Interactive Technologies and Indigenous Art: Exploring the Use of Immersive Resources to Increase Audience Engagement with Ceramic Pieces in the Andean and Amazonian Indigenous Art and Cultural Artifacts Collection (AAAC) at The Ohio State University

The Ohio State University

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Background

- Indigenous communities learn through experiential approaches.
- Indigenous artifacts are sources of knowledge.
- Creating, understanding, and appreciating indigenous art requires multi-sensory interactions between people and artifacts.
- Museums often separate artifacts from audiences and are therefore not suited for engaging with indigenous art.

Results

By way of the digital interactive program:

- 88.5% increased interactions with collection pieces and used sight, touch, and hearing.
- 100% increased their knowledge of and appreciation for indigenous art, the Canelos Quichua community, and ceramic making.
- 92.3% gained a deeper understanding that indigenous art creation and appreciation are interactive processes.
- 84.6% increased recognition of art as sources of knowledge.
- Users spent much longer exploring this digital resource than they typically spend engaging with museum exhibits.

Time that Users Spent Utilizing the Digital Interactive Program

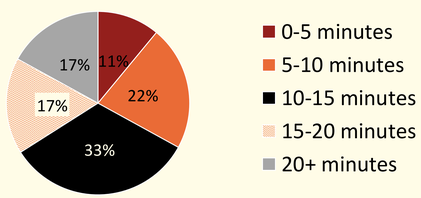


Figure 1: A breakdown of program-use duration. 89% of users spent 5+ minutes while 67% of users spend 10+ minutes.

Central Question

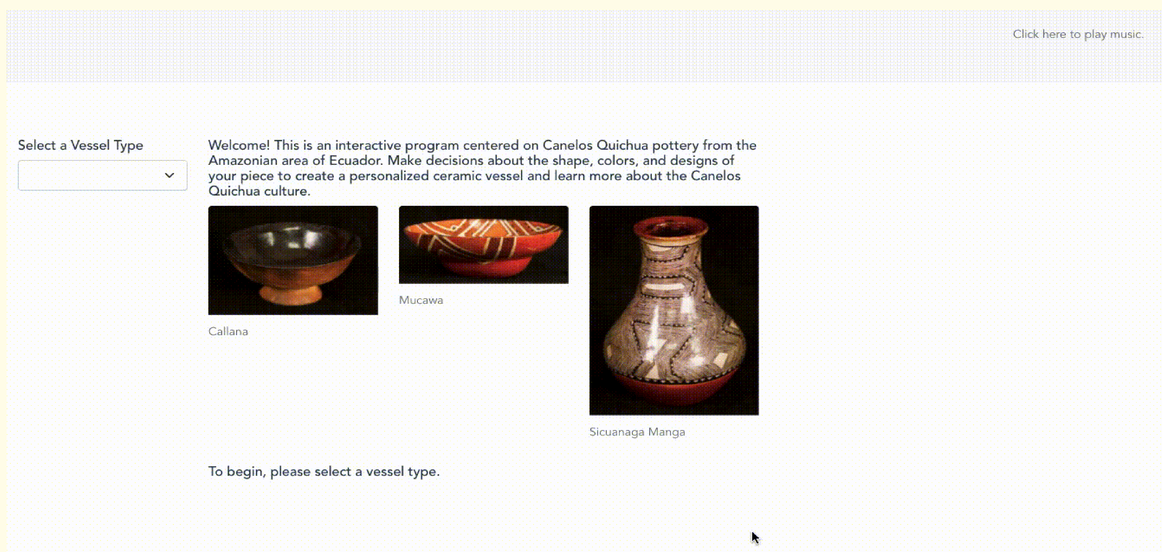
To what extent might interactive tools facilitate immersed interaction with Andean and Amazonian indigenous art, thereby increasing appreciation for indigenous forms of expression as epistemology and providing insight into key cultural concepts and practices?

Image 1: A *callana* made by Faviola Vargas Aranda in Campo Alegre of the Comuna San Jacinto del Pindo, Ecuador

Image 2: A *mucawa* made by Marlene Ushigua Santi in Pacayacu, Ecuador

Image 3: A *sicuanga manga* made by Virginia Santi in Montavalo, Ecuador

Project Design



User Comments

"This program was fun and interactive! I enjoyed exploring the different colors, shapes, and patterns. I also loved learning about how the art is made. It gave me a deeper appreciation for this art."

"I think the program helped me see the connections between the environment where these indigenous cultures live (the animals that inspire colors/designs, the type of clay available) and the art being produced."

Methodology

- I reviewed literature on the Canelos Quichua community, modern museum culture, interactive technologies, and experiential learning.
- I used Illustrator, Blender, and Substance Painter to create a digital resource that allows users to personalize models of AAAC vessels.
- I received feedback on the program by way of follow-up survey, recorded and in-person observations, screen recordings, and discussions.

Discussion

- The program's successes must be celebrated in the proper contexts.
- Technology is tempting, but limitations can shift focus away from the art.
- Digital features should not be used as crutches or fix-all solutions.
- A combination of interactive approaches including hands-on and digital resources is optimal.
- Amplifying indigenous voices, though challenging, is very important.

Final Reflections

- I gained new investigative and technical skills and expanded my definition of research.
- Working closely with others from an array of backgrounds and levels of expertise provided a variety of different perspectives and makes me excited to pursue similar approaches to research in the future.

Image 4: Brandon D'Souza with the ceramic artifacts in the AAAC

Image 5: QR code for the digital interactive program

Acknowledgements

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