



Inspired Learning: The Smithsonian Folklife Festival and Art Museum Education Strategies

by Betty J. Belanus and Charmaine Branch

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

~W. B. Yeats

Introduction

Inspired learning can happen anywhere—at school, in a museum exhibition, at a public program, even in your own kitchen or backyard. In this article, we examine two

learning venues, the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival and art museums, and four learning strategies used in both settings in different ways. Employing specific examples of the Big Draw, Visual Thinking Strategies, the use of the humble Post-it note, and social media platforms such as Instagram, we explore types of interactions that create inspired learning experiences. We also offer an activity that combines some of the strategies.

The four learning strategies examined in this article involve active engagement of art and folklore. They also offer different combinations of the other markers of “inspired learning,” helping learners in these settings with meaning making, deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, feelings, attitudes, and reflection on what is encountered. While these strategies represent only a small subset of learning strategies that folklorists and art museum staff use and there are challenges to their use that we discuss below, we feel strongly that these strategies are useful models for inspired learning in many settings.

About the photo: Section of artwork created by visitors to the 2009 Smithsonian Folklife Festival’s Wales Smithsonian Cymru Program, directed by artist Mary Lloyd Jones.

Photo by Betty J. Belanus.

Why “inspired learning?”

While doing research on learning, engagement, and art we discovered the “Inspiring Learning for All Framework” (ILfA) developed by cultural institution educators in the United Kingdom. As opposed to the term “museum education,” which seems somewhat passive, the ILfA definition for “inspired learning” fits the work of folklorists working in education and progressive museum educators alike:

“Learning is a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve increase in or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, feelings, attitudes and the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.”¹

Our examples will make more sense as springboards for inspired learning if we first describe and compare the venues and their typical audiences. Since Betty has the most experience with the Festival and Charmaine with art museums, we combined our knowledge of these two venues and alternate sections using personal examples and research.

Setting the Stage: The Festival, Art Museums, and Their Audiences

In late June in Washington, DC, the weather turns hot and humid, alternating between burning hazy sun and scathing thunderstorms, now and then with a perfect day of clear skies and comfortable temperatures. This is the setting for the [Smithsonian Folklife Festival](#), which takes place out of doors under tents, in temporary built structures, and beneath trees on the National Mall. Despite the sometimes unpredictable weather, the event attracts hundreds of thousands of general public visitors per year, tourists and locals alike, including families, summer day campers, artists and educators.

The Festival differs from a bricks-and-mortar museum in several ways. First and most apparently is its relatively short duration—compared with even temporary museum exhibitions that are usually in place for months, not to mention permanent exhibitions in many art museums that may not change for years. It can perhaps be seen as one of the world’s largest and most complex [Pop Up Museums](#), composed of temporary displays easily put together and taken apart. Second, as an open-air event without an obvious/singular/apparent main entrance and copious eye- and ear-catching venues, visitors enter the Festival more freely than they would through conventionally imposing museum doors. They choose their pathways more voluntarily than is possible in most museum gallery spaces.

The third difference, and the one most closely linked to the mission of the Festival² and its parent organization, the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (CFCH), is that people—not objects—are the heart of the event: the Festival “participants” or “culture bearers” who come from various parts of the United States or the world to demonstrate, perform, and talk about their cultural skills. Unlike most museum exhibitions, which may briefly employ live demonstrators, performers, or lecturers, the “people behind the objects” are the focus of the Festival throughout the event. Visitors are free to interact with them, ideally creating a dialogue (or, in Festival lingo, “a cultural conversation”).³

At first glance, an art museum may seem to be the epitome of a “passive” museum experience, and a polar opposite to the Festival. At a minimum, art museum visitors are asked to view inanimate objects such as paintings and sculptures as they walk through the galleries. Some people may not think of this viewing experience as active because the interaction between viewer and object is not as obvious as a conversation between two people. However, recent developments among educators in art museums attempt to involve visitors in a variety of active roles during their visit. Along with active observing that invokes critical thought, art museums are offering visitors the opportunity to take part

in conversational tours, educational programming, and more. These methods offer some interesting ideas that could also lead to new levels of visitor engagement cultural events such as the Festival.

How relevant is the difference between visitors to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and art museums to their learning experience? According to a 2010 study of 40,000 museum-going households by the organization Museum Audience Insight, art museums had generally older visitor bases, with 65 percent of respondents over age 50. Generally, respondents were less ethnically diverse than the overall sample of museum goers, with 92 percent identifying as white, and only 16 percent identifying as a minority. According to the 2015 Smithsonian Folklife Festival visitor survey, Festival visitors skewed somewhat younger (34 percent were over age 55) and more ethnically diverse with 59 percent white, 16 percent Latino, 11 percent African American, and 7 percent Asian (*Who's Coming to Your Museum?* 2010).

Broad demographic statistics don't take into account the variation of art museums within the U.S. or in audience makeup of the Festival. For example, art museums with more specific missions, such as those that focus on an ethnic group, might have a more diverse audience. Festival programs featuring Latino or Asian cultures generally bring out a larger affinity audience. Beyond demographics, the bigger common sense difference between the two venues may be the anticipated experience of most visitors. Art museum goers do not usually expect to encounter music, join in a dance, or converse with an artist in person, although all these things could potentially take place within art museum walls. Festival goers find it harder just to read available signage and gaze at the art and craft on display, with the makers actively demonstrating their skills and other compelling programming beckoning nearby, although if they really wanted to have a totally passive experience, they certainly are free to do so.

Given the differences in venue, audience makeup, and expectations of the Festival and art museums, we were struck with the strong potential for using the four strategies we outline here in these very different settings and beyond. We believe that the strategies discussed below offer visitors to the Festival, art museums, and other venues (including the classroom) ideas for "lighting the fire" of inspired learning in different ways. Some strategies have been used in various forms for a number of years at the Festival. Most of the art museum examples are from the past 15 years, and many represent a radical shift in the way these museums approach visitor learning experiences. Outside the scope of this article are similar strategies that might have been part of the learning experience repertoire of other types of museums (for instance, children's museums, living history museums, science centers, or zoos).

Participation and Connection: The Big Draw (Betty)

In the Fall of 2007, I was conducting research in Wales for what would become the 2009 Wales Smithsonian Cymru Program of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, when I encountered a [Big Draw](#) event at the art gallery of the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagan's. I knew nothing about the Big Draw, but I liked the concept: a facilitator invited visitors, myself included, to contribute to a paper mural inspired by the art of Mary Lloyd Jones, whose work was displayed nearby on the gallery walls. Jones happened to be an artist being considered for inclusion at the Festival, since her art connects to Welsh identity and language.



Facilitator at the Welsh Folk Museum directing a Big Draw project inspired by the artwork of Mary Lloyd Jones (an example can be seen on the wall in the background).

Photo by Betty J. Belanus.

I discovered that the Big Draw (formally The Campaign for Drawing) was founded in 2000 in the U.K. to “promote visual literacy and the universal language of drawing as a tool for learning, expression and invention.” The idea quickly took off and grew from a one-day event to a month-long international celebration with a new theme each year. Big Draw events are further explained as “participatory and inclusive, [using] drawing to engage people of all ages with museum and gallery collections, heritage sites, or each other, in new and creative ways. Participants are encouraged to expand the boundaries of drawing and experiment with paint, charcoal, sand, clay, digital imagery and much more.”

The philosophy behind the Big Draw is simple: to draw something, one needs to observe it closely and then use imagination and creativity to reinterpret the item. An informed facilitator—ideally the artist him/herself—helps guide the activity. When I attended the Big Draw at the Welsh Folk Museum, the visiting artist pointed out the nearby exhibition of Mary Lloyd Jones’s work and talked briefly about its symbolism, then invited visitors to use the paints on hand to add to the growing mural with their own artwork. At the 2009 Festival, we were fortunate to have Mary Lloyd Jones as a participant. Festival visitors were invited to add their artwork to a canvas inspired by her work (on display around the site), under her tutelage.

Participatory art projects similar to Big Draw activities have been included at many other Smithsonian Folklife Festival programs as well, either in a family activities area or alongside a folk artist’s demonstration tent. These activities (in theory at least) relate to the work of folk artists at the Festival. Group creative tasks (to use the Big Draw term) have involved drawing or painting—adding to a mural on a wall or a large piece of craft paper during the 2015 Peru program, for instance. Activities inspired by the artwork of Festival participants are also common; at the 2014 China Traditions and the Art of Living Program, visitors to the family activities tent created and decorated

kites made from bamboo skewers and paper, inspired by the work of a master kite maker working in another part of the program.

If the activity takes place in a separate family activity area, the physical distance between that space and where the artist is working may make it difficult for visitors (usually children) to connect the work of the artist and their own simpler rendition. They may be having fun and being creative, in other words, but they may not be learning what the Festival staff hoped they would about the history, complexity, mastery, and symbolism behind traditional cultural products. In the case of the kite-making activity, signage explaining what seasonal festival kites are made for in China was posted on worktables, and examples of the kite maker's artwork were placed on a nearby table to attempt to make the cultural connections more evident.

Even when the folk artist is close to the art participants, there may not be a truly "intentional" connection made, usually because of a language barrier and the large crowds at the event. For instance, during the 2014 Festival, a separate table was set up next to the Chinese paper cutters, with materials (paper, scissors) for trying the craft. This seemed like a fine idea, but in my observation, this proved to be more of a strategy to get visitors to leave the craftspeople to their own skilled work than to making a meaningful connection with these particular Chinese folk artists. The visitors doing their own paper cuttings seemed to be mostly ignoring the folk artists, intent on their own activity.

In contrast, an English-speaking master Chinese American paper cutter who demonstrated in the family area mesmerized visitors, although she was not involving the audience in a hands-on activity. She made an intricate paper cutting while telling Chinese folk tales, revealing her cutting at the end of the session. This emphasizes that many different types of learning are going on at the Festival (and at art museums), and connection/engagement may not always be most effective through hands-on participation.

A Big Draw style event presents an amazing learning opportunity for visitors to connect to the work of artists and to get involved by trying their hand at some art themselves. But, without the proper connections being made, as with these examples from the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, the opportunity may be missed. When planning such a project in any learning setting, organizers should attempt to make these connections through mindful facilitation, intentional questions, and meaningful displays of authentic art, ideally involving the actual demonstration of a master artist. (For a Big Draw inspired activity, see *Learning Application: The Story Behind a Folk Craft*, in this issue, page 103.)

Look Closely, Ask Questions, Discuss: Visual Thinking Strategies (Charmaine)

Many people think of an art museum tour in which a guide lectures at a silent audience as the usual form of visitor participation in a museum environment. That is no longer the case in all art museums, with countless types of tours, many encouraging discussion and conversation surrounding the object being observed. As a student docent with the Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center at Vassar College, I was introduced to one strategy, Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), as an important tool to communicate with our visitors.

Multiple museums have designed methods with missions similar to VTS. The Art of Seeing Art at the Toledo Museums of Art encourages slow looking and discussion through a series of steps: Look, Observe, See, Describe, Analyze, and Interpret. With these steps, visitors of all ages are guided through interacting with works of art and understanding them on a deeper level.

Visual Thinking Strategies

Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine developed VTS as a teaching method and educational curriculum focused on enhancing critical-thinking skills and developing dialogue among museum visitors. The method is most successful in a group environment in which a museum educator facilitates a discussion surrounding a visual object such as a painting, sculpture, or video. The educator asks the group a series of questions beginning with a variation of three general questions:

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can we find?

These open-ended questions and those that build on the group's observations are integral to this method to increase student engagement and performance (Visual Thinking Strategies). VTS values all the visitor voices shared in a way that encourages understanding of the viewer's perspective as well as that of the artist.

Note: Other frameworks to guide student observation and analysis of visual (and cultural) objects and expressions include [Harvard Project Zero's Thinking Strategies](#).

According to Housen and Yenawine, by learning with the VTS method visitors, especially children, are able to develop aesthetic, observational, language, and critical-thinking skills (*Visual Thinking Strategies*). Although VTS was originally developed for the art museum setting, it can be implemented in many learning environments, from the classroom to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The flexibility of VTS works well within the Festival's free choice learning environment. Visitors are encouraged to connect what they see, taste, and feel at the Festival with experiences in their own lives, creating cross cultural conversations. VTS, however, focuses on creating dialogue around an inanimate object, while the Festival provides visitors the opportunity to engage with participants skilled in their craft.

How might the conversation shift among visitors from discussing a basket on display in a museum to discussing a basket with a basket weaver at the Festival? The personal experience of the weaver as well as the historical context of the weaving technique would be more readily available in the Festival example. The open-ended questions provided by the facilitator could take on a more comparative role, asking visitors to discuss the use of baskets in their own culture in relation to the weaver's presentation. Perhaps the facilitator would ask: "Do you use baskets in your daily life? What do you use that functions as a basket? What is the importance of making a basket beautiful as well as functional?"

VTS at the Festival may also offer a means of delving deeper and thinking more critically about what a visitor sees, furthering the "cultural conversation" by a closer observation of a craft item to ask more meaningful questions. Take, for example, the case of the paper cutters from China at the 2014 Festival. If a visitor took the time to examine the finished paper cuttings on display as well as works in progress, questions might go beyond the usual "How long does this take to make?" to include "What kind of bird is this in the paper cutting? Why are most of the cuttings red? Who taught you to make the paper cuttings?" Although the participants within a conversation might shift from art museum to festival, the critical questions encouraged by VTS remain relevant across learning environments.

Leaving Your Mark: Post-it Notes (Betty)

What is the potential power of the ordinary yellow sticky note for visitors to museums and cultural events? During the One World, Many Voices: Endangered Languages Program of the 2013 Festival, a large laminated map of the world became a fascinating interactive space. Visitors were invited to leave their own "language stories" on sticky notes, and many people had comical or poignant stories



Visitors post their language stories at the One World, Many Voices Program of the 2013 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Photo from Festival Blog

<http://www.festival.si.edu/blog/2013/visitors-put-their-languages-on-the-map>

to tell. Visitors could be seen not only leaving notes but also avidly reading the accumulated stories. Curator Marjorie Hunt tasked her interns during the Festival with writing a blog encouraging visitors to participate, which included the prompts and some of the stories. After the Festival, interns compiled the stories to share at a Festival evaluation meeting. In the end, over 800 posts were compiled.

Indeed, the humble sticky note can become one of the most useful interactive tools in museums and at the Festival, employed to make portions of exhibits and Festival programs instantly interactive, adding stories and inspiring commentary in multiple voices. The idea of visitors leaving comments about an art exhibition via various means, including comment cards or books, is well established. These are usually relegated to a corner of the exhibition. The idea of applying Post-its directly to the walls of a museum, sometimes even adjacent to the artwork, to solicit more immediate visitor reactions and opinions is relatively new in most art museums and may be shocking to some visitors who might consider sticky notes a “tacky” addition to the aesthetic of an art museum.

One powerful example of the Post-it concept is from the 2013 *30 Americans* exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum. Museum staff invited visitors to leave comments about and reactions to the exhibit via Post-it notes. Starting with a small, designated area for the notes, staff soon realized that many more people than anticipated wished to leave comments and dialogues were being created between notes. The museum’s school and teacher program manager, Laci Coppins, commented:

I was excited to see so many people having a desire to share their voice through a small yellow note, dare I say be empowered to do so. As the exhibition continued, the Post-it notes really became a reflection of the community who viewed the art in the space and in some ways became a work of art in itself. Personally, I was most moved by the conversations that took place between notes, the different languages listed, and the overarching reminder of forgiveness, love, and the importance of teaching the next generation. (*30 Americans blog*)

Unlike high-tech versions of commenting on and sharing impressions of an exhibition or Festival program (which Charmaine discusses in the next section), the simple sticky note is immediate and inclusive. In some museums, comments displayed on the exhibition walls have shaped whole exhibitions, such as in the [Gallery of Conscience](#) at the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. (See pages 3-34, this issue.)

After the positive experience with visitors leaving messages in 2013, our education team working on the Wawawasi Kids Corner at the 2015 Peru program decided to leave three prompts for visitors on a board outside the activity tent. The result was over 400 comments, ranging from many variations of “I love Peru” to short travelogues (“My trip to Peru was filled with adventure. A baby was born on my train to Cusco from Macchu Pichu”) to a full-blown multi-Post-it story written July 5 by visitor Talia Nascimento [punctuation original to note]:

In 1979, after my 1st semester at Stanford I wasn't sure what I wanted to study, so...I took my backpack and traveled across Mexico to see friends. That trip led to 3 years traveling throughout South America. As I zig-zagged up & down the continent one country kept calling me back...Peru...the Andes, the sea, the Amazon, mostly the people. It was the place I kept returning to like a bird returns to its favorite flower. I made friends that I still return to see - who visit me in California. This festival has been amazing and reminds me why I still return to Peru every 3-4 years. (Post-it note comment, Peru: Pachamama Program of 2015 Smithsonian Folklife Festival)

While most Post-it note boards are not going to yield too many complete stories such as this one, even short messages can be powerful tools. First, as already noted, they make visitors feel included in a dialogue with the exhibition/event. Second, many other visitors read the comments, creating an engaging display in its own right. Third, if saved, compiled, and analyzed, these notes can become a strong evaluation tool, offering clues to how people related to the exhibition/program, what they liked/disliked, and why they felt compelled to visit in the first place.

Post-it boards or walls are, in conclusion, a low-cost, high-yield inclusion to both Festival programs and museum exhibitions. Even if they are not saved for posterity or evaluation, they are still useful in providing visitors a means of offering feedback and adding their voice. Putting some time and effort into compiling the comments, writing a blog about the results, and perhaps even coding them for clues to visitor behavior would maximize the impact of the interaction. Visitors took the time to leave their comments; educators should take the time to use them to their fullest potential after their lifetime on the wall.

Technology Is Not the Enemy (Charmaine)

Technology-enhanced learning activities are myriad these days both at the Festival and museums. Much has been written about the advantages of using a smartphone to convey additional web-based information, thus bringing the museum to “virtual visitors” unable or unwilling to visit the building. Those visitors able to experience the museum in person can carry information out of the building with them in one of the many forms of social media. Through Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, etc., they share their personalized museum adventure with their friends and followers. Social media becomes an extension of museum learning with the potential for promoting critical thought.

The Renwick Gallery, home to the Smithsonian American Art Museum's collection of contemporary craft and decorative art, has incorporated Instagram and live media sharing into a museum visit from beginning to end and afterward. The inaugural exhibition [*Wonder*](#) for the reopening of the Renwick in 2015 included a number of monumental artworks that people could meander through and around in casual exploration. My sister and I thoroughly enjoyed *Wonder* when we visited in March 2016. As frequent museum goers we weren't expecting the enthusiastic signs throughout the galleries encouraging people to take photographs. I usually look for signs letting me know where I cannot take photographs, which can unfortunately result in a puzzle of yes/no/yes/no depending on my location. The reaction was a plethora of selfies, pensive poses, and silly faces among the visitors. When we

uploaded our photos onto Instagram with the hashtag #RenwickGallery, we could view them on media screens throughout the galleries. This additional layer of interaction felt especially geared toward members of the Millennial generation like ourselves, and made the visit truly memorable.



(Left) Charmaine Branch standing inside *Shindig* (2015) by Patrick Dougherty at the Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC. (Right) Sarah Branch standing next to *Plexus A1* (2015) by Gabriel Dawe at the Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC.

Photos courtesy Charmaine Branch.

At the Festival, technological learning experiences have been embraced by some staff members and approached skeptically by others. While everyone agrees that the Festival website can enhance the event through posting additional information (up-to-date schedules, blogs, video, streaming content), many on staff would like to see people put away their phones and focus on interacting with participants. Other staff members are asking, “How can social media via Smartphones enhance the Festival experience while not detracting from person-to-person cultural conversations?”

CFCH is present on a number of popular social media apps including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, and YouTube. Some accounts are more general, referring to ongoing projects, including Smithsonian Folkways Recordings. Others are specific to the Festival such as Instagram photo contests, hashtags including #2016Folklife, and an invitation for visitors to share their favorite photo with #FolklifeCapture. The majority of the social media engagement derives from visitors’ use of Twitter and Instagram as they share their exploration live via the Internet. These social media experiences are not central to the Festival, but act as supplemental engagement opportunities for a community of technologically savvy visitors. Additionally, the Festival’s social media presence supports CFCH’s mission to represent traditional folk art and cultural practices as dynamic and in the present rather than frozen in the past.

Along with easy access to social media, the Smartphone has many uses in the museum environment. In the 2015 New Medium Consortium (NMC) Horizon Report, a group of researchers analyzed the

impact of technology in the museum over the next five years. They discussed the ongoing trend of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) happening in museums today, finding that:

More museums are seeing the value of enabling visitors to capture and share their experience of art with their personal devices for educational purposes, and for promoting the institution to a broader audience through social media (2015, 37).

In art museums, location-specific Smartphone apps have replaced bulkier audio guide devices of past decades. Visitors can download an app specific to the museum with extended descriptions of the exhibitions, videos, and more. The Metropolitan Museum of Art's iPhone/iPad/iPod touch app provides accessible information about the museum and gives people the ability to explore current exhibitions. They can access the information during their visit or afterward from whichever location they choose. Variations of similar apps exist in museums all over the country, from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to the Minneapolis Institute of Art.⁴

A general information app was developed for the Festival in 2013, but it was scrapped in favor of maximizing the existing Festival website for mobile devices. Might the Festival think about a value-added app in the future, in line with new uses of cellphones in art museums? At first glance, the difference between the environment of the Festival and the art museum may seem prohibitive to an audio tour-like app: too much distracting ambient noise, but also the unique presence of the participants to speak to in person. But, what if audio content enhanced the Festival visitor experience in innovative ways?

The Festival takes participants out of the "natural contexts" of their workshops, homes, gardens, city sidewalks, or farms. What if contextualized audio soundscapes of a participant's home or work setting could be recorded and delivered via a Smartphone app? Could such additional information help set the stage for a more meaningful exchange and deeper understanding of the folk artists' natural milieu? Perhaps it is worth the experiment. In any case, new uses for social media and mobile technology will surely be incorporated into future Festivals, hopefully enhancing visitor experience instead of detracting from it.

Conclusion

As the learning strategies above suggest, visitors can become active learners if provided the tools to do so. But we must acknowledge that visitors to all cultural institutions and events bring their individual styles of and preferences for receiving and processing information in cultural institutions and events that may have little to do with the venue they are visiting. Nina Simon, innovative director of the Santa Cruz Museum of History and Art and author of *The Participatory Museum*, notes that there will always be visitors who enjoy the "static exhibition conferring authoritative knowledge" typical of many art museums, just as "there will always be visitors who enjoy interactive programs that allow them to test that knowledge for themselves," which is more typical of the Festival. And, as Simon continues, "there will increasingly be visitors—perhaps new ones—who enjoy the opportunity to add their own voices to ongoing discussions about the knowledge presented," which as we have seen above, opens new opportunities to Festival goers, art museum visitors, and learners in many other contexts (Simon 2010, 4).

As the Smithsonian Folklife Festival approaches its 50th year in 2017, it continues to evolve, reflecting changes in society, research methods, technology, and many other factors. The Festival continues to develop new learning strategies and activities and improve those already serving visitors with the opportunity for "inspired learning." Similarly, art museums in the U.S. and around the world continue to develop new strategies for visitor engagement and "inspired learning." While

the Festival presents different opportunities as well as drawbacks to bricks-and-mortar museums, learning within the context of both Festival and museum can inform one another. In the future, it would behoove organizers of folk arts and folklife events such as the Festival to pay more attention to the ways visitor learning is changing and evolving in art and other museums and focus not only on the differences between the two, but also on the ways they can both provide visitors with meaningful learning experiences.

Betty J. Belanus is an Education Specialist and Smithsonian Folklife Festival Curator at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. She holds a PhD in Folklore from Indiana University. She has worked on folklore and education and museum education projects since 1982 with such institutions as The Indianapolis Children's Museum, the Indiana Historical Bureau, and in her present position where she has served since 1987.

Charmaine Branch is a former intern with the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. She is pursuing an MA in Art History at Columbia University and holds a BA in Art History from Vassar College. She has interned and worked with a number of institutions including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Museum of the American Indian.

Endnotes

1. The ILfA Framework <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance-library/toolkits> created “to develop rich learning environments for the visitor, and to evaluate the actual learning experience gained by the visitor” is a tool for museum educators and has potential for folklorists working in education as well, but further applications are the stuff of another article. Incidentally, “Inspiring Learning for All” has echoes in the in-house education “brand” that the Smithsonian launched recently with the aid of public relations firm Woolf Olins: “Exciting the Learning in Everyone,” <http://www.wolffolins.com/work/42/smithsonian>.
2. CFCH Mission can be found at <http://www.folklife.si.edu/mission-and-history/cfch-strategic-plan/smithsonian>.
3. The term “cultural conversation” has been used in many references to the Festival. See Richard Kurin (2014) and Cadaval, Olivia, Diana Baird N’Diaye, and Sojin Kim (2016).
4. For more information see <http://www.metmuseum.org/press/news/2014/metropolitan-museum-launches-flagship-mobile-app> and http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/18/arts/artsspecial/18SMART.html?_r=1.

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Smithsonian Folklife Festival www.festival.si.edu

Pop Up Museum <http://popupmuseum.org/pop-up-museum-how-to-kit>

The Big Draw <http://www.thebigdraw.org>

Harvard Project Zero Thinking Strategies http://www.visiblethinkingpz.org/VisibleThinking_html_files/VisibleThinking1.html

Festival blog on Post-it notes <http://www.festival.si.edu/blog/2013/visitors-put-their-languages-on-the-map>

Gallery of Conscience <http://www.internationalfolkart.org/about/our-history/gallery-of-conscience.html>

Renwick Gallery *Wonder* Exhibition <http://renwick.americanart.si.edu/wonder>

Learning Application: The Story Behind a Folk Craft

(Adapted from the *Big Draw on the Move Sourcebook*.)

Can a folk craft tell a story? How can you find out?

Assemble some handmade folk crafts into a “mini-museum” in your classroom, museum, or cultural event. Baskets, pottery, wood carvings, paper cuttings, kites, a quilt square—whatever is readily available and not too fragile or valuable to prevent handling. (If you are at a cultural event such as a craft or folklife festival, collect items from the makers if possible.)

Invite participants to touch, feel, even smell the artifacts, and ask each to pick the one that interests them the most.

Pass out art materials (paper, pencils, markers, crayons) and invite each participant to draw the item they are most interested in.

If you are in a setting where the makers of the crafts are present, have the participants take their drawings with them and find the maker of that type of item. (Basketmaker, quilter, paper cutter, etc.) They should conduct a short interview with the maker, asking some of the following questions or making up their own:

Who taught you how to make this craft?
How old were you when you made the first one?
Why did you choose these materials, colors, shapes?
What do you like best about making this craft?

If you are not in a setting with makers present, prepare some sheets of information on each craft (and its maker, if known), which the participants can use to discover more information.

Ask participants to use the information from the interview or information sheets to write a story about the craft in their drawings. Have them share the stories with the other participants.

Put the drawings and the stories on display on a bulletin board.

EXTENSION: Invite other visitors to vote on their favorite drawing/story pair, to leave a Post-It note comment near their favorite, or to share their favorite on a social media platform.