

UNFIX

INVESTIGATE



Monument Lab

FIELD TRIP

MUSEUMS

CONFRONT

?

QUESTION

EXPLORE



ABOUT

Monument Lab Field Trip: Museums is a set of self-guided activities designed to help you investigate museums; ask questions about learning and access in arts, culture, history, and science institutions; and propose your own ideas for making museums more accessible and less exclusive spaces.

We encourage you to explore with family, friends, classmates, and neighbors in a way that is safe and accessible for you. You may find that accessing museum webpages, online collections and exhibitions, and social media is a way to explore a museum from home. Many institutions have expanded their online content and programs during the pandemic, offering more ways to engage with museums.

museum:
a hub of power,
preservation, and
demonstration.

GETTING STARTED

WHAT DO I NEED?

You'll be doing lots of drawing and writing on this Field Trip, so make sure you have something to write with (pen or pencil) and something to write on (like a clipboard or notepad). You'll also need a sense of curiosity as well as a critical eye.

HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

It's up to you! These pages are just a guide, but ultimately, it's your investigation. You can do all of these activities in one day with one museum, really digging in and exploring the histories and stories it reveals (and hides). Or you can use this guide to critically engage with several museums over time.

SHARE

Share ideas, questions, drawings, and photos from your Museum Field Trip with us on social media, and tag us @Monument_Lab.

“A museum is a complex institution, and defining it is not easy.”

- Edward Alexander,
historian & educator

CREDITS

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Monument Lab Field Trip: Museums was designed and illustrated by Mike Murawski & Bryna Campbell with Super Nature Adventures.



Monument Lab

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**SUPER NATURE
ADVENTURES**

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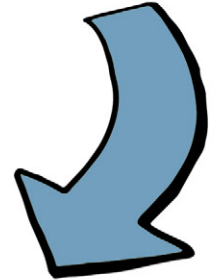
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ASK YOURSELF

Have you visited a museum before?

yes

no



What are some things that make you want to visit a museum?

What words or ideas do you associate with museums?

CHOOSE A MUSEUM TO VISIT

What do you know about this museum ahead of your visit?

name of museum I'm going to visit

location of museum

ENTERING THE MUSEUM

DRAW

As you arrive at the museum, what do you notice about the building and the spaces around it?

Make a quick sketch here.

PAUSE

How do you feel as you enter this museum space?

HONOR THE LAND

Learn about the Indigenous peoples on whose ancestral lands this museum now stands, and other histories of this place.

Does the museum have information and resources to help you learn this?

IS THERE AN ADMISSION FEE?

yes no

cost: _____

WHEN IS THE MUSEUM OPEN?

Sun Mon Tues Wed Thur Fri Sat

ARE THERE RAMPS AND ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCES THAT ARE EASY TO FIND?

yes no

WHAT TYPES OF INFORMATION AND MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE TO YOU AS A VISITOR? (check all you can find)

- map or visitor brochure
- info about new or special exhibits
- materials in languages other than English
- large print materials
- audio guide
- materials for kids or families
- other: _____

INVESTIGATE



Take a moment to find a wall or area dedicated to recognizing the names of donors.

Can you find something like this?

yes no

Who are the major donors? How big are their names compared to other signage?

Are any of these names familiar to you?

Is there comfortable seating available throughout the museum?

What are some other things you notice about this museum during your visit?

EXPLORE

Choose one room or gallery in this museum.
Take some time to explore and consider these questions.

What stories, themes, and topics are being shared here?

What stories are missing?

What is the role of objects in this exhibition space?

How do you think the objects or items on display got here?

How does this gallery provide you with information? (for example, labels, text, or videos)

“What they put on view says a lot about a museum, but what they don't put on view says even more.”

– Fred Wilson, artist

THE WORK OF MUSEUMS

Museums require many different kinds of labor to operate, and much of this work is not visible to most visitors. During your visit, notice those you see working there and recognize all the work happening that you might not see.

Who have you noticed working in this museum?

How are workers and their labor recognized throughout this museum?

“We can use the resources we have as museum workers, as professionals, as leaders, as public intellectuals to care.”
-Monica O. Montgomery, museum leader

What types of museum work do you want to know more about?

Can you find anything in the news about employee experiences or union organizing at this museum?



Librarian
Maintenance
Program Manager
Conservator
Visitor Services
Intern
Retail
Administrative Assistant
Technology
Development
Payroll Manager
Security
Collections Assistant
Events
Archivist
Curator
Facilities
Educator

In what ways do you think this museum is welcoming and accessible?

How might this museum represent POWER? Whose POWER?

What sorts of rules (spoken and unspoken) are people following?

Does this museum seem interested in the perspectives, voices, and ideas of visitors or community members?

yes no

How so?

What forms of surveillance or control do you notice?

QUESTION EVERYTHING

In what ways is this museum engaging with social or political issues that matter to its audience and local communities?

Ask questions of any and all museums you visit. Let's unfix the ideas we have inherited about museums.

Is this museum taking on stand on issues that matter to YOU?

yes no

“Museums are not neutral. They never have, and never will.”

- Suay Aksoy, museum scholar

IMAGINING MUSEUMS

Who is your museum for?

Where will it be located?

IMAGINE a new museum that you would create. Use this page to get started by brainstorming some ideas.

Think of something that matters to you or your community.

Draw your ideas on the next page

What stories do you want to tell?

What kinds of objects or experiences do you want to include?

Who will care for your museum? How will your museum care for others?

DREAM

Think beyond the traditional ideas of what a museum can be.

How could the museum you imagine be different from other museums?

“Take me into the museum and show me myself, show me my people, show me soul America.”
- June Jordan, poet

DRAW YOUR MUSEUM

USE THIS SPACE TO SKETCH YOUR IDEAS AS
YOU IMAGINE YOUR NEW MUSEUM.

NAME YOUR MUSEUM

LEARN MORE

***Culture Strike:
Art & Museums in an
Age of Protest***
by Laura Raicovich
(Verso, 2021)

Decolonize This Place
decolonizethisplace.org

Museum Workers Speak
Twitter: @MuseumWorkers
Instagram: @museumworkersspeak

Museums Are Not Neutral
museumsarenotneutral.com
#MuseumsAreNotNeutral