

Proposal for an Art+Technology Learning Center

A New Kind of Interactive Classroom-Museum for the 21st Century

Art History as a rule is taught with slides, usually with students looking and listening but not interacting with the material except in an abstract way. The traditional slide lecture format, while useful in many ways also has many limitations. A richer understanding of art objects becomes possible when students experience original works of art rather than slides. This is why art students are sent to museums. The recent experimental use of computer databases in museums has demonstrated how serious students are highly motivated to learn more when they can research whatever they want to know about the history and meaning of the works while they are seeing them, not when seeing is only a memory.

The Art Department of CSUEB has developed a plan for a new kind of classroom, a "Classroom-Museum," in which both these heightened modes of learning are available at the same time. The space will be filled with a selection of real works from the major eras of Art History, together with computer-stations that will have information specific to each work as well as to the economic, sociological, and religious context from which that work emerged. That collection has already been assembled. Professors can use this unique facility for special lectures and seminars, and students can drop in for any visual exploration they wish. It would be an open lab with new dimensions.

Students in this "Classroom-Museum" will not only be looking back in time to the art of the past, as realized in the traditional media of painting, sculpture, etc. CSUEB art majors, most of whom major in some form of electronic art, also will be looking at the electronic art of the past, present, and future. Stations will be dedicated to both web art in particular, and electronic art in general. The internet will enable students to follow pathways designed by their professors, and/or to search whatever historical field or emerging field is of interest to them, from the history of computers to the latest cyber-shows in the museums and cyber-studios of the world. Student access to updated information would be continuous and global.

It would be practical to develop the Learning Center concept in three-stages:

Stage 1: A lab in an existing classroom of about 1000 sf in the Art+Education Building displaying a collection of world art facing a bank of computers to explore any object. Preliminary cost estimate: \$30,000-50,000. Funding by private donors.

Stage 2: A larger space of about 5,000 sf inside an existing building to test more interactive concepts and show a pilot space to potential patrons of the final space. This could be in the S.S. Building, Student Union, Library, Music & Business Building, etc., possibly in association with the Anthropology Museum. Preliminary cost estimate: \$100,000-\$150,000 mainly for display cases, lighting & computer-stations. Funding by private donors.

Stage 3: The final space, a new construction about 10,000 sf on a site to be determined. Preliminary cost estimate: \$3-5 million. Funding by private donors.

OVER 1,000 WORKS OF ART ALREADY HAVE BEEN PROMISED, INCLUDING THE COLLECTION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR AESTHETIC DEVELOPMENT