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# The Participatory Museum



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## Synopsis

Visitor participation is a hot topic in the contemporary world of museums, art galleries, science centers, libraries and cultural organizations. How can your institution do it and do it well? The Participatory Museum is a practical guide to working with community members and visitors to make cultural institutions more dynamic, relevant, essential places. Museum consultant and exhibit designer Nina Simon weaves together innovative design techniques and case studies to make a powerful case for participatory practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Nina Simon's new book is essential for museum directors interested in experimenting with audience participation on the one hand and cautious about upending the tradition museum model on the other." --Elaine Gurian, international museum consultant and author of *Civilizing the Museum*"This book is an extraordinary resource. Nina has assembled the collective wisdom of the field, and has given it her own brilliant spin. Her book will make you want to go right out and start experimenting with participatory projects." --Kathleen McLean, participatory museum designer and author of *Planning for People in Museum Exhibitions*"I predict that in the future this book will be a classic work of museology." --Elizabeth Merritt, founding director of the Center for the Future of Museums"Nina neatly balances practical ideas for immediate implementation with broader strategic thinking, making *The Participatory Museum* the go-to recipe book for the coming years." --Sebastian Chan, Head of Digital, Social and Emerging Technologies, Powerhouse Museum, Australia

Participatory Museum has the resonance of a manifesto and the potential to make a transformative impact on museum practice and visitors' experiences in museums in the coming decades. --Eric Siegel, Director and Chief Content Officer, New York Hall of Science

Nina Simon is an independent experience designer with expertise in participatory design, gaming, and social technology. She is the principal of Museum 2.0, a design firm that works with museums, libraries, and cultural institutions worldwide to create dynamic, audience-driven exhibitions and educational programs. In addition to design work, Nina lectures and gives workshops on visitor participation. She is an adjunct professor of social technology in the University of Washington Museology program. Nina authors the Museum 2.0 blog, which also appears as a column in Museum magazine. She is also a member of the board of the National Association of Museum Exhibitions. Previously, Nina served as Curator at The Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose, CA, and was the Experience Development Specialist at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C. Nina lives in Santa Cruz, California. She spends her free time rock climbing and building tree houses.

When I read the book I felt my self doing my PhD about modern museology. I learned designing participatory projects in cultural institutions and museums with an analytical and systematic approach. I learned developing visitor profiles and design methods for creating socially interactive environments in the museums and in cultural institutions. There are also very good and effective examples and case studies. I will use these designing methods in my work, which is designing and realizing museums both interior design and content development... Dear Nina, thank you very much ... I hope one day we meet you... We wish you a lot of success and a good life with full of new participatory designs for museums... Best Wishes Cigdem Yavuz Tasarimhane Istanbul Turkey [cigdem@tasarimhane.com](mailto:cigdem@tasarimhane.com) f:tasarimhane

I don't work in a field related to museums at all. I sell enterprise software, but a common problem plaguing all businesses these days is how to stay relevant in a world where the public expects a level of interaction that the classic didactic experiences don't provide. Consumers want a high level of personalization, and interaction creates rich "sticky" experiences. I would recommend this book to anyone in experience design, shopper marketing, or anyone who ever has to stand a trade show booth. One of the best things about this book is that she explains concrete approaches to make experiences more interactive and these are all based on case studies, there's little or no hand

waving and pontification.

I am in the midst of writing my thesis on material culture and museums. This book gives a clear and systematic path in how to approach technical problems in the museum. It is easy read, and not only gives it a great foundation to understanding the inner workings of interaction, but also gives you great ideas for how to conduct museum-research which results can be immediately applied to your pedagogical museum. The book should be compulsory to anyone involved with museums or interactive design, student or professional. Fidel Soto, Norway BA(Hons) product design, MA in material culture and didacticism

I really made a great deal on this book. The concepts on participation are exactly what I've been looking for in the sense of a more relevant, fulfilling and inclusive visitor experience in a museum or cultural center. Along the reading, lots of ideas spring, because the way she conducts the reading is very inspiring. If you work with cultural centers, museums, this is a must read. I strongly recommend! The only thing it falls short on is the cover. I wasn't even half way through the book and the cover is so thin (for a 250 page book) that it looked like the book went to war. A hard cover would have met up with the quality of the content.

Nina Simon's *The Participatory Museum* is an excellent source of information for anyone in the museum field. Simon describes various ways that museums have explored participatory techniques (both successful and unsuccessful) to get you thinking about new ways of engaging patrons in your institution. Throughout the book, Simon provides various case studies and numerous resources in the form of links to these cases and many others. Simon also facilitates a blog that is updated regularly to make the book itself a participatory experience. *The Participatory Museum* is a definite read for anyone in the museum education or exhibition design field.

This book is a delightful read, accessible even for those who are not involved in museum studies. I came to this book looking for ideas on how to create and support contributory learning experiences. I was delighted with the many engaging examples of successful participatory projects collected. Thoughtful analysis of each example was provided. Examples selected came from a variety of fields. This diversity really helped me to connect with the book even more, as I came to the book looking for cross-disciplinary insights. The book also does a great job of covering all aspects of design that need to be considered; establishing participation goals, evaluating and managing such

projects. A truly delightful read, I highly recommend.

Innovative, comprehensive, structured, practical, without hype about web apps and with lots of case studies: a must read for anybody wishing to make museums more meaningful to their potential audience by enabling visitors, staff and other stakeholders truly participate in the museum experience. I was truly inspired while building our new museum in the Czech republic

If you want to create or improve the participatory nature of your programs and the relevance of your institution, this book provides very detailed examples and models, with case studies across a range of organization missions, all of which can be followed up on by the reader. A nice job of laying out an underlying model for how to structure participation, with examples of how institutions have targeted various levels on the model, an analysis of their results, and discussion on if/how to go to the next level.

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