



Passive Programming as a Pathway: How to Engage with Heavily Scheduled Patrons

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Introduction

A unique challenge for SLA librarians is to provide programs and outreach to patrons that are heavily scheduled or have an intense workload. Passive programming is one approach. This poster illustrates one highly successful passive initiative. The [United State's Military Academy Library's](#) passive Tiny Art program "Magnificent Miniatures" resulted in 95 canvases of original cadet artwork. These canvases were used to produce a major art exhibit, which proved so popular, it was then digitized.

Why Passive Programming?

Passive programming such as Tiny Art results in active learning that is self-paced and self-directed. This eliminates time and scheduling barriers (for both library staff and patrons) and creates opportunities for patrons to interact with library staff and resources as their schedule allows. Passive programs are budget-friendly and can be used year after year.

References

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Why a Tiny Art Show?

- "Magnificent Miniatures" speaks directly to the [USMA Library Mission Statement](#) which charges us to make the library a place to engage with knowledge and ideas
- Creating an exhibit from original cadet artwork provided an opportunity for cadets to engage with the exhibit (both at the library and virtually), the library collection and each other. Setting up voting made the program interactive and lead to a greater appreciation of the art.
- This is an application of scholarly information. Artistic creation is a creative problem process, and it includes skills such as critical thinking, analysis, investigation and innovation. Creating artwork allowed our cadets to produce original works of scholarship and be part of the scholarly conversation.



Marketing and Outreach

- Start a buzz and leverage word of mouth
- Build relationships with other organizations and collaborate to expand reach
- Leverage those new relationships for further collaborations (see: [First Annual Evening at the Haig Open Mic and Poetry Slam](#))
- Tiny Canvases travel exhibit as library ambassadors (see: [Mini Masterpieces Become Library Ambassadors](#))

[News paper Article](#) [IG Post 1](#) [IG Post 2](#)

Further Engagement: Creating the Exhibit

As library professionals, we aim to share our holdings in dynamic ways, particularly exhibit development. Art can be an expression of experience, and by participating in this program, cadets conveyed their individual voices within the broader story of life at West Point. Next, as exhibit designers, we were able to tap into our own creativity and aesthetic sensibilities and orientation as we chose label templates, type face, selected spaces and applied considerations of accessibility, shape, size, and color when arranging works into eye-catching groups that featured a particular subject. From there our audience could decide for themselves how each piece fits into the larger framework of the exhibition.

Design Considerations

- Museum Style vs. Salon Style
- To Frame or not to Frame?



Digital Exhibition

- Used this opportunity to digitize the tiny art for future inclusion as a new series in USMA Archives and Special Collections .
- Utilized Omeka, a free, flexible, and open-source web-publishing platform for displaying library, museum, archives, and scholarly collections and exhibitions.
- Developed a digital exhibit that allowed us to share the artwork, history, and culture of West Point without limitations of time or location.

[Magnificent Miniatures Digital Exhibit](#)

Lessons Learned

- **Use program to raise awareness of library services, staff and collections**
We created a "Magnificent Miniatures" [LibGuide](#) to connect patrons with resources within our collection about this unique art form. Staff made a point to engage with cadets, faculty and staff as they came to visit the exhibit.
- **Select a meaningful theme**
We gave cadets the option to submit canvases that were "Inspired by West Point." This spoke directly to the USMA Library's strategic direction to "Inspire the Corps of Cadets." This theme gave the program a much higher profile, drew the attention of many organizations on campus and beyond and ultimately gave the exhibit a more cohesive look.
- **Leverage the high participation rate to obtain research data, but follow proper protocols**
This program proved so popular, we soon realized there were enough participants to query for data that was representative of the *entire* Corps of Cadets. Moving forward, we will secure an [IRB](#) so we can exploit this high participation rate to gather data about improving mental health outcomes through library programming.

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