

A brief report from a visit at the Children's Creativity Museum in San Francisco on January 27, 2018

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Abstract: *This brief report contains an overview of creative activities collected at the Children's Creativity Museum in San Francisco, CA.*

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Introduction



Some information about the museum can be found on the web page <https://creativity.org/> and in the Wikipedia article https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Children%27s_Creativity_Museum.

This report contains numerous pictures with descriptions of the stations and various activities that the museum organizes on regular basis. The visit is highly recommended to children of age 2-12 and their parents!

Adults are allowed to enter the museum only if accompanied by children of age 2-12. However, an adult educator can request a brief tour which lasts about 30 minutes. Photography is allowed as long as the photos do not show children and their faces. The museum takes space of two floors and consists of several stations that address different aspects of creativity for different ages. My guide, Kelly Garrett, mentioned that according to the recent survey, children tend to spend about one hour at each station and about two and half hour at the entire museum. The museum allows re-entrance on the same day.



Personally, I would enjoy every activity that I saw at the museum. Thus, I wonder whether a similar museum could be designed for adults to revitalize their creativity?

Some stations are unfacilitated, but most contain a detailed description of what can be done and how to approach the station. However, some stations have a facilitator that provides directions and support with

the supplies. Some activities are designed for younger kids, some for older but there is no formal division, and everybody can enjoy every station.

Stations



STATION 1: SAND. There are two boxes with sand. The first one indicates the level curves showing the elevation, including below the sea level. The sand has different color for the terrain and for water to make easier distinction between those two. The second box contains simulations of animals that can move along the land or only in the water. Children design the terrain and observe the animals moving around. This station is designed for small children, but the curiosity builds up and even an adult will hang out here trying to figure out how the simulation works and how the silhouettes of the animals are projected on the sand.



After the work, participants can clean their hands and get creative with applications of the colorful fuzzy pompons.



STATION 2: BUILDING BLOCKS. Foam blocks of various shapes can be crated into various objects. This space is designed for families so that kids can build their favorite geometrical spaces for playing and hanging out. It reminded me of playing under the table, making a tent in my room just to enjoy the change of the space around me. This change has a transforming impact on the mind and can literally take an individual far away from their current location.

In the background under the ceiling there is a collection of flags made by children during one of the workshops. I can only imagine kids' excitement when they see their own work preserved by the museum and presented to the visitors in a form of an exposition.



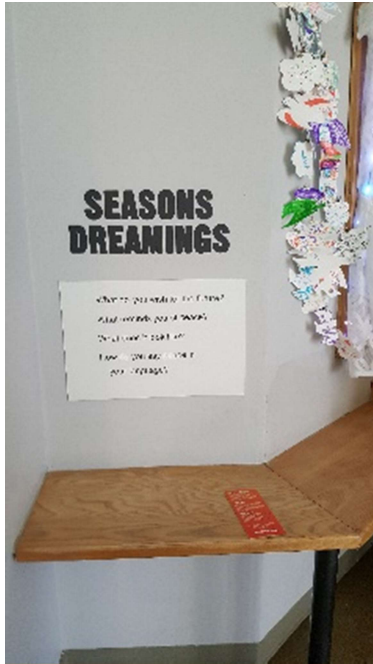
STATION 3: PUPPET THEATER where students arrange their own plays and can wear dresses provided on the racks. There is a space for the audience to sit and watch the show but when I visited nobody was having rehearsals. The station seemed to be unfacilitated and the shows unscripted but there may be scripts hidden somewhere in the drawers.



STATION 4: GEOMETRICAL ARTWORK where students write and draw, and later organize their work in geometrical expression. The exhibition is arranged on a hanging frame above the table. The entire station looks incredibly appealing even from a distance.

STATION 5: READING where parents can read with their children and teach them letters. The station is arranged so that parents and children sit around a low, round table with a shape of a tree in the middle. Build-in shelf contain books for various ages.

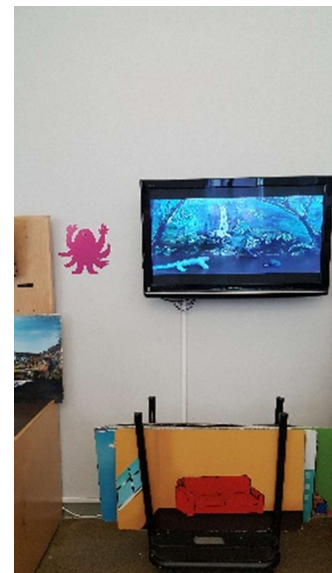




STATION 6: CREATIVE WRITING where students write about a theme provided seasonally by the museum staff. Their work is displayed inside the room and available for reading to other children. The theme is more mature than is STATION 4 and requires more content. The mini-exhibition on the wall contains sample writings from the visitors. This station takes the entire room, not just a small round table as in STATION 4. The horizontal shelf running around the room provides an ample space for writers. Sample questions (the property of the museum) are “What do you wish for the future?” or “What reminds you of peace?” and more. The announcement board with lights around it is a space for displaying the works of visitors.



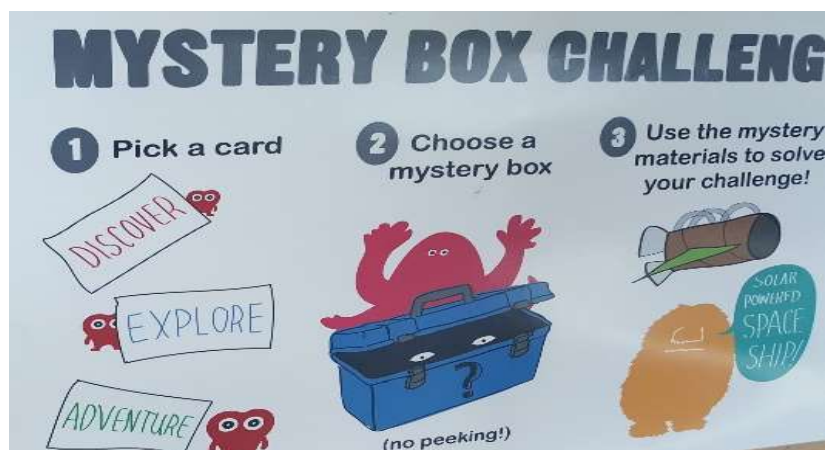
STATIONS 7 and 8: CREATIVE STORY TELLING where visitors can present their stories and record them with high quality camcorders. At those stations children are encouraged to tell their own stories with magnet shapes or with characters made in the modelling clay. The stories can be recorded and presented in a form of a video on a screen. While watching one of those kids-made videos I had an impression of a professional work. The backgrounds for the clay models is pre-made but the choices are vast. The models are made and moved by children and their parents. All created videos can be send to the authors via email.





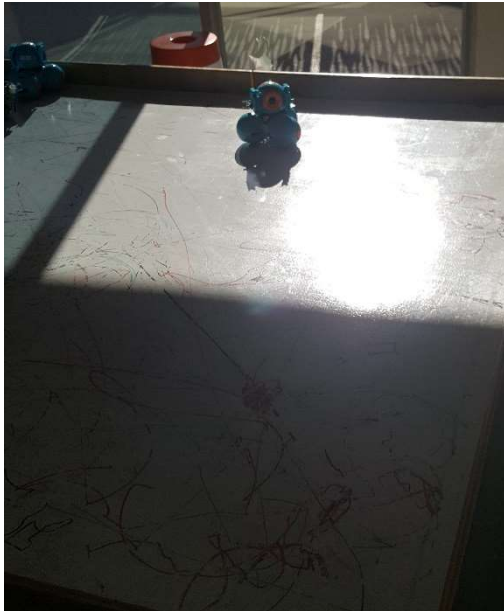
STATION 9: CLASSIC WOODEN BLOCKS that brought joy to generations of kids are here presented, for easier assembling, with magnets. The magnets are highly appreciated since the station is creatively arranged in a narrow hallway with limited space for playing. Most assembling happens on the metal wall requiring magnets to hold the assembly in place.

The wooden blocks, even if so simple, has been source of joy for generations of children across the planet. I recall hours spent on creative building that usually ended with equally creative methods of destruction.



STATION 10. MYSTERY BOX CHALLENGE offers a truly creative work for a young engineer. This assignment, oriented towards problem-solving skills, asks visitors to build something from provided materials with given tools. This station is facilitated by a museum personnel who distributes the assignments and the boxes making sure that nobody peeks what is in the box.





STATION 11: DESIGNING A ROBOT is a truly modern game that was not available to previous generations. The station is located in a large sunny room with three tables where students can design and test their robots for simple movements, drawing skills and maze drill. A facilitator offers help with learning how to program a robot and communicate with it. The tables are aligned from the most basic (simple movements) to the most advanced (running through the maze.)



STATION 12. DESIGNING THE CITY where children design their own city by coloring buildings, houses, airplanes, cars, and highways. When the drawings are ready, children scan and display their work on a large wall of the room. The projectors “shake” the buildings once the light is disturbed by for example waving the hand at the item. It looks like houses dance after someone waves at them.

Summary

The exit of the museum contains exhibitions of children’s work from workshops held at the museum. There are few examples of that.

Leaving the museum, I could not stop thinking what should a creativity museum for other ages contain?



What could spark creativity of adults who simply forgot the joy of being creative and search for some inspiring activities beyond painting and storytelling?