

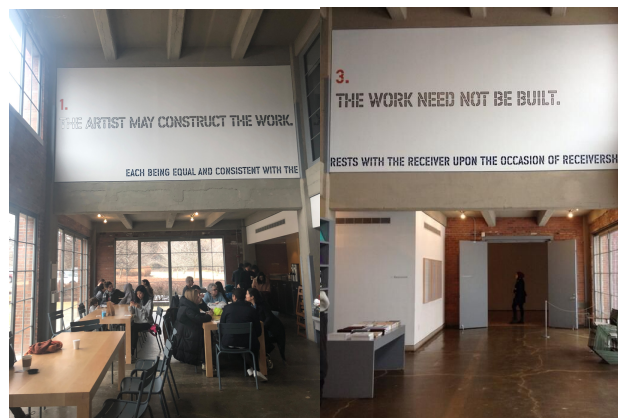
Hannah Peck
The Culture of Archives, Museums and Libraries
Professor Howard Besser
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Observational Study

Dia Beacon

I visited Dia:Beacon, a contemporary art museum located in Beacon, New York on March 9th (Fri). It was about an hour and half drive from Manhattan and this observational study began as I entered the parking lot. When I arrived at Dia:Beacon around 10:30am, I was actually surprised to witness that only few parking spaces were left, but then I remembered that Dia:Beacon had extremely limited opening hours especially in March. Dia:Beacon is open from 11am to 4pm, closed every Tuesday and Wednesday, and they are also closed on Thursday in January, February, and March. Most cars were from New York and New Jersey and about 10 cars were from rental services. Since people traveled more than an hour to arrive at the museum, most visitors first looked for restroom signs or walked over to the cafe right near the entrance before purchasing the admission tickets.

My friend and I also sat down at the cafe for few minutes before heading into the galleries. This was actually the best location to observe people because everyone who came through the entrance all bought a cup of coffee/tea or pastries before starting their tour of the museum. People all came in groups of 2 or 3 and it was mostly couples or group of friends and families with young children. Most people seemed to review the floor plan of the galleries during their brief coffee break due to the scale of this museum and I also found a lot of people taking photographs of the work of Lawrence Weiner installed on the wall above the main entrance area and cafe, which is the only work of art in the main entrance area.



As I entered the gallery space, I've observed that most people started walking towards the galleries on the left although there weren't any predetermined paths. I also started from the left and spent

about 15-20 minutes in each spaces to observe the pattern of people. There are no texts or descriptions on the wall except for the name of the artist at Dia:Beacon so people had no choice but to look at the objects first. I observed about 10-12 people using a stopwatch on my phone and I stood in four different areas with large installation works. On average people spent about 20-30 seconds looking at the work, took pictures and some people walked over to the little white box hanging on the corner of every wall, where Dia:Beacon provided a coated paper (not for takeaway) with background of the artist, information about the works and the area's floor plan. This was a unique way of delivering information without wasting paper, but some people did not even notice that these information were available as there were no signs on the wall and the color of the box perfectly camouflaged along with the white walls. I also examined some people searching on their phones to learn more about the artist. There were approximately 1-2 guards standing in each corner of the wall and they were very attentive in observing people due to the large spaces and great number of multimedia installation works. They appeared to be trained interns or volunteers and when I asked one guard about a particular artist, she was able to answer basic background information and number of works by that artist presented in the museum.

Due to the vast size of the museum, it was difficult to categorize people in certain age groups or ethnicities so I decided to observe the works of art that people spent more time to interact with or take photographs/videos. From my observations, visitors seemed to spend much longer time with large-scale installation works (Richard Serra, Louis Bourgeois), interactive installation (John Chamberlain), neon installations (Dan Flavin, Francois Morellet) and works that involved reflective surfaces (Robert Rauschenberg) in comparison to the two dimensional paintings, text art or traditional sculptures. I've also noticed how people stood still in front of these works to upload the photographs or videos on their social networking services before walking over to another work of art. My friend and I spent about two hours at Dia:Beacon

Magazzino Italian Art

After the visit to Dia:Beacon, I traveled about 20 minutes to arrive at Magazzino Italian Art. This is a fairly new private Italian art warehouse located in Cold Spring, New York. It was established in 2017 with the private collections of Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu who are longtime residents in the area. This warehouse is also closed every Tuesday and Wednesday and visitors are required to make reservations prior to their visit through the website and they allow about 20-30 people every two hours. The scale of this museum appeared relatively small in comparison to the previous visit to Dia:Beacon, but personally it was much enjoyable because it felt like you had the gallery all to yourself. Considering the fact that this museum opened in the summer of 2017 and it operated based on reservations, I was not able

to observe large group of people at once, but it was much easier to study people's behavior closely. I was in this warehouse with about 8 other people and spent about an hour and half inside the galleries.

When you first walk into the entrance, two ladies at the admission desk greets people, check the name under reservations, and hand out pamphlet with artist's name, title of the work, year, and materials used. This pamphlet was not very useful because it did not indicate the location of each work or have background descriptions of the artists. After a brief introduction to Magazzino by the staff member, people walked towards the video projection before heading into the galleries. There were three benches for people to sit down and watch the video on the background history of this unique place. The video introduced visitors to the mission of Magazzino Italian Art to showcase and promote post-war, contemporary Italian art and it was an intriguing experience to see the museum founders living with the works of art in their home before the establishment of the museum, and actually noticing them inside the galleries after the video. 6 out of 10 people watched this 10 minutes video before looking at art objects and other people watched the videos after they walked around all the gallery spaces.



The gallery spaces in Magazzino are arranged in classic white cube style and each works of art is installed in very close proximity to one another. The galleries had a predetermined path from the introduction video to galleries A through F, but people including myself, constantly walked back and forth from each gallery to another. On average people spent about 3-5 minutes in each gallery and there were no guards present in the gallery spaces so people seemed more comfortable interacting with the objects and started having conversations about the works. Although it was a very small group of people, the visitors were relatively older than people I encountered at Dia:Beacon and all visitors in this group were either European or Asian (4 Italians, 2 Koreans, 2 Chinese, 2 Germans). I've also noticed that people also spent more time with each of the works at Magazzino than people at Dia:Beacon. In addition,

people also took more photographs in front of neon installations or works of art with reflective surfaces in this place as well, but in general, people spent more time viewing the works rather than taking pictures or uploading them on their social networking services.

Following this consecutive visits to Dia:Beacon and Magazzino Italian Art, I was able to identify several similarities between these two organizations. These two organizations both focus on supporting and showcasing various artists and works of contemporary art, and they also renovated former factories to host works of art. Dia:Beacon was the site for Nabisco box-printing facility and Magazzino took over a former computer manufacturing warehouse. Situated on the banks of Hudson River, the high ceiling galleries within Dia:Beacon are beautifully lit by enormous amount of natural light coming in through its large windows. Magazzino is also situated among nature and its architecture doesn't try to stand out from its surroundings, but almost seems to become one with the scenery. Most spaces in this warehouse also absorb great amount of natural light with white walls and large windows as well. This might be something personal, but I've felt that people seemed more relaxed in both places compared to visitors at museums like the MET or MoMA in the city. It requires more prior preparation for visiting these organizations, such as spending longer travel time and reserving almost a whole day to visit, but it was a great excuse to get out and spend time outside of the city.

In addition to the similarities, various contrasting elements were also examined between the two organizations and these differences could be categorized into Size, Mission & Focus, Admission, People's age, People's behavior, Scale of Works, and Exhibition Style.

	Dia:Beacon	Magazzino Italian Art
Size	160,000 square feet(Basement, 1F, 2F)	18,000 square feet (Single floor)
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committed to advancing, realizing, and preserving the vision of contemporary artists and artists and art collectives from 1960s and 1970s - Commission artist projects, exhibitions, site-specific installations that might not otherwise be realized because of scale or scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote and host Post-war/ Contemporary Italian Art and Artists - Not a private museum or a foundation, simply to host works of Italian artists/educate people - Committed to sharing the private collection of Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu
Admission	\$15 General, \$12 Students /Seniors Free for members / children under 12	Free admission / Prior Reservation
Age Group	People in early 20's-30's	People in mid 30's-40's
People's Behavior	Taking pictures and posting them on SNS	Spending more time with each work rather than taking pictures

Scale of Work	Large scale, site-specific installations that occupy the entire gallery space	Mixture of small-mid scale sculptures and installations
Exhibition Style	Works of single artist per gallery, No wall texts but stacks of coated paper	Works of 3-4 different artists in each gallery, one pamphlet and introduction video