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MIDEA Awards Equipment and Project Minigrants to Texas Museums

The Marcus Institute for Digital Education in the Arts distributes funding to museums to launch innovative technology-based projects.

Austin, TX (July 11, 2013) — The NMC's Marcus Institute for Digital Education in the Arts (MIDEA) has awarded seven minigrants to museums in Texas that are creatively incorporating technologies into their programs, exhibitions, and online experiences. This funding is made possible through the New Media Consortium's (NMC) partnership with the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation. MIDEA is an organization that offers its membership of museums and cultural centers practical knowledge, tools, and online resources about innovative strategies to advance their missions. A total of \$49,621 was dispersed by MIDEA to help 17 institutions purchase new equipment and fund seven technology projects.

"The grantees were selected because of their forward-thinking approaches to integrating technology for the purpose of education," said Dr. Larry Johnson, NMC CEO. "We are excited to see that more museums are using emerging technologies to increase engagement and make learning central to the museum experience."

Project Grantees

The seven projects demonstrate a variety of innovative approaches in the museum sector, leveraging mobile technologies, e-publications, digital media, and Makerspaces to enrich the visitor or online experience.

The Blaffer Art Museum, Houston

The Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston has received funding to develop content for their tour program for *Andy Coolquitt*, an exhibition that is taking place May 18-August 17, 2013. iPads will be used to record interviews with artists about their inspirations and processes, to be edited into video clips that will enhance group tours.

The Blanton Museum of Art, Austin

Funding to the Blanton Museum of Art will support their effort to build digital galleries that offer expanded information on works of art from three permanent collections — The Battle Casts, European

paintings, and contemporary art. The iBook platform will be leveraged for presenting images, text, audio, and video on iPads, which will be installed on gallery benches and stands around the museum.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

The MIDEA project grant will help the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston to develop and implement a summer series of Maker workshops in association with hang@MFAH, a learning lab for youth. Funds will support the development of interactive art projects, digital art performances, and other events.

The Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas

The Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas intends to use its MIDEA project grant to create an interactive series of digital videos called “Ask an Architect”, which will implement crowd-sourced interview questions to explore architecture as a potential career. This project will add to Nasher’s “Careers in the Arts” video series, which is currently being developed for the institution’s new website.

Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum, Austin

The Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum will use its MIDEA minigrant to increase accessibility for disabled visitors by developing a tour in the form of an e-publication for the visually impaired. They plan to transition from traditional print materials to iPads in order to encourage active engagement for blind patrons.

University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington

Funds awarded to the University of Texas at Arlington will support the development of The Campbell-Dowdy African Art Collection website, giving the collection a responsive online presence that will provide educational information and raise awareness to attract prospective donors.

Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls

The Wichita Falls Museum of Art at Midwestern State University will use its minigrant to develop a pilot project to create mobile web pages that can be accessed via QR codes, allowing visitors to view educational content for ten works in the museum’s permanent collection. The funds will also help cover the subscription costs of implementing this mobile strategy.

“The quality of project proposals has continually improved since we began offering minigrants to Texas museums a few years ago,” shared Alex Freeman, the Associate Director of MIDEA. “It is a clear sign that MIDEA members are becoming increasingly comfortable using emerging technology to create innovative, educational, and interpretive projects within their museums.”

Equipment Grantees

Amarillo Museum of Art
AMOA – Arthouse
Art Museum of Southeast Texas
Artpace San Antonio
Ballet Austin
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
Dallas Museum of Art
McNay Art Museum
Mexic-Arte Museum

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth
Museum of Fine Arts Houston
Nasher Sculpture Center
San Angelo Museum of Art
Tyler Museum of Art
Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum
University of Texas at Arlington
Wichita Falls Museum of Art

About the Marcus Institute for Digital Education in the Arts (MIDEA)

The Marcus Institute for Digital Education in the Arts (MIDEA) provides timely, succinct and practical knowledge about emerging technologies that museums can use to advance their missions. The Institute, a collaboration between the Edward and Betty Marcus Foundation and the New Media Consortium, showcases best practices in emerging applications of technologies like social media, mobiles, augmented reality, cloud computing, and others that are just around the corner. MIDEA offers its members a wealth of online resources, regular analysis, continuous research, news, and reports, as well as a flagship blog that is home to ideas and reflections authored by some of the leading minds in the museum world. Most of all, however, MIDEA offers members a dependable, credible, and timely font of carefully vetted information and tools they can put to use immediately, including a Museum Edition of the highly regarded Horizon Report. For more information, visit www.midea.nmc.org.

About the New Media Consortium (NMC)

The New Media Consortium (NMC) is an international not-for-profit consortium of learning-focused organizations dedicated to the exploration and use of new media and new technologies. For 20 years, the NMC and its members have dedicated themselves to exploring and developing potential applications of emerging technologies for learning, research, and creative inquiry. For more information, visit www.nmc.org.