

**Seed Grant Cover Sheet 2012**

**1. Principal Investigator**

**Name:** Tim McNeil

**Title:** Associate Professor/Director, UC Davis Design Museum

**Department:** Design

**College:** UC Davis College of Letters & Science

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**2. Co-Principal Investigator (if applicable)**

**Name:** Patricia Austin

**Title:** Research Leader/Principal Lecturer

**Department:** Spatial Practices Program

**College:** University of the Arts, London

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**3. Project Title**

**Audience, Participation, Experience:** Beyond the Museum Exhibition

**4. Abstract (not to exceed 100 words)**

The term “exhibition design” is outmoded, it requires a better definition, one that advances academic understanding and elevates current professional practice. This will be the first in a series of international symposiums on transforming Exhibition Design bringing together thinkers, strategists and practitioners from the USA, Asia and Europe to address and inform this evolving design discipline, with a focus on designing experiences for audience participation. The event will serve as a catalyst for further international academic and professional exchange around this topic.

**5. Budget**

**Total amount requested:** \$15,000.00

**Total matching support:** \$25,321.50



## **Audience, Participation, Experience *Beyond the Museum Exhibition***

*Proposal for a Series of International Symposia  
on Exhibition Design*

# Audience, Participation, Experience: Beyond the Museum Exhibition

## Proposal for a Series of International Symposia on Exhibition Design

### 1. Brief Summary and Goal of the Proposal

The term “exhibition design” is outmoded, it requires a better definition, one that advances academic understanding and elevates current professional practice.

This will be the first in a series of international symposiums on transforming Exhibition Design bringing together thinkers, strategists and practitioners from the USA, Asia and Europe to address and inform this evolving design discipline, with a focus on designing experiences for audience participation. The event will serve as a catalyst for further international academic and professional exchange around this topic. The date of the event is October 2013 and it will be held at Central Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London.

### 2. Proposal Narrative

#### a) *Why is it important that we re-evaluate the term “exhibition design”?*

The public museum is a nineteenth century construct that has survived and persisted into the 21st century and carried with it assumptions that the museum is the repository for the “exhibition”, hosting visitors as willing or, indeed, unwilling spectators. However, today’s hyper-connected audiences are looking beyond the museum exhibition’s traditional role to inform, educate and inspire. Experiential, non-museum-like environments driven by audience preferences, located in dispersed geographical and cultural contexts, using technological advances that produce media rich immersion, are all transforming public expectations. What does this mean for exhibition developers and designers? To answer these questions the issues of exhibition relevance, authority and audience all need to be unpacked and debated.

*How can cultural institutions use participatory techniques not just to give visitors a voice, but to develop experiences that are more valuable and compelling for everyone? This is not a question of intention or desire; it’s a question of design.*

Simon, Nina (2010), *Principles of Participation*, The Participatory Museum

There has been a rapid expansion and diversification of the museum sector across the globe in the last 20 years with an eye to longevity, legacy and resilience. They are now thought of as anything from brand pillars in city profiles in other words, walk in logos on a “must do” tourist trail, to spectacular commercial entertainment, to guardians of cultural and material heritage, to kernels of community cohesion. As museums proliferate and visitor numbers increase throughout the world, there is surprisingly little debate and exchange about the design of the visitor experience. Assumptions about purpose, form, curatorial and design practices, and audience participation have not been sufficiently questioned. The University of California, Davis (UC Davis) and Central Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London (CSM) are at the forefront of the debate on the future of design for museums and argue that a rethinking of exhibition design from the perspective of audience participation, interaction and experience will provide a much needed critical landscape for the numerous stakeholders involved.

Opportunities for international Exhibition design scholarship and idea exchange are relatively few taking the form of museum-centric journals at a national level such as the *National Association of Museum Exhibitions* (NAME), academic journals such as *Visitor Studies* looking at visitor behavior but not so much at design, and the less academic *Museums Journal* and *Museum* which are struggling to break away from the curators’ issues. Global organizations include the International Committee on Museums (ICOM) which has a single committee looking predominately at museum architectural design, the Society for Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD) which has a growing global reach and will serve as a partner in this venture, and a handful of online community groups (MuseumDesign, ExhibitDesign group-digests@linkedin.com) focused on technical devices and some discussion of courses and design jobs. There is a lack of international dialogue about the discipline and academic programs teaching exhibition design. The definition of a “curator” has changed, that of the exhibition designer has never really been unpacked, and academic study is limited or sits within the museum bubble—exhibitions are everywhere.

*Ken Arnold, the Wellcome Collection's Head of public programmes, envisages a time when, through advances in personal computing, people make enquiries and curate for themselves or participate or organises their own events.*

Sharp, Rob (2012) *Flexible thinking*. Museums Journal, 112 (10), pp.24-29.

This proposal is seeking support to address this intellectual gap by creating a series of international symposia on exhibition design with resulting publications and documentation. The field of exhibition design spans cultural and commercial sectors encompassing museums, visitor centers, tradeshow and theme parks. The symposia will bring together participants with divergent views from all sides of the exhibition spectrum to create a design-centric rather than a museum-centric forum for debate, analysis, and future collaboration and exchange. Starting with realistic and achievable goals, the intention is to expand the event in subsequent years. Although there will be overlap, "Audience" (the people) will be the first symposium theme, with further themes emerging such as "Content" (the curator) and "Experience" (the designer). The range of potential issues and questions include:

- There is a shift in audience engagement from a passive viewer to an active participant who shapes their own narrative. How do we design for active participation? How can new theories in psychology and behavioral sciences inform exhibition design?
- Audiences are becoming more fragmented and diverse as global mobility increases. How can design provide multiple and simultaneous cultural touch points and nuances in storytelling and the sharing of stories?
- Audiences are better connected to information and like-minded social networks. How do we harness this to enrich the physical/emotional/intellectual visitor journey through the space?
- Learning styles have become more sophisticated and the ways to deliver content more accessible. What challenges does this bring to design?
- Audiences expect to photograph objects and take away images and indeed some see this as curating. Audiences can now assemble their own collections online and even charge other audiences to see their collections. What are benefits for, and threats to institutions that arise from this phenomena, and what is the role of design here?
- Recent advances in technology mean audiences can drill down into data using digital technologies from any location with wifi, designers can animate information in sound, moving image or video projections inside museums or on mobile phone screens. Audiences expect mobile technology and media driven environments. How is this changing the design process?
- The location of exhibitions has expanded beyond museum walls attracting audiences to a multitude of dispersed exhibition environments that may also include events, performances and geo-located, augmented reality experiences. What new challenges and opportunities arise from this dispersed and performative visitor experience?
- Audience experience has become the defining factor for exhibition success and future funding. Does this not mean the design is more crucial than ever before?
- The definition of community involvement has evolved as museums take on an active role in social innovation and social inclusion. How the design process and outcomes contribute to this goal?
- Is the dispersed museum more sustainable than the traditional centralized model?

***b) Who are the proposals primary organizers and partners?***

This proposal is the result of a collaborative academic partnership between Professor Tim McNeil at the University of California, Davis, and Research Leader/Principal Lecturer Patricia Austin at Central Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London. For several years both parties have been seeking a way to actively partner on academic instruction and delve deeper into their specific research area, the "narrative environment", a broader notion than exhibition design. As leading researchers in their field, they serve as the core PI's on this grant. The inclusion of other academic institutions will increase in due course, with potential interest from FIT/State University of New York, University of Leicester, University College London, Goldsmiths University of London, University of Leiden Netherlands, Communication University of China Beijing, Tongji University Shanghai, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Design Academy Eindhoven, and Geneva University of Art and Design.

UC Davis has one of the only dedicated academic exhibition design programs with both undergraduate and graduate studies in the United States (graduate studies are available at FIT/SUNY, University of the Arts Philadelphia, Corcoran Washington D.C.). The UC Davis Department of Design offers four undergraduate studio courses in exhibition design that focus on cultural, commercial and entertainment environments, and the implementation of contemplative, sensory, discovery and interactive communication design tools. Other lecture courses in the department cover the history of museums and exhibitions. MFA candidates in exhibition design are vital to the growth and vitality of the program and the further development of this area is linked to academic exchange opportunities outlined in this proposal.

*As exhibition designers, we should not blindly follow the trend unless there's a proven reason to incorporate high tech beyond flash and attention, and commit to collections and story-based design solutions. As visitors, we should take advantage of the respite that "old school" museums offer and patronize those institutions.*

Whitemyer, David (2012) Slow Museums: Back to Basics.  
Memory, Vol. 15 n3

The majority of international exhibition design programs are located in Europe with an increasing number in Asia. "Creative Practice for Narrative Environments" at Central Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London is one of the most progressive academic programs with exhibition design study up to the PhD level. The course was established in 2003 to pioneer collaborative practice among architects, spatial designers, communication designers and curators in the development of engaging and content-rich visitor experiences. The students develop and prototype experiences for cultural, commercial and community environments. The course maintains that design can create, alter, add or subtract narratives from environments by integrating artifacts, text, sound, images, film and digital interfaces into the physical world. Environments are explored and developed through at least three dimensions, firstly hard physical structures, materials and form, which tend to remain fairly fixed over time; secondly, text, light, image, sound which can change quite rapidly; thirdly, the soft and most unpredictable dimension, human presence and interaction. Students produce both spaces that tell stories and spaces that encourage dialogue and the exchange of stories. CSM moved into a state-of-the-art new facility in September 2011. The building is a stunning example of a 21st-century design school and the perfect location for the inaugural symposium.

*c) What are the major goals and objectives and what will be accomplished (short and long term)?*

- Redefine the term "exhibition design"; it is outmoded and no longer represents the diversity and rigor of the discipline.
- Provide an open, design-centric forum for advancing the exhibition design discipline.
- Bring together an international roster of speakers/facilitators that are representative of the global exhibition design sector and economy.
- Look at emerging areas of exhibition and experience design and foster their growth.
- Introduce less prominent case studies that challenge the traditional exhibition design approach, such as MONA in Tasmania.
- Highlight best practice—those individuals or projects that are shifting the exhibition design paradigm and including audiences in new and thoughtful ways.
- Tackle a new theme, in a different country at each symposium.
- Begin ambitious but small in terms of outreach, invite a few select speakers from across the globe.
- Students, researchers and professionals participate equally in the dialogue and exchange.
- Focus less on the "celebrity" designers and more on those who are really making a difference.
- Encourage debate and include participants with contrasting perspectives and ideologies.
- Develop international project partnering and exchange opportunities for faculty and students.

*d) What format will the symposium take?*

The symposium will be held at Central: Central Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London in the Platform Theater and Main Foyer, October 17–19, 2013. The event capacity is 400 attendees, and the cost is £100 for professionals and £35 for students (scholarships will be given for students involved in the workshops).



***Thursday, October 17, 6:00–9:00 p.m.***

- Introduction by symposium hosts, organizers and sponsors
- Keynote introductions and panel discussion\* (Nina Simon, Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History; Ken Arnold, Wellcome Trust London; Wu Meng, Communication University of China, Herman Kossmann, Kossmann de Jong Amsterdam)
- Student workshop part 1 (webcast): project involving students from 3 international universities
- Networking event

***Friday, October 18, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.***

- Breakfast
- Presentations with workshop component: Audience and Experience (Nina Simon and Ken Arnold); Audience and Place (Herman Kossmann, and Phillip Taft); Audience and Social Sustainability (Wu Meng and Shan McLennan, SouthBank Centre)
- Lunch
- Thought leaders (8–10 five minute presentations about most pressing exhibition design issues)
- Break
- Student workshop part 2 (webcast): project involving students from 3 international universities
- Wrap up discussion and next steps

***Saturday, October 19, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.***

- Site visits (at least one exhibition at a museum, studio and public space)

***e) What are the desired outcomes and intended results?***

The documentation of the symposium proceedings and a sustainable format for future dialogue and exchange are the primary outcomes, these will include:

- Every other year conference/symposium at different international venues
- Publication of the proceedings
- Articles in museum/exhibition design connected journals
- TED style videos on YouTube etc.
- Website/blog/Ning for collecting symposium content and connecting to future events and symposia
- Industry and professional sponsorship and support
- Network of international academic/professional attendees and academic programs for students
- Growth of graduate studies/exchange in exhibition design at UC Davis and other academic institutions
- Informed body of material for sharing at other conferences connected to exhibition design

### **3. International Collaboration, Support and Long-term Sustainability**

This is an exciting partnering and outreach opportunity for UC Davis and CSM, one that leverages their unique faculty expertise. Together with other academic and professional partners (see letters of support) this will galvanize the international exhibition design community, address pertinent questions and issues affecting the future of the discipline, and fill a dialogue gap. UC Davis stands to gain on several levels: strengthening itself as a hub for international exhibition design research; collaborations with other UC Davis faculty in Design, the Humanities and the Arts (building on the potential of the new UC Davis Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art); expanding student (both undergraduate and graduate) exchange and collaboration; and adding significantly to an already robust and growing international program at UC Davis.

The UC Davis seed grant together with matching funds from CSM will provide a foundation to sustain this future revenue-generating event. Admission fees from the inaugural activity will seed subsequent symposia/conference in other locations including UC Davis in 2016, timed to coincide with the opening of the new art museum. The proposal has been endorsed by the Society for Environmental Graphic Design (SEGD), one of the only international organization representing academic exhibition design research and standards of professional practice. Design organizations in the U.K. have shown great interest and a commitment to review the proposal and provide financial backing. Viable opportunities exist in the future to seek design industry/manufacturing support and related sponsorship to augment and expand conference offerings.

\* Speakers to be confirmed

#### 4. Budget Proposal and Narrative

The primary costs for this inaugural symposium include research assistance and staff hours, renting facilities at CSM, and travel expenses for the invited speakers. This proposal is seeking the maximum of \$15,000.00 in seed grant support from UC Davis Outreach and International Programs. CSM will make a matching contribution of \$15,622.00. An additional \$9,700.00 has been promised by the Dean of UC Davis Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies to offset the cost of a GSR appointment and their travel. Because the UCD costs exceed the grant allowance by \$943.00, additional funding will be acquired in the months leading up to the symposium from other U.K. and U.S. based organizations. In the longer-term the symposium will become self funded through conference revenue and admissions, other international academic institutions hosting the event, and additional industry and professional support. The following U.K. based organizations have expressed interest in helping to promote and/or fund the symposium: British European Design Group, British Institute of Interior Design, British Council, Chartered Society of Designers, Cultural Industries Development Agency. Once the major funding is in place, these leads will be explored further to cover any additional expenses.

**a) Total UC Davis University Outreach and International Programs seed grant funding \$15,943.00**

*Costs associated with researching content and documentation, planning the event and logistics:*

- Undergraduate student assistant to help plan event and logistics: 50 hours @ \$10.00 = \$500.00

*Costs associated with travel expenses:*

- Travel for speakers (4 international flights, ground transport and accommodation): R/T Amsterdam to London (Herman Kossmann) \$400, plus 3 nights hotel \$900= \$1,300.00; R/T San Francisco to London (Nina Simon) \$1800, plus 3 nights hotel \$900= \$2,700.00; R/T Beijing to London (Wu Meng) \$2100 (including visa), plus 3 nights hotel \$900= \$3000.00
- Travel for principal PI (international flight, ground transport and accommodation, R/T Davis to London): San Francisco to London \$1800, plus 3 nights hotel \$900= \$2,700.00

*Costs associated with running the event:*

- Student workshops (materials, international web conferencing and local travel): \$700.00
- Student scholarships (free attendance for 12 students): 12 x \$57.75 (£35.00)= \$693.00
- Symposium posters and event printing: \$1,100.00
- Beverage and snack catering (attendees will purchase breakfast and lunch from the CSM canteen which is subsidized): \$600.00
- Buses for site visits: 4 @ \$300 per half day with driver = \$1,200.00

*Costs associated with outcomes and long-term goals:*

- Video editing and website production for disseminating proceedings: \$1,450.00

**b) Total matching funds from Central: Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London \$15,622.00**

*Costs associated with researching content and documentation, planning the event and logistics:*

- Co PI time: 50 hours @ \$65.11 (£39.46)= \$3,255.00
- Graduate student assistant to compile symposium background content and publicity: 50 hours @ \$23.05 (£13.97)= \$1,152.50
- Undergraduate student help to usher and take registration: 16 hours @ \$16.50 (£10.00)= \$264.00

*Costs associated with running the event:*

- Facility rental and hire of CSM LVMH theater: (£6,000.00) \$9,900.00
- AV equipment and event webcast: \$1,050.00

**c) Total contribution from Dean of UC Davis Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies \$9,700.00**

*Costs associated with research assistance and documentation, planning the event and logistics:*

- GSR funding (25% for one quarter with fee remission)= \$7,000.00
- Travel for GSR (international flight, ground transport and accommodation, R/T Davis to London): San Francisco to London \$1800, plus 3 nights hotel \$900= \$2,700.00

See attached letters of support and budget spreadsheet.

UOIP SEED GRANT - Budget Proposal - Audience, Participation, Experience: Beyond the Museum Exhibition	HOURS	RATE	TRANSPORT	HOTEL	FACILITY/FOOD	TECH	MISC	SUB TOTAL	
UC Davis University Outreach and International Programs seed grant funding									
<b>Costs associated with researching content and documentation, planning the event and logistics:</b>									
Undergraduate student assistant to help plan event and logistics	50	\$10.00						\$500.00	
<b>Costs associated with travel expenses for speakers and PI (international travel and accomodation):</b>									
R/T Amsterdam to London (Herman Kossmann)			\$400.00	\$900.00				\$1,300.00	
R/T San Francisco to London (Nina Simon)			\$1,800.00	\$900.00				\$2,700.00	
R/T Beijing to London (Wu Meng)			\$2,100.00	\$900.00				\$3,000.00	
R/T San Francisco to London (Tim McNeil)			\$1,800.00	\$900.00				\$2,700.00	
<b>Costs associated with running the event:</b>									
Student workshops (materials, international web conferencing and local travel)							\$700.00	\$700.00	
Student scholarships (free attendance for 12 students)							\$693.00	\$693.00	
Symposium posters and event printing							\$1,100.00	\$1,100.00	
Beverage and snack catering breakfast and lunch from the CSM canteen which is well subsidized)					\$600.00			\$600.00	
Buses for site visits- 4 @ \$300 per half day with driver			\$1,200.00					\$1,200.00	
<b>Costs associated with outcomes and long-term goals:</b>									
Video editing and website production for disseminating proceedings						\$1,450.00		\$1,450.00	
								\$15,943.00	<b>TOTAL</b>
Matching funds from Central: Saint Martins School of Arts & Design, University of the Arts London									
<b>Costs associated with researching content and documentation, planning the event and logistics:</b>									
Co PI time and hours	50	\$65.11						\$3,255.50	
Graduate student assistant to compile symposium background content and publicity	50	\$23.05						\$1,152.50	
Undergraduate student help to usher and take registration	16	\$16.50						\$264.00	
<b>Costs associated with running the event:</b>									
Facility rental and hire of CSM LVMH theater					\$9,900.00			\$9,900.00	
AV equipment and event webcast						\$1,050.00		\$1,050.00	
								\$15,622.00	<b>TOTAL</b>
Contribution from Dean of Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies, UC Davis									
<b>Costs associated with research assistance and documentation, planning the event and logistics:</b>									
GSR funding (25% for one quarter with fee remission)		\$7,000.00						\$7,000.00	
Travel for GSR (San Francisco to London)			\$1,800.00	\$900.00				\$2,700.00	
								\$9,700.00	<b>TOTAL</b>



**William B. Lacy**

Vice Provost, University Outreach and International Programs  
Office of the Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor  
220 Mrak Hall  
University of California, Davis  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis,  
CA 95616

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012

Dear Professor Lacy,

**Confirmation of support from Central Saint Martins College of Arts  
and Design**

I am writing to confirm that Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design (CSM), a constituent college of the University of the Arts London, endorses the initiative developed by Tim McNeil at University of California Davis (UCD) and Tricia Austin of CSM which is embodied in the former's request for a **seed funding grant from UCD's Outreach & International Programs**.

Their proposal is to establish a series of international symposia, commencing October 2013, to address the need for a better definition of Exhibition Design, one that advances academic understanding and elevates current professional design practice. The College and School are very pleased to be involved in this initiative and confident that through collaboration with UCD significant advances can be made in this respect.

To this end, we undertake to match in kind, any grants up to \$15,000 made by UCD towards the initiative, by the provision of physical and human resources and expertise at CSM.

Yours sincerely,




Jonathan Barratt  
Dean of School

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Tim McNeil <tjmcneil@ucdavis.edu>   
Fwd: UOIP Seed Grant Support

October 30, 2012 2:24 PM

1 Attachment, 5 KB

**From:** Jessie Ann Owens <jaowens@ucdavis.edu>  
**Subject:** RE: UOIP Seed Grant Support  
**Date:** October 29, 2012 2:22:35 PM PDT  
**To:** Timothy McNeil <tjmcneil@ucdavis.edu>  
**Cc:** Ian Blake <irblake@ucdavis.edu>

Hi, Tim,

Ian and I went over your proposal pretty thoroughly and would like to offer a way of supporting this exciting initiative. We would provide you with a GSR (25% for one quarter with fee remission, roughly \$7,000) and contribute up to \$3K for the grad student to travel to London and attend the conference.

J

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*Jessie Ann Owens, Dean  
Division of Humanities, Arts & Cultural Studies  
College of Letters & Science  
University of California, Davis  
tel: 530 754-8920; fax: 530 752-3490*

**UC DAVIS**  
**DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND CULTURAL STUDIES**



**Society for Environmental Graphic Design**  
The global community of people working at  
the intersection of communication design  
and the built environment.

1000 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Tel 202-638-5555 Fax 202-478-2286  
[www.segd.org](http://www.segd.org)

30 October 2012

Tim McNeil  
260 Cruess Hall  
University of California  
One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Tim;

I am writing in support of your grant proposal "Audience, Participation, Experience: Beyond the Museum Exhibition" for a series of international symposia on exhibition design. As you know, The Society for Environmental Graphic Design has long served as an education-based organization for the furthering of EGD including the specialized practice of Exhibition and Experience Design. Our long standing Exhibition and Experience Design Symposium has become one of our signature regional events, and continues to evolve to reflect the future of design education.

As the leading global design organization serving to educate, inspire, and connect those working at the intersection of the built environment and graphic communication design, SEG D is acutely aware of the challenges that designers and educators are facing at this moment of collective change impacting both design education and practice. Global shifts spanning economic and cultural trends are changing in the way we educate and train designers to be prepared for the increasingly competitive and demanding professional landscape.

The shift that is occurring at the foundation of design education is the trend towards designing for experiences. The long-standing model of designing objects is no longer relevant for a world in which design and strategy have converged to form service and experience driven ecosystems. The practice and future of "exhibition" design is greatly impacted by this very paradigm shift. Models of object driven curation are being questioned, examined, and new platforms for experiencing innovation and information are emerging at a vigorous rate. The need for a revolutionary discourse is paramount to understanding and informing the systems that are currently in play and to what degree they will be solidified into a mainstream and accepted expectation.

SEG D believes that this symposia represents a truly international collaboration that will showcase the future of exhibition and experience design, and will guide the next generation of designers towards a defined model that will serve as a the new baseline for this practiced space. SEG D looks forward to being a contributor and activator for the symposia with respect to content generation and dissemination. The design community at large has much to gain from this unique knowledge sharing opportunity.

I look forward to personally working with you to align and connect this proposed event to the current endeavors of SEG D. On behalf of SEG D, we hope this proposal is met with success and anticipate a unique and critical dialogue between UC Davis, and the supporting academic institutions in the UK. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely yours,

Justin Molloy, SEG D  
Director of Education and Professional Development

+1 513 252 2925 | [justin@segd.org](mailto:justin@segd.org)

Tricia Austin  
Course Director  
MA Creative Practice for Narrative Environments  
University of the Arts London  
Central Saint Martins  
London


21.10.12

**RE: University of California Davis / Central St Martins Symposium Proposal**

In my view, museums will continue to have their major task of helping us understand the world around us, past present and future, but they have to acknowledge the agencies of change. They now inhabit a very volatile marketplace where they compete with brand experiences, theme parks, high-end domestic digital technology and a whole stream of other market led distractions.

With 25 years experience in practice, having delivered around £100m of museums and galleries as an exhibition designer I am continually frustrated by the lack of vision demonstrated by major museum institutions. Narratives are often presented by curators who as experts in their field and merely draw on familiar 'in house' or favoured loan collections. The protocols of really understanding user needs, effective evaluation or even the concept of attracting public centric interpretation material are in my view seriously underdeveloped. The proposed UCD/ CSM initiative will I believe activate debate and documentation, enabling us to reflect on the principles of the status quo.

Yours sincerely



Professor Peter Higgins RIBA RDI  
Creative Director  
Land Design Studio Ltd