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Exhibition Labels: Language, Accessibility and Inclusion

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THE ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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Exhibition Labels: Language, Accessibility and Inclusion

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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between language and visitor experience as key facets of accessibility and inclusion by asking how museums use language to address visitor experience and facilitate engagement. When museums are sources of exclusion, a barrier exists between potential visitors and the collections on view, effectively gatekeeping cultural heritage, arts, and humanities. To examine the extent to which language contributes to this, I discuss power dynamics and language, specifically how language contributes to and supports social hierarchy. Then I relate this research to museum education and evaluate how discursive power dynamics operate within these institutions. Combining museum education theory, language-learning theory, and sociolinguistic theory, I evaluate how meaning can be made in museums. Using two case studies of progressive language in museums as exemplars of positive community interaction, this paper interprets these examples within the historical context of inclusion within the museum. As educational and recreational institutions, museums have an opportunity to have a positive impact on visitor experience through language, particularly as representation and inclusion are essential for a positive visitor experience.

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Introduction

Museums assume a responsibility for the stewardship of their collections and disseminating information to their audiences. This stewardship is guided not only by each individual museum's mission and vision statements, but also the guiding principles set forward by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). As two guiding organizations for museum governance on the national and global scale, both AAM and ICOM guide how museum staff conduct their business. In September 2019, ICOM held a contentious vote on changing the definition of the museum; some important parts of this proposed definition for my project included the following: "Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures…safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people… and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world."[1] Although this definition was not adopted at the 2019 conference, the interest of museums, on an international scale, toward more inclusive, contextual language demonstrates the importance of language and its potential impact on meaning-making by visitors.

Language and power are intrinsically related: power is maintained through a filter of a specific authority depending on the power model being used.[2] Language is often used as a barrier for people that do not fit into the public perception of the normative. This perception is

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[1] "ICOM Announces the Alternative Museum Definition That Will Be Subject to a Vote," ICOM, accessed October 1, 2019, https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-announces-the-alternative-museum-definition-that-will-be-subject-to-a-vote/.
[2] Helen Coxall, "Museum Text as Mediated Message," in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 2nd ed, vol. Leicester readers in museum studies (London: Routledge, 1999), 132.

controlled by those in power who have authority over media, culture and the like. Regardless of the subject matter presented, museums have contributed to this by either not providing labels at all, providing labels that were only understandable for people with specific education levels, or by not supporting translations for non-English speakers. Visitors who do not speak English or are learning English as a second language may also have trouble fully experiencing the museum because of lack of translations in their native language. There is also a lack of interpretation for people that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing or people who are blind or have low vision. People that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing may be excluded from audio aspects of a museum, including videos and guided tours and as a result might not have access to parts of the museum experience. People who are blind or who have low vision also have multiple barriers in a museum, although supplements may be provided for visitors in Braille.[3] These minority groups often do not feel that their lives are reflected in the museum experience.

However, amazing progress has been made to position museums as a welcoming space for visitors. Through best practices documents, new professionalized courses being taught in universities, and changing ideals implemented in the museum space, over the last 100 years museums have seen a major progressive shift in interpretation. For many Americans the museum is not just a weekend trip, it is an educational supplement for them and their families.[4] This means that somehow their experience needs to be facilitated for them to have any sort of understanding. The museum has multiple tools at its disposal to send a message to a visitor. Facilitation happens in a number of ways but for this project I will be paying attention to exhibit

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[3] Capitalization matters when referring to these specific communities. Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing are capitalized because being Deaf or HoH is not simply a condition, it is also a culture and Deaf people that associate with this culture capitalize the "D". Alternatively, there is not a similar thinking when referring to people that are blind or have low vision, so these words are lowercase.

[4] AAM estimate based on *National Study on the Use of Libraries, Museums, and the Internet*, IMLS, 2008

label text as the foremost form of interpretation. Language is a tool that contributes to power and meaning, it can create social hierarchy and influence understanding. Language is the context through which you interpret things, no matter how your mind works and how you think to conceptualize what you're seeing, you are using language to do it. When a visitor reads an exhibit label, they are receiving a message that is mediated by those who contributed to the exhibit.[5] While labels are the main form of interpretation besides the object, they are often not read in their entirety. For the people that do take the time to read exhibit labels, understanding may still not come to them. I am focusing solely on exhibit text because museums across America have widely varying budgets and resources and oftentimes smaller museums can only afford to have label copy as their interpretation. My findings are meant to be usable by a broad swath of museums.[6]

In terms of linguistic theory, this project will be informed by the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which was developed by Lev Vygotsky and Peer Learning Theory which comes from the Vygotskyan method. Both see language learning developed through group learning. For instance, both theories can most easily be seen in a school setting, in which a child's language development is being influenced and supported by the development of their peers.[7] Considering that many elementary schools utilize museum visits to supplement learning, the child's experience in an exhibit is an influential experience in their language development

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[5] Coxall, "Museum Text as Mediated Message."

[6] The museums I will be using as case studies are considered large institutions because each receives over 50,000 visitors a year. The case study museums are the Rochester Museum & Science Center and The Strong National Museum of Play. The Rochester Museum & Science Center receives over 375,000 visitors every year. The Strong National Museum of Play receives over 500,000 visitors every year.

[7] Ana Christina, DaSilva Iddings and Steven G. McCafferty, "Language Play and Language Learning: Creating Zones of Proximal Development in a Third-Grade Multilingual Classroom," in *Language in Use: Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives on Language and Language Learning*, ed. Andrea Tyler, Mari Takada, Yiyoung Kim, Diana Marinova. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2005.

and their burgeoning understanding of power structures, even if they are not aware of it.[8] Peer Theory is related to the ZPD because it sees language learning as more productive and collaborative when there is a "knowledgeable peer" who can help guide the learning.[9] A group's visit to a museum might see them accompanied by a peer who has some base of knowledge about the content, this peer will act as a guide and share their knowledge in whatever way that they can. It is important to look at how these two aspects of language learning relate to museum education because they can help explain the process of group facilitation during a museum visit.

Research and guidelines about how to write label copy are abundant in museum scholarship, but it is also acknowledged that not all visitors read these labels.[10] I, personally, read all the exhibit text in an exhibit, but only because I have been trained to pay attention to these details. What does it say about a museum if the people most likely to absorb information from the text are already educated, and are specifically educated in museum practices? Engagement and facilitation are highly important to an educative museum experience. If a visitor doesn't understand what is being said to them, how will they enjoy their experience? How will they learn? The simple answer is that they will not.

This thesis begins with a literature review that focuses on two ideological groupings, how meaning is made through language, and how language facilitation affects understanding. The publishing years for these sources range from 1992 to 2019 and all act as an introduction to important topics addressed herein. I will be looking at language use as it relates to power and

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[8] I will not be touching on schools that operate within museums as this is beyond the scope of the project but both museums do host preschools and the Rochester Museum & Science Center shares a campus with the Genesee Community Charter School.
[9] Le Pham Hoai Huong, "The More Knowledgeable Peer, Target Language Use, and Group Participation," *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 64, no. 2 (December 2007): 333–54.
[10] Lucy Trench, "Gallery text at the V&A A Ten Point Guide," Victoria & Albert Museum, 2013.

messaging. The cornerstone of my thesis is meaning making and social hierarchy. My sources center around museum education, museum politics and sociolinguistics.

Moving from the broad framework of museums, one goal of this thesis is to offer two case studies as a way to examine language use and how language impacts and/or facilitates visitor engagement onsite at museums. The site of the case study is Rochester, N.Y, which has four museums that are accredited by AAM: the Rochester Museum & Science Center (RMSC), The Strong National Museum of Play, the George Eastman Museum, and the Memorial Art Gallery. For this paper I will focus on the RMSC and The Strong. I have chosen these two museums because they have a similar audience and goal.

The RMSC was founded in 1912 and has acted as a steward of Rochester and western New York's history ever since. In the Native Peoples of the Americas Gallery, the RMSC has labels that were created through a community engagement project with local first graders from the Genesee Community Charter School. Although the developers of the project may not have thought about it in this way, they were encouraging community engagement through language. Development of language and writing skills dominates early childhood education, so a project where children learn how to write about people from their community who have a different culture than theirs is inherently sociolinguistic. I see the first graders that took on this project as the ideal label copy writers because they write about what they think is important for us to know concisely and clearly.

The Strong National Museum of Play is named after Margaret Woodbury Strong, who founded the museum in 1968.[11] The Strong has become a major destination to see the history of

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[11] "History," The Strong National Museum of Play, January 27, 2014, https://www.museumofplay.org/about/history.

toys and games and boasts a collection that explores both the physical and the digital. I have personal experience with The Strong as I have completed a summer internship with them and cataloged hundreds of role-playing games, among other projects.

One of the most recent exhibits at The Strong is called "Women in Games." This exhibit looks at the history of women in the video game industry, including writers, designers, and characters. This is an important case study because it exemplifies how children's museums can address difficult or controversial issues and foster conversations. Exhibits like this give visitors the language to have these kinds of conversations with children. Seeing how a museum can broach these kinds of conversations may make the topic more understandable and open doors for post-visit discussion at dinner tables and in classrooms.

Literature Review

Language and Meaning

Language is the vehicle through which humans create meaning in interactions with and for each other. Whether this language is spoken, signed, or written, its purpose is to communicate some form of meaning between participants. How do museums communicate meaning with visitors? The AAM LGBTQ Alliance is making major strides in changing language use to be more gender, sexuality and family inclusive.[12] The two editions of the "Welcoming Guidelines," 2016 and 2019, exemplify ways to create a more inclusive vernacular within the museum without falling into the trap of assuming a shared cultural experience. In "The Concept of a Linguistic Community" Erik Eastaugh emphasizes that just because a person

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[12] Nancy Anshel et al., "LGBTQ Welcoming Guidelines for Museums" (Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, May 2019).

shares a language or aspects of a culture with someone else does not mean that you are participants in a shared "mono-culture."[13]

Within the museum language guides put out by AAM, the focus is put on welcoming and respectful language that does not presume unshared information on the part of any participant. The writers explain their target groups that they would like to educate and examine word usage and how to respectfully address people. There is no harsh judgement of the people it is targeted towards and it tries to act as educationally as possible. This is a potential model that museums can follow for other language guides.

Meaning is also made within the structure of language and how we use it. Generally, there are three main linguistic functions within interactions: referential, social regulative, and metalingual.[14] The referential function is used to describe events or objects in the world. The social regulative function is based on the interactions between people that are communicating with each other and *how* they are communicating with each other. The metalingual function is how and if you are talking about language. For people that have acquired language, our interactions are some mix of all three with most interactions holding a predominant function. Individual comprehension of these aspects of language plays into the power dynamics that are prevalent in museums.

Museum educators wear many hats in the museum, with one of their main roles being designing label copy for exhibits. This is the front line for communicating meaning with the visitor. In the least facilitated experience possible, the conversation is between the visitor and the

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[13] Erik Eastaugh, "The Concept of a Linguistic Community" *University of Toronto Law Journal* 69, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 117–58.
[14] Celeste Pappas Jones and Lauren B. Adamson, "Language Use in Mother-Child and Mother-Child-Sibling Interactions," *Child Development* 58, no. 2 (1987): 356–66, https://doi.org/10.2307/1130512.

exhibit content. According to Helen Coxall, "Museums and their texts are active agents in shaping identity. Language is socially determined and therefore articulates ideologies, generally through the assumptions which underlie texts. Museum writers need to be aware that this is happening in order to identify the assumption that our text will be built upon."[15] Coxall is referring to dominant discourses, essentially the language used by more powerful people or institutions, to establish norms and a dominant narrative. Label text can be exclusionary predominantly in two ways. The first being high level language about a topic or people that is difficult for visitors to understand. The second being voyeuristic and exoticizing language about a people or group. This use of language has existed in museums since their inception. Addressing dominant discourses and exclusionary language should be a priority when developing exhibit content and facilitating meaning.

The Plain Language Movement first originated to make legal writing easier to read but it has filtered to other fields as well.[16] The concept has been seen in academic writing, and museums to name a couple of examples. Industry specific jargon and a high educational level were typically required to understand academic publications and exhibition text in museums. In recent years articles and textbooks have become much easier to read, and more importantly, understandable for a broad range of readers. In museums, this change is reflected in exhibit label guidelines. These state explicitly not to drill down into the jargon of the field as it will confuse many visitors and dissuade them from reading the labels or in extreme cases, going to the museum at all.

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[15] Helen Coxall, "Museum Text as Mediated Message," in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 2nd ed, vol. Leicester readers in museum studies (London: Routledge, 1999), 132.
[16] Christopher Balmford, "Plainlanguage.Gov | Plain Language: Beyond a Movement," accessed February 20, 2020, https://www.plainlanguage.gov/resources/articles/beyond-a-movement/.

Language Facilitation

For many people going to a museum could be difficult for a range of reasons, a major reason being language barriers. The United States houses a large immigrant population, many of whom are either new English speakers or do not know English at all. Learning a new language can be difficult, and if a person expects that they cannot participate in something because of their lack of language knowledge then they likely will not try. Museums that do not provide multilingual options for their visitors are missing out on a large swath of the population that could be engaging in cultural heritage.

Insight can be gained from a linguistic survey of a family's language habits that was conducted by a member of the family and published in 1999.[17] The survey conductor, Linh, completed discourse analysis on her family's conversations. Her family's situation is particularly unique because they speak four languages at varying levels of fluency. This can lead to major generational language barriers that are difficult to overcome. Oftentimes the interactors do not have adequate vocabulary to effectively communicate. Can museums make it easier to facilitate familial interactions like these? The Guggenheim and other museums say yes. In the blog post, "Museums Share Their Best Practices for Reaching Multilingual Audiences," Rebecca Mir talks about research done on bilingual exhibiting, "Conclusions drawn in the Bilingual Exhibit Research Initiative report indicate that providing multilingual resources also makes intergenerational learning possible: the practice allows caregivers to become educational facilitators for their children."[18] Museums can facilitate conversations and create new

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[17] Thomas Lee and Linh Cao, "Language Use in Family and Society," *English Journal* 89, no. 1 (September 1999): 107–13, https://doi.org/10.2307/821364.
[18] Rebecca Mir, "Museums Share Their Best Practices for Reaching Multilingual Audiences," *Guggenheim* (blog), April 25, 2014, https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/checklist/museums-share-their-best-practices-for-reaching-multilingual-audiences.

discussions for visitors and this lends to the power of an exhibition or a public program. Lack of access is a major obstacle in so many aspects of life, providing access to visitors with many different language backgrounds can help fuel cultural heritage programs and increase voices contributing to discourse.

In "It's All Greek to Me: How Museums Use Language to Connect to Community," Travis Monagle's 2017 master's thesis for the museology program at the University of Washington, he takes a look at how museums are incorporating foreign language into their programming. The project looks at languages other than English and Spanish and included interviews with museum staff about their programming. This project shows that the multilingualism most American museums embrace is only English and Spanish, but Monagle used five museums as case studies for their multilingual language inclusion and each provided support for at least three languages other than English. Current technology in the museum may be able to help expand this access for visitors.

In "The More Knowledgeable Peer," Le Phaim Hoai Huong writes about the knowledgeable peer and how they can facilitate language acquisition. In this study, Huong focuses on a group of Vietnamese students that are learning English; the experiment procedure is to monitor group interactions where a peer facilitator more fluent in English is present and group interactions where they are not. The conclusion of this study is that having a knowledgeable peer facilitator affects the measure of group participation and individual utterances.[19] This study establishes a distinction between a conscious adult guiding a conversation and an informed peer contributing to understanding; is the museum the conscious adult or the knowledgeable peer?

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[19] Le Pham Hoai Huong, "The More Knowledgeable Peer, Target Language Use, and Group Participation," *The Canadian Modern Language Review* 64, no. 2 (December 2007): 333–54.

Relating museums and the work that is done within them, language facilitation and acquisition can best be seen in exhibit labels.

Exhibit Label Language

As a key scholar and practitioner of museum exhibition and evaluation, Beverly Serrell has influenced the writing of exhibit labels for decades. Most notably her concept of "the big idea" has made clear the importance of language in writing. In "Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach," Serrell says this about "visitor friendly" labels.

> Interpretive labels speak to visitors in an appealing voice—not preachy or pedantic, but not simplistic or condescending. They encourage visitors to start to read, to read aloud to others, to read all the way to the end, and to remember what they read. The best kind of interpretive labels will also be useful and meaningful to visitors.[20]

There are a number of qualities that make a good label including writing style, accessibility of the language and the "cool factor." According to Jan Freedman the Curator of Natural History at the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, "conversational style of writing makes the label easier to digest."[21] People are naturally drawn to things that they deem interesting, if a label is bland and hard to absorb then that is a lost opportunity for education. There are many guidelines for label writing in museums. The Getty museum has a thirty-eight-page document that goes into detail about designing labels for an adult audience and even goes as far as to explain the type of visitor they are writing for. These guidelines are very in-depth about word count, design hierarchy, and placement, but they do not mention the word inclusion

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[20] Beverly Serrell, *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

[21] Jan Freedman, "Museums Need to Write Conversational Text to Be More Inclusive," Museums + Heritage Advisor, October 29, 2018, https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/blogs/museums-need-write-conversational-text-inclusive/.

once, and it only references accessibility once in the document. Notably this reference to

accessibility does not come in the overview section of the document which acts as an

introduction, it comes near the end of the document. This also rings true for the Smithsonian

National Air and Space Museum (NASM) exhibit label guidelines. The mention of accessibility

here refers to the size of text on labels at the Udvar-Hazy Center.[22] The lack of an explicit

mention of inclusion or accessibility is interesting considering that they both make mention of

the education levels of visitors. And explicitly, the NASM guidelines pay attention to the fact

that many visitors do not speak English. Another example of museum label guidelines comes

from the Victoria and Albert Museum in Britain. These guidelines explicitly refer to accessibility

multiple times throughout the document and make it a main focus of the design process. All

three of these guidelines represent the priorities of label writers in museums in three different

markets which is important to understand the current thinking in the field.

Interrogating the ways museums write exhibit labels is vital to counteracting how the

subjects themselves are labeled. The concept of community involvement is well-touted and

vaguely defined. As the concept of diversity in the workplace has shifted in recent years, so has

the idea of community engagement in the museum.[23] Inclusion initiatives that are executed in

good faith can fall short of expectations because of the way the word 'community' is so broadly

defined in conversations. When referencing involvement with a community it is important to

keep in mind the theory of a monoculture and the shortfalls that come with this line of thinking.

Exhibitions about specific cultures, ethnic groups, genders, or general groups are going to be

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[22] David Romanowski, "Exhibit Label Script Guidelines: National Air and Space Museum and Steven F. Udvar Hazy Center," June 2015.

[23] Rose Paquet Kinsley and Aletheia Wittman, "Bringing Self-Examination to the Center of Social Justice Work in Museums" (*Museum,* February 2016). 42-43.

designed through the lens of those influencing the exhibit. If the community being consulted with is being represented by a specific subset of the group, then differing points of view will be absent from the conversation.

To evaluate the exhibit labels in this project, I will be looking at the writing style, accessibility, how interesting the label is, the length of the label and if the perspective of the represented community is present in the label. It is important to note that here accessibility relates to both the language used in the label and the way that it is displayed for easy readability. To asses these four facets, I developed a series of questions in an effort to evaluate labels in each case study. The evaluation questions are:

1. What is the messaging?
2. What is the context of community?
3. How long is the text panel?
4. How many sentences?
5. Accessibility of language questions-
    a. What words do they use?
    b. What is the voice used?
        i. (active or passive)
        ii. (authoritative or conversational)
6. What color is the background vs. the text color?
7. Where is the panel located?

Methodology

I used these evaluation questions to conduct visitor studies at both of my case study institutions. My first step when conducting these studies was to contact the appropriate staff to gain insight into their process creating the labels or in The Strong Museum's case, the exhibit as a whole. Both institutions allowed me access to position myself in the exhibit space and evaluate how visitors interacted with the labels, if at all. Conducting these visitor studies was made difficult by an injury I received the week before the studies began, however, I was able to

complete both of them. It is important to note that these studies were conducted on different days of the week and at different times, so I am aware that I could have received different data if I had coordinated visits. A second visit to The Strong Museum was planned to rectify this but as the COVID-19 crisis escalated, cultural heritage institutions around the United States began to close, and this was the case in Rochester as well.

This is a mixed methods observation study that consisted of a single visit to each museum. On each visit I sat in the specific gallery for a minimum of an hour and wrote down anytime I saw visitors interact with the exhibit in any way. I tried to be as unobtrusive as possible to avoid influencing how visitors were going about their visit and I opted not to survey any visitors because I preferred to keep the data observation based. I chose these two exhibits because they each covered topics that could lead to exclusionary language in the exhibit labels. This exclusionary language could relate to specific subjects but also includes higher level language and jargon. My original intent was to compare a single set of labels at the RMSC that were created under very specific circumstances with labels that were made in the traditional way that The Strong creates labels. However, as I completed the visitor studies I came to realize that there were labels at the Strong that were quite similar to those at the RMSC which led me to shift the scope of the project and evaluate how visitors were reacting to these kinds of labels at different institutions.

This table shows my observational data collected during my visits:

	The Rochester Museum and Science Center Observation Numbers	The Strong National Museum of Play Observation Numbers
Independent	5	4
Group	13	2
Families*	8	1
Total	18	6

*Family numbers are included within the total group number but are also independently shown because they represent a specific type of facilitated experience.

Rochester Museum & Science Center Case Study

Founded more than a century ago, the Rochester Museum & Science Center was known as the Rochester Municipal Museum. Many items in the museum's original collection were items that were on loan from the Rochester Historical Society.[24] The RMSC has always had dynamic interpretation in mind for their exhibits. In the 1920s when the museum's director Arthur Parker wanted to update the galleries, he ensured that the new interpretation focused on both the exhibit content and the label copy. Parker stated, "interpretation is one of the most important features of exhibition. The visitor not only wants to see an object but he wants to know what it means and what value it has to himself and to knowledge in general."[25] Without delving into the ideals of the 1920s and the gendering of the visitor, this is a powerful statement about exhibit labels and museum theory in Rochester early in its museum history. This ideology is represented in the

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[24] "History of the Rochester Museum and Science Center," The Rochester Museum and Science Center, n.d.
[25] Ibid.

museum's recent collaboration with students from the Genesee Community Charter School in the 2017-2018 academic year. The Genesee Community Charter School operates on the RMSC campus and the students complete community projects that are then exhibited to the public.[26] This project is one of many that students have completed, and it involved first graders from this school who created exhibit labels after interviewing Haudenosaunee people.

The purpose of this project was to introduce elementary school aged children to what modern Native Americans are like and to see their lives beyond a historical context. One of the failings of exhibits about Native Americans is that oftentimes they can lead to a misinterpretation that all Native Americans have died off and that the items that are being looked at are all that's left of their culture. Suffice to say that this is not accurate, although Indigenous peoples in North America have been murdered, displaced, and assimilated in many ways, they still exist and still have their own cultures and forge their own paths in life.[27] The RMSC is fully aware of the reality that modern Rochester exists on stolen Haudenosaunee land. They are in the process of creating a land acknowledgement that will be shown at the beginning of a new exhibition.[28]

The labels written by the first graders reside in the Native American wing of the RMSC. The exhibit is full of dioramas and information that is interpreted through several exhibit labels. One of the things that drew me to these labels when I first saw them in 2018 was how much personality there was in them, something that I am not accustomed to seeing in label copy. I recall being extremely impressed by the writing and how much information was packed into one

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[26] "Final Products & Exhibition Night | Genesee Community Charter School," accessed April 9, 2020, https://www.gccschool.org/curriculum/final-products-exhibition-night/.

[27] Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *All the Real Indians Died Off: And 20 Other Myths about Native Americans*. Boston: Bean Press, 2016.

[28] Calvin Uzelmeir, interview with author, Rochester, New York, April 10, 2020.

label. It seems like these first graders were able to make some extremely engaging labels that had a "cool" factor for many visitors by simply writing the way they speak. According to Calvin Uzelmeier, the Director of Featured Content, Exhibition Support & Special Projects at the museum, the process used to create this series of labels was a collaboration between the Genesee Community Charter School and the RMSC for the class's Native American studies unit. Once the labels were created, they were meant to stay up on exhibit for a limited time and then be taken down, but according to Uzelmeier, "The teacher's expectations is that these would be temporary installations, just long enough for the parents to see them in the gallery at a special family event, but staff felt so strongly about them we purchased and installed special lighting for each panel and made them permanent."[29]

These exhibit labels represent an exploration of the cultures and paths of specific individuals. These labels are titled, "Haudenosaunee today" and are included here (See Figures 1-4). As they created the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels, the children actively engaged with their subjects through interviews. They then gave this information to their teachers so that the students and teachers could collaborate on preparing the label copy.[30] The images on the labels were taken by the children or a caregiver or provided to them by the subject. The finishing touch on the labels are the drawings created by the children that are a part of the design of the label. One of the most important guidelines in label creation is to write at a reading comprehension level that can be understandable for visitors of any age and of any education level. As first graders, these students are only now coming into their reading and writing abilities in a way that can be shared with other people, which is one of the strengths of these labels.

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[29] Calvin Uzelmeir, interview with author, Rochester, New York, January 26, 2020.
[30] Ibid.

The process to create the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels exemplifies the ZPD and Peer Learning Theory. At GCCS students work collaboratively to complete projects to enhance their understanding of community and local history. The school has partnerships with many institutions throughout Rochester and by the time they reach the sixth grade, students leave with an understanding of their local fabric and an appreciation of the world they live in. Group learning contributes to language use as well. The students at GCCS are receiving an education that aims to teach them accountability and knowledge of a larger world and prepares them to participate in it. The language used on the website shows that the educators have a very specific goal in mind for the school that sets it apart from traditional K-12 education opportunities.[31]

These labels are large and have a lot of information in them, but they separate the major ideas into groupings. The general themes are, what they do for fun, what they eat, what they wear, and how they carry on traditions. Paragraph lengths varied widely, but the average word count from all of the labels was approximately thirty-six words, with the shortest paragraph being sixteen words and the longest being sixty-four words. The labels about Jamie Jacobs and Tsioianiio Galban each have words specific to Haudenosaunee culture printed in bold. Words like "ribbon dress" and "snow snake" are important to the subjects of the labels but have no context for the non-Haudenosaunee visitors; highlighting these words acts as an invitation for visitors to make new associations. The text format signifies them as important within the label and draws the eye to them because they are the only words in bold. Once the eye is drawn to this paragraph it does not leave the reader wondering for long what the word means, the item is

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[31] "Learning Expeditions | Genesee Community Charter School," accessed April 9, 2020, https://www.gccschool.org/curriculum/learning-expeditions/.

explained in the next sentence. The explanation is simple and is designed for a first grader to understand.

The content in the labels are ones that the younger visitors may not have been formally introduced to yet in their education. This opens the door for any adults with them to facilitate a conversation about what they are reading, which becomes easier if the label is at the child's reading level. Caregiver interactions are very common in the museum. During a visit to the RMSC in September 2019, I overheard a conversation between a caregiver and a child. The child, yelling across the gallery begged his mother to come look at something, "Mom, can you come here for a second?" to which she responded "No! I'm walking through history!" This interaction is interesting because it seems like both mother and son were having an educational experience even though they were experiencing differently. They were also eager to share their discoveries with each other, although the mother wasn't quite done reading yet.

The process of meaning making in this exhibit has been enhanced by these labels. One factor of visitor experience is relatability, regardless of visitor type they like to be able to relate to the content they are seeing. It can be hard to relate to objects that are detached from their original context and while there are dioramas depicting "traditional" life of Native Americas in this gallery, there is still a sense of detachment. These labels personalize the content in the gallery and help the visitor understand that while they are looking at pre-colonial artifacts, Haudenosaunee people still live in this area and are a part of the local fabric of Rochester.[32]

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[32] The Haudenosaunee Nation includes many groups including Seneca, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora and Cayuga. The participants in the "Haudenosaunee Today" project are Seneca and Mohawk and are in different clans.

Visitor Study

My visitor study at the RMSC took place on Sunday March 1ˢᵗ, 2020. I stationed myself on a couch in the exhibit where I could see visitor interactions with the labels and stayed there for two hours. The gallery is organized with a thoroughfare that offers dioramas on the left and chronological arrangement of bays on the right. Three of the labels are situated as pseudo entry panels on each of these bays, with the fourth label positioned on the right of the main diorama in the gallery (See Figures 5-7). The labels juxtapose ancient and colonial life of Native Americans with the lives of modern Native Americans. Each label is easily visible to passersby because they are large and aesthetically different than the rest of the exhibit. There are also spotlights above each of them to highlight the text. The names of the subjects of the labels are Jamie Jacobs, Dave Fahrer, Ronnie Reitter, and Tsioianiio Galban. Jamie, Dave and Ronnie are all Seneca and Tsioianiio is Mohawk. In the gallery the main attraction is the Seneca long house diorama which depicts how Seneca people would have lived and interacted with a long house, many visitors were solely attracted to this which meant that the "Haudenosaunee Today" label located right next to it, Jamie Jacobs, received the most attention.

There were three main groups of visitors in the gallery that day: older visitors in groups, typically their families; younger visitors likely between ages eighteen and thirty that were either in couples or larger groups of over four; and families with young children ranging from ages one to approximately six years old. I witnessed a wide variety of interactions, and, as anticipated many visitors did not stop and read labels. However, I could classify the experiences I witnessed into groups by experience type: I identify these experiences as the independent experience and the group experience.

Independent visitors comprised five of my eighteen observations on this day. They were more likely to take their time and read labels, but they were also more likely to be silent about their observations. Some standout interactions included an older visitor that took her time through the exhibit until the rest of her group joined her, and a college-aged visitor who separated from his group to go through the exhibit and then rejoined them when he was done. The older visitor was in the gallery when I entered around 1pm. As I made myself comfortable to sit and take notes, she was meticulously looking into display cases and seemed to be reading each label. She spent about thirty seconds on the shorter labels but with the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels, she spent more than a minute looking over the entire thing and before moving on. This visitor meandered throughout the gallery without a set path but still stopped and read the focus labels. The college-aged visitor came in a large group of more than five people, all talking loudly about the things they had seen so far. As the visitor looked around the gallery, he saw something that caught his attention and separated from his group. As he made his way through the gallery the label about Jamie Jacobs caught his eye and he did a double take and went to read it. After he finished reading, he took a selfie with the longhouse diorama. For these interactions the conversation between the label creator and visitor was direct and was not filtered through multiple layers of interaction the way that a group interaction might be.

Family groups made up eight of my thirteen group observations. The family units that I saw were comprised of a father, mother and multiple children of varying ages. The father typically took charge of the educational experience while the mother typically took charge of the wrangling efforts. Many of the conversations included parents fielding questions about technology which were variably answered. Other group interactions included two women who entered the gallery early on in my visit and began discussing what their lives would have been

like if they were Native Americans in the time portrayed. They also read parts of labels that they found interesting and discussed them as they made their way through the gallery. There was an excited teacher that came toward the end of my observations, he came with another visitor and they looked as if they were planning on moving rather quickly through the gallery. When he spotted the label about Jamie Jacobs he stopped to read, when he reached the bottom of the label which explains that they were written by first graders he went to find his partner and quickly told her about the labels. After this the both of them took the time to read all of the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels and then went on to discuss how to get their students involved in something similar as they left.

These observations were all very exciting, but they represent just a fraction of the visitors who came through the gallery that day. Over the two hours I remained in the gallery about fifty visitors passed through. Many of them did not stop and read or stop at all which could be a result of many things that I was not recording that day. Some non-visitor observations that I made were that the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels were so obviously different from the rest of the label copy that they were hard to ignore. The language in these labels was more accessible than some of the older labels, which used words that the average visitor might not know the definition of and often times provided too little information about an artifact. Those that were drawn in by the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels were all in for a surprise when they discovered that they were written by elementary schoolers and in particular, the placement of the label about Jamie Jacobs made it easy to make associations with the diorama directly to its left. Many of the visitors that passed through the gallery stopped at the diorama and shared their own associations with long houses to their groups. Those that seemed to have grown up in the Western New York area spoke a lot about having to construct their own long houses in elementary school and many fathers

made jokes with their children that had not reached that stage in their curriculum yet. Multiple families made this association, and while they lingered to discuss, at least one member would branch off and read through the information about Jamie Jacobs.

Another key observation I made was that sometimes facilitation would only begin if the child showed interest in a specific case, which was again typically the long house diorama. Upon seeing their child's interest, the parent would take over and explain what they were seeing, often times using the case label to help them along. These visitors virtually ignored the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels, likely because they were dealing with the attention span of a young child and trying to provide as enriching an experience as possible. Because the labels were not directly related to the cases or objects that their children were interested in, they received no attention.

In general, adults were the ones interacting with labels, although there were some younger visitors who read them as well. There were both peer interactions and interactions guided by a knowledgeable facilitator. Those that did read the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels had positive reactions to them and shared their experiences with others. They drew interest and typically visitors spent longer than thirty seconds to read multiple sections. There is a lot of information in this gallery to take in and the addition of the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels adds an interesting context to the exhibit, one that increases modern Native voices and enhances the inclusivity of the space. Exhibit labels where Native Americans are empowered to represent themselves in spaces that control the way that others perceive them is a strong example of how language and inclusion work hand in hand in the museum.

The Strong National Museum of Play Case Study

Founded in 1968, The Strong National Museum of Play has tens of thousands of objects in its collection all centered around the idea of play.[33] This interpretive practice began in the early 2000s after years of research and planning. With a collection that includes doll houses, toys, role-playing games, pinball and arcade games and live specimens like butterflies, The Strong has many of the qualities of a children's museum, but is actually geared for visitors of all ages. Amid a physical expansion funded by the State of New York and many others, The Strong is positioning itself as a destination in New York State. Much of the collection that is on exhibit is meant to deliver a hands-on experience to visitors both young and old every day. The Wegmans grocery store recreation has everything a young shopper might need, the pinball and arcade machines are all playable and there is an onsite conservator specifically for the arcade machines. When an exhibit does call for the objects not to be touched, there is often public programming to go with the run of the show so that visitors still get to experience a hands-on experience. At the end of the expansion, the museum plans on having a larger footprint, that includes an indoor ropes course. With all this in mind, it is no wonder that The Strong is one of the top tourist locations in New York state. Interpretation at this museum has to toe the line between gamification and educational information.

It is always interesting to see how museums address important social topics and The Strong is no different. The intention of the *Women in Games* exhibition is to "Learn about trailblazing women and explore their accomplishments in diverse areas of the video game

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[33] "Fast Facts About The Strong," April 24, 2014, https://www.museumofplay.org/press/fact-sheets/fast-facts-about-strong.

industry."[34] The content of the exhibit includes game designers and programmers, characters in games, company executives, and writing and art made by women.[35] As a long-term exhibition, the content will reach a broad audience throughout its run.

I spoke with one of the museum's curators, Shannon Symonds, who gave me some much-needed context about the creation of the exhibit, and in particular the labels that are abundant in the space. Shannon was instrumental in the creation of the exhibit, so she is well aware of the thought process that went into the label copy. There are a few types of labels can be found in exhibit spaces in The Strong, section, primary, secondary, and tertiary labels. In this show, the section labels are large biographical statements about specific women in the video game field. These labels include a photo of the woman, an example of their famous work, and a short biographical statement about them. The primary, secondary and tertiary labels all hold information about specific games and characters that were vital to the exhibit's narrative. One interesting aspect of this exhibit is that it utilizes digital labels (See Figures 17-18). These labels scroll through multiple visualizations on a thirty second loop and have information that the exhibit team thought was important but was far too much to put onto one label. This exhibit took more than a year of planning and the label creation took a significant amount of that time.[36]

The Strong's style guide determines how label copy looks.[37] There is a strict approval process that requires content to go through multiple revisions before it is approved and printed. One of the most important aspects of this process is that throughout the revisions, the curators

[34] "Women in Games," The Strong National Museum of Play, October 17, 2018, https://www.museumofplay.org/exhibits/women-in-games.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Shannon Symonds, interview with author, Rochester, New York, March 6, 2020.
[37] Kelly Lucyszyn, Michelle Partnett-Dwyer, and Shane Rhinewald, "The Strong Style Guide" (Rochester, NY: The Strong National Museum of Play, 2019).

are consulted so that the labels retain meaning throughout grammatical and style changes. Content creators also typically adhere to a general rule of keeping label length at sixty-five words or less and this exhibit strictly keeps to that rule. The language used in the labels follows the reading comprehension guidelines for museums but also keeps the text interesting by remaining conversational, maintaining that "cool factor." There are words that are meant to evoke emotions in the visitor like "humor," "superb," "rouses," and "engaging" to describe the work of the women in the exhibit.

The general theme of the exhibit is that the creators "wanted to highlight women and not just their stuff."[38] Bringing the accomplishments of women to life was at the forefront of the creator's mind. The exhibit acts as a timeline that considers the history of women in board game creation as well. The sections about video game protagonists have labels that have the game title, publisher, year and then one-two sentences about the game. Each case in the main exhibit space has a big idea that is portrayed in the primary label that is then supported by secondary labels in the case which expand on the idea. The exhibits color scheme included pastel or medium saturation colors that contrasted with the white text of much of the labels. The text of the labels is a sans serif with hierarchies for titles.

Of the label types mentioned I will be highlighting the large biographical labels because of their similarity to the "Haudenosaunee Today" project (Shown in Figures 19-25). Each bio served as an introduction to a new section of the exhibit. The themes in the exhibit were: script writing, design, voice acting, composition, illustration, programming, and management. The subjects of the labels were Amy Hennig, Roberta Williams, Jennifer Hale, Yoko Shimomura,

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[38] Shannon Symonds, interview with author, Rochester, New York, March 6, 2020.

Rieko Kodama, Carol Shaw, and Bonnie Ross who are listed in the order of the professions in the previous sentence. Notably, these labels are made of glass to go with the theme in the exhibit of breaking the glass ceiling, if visitors look up, they will see shards of glass hanging from the ceiling to connect the idea. The labels are all formatted into one paragraph about two to three sentences long. The length of this paragraph varied by label, but the average length was fifty-nine words, and no single label exceeded sixty-five words. This word count included game titles, but not years of games.

The ZPD and Peer Learning Theory also apply to this case study although the labels were not created as a part of childhood education. There is a collaborative nature in creating exhibit labels at The Strong in which everyone that contributes to the process brings their own research and expertise to the content while also adhering to The Strong's rules. In this case the curator acts as a knowledgeable peer to maintain the focus of the content while editors make grammatical and flow corrections. Beyond that, the experience in the museum during a visit is guided by the type of group. Families tend to stick together with parents guiding the learning of the children or older siblings helping their younger sibling understand how to play a game. It is a participatory experience because the children are often guiding what they will learn about. The whole group typically only stops if someone has shown interest in an aspect of the exhibit. Group learning can be seen throughout the museum.

Visitor Study

This visitor study was a vastly different experience than the one I conducted at the RMSC. Firstly, my study began by interviewing the curator, Shannon Symonds, who led the process of creating this exhibit. I visited the museum on Friday March 6th at 1:30 in the afternoon

and conducted the study from 2:00pm until 3:00pm. The "Women in Games" exhibit is in a rotating gallery space along a main walkway in the museum. It is important to note that this study took place on a Friday afternoon in the middle of the school year and schools were not on break, which definitely affected the demographics of visitors. Most attendees were caregivers with children under one up to about age five and many were not interested in stopping to read exhibit labels. Every caregiver was also monitoring small children at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was just beginning to enter the minds of American people.[39]

This gallery is situated in a main hallway between a large exhibit designed for children to play in and an atrium that leads to the rest of the museum. Typically, visitors would enter from the direction of the main entrance, but the museum recently began a major expansion project which closed the original main entrance and moved it to the opposite end of the building (See Figures 10-11).[40] This is still one of the first exhibits that visitors see upon entering the museum, but now much of the introductory content is at the opposite end from where visitors enter the exhibit. When entering from the new main entrance visitors will first encounter a board to put post-it notes on. This part of the exhibit is connected to a display about the video game character Lara Croft and is meant to get them thinking about their own opinions about video game character designs (See Figures 8-9). The rest of the exhibit is set up with individual sections based around a theme, whether it is music composition or character design. Each section has one main display case with objects related to the theme and each case has at least two labels. Outside

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[39] I was also in the middle of recovering from a concussion and was unable to stay in the museum for as long as I was at the RMSC because of the noise levels. I originally planned on returning to The Strong on a Sunday to try to have a better comparison of results but that soon became impossible.

[40] "The Strong Breaks Ground on Expansion and Launches Capital Campaign," July 11, 2018, https://www.museumofplay.org/press/releases/2018/07/4835-the-strong-breaks-ground-on-expansion-and-launches-capital-campaign.

of the cases there are objects hung on walls and three playable games that get their own tertiary labels. The most visible labels in the exhibit are the large biographical labels about individual women that were important in their corner of the game industry.

Because The Strong is committed to toys and games, much of their interpretive methods are hands on games. This exhibit is no different but some of the games also had their own interpretive labels to tell visitors how to play them (See Figures 15-16). As I observed, most visitors played the games in the exhibit and moved on. However, there were a few visitors that stopped and read labels and played the games. One key observation about the visitors that did read labels was that they either did not have children with them or they had a child that was not old enough to walk. This leads me to believe that the visitors that were free to read and explore the exhibits were those that had the time to read because they did not have to keep an eye on their children. That being said the labels that received the most attention were the large biographical ones that divided the sections. The visitors that read the labels typically started with the large biographical statements and then moved on to the rest of the exhibit.

Accessibility of information played a major role in what people would pay attention to. The same classifications from the previous case study apply here. In total I had six observations, four of which were independent visitors and two were group visitors in family units. Something that is contrary to the RMSC is that the visitors that stopped in this exhibit were not discussing what they were seeing and reading with each other, I only observed one conversation over the course of the hour.

The independent visitors did not read more than two labels. Two visitors that came about a half hour apart from each other each began with the Lara Croft display, read the quotes

surrounding the figures in the display and then read one more label and left. One of these visitors read the label about Amy Hennig titled "(un)Charting Success," spending approximately twenty seconds at the label before moving on. The other visitor looked at the display case in the section about illustration and then went on their way. Another independent visitor who was carrying a baby walked throughout the exhibit stopping to read all of the biographical labels. Because the exhibit is located in one hallway and is not in chronological order, visitors were free to make their own path through.

The two groups I observed took in the exhibit in different ways. The first group was a family unit comprised of a mother, father, and a sleeping baby in a carrier. They came through at 2:15 pm read the label about Jennifer Hale titled "Say What?" They spent approximately a minute at this label and then moved on to another exhibit. The second group stayed much longer and also discussed what they were reading. They began by reading the Amy Hennig label together and then separated. They took pictures of the exhibit and read all of the biographical labels. As they read, they pointed out things that they thought were interesting to each other. They also took some time and looked into the display cases before leaving.

Of these observations the main conclusion that I came to was that on a day where school was still in session and children were still in school, the majority of visitors to the museum were those who had young children not yet school-aged or children that were likely homeschooled. All of the visitors that read any labels on this day were adults and they typically did not read all of them, spending less than five minutes in the exhibit in total. The majority of the engagement this day was with the interactive components, I did not count those that did not interact with exhibit labels in my observation numbers but over thirty people passed through the area and of

these thirty people six interacted with labels and approximately ten visitors stopped and played the games within the exhibit. However, the reactions from those that read the labels were positive and the biographical labels drew the most interest. This exhibit involved meticulous planning over the span of a year and the creation of the labels was guided by Shannon Symonds vision for the exhibit. As a woman that plays video games, Symonds was able to bring context into the exhibit. The choice to include biographical information about influential women connects the games and other content in the exhibit to a real person. The exhibit ends with a panel advocating for women and girls to follow their interests.

Reflections

My evaluation questions were a very helpful guideline throughout this project. They were one of the first things I wrote, and they stayed more or less the same over the course of my research. When I began this project, I knew that I would be focusing on inclusion and representation and these questions helped me keep that in perspective. Through the many shifts I have done I am most surprised by the many similarities institutions have regardless of content. The level of research that has gone into making label copy that visitors will understand and enjoy reading frankly shocked me. I now know that many museum professionals also believe that representation is integral to operating a museum. Another surprise during this process was my resistance to being critical about museums I have a personal connection to. I had to take myself out of this mindset to be unbiased about my evaluation of the content. At the beginning of this process I half expected to spend my word count being argumentative about the state of museums. My experience over the past nine months has seen me make major shifts in focus on this project

and narrow my evaluation down to what I consider the front line of communication in museums. The labels I evaluated brought meaning making front and center to the discussion.

Throughout this project I got to see the Zone of Proximal Development and Peer Learning Theory in action in a variety of ways. Beyond representation of seeing specific cultures and topics displayed in a museum, I have realized that people want to see the "human" element in museums and when they do observe this element, they are keen to share what they have learned. That human element is not just being more inclusive in the language being used to talk about cultures but also including stories about people that visitors can relate to. I believe that this is a grounding element for all of the information in exhibitions. People enjoy learning about other people and getting context about the content they are absorbing. With the addition of the "Haudenosaunee Today" labels the RMSC has created a juxtaposition with their didactic information about pre-colonial and colonial life of Native Americans with modern Native Americans. This offers a view that many people do not regularly consider and gives them the opportunity to think about how preserving culture and modernization work hand in hand in communities other than their own. The "Women in Games" exhibit not only brought to light information about the often-hidden contributions of women in the gaming industry but also highlighted specific women that visitors could connect to properties that might be familiar to them. I have realized that examples of real people that are connected to the exhibit are a very useful interpretive tool and inspire discourse and informal learning.

Conclusion

As a source of informal education, museums can cover many topics outside the restraints of a required curriculum. Introducing concepts of inclusive language throughout the museum

creates an inclusive space for people with varying identities. Regardless of race, sexuality, gender, religion, or disability, visitors should feel accepted and see themselves reflected in the museum experience.

From my experiences I have realized that there are some very typical visitor interactions with content in the museum that lends to facilitation. Something that I now know that content creators have to contend with is that there will always be visitors who do not read the label copy but will instead inject their knowledge and perspective or that will outright ignore it and look at exhibit cases and move on. I am not sure if that means that these visitors are harder to reach or if that means that objects truly do speak for themselves for many visitors. In that case, in terms of discourse and dominant ideologies, there is not much that label copy will do in this instance. A change in dialogue on labels will not affect the thinking of someone entering the museum with a primitivist mindset that will see another culture on display and make their own assumptions about them. This means that exhibits need to be dynamic about addressing dominant ideologies all throughout the interpretation, not just label copy, the discussion does not end if and when the visitor reads a label, in many ways that is just the beginning of the experience. That being said, the visitors that do read labels, however short lived the experience is are receiving what is being transferred to them and then they further the process by transferring what they now know to their group, or perhaps someone not even on the visit with them. What is learned during a museum visit can be far-reaching, which was the crux of this project. My aim was to evaluate how museums regard their own power through discourse and use that power to educate benevolently. Each museum is unique, and these case studies can be used as a guide to complete this research in other institutions.
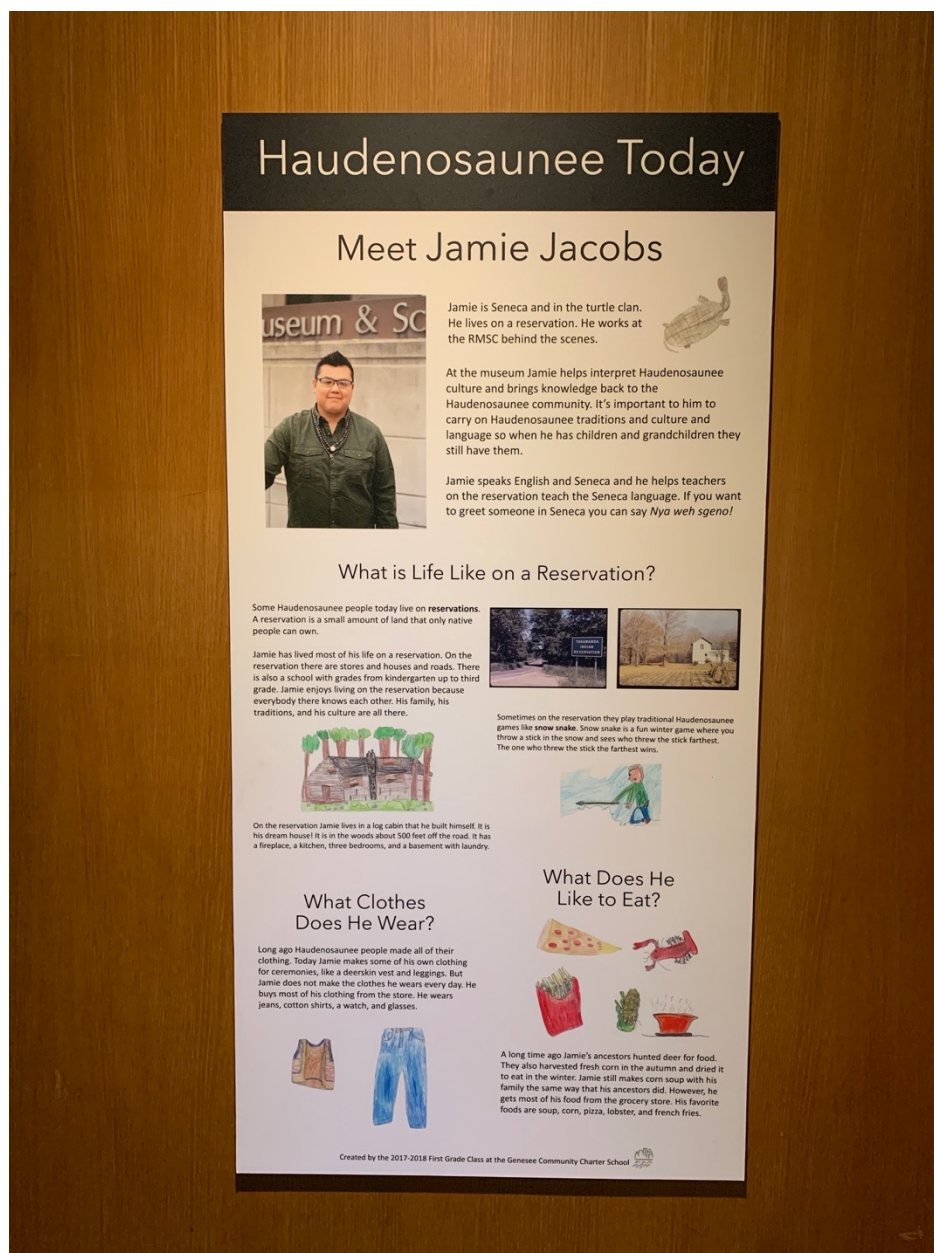
Appendix

Figure 1: "Haudenosaunee Today" label describing Ronnie Reitter on display in the Native Peoples of the Americas gallery at the RMSC. This image shows the spotlight purchased for the labels as well as display cases depicting pre-colonial life. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 2: "Haudenosaunee Today" label describing Dave Fahrer on display in the Native Peoples of the Americas gallery at the RMSC. This image clearly shows the different sections used to describe Dave's life. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 3: "Haudenosaunee Today" label describing Tsioianiio on display in the Native Peoples of the Americas gallery at the RMSC. This image shows how each label is unique and also includes a pronunciation of Tsioianiio's name. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 4: "Haudenosaunee Today" label describing Jamie Jacobs on display in the Native Peoples of the Americas gallery at the RMSC. This image shows the only "Haudenosaunee Today" label that is not located on a display case in the exhibit. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 5 and Figure 6: Native Peoples of the Americas gallery layout. These images show the locations of the labels in relation to the gallery layout. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
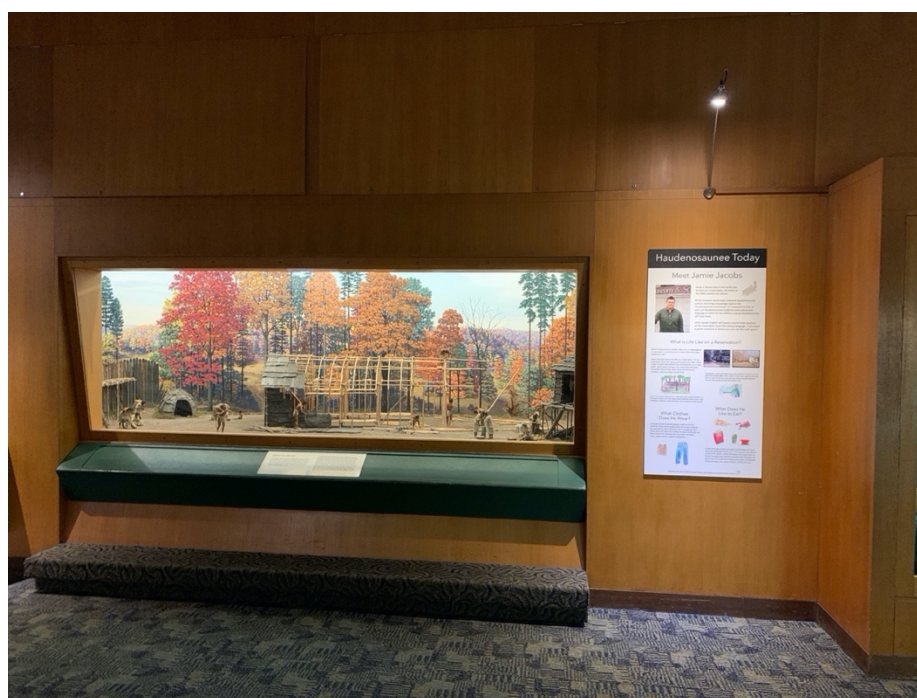
Figure 7: Seneca long house diorama. This image shows the label about Jamie Jacobs next to the diorama depicting the construction of a Seneca long house. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
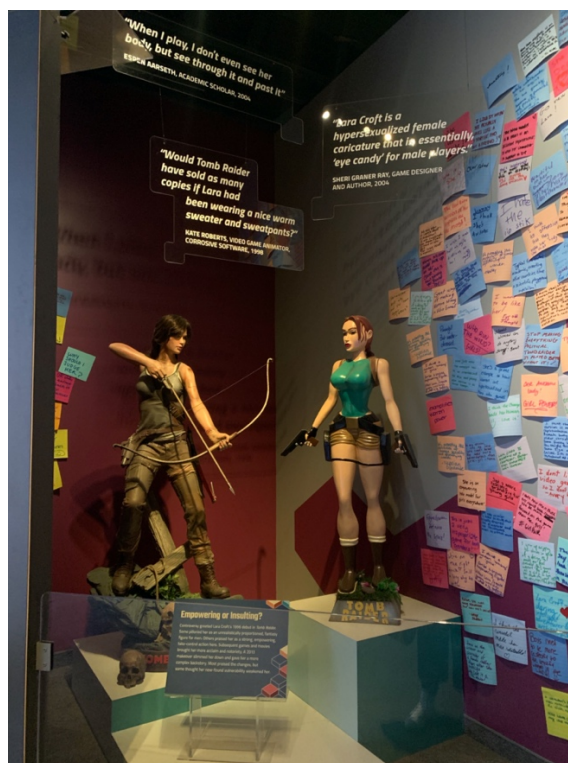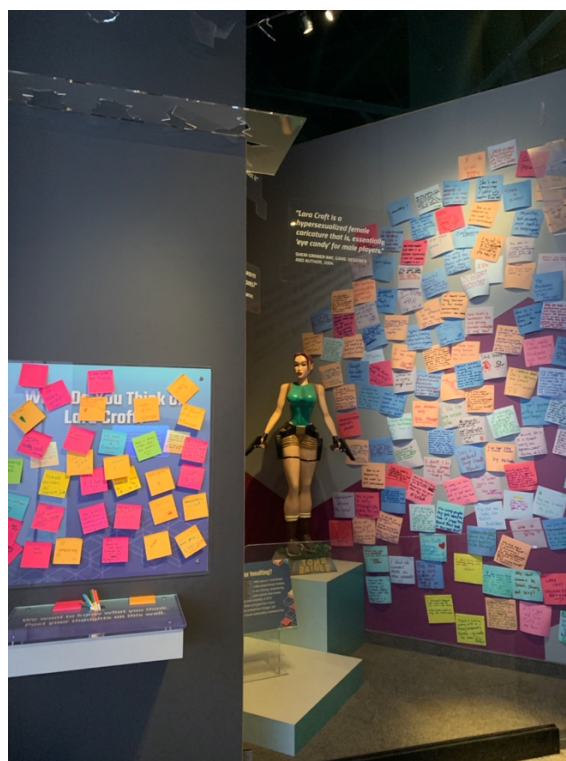
Figure 8 and Figure 9: Lara Croft display case in the "Women in Games" exhibit at The Strong. These images show the large display about the character design of Lara Croft to evoke visitor response. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 10 and Figure 11: Views of the "Women in Games" exhibit layout. The image on the left shows a view of the exhibit when entering from the new main entrance of the museum. The image on the right shows a view of the exhibit when entering from direction of the old main entrance. Photos by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 12: Introductory panel for the "Women in Games" exhibit. This image shows an infographic painted onto a column at the entrance of the exhibit. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 13: Timeline Display of female game characters. This image shows three display cases that house a timeline of important female video game characters. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 14: "Women in Games" introductory panel with tri-screen. This image shows the main introductory panel for the exhibit which has a video of the women highlighted in the exhibit. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
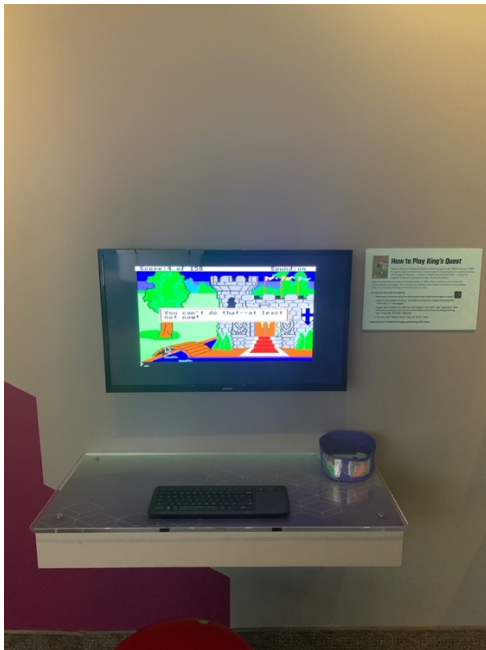
Figure 15 and Figure 16: *King's Quest* **game and interpretive panel.** These images show one of the games that can be played in the exhibit. The image on the left shows the game and label and the image on the right shows the information on the label. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
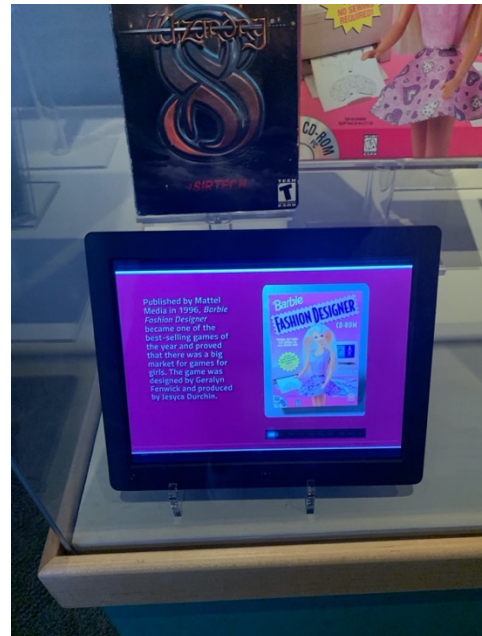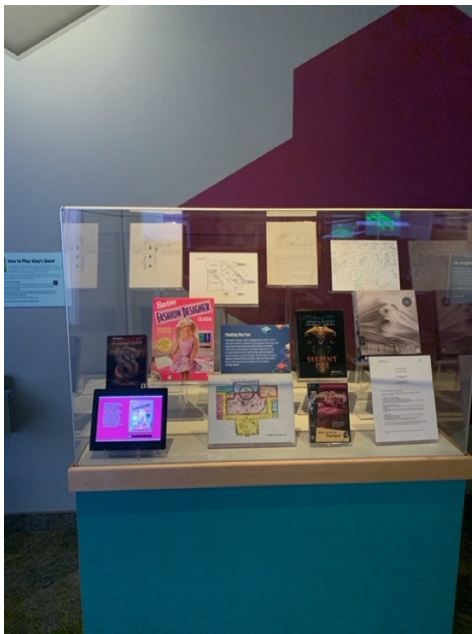

Figure 17 and Figure 18: Display case in the game design section of the exhibit. These images show the arrangement of display cases and how exhibit labels are used. The image on the right is an example of a digital label, the bar below the image shows the visitor how much time they have to read the label before the visualization switches. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

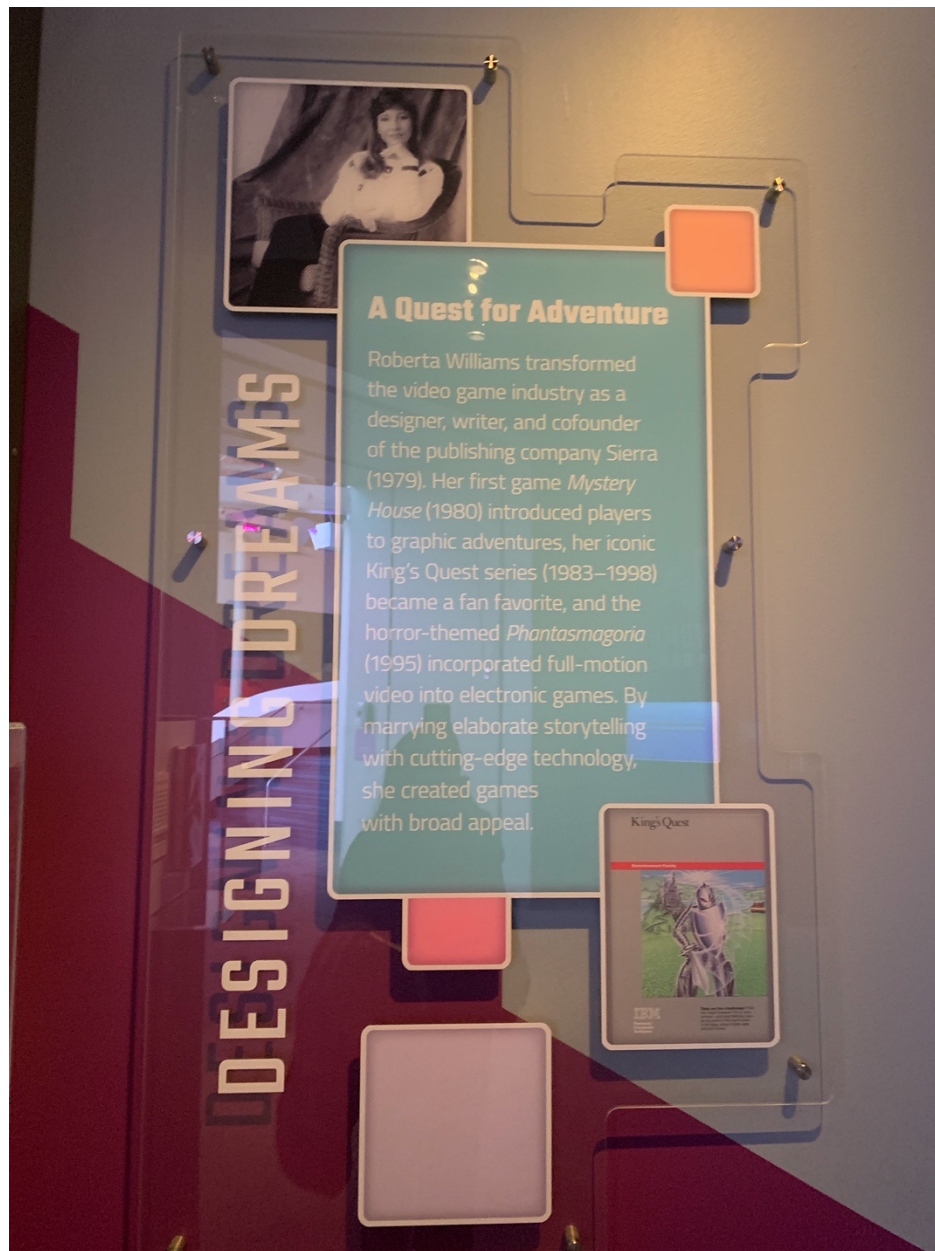**Figure 19: "(Un)Charting Success" biographical label about Amy Hennig.** Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 20: "A Quest for Adventure" biographical label about Roberta Williams. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 21: "Always in Tune" biographical label about Yoko Shimomura. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
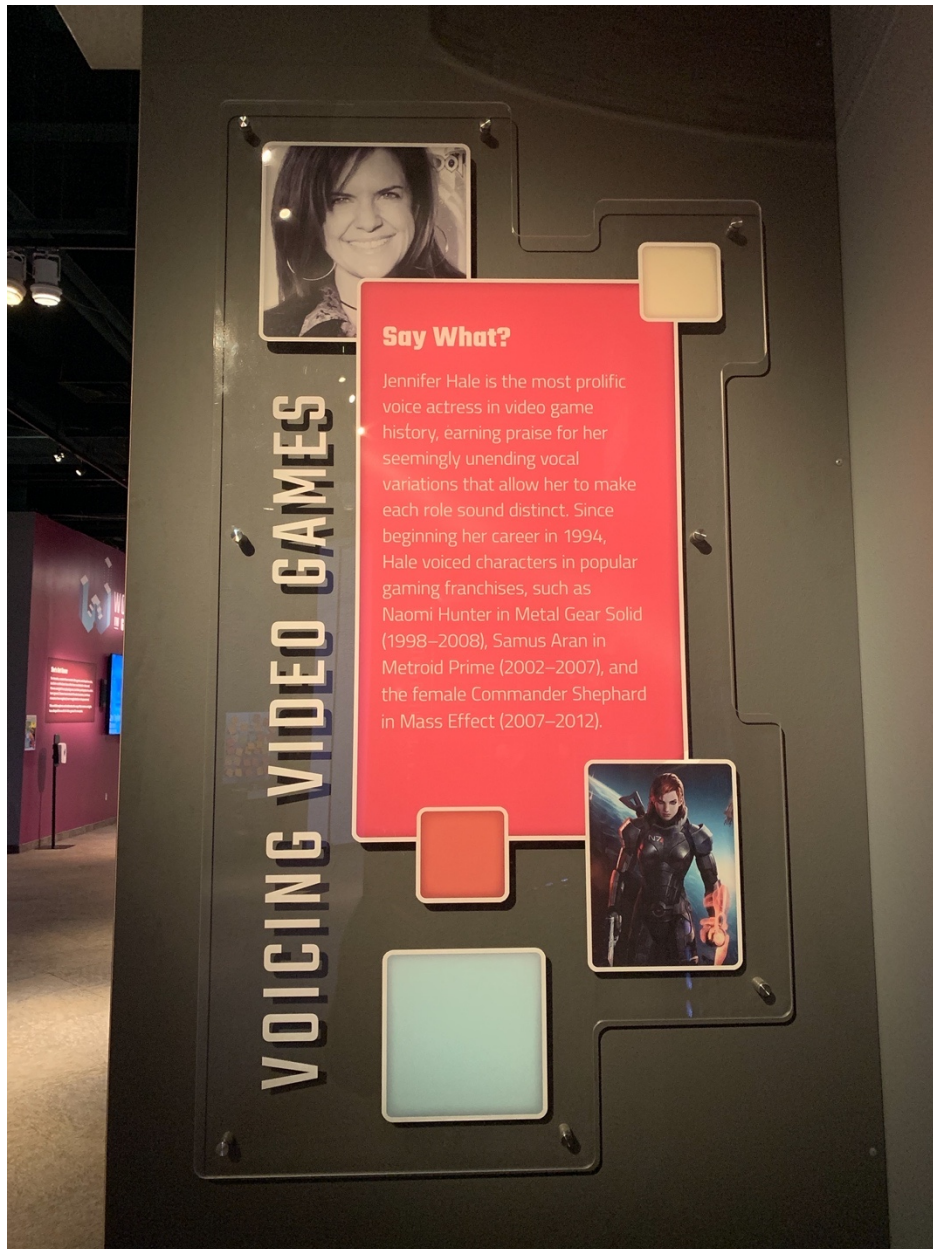
Figure 22: "Say What" biographical label about Jennifer Hale. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

Figure 23: "A Trailblazing Career" biographical label about Carol Shaw. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
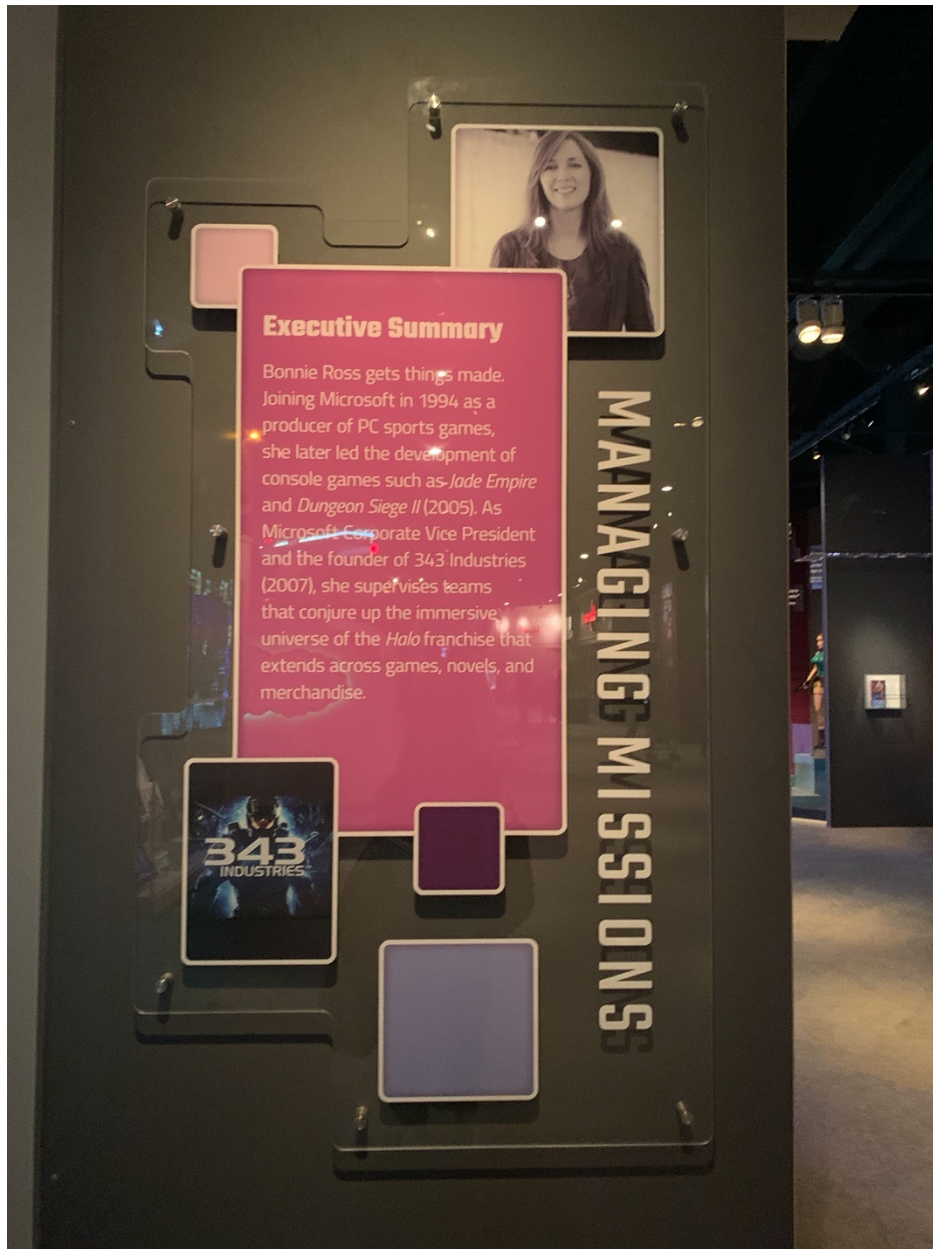
Figure 24: "Executive Summary" biographical label about Bonnie Ross. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris
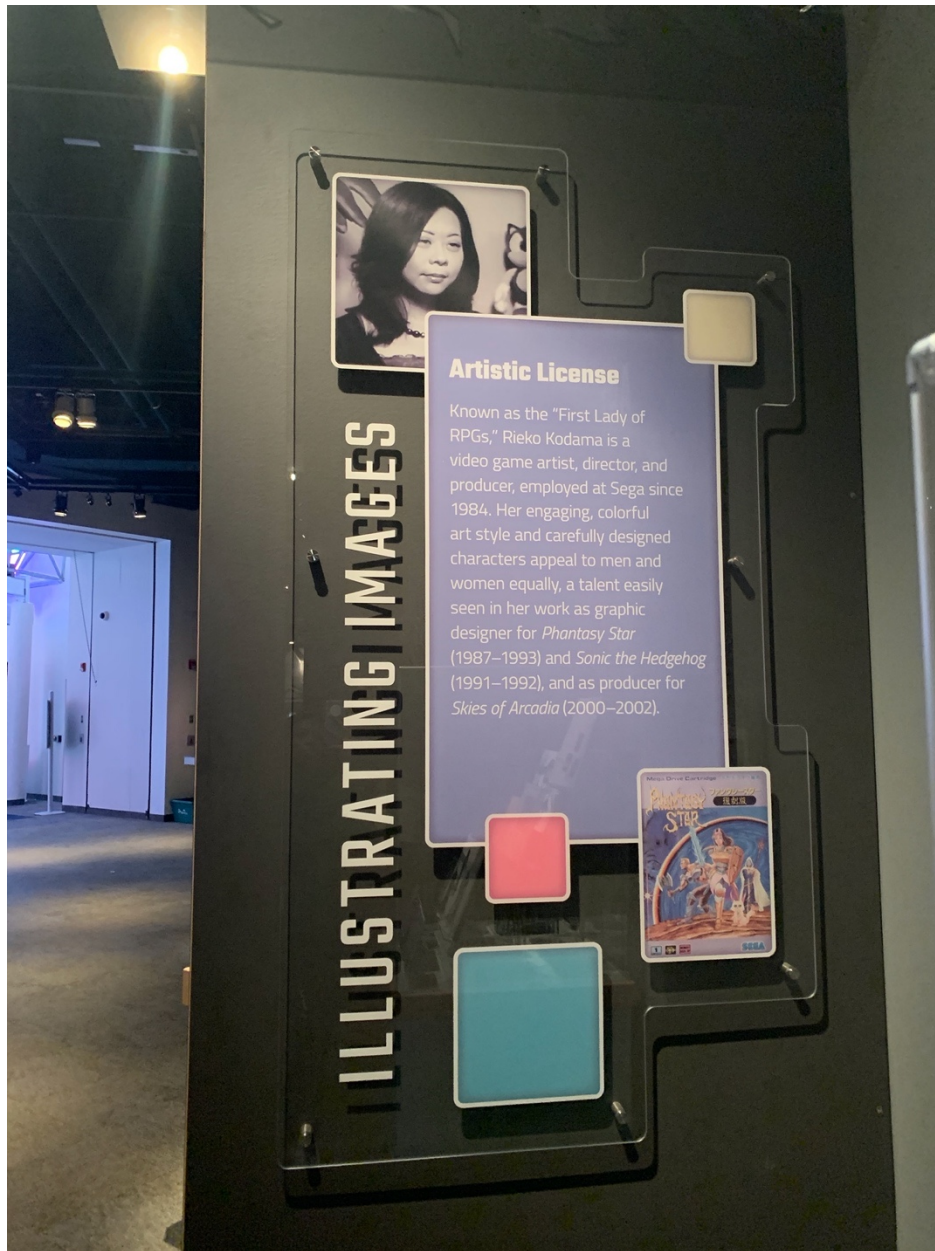
Figure 25: "Artistic License" biographical label about Rieko Kodama. Photo by Brienna Johnson-Morris

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