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Art Walk 2022: An Exploration in Collaboration and Creativity

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Art Walk 2022: An Exploration in Collaboration and
Creativity

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DePauw University Honor Scholar Program

Class of 2022

Professor William Pearson, Sponsor
Dr. Eliza Brown, 1st reader
Professor Andrea Sununu, 2nd reader

II. Table of Contents

- I. Title Page
- II. Table of Contents
- III. Thesis Statement
- IV. Acknowledgements
- V. Source Rationale
- VI. The Beginnings: Art Walk 2021
- VII. My Personal Motivation for Creating Art Walk
- VIII. The Festival Continues: Art Walk 2022
- IX. Analysis of AW 2022's Description, Mission Statement, Goals, and Values
- X. Defining my Role in AW 22 as an Artist-Curator
- XI. Defining the Five Goals of Art Walk 2022
 1. Unity
 2. Diversity
 3. Interdisciplinarity
 4. Accessibility
 5. Community Engagement
- XII. The Future and Legacy of Art Walk
- XIII. My Creative Curation: An AW 22 Exhibit in East College
- XIV. My Final Thoughts on Art Walk
- XV. Bibliography

III. Thesis Statement

My thesis project consists of three parts: research, organization of Art Walk 2022, and an original curation. It begins with researching community engagement, interdisciplinary studies, general arts administrative skills, and artistic curation. Using this research, I will facilitate and manage an arts festival (Art Walk 2022) that focuses on interdisciplinary projects created by various students at DePauw. Further, during Art Walk 2022, an installation of original art will be produced and displayed that synthesizes past projects with new ideas. This combination of theory and practice will help me synthesize the many, varied roles of an artist-curator and will allow me to enact and fulfill my artistic values and vision.

IV. Acknowledgements

A special thank you to my thesis committee, Dr. William Pearson (thesis advisor), Dr. Eliza Brown (first reader), and Professor Andrea Sununu (second reader) for their support and encouragement during the organization of Art Walk 2022 and the writing of this thesis. Moreover, I'd like to thank Professor Beth Benedix (my unofficial third reader) for always being there to chat about my creative and logistical problems.

V. Source Rationale

In this thesis I use mainly one book and two interviews I conducted to support and contextualize my decisions surrounding Art Walk 2022. Larkin Sanders' book *The Creation of the Taneycomo Orchestra* provides a guidebook for other artists interested in organizing music or arts festivals. By using a book that has similar goals and values to Art Walk 2022, I was able to relate her ideas and advice accurately and easily to our planning. Moreover, this book is easily digestible in content and reader-friendly: it is written in a conversational tone and is not filled with technical jargon. The two interviews I conducted were with Alejandro Acierto (an artist, curator, and performer) and Amanda DeBoer Bartlett (the founder of Omaha Under the Radio, a non-profit performance festival). By discussing this festival and thesis with these two working artists, I was able to compare Art Walk 2022 to their own professional initiatives. Overall, by using Sanders' book and these two interviews, I was able to discuss my arts festival with artists in the professional world and learn how to let Art Walk grow and prosper from people who understand what is required to organize large-scale events.

VI. The Beginnings: Art Walk 2021

In September of 2020, I approached the Contemporary Ensemble Club board with an idea to create an event based off Ellen Reid's *SOUNDWALK* in New York City's Central Park.¹ Reid's project uses a phone application that tracks your location as you walk through the park: where you walk determines what music the application played.² I thought that this innovative and interactive sound experience could be translated to the campus of DePauw during a year with so few live performances. However, after some discussion, the Contemporary Ensemble board decided that we did not have the resources, time, or knowledge to create an application of that capacity. Therefore, to create an event that remained in the spirit of Reid's but was also accessible and technologically feasible, we thought of Art Walk 2021 (AW 2021). Our event would place yard signs all over the campus with QR codes that would link visitors to different virtual art exhibits created by DePauw members. We created a website that housed all the exhibits and had an interactive map so people off campus could still "walk" around campus and explore the exhibits.³ AW 2021 was open to all artistic disciplines and mediums and allowed us to showcase any type of art using a virtual platform.

Here is our original elevator pitch, written in October of 2020:

The DePauw Art Walk, facilitated by the Contemporary Ensemble, consists of a campus wide virtual artistic "scavenger hunt." On a specific day or set of days next semester, artistic events will unfold all throughout campus at designated locations. Each exhibit will focus around a different artistic medium or mode of expression, ranging from live musical performances to interactive sculptures or poetry readings.

¹ The 2020-21 Contemporary Ensemble club board consisted of President Abby Foehrkolb '21, Vice President Genevieve (Mary) Miedema '21, me as treasurer, and our club advisor Professor William Pearson. By October 2020, this board would become the Art Walk 2021 board with additional members Caleb Wiggins and ITAP intern Jun Hong.

² Ellen Reid, "SOUNDWALK," accessed December 7, 2021, <https://www.ellenreidsoundwalk.com/>.

³ DePauw Contemporary Ensemble, "Art Walk 2021," *Art Walk 2021*, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://sites.google.com/view/artwalk2021/home>.

To accommodate both social distancing and remote learners, we are looking for ways to bring this event online by means of an app, an interactive map, QR codes, etc. Each designated location could have a QR code or pin on the virtual map that students could click on to view the event occurring.

We would like to involve as many different art forms as possible, including but not limited to, dance, music, poetry, writing, sculpture, or any combination of mediums possible. Events can involve multiple people or singular individuals. They can be live events or prerecorded.⁴

The inaugural AW 2021 took place April 16th to 18th and aimed to showcase all types of art during a year with few opportunities to do so because of the many coronavirus restrictions. Through many emails, class visits, and posters, we reached out to DePauw students for their art submissions and ultimately displayed about 30 exhibits and produced 10 live music performances. The exhibits we presented in AW 2021 were diverse, ranging from large-scale public size murals to unpublished student compositions and original poetry. Moreover, the live performances included a range of formats and styles, including a jazz concert, a work for bass saxophone played by multiple people, and improvised electronic music.⁵ For many DePauw students, Art Walk weekend in 2021 was one of, if not *the only*, chance to perform live and exhibit your projects to the broader community. In the weeks following AW 2021, we heard from countless students about how important that weekend was for them. And soon we started to hear from Greencastle community members about how much they enjoyed walking through campus and scanning art exhibits.

For example, a Greencastle community member came up to me at a table I was hosting for the Contemporary Ensemble club at a trick-or-treat event in fall of 2021. We had an Art Walk poster on the table and after she saw it, she began telling me about her and her kids' experience of that weekend. Both the mom and the kids loved walking around and trying to find the next

⁴ Elena Collins, "Elevator Pitch," written October 2020.

⁵ Contemporary Ensemble, "Schedule of Events," *Art Walk 2021*.

yard sign to scan and see what the exhibit was. They expressed that they were excited to hear that it was happening again: she even pulled out her phone to mark the dates for Art Walk 2022 (AW 2022) in her calendar. This and many other experiences like it have shown me how much the DePauw community and larger Greencastle one appreciated this event and have encouraged me each day as I plan this year's festival.

VII. My Personal Motivation for Creating Art Walk

Larkin Sanders poses a question in the beginning of her book about creating her Taneycomo Festival Orchestra that asks organizers to define their personal motivation behind creating their event: Why? Why should they (the audience) attend? And why is it important to them and to the creators?⁶ Personally, I would add, why are you (the organizer) creating this event? With AW 2021, we originally wanted to provide a platform for DePauw students to showcase their projects. Since the pandemic sadly halted many projects, performances, exhibitions, and so much more for musicians and artists in both academic and professional spheres, AW 2021 was a chance to finally let them occur. However, as the organization of Art Walk 2022 began, my answer to this question changed. I am now creating this festival to leave a legacy behind after I leave: I want this interdisciplinary festival to continue past 2022 and become a staple in the DePauw community. Throughout my time here, this university lacked an event of this kind, and I think a school like ours—a small, liberal arts university that prides itself on well-rounded, community-focused creative work and research—needs an Art Walk.

While researching this event and discussing it with faculty members at DePauw, I found out that Art Walk is not the first interdisciplinary arts festival that DePauw's campus has seen.

⁶ Larkin Sanders, *The Creation of the Taneycomo Festival Orchestra: The Performer's Field Guide to Music Festival Foundation* (South Carolina: CreateSpace Independent Publisher, 2016), 11.

ArtsFest, according to Ron Dye (DePauw professor in the English Department) who was one of the founders of this event, was an annual week-long festival that started around 2002 and lasted until about 2017.⁷ This event was run mainly by faculty and encouraged interdisciplinary collaborations between professors and departmental leaders. There was involvement from almost every artistic discipline on campus, performances by the School of Music, and involvement from Greencastle community members. While ArtsFest mirrors many values and goals of Art Walk, such as interdisciplinarity, community engagement, and collaboration, it centered on the faculty and staff rather than the students as Art Walk does. When I entered DePauw ArtsFest was not occurring anymore because of various issues, including professor sabbaticals and staff administrative reconstruction, and so I saw a gap in creativity and collaboration and wanted to start something new.

When I interviewed Amanda DeBoer Bartlett (founder of Omaha Under the Radar festival) and shared this vision with her, she supported and elaborated on my answer while warning me about “artistic arrogance.” She loved that I wanted to provide DePauw with something it did not have before: she understands this feeling—this “compulsion” as she describes it—to organize events and create something valuable in a community.⁸ However, she warned me that communities are often more complex than I realize, and that I cannot assume that other people want this event or that other people feel its need. This “artistic arrogance” is when organizations take the viewpoint that they are “saving” a community with their events: they feel that they are necessary to the community and believe their importance is greater than it is.⁹ This feeling often leads organizers to create something that is not needed in a community or not the

⁷ Ron Dye, unrecorded interview by Elena Collins, March 16, 2022.

⁸ Amanda DeBoer Bartlett, Zoom interview by Elena Collins, October 18, 2021, 40:10.

⁹ Bartlett, Zoom interview, 44:20.

right fit for a group. As I was drawing up the goals, mission statement, and vision for AW 2022, I stayed away from any arrogant language and reframed this festival as a creative *opportunity* for DePauw students and community members, placing the creative agency and freedom in *their* hands.

VIII. The Festival Continues: Art Walk 2022

Remaining consistent with the values of AW 2021, AW 2022 will focus on being physically accessible during the pandemic and providing a platform for creative members of our community. This year we are imagining this weekend as a *festival* that focuses on in-person, physical art installations and performances.¹⁰ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, one definition of a festival is an “organized series of concerts, films, plays, or other themed events, typically held annually or every few years in the same place.”¹¹ This type of artistic festival is often associated with churches or religious events and frequently led by community organizations or members. With this definition in mind AW 2022 fits into the description of a festival: it is an annual, organized series of artistic exhibits of many mediums and is an event that we hope continues to grow for many years to come. It is also tied to a central community and physical location, the DePauw University campus, and led by the students. Calling this weekend a festival also reflects our new goals of becoming a more community-focused event, both within DePauw and the Greencastle community.

IX. Analysis of AW 2022’s Description, Mission Statement, Goals, and Values

¹⁰ DePauw Contemporary Ensemble, “About,” *DePauw Art Walk*, accessed December 7, 2021, <https://dpuartwalk.com/>.

¹¹ “festival, adj. and n,” OED Online, accessed January 9, 2022, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/69567?redirectedFrom=festival>.

Our website (dpuartwalk.com) contains an “About” page that gives a brief description of our event, mission statement, goals, and values. We begin with a description of our event that provides context for readers and interested participants regarding the history and purpose of our festival. It reads:

After the success of Art Walk 2021 last spring, the group has gotten back together, added new members, and begun planning the next Art Walk, scheduled for April 29th to May 1st of 2022. This year we plan to create an arts festival that has mostly live components: live performances, in-person art exhibits, live artists talks, etc. Participants can either submit their own individual work or elect to collaborate on an interdisciplinary project. For the latter submission, individuals from different disciplines will be paired together to create a collaborative project or installation.¹²

This description allows visitors of our website a quick and easy way to learn what this event is and how they can contribute. Next on our website we state our mission statement that further contextualizes our description with specific goals and values that we hold:

We believe that Art Walk expresses the values that a Liberal Arts education strives to achieve: an education filled with creativity, interdisciplinary projects, and collaboration. Art Walk provides DePauw students with the opportunity to enhance their education with creative and intellectually stimulating projects created *for and by* DePauw students. Through any medium, inspiration, or collaborative process, participants in Art Walk will leave the event with a sense of ongoing creative inspiration.¹³

While our mission statement gives readers all the necessary information, it can be seen as long and wordy. According to Larkin Sanders the mission statement should provide one sentence describing what the organization does, one sentence to elaborate on the functions, and one to invite the audience to attend.¹⁴ With this format in mind, our mission statement seems long and vague; however, I believe that our description and mission together provide the full context for AW 2022 and clearly details what our goals and functions are as an organization. We state what

¹² Contemporary Ensemble, “About,” *DePauw Art Walk*.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Sanders, *Taneycomo Festival Orchestra*, 19.

the art festival consists of, how people can participate, and even why we are doing it. Thus, we give the necessary information, albeit in a long-winded way.

After the description and mission statement, our website lists the main goals of our festival that we as a board wrote and voted on during fall of 2021:

- To provide a platform for the DePauw community to showcase their artistic talents across multiple disciplines and ultimately bring together the various communities present at this university
- To offer the DePauw and Greencastle community with an educational and engaging weekend of artistic exploration
- To inspire creativity and collaboration among individuals
- To explore the interdisciplinary project opportunities found within the various departments at DePauw
- To begin building a better connection between DePauw and the Greencastle community.¹⁵

When she began organizing her festival, Sanders began with six goals in mind that encapsulated the purpose of TFO: in general their focus was on making and performing music, providing the community and the musicians with music, and promoting classical music specifically.¹⁶ Our goals mirror her formatting by each beginning with an infinitive and similarly focus on creating interdisciplinary collaborations, providing art and inspiration to DePauw and Greencastle members, and promoting individual creativity. The “Goals” section of our website and other organizations like us provide viewers with context as to why we are putting on this event.

Sanders’ website for TFO also has a values section that further articulates their reasoning behind their goals.¹⁷ I mirrored AW 2022’s values off hers as well. Ours read:

- To focus on creativity and collaboration for the betterment of our education
- To create meaningful projects and exhibits that inspire ourselves and those who interact with them

¹⁵ Contemporary Ensemble, “About,” Art Walk 2022,

¹⁶ Sanders, *Taneycomo Festival Orchestra*, 5.

¹⁷ Taneycomo Festival, “Mission, Vision, and Values,” *Taneycomo Festival Orchestra*, accessed January 22.

- To build a connection between the School of Music and the College of Liberal Arts
- To create a space that actively includes people of all races, cultures, genders, sexualities, and abilities
- To create a student-generated, student-run art experience which encourages unrestricted creativity and inspiration.¹⁸

Our values center on being inclusive, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and accessible.

Together our description, mission statement, goals, and values allow our organization to articulate what, why, and for whom we are creating this event. It allows viewers to see precisely what we stand for and why, and it helps us spread a bigger message about Art Walk: our event has a greater goal than simply displaying art — we want to impact the community and make a difference on this campus. Ultimately, by using Sanders’ advice in her book to both guide and analyze our mission, goals, and values, we (the AW 2022 board) were able to create an effective “About” section on our website that provides interested people with the necessary information.

X. Defining My Role in AW 2022 as an Artist-Curator

In this section, I want to describe my role as an artist-curator of AW 2022. To do this, I will first recount the history of traditional museums and the developments that have occurred in these spaces. Then I will show how these changes in museum spaces result in developments in curatorial practices, blurring the boundaries between an artist and a curator.

Overtime, the concept of what a museum is has developed and changed. Traditionally, museums are buildings that simply house art: visitors walk through, look at the paintings on the wall, and read the short paragraphs of information. This way of presenting art results in a relatively static and passive experience for viewers. Displaying artwork in a fixed way creates a sense of rigidity and uniformity in how people appreciate art. Alternatively, today’s

¹⁸ Contemporary Ensemble, “About,” *Art Walk 2022*.

contemporary art museums are often not static buildings or rooms: they are (1) interactive, (2) use multiple mediums, or (3) are in non-traditional venues. Interactive exhibits often contain elements where visitors can touch, add to, or participate in the exhibit, allowing visitors to structure their personal experience of the works. Moreover, the increase of multi-media works integrates other modes of expression from different mediums, including visual, auditory, or literary stimuli. This allows for a softening of conventions that encourages visitors to sculpt their own experience and personal connections between the subjects. Lastly, non-traditional venues, like churches, outdoor parks, cafes, or bookstores relax the inaccessible and potentially elitist air that surrounds traditional museums, thus increasing accessibility by bringing art into familiar, common places grounded in the community.

A current example of an integration of these ideas is “Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience.” This exhibition is currently touring the United States and Europe, bringing Van Gogh’s art to life with non-traditional venues, multiple mediums, and 360-degree projections.¹⁹ Instead of placing his art in museums, this exhibit uses large convention or event centers in big cities and projects the art onto the walls, ceilings, and floors to create an immersive experience: visitors feel like they are walking straight into Van Gogh’s paintings. Furthermore, visitors can experience a virtual reality tour using a headset to learn what a day in the life of an artist is like. Visitors can engage with art in a more open-ended way and can create their own interpretation of the works. Overall, this exhibit uses multiple mediums, untraditional venues, and interactive components to enhance the experience of the visitor, creating a unique and memorable viewing of Van Gogh’s art.

¹⁹ Exhibition Hub and Fever labs Inc., “Van Gogh: The Immersive Experience,” Van Gogh Exhibit: The Immersive Experience, accessed January 26th, 2022. <https://vangoghexpo.com/>.

As the physical spaces and methods of art presentation have changed, so did the role of the traditional curator. Historically, the term curation is broadly defined and can be applied to many fields. For example, curation is often associated with museums, but it is also used in subjects outside of the gallery, such as in media or fashion. Because of its breadth in use, curation is often defined using broad terms, such as the selection, programming, ordering, or the physical act of displaying subjects.²⁰ A curator is the person that determines what and how exhibits or installations appear to the audience. However, with modern museums that employ new presentation methods, a curator is often both physically displaying objects while making artistic choices like what venue and mediums to use, or what type of interaction should take place. The choices that a curator makes will ultimately affect the aesthetic experience of the viewer. Moreover, Lankford and Vazquez contend that “curation or programming is an art form in itself because of the ways that dissemination and display reflect one’s ability to expand access to and appreciation of cultural products.”²¹ In other words, they see the curator as a creative artist who makes choices that ultimately reflect a larger message for the audience to absorb and appreciate.

Many artists and curators alike support this idea of creative curation. Vince Dziekan and Sven Mehzoud’s article on the *exUrbanScreens* festival cites James Putnam’s book “Art and Artifact: The Museum as Muse.” Putnam (a museum curator) describes how often in modern museums “the roles of the artists and curator become blurred as the artist-curator dissolves the boundaries distinguishing exhibition design from installation.”²² He thinks that a modern curator

²⁰ Elsa Lankford and Laura Vazquez, “Media Arts Festivals: Scholarship and Artistry in Practice,” *Journal of Film & Video* 72, no. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 2020), 8.

²¹ Lankford and Vazquez, “Media Arts Festivals,” 11.

²² Vince Dziekan and Sven Mehzoud, “Activating *exUrbanScreens*: Applying Curatorial Design toward Affective Experience in Civic Media Spectacles,” *Curator* 57, no. 4 (October 2014): 487.

makes choices that mirror how an artist makes decisions in their medium, ultimately determining the affective experience. Likewise, Alejandro Acierto (an artist, musician, and curator) and I discussed this idea. He believes that “curating is, at its core, selecting, and weeding through, and editing.”²³ Acierto admits of curating’s core attributes of physically displaying objects like the previous authors. Similarly, he also elaborates on the need for artistry in curation, because, after all, the way things are positioned determines a message for the audience. He says that “presenting a program that has some kind of idea or thread...allows us [the audience] to consider all of the components of a work.”²⁴ In other words, there needs to be ideas and decisions behind the placement of subjects to create an affective experience. Thus, based on these authors and their reasoning, I will use the term artist-curator to describe the modern conception of a curator.

With their new dual identity, artist-curators are positioned to both take advantage of the benefits of modern museums and address the difficulties that arise from them. For example, non-traditional venues and the use of multiple mediums can cause oversaturated or overloaded experiences for audience members that often lack a clear message.²⁵ For example, exhibits can contain too many stimuli with not enough direction from the curators, resulting in a disjointed experience for visitors. In an attempt to solve issues like this, the curators of *exUrbanScreens* focus on creative curating (or thinking like an artist-curator), integrating technology, creating interdisciplinary projects, and directing the viewer’s attention to specific, holistic topics or themes.²⁶ They created site-specific installations in outdoor venues, have video screenings, and a virtual mobile app component.²⁷ Further, they lead walking tours and have written clear

²³ Alejandro Acierto, Zoom interview by Elena Collins, October 29th, 2021, 12:00.

²⁴ Acierto, Zoom interview, 27:48.

²⁵ Dziekan and Mehzoud, “Activating *exUrbanScreens*, 485.

²⁶ Dziekan and Mehzoud, “Activating *exUrbanScreens*, 487-89.

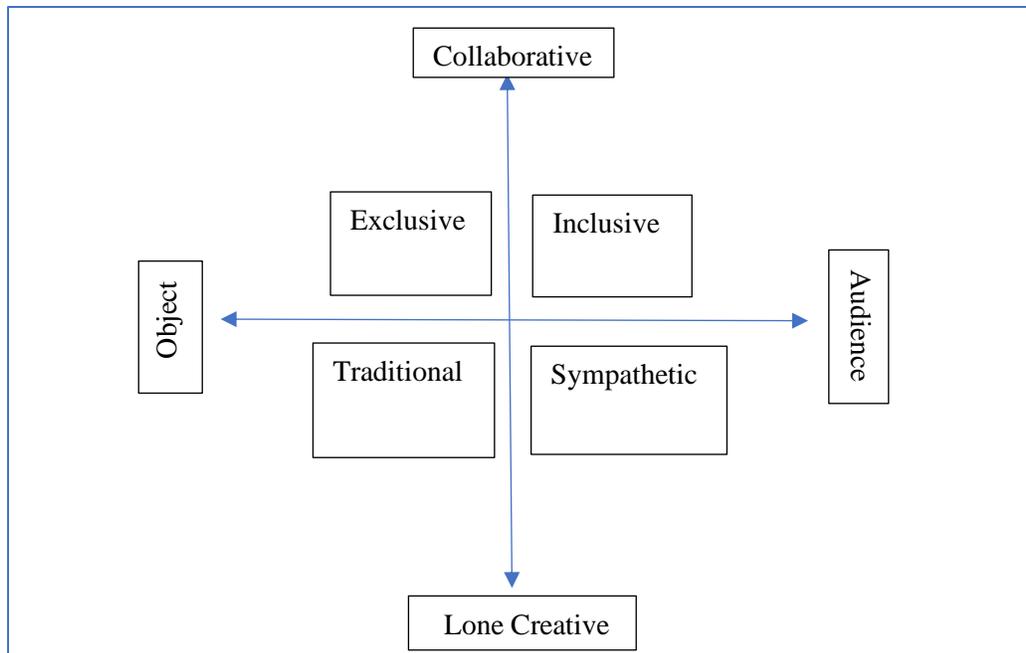
²⁷ *Ibid*, 492.

messages or themes that viewers could read or hear about throughout the exhibit.²⁸ Even though they use many mediums and stimuli, they direct their audiences toward a message and connect all the various parts of the exhibit into one united whole. By keeping their audience's affective experience in mind, the curators of *exUrbansScreens* confront the issues of modern museums and create a satisfying visit for viewers.

I will face difficulties as an artist-curator for AW 2022 like those discussed above and will need to organize my approach to these challenges. Pat Villeneuve et al.'s *Dimensions of Curation Competing Values Exhibition Model: Towards Intentional Curation*, provides a useful tool for identifying what type of curatorial practice AW 2022 requires and how this can inform the organization of the festival. According to the article and the accompanying graph, there are four distinct curatorial practices: traditional, exclusive, sympathetic, and inclusive.²⁹ The X-axis of this graph describes the range of interpretation from object to audience: an exhibit that focuses on objects places the interpretation in them while an audience interpretative-focused exhibit places the power of interpretation in the audience's hands. The Y-axis illustrates the curator's role: a collaborative curation involves many curators with different viewpoints, mediums, and strategies while the lone creative side describes one person creating an exhibit based solely on their beliefs or viewpoints.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Pat Villeneuve, et Al., "Dimensions of Curation Competing Values Exhibition Model: Toward Intentional Curation," *International Journal of the Inclusive Museum* 14, no. 2, (December 2021), 137.



Based on these different curatorial practices, Art Walk lies within the inclusive box: it is both (1) audience interpretive focused, and (2) it uses collaborative curatorial methods. (1) Audience Interpretive Focus. AW 2022's audience will contain members from both DePauw (an academic institution) and Greencastle (a rural, small town). With this knowledge I can assume that the audience will be of various ages and backgrounds, but all share a common location and experience of DePauw—a small, liberal arts university in Indiana. I cannot assume much beyond these facts because of the diversity found at this University and within the community. Therefore, because of AW 2022's broad, diverse audience, the interpretive power will be in their hands: the interpretation of individual events or the festival is determined by the audience members themselves. One way that we make this power explicit to audiences is having interactive exhibits where visitors can actively engage with pieces, forming their own meaning and interpretation. (2) Collaborative Curation. AW 2022 has many participants and showcases a variety of exhibits and mediums created by many different people. Each exhibit will offer a different idea, message, or interest to the audiences: there is not a single overarching theme to the

festival that all exhibits tie into. Therefore, AW 2022 is an inclusive curatorial practice by using many curators to create a diverse set of exhibits that can impact a broad range of audiences.

With this inclusive categorization, I, as artist-curator of this festival, can make intentional decisions regarding all aspects of the weekend and address possible issues that we may face. Since AW 2022 will have many diverse exhibits, we may face a problem of oversaturation as discussed earlier with *exUrbanScreens*: there may be many exhibits that do not relate to each other, resulting in an overstimulating experience with an unclear message surrounding the festival. We have addressed this issue by framing AW 2022 as a festival that celebrates creativity and collaboration across the entire DePauw and Greencastle communities. In this way, the extreme diversity of exhibits can be seen as a feature of AW 2022 and not an oversaturation of ideas. Likewise, while this framing provides a broad thematic unity, it does not constrain the types of creative works exhibited nor the individual affective experiences of our viewers. Additionally, to lessen the possibility of oversaturation, we are using the entire campus to present exhibits and creating time-specific exhibits that allow for some structured viewing of art or performances. By physically spreading out exhibits, we are reducing the chances of overloading people's attention. And our time-specific events, like the Contemporary Ensemble concert, allows visitors to plan their day and viewing around this performance. This balance of freedom and structure allow visitors to experience the art at their leisure while still providing context and organization for the diverse exhibits.

XI. Defining the Five Goals of Art Walk 2022

I have distilled the following five goals from the aforementioned goals and values that we as an AW 2022 board created to center my actions and ideas as an artist-curator on: (1) creating a

greater sense of **unity** in the DePauw artistic community, (2) encouraging a **diversity** of voices in DePauw's artistic culture, (3) facilitating **interdisciplinary** collaboration, (4) providing **accessible** opportunities for creativity, and (5) providing a platform for the school to reach out to the surrounding **community**.

1. To create a greater sense of unity in the DePauw artistic community.

At DePauw University and at many other schools, the disciplines are often kept separate: the students and staff remain within their sphere of academia, often with little to no interaction with other departments. For example, at DePauw, the School of Music (SOM) remains distinct from all other College of Liberal Arts (CLA) departments. The SOM has their own activities and events that are separate from the CLA events, and there are few collaborative opportunities between these two spheres. Further, even CLA departments themselves are often kept distinct in similar ways. While AW 2022 does not hope to completely unite these divisions, this festival provides collaborative opportunities, promotes awareness of other artists, and creates an infrastructure that supports interaction between different artistic mediums. In other words, this goal of unity does not refer to a lack of separation or distinction between groups: rather, it communicates a desire for community and fellowship among the various groups at DePauw and in Greencastle.

To create this greater sense of unity, AW 2022 promotes and facilitates collaborations within and between the disciplines using many strategies. For example, the AW 2022 board created a list of all departments and faculty and reached out to each professor regarding our event and how they and their students can participate. Further, we enlisted the help of students outside of the SOM, ensuring that there are at least two members of our board from the CLA. Next, I

have personally met with professors to discuss specific interdisciplinary collaborative projects and paired students and faculty together. For example, I am working with a visual art student and a geology professor to create a geological time walk on a span of sidewalk on our campus. Unlike AW 2021 where we only had a general submission form, this year interested participants can sign up for one of these interdisciplinary collaboration on our website. Moreover, our submission page does not have any requirements for projects: there are no length, genre, or medium policies. By allowing for such a broad range of submissions, we are encouraging a sense of unity or fellowship between all artistic mediums: all disciplines are welcomed and encouraged to collaborate and present their art together at this multi-media festival. Finally, AW 2022 will include submissions from students, faculty, staff, and community members alike. In this way, we aim to create connections between Greencastle and DePauw and further inspire creativity and collaboration while encouraging a sense of unity in the artistic community.

2. To encourage a diversity of voices in DePauw's artistic culture.

For AW 2022 the term diversity refers to the various disciplines that we hope to engage and collaborate with, including the voices of the Greencastle community. Personally, I believe that in artistic fields a diversity in voices encourages collaboration, creativity, inspiration, and overall awareness and knowledge of ideas. Because I believe that this type of diversity and inclusivity promote creativity and collaboration, AW 2022 aims to encourage a diversity in participants and their exhibits.

To achieve this diversity, we will need a high involvement of participants: a high student involvement creates a high level of diversity. Thus, AW 2022 has created various forms of marketing and promotion to increase the number of participants and the general awareness and

knowledge of our event throughout the school and community. We have based many of our marketing strategies on Larkin Sanders' advice: according to her, the most effective form of recruiting is personal communication.³⁰ In general, we have emailed both past AW 2021 participants and prospective ones, held meetings with professors, hung up posters advertising our event and website, talked about AW 2022 in classes and at events, and posted on our social media accounts. We have specifically targeted the various disciplines and met with professors or department leaders to talk about how they can involve themselves or their students in this festival in individual or interdisciplinary ways. Thus, by making a concerted effort to talk with other disciplines, we are encouraging a diversity of voices and a sense of inclusivity surrounding this event.

Through our various marketing strategies, we have collected exhibits from most departments at DePauw, including literature, mythology, visual arts, music, sciences, theater, and more. We have exhibits of original poetry, photography by students and local artists, a fashion collection by the theater department, a wood printing demonstration by a community member, an interactive drum circle, many musical performances, and even a student comedy show. Moreover, we have collaborations between the astronomy and music departments and between the arts and the Prindle Institute for Ethics. The variety in our exhibits show our diversity and inclusivity of all projects, encapsulating a core goal of AW 2022: to provide a platform for any type of art present in DePauw and Greencastle.

3. To facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration.

³⁰ Sanders, *Taneycomo Festival Orchestra*, 60.

Julie Thompson Klein’s chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity* (OHI) provides a working definition of interdisciplinarity that can be applied to AW 2022. Using the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) definitions, she describes interdisciplinarity as any interaction, ranging from “simple communication of ideas to the mutual integration of organizing concepts, methodology...and organization of research and education.”³¹ Since this definition is overly broad, Klein narrows it by saying interdisciplinarity is the “focusing, blending, and linking” of different concepts or fields. For AW 2022, this idea refers to the combination of participant’s individual expertise in their field during a project’s production. Moreover, this combination implies collaboration between people, disciplines, and communities alike. Although Klein declares that interdisciplinarity does not always imply collaboration, AW 2022 supports and facilitates both interdisciplinarity and collaboration.³² Further, interdisciplinarity during this festival also refers to the integration of multiple artistic mediums on one project. According to the OHI, this type of medium-blending fits into the category of interdisciplinary arts. This sub-field, states Tanya Augsburg in her section of the OHI, is generally defined as the integration of forms and ideas from two or more mediums of expressions.³³ Overall, during AW 2022, disciplines will interact, and connect their different fields and artistic mediums together through interdisciplinary collaborations.

To accomplish this goal of interdisciplinary collaborations, we encourage and create opportunities for students/faculty to connect across disciplines. Using our interest form found on our website, participants can sign up to be a part of a collaborative project (they can also sign up

³¹ Julie Thompson Klein, “Typologies of Interdisciplinarity: The Boundary Work of Definition,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Robert Frodeman, et al., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 24.

³² Ibid, 24.

³³ Tanya Augsburg, “Interdisciplinary Arts,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, ed. Robert Frodeman, et al., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 132.

with their own, pre-formed group or as an individual). We pair interested students from different disciplines together and have them create a project of their own that combines their two disciplines or mediums of expression. For example, we have a music student working with two astronomy professors to create an astronomy-based art exhibit at McKim observatory: this exhibit will feature original poetry, music, and art based on astronomy while allowing participants to star-gaze, using the telescopes. Another example is our pairing of a pianist with a visual artist: they will be presenting a series of watercolor paintings that the artist created based on the pianist's performance of a piece.

Another key to creating a satisfying experience and successfully engaging our visitors is to make them interactive. In *Engaging the Concert Audience*, David Wallace discusses that to have an interactive performance (or exhibit) you must have performers that “help audience members to perform, create, and reflect in ways that heighten their musical perceptions.”³⁴ In other words, the artists and audience members need to directly interact and collaborate in meaningful ways that affect people's experience of the event. For example, a group of Greencastle community members will be leading an interactive drum circle during AW 2022. Moreover, there is also an ethics of art debate/conversation being led by the Prindle Institute interns that allows participants to converse with people from all majors or expertise. These interdisciplinary collaborations allow multiple perspectives and people to come together and work on an artistic project. Further, interactive components provide visitors a way to engage with the works and create their own, individually satisfying affective experiences.

³⁴ David Wallace, *Engaging the Concert Audience: A Musician's Guide to Interactive Performance* (Boston: Berklee Press, 2018), 4.

4. To provide accessible opportunities for creativity.

AW 2022 will be physically, socially, and pandemic accessible. Physical accessibility refers to our compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities) requirements: events and exhibits will be placed in areas that are accessible to everyone who would like to visit them. Moreover, social accessibility refers to our openness to all mediums, people, and departments. No individual or group will be denied participation in AW 2022 because of their identity, medium of expression, or other factor. Finally, pandemic accessibility or coronavirus accessibility refers to our presentation of exhibits and performances in both in-person and virtual formats. Therefore, if someone is in quarantine or would feel safer visiting exhibits virtually, they can do so. To implement this final point, we will be livestreaming all concerts or performances and providing a page on the website where they can view digital versions of the exhibits.

For AW 2022 to be accessible we need to be adaptable. Many arts organizations, festivals, and concerts were forced to adapt early in the pandemic to continue providing services for their audiences. Through some trial-and-error testing, businesses found what worked for them and their surrounding community. In an article titled “Adapting to the Pandemic,” Lauren Velvick discusses how three different arts organizations adapted to the pandemic in a variety of ways with some solutions that mirror AW 2021.³⁵ Through having virtual events and concerts, opening up the platform to artists from around the world (rather than just those in the local area), and expanding their programming options, organizations like the Tusk Music festival found that these solutions actually offered up more possibilities and made their events more accessible to a larger audience.³⁶ For example, people who could not usually participate in the festival because

³⁵ Lauren Velvick, “Adapting to the Pandemic,” *Art Monthly*, no. 443, (February 2021), 39.

³⁶ Velvick, “Adapting to the Pandemic,” 40.

of travel restraints, time, or money could now participate virtually. Thus, virtual events became more inclusive of artists and accessible to more audiences. When AW 2021 embarked on planning a virtual event using a website and interactive map, the benefits of this medium were evident. Consequently, what at first seemed like a negative (i.e., livestreamed concerts with a limited in-person audience), eventually became a positive because people from anywhere could view and enjoy our concerts/exhibits.

5. To provide a platform for the school to reach out to the surrounding community.

According to the Carnegie Foundation’s Classification for Community Engagement, “community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”³⁷ Moreover, a few common goals of community engagement are “to enrich scholarship, research and creative activity” and to “enhance curriculum, teaching and learning.”³⁸ In other words, community engagement involves an exchange of ideas and active interaction between two groups that enhance the experience of each party. Remaining consistent with these guidelines, AW 2022 ultimately aims to enhance the educational and creative experience of its participants through a collaborative exchange of knowledge and ideas between the Greencastle and DePauw communities.

Although AW 2021 did not specifically focus on community engagement, AW 2022 endeavors to add this into our mission statement. This year we hope to *engage* with the

³⁷ “Community Engagement Classification (U.S.),” *Commission on Public Purpose in Higher Education* (January 10, 2022), accessed January 18, 2022, <https://carnegieelectiveclassifications.org/>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

community and not simply enact a *community outreach* program. For example, our submission form is open to all community members who would like to create their own exhibit, and we have reached out to business owners about possible collaborations. We are not simply advertising this event to Greencastle; rather, we are encouraging and promoting collaboration and active involvement. To accomplish this goal, we chose a member of the Art Walk board who is focusing on community engagement and working with Greencastle on projects. They are meeting with local store owners and business members to help promote AW 2022 and work on marketing the festival to Greencastle through various sources (newspapers, community leaders, posters in store windows, and more).

As I was discussing this goal with Amanda DeBoer, we realized that this is a long-term process that will occur with future Art Walk festivals. After all, we (DePauw) are building a relationship with Greencastle through various artistic endeavors, and this relationship will take years to grow. DeBoer says that to properly engage with a community we need to “broaden our relationship to the community in an organic way” where it feels natural and not forced.³⁹ For example, the SOM often hosts community engagement events, such as Music on the Square events (a music venue in downtown Greencastle), the Instrument Petting Zoo that engages with children of the community, and the Community Music School that provides lessons to local students.⁴⁰ AW 2022 is another way that DePauw is furthering our relationship with Greencastle through art: we are opening this event up to them to collaborate and participate with us, broadening our connection with them.

³⁹ Bartlett, Zoom interview, 37:51.

⁴⁰ Ming-Hui Kuo (DePauw professor and Community Outreach Coordinator), unrecorded interview by Elena Collins, March 21, 2022.

XII. The Future and Legacy of Art Walk

I hope that this festival continues to occur after I graduate, and that it becomes a staple of DePauw's artistic community. I am leaving Art Walk, this thesis project, and all the organizational tools that I used to create this event as a sort of legacy for this school and the future organizers of Art Walk 2023 and beyond. As I was talking about this legacy plan with artists, many people encouraged me to think about the future now so that I can make informed decisions and even predict possible issues about the organization and conception of future Art Walks. For example, Amanda DeBoer Bartlett described the benefits and negatives of letting an organization grow or remain small. Her Omaha Under the Radar festival is currently expanding their board, community outreach programs, and overall conception, and they are running into problems that they would not necessarily have as a small business, such as donors.⁴¹ Donors often decide a lot of what happens in a festival, and DeBoer does not know if she wants to give up the freedom she has as a small organization. In a similar way, Art Walk is growing and expanding to all disciplines at DePauw and to the Greencastle community. We are now working with people in most departments, our board grew, and the size and breadth of exhibit types are increasing. We have around 34 exhibits, 15 group performances, and another 10 live events from about 10 different disciplines and groups at DePauw and in Greencastle. Naturally, our concern is, is it becoming too much to manage—too much to organize?

The AW board discussed this possible issue but eventually resolved that we will let this festival grow for now and if it does get too big, we will address that problem when we get there. I truly believe that we have some time before we face this issue, and I think that there are possibilities for Art Walk to become a more influential organization in DePauw's artistic

⁴¹ Ibid, 19:20.

community than it is now. As I read about other organizations, festivals, and projects, I began to have ideas on how to broaden the festival's outreach and impact to the community here and beyond. I would love to see a future festival centered around a social, political, or cultural issue. For example, Art Walk could center on promoting awareness of climate change, racial injustice, etc.⁴² Even though this would create a politically charged event and would be difficult to organize, I think students would love to participate in a big event like this. We could even raise money for different organizations around the nation and help the issue in a more tangible way. It would be a difficult and possibly controversial idea, but I think it is one way that Art Walk could develop into something bigger and more influential.

As we discussed the future possibilities of AW, the board also discussed a few concrete details regarding how to ensure that this event occurs again in 2023. We think that many of our core values will remain the same: we will be an event that focuses on community engagement (not simply outreach), interdisciplinarity and collaboration (between and within disciplines), and creativity. Moreover, we will remain student-led and accessible to everyone. To uphold these values and create AW 2023, at the end of this semester we will pick new members for the AW board to replace the graduating seniors. These members will be CLA or SOM students, professors, or community members. We decided to open the board up to all members of this community (both DePauw and Greencastle) to create a more inclusive planning process compared to this year's event. Once we have a board or the general idea of the board members towards the end of spring 2022, we will meet to discuss and formally schedule AW 2023. Then, to make sure that the 2023 board has all the necessary tools and information, I will give up

⁴² DePauw's ArtsFest used to have a yearly theme like these examples.

access and managing rights to our shared Google Drive which hosts all the information and organizational material for AW, our website, our email, and our YouTube page. Finally, as of now Art Walk will remain an event that Contemporary Ensemble Club runs, so that we can continue getting funding from the school for the logistical needs. There has been discussion to detach these two entities; however, this decision will be made in future years if necessary.

Furthermore, at the end of this semester, each board member will create a list of the tasks or jobs that they completed to create Art Walk (making posters, posting online, contacting professors, etc). We will each provide a contact list of people who helped facilitate or organize AW 2022 in any way and keep these connections for next year. For example, we are working with the Prindle Institute and will keep this connection next year and further our collaboration through exhibits or installations. AW 2023 will not start from scratch; rather, it will have the resources, such as a Google Drive that contains our mission statement, meeting notes, important contacts, and more, to plan an event that is bigger and better than this year's.

I hope that Art Walk continues to occur and grow in influence, recognition, and impact. Even though there are consequences and dangers of becoming too big to handle, I believe that this festival is just at its beginnings and has a long way to go. I love this event and believe that it is important and enriching for this school. I believe it provides students with professional development to learn how to organize and manage large-scale artistic events. I also believe it provides participants with a platform to showcase their art in an interesting and unique way. I have no control over what next year's event looks like, but I am going to do everything possible to ensure that it happens again.

XIII. My Creative Curation: An AW 22 Exhibit in East College

My creative curation is an AW 2022 exhibit that transforms four rooms of DePauw's oldest building, East College, into a series of interdisciplinary installations. Each room will center around a different topic or theme that has been meaningful to my education here at DePauw. Ultimately, this complex of installations will combine fragments of my education that can be engaged with through varying levels of interactivity. The fragments from each individual room will add up to a greater whole that reflects my broader intellectual and aesthetic interests while showcasing the multifaceted personality of an artist-curator. On April 29th (opening night of AW 2022), I will lead a guided tour through the rooms, explaining their design, organization, and my artistic motivation behind them. The exhibit will remain open throughout the weekend, and there will be informational cards on the walls or tables contextualizing the rooms and their artifacts. Ultimately, this exhibit will allow me to play as a curator in my own museum and reflect upon the many concepts, goals, and ideas I have learned about while writing my thesis and organizing AW 2022.

Overall, these rooms explore varying levels of interactivity that ultimately reflect my research regarding the different curatorial practices. If visited in order (beginning in the basement and ending in Meharry hall), my rooms will gradually increase in interactivity and complexity. The first two rooms are in the basement of East College and do not have the visitors interact in any physical modes. In other words, the visitors simply look at, read about, and listen to my pieces without adding to them, exemplifying the *traditional* curatorial practice as defined by Villeneuve's graph: there is one curator (myself) who imposes their views and opinions upon the visitor using simple, stationary objects and written descriptions. The third and fourth rooms are located on the first floor of East College and involve more interaction than the basement. For example, *An Ode to Papers Written* room asks visitors to touch, walk through, and actually edit

my papers. By encouraging them to add to and alter the room they are in, participants physically interact and change the exhibit, creating meaning on their own with few written descriptions and explanations from me. The Virginia Woolf room furthers this level of interactivity and has visitors scanning QR codes, writing on paper, listening to music, reading books, and creating AI generated art. These curatorial practices of the first-floor rooms reflect Villeneuve's exclusive curatorial practice because they use mainly one curator, with limited collaborative influence from the audiences: I still design the room and its messages but allow them to contribute during their visit.

Finally, at the end of my tour of the rooms on Friday evening, I will bring everyone up to Meharry hall and invite people to musically improvise with me. I will begin by myself at the piano and then have a few of my friends (whom I will ask to bring their instruments) join me in some free musical improvisation. Others can sit and listen, or if they want or join in, I will provide a few percussive instruments that participants can use. This room represents the final level of interactivity where visitors actively create and explore the room together. By being the final room, this improvisation marks our journey from little or no interaction to full collaborative influence on a piece of music: participants are now actively creating their own piece of curation. Since this room requires a group of people and has no physical artifacts, it will only occur on Friday April 29th at the end of my opening tour. The writing that follows is an in-depth explanation of each room and their set up.

Room 1: "Processing: A *Musique Concrète* in Fragments"

Over the last few years here at DePauw, I have created several *musique concrète* style pieces (taking pre-recorded audio clips and modifying them using a sound editing software to

make a piece of music). These pieces have allowed me to capture sounds of my everyday life and manipulate them artistically. For this room, I have chosen five audio clips I have taken at the Nature Park or in the practice rooms over the last four years and will play them through speakers on a loop. Personally, I have spent a lot of time in these spaces (especially recently) and have begun to love these sounds: my Nature Park walks and practice sessions in the small ensemble room are my favorite part of each week. In this room, there will be a separate station for each sound and visitors can walk around and listen to the individual parts. Overall, this room allows me to artistically render familiar sonic spaces that I have lived in during my time at DePauw while exploring how the spatialization of them in a room can affect the traditional listening experience.

Themes: processing, progress, the fragments vs a whole, deconstructing and reconstructing, space, and place.

Room 2: “Composing in Fragments: Nietzsche’s Room”

This room contains audio recordings of a piece I composed based on one of Friedrich Nietzsche’s own solo piano works, “Das ‘Fragment an sich.’” His piece is only 22 measures long and explores the idea of a never-ending piece: he does not write a bar line at the end and instead writes *da capo con malinconia* (return to the top with melancholy). Thus, the piece forever repeats and simply remains an incomplete fragment of a whole. This piece can be seen as Nietzsche’s attempt to philosophize through music and is a precursor to his ideas of *eternal return*. I took this piece and extracted certain measures, notes, or chords from it, creating my own musical fragments to compose a piece for violin, guitar, and harp. In this room, Nietzsche’s piano composition score, my composition score, and my score drafts will displayed across the

room at various stations. There will be QR codes linking visitors to different recordings of both Nietzsche's piece and my own. Finally, there will be quotes from Nietzsche's writing posted throughout the room that visitors can read and reflect upon his musical philosophy and how it may have affected my compositional choices.

Themes: composition, philosophy, eternal return, fragments.

Room 3: "An Ode to Papers Written"

This room will consist of a collection of past papers that I have written from Professor Sununu's Ruin and Re-Begetting class). I will be taking each paper and its pages and acting as though they are the artworks, I am the curator, and the room is my gallery: the papers will be hung on clothespins, strings, on walls, and placed on tables throughout the room. At the door to the room, there will be a short story I wrote based on Kafka's style that encourages visitors to view this room as both a dream and reality. There will be writing utensils in the room that participants are encouraged to use to further edit and write upon my papers (do not worry, they will be copies of the real papers). There will a station in the room where visitors can write down on a piece of paper which essay or project they are most proud of accomplishing in their lives. There will be a place to leave these notes so that each ensuing visitor can read through them and add their own. This room is sort of an ode to the seniors and a nod to all the work we have completed over the last four years.

Themes: artist-curator, personal accomplishments, looking back or remembering, dreamscape.

Room 4: "'Moments of Being:' The Pieces of Virginia Woolf"

This room collects fragments or “Moments of Being” (a title of a book that is a collection of some of Woolf’s unpublished works) relating to Virginia Woolf and displays them in various mediums of artistic expression. Some artifacts include, her signature, an audio recording of her voice, a photograph, a painting of her, a few of her novels, and more. For one table specifically, I created improvisations on the piano based on data sonifications derived from her birth and death dates. There will be interactive components in the room, such as QR codes to websites that allow you to create paintings (Wombo.art) or collect data from books (<https://voyant-tools.org/>). Wombo Art is a website that allows visitors to type in a prompt (for example “Virginia Woolf”) and then pick an artistic theme (like “sketching” or “Salvador Dali”). This website will then render a painting in this style using an AI generator. Voyant Tools is a website that you can put in a book or article, and it will generate data, such as how many times certain words or phrases are used throughout the writing. By interacting with moments of Virginia Woolf but not actually with the person herself, this room explores the intangible nature of life and the fleeting personalities of people.

Themes: moments of being, fragments, crystallizing a moment, indexicality, indirect vs direct engagement with a subject.

Meharry Hall: Improvisation Room

This final room will be a live room and thus will only occur at the conclusion of my Friday night opening tour. Before this tour I will ask several of my friends to bring their instruments (including some percussion instruments for those who do not have their own). I will begin on my own at the piano and then encourage others to either join in or sit back and listen.

This final room represents the culmination of all the other previous rooms and acts as the final level of interactivity: visitors actively create their own room together.

Themes: improvisation, collaboration, control.

XIV. My Final Thoughts on Art Walk

This thesis allowed me to take something I am passionate about — Art Walk — and expand it into a project that is greater than I ever could have imagined. I was able to organize Art Walk for the second year in a row with a new group of passionate students. I got to research other arts festivals and artists, talk to other curators and organizers, create and design my own installation that synthesizes many past projects I have worked on, and really think about my professional aspirations. I learned that I love organizing events for people. I love collaborating on projects outside music and inside music. I love seeing people's creativity and excitement about their project, and I love helping people see their artistic vision through. Art Walk and this thesis in general allowed me to explore my interests in a safe environment and develop professional skills that I will use in my life going forward. I am sad to leave Art Walk behind and move on to the next stage of my life, but I know that I am leaving this project in good hands and that it has given me all the knowledge and experience that I need to go forward. So, thank you DePauw Art Walk for everything you have given me, and I can't wait to see what you become in the years to come.

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