

C3: Conversation. Creativity. Community.

Research and Development

Final Report



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for the Mississippi Museum of Art
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Client: Mississippi Museum of Art
Project: Research and Development -
annual community engagement series C3: Conversation. Creativity. Community.

Background:

The idea for the series *C3: Creativity. Conversation. Community* emerged in the wake of the 2012 public sculpture performance installation *Cocoon by Kate Browne*. Taking place in the newly created Art Garden at the Museum, the engagement of the Cocoon art work truly modeled the mission the Museum had set forth for their garden – namely to become an intersection for experiencing the arts in Mississippi not just as a viewer but as part of a community of creators.

The Museum's stated goals for the series *C3: Creativity. Conversation. Community*, is to bring together the diverse members and citizens of the community for the purpose of fueling an artwork that is representative of this place and of Mississippi.

Important in creating a vision and strategy for this series is defining the word community. In truth, the Museum community is a set of communities; some nested within each other and some disparate. For this reason, the C3 series must invite people to it on different terms and in different languages. This report does not attempt to define "community". This is a task for internal Museum deliberation and should be related to an over-arching and evolving mission statement.

While this report will focus on the main annual project executed under C3, it is important to recognize that a balance of these three principles underlie all Museum interactions. Bringing a selection of other already recurring Museum events and projects under the umbrella of C3 will strengthen the community which arises around C3 by establishing a year-round presence. The Museum has seen this momentum build each of the three years of the series; harnessing that energy – creating an opportunity for C3 participants to identify more broadly with the Museum and its activities – would help build membership and recurring Museum participation year round.

This final report focuses on each Museum department and consolidates thoughts and ideas which arose in conversations along the way between staff, visitors, and Significant Developments staff regarding the unique intersection of the C3 series and how to facilitate the interactions to the greatest effect. The report is organized as a suggested order of actions from the proposal through the beginning of the annual Winter/Spring large-scale socially engaged art work.

Because the nature of the C3 annual project is to select an artist and then give them a wide berth in which to operate without Museum interference, this report focuses on a strategy for integrating the artist effectively into the Museum culture and facilitating access to tools, spaces and needed personnel. There is little here which would dictate the type of projects desired or their method of execution. These decisions should be arrived at collaboratively between the Museum and their chosen artist.

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Roots of the C3 Identity: Defining a Mission

The **Director of Education, Director of Family and Community Programs, and Museum Teaching Artist** should determine the intentions and goals for the Mississippi Museum of Art's series C3: Conversation. Creativity. Community. This C3 mission statement should be reconciled with and approved by the **Chief of Public Participation**.

This statement should include the primary and secondary populations of focus for the current cycle and desired outcomes. There will likely be multiple populations in each category and may change little from cycle to cycle.

This process should be repeated biennially.

Intentions and Choosing an Artist

The **Director of Education, Director of Family and Community Programs, and Teaching Artist** should conduct the proposal and interview process for selecting each C3 artist.

While proposals should be welcome and considered from anyone, the Museum should curate its own list of artists and invite proposals from them specifically rather than issuing a general call for proposals. Depending on the intentions for each year, this may be an international artist or it may be a local artist or artist group either of which may require greater facilitation.

Upon selection, the **Teaching Artist** should become the primary facilitator for the C3 artist unless otherwise dictated by the C3 mission statement.

Determining and Meeting Project Needs

Early in the planning process, the C3 artist should meet with the **Director of Family and Community Programs** and the **Teaching Artist** to determine what needs the Museum will meet in the course of the art work. The **Director of Family and Community Programs** and the **Teaching Artist** will create a strategy for meeting these needs including securing needed materials and identifying who will be responsible for procuring, delivering or implementing each provision.

As early as possible, it is useful to give the C3 artist a tour of the classrooms and it's cabinets. The **Teaching Artist** will be the coordinator for working with appropriate staff to meet needs.

Media Strategy - Invitation to PR Collaboration

The **Chief of Public Participation** should be introduced to the C3 artist early in the planning process as the point person for approving communication strategies both in house and out. These early meetings should include detailing the Museum's broader intentions for hosting the C3 series and how it fits into the Mission Statement of the Mississippi Museum of Art.

A primary goal of this meeting is to solidify an invitation to the C3 artist to be a collaborator in the media strategy for the art work.

Media Strategy - Determining the Nature and the Details

The **Director of Media and Public Relations** should be introduced to the C3 artist early in the planning process as the documentarian for the project. Early meetings should be had between the artist and this Director on strategies for documentation to support and further the goals of the art work.

This Director will also discuss with the artist a vision for featuring the C3 art work on the Museum Blog and other online and print venues. The **Director of Media and Public Relations** will subsequently create a document detailing the expected strategies and anticipated work time needed to fulfill them.

This strategy will be reconciled with and approved by the **Chief of Public Participation** and then distributed to the **Director of Family and Community Programs** and the **Teaching Artist**.

Intersecting with School Programs

The **Director of School Programs** should be introduced to the C3 artist early in the planning process and meetings held to determine if and how the School Programs populations can participate in the work, the nature of their participation, and strategies for coordinating this participation.

It is important to consider the possibility of a strategy for being available to some or all of the touring school groups. The **Director of School Programs** should describe the standard school tour – content and timing.

What is the Art Work and Determining Maintenance

The **Registrar** should be introduced to the C3 artist at least three weeks prior to the beginning of the art work to determine the nature of the spaces the artist and project will inhabit throughout its duration. A determination should be made by the artist regarding if and how the area(s) should be maintained.

The primary question for the **Registrar** is whether the space is durational performative space needing specific maintenance or labeling as art work. Maintenance for spaces not considered art work will be coordinated by the **Teaching Artist**.

Subsequently, the **Registrar** should determine the appropriate personnel and schedules needed to service the performative spaces which are the art work. This information should be communicated to the **Chief of Public Participation**, the **Teaching Artist**, and needed personnel.

Finalizing Documentation Strategy and Proprietorship

At least three weeks prior to the beginning of the art work, the **Teaching Artist** should work with the C3 artist to finalize all ways the work will be documented, whether art objects will be produced, and the relationship of these objects to the Museum. Included in this conversation should be establishing potential methods for how the Museum will exhibit documentation of the work if the decision is made to craft a wall display detailing the activity of the work.

The **Director of Media and Public Relations** and the **Registrar** should subsequently be made aware of the types of documentation to be collected and the nature of their involvement in collecting and/or archiving.

Project Summaries

The **Teaching Artist** should create a document featuring a short bio of the C3 artist, a short description of the expected work to be performed by the artist, the primary and secondary populations targeted for participation in the work (will likely have multiple populations in each group), a detail of the anticipated process and occupied spaces, detail of participation opportunities, expected regular and irregular times of project operation, projected outcomes, date of culminating event(s) at or near the end of the project, date of deinstallation, and contact information for further questions.

This document should be distributed to all previously mentioned staff as well as the **Director, Director of Communications, Curators, Director of Events, Food and Beverage, Visitor Info Coordinator, Chief of Security, and Building Operations Manager.**

An identical document should be provided to the C3 artist but should include a list of Museum staff email addresses and other applicable contact information including phone numbers for the Teaching Artist and the Security Office.

General Information Project One-Sheet

The **Teaching Artist** should produce a one page document featuring a short bio of the C3 artist, a short description of the art work, descriptions of the various opportunities for participation, times of participation, date for culminating event(s) at or near the end of the project, date of deinstallation, and contact information for further questions.

Copies of this document should be given to **all volunteers and staff at Museum information desks, front-of-the-house café staff, all Security personnel, Preparators, the Graphic Designer, the Executive Chef, Chief Custodial Personnel, the Museum Store Manager, the Director of Finance and Administration, and the Accounting Assistant.**

All staff should receive an invitation to participate. This can be an informal single page document produced by the **Teaching Artist** featuring basic details.

Introductions - The Rest of the Team

At least one week prior to the beginning of the art work, the C3 artist should be introduced to **Security and Museum info desk personnel** normally scheduled for expected active project times, **Chief Custodial personnel, Curators, Preparators, Graphic Designer, Visitor Info Coordinator, Building Operations Manager, and Director of Events, Food and Beverage.**

The Layout and Access

At least one week prior to the beginning of the art work, the C3 artist should be given a Museum tour including the offices and workshops of the personnel they have met, various entrances and methods of access, and various tool/supply locations including ladders, dollies/carts, paper towels, brooms, and mops.

It should be made clear that **Security, the Building Operations Manager, the Director of Family and Community Programs, and the Teaching Artist** can all unlock doors for them to access these tools.

The C3 artist should also be made aware of the water cooler in the staff break room and that coffee is available at the café the mornings they are open.

Additional Notes

- Museum Staff are a primary asset to the C3 series and should be strongly encouraged to participate early on. Because Museum Staff represent a diverse selection of the greater Jackson community, their contributions to communicating the project by word-of-mouth is indispensable. Within the Museum they are seen by visitors as part of the C3 team, therefore steps should be taken to be sure they can answer basic questions about the project and direct visitors to the right people for more in depth information.

Nothing prepares them better to be ambassadors for the project than first-hand participation.

- A good way to ensure staff inclusion and awareness of the project is to offer staff a 30-minute paid block of time to participate in the C3 project during the first two weeks of its operation. Arranging group participation times for staff is also beneficial – many staff noted that participating in past projects alongside their coworkers contributed to social cohesion and the development of understanding and collaboration between departments.
- In selecting the annual C3 project, staff expressed a preference for ‘open studio’ style activities not requiring participants to arrive at specified times. Staff also voiced a preference for having some aspect which allowed for state-wide participation; preferably with a component which would take the artist throughout the state to meet participants in person even if only briefly. Inclusion of affiliates was noted as a desired goal.
- Strategies developed during the planning process will certainly require amendment along the way. The process detailed in this report is primarily aimed at establishing clear communication channels within the Museum for the C3 artist and ensure an initial plan is established from which changes can be made along the way.