CASE STUDY

MONA MINE HOBART

The Museum of Old and New Art (Mona) is Australia's largest privately-owned museum. It showcases owner David Walsh's collection, which includes more than 2000 artworks, antiquities and ethnographic pieces. Since opening in January 2011, it has received more than 1.4 Million visitors

THE WONDER OF GONDWANA
A Journey into Ancient Australia

DMS DESTINATION MARKETING STORE

MONA MINE HOBART

The experience is truly engaging and immersive at every stage of the visitor journey.

Pre-visit - website

The Mine experience starts right from the initial visit to the MONA website, for the period of the exhibition it solely features the "Mine" exhibition on its home page.

As the user scrolls down the home page they are presented with snippets of information that starts with the number visitor they are to the website, followed by how many people are also on the website at that time. Information then starts to get increasingly personal presenting the user with their IP address and location of their internet service provider. Continue scrolling and there is information on the length of time spent on the site before finally reaching the booking button.

All of which feels intrusive and unsettling – which is exactly the point in order to draw attention to the fact that their data is being mined!

During visit –exhibition

Mine is designed to look and feel like a game with a wall-to-wall reproduction of the 60's Australian board game Squatter, a version of Monopoly but with sheep farmers instead of property investors. On this board game floor sit giant pieces modelled after contemporary mining machinery.

Even the usual exhibition catalogue is created as a board game, a contemporary version of Squatter called Extractor which is also on sale in the gift shop!

Gamification & Technology – Interaction & Immersion

The game is designed for 2-6 players, each taking the role of a different data platform business. By the end of the game, one person will have achieved Amazon-like status – a massive business for the storage and monetisation of data.

Mine uses augmented reality (AR) technology similar to that used in Pokemon Go throughout the exhibition. Mine's bird mascot, the critically endangered Tasmania King Island Brown Thornbill bird, appears in the AR pop-ups and on the walls of the gallery.

Visitors are invited to use their own smartphones or the museum's O device to play the game by collecting information and uncovering these hidden bird animations as they work through the space

Pop-ups on these devices also inform the visitor about the natural resources extracted from the earth to make its various components. Other pop-ups show what data is being mined from them when they're using the O. Over half the exhibition's content exists exclusively in-app including videos. If you don't use the O, you cannot fully experience Mine.

Again which is the point – the visitor feels coerced into using the system.

Post-visit – the engagement continues

Ironically, the museum also gathers data about each visitor to the exhibition - how long they spend engaging with each artwork, what path they make through the exhibition, what they like and dislike.

By the time the visitor gets home they will have received an email with a record of their time in the museum, all the things they've missed & access to layers they didn't read.

Immersive, interactive & uniquely creative story-telling which initiates an extremely strong emotional response/connection.
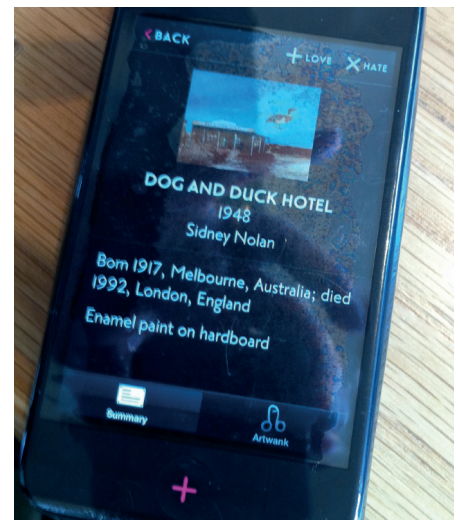

Photo: Francesca Ford
Making Conversations with Museums Blog

Mona's O

Mona's O is a portable touchscreen device and serves as the museum's map, information centre, and exhibition pamphlet. It replaces wall texts in the museum, providing users with stories, essays, music, interviews, and more.

The O is free and can also be downloaded as an app on iPhone, and allows users to save their visit and access the content at home. All the while, the O collects your data for Mona's use.

The O was originally developed to replace wall labels, but the intrinsic role it plays in the unique Mona visitor experience has expanded and morphed curatorially. Mine was the first time it was used as part of an exhibition.

The O is really intrinsic to the Mona experience whereas at other museums, an electronic device for visitors is a bit of a luxury add-on. No longer do visitors have to engage in a forward and back dance to read the label beside a work of art. Mona's O gives visitors access to all these layers of provenance and interpretation, and more.

Other museums agonise over how much information to provide on their labels. With the O, the visitor decides. Enter an email address and by the time the visitor gets home they've been sent a record of all the things you looked at, all the things you missed, and access to the layers you didn't have time to read.

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