



Society for Environmental Graphic Design
Summary of Presentations and Activities

New Directions in Exhibition and Environment Design: Placemaking

Fifth Annual Symposium
Cranbrook Academy of Art
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan
August 7-9, 2008

Presented by SEGD and N.A.M.E.



Museumless Exhibits

Museumless exhibits are exhibition designs that are not housed in museums. Untethered from their traditional settings, they can rejuvenate zoos and aquaria, corporate offices, gardens and nature centers, libraries, and other facilities and engage and delight visitors.

The Griffith Observatory atop Mount Hollywood in Los Angeles is not a museum. But its newly renovated facilities now include museum-quality exhibitions that encourage visitors to be observers of the universe. The exhibits were designed to appeal to a diverse demographic, so they communicate the concepts of basic astronomy using grand visual gestures. Because many of its visitors are not English speaking, we minimized text panels. Exhibits include a dramatic, architectural-scaled model of the solar system and the world's largest astronomical photograph, imaged on a 150-ft. porcelain enamel wall.

Museum exhibits can travel outdoors. Using graphic interventions and interpretation, a decrepit urban site in Buffalo was transformed into a destination. Traceries of previously existing buildings on the site of the Erie Canal Harbor Project were left to give people a sense of the past hustle and bustle, and a ghost façade contains images of the people who worked there.

Museumless exhibits reinforce a sense of the place and its mission. At the National Center for Preservation of Democracy, a display inspired by traditional European train station schedule signs shows a series of quotes about democracy. As the quotes change, a beautiful rain stick sound emanates from the sign's flip mechanisms.



Jonathan Alger,
C&G Partners

Federal Reserve
Bank of Atlanta
(C&G Partners)



At the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, museum exhibition concepts were used to make the Fed and what it does more transparent. The client wanted to demystify itself, and added credibility by using a museum exhibition approach.