



## ***Contemporary Artists Bridge Art Galleries, Museums, and Communities***

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Historically, art galleries and museums have operated in opposite spectrums of the art world. The primary role of galleries was to present works of art for the consumption of the collector. While museums, steeped in the practice of museology, served its visitors through education—by presenting and interpreting objects to explore the past, examine the present, and offer a glimpse into the future.

Today, to remain relevant, both are evolving to adapt to the demands of changing audiences and social expectations. In doing so, these institutions are placing artists at the forefront of that shift. Whether the effort is joint or separate, galleries and museums are looking to living artists to enhance their programming, engage audiences, and create memorable experiences.

In this artist-centered approach, the artist serves as stimulus to encourage the return of art lovers and as a curiosity to draw in first time visitors. With each revolving exhibition comes the opportunity for art galleries and museums to provide artists' talks, demonstrations, lectures and workshops to deepen patron loyalty and foster new relationships.

Artists lie at the intersection of art galleries and museums as both institutions recognize they share audiences who possess common interests. By looking to artists for inspiration and thought provoking works, collaborations between art galleries and museums allow for a cross-



pollination of talent and broad-range of ideas. This type of partnering augments audience participation, and offers opportunities to provide unique and diverse programming.

For museums, faced with the challenge of presenting objects from their permanent collections from a contemporary perspective, relevance is found in the reinterpretation of art and artifacts through the artist's oeuvre, work which can relate to, and extend the public's understanding of the collection.

Both art galleries and museums are faced with the ongoing feat of devising strategies to increase visitor numbers, whether they are defined as client or member, respectively. And in today's economy, each is competing for discretionary income and the few precious leisure hours busy schedules allow. To remain competitive and relevant in a marketplace that demands art and education be couched in entertainment, it is the creative and innovative approach that wins hands down.

As the social and institutional roles of art galleries and museums has changed, so too must their strategies to engage, sustain and reach new audiences. In turning to the artists for inspiration and in elevating their work, institutions are able to modernize their appeal by remaining current by employing the artists' poignant works of art.