through **non-written language** like visuals, curation, and layout features

- How to write for a **non-academic** publication, on a **public-facing** platform, in a way that is educational, discoverable, and engaging

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

This assignment is divided into **FOUR** parts:

1) **DAY xx/xx/xx, DUE:** Project proposal handout posted to Canvas Assignments page (p.3)

2) **DAY xx/xx/xx & DAY xx/xx/xx, DUE:** In-class Digital Collection presentation (5-10 min) (p.4-7)

3) **DAY xx/xx/xx, DUE:** 5-7 exhibit items uploaded to Omeka *OR* posted to Canvas discussion board, with accompanying digital objects (i.e. image, video, etc.), metadata, and descriptions (100 words) (p.8-11)

4) **DAY xx/xx/xx, DUE:** Final digital exhibit uploaded to Omeka (5-7 items above and 500-word exhibit introduction) (p.8-11)

A section of our library's archives.

PLANNING YOUR DIGITAL EXHIBIT

Consider the following questions while you brainstorm and design your exhibit. You do not need to answer all of them; instead use them as guides for your thinking process.

> ➢ HISTORICAL MOMENT: What historical moment will your exhibit cover (this should be the same as your second paper)? What aspect of it will be considered (i.e. artwork inspired by the event; perspectives of people present at the event)?

> ➢ STORY: What story are you telling with your exhibit? Is it praising the people involved, condemning them, commemorating them, questioning them? What is its intent (to educate, to entertain)? Is it responding to some other telling or aspect of the event?

> ➢ INSTITUTION: Why is this exhibit a good fit for the Museum of the Moment? How does it help to fulfill the museum's mission statement?

> ➢ AUDIENCE: Who is the audience for this exhibit/institution? What is the best way to engage that audience?

> ➢ ITEMS: What items would you include to describe your chosen historical moment (make sure you can name at least 3-5)? How will you obtain, digitize, and/or attribute these items?

> ➢ DIGITAL EXPERIENCE: What would you like the experience to be for visitors discovering your exhibit? Is it a somber memorial or dry and educational? Is it self-guided or will you guide your audience through each item in a particular order? Is it interactive? How will your items be displayed and attributed?

COPYRIGHT CONSIDERATIONS

Since the Museum of the Moment is not a "real" museum, the items it contains do not necessarily have to be "real" either. Want to include a brick from the Berlin Wall in your exhibit? A digital image of a brick will suffice, but should be accompanied by a disclaimer (provided by the instructor) explaining that the image is *representative* of an item rather than an actual digitization or facsimile.

All content *NOT* created by the student, regardless of its verified connection to historical events, needs to be properly credited and cited (in [MLA format](#)) to be used. Space will be provided on Omeka for licensing information where necessary. Students are encouraged to seek out [royalty-free, open-source or public domain images](#) where possible. If content includes a rights statement prohibiting reproduction, students should seek out a different item instead.

Assignment #3: Museum of the Moment
Curating a Digital Exhibit

Proposal Handout
Due xx/xx/xx, 11:59pm

Name_____

EXHIBIT

➢ HISTORICAL MOMENT: What historical moment will your exhibit cover (this should be the same as your second paper)? What *aspect* of that history will be addressed in the exhibit?

➢ STORY: What story are you telling with your exhibit (i.e. will it follow a particular person's experience of the event; will it collect artwork responding to the event after-the-fact?)? What do you want your audience to take away from their experience?

➢ ITEMS: List 3-5 items you have in mind for your exhibit. Do you have/how will you gain access to these items (i.e. locating a representational image; linking to a YouTube video, etc.)?

➢ PROPOSAL: Pretend you are a curator, archivist, or historian interested in pitching your exhibit to the Museum of the Moment. Your proposal will be considered alongside dozens of others, so you'll need to convince the Museum that your exhibit is the one they should support. In 150-250 words, pitch your exhibit to the administrators of the museum. Why is this exhibit a good fit for the Museum of the Moment? How does it help to fulfill the museum's mission statement?

Assignment #3: Museum of the Moment
Curating a Digital Exhibit

Digital Collection Presentation
In-class, xx/xx/xx and xx/xx/xx

Your third major assignment for this class asks you to curate and build a digital exhibit. But what exactly *is* a digital exhibit and what does it entail? Like the other genres of historical communication we've considered in this class (academic, graphic narrative, etc.), digital exhibits are unique in what they promise their audiences and how they present information about a given topic.

On DAY xx/xx and DAY xx/xx, each of you will give a brief, **5-10 minute presentation** on the digital archive or museum collection of your choice (sign-ups here). This will help to introduce us to the world of digital curation, its capabilities, and its genre elements. It will also aid us as we consider deeper questions around the production of history, such as: which institutions have ownership over historical and cultural materials? Who has access to these materials? And how are we, the public, invited to interact with them?

| *Item View from the Old Bailey Online Collection* | *Item View from the Rhizome ArtBase Collection* |

Presentation Requirements

Your presentations will all follow the same basic format as you introduce us to your digital collection. You will build **3 informational slides** (more may be added if you'd like to share additional images), and share that information with the class informally for **5-10 minutes**.

Slides

Your slides may be formatted however you'd like, but should contain the following information:

Slide 1

Title of Digital Collection
Name of Authoring Organization(s)

- Genre, theme, and/or scope (geographic/chronological) of items
- # of digitized Items
- Is there a physical collection? If so, where is it located? How many items does it contain?
- What are the mission or goals of the collection? If it is not directly stated, you may infer based on information provided.
- Which organizations, companies, or entities contribute to the collection? Who funds the collection or offers other material support?

Slide 2

Navigating the Collection

Share screenshots to illustrate the following:
- How easy is it to navigate the collection? To locate particular items by theme, date, or other criteria?
- What kind of info is provided about each item? How is it laid out?

Respond where relevant:
- What additional *information* does the digital collection site offer (i.e. historical, collection provenance, technological or digitization techniques, etc.)?
- What additional *educational materials* does the digital collection site offer (i.e. exhibits, essays, teaching materials, data visualizations, etc.)?

Slide 3

Exhibit or Item Example

Introduce us to an example of an item in OR an exhibit from the collection that you find interesting. Include:
- 1 or more images
- Basic information
- How does the item or exhibit fit into the rest of the collection?
- What do you find interesting or intriguing about this item or exhibit?

Public Speaking

How you verbally present the information on your slides is entirely up to you. However, it might help to keep in mind the following:

- This presentation is **informal**, so there's no need to make a grand statement or argument.
- Try to **avoid reading** from your slides. This will keep your audience more engaged.
- Stay **on time**. Hold space for your peers that are also presenting on the same day.

Take a look at The Norton Field Guide chapter on giving presentations for more suggestions.

Assignment #3: Museum of the Moment
Curating a Digital Exhibit

STEPS AND INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Building The Museum of the Moment**

   What is the Museum of the Moment? We will discuss the museum's audience, mission statement, and collection parameters in class before you design your exhibits.

   Documentation, once complete, will be available here.

   You can access the Museum's site here.

2. **Curating and Describing Your Exhibit Items**

   ➔ *Selecting Items*

   ◆ You may select almost any type of item for your exhibit—your imagination is the limit! For instance, you might include:
      ● **Photographs, audio** or **videos** documenting your event
      ● **Physical objects** from the site of your event (i.e. clothing, cutlery)
      ● **Personal documents** from people involved in an event (i.e. notes, journals—if publically available/accessible)
      ● **Artwork** (visual, musical, literary) responding to your event
      ● **Social media posts** responding to your event
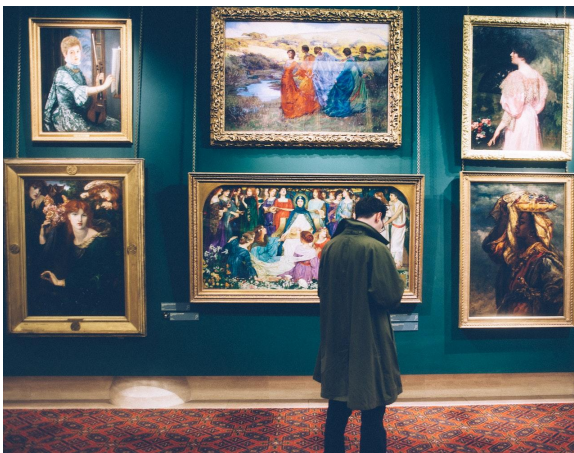
Consider what types of items are typically displayed in physical exhibits at museums and archives. What kinds of items tell us about the past and what stories are they capable of telling? Where and from whom do these items come from and how were they sourced? (Left: Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta; Right: British Museum, London)

◆ However, in some cases your exhibit items will be "real" (i.e. digital photographs), whereas others might be representational (i.e. an image that stands in for a specific physical object).
  - ● You will need to **differentiate** between these types of items within your exhibit (see copyright statement on p3).
  - ● You will need to provide a **digital version** of the item, regardless of its authenticity (i.e. a JPEG version of a photograph).
  - ● There are **limitations** to the fictionality allowed by this project. For instance, you may not share forged documents or manipulated video/audio of any kind. If you have questions about a particular item, talk to your instructor before posting it.

◆ Your selection criteria will depend on a number of factors, including the **aspect** of the event you'd like to cover, the **theme** you've selected to convey in the exhibit, and the **story** you'd like to tell. For instance, you might take one of the following approaches.
  - ● An exhibit displaying the **clothing** worn by Silicon Valley billionaires to illustrate **changes in cultural norms** around conspicuous consumption and wealth.
  - ● An exhibit examining **protest music** written in response to the police brutality critiqued by the **Black Lives Matter movement**.
  - ● An exhibit compiling **cell phone videos** taken in the aftermath of the Pulse Nightclub shooting, examining the **intersection of technology and collective trauma**.

➔ *Description & Metadata*

◆ Each of your items requires a specific set of metadata, such as a title, date, format, and copyright statement. That data will need to be formatted correctly to be identifiable and findable by (roughly) archival/ curatorial standards.

  The required fields are highlighted on Omeka, but you can also find a full list of fields and accompanying instructions here.

WHAT EXACTLY IS METADATA?

"Metadata" quite literally means "data describing other data." In the case of digital objects, the data typically takes the form of cataloging information, often occupying the dual role of describing the digital item, and—where relevant—its original, non-digital counterpart.

OBJECT ORDER	Bentley Plates 1-4, 12, 5, 6, 9-11, 13, 22, 15, 14, 18, 17, 19, 21, 20, 23, 27, 24-26, 28
◦	As previously bound, the volume included an additional impression of Bentley Plate 2 following the title page. This was added by a previous owner and was not part of Blake's original collation of the copy. Accordingly, this additional impression of Bentley Plate 2 is not included.
OBJECT SIZE	ranging between 16.8 x 11.7 and 14.2 x 9.1 cm.
NUMBER OF LEAVES	25
LEAF SIZE	30.3 x 24.3 cm.
MEDIUM	relief etching, color printed with hand coloring
PRINTING STYLE	relief
INK COLOR	green and orangish yellow ochre
◦	The texts and accompanying interlinear motifs on Objects 1 and 2 (Bentley Plates 1 and 2) are printed in yellow ochre, but in green on all other plates bearing texts. The designs, both full-page designs and those on plates bearing texts, are color printed in a variety of colors, with yellow ochre one of the dominant hues.
SUPPORT	wove paper
WATERMARK	none
PENNED NUMBERS	none
FRAME LINES	none

Awakateko

Object Details

Name	Awakateko
Name (Indigenous)	Awakateko
Alternate Name(s)	Aguacateco Aguacatec
Language Code	agu
Macro Language	N
Language Family	Mayan
Description	
Countries	Guatemala
Language PID	ailla:119668

Different collection & item types require different sets of metadata. For instance, consider what information might be useful to an art historian looking at a print from the [William Blake Archive](#) (left), versus what information a linguist might look for in the [Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America](#) (right).

◆ Each of your items will also require a description of at least 100 words. These descriptions should include:
 - Pertinent details about the item (especially those details not captured by the metadata)
 - A brief physical description
 - A sentence or two connecting the item to the theme(s) of the exhibit.

3. Using Omeka

→ Instructions for setting up your Omeka account are [here](#).
→ Instructions for uploading items to Omeka are [here](#).

4. Creating & Sharing Your Exhibit

→ Instructions for turning your items into an exhibit on Omeka are [here](#).

EXPECTATIONS FOR FINAL EXHIBIT

→ **Format / Omeka**
 ◆ Complete, proofread **metadata** entries, using controlled vocabularies (i.e. Library of Congress Subject Headings) where necessary

◆ Clear, concise 100-word **descriptions** for each item

◆ Item entries (digital objects, metadata, and description) all **uploaded** successfully to Omeka

◆ Thoughtful, engaging, and proofread 500-word **introduction** to exhibit

◆ All citations (metadata, in-text, and bibliographical) in **MLA Style**

◆ Thoughtfully & intentionally-arranged **digital exhibit "space"** using formatting options available through Omeka

→ **Content**

◆ Demonstrate a critical, thoughtful consideration of the **museum/archiving practices** we've discussed in class

◆ Clearly articulate a **theme** or **story** conveyed through item curation, description, and introduction

◆ Engage with the **digital tools** available to successfully communicate a historical narrative to a **broader public**

◆ Demonstrate understanding of broader purpose of **digital collections** and **public history**, in particular the mission statement of the **Museum of the Moment**

→ **Rhetoric**

◆ Displays understanding of
- **Genre** conventions (digital exhibit)
- **Audience** (high school seniors)
- **Citing** the works of others
- **Adaptation** or **Transformation** of the same content to new modes of communication

◆ Use of formal academic voice, with limited personal references

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DUE DATES

→ **DAY xx/xx/xx, 10am**: 5-7 exhibit items uploaded to Omeka *OR* posted to Canvas discussion board, with accompanying digital objects (i.e. image, video, etc.), metadata, and descriptions (100 words)

→ **DAY xx/xx/xx, 10am**: Final digital exhibit uploaded to Omeka (5-7 items above and 500-word exhibit introduction)