The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell

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Abstract

For this project the author partnered with the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York (SPM) in South Buffalo to create a special exhibition focused on their 14 prints of Norman Rockwell paintings in the museum’s collection. The exhibition used supplementary artifacts to add personal narratives to Rockwell’s paintings. The exhibit diversified the audience of the SPM and created a potential new audience the museum could target, while still appealing to their current audience through the use of personal narrative. The museum had not curated an art exhibition before and this project proved to be beneficial by exploring new themes that dealt with art, chemistry, biology, and labor history. In developing an exhibition proposal the author researched the Norman Rockwell paintings and supplementary information and artifacts and provided the museum with a research paper on the paintings and contextualized items from their collection. Text labels were created for the exhibit including, an introductory panel and individual labels for each artifact were also created. To compliment the exhibit, lesson plans were also created for classrooms to use. Teacher packets were created and distributed to local schools as a form of marketing. Other marketing techniques included using social media and print advertising. Exhibit installation utilized proper hanging, artifact placement, and label placement. Appropriate lighting and seating were installed for the exhibit. Overall, the exhibition used knowledge from all of the training received from the Museum Studies Program. It required the knowledge and application of exhibition design, curation, marketing, education coordination, and objects management. The successful planning and installation of the exhibit required extensive research and planning. The exhibit has helped the SPM to broaden its audience and be a catalyst for new partnerships with local schools and museums.
THE ART OF STEEL: AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF

NORMAN ROCKWELL

A Thesis Project in

Museum Studies

by

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INTRODUCTION

In October 2012, the author approached the curator of the Steel Plant Museum of WNY (SPM), Spencer Morgan, about collaborating with the museum on a Master’s Project. The goal was to showcase the skills learned in the Museum Studies Program at Buffalo State College, along with the SPM’s collections. Mr. Morgan was very enthusiastic about a potential collaboration and creating a new temporary exhibit for their display space. The current temporary exhibit was overdue for dismantling, as it was on display since their initial move of the museum to the Heritage DiscoveRY Center in 2008. The SPM was looking to attract a new audience and needed to make some changes to do so. Rotating the exhibits was crucial for the SPM to attract new audiences and grow as an institution. With the help of Mr. Morgan, the archives and storage facilities were combed through, looking for some newly acquired or never before shown artifacts to showcase. Mr. Morgan mentioned a collection of 14 Norman Rockwell prints the museum recently had framed, but was unsure how in to tie them to the museum’s mission. The prints were of the Sharon Steel company in Sharon, PA, and did not relate to steel working in Western New York. However, the clothing and tools used by the subjects, all named in the titles of the prints, and the machinery in the paintings were used in steel plants around the world. The objects and uniforms used in the creation of steel were universal, and could be applied to an exhibit about steel manufacturing in Western New York. An important component of the exhibit was to pull pieces from the museum’s collection that exemplified each scene in Rockwell’s paintings.

The Norman Rockwell prints were created in a limited number and have never been displayed in the Western New York area. The paintings were commissioned by Sharon Steel to
be used as advertisements for the new machinery the company acquired. However, the focal point of each painting became the steel workers Mr. Rockwell painted. Having something unique to show the public would potentially draw new visitors to the museum. The paintings were done later in life, from 1964 to 1969, so they do not have same Rockwell-esque, American Dream quality of Rockwell’s earlier work. Not all the men are smiling as they go about their work. Rockwell explores the blue collar side of America through these portraits. Buffalo’s roots are very blue collar and can be related back to the paintings.

Due to the small size of the museum and the extent of the project, most of the tasks for the exhibit fell under my responsibility. Creating content for the exhibit, fundraising the exhibition budget, and promoting the exhibit within the community were required steps in the exhibition process. Smaller museums required staff to fulfill a broad spectrum of responsibilities and understand how each aspect of a museum operates. Working with the SPM gave me the opportunity to learn everything it takes to make an exhibit successful. Without support from the community the Rockwell exhibit never would have happened. Experience with fundraising and involving local businesses with the museum was crucial. Many of the business owners had friends and family members that were involved with steelmaking in Western New York, but they had never heard of the SPM. Networking within the community helped the SPM to gain exposure, as well as new source of revenue for the museum.

Research for the project began in December 2012. About two months was devoted to researching Norman Rockwell and the process of steelmaking. The research provided a well informed background on the day to day operations of a steel plant. The volunteers at the SPM
were very informative about the machinery and how it operated, and provided good leads and direction regarding research of steel plants.

To find out what happened to the Rockwell paintings after Sharon Steel closed, the Butler Museum in Youngstown, Ohio was contacted. They were the last museum to display the original paintings in 1991 and had some information on their whereabouts. The paintings were sold at auction to private donors after Sharon Steel went bankrupt. One painting was missing from the collection and was thought to be lost or stolen. The prints owned by the SPM included a copy of that painting. The Butler Museum provided more information on the men who were the subjects of each portrait. Also, they supplied a DVD of interviews with two of the subjects from the portraits, and news footage from the exhibit opening at the museum in 1991.

The Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA was also consulted. Regarding information on the portraits Rockwell did for Sharon Steel, they supplied a packet of correspondence between Rockwell and the advertising agency, Watts, Lee, and Kenyon. The letters gave insight into how busy Rockwell was while working on the portraits, and how many deadlines he managed to miss. The letters could give the visitors insight into how Norman Rockwell worked, and give them a special behind-the-scenes glimpse into his artistic process.

After working on researching Mr. Rockwell the focus shifted to creating content and marketing the exhibition. Donation letters were prepared that explained the importance of the exhibit. These were delivered personally to local businesses. Museum rack cards and posters were made using the “lost” Norman Rockwell painting from the collection. Rack cards were placed in local museums including: the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site, Burchfield Penney Art Center, the Albright Knox Art Galley, the Buffalo History Museum, and the Buffalo Science
Museum. Also, rack cards were dropped off at local hotels to give out of town visitors an opportunity to see the exhibit. Posters were placed in local businesses, including businesses that who donated to the exhibit. Social media was used to promote the opening gala of the exhibit. A Facebook event page was created, and the SPM is twitter account was used to inform followers about the exhibit. Combining traditional advertising and social media helped to expand outreach and to diversify the audience at that SPM.

*The Story of Steel* gave the SPM an opportunity to reach out to new sectors of the Western New York community. Rotating exhibits and promoting to new audiences can help smaller museums to grow. As Steven Bukowski pointed out in his article, “Moving Toward Modern - How the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York is Embracing the Paradigm Shift of Museums in the 21st Century,” “the SPM is on its way to becoming that dutiful community-based center of learning.”¹

The first task was to create a “look back calendar” from the target opening date. The approximate deadlines were determined as follows:

- January 2 - Interpretive Master Plan
- January 16 - Artifact Selection
- February 19 - Research on Rockwell and Steelmaking
- March 12 - Lesson Plans/ Teacher Packets
- March 19 - Marketing Campaign Completed and Printed
- March 19 - Members/Donors Invites
- April 16 - Exhibition Labels and Design

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April 26 - Sent to the Printers

May 12 - Exhibition Installation

May 15 - Members and Donors Opening

May 17 - Grand Opening
Exhibition Proposal

1. Introduction

The Steel Plant Museum of Western New York (SPM) is located in the Heritage Discovery Center in the First Ward of South Buffalo, at 100 Lee Street. It is in the former industry district of Buffalo. The SPM is less than three minutes from the I-190, a major interstate in the Western New York area. The museum was originally located in the Lackawanna Public Library, but outgrew the space and moved into the Heritage Discovery Center. The current temporary exhibit at the museum introduces visitors to steel in Western New York and has been up for over a few years now. It is very cluttered and overwhelming to the visitor. The museum wants to shift focus and create a new audience through the use of temporary exhibits.

2. Title

The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell.

3. Nature of the Project

The proposal is to create a chronological exhibit discussing the process of steel making using the SPM collections, which includes of 14 Norman Rockwell prints, and artifacts from former WNY steel workers. The Rockwell prints were acquired from Robert and Agnes Annis in the early 2000’s and were not previously exhibited. The actual paintings, from which the print series were made, were only exhibited at the Butler Museum in Youngstown, Ohio in 1991. The paintings were auctioned off when Sharon Steel declared bankruptcy and have not been exhibited since. The original painting entitled, “Runner Man at the Blast Furnace” was lost during the bankruptcy and its location is unknown. This exhibit will feature one of the few remaining prints
of the painting. The exhibit will utilize both constructivist and realist learning approaches to appeal to a wide range of ages and interests. Constructivist learning allows visitors “opportunities to interact and to construct their own meanings.” Realist learning provides the visitor with the facts, but does not give them the opportunity to come to their own conclusions.

The exhibit is designed to appeal to a variety of ages and interests through the use of storytelling, interactive activities, and subject-based tours. Visitors will be given numerous opportunities to engage with the artifacts and find out more information on their origins.

4. Purpose of the Exhibition

The exhibit will provide a space for conversation and create a learning environment that is educational, social, and fun. Museums provide a place for conversations to occur. “Through the art of conversation individuals express interests, preferences, and knowledge that enable pairs to learn about each other, assess their compatibility, affirm their ongoing connections, and simply enjoy each other.” Conversation is an important part of our everyday experiences and the SPM will try to engage visitors with one another though the use of conversation. Visitors will have the opportunity to discuss the exhibit with each other as they view it. The artifacts on display are positioned in a manner that creates dialogue with the visitors. An activities station will provide visitors with a fun and engaging learning environment. There will be opportunities for visitors to be constructivist and interact with each other and the artifacts. Although there will be text labels, they will be interactive and engaging. The exhibit will try to replace realist learning with constructivist learning wherever it is logical, and fiscally possible. Constructivist learning will

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give visitors the opportunity to draw their own conclusion from the exhibit, instead of being told what to think of the exhibit in a realist manner.

5. Timescale and Budget

Timescale

The exhibit will be a temporary exhibit that will be on display for 6 months each year. The exhibit will open May 17, 2013, the third Friday of the month. There will be an opening night gala with extended museum hours, free admission, and a possible guest speaker. The exhibit will be in rotation until 2018, when it will be reviewed by the museum and determined if it still has any relevance to the needs of the museum. The exhibit will be replaced with Steven Bukowski’s exhibit, *Razing Awareness: Historic Preservation & The Bethlehem Steel Administration Building*, every six months for the next five years. Changing the exhibits will help the SPM keep visitors engaged and give them an opportunity to learn about new subjects in regards to the steel industry.

Budget

The budget for the exhibit will be $500. The money for the exhibit will be raised through a campaign in the local community. For a donation of $50 or $100, businesses will have their logos placed inside display cases to thank them for their support, and to offer them visibility in the community. The money fundraised will be used to purchase exhibition labels, any promotional ephemera for the exhibit, and cover general operating expenses.
6. Audience and Strategy

Primary Audience

Art and history enthusiasts in Western New York will be the primary audience for this exhibit. Potential visitors in the art or history fields may not be aware of the SPM’s existence, and would not have had reason to visit the museum previously. The SPM wants its audience to grow and will be able to create new audience through temporary exhibits geared towards different factions of the public. Through a temporary exhibit the museum can reach out to both art and history enthusiasts in the community and gauge its popularity with them, without permanently committing to a new direction. If the Norman Rockwell exhibit is successful there is potential to do exhibits on other contemporary artists whose focus was on the steel industry. For example, they could have exhibits on Milton Rogovin, the social documentary photographer who captured steelworkers doing their daily jobs, or on Patricia Bazelon, the photographer who documented the beauty of the architecture at the abandoned steel mills in Western New York.

Secondary Audience

The secondary audience is composed of potential museum visitors and current museum members, most of whom are former Western New York steel workers, and their families. The museum should strive to engage their original audience through the use of artifacts from Western New York and the use of personal stories from the steel workers. The main goal of the exhibit is to blend the worlds of art and blue collar labor together, so the museum can maintain its original audience while exploring other avenues. The exhibit should still be accessible to the museum’s current visitors and members, and make them feel welcome and comfortable with engaging with and commenting on art.
Tertiary Audience

A tertiary audience will be comprised of former Sharon Steel workers from Sharon, PA, the company that originally commissioned the Rockwell paintings, and where they originally hung in the administration building. The exhibit will also appeal to school groups because it us applicable to used with many different ages and subjects covered in classes. For example, chemistry students can learn more about the composition of steel, and art students can learn more about the painting and compositional techniques used by Norman Rockwell, as well as critique the collection as a whole. A multidisciplinary unit could be created for elementary students to utilize.

8. Theme and Concept

Subject Matter

Primary Subject Matter

14 Norman Rockwell prints depicting the process of steelmaking commissioned by Sharon Steel in Sharon, PA.

Secondary Subject Matter

Artifacts from WNY steel workers and the stories behind them.

Themes

The themes for the exhibit are based on subjects taught in the classroom. They fall under subjects taught in the New York State Common Standards. The exhibit is multidisciplinary with its themes because teachers need to manage their time, and make the most out of field trips.

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Allowing them to teach a variety of subjects through the *Story of Steel* exhibition will help the SPM attract school groups to the exhibit.

**Primary Themes**

The story behind the 14 Norman Rockwell images and Rockwell’s approach to painting.

Broad academic subject and curricula include:

- History/ Social Studies
- Art (Painting)

**Secondary Theme**

The process of steelmaking.

Broad academic subjects and curricula include:

- Chemistry
- History/ Social Studies
- Natural History

**Tertiary Themes**

The history of Sharon Steel and Western New York Steel Companies, including personal histories of the workers.

Broad academic subjects and curricula include:

- Oral History

**Concept**

The SPM will utilize a socially interactive, hands-on exhibit to discuss Norman Rockwell and the process of steel-making. Primary, secondary, and tertiary themes will be conveyed using both inquiry-based learning and minimum didactic-based learning. Inquiry based learning is
interactive and lets visitors draw their own conclusions through experimentation. Didactic based learning is information given to the visitor, that doesn’t require their participation. Subject-based tours will allow for problem solving and inquiry based learning to occur.

9. Content and Interpretive Elements

Overview

The exhibition will be comprised of engaging activities, specialty tours, and educational curriculum.

Visitor Experience

The visitor experience will be educational, socially interactive, and fun. The exhibition will be ADA accessible and have seating available for those with limited mobility. The exhibit will be displayed in seven cases alongside one wall of the museum space, where you first enter the space. Due to the chronological nature of the exhibit, visitors will benefit from viewing the exhibit from left to right. However, if they choose to visit the cases out of order the exhibit will still be accessible, and hold its meaning. The text labels will be written at a fifth grade reading level and will be engaging. Keeping the labels at a fifth grade reading level will ensure that any museum visitor will have the opportunity to understand the exhibit text, therefore helping them better understand the exhibit as a whole. The labels will be interactive and pose questions to stimulate the visitors. Asking questions will engage the visitor in the exhibit, and keep them interested. The SPM is aware that each visitor will come to the exhibit with their own set of information, and interpret the exhibit through their own personal lens. “Visitors who possess different cultural backgrounds and experiences are not only likely to utilize the same museum spaces, exhibitions, and programs in different ways, but they are almost certain to make
very different meaning to what superficially might appear to be similar to museum visitor experiences.”

Interpretive Devices

The interpretive devices will include doing, thinking, questioning, listening, observing, and conversing.

Interpretive Elements (In an ideal execution of the exhibit)

Storytelling Stand

The devices that will allow the interactive elements to happen will be a storytelling stand that tells the visitor more about the origin of specific objects in the cases. As Black says, in the Engaging Museum, “Object stories placed in a flip-book directly in front of a case encourage engagement.” Learning more about the objects in the exhibit will help the visitors connect with the exhibit fully. Also, the wall labels will ask the visitors questions to encourage engagement. They will have small interactive elements with questions that flip open to the answers, and activity wheels that give more information on particular objects when turned.

Audio Tours/ Mobile App

Public audio tours available to the public of former Western New York steel workers can tell the story behind the artifact they contributed and give more information about their specific job at the steel plant. There will also be a downloadable app for I-Phones and Androids that provides the visitor with extra content if they scan the QR codes placed throughout the exhibit.

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Apps will help to bring in families because “using a smartphone enhanced the shared family experience of museum visiting.”

*Video Viewing Area*

There will be a video viewing area where visitors will watch former steel workers discussing the process of steel making. Visitors can also watch a short film on Norman Rockwell’s experience at Sharon Steel and find out the fate of the original paintings.

*Activities Area*

This area will appeal to families, school groups, and adults who learn by doing. Visitors will be invited to sketch the Norman Rockwell prints, or create still life drawings of the artifacts. There will also be a chemistry aspect where visitors can look into microscopes and determine the chemical make-up of steel in its different stages.

*Subject Driven Tours*

Special subject-given tours will be given on a rotating basis once a month to provoke visitors more information on specific themes in the exhibit. There will be tours on the life of Norman Rockwell, the process of steelmaking, the history of Sharon Steel, and the history of Western New York Steel Plants (Bethlehem and Republic) during the 1960s. The tours will allow visitors to handle certain objects used in the process of steelmaking. According to Graham Black’s *The Engaging Museum*, object-based learning is key to museums. “To be object-based, it must involve opportunities for object handling and associated activities.”

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7 Black 2005, 183.


9 Black 2005, 139.
The interpretive devices will give visitors the opportunity to use their different senses and engage different learning styles. The devices cover a wide range of subject materials and age-levels. A subject-driven tour on Norman Rockwell will appeal to a new audience and bring the museum new visitors. An activities area will appeal to families and school groups, which will also increase the SPM’s potential audience. The exhibit will engage visitors and create human connections to the process of steelmaking.

10. Branding

Branding will be very important to the exhibit because the museum is trying to attract new audiences and become more relevant in the WNY art community. In order to create a brand for the SPM, the museum has to decide what audience they want to appeal to, and the best way to connect with them. The SPM wants to attract a younger audience to their museum, so using social media will help to gain the attention of younger visitors.

Primary Branding

Social media and advertising will be the primary forms of branding for the exhibit. The SPM will utilize Facebook and Twitter to promote the exhibit. The use of social media will decrease the median age of the museum visitor because the average Twitter user is 31 and the average Facebook user is 33.\(^{10}\) The median age of the current SPM visitor is around 60 because the main base of visitors are retired steel workers. Lowering the median age of the visitor will give the museum a longer lasting audience.

There will be an event page created on Facebook to announce the opening of the exhibit. Submitting press releases to major news organizations, including WGRZ, WKBW, WIVB, the Buffalo News, Artvoice, and the Penny Saver will be another form of promotion. Posters, postcards, and brochures will also be created to advertise around Western New York (Appendix C). The funding for the advertising materials will be provided by donations from local businesses supporting the exhibit.

**Secondary Branding**

Secondary branding will occur through the use of teacher packets with lesson plans and information on how the exhibit meets their curriculum. Lesson plans could be created for a variety of ages and cover a variety of subject matter. For example, a lesson plan on the paintings of Norman Rockwell, that covers both technical and critical concepts, could be created for a high school art class. Another lesson could be created for a middle school science class focusing on the chemistry of iron and how it is processed into steel. An elementary school curriculum could be expanded into a multidisciplinary unit that covers math, science, English, art, and history.

**Tertiary Branding**

The exhibit will utilize a “Third Friday” program to give visitors with full time jobs more opportunities to visit the exhibit. On the third Friday of the month visitors will be allowed into the museum for free to see the exhibit. If it can be arranged, a special guest from Sharon Steel will attend and discuss his/her experience with the company. Another guest could be a scholar of Norman Rockwell to discuss his painting style in more detail.

Members of the museum will also be invited to a special viewing of the exhibit before the public opening. They will be asked to give constructive criticism that could be utilized to improve the
exhibit prior to its opening to the public, and which will inform subsequent rotations of the exhibit as planned through 2018.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

There are three pillars that make up the creation of an exhibit: exhibition design, education, and visitor experience. Exhibition design has become innovative in the past decade within museums, and exhibits are created more with the visitor in mind. A huge part of exhibition design are the objects within the museum. Objects are the centerpiece of the museum. Object autonomy was created when objects were placed in different contexts. Originally museums relied solely on curators to give objects their autonomy. Recently, visitors are playing a bigger role in creating object autonomy. Each visitor brings his/her own bias and level of knowledge into the museum. Therefore, each visitor’s experience is different. Museums must be aware who their visitors are and who is interested in the collections. Recently, museums have shifted their focus from being object centered to visitor centered. If visitor’s needs are not met, the museum will fail to exist because there would be no interest in their institution. The museum education department works with schools, and brings in a large number of museum visitors. As budget cuts in school systems dwindle field trips to museums, museum educators have to become more creative with the resources they have. If classes can not come to them, museums can create resources to use in the classroom. New museums create a community of visitors who bring their own experiences to the museum when engaging with the objects and giving them autonomy.

Exhibition Design

*Exhibition Design* by Phillip Hughes outlines how to create a well planned exhibit. Hughes starts by discussing creating a brief for an exhibit.\(^\text{11}\) Creating a brief will set the tone for

the exhibit and highlight what the exhibition designer finds important. Once the brief is completed museums have to find their target audience for the exhibit, and find ways to appeal to all audiences in their exhibit. It is helpful to use all different kinds of learning styles and keep the text at a fifth grade reading level. Next, exhibition designers should study the site and decide the best way to display the exhibit. The exhibit needs to flow, and traffic patterns for visitors should be laid out. Exhibition designers go on to create 3-D designs and sketches of the exhibition space to give visual references of the space. A very important part of the exhibit is looking at 2-D designs, which include the text for the exhibit. Choosing the font, size, and layout of the exhibition text is just as important as choosing the artifacts. If the text is illegible, or at too high of a reading level the exhibit will be unsuccessful because no one will understand the reasoning behind the exhibit. Other important aspects of exhibition design discussed by Hughes are lighting design, interactivity, video, and constructive materials. Lighting is important because if done incorrectly it can harm the artifacts, and create a glare in the exhibit cases. Having interactive or video aspects of an exhibit helps to engage the visitor. Interactivity gives visitors examples of key elements in the exhibit. Videos help to create a storyline and frame the exhibit. Exhibition materials need to be fireproof, durable, and sustainable over a long period of time. There are many aspects included in exhibition design, and to create a successful exhibit one must think all of them through.

Object Autonomy

Elaine Huemann Gurian explains in her 1999 article, “What Is the Object of This Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums,” how museums represent civilized society and the objects within them hold meaning to specific
cultures.\textsuperscript{12} Over time objects lose some of their original meaning. Many objects are reproduced, or photographed taking away from their original value. Gurian explains that “real” objects can be reproductions, as long as they represent the true intention of the original. She gives the example of a dinosaur skeleton. Not all the bones on a dinosaur skeleton are authentic, but plaster molds replace the missing pieces to create an understandable image for visitors. They need to see the whole picture to truly understand the scale of the dinosaur. Everyday objects can also take on new meanings, if there was a story behind them. Gurian discusses the meaning behind simple objects from the Holocaust. For example, the collection of shoes in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC can be looked at as simply shoes. However, within the context of the museum they tell the sad story of death. Context completely changes the reality of the object.

Graham Black discusses the importance of objects and their autonomy in his 2005 book, \textit{The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement}.\textsuperscript{13} Black discusses that no matter how many amenities your museum provides, visitors at the core are there to see the objects. Black argues that curators should focus on creating engaging stories for the visitor. Exhibitions need to be more than window displays. They have to engage and educate the visitor. There are six ways to display objects according to Black. First, open storage allows the visitor to have a behind-the-scenes look at the museum’s collection. It only gives minimal interpretation for the visitor. Next, object display is where the objects “speak” for themselves. There is minimal or no interpretation. Object-orientated displays focus on how the objects are classified. Only


\textsuperscript{13} Black, 2005.
limited interpretation is provided. Learning-focused displays give the visitor lots of interpretation and opportunities to engage with the objects. Next, thematic displays focus on a particular theme and give a decent amount of interpretation. Lastly, concept displays do not focus on the object as a primary part of the display, but instead focus on the larger message of the exhibition.

In *The Participatory Museum*, Nina Simon discusses the idea of social objects. “Social objects are the engines of socially networked experiences, the content around which conversation happens. Social objects allow people to focus their attention on a third thing rather than on each other, making interpersonal engagement more comfortable.” Simon breaks the social objects down into four categories: personal, active, provocative, and relational. Personal social objects create a personal connection with visitors and remind them of their own experiences with a similar object. Active social objects physically insert themselves into the dialogue. Living collections are the primary focus of active social objects. Provocative social objects have the spotlight without the need for further context. Relational social objects require the use of more than one person. Exhibits focus primarily on the personal social object because it connects visitors to the exhibition and keeps them interested.

According to Simon there are five techniques a museum could use to engage visitors with social objects. First, they can ask questions and allow visitors to share their experiences with, and reactions to, social objects. Museums can provide live interpretation, in the form of a docent to help visitors make connections to social objects. Next, they can design an exhibit that provokes thought from the visitor by creating a dialogue using the objects. If the visitor is unclear on how

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15Simon, 110.
to engage with the object, the museum provides them with answers. Lastly, the museum can offer visitors a way to share their experience with the social object through physically connecting with it, or virtually connecting to the social object.

According to Graham Black in his 2012 book, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century*, objects engage with people’s memories. “Objects represent the visible and touchable outer world of the cultural memory of past societies. In deciding what objects to select and preserve museums are not only acting as a cultural memory store for humankind, but also defining what is or is not history.”\(^{16}\) Even the simplest object can trigger the memory of visitors and allow them to connect with the exhibit. Black thinks all objects housed in a museum’s collection should be able to stimulate conversation when standing on their own. The use of selective grouping brings out the narrative the curator was trying to create. If a display is overwhelming and there is too much competition, visitors are not able to engage with the exhibit.

Black also argues that visitors feel they are seeing something rare and real when they visit a museum. Giving them a unique experience they can not have anywhere else. If a museum wants to engage the visitor even more, it can give visitors an opportunity to touch the objects through the use of activities stations or subject-based tours.

**The Museum Visitor**

Successful museums meet all of their visitors physical needs, before getting to their mental needs. Judy Rand discusses this concept in her 2000 declaration entitled, “The Visitor’s Bill of Rights.”\(^{17}\) First, the visitor’s need of comfort has to be met. They need to have access to

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\(^{16}\)Black, 2012, 145.

clean restrooms, wheelchair accessibility, seating, and possibly a place to dine to feel comfortable in the museum. Next, visitors need to know how to get around the museum. Museums need signage and maps to orientate visitors to the different museum spaces. Visitors want to feel welcome in the museum and expect staff to be friendly and helpful. If visitors feel welcome they are able to have fun. Visitors have fun when exhibits function properly and are not too dense. Socializing is another aspect of the museum visit mentioned by Rand. Visitors want the opportunity to interact with their family and friends, and share their museum experience. Visitors do not want to be talked down to, or feel overwhelmed with the information given. They desire the museum's respect and do not want to feel patronized or dumb. Museums need to communicate with their visitors through their labels and docents. Visitors want the opportunity to ask and answer questions. Through their questions and exhibit labels visitors have the opportunity to learn something new. Visitors want the freedom to choose their path in the museum and control some of their visitor experience. Museums need to make challenging aspects to their exhibits, in order to give the visitor an opportunity to succeed. Lastly, if visitors feel the first part of the “Visitor’s Bill of Rights” is met, they leave the museum feeling revitalized. The museum visit will not be successful unless the physical needs of the visitor are met first, followed by the mental needs being taken care of.

Steven Bukowski discusses meeting the physical and mental needs of visitors in his 2013 article, “Moving Toward Modern -- How the Steel Plant Museum of Western New is Embracing the Paradigm Shift of Museums in the 21st Century” in the first volume, second issue of the journal, *The Exposition*. The SPM made a major move from the Lackawanna Public Library to the Heritage Discovery Center (HDC) in 2008. Bukowski explains one of the reasons for moving
is to benefit the SPM’s patrons, “Spencer Morgan [the museum curator] mentioned accessibility as another reason to move. With a sizable portion of the museum’s patronage being senior citizens potentially with mobility issues, Morgan stated that the HDC, with ‘…handicapped-accessible entrances, wider hallways…makes us much more ADA-compliant.’ The ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ensures that public spaces, like the museum’s exhibit hall, allow for the accessibility for those with disabilities and mobility issues.” Moving locations can breathe new life into a museum, and help to attract new visitors too. Bukowski describes how even the smallest detail can make the difference when building a museum audience. He explains that making the visitors comfortable will encourage return. He cites specific examples like adding benches as a marker of physical comfort, and friendly staff as one of social and emotional comfort. He explains how the SPM is successfully transitioning to their new location and building visitors. Small museums can take steps to improve their visitor relations by making physical and social changes to museum. Becoming ADA-compliant gives elderly and disabled visitors more opportunities to visit their museum. Employing friendly staff helps to create a rapport with visitors, and might encourage them to return.

Margret Lindauer describes a new observatory type of museum visitor in her 2006 article, “The Critical Museum Visitor.” The critical museum visitor uses their experience with museum theory to shape their museum visit. Their experience starts prior to entering the museum upon finding out the title of the exhibit, and forming theories as to why it was chosen. Next, the critical museum visitor looks at the architecture of the building when they arrived. From their

18 Bukowski, 9.
observations they try to decipher the type of museum they are visiting and how the architecture might be reflected in the displays. Some museums contradict their exterior architectural facade with their interior displays. The exhibition display style is also critiqued by the critical museum visitor. Depending on how the object is displayed Lindauer explained that it could be associated as “art” or an “artifact.” Art is displayed more sparsely and is intended to stand on its own. Artifacts are typically grouped together and compliment each other. The text of the exhibit informs the critical museum visitor on the intention of the exhibit. Lindauer cites that exhibit labels should never be longer than 50 words because they are intended to give the big idea and quickly inform the visitor. Wall text expands on the exhibit labels and allows the visitor to choose if they’d like to learn more. Wall text allows the visitor to create their own opinions about the exhibit from the information given to them. The critical museum visitor is able to find the exhibition thesis when the museum successfully puts together an exhibition. Lindauer argues the critical museum visitor could inform the museum on how to make their exhibit appealing to a larger audience.

Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience, the 2009 book by John Falk, explains the motivations behind a person’s visit to a museum. Falk organizes museum visitors into five categories: the explorer, the facilitator, the experience seeker, the professional or hobbyist, and the recharger. Explorers want a museum experience that satisfies their curiosity and let them learn more about a topic discussed in the museum. They are regular museum visitors who desired to see new exhibitions and objects. Falk discusses having blockbuster exhibits as a way to attract an explorer. Another option is to have temporary rotating exhibits giving explorers the option to

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return to the museum and see new items. Explorers are influenced most by word of mouth recommendations. If museums create a “buzz” in the community, they are more likely to attract the explorer.

Facilitators like to plan their museum experience for a group. Falk organizes them into two categories, the Facilitating Socializer and the Facilitating Parent. Facilitating socializers use the museum to create a dialogue with other visitors. Museums that create special events and exhibit openings are more likely to attract the facilitating socializer. The facilitating parent uses the museum to bond with his/her child and give them an educational experience. They want to have an experience that was both educational and enjoyable. Group activities help museums gain the facilitating parents interests. Low admission prices also help to get facilitating parents to museums. Facilitating parents are aware of the limited time they have. Museums that create different visitor experiences depending on time are more likely to attract the facilitating parent. Lastly, word of mouth recommendations greatly affect both types of facilitators.

Experience Seekers are primarily tourists who wanted to see the museum’s blockbuster objects. They desire a one-of-a-kind experience that is be enjoyable and minimally educational. Museums promote their rare objects to attract the experience seeker. Also, the availability of a gift shop and food attract the experience seeker. They want the entire package included in their museum visit. Professionals and hobbyists desire to become experts on a particular subject and heavily use the museum’s educational department. Professionals and hobbyists are often the most judgmental visitors and are very aware of the quality of content the museum provides. Typically, professionals and hobbyists seek museums out on their own when they desire to utilize the museum’s resources. Allowing hobby groups to utilize the museum space for meetings or
conferences is one way the museum could reach out to them. Rechargers go to museums to relax and reflect. They desire a quiet space with plenty of seating where they could de-stress. Advertising the museum as a quiet place of tranquility is one way to get rechargers attention. Falk reminds the reader that museums should not try to attract all six groups of museum visitors at once. They need to pick their specific niches based on what they have to offer as an institution.

**Museum Education**

Graham Black explains how museums have adapted to meet the educational needs to teachers in his book, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-First Century*. Museums need to take steps to appeal to educators needs, or else they will lose a large number of visitors. Many schools have limited budgets for field trips, and can not afford to visit more than one field trip a year. Creating a meaningful, memorable experience that is multidisciplinary can help museums to appeal to teachers needs. Black explains that there are many problems that can happen when it comes to museums and education, “particularly transport costs, trends in national education policy, increasing difficulties in finding adult volunteers to accompany the trip, the practicalities of bringing older pupils and the decision making of individual schools.” Museums can not control many factors, but they can create meaningful curriculum for schools to use. By creating lesson plans and field trips that apply directly to the curriculum being used in classrooms, museums can apply to educators and make them more inclined to visit. Lesson plans should be interactive and hands on, they should give students real life examples that help them relate to the exhibits.

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21 Black 2012.

22 Black 2012, 112.
Museum theory has shifted over the last few decades. Objects used to be at the forefront of the museum, now the visitor comes first. However, objects still hold great importance to the museum. Without them there would not be a museum. Throughout the years authors developed new theories on the autonomy of objects and how a museum visitor’s background can influence their exhibition viewing. Objects need to engage the visitor and make them feel they were viewing something unique. The museum visitor desires to have their physical and intellectual needs met. Visitors come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Museums need to be aware of their audience, in order to cater their exhibit towards them. There are a variety of types of museum visitors, but museums can only cater to a few at the same time. Small and specialized museum like SPM can educate, but also connect to the emotional needs of their visitors.
CHAPTER THREE:
Project Narrative

Norman Rockwell gained success through his picturesque, commercial artwork. He created pieces for many American magazines including: Life, Literary Digest, The Saturday Evening Post, and Look Magazine. His early work was based on idyllic small town life in America. The phrase Rockwell-esque was used to explain living the perfect small town, American life. However, later on in his career Rockwell explored relevant current events issues including the civil rights movement, the war on poverty, and the space program. Molly, Rockwell’s third wife, encouraged his activism, “Molly, of liberal and activist bent, urged her husband to take on the issues of the day, a mission supported by his new editors at Look, to which he decamped in 1963 after the Post had begun its slide into irrelevance.”

His paintings became more controversial and shed light on important issues, like the civil rights movement and the war on poverty. It was during this time he was commissioned to paint portraits of the workers and new machinery at Sharon Steel in Sharon, PA. Rockwell claimed his life experiences effected the way he painted, “everything I have ever seen or done has gone into my pictures in one way or another. The story of my life is really the story of my pictures and how I made them.”

Norman and Molly Rockwell visited the Sharon Steel Plant on only one occasion, on April 18, 1966. Molly came along to help Rockwell with his work. Molly photographed each of


the steel workers chosen to be painted by Rockwell. Molly posed each worker and shot from many different angles to give Rockwell many different options when painting in his studio. Molly Rockwell’s photographs of the steelworkers were added to the collection at the Norman Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge, MA. Rockwell and Molly collaborated on other occasions too, she helped him to write the children’s book, *Willie Was Different*. The story was about a wood thrush with a passion for singing. Molly was the most creative of Rockwell’s wives and was very involved in his work.

The paintings of the Sharon Steel workers were completed from 1964 through 1969. The process took five years because of Rockwell’s busy schedule. He took many breaks from working on the paintings to go on location for *Look Magazine*, and he even did work for the US Government, including work for the Space Program and the Peace Corps. Sharon Steel was obviously unhappy with the extended amount of time Rockwell took to complete the work, but the advertising company of Watts, Lee, & Kenyon, Inc. tried to keep the peace between the two. Robert Kenyon sent many letters to Rockwell over the five years, begging him to turn in his work. On July 3, 1967 Rockwell had promised that by September of the same year he would be finished painting the portraits, “I’ll swear on maybe a little smaller stack of Bibles, by September 1st, and then we will be all through.” Obviously, Rockwell’s promise was off by a few years. On November 21, 1967 Mr Kenyon wrote:

“Am really in a pinch for the next two illustrations. As I mentioned to you, we are running them in the first ad series because we cannot complete the booklet until we have

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them all finished. For this reason, I must have the two in order to make the ads and have them approved in the time to meet publication closing. This is getting very tight. If I do not make it, I will really be in trouble at Sharon. Please! Please!”

At the end he added, “Hello, Molly - Help!” Rockwell was asked by President Johnson to create portraits for the Space Program and the Marines in 1968. He also took a small, but well deserved vacation that same year. Although Rockwell missed his deadlines with Sharon Steel, he realized his role as illustrator was different from an artist involved in the fine arts. “The illustrator must satisfy his client as well as himself. He must express a specific idea so that everybody will understand it. He must meet deadlines.” Being an illustrator meant your work was more widely seen, and therefore more widely criticized. The illustrations were also advertisements and had to promote a certain idea, and thus win the approval of the client.

Many critics claim that Norman Rockwell should not be considered as a serious artist because he spent his life as a commercial artist. He was dismissed as an artist because his work is considered too sentimental and unrealistic. Even when he was working for the Saturday Evening Post, Rockwell wanted to tackle of uses of race, but the magazine would not allow it. Richard Halpern discussed Rockwell’s issues with the Saturday Evening Post in his book, Norman Rockwell: The Underside of Innocence. “Rockwell, it should be said, had long wanted to depict African Americans but was forbidden to do so by his editors at the Post, who feared that the


30 Rockwell, 48.
mere sight of them might upset most of their readers.” Rockwell disliked working on just the Post covers because they were similar in style and didn’t challenge him as an artist. Still, Rockwell had more artistic freedom than most artists who worked for the Post, he spent most of his career there without any contractual obligation. In Norman Rockwell: A Life, Laura Claridge explained that Rockwell felt his Post covers suffered when he was under contract. “He reminded the editor [Ben Hibbs] that when he was under contract - presumably during Ken Stuart’s first few years - it had forbidden him from accepting any assignments from other magazines. As a result, his Post covers suffered, he explained, because he was suffocated by sameness. He need the occasional outlet to stay fresh for the Post…”

Rockwell’s work reflected his more serious side as he grew older. His portraits became more realistic, and depicted less of the quaint small towns he used to paint. His work on the civil rights movement depicted the disparity of the situation. He used similar techniques to create the portraits of the steel workers. Many of the steel workers are shown with stern faces and are focused on their job, and not smiling for the camera. They look focused on their jobs and do not seem concerned with portraying the “American Dream.” The machinery was supposed to be the focus of the portraits, as they were used as advertisements in industrial magazine. Rockwell’s portraits on the steelworkers stole the limelight from the machinery. They humanized the steel workers and allow the audience to make a connection with them. Including the names of the workers in the portrait titles helped to create connections. However, the compositions and people

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were devoid of the grit of being a steelworker. The subjects were clean, and missing the sweat and dirt that comes with steel working (Appendix B, Figures 1-14).

As a commercial artist, Norman Rockwell could not show the grit involved in steel working that a photojournalist could. Photojournalists and social documentary photographers were able to depict things more realistically than a commercial artist, such as Norman Rockwell, could because they weren’t working on commission. Commercial artists had the obligation to make their client happy first, as opposed to photojournalists who had the obligation to depict the truth. The Rockwell portraits looked aesthetically appealing, and clean, because they were meant to be advertisements first, and pieces of art second. Social documentary photographer, Milton Rogovin’s book, *Portraits in Steel*, showed the struggle of steelworkers in Western New York. Many of his subjects were covered in sweat and grime from their time in the steel plant. Rogovin was shooting his portraits as the steel plants of Western New were starting to decline in the 1980s. The despair of the steelworkers was prominent in Rogovin’s work. Norman Rockwell was working on his steelworker paintings during the late 1960s, when the steel plant industry was still blossoming. Rockwell’s figures appeared more mannequin-like, and less realistic than the steelworkers photographed by Rogovin.

David Kamp’s *Vanity Fair* interview discussed the complexity of Rockwell’s process, “Rockwell always referred to his works as "pictures," like a movie director, rather than "illustrations" or "paintings" he documented an exhaustive creative "system" in which photography was only the midpoint.” Rockwell took many steps to create the “simple”

34 Kamp, *Norman Rockwell’s American Dream.*
paintings Americans identify with. First, he would create a rough sketch in pencil of the scene he wanted. Then, he would hire models, or in the case of Sharon Steel the workers themselves, to pose for a photograph. According to Ron Schick, in his book *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera*, Rockwell would frame the photograph, but did not like to take the photo itself. “Norman Rockwell could afford to employ skilled workers to operate the camera and make his work prints. As Rockwell likened himself to a film director in relation to his actor/models, so his relationship with his photographer was one of director to cinematographer. He determined where to position the camera, how to frame the scene, and when to shoot, but preferred not to look through the viewfinder.” Once the perfect shot was achieved, he created a charcoal sketch, then a color sketch that would be used for reproductions. Lastly, he created the final larger painting. Obviously, this was a very time consuming process and it created tension between Rockwell and his employers as the process took a great deal of time.

**The Curation Process**

The curator of the SPM, Spencer Morgan, helped with locating appropriate artifacts, and curating the exhibit. We designed the exhibit to show the creation of steel from start to finish. The prints start with a miner at the coal mine, and end with a welder welding beams on a skyscraper. They show each step in the steelmaking process. To connect the exhibit to Western New York, we pulled artifacts from SPM’s collection. We combed through the PastPerfect object database to find artifacts that matched items in the prints as closely as possible. Every small detail was attended to, from the color of the helmets, to the pens in workers’ pockets. It was important to be as detailed as possible when choosing the artifacts because we wanted to bring

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the portraits to life. It was important to create a human connection with the men in the portraits. Authentic objects convey this connection. The prints informed and contextualized the objects. The names of each steelworker were listed on the exhibit label in each case allowing visitors to further find a human connection within each exhibit case. Names were a device that humanize and individualize a general class of laborers, often faceless and nameless in traditional history.

The exhibit started with a video that introduced the process of steelmaking, the origin of the Norman Rockwell portraits, and interviews with two of the steelworkers who posed for the portraits. The interviews were with George Petropulos, a metallurgist at Sharon Steel, and Bob Addicott, who ran the vacuum degassing unit at Sharon Steel. It was important to give the visitors background information before sending them through the exhibit. The video proved the people in the portraits were real steelworkers, and not just abstract sketches from the imagination of Norman Rockwell. It also familiarizes those who do not know about the production of steel with the process.

The first exhibit case has the portrait of the “Coal Miner,” Andy Marchiney, from the Joanne Coal Company (Appendix B, Figure 15). In this portrait, Mr. Marchiney is wearing a jumpsuit made out of a denim material. The SPM has a similar jumpsuit in their collection that was displayed alongside the portrait. The coal miner was placed next to the “lost” portrait of John Reichert, the “Runner Man at the Blast Furnace” (Appendix B, Figure 15). Thankfully the SPM had a cast iron shovel in their collection that matched the portrait, and fit perfectly in our case. Also, we added an orange helmet with similar safety goggles to pull the exhibit case

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together. Thus, the three key artifacts were contextualized by close association with the artwork, inviting commentary, and personal discovery.

The next case had the “Melter at Oxygen Furnace” portrait of Pat Lyden (Appendix B, Figure 16). The portrait was matched with a similar looking helmet and safety glasses, they have a blue tint to protect workers’ eyes from the bright flames. Next, we took the “Foreman at Electric Furnace,” the only African American portrait of Johnson “Junior” Ragster (Appendix B, Figure 15). In his portrait Mr. Ragster was wearing a very specific helmet, gloves, and safety glasses. Very similar artifacts were described in the museum’s PastPerfect database. Every detail, from the brim of the helmet, to the type of goggles is very important when bringing the exhibit to life.

The third case depicted Bob Addicott in the “Vacuum Degassing Unit” portrait. Mr. Addicott is wearing an orange helmet and blue tinted safety googles in his portrait. The SPM has similar artifacts in their collection that we added to the case. Our attention to detail is put to the test with the portrait, “Furnace Operator (Cold-Sheet Roll)” of Joe Kulesa. He’s wearing a green jumpsuit with a few items in his pocket in the portrait. On closer inspection, we noticed there is a pen and two cigars in Mr. Kulesa’s pocket. We used a Bethlehem Steel pen, and bought two cigars to add to the pocket. Once again, the attention to detail makes all the difference, the cigars bring Mr. Kulesa’s personality to life.

In the next case, we have “Tube Mill Operator” featuring Jim Rossetti holding a hook (Appendix B, Figure 17). PastPerfect database indicated a similar hook in the SPM collection. The hook is paired with a pair of gloves and an apron similar to Mr. Rossetti’s in the portrait. In the same case is the portrait of Fred Greene entitled, “Hot Strip Mill Operator.” Mr. Greene is
wearing a plaid shirt, with a pen in his pocket in his portrait (Appendix B, Figure 17). Also, he has on safety glasses and a watch. We borrowed a shirt from Spencer Morgan, the curator of the SPM, to use in the case. We added a pen from Bethlehem Steel to the shirt pocket. In the SPM’s collection we found similar safety googles, and used a watch given to a Bethlehem Steel employee for 25 years of service to use in the exhibit case.

The fifth exhibit case dealt with aspects in the final stages of the production of steel. “Operator at Tandem Mill” featured George Ketler inspecting a roll of steel (Appendix B, Figure 18). He was wearing glasses, and a grey baseball cap with a pencil sticking out. We found a grey United Steel Workers (USW) hat in the collection and paired it with a pair of safety glasses and a pencil from Bethlehem Steel. Earl Hoffman was holding a blue binder with paperwork in “Roller at Blooming Mill.” He was wearing a navy baseball cap with a wide brim in his portrait (Appendix B, Figure 18). The SPM had old paperwork from Bethlehem Steel in their collection that we displayed in the exhibit case. We paired the papers with a blue binder from the administration building of Bethlehem Steel. We added a navy baseball cap from the collection to tie everything together.

David Richards was holding steel samples in his portrait, “Foreman at Brainard Strapping Factory.” The SPM had similar samples in their collection that we displayed with the portrait (Appendix B, Figure 19). It was difficult to show samples of the products made by steel companies because of their typically large size. The exhibit focused more on the human aspect of steel production, but it was important to show the products created as well. The paperwork used by steelworkers was an item that was overlooked as an artifact, but it was important part of the production process. “Sendizimir Mill Operator” featured William Cole wearing a tan button
down shirt, and checking paperwork as he operates a machine (Appendix B, Figure 19). We used some checklist papers from Bethlehem Steel in the exhibit with a tan shirt that has a pen and pencil in the pocket.

The last exhibit case featured the final aspects of steel production. In the “Metallurgist,” George Petropulos was checking the quality of the steel produced (Appendix B, Figure 20). He used a metallurgical microscope to determine the purity of the steel. The SPM had a similar microscope in their collection that we displayed with the portrait. Lastly, we displayed the portrait of the “Welder.” Calvin Martin was welding steel beams together with a welding torch in the portrait (Appendix B, Figure 20). We found a pair of welding gloves and a welding torch to use in the exhibit case. Also, we chose a black backdrop to use in the exhibit case to contrast with the silver welding gloves. The exhibit ended on a strong note. It showed the final product produced by steel plants, thus bringing the exhibit full circle.

The attention to detail was very important when curating an exhibit. We studied each portrait closely, and found artifacts that highlighted the scenes created by Norman Rockwell. Rockwell’s images, though somewhat “cleansed” of the grit of steel production, provide a context for the SPM artifacts. Small details like cigars or pens in pockets bring the portraits to life, and allow visitors to connect with the artifacts, which were once worn and used by real people. Even someone who doesn’t understand the production of steel can still appreciate the steelworkers stories shown by Norman Rockwell. The artifacts from the SPM had a more worn-in, realistic look to them, than the artifacts highlighted in Norman Rockwell’s portrait scenes. They created context needed to understand that the production of steel was not as clean as
Rockwell’s portraits made it seem. The WNY artifacts create a local connection to the exhibit, and lets the volunteers at the SPM have an opportunity to tell their stories.

The text labels to the exhibit were very important, as well. Museums have to decide between keeping exhibit text simple, or interpreting the exhibit for their visitors. For the *Story of Steel* it was important for visitors to have the opportunity to interpret the artifacts themselves. Author, Nicole Williams discussed the benefits of keeping exhibit text simple in her article, “Reading the Gardner: Viewership, Readership, and Public Art.” “Each label was so large that my eye was immediately drawn to it and as a result I read the museum’s interpretation of the painting before I even had the chance to analyze it. I found myself looking for the interpretation written on the label instead of attempting to make my own.” Williams disliked having museums tell her what to think, and prefers to think for herself. *The Story of Steel* allowed visitors to make their own connections to the portraits and interpret them through their own perspectives. The two wall texts provided visitors with the background information they need, without being too dense. The first wall text provided more information on Norman Rockwell and his experience with Sharon Steel (Appendix B, Figure 25). The second wall text provided the visitor with key terms they need to know about steelmaking (Appendix B, Figure 26). Lastly, there was a wall text to thank donors for their support (Appendix B, Figure 27).

**Exhibit Problems and Solutions**

Every exhibit has its challenges, and this one is no different. Whether it be budgetary restraints or object inquiry, museums have to find creative solutions to the issues that surface. Small museums struggled with finding money to create new exhibits. Limited budgets mean they

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relied on donations from the community more than larger institutions would, as they may not be receiving state or county support. Also, museums can run into trouble when trying to acquire objects for an exhibit. Sometimes museums may try to borrow objects from other institutions to use in their exhibits, but they might not be able to acquire the objects in time, or have the ability to provide safe transport. Museums can try to find reproductions of objects, or other objects that may tie to the collections in a unique way. Videos, letters, and photographs can also be used in exhibits to provide first hand accounts.

Small museums always struggle with budgetary constraints. *The Story of Steel* started without a budget because the SPM is mostly run on a voluntary basis. Without a budget for exhibits small museums have to be more creative with how to pay for a new exhibit, and many turn to community fundraising. To create a budget for *the Story of Steel* local businesses were asked for donations. Most local businesses approached have never heard of the SPM, but knew someone who had previously worked at a local steel plant. They were excited to share stories of their friends and relatives experiences in steel plants, and enthusiastic that there is a museum to share those memories with. Creating personal relationships with local businesses can help small museums to find new audiences and funding for their business. The donation letters created for the exhibit help to explain why the exhibit was important to the SPM, and how the donors money will be used. It also gave donors incentive to contribute because their business would be listed in the exhibit, giving them an advertising opportunity (Appendix A). The fundraising goal for the exhibit was $500, the goal was surpassed by $240, with $740 raised for the exhibit. The money helped to create the exhibit panels, pay for advertising materials, and cover overhead costs of the
SPM. Without the help of local businesses the SPM would not have been able to change their exhibits, and would have lost the opportunity to grow as an institution.

Museums can also run into problems when attempting to acquire objects. When putting together an exhibit a museum might be missing some key objects. They can either attempt to borrow objects from other museums, or restructure their exhibits to avoid problems with acquisition. When *the Story of Steel* was being conceptualized we wanted to incorporate some of the original Norman Rockwell paintings from Sharon Steel. While researching the provenance of the paintings it was discovered they were all sold at private auction after Sharon Steel went bankrupt. Unfortunately there was no public record of who the paintings were sold to, so there was no way to use them in the exhibit. Fortunately, there were other ways to incorporate primary artifacts into the exhibit. The SPM’s collection is mostly donation based from former Western New York steelworkers and their families. A lot of the artifacts were actually used in the process of steelmaking, and the wear and tear on some of the artifacts is clearly visible, and part of the story. The artifacts from the SPM matched the scenes in the Rockwell prints incredibly well. Matching the SPM’s artifacts to the Rockwell prints required the use of PastPerfect to comb through the collection. It took time to find artifacts that matched as precisely as possible. Most of the artifacts used in the *Story of Steel* were not on display during the SPM’s time in the Heritage Discovery Center. Showing “new” or never-before-seen artifacts alongside the 14 Norman Rockwell prints helped to refresh the SPM’s display, and protected artifacts that were previously on display before the *Story of Steel* from any light damage by placing them back in storage.
Objects were supplemented with other first hand objects with videos of the opening of the Norman Rockwell exhibit at the Butler Museum, and letters between Rockwell and his advertising agency. The videos contain interviews with George Petropulos and William Cole, two of the men painted by Rockwell for Sharon Steel. They tell about the process of being sketched, and what it was like to work with Rockwell. The letters give more information on Rockwell’s artistic process, and why it was so difficult to finish the paintings. Both the video and letters help to make up for not having an original painting from Rockwell’s series at Sharon Steel.

Small museums allow their staff to come up with creative solutions to problems bigger museums might not face. Without a large budget, small museums have to fundraise and network closely within their community. Networking leads them to finding new audiences to view the exhibit and donate to the museum. Object acquisition is also a struggle for small museums when creating an exhibit. Museums can replace objects that they might not be able to acquire with videos and letters that give firsthand accounts of various activities related to the exhibits. Problems with exhibits are solved when museum staff are open minded and think creatively. In the case of the Story of Steel, the SPM was able to highlight, for the first time, objects in the collections that had not previously been displayed. The SPM also used the opportunity to connect with the community, winning new supporters and donors.
CHAPTER FOUR:

Lesson Plans

The lesson plans created for the exhibit are based on New York State Common Core Standards. They are multidisciplinary and can be used as supplemental materials for the exhibition, or as freestanding lessons. Both lessons are created for a middle school audience. Seventh graders are required to learn local history in New York State, and the lessons cover the labor history of Western New York. As well as, the subjects of art, english, mathematics, and science. Lesson One requires students to create a short story, letter, picture book, or comic strip about a day in the life of one of the Norman Rockwell steelworkers prints. The lessons requires students to research steelmaking and think creatively to convey the life of a steelworker. Lesson Two uses mathematics to put the size of steel into perspective. Students have to create a mathematic equation using statistics from the production of steel. Students have to understand the proportions of steelmaking to be able to complete the lesson.
Lesson One

VITAL INFORMATION:

Subject: English/Creative Writing

Big Idea: The Story of Steelworkers

Lesson 1

Grade Level: 7

NYS Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy:

RI:7.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL:7.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL:7.9: Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

RL:7.11: Recognize, interpret, and make connections in narratives, poetry, and drama, ethically and artistically to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations.
a. Self-select text based on personal preferences.

b. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.

W:7.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.

d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

W:7.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

a. Produce text (print or non-print) that explores a variety of cultures and perspectives.
W:7.11: Create a presentation, art work, or text in response to a literary work with a commentary that identifies connections.

a. Make deliberate, personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections across genres.

b. Create poetry, stories, plays, and other literary forms (e.g. videos, art work)

NYS Social Studies Standards:

SS:7.1: History of the United States and New York: Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

SS:7.3: Geography: Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

**Time:** 60 minutes (Day One: 40 minutes and Day Two: 20 minutes)

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to create a narrative about a steelworkers life and make connections to their daily lives.

Students will research the 1960s in America and the history of steel working in America.

Students will create a short story, letter, picture book, or comic strip about a day in the life of one of the Norman Rockwell steelworkers prints.
Students will give a 5 minute oral presentation on their project and discuss the reasoning behind what they wrote and/or drew.

**Summary/Rationale:**

The lesson focuses on the creating a narrative for one of fourteen Norman Rockwell prints done for the Sharon Steel Company. This lesson allows students to connect to steel workers and learn more about families in the 1960s. This lesson will help students awareness of the importance of the human aspect of industry and business to a prospering city. Creating their own project will allow students to think creatively and place things in their historical context.

**MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:**

**Instructional Materials:**

- Colored Pencils
- Computers
- Construction Paper
- Pen/Pencil
- Printer
- Scissors

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

**Context:**
During the 1960s Pennsylvania was an industrial state made up of blue collar residents. Sharon, PA was a small town in the Shenago Valley that had a huge impact on the production of steel. The Sharon Steel Company was successful enough to commission Norman Rockwell to create a series of fourteen paintings of their workers and new machinery. Rockwell captured the workers in the midst of doing their daily job and created a narrative through his paintings.

**Procedure:**

**Day One:**

1. Teacher displays the fourteen Norman Rockwell prints for students to view and asks students to brainstorm the 5 W’s (Who, What, Where, When, and Why) surrounding the pictures.

2. Teacher has students brainstorm and record their answers on the blackboard.

3. Teacher and students discuss the answers on the board and assigns the students to briefly research steel from a list of resources.

5. Teacher gives the students class time to research steelworkers and America in the 1960s.

6. Teacher assigns the students the project of creating a short story, letter, picture book, or comic strip on the steelworker of their choice and allows them to work on it until the end of class. A bibliography of at least 4 sources must be included with the students’ project.

7. Teacher assigns the rest of the project for homework (preferably over the weekend)

**Day Two:**
8. Teacher has students present their project to the class by discussing their reasoning behind choosing the particular steelworker and creating the narrative behind their life.

9. Teacher puts the projects together to create a zine of all the class projects.

**Differentiation:**

Students will be exposed to visual images (the fourteen Rockwell prints from the 1960s). Social learners will benefit greatly from group work during the brainstorming session. Students will share ideas from the readings and have different interpretations from seeing the prints. If needed, pairs can group with others to share more ideas. The class can collaborate and list all topics formulated from reading the selected text. The assessment for this project will include a hands on project in the form of a short story, letter, picture book, or comic strip.

**ASSESSMENTS:**

Assessment: Students will be assessed on the completion of the project and its presentation to the class.
Rubrics:

Name __________________________

Narrative/Creative Writing Evaluation

<table>
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<th>Levels/Criteria</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>Score/Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Created a comprehensive narrative in their project.</td>
<td>There was a clear narrative in the project.</td>
<td>There was a narrative in the project, but there were some problems with development</td>
<td>There was no narrative in the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a bibliography with 4 or more sources</td>
<td>4 or more sources were cited at the end of the project.</td>
<td>3 or less sources were cited at the end of the project.</td>
<td>No sources were cited at the end of project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presented their project to the class in a clear, rational manner.</td>
<td>The presentation of the project was well articulated and the student explained their narrative well.</td>
<td>The presentation of the project lacked a full grasp of the narrative, and/or the student did not articulate themselves well.</td>
<td>The student did not present their project to the class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar and punctuation.</td>
<td>No more than two grammatical or punctuational errors in the writing.</td>
<td>Three to five grammatical or punctuational errors in the writing.</td>
<td>More than five grammatical or punctuational errors in the writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

50
Resources:

Fourteen Norman Rockwell Prints

*All images courtesy of the Steel Plant Museum of WNY.*

Shuttle Car
Andy Marchiney
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Tube Mill Operator
Jim Rossetti
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Vacuum Degassing Unit
Bob Addicott
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Welder
Calvin Martin
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Foreman at Brainard Strapping Factory
David Richards
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Roller at Blooming Mill
Earl Hoffman
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Sendizimir Mill Operator
William Cole
Print, 1968
Foreman at Electric Furnace
Johnson “Junior” Ragster
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Furnace Operator (Cold-Sheet Roll)
Joe Kulesa
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Hot Strip Mill Operator
Fred Greene
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Melter at Oxygen Furnace
Pat Lyden
Print, 1968
Metallurgist
George Petropulos
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Operator at Tandem Mill
George Ketler
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Runner Man at the Blast Furnace
John Reichert
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
*The Original Painting is Missing*

Literature on Steelmaking:


* Have the school’s reference librarian pull books and articles ahead of time for the students to use for research
Examples of Fiction created about Steelworkers:


Lesson 2

VITAL INFORMATION:

Subject: Mathematics

**Big Idea:** The Weight of Steel

Lesson 1

Grade Level: 7

**NYS Common Core Standards for Mathematics:**

RP: 7.2: Recognize and represent proportional relationships between quantities.

a. Decide whether two quantities are in a proportional relationship, e.g., by testing for equivalent ratios in a table or graphing on a coordinate plane and observing whether the graph is a straight line through the origin.

b. Identify the constant of proportionality (unit rate) in tables, graphs, equations, diagrams, and verbal descriptions of proportional relationships.

c. Represent proportional relationships by equations.

RP: 7.3: Use proportional relationships to solve multistep ratio and percent problems.

NS: 7.3: Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the four operations with rational numbers.

EE: 7.1: Apply properties of operations as strategies to add, subtract, factor, and expand linear expressions with rational coefficients.

EE: 7.2: Understand that rewriting an expression in different forms in a problem context can shed light on the problem and how the quantities in it are related.
EE: 7.4: Use variables to represent quantities in a real-world or mathematical problem, and construct simple equations and inequalities to solve problems by reasoning about the quantities.

a. Solve word problems leading to equations of the form $px + q = r$ and $p(x + q) = r$, where $p$, $q$, and $r$ are specific rational numbers. Solve equations of these forms fluently. Compare an algebraic solution to an arithmetic solution, identifying the sequence of the operations used in each approach.

**Time:** 60 minutes (Day One: 40 minutes and Day Two: 20 minutes)

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to create a mathematic equation using statistics from the production of steel.

Students will understand the proportions used in steelmaking.

Students will solve their classmates problems by applying the mathematical skills they used to create their own problem.

**Summary/Rationale:**

The lesson focuses on the creating an awareness of the size and weight of steel. This lesson allows students to learn proportions. Students will learn how to apply real world statistics to mathematical problems. By creating their own math problem students will learn though teaching and will have the opportunity to think creatively.

**MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:**

**Instructional Materials:**

Pen/Pencil

Paper
Worksheet and Teacher Key with Steel Production Statistics

IMPLEMENTATION:

Context:

The process of steelmaking can give students real world insight into mathematical equations. Steel workers had to solve mathematical problems while on the job throughout a typical day. Also, students will learn proportions through creating their equations and will realize the sheer size of steel production and its final products.

Procedure:

Day One:

1. Teacher hands out a worksheet with facts about steelmaking and asks students to determine which facts are true or false.

2. Teacher calls on students to answer if the fact is true or false and their reasoning behind it.

3. Teachers asks students to get in pairs of two and create a mathematical equation from one of the true facts on the worksheet.

4. Teacher collects the students equations and creates a worksheet from them.

5. Teacher assigns solving the equations as homework to the class.

6. Teacher tells students for extra credit they can research steel production and create their own equation and solution.

Day Two:

6. Teacher calls on students to go to the blackboard and solve the equations they were assigned for homework.


**Differentiation:**

Students will be exposed to problem solving and becoming the teacher. Social learners will benefit greatly from working in pairs while creating the equation. The class can collaborate while determining whether the facts on their worksheet are true or false. The assessment for this project will include a hands on project in the form of creating their own equation.

**ASSESSMENTS:**

Assessment: Students will be assessed on the completion of their equation and solving of their classmates equation.

**Rubrics:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels/ Criteria</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>0 points</th>
<th>Score/ Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Created and solved their own equation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Created and correctly solved their own equation.</td>
<td>Created an incorrect equation and failed to solve it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solved their peers equations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Solved each equation correctly and showed all their work.</td>
<td>Attempted to solve each equation correctly, but made some errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Raised their hand and actively engaged in the worksheet and solving equations on the blackboard.</td>
<td>Did not show any work for each equation, OR did not solve any equations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Credit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Correctly created and solved their own equation.</td>
<td>Attempted to create and solve their own equations, but made some errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources

Student Worksheet: Name_______________

Choose if each answer is true or false. If the answer is false, make sure to write down the correct information to help you create your equation.

True/False: To make one ton of steel, you need: 2,500 lb.. iron ore, 1,400 lb.. coal, and 120 lb.. limestone.

True/False: 90 tons of molten iron equals the weight of 500 elephants.

True/False: The melting point of iron is 2,795 degrees Fahrenheit; the boiling point of iron is 5,432 degrees Fahrenheit.

True/False: Sound travels at a rate of 50,000 feet per second in pure water; sound travels at a rate of 20,000 feet per second in solid steel.

True/False: Pressure is defined as the force on a certain area. The standard unit of measure for pressure is the Pascal (Pa). The pressure at the center of the Earth is 400 billion Pa. The pressure of a shark bite is 30 million Pa. Steel withstands the pressure of 40 million Pa.

True/False: When processed in the coke oven 17 tons of coal become 17 tons of coke, without any waste.

True/False: At the height of the steelmaking industry, the average coke battery used 4 oven warehouses with a combined total of 365 ovens. Each oven was 2 stories tall and 18 inches wide. 17 tons of coal was poured through a hole in the roof of each oven; the coal was heated to 1,700 Fahrenheit in each sealed oven. Each oven would produce 13 tons of coke when finished processing.
Teacher Key

True/False: To make one ton of steel, you need: 2,500 lb. iron ore, 1,400 lb. coal, and 120 lb. limestone.

TRUE

True/False: 90 tons of molten iron equals the weight of 500 elephants.

FALSE: 90 Tons = 30 Elephants

True/False: The melting point of iron is 2,795 degrees Fahrenheit; the boiling point of iron is 5,432 degrees Fahrenheit.

TRUE

True/False: Sound travels at a rate of 50,000 feet per second in pure water; sound travels at a rate of 20,000 feet per second in solid steel.

FALSE: 5,000 ft. per second in water.

True/False: Pressure is defined as the force on a certain area. The standard unit of measure for pressure is the Pascal (Pa). The pressure at the center of the Earth is 400 billion Pa. The pressure of a shark bite is 30 million Pa. Steel withstands the pressure of 40 million Pa.

TRUE

True/False: When processed in the coke oven 17 tons of coal become 17 tons of coke, without any waste.

FALSE: 17 tons of coal becomes 13 tons of coke and 4 tons of waste (hot tar)

True/False: At the height of the steelmaking industry, the average coke battery used 4 oven warehouses with a combined total of 365 ovens. Each oven was 2 stories tall and
18 inches wide. 17 tons of coal was poured through a hole in the roof of each oven; the coal was heated to 1,700 Fahrenheit in each sealed oven. Each oven would produce 13 tons of coke when finished processing.

TRUE.
CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusion

“The Story of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell” was a success for both the guest curator and the museum. The exhibit raised over $700 for the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York. Most importantly, it helped the museum to form partnerships with new businesses in the community and brought a new audience to the museum. Through street promotion, social media, and press releases, the advertising of the exhibit brought 100 visitors to the opening gala. The majority of the visitors had never visited the museum before and showed an interest in returning with friends and family members. The exhibit was a turning point for this emerging museum professional, and showcased the theories learned in a practical way. The exhibit gave this author a first hand look at the operation of a small community orientated museum. The exhibit had approximately 1045 visitors altogether. Seventy five percent were local, twenty percent were domestic/outside the USA (CANADA), and five percent were international.\textsuperscript{38}

The exhibit relied on the autonomy of objects to tell the story of steelmaking. By pulling in objects from local steel plants donated to the SPM to display with the Norman Rockwell prints, this author was able to create a more cohesive narrative and engage the museum visitor. The objects took on personal meanings for each visitor and helped to shape their visitor experience. Visitors with limited knowledge of steel production were still able to enjoy the aesthetic quality of the exhibit, and had the opportunity to learn more through text panels if they so desired.

\textsuperscript{38} As reported by the curator of the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York, November 12, 2013.
The exhibit labels in the cases were kept simple and followed the pattern of an art museum. The wall panels gave the visitor more information on Norman Rockwell and his involvement with Sharon Steel, and described what was happening in each print. More inquisitive museum visitors that could watch videos describing the steelmaking process and the history of the Norman Rockwell paintings.

With a larger budget, space, and timeline, the exhibit could have been expanded and all of the interpretive elements would be added to create a more constructivist learning environment. Implementing an audio tour or mobile app could draw in a younger audience to the museum. The current museum audience and the majority of the staff were not interested in incorporating technology into the exhibit space. Spencer Morgan, the curator of the SPM, said they tried to have cell phone tours in the past, but the visitors weren’t utilizing them often. The compromise was using the television in the exhibit space, in order to give the visitor the opportunity to learn more about the exhibit. In the future the use of iPads or a touch screen would give the exhibit more interactive elements. The visitor could use the touch screen to learn more about steelmaking and Norman Rockwell through videos and text. Former Western New York steel workers will tell the story behind their artifact and give more information on their job at the steel plant, or describe the scene in the Norman Rockwell prints. Also, more children's activities could be added to the touch screens. Apps will help to bring in families because “using a smartphone enhanced the shared family experience of museum visiting.”

Including an activities area would add another constructivist learning element. The exhibition space was very limited and there was not room to set up this area. This area would

have appeal to families, school groups, and adults who learn by doing. Visitors would have attempted to sketch the Norman Rockwell prints, or draw still life’s of the artifacts. There could have been a chemistry aspect where visitors looked into microscopes and determined the chemical make-up of steel in its different stages. The lesson plans created for the exhibit helped to fill the void of the activities area. Students can do the hands on learning in the classroom prior to or upon seeing the exhibition.

Subject driven tours would have given another opportunity for constructivist learning. Unfortunately, the limited amount of time to develop the exhibit forced the subject tours to be cut. The SPM could create these tours in the future and give them on a rotating basis once a month. Visitors could learn more information on specific themes in the exhibit. The SPM could create tours on the life of Norman Rockwell, the process of steelmaking, the history of Sharon Steel, and the history of Western New York Steel Plants (Bethlehem and Republic) during the 1960s. The tours allow visitors to handle certain objects used in the process of steel making. According to Graham Black’s The Engaging Museum object-based learning is key to museums. “To be object-based, it must involve opportunities for object handling and associated activities.”  

Overall, the exhibit helped the SPM attract new audiences and develop new relationships with businesses in the community. Hopefully, they will continue those relationships and build a more sustainable museum. *The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell* could be expanded upon in the future and more constructivist learning elements could be added. The exhibit helped this guest curator to grow as an emerging museum professional and apply

40 Black, 2005, 139.
knowledge in a practical way to assist a local museum use its collections and attract new supports. It was gratifying for this Western New Yorker to have the opportunity to work with a local museum and contribute to the community.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Rockwell, Norman. Sharon Steel Series, 1964-1969 (Steel Plant Museum of Western New York, Buffalo).


Rockwell, Norman, and Watts, Lee, & Kenyon, Inc. Correspondence from 1965 to 1969. Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA.


APPENDIX A:
Fundraising Materials
February 1, 2013

Dear

Hello, my name is Megan Hahin and I’m currently a graduate student enrolled in the Museum Studies program at Buffalo State College. I am collaborating with the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York on a new exhibit entitled, The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell. It will be opening May 2013. The exhibit will feature a series of prints on steelmaking originally painted by Norman Rockwell for Sharon Steel in Sharon, PA, and artifacts from Western New York steel plants that are also seen in the paintings.

The museum is trying to expand their visitor base and reach out to different groups in the community through different types of exhibits. The prints touch on art, but feature real people doing their everyday jobs in the steel mill. The process of steelmaking was so important to America’s history that one of America’s most famous artists, Norman Rockwell, chose to document it. Steel workers in Western New York completed the same tasks, and used the same equipment as Sharon Steel workers in their daily lives. Displaying the artifacts of WNY steel workers next to the paintings will create a unique exhibition experience that will fuse together art and the history of steelmaking. Curriculum for local schools will also be created for a variety of different age groups and subjects using the information and artifacts from the exhibit.

In order to make this exhibit possible we are asking you, as a member of the WNY business community, to help us with our capital campaign entitled The Art of Steel. Our goal is to raise five hundred dollars ($500.00), so we can ensure that we provide a first rate, professional museum experience. Donations will help with printing costs, exhibition production, and the creation of teacher kits for local schools. Donations can be made in $25 or $50 increments, please feel free to make a larger donation at your own discretion. Donors who pledge $25 will have the name of their business featured on a display case and the exhibition brochure. Donors who pledge $50, or more, will sponsor one of the fourteen Norman Rockwell prints and their business will be featured in the exhibition brochure. All donors will be invited to attend a special members only opening of the exhibit. The Steel Plant Museum of WNY is a non-profit, 501-C3 organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Enclosed you will find a pledge card that we ask you to return with your generous donation. If you have any questions or comments about this exciting exhibition, please do not hesitate to contact myself via email at mhahin21@gmail.com, or Spencer Morgan, Museum Curator at 821-9361, or via email at: spencer.morgan@steelplantmuseumwny.org.

Thank you very much for your valued support, and we look forward to seeing you at the grand opening of The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell in the near future.

Sincerely,
I want to support the Steel Plant Museum's Art of Steel Exhibit with a pledge of:
- $50
- $25
- Other $_________

Checks can be made out to the Steel Plant Museum of WNY. All donations are tax deductible.

Business Name

______________________________
Address

______________________________
City, State Zip Code

Email or Telephone #  Thank you for your support!

Return To: The Steel Plant Museum of WNY
100 Lee St.
Buffalo, NY 14210

www.steelplantmuseumwny.org/

Thank you for your support!
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<th>Reference</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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APPENDIX B:
Exhibit Text and Design
Appendix B, Figure 1:

**Shuttle Car**
Andy Marchiney
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 2:

**Tube Mill Operator**
Jim Rossetti
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 3:

Vacuum Degassing Unit
Bob Addicott
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 4:

Welder
Calvin Martin
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 5:

Foreman at Brainard Strapping Factory
David Richards
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 6:

Roller at Blooming Mill
Earl Hoffman
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 7:

Sendizimir Mill Operator
William Cole
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 8:

Foreman at Electric Furnace
Johnson “Junior” Ragster
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 9:

Furnace Operator (Cold-Sheet Roll)
Joe Kulesa
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 10:

Hot Strip Mill Operator
Fred Greene
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 11:

Melter at Oxygen Furnace
Pat Lyden
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 12:

Metallurgist
George Petropulos
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
Appendix B, Figure 13:
Operator at Tandem Mill
George Kettler
Print, 1966-1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Appendix B, Figure 14:
Runner Man at the Blast Furnace
John Reichert
Print, 1968
Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)
*The Original Painting is Missing*
Appendix B, Figure 25:

The Rockwell’s and Sharon Steel Corporation

In 1965, the Sharon Steel Corporation commissioned Norman Rockwell to create 14 paintings of steel workers and new machinery at their plant. Rockwell was in high demand when Sharon Steel asked him to create the collection, and it took him four years to complete it. In 1966, Rockwell made his only visit to Sharon Steel. He brought along his third wife, Molly, to photograph the workers as they completed their tasks. Each piece was painted from Molly’s photos. When Mr. Rockwell finished, the paintings were hung in the Sharon Steel administration building. A catalog was created from the collection. Which was used to promote the company and their new machinery.

Other Projects Rockwell

Worked on from 1965 to 1969:

- 1966 - Stagecoach Portraits for the Twentieth Century Fox film.
- 1967 - An assignment on Russia for Look Magazine
- 1967 - Illustrated and co-wrote the children’s book Willie Was Different.
- 1967 - Famous portrait Home for Christmas in McCall’s Magazine.
- 1968/69 - Pictures for the Space Program and Marines commissioned by the US Government.
Appendix B, Figure 26:

Shuttle Car
The process of steelmaking started at the coal mines. Coal was transported from the coal mines to the steel plant on industrial railways throughout the Northeastern United States. The shuttle car operator would shovel coal into cargo cars and send them to the steel plant.

Tube Mill Operator
The Tube Mill Operator worked at the Rolling Mill.

Vacuum Degassing Unit
The Vacuum Degassing Unit helped to remove hydrogen from steel. Hydrogen created cracking in steel and could ruin the quality of the steel.

Welder
The welder used the processed beams of steel to create buildings, railway tracks, ships, cars, etc. This particular welder was in the process of creating a skyscraper.

Foreman at Brainard Strapping Factory
Steel Strapping was used to secure products. Straps were flat and flexible and used to hold a cargo load in place. A Foreman took on more responsibility and supervised workers in the factory.

Roller at Blooming Mill
The Blooming Mill created structural shapes and rails out of steel. The roller’s job was to flatten the steel by placing it through two large rolls.

Sendizimir Mill Operator
The Sendizimir Mill was named after Polish immigrant, Tadeusz Sendzimir. He created an easier way to make Steel Strips.

Foreman at Electric Furnace
The Electric Arc Furnace created steel through the heating of scrap metal in an arc basin.

Furnace Operator (Cold-Sheet Roll)
Cold Sheet Rolling occurred at room temperature. The advantage of cold rolling, instead of hot rolling was that the steel was stronger and had a nicer finish.

Hot Strip Mill Operator
The Hot Strip Mill used the process of Hot Rolling or Cold Rolling to turn iron slabs into flat steel.

Melter at Oxygen Furnace
The Basic Oxygen Furnace turned pig iron into steel. The Melter melts down the pig iron down and through oxidation it becomes steel.

Metallurgist
The Metallurgist was a scientist who determined the purity of the steel made. If the steel wasn’t tested and it was structurally compromised many people could get hurt.

Operator at Tandem Mill
A Tandem Mill is a special type of Rolling Mill. Rolling is done in several passes.

Runner Man at the Blast Furnace
The Runner Man helped to keep the Blast Furnace operational. The Blast Furnace produced molten metal and a byproduct known as slag.
SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

Don Williams
Robert and Agnes Annis
West Herr

MassMutual Financial Group
Souhtowns Financial Group
Ted and Jackie Hahin

Brittany Hastings
IUOE Local 409
Kupkates
Sylvia MacKenzie

Hodgson Pool Sales
Premier Info. Packaging
APPENDIX C: Promotional and Advertising Material
The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell
May 17, 2013 - November 1, 2013
Opening Reception
Friday May 17, 2013
6:00pm - 8:00pm
Presented by the Steel Plant Museum of Western New York
located in the Heritage Discovery Center
100 Lee St., Buffalo, NY 14210

presented by:

SOUTHTOWNS Financial Group, Inc. MassMutual WEST HERR

LOCAL 409

Norman Rockwell steelplantmuseumwny.org
The Story of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell

May 17 - November 1, 2013

Opening Reception
Friday May 17th
6:00-8:00 pm
at the
Steel Plant Museum of WNY

100 Lee St., Buffalo, NY 14210
(716)821-9361

Hours | Tues, Thurs, & Sat | 10:00am – 5:00 pm
steelplantmuseumwny.org
APPENDIX D:
Press and Awards
CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

AWARDED TO

Megan Hahin

For doing an outstanding job on:

The Art of Steel: As Seen Through the Eyes of Norman Rockwell

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK!

Awarded this 17th day of May, 2013

Sincerely,
Douglas Morgan, Quartermaster
Men of Steel

by Jack Foran

Steel Plant Museum’s archives recall a vocation as it longer exists

Artist Norman Rockwell had an uncanny way of turning reality and something more like saccharine. A series of full-color illustrations of steel plant workers in various jobs he made in the mid-1960s is a case in point. The series is currently on view in the Steel Plant Museum (100 Lee Street).

The trove of black-and-white photos the museum has on file of operations at the Bethlehem and Republic and other plants in Buffalo and Lackawanna are so much more real and more interesting. Likewise so much more real and interesting the recently added exhibit wall entitled “Ed Walker Went Down Swinging.” Like John Henry, steel-drivin’ man.

For years Walker fought the federal bureaucracy to obtain justice for former Bethlehem Steel employees involved without their knowledge in nuclear materials production during the Cold War years 1949 to 1952. In 2000, Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law an agreement to pay $150,000 to each worker who contracted one of a number of different cancers after employment at Bethlehem in the nuclear work.

Walker and 2,000 other workers filed claims. Nothing but red tape ensued. Apparently that number was more than the government payment entity had been anticipating. Whereupon, Walker organized the claimants into the Bethlehem Steel Action Group (BSAG) to press their claims. Eventually, they got the attention of then Senator Hillary Clinton and Senator Charles Schumer, among others.

Finally, in 2010, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services designated former Bethlehem workers in the bar mill as eligible for compensation. The text of the museum display states that “this was a significant victory for the BSAG, representing all of the affected employees and their immediate surviving families.”
Men of Steel

Though too late for Ed Walker personally, who had fought tirelessly until he died, two years earlier, in 2008.

The Norman Rockwell project was for a publicity campaign for the Sharon Steel Company in Pennsylvania. Each illustration of an individual worker, taken from an original photo, was turned into a separate magazine ad with a brief write-up about the company. The illustrations have a quality of straight from central casting. The worker ladling a molten sample from a larger vessel could be the leading character in a Hollywood movie about Olympic athletes.

And everybody’s neat and clean and looks recently shaved and showered, and nobody perspires inordinately — just enough to create an attractive facial glow reflection of the pleasant red-orange radiance of process fires and liquid metal. And the work environment is neat and clean. No hazardous-looking piles of scrap metal and broken molds and general industrial detritus (hazardous to negotiate around during work performance, and possibly hazardous also as chemically or nuclear contaminated).

What’s missing from the Rockwell illustrations is what the museum photos and other display materials clearly show. The grueling nature of the work, the sweat, the grime, the dangerous and unhealthy workplace conditions—a display item blackboard lists lost time accidents in one column, fatalities in another column, through the years at the Bethlehem plant—as well as environmental effects, the semi-permanent ambient air pollution miasma, except in high wind situations, the acres of created land mass of the slag dumping grounds along the lake shore, the contaminated materials dumping. The magnitude and magnitude of the collective operations, the heroic dimension of the work and individual workers.

What Norman Rockwell’s tame sentimentalist vision doesn’t see, doesn’t convey. Why working at the steel mill wasn’t just a job, it was a vocation.

Lee Street is in the First Ward, off South Park Avenue, between the bridges over the Buffalo River and the railroad tracks. The building that houses the museum is called the Heritage Discovery Center, and also houses the Western New York Railway Historical Society museum. Admission is free.