



# WATCH & LEARN: ARTS & LIFESTYLE

## ART MUSEUMS: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

### INSTAGRAM TRAPS CHANGE ART (5:55 min)

#### VIDEO Script & Vocabulary (page 1 of 3/v1143)

#### INTERMEDIATE (B1 - B2) AND ABOVE

- ◊ Read the script and note new vocabulary
- ◊ Write three sentences using new vocabulary
- ◊ Prepare for the discussion questions

Starting Off

*There's a new generation of pop-up art experiences designed to look good in person and, more importantly, on Instagram. Right now these places are shaping how we consume art.*

- 1 Read the **Video Script** below. The words in **bold** are defined in the **Vocabulary** section. Look up any new words in a dictionary.
- 2 Go to the **Your Turn** section at the end of this document. Practice using new words and expressions from the video script to prepare for your next class.
- 3 Look at the **Discussion Questions** and prepare your responses for the next class.

#### Video Script:

**Narrator:** There's a **warehouse** in Brooklyn that feels like stepping into a dream. It's an art exhibit but the only picture frames you'll see are right here, on smartphones. This exhibit is part of a new generation of **pop-up art experiences** designed to look good in **person** and here - on Instagram.



There's the Museum of Ice Cream, the Museum of Selfies, the Museum of Feelings. Others have themes around colors, dreams, pizza, eggs, candy, and Rosé wine. Basic admission can **run** around \$40 and they often sell out months in advance. These places might not feel like real museums and instead more like a **trendy fad** with **ball pits**, but right now they're **shaping** how we consume art.

**Julius Lizardo, 29Rooms visitor:** In these pop-up museums the room and you are the centerpiece. So that's what makes it Instagramable, is that you are... you are **immersed** in the actual art.

**Narrator:** This format, interactive art pieces separated into themed rooms, is **hot** right now, but it isn't new. It comes from traditional museums.

In the 1960s artists started using museum rooms to create immersive, three-dimensional artwork designed specifically for a certain space. It was called **installation art**. Suddenly, art wasn't just confined to the walls of a museum; it was immersive and interactive. Viewers were part of it.

You can see installation art's influence on today's pop-up museums pretty clearly. Just look at the obliteration room, first developed by Yayoi Kusama for the Queensland Art Gallery. It's a white room where visitors can place colored **stickers** wherever they want. The Rosé mansion, an Instagram friendly pop-up has its own version of that. Or infinity room, a series of mirrored rooms that Kusama has been producing since 1965 that has a pretty identical version at the dream machine pop-up museum.

*Video Script continued on next page...*

#### Discussion Questions:

- ◊ Have you ever been to an "immersive" art exhibit in which you, the visitor, interact with the art and are part of the show?
- ◊ How do you feel about the fact that so many people seem to be constantly taking photos at art exhibits these days?
- ◊ More and more museums are curating their exhibits in order to attract Instagram users rather than to highlight the work of specific artists. What are some of the pros and cons of this phenomenon?

#### Vocabulary:

- **warehouse** - large building where raw materials or manufactured goods may be stored prior to their distribution for sale; often converted for parties or exhibitions in the US and UK
- **pop-up art experience** - temporary art event, less formal than a gallery or museum but more formal than private artistic showing of work. Pop-up experiences usually allow for a more immersive experience.
- **in person** - with the personal presence or action of the individual specified
- **run** - cost
- **trendy** - very fashionable or up to date
- **fad** - an intense and widely shared enthusiasm for something, especially one that is short-lived; a craze
- **ball pit** - a padded box or pool filled with small colorful hollow plastic balls generally no larger than 3 inches (7.6 cm) in diameter
- **shaping** - influencing
- **immerse** - involve oneself deeply in a particular activity
- **hot** - involving much activity, debate, or interest
- **stickers** - an adhesive label or notice, generally printed or illustrated

*Vocabulary continued on next page...*





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### Video Script continued...

**Narrator:** Installation art invites the viewer to participate in creating a piece of art or to physically see themselves in it, often **alongside** brightly colored lighting and simple, elegant shapes. And that made for museum experiences that were **inherently photographable**. Pop-ups **figured out** that there was a business to be made out of that photographability even if it wasn't attached to a well-known artist. Now the **explosive** success of those pop-ups is making traditional museums rethink how they do things.

**Alixandra Barasch, Assistant Professor Marketing, NYU:** People who work at museums are very concerned. It changes the nature of what artwork is most attractive to consumers and so in order to compete with the trendy, colorful exhibits that are popping up, you have to add some of those components to the more traditional exhibits.

**Narrator:** That conversation often starts here, with museum photography policies. Many museums have traditionally **banned** photography to protect **copyright** and light-sensitive paintings, but now that museums are becoming more social media friendly, their policies are changing. Like the Renwick gallery, which started posting "photography encouraged" signs in 2015.

**Sara Snyder, Chief of External Affairs and Digital Strategies, Renwick Gallery:** It was our way of saying, **boldly**, it's okay. You can be who you are, **mediate** your experience in a museum however feels right to you.

**Cathy Frankel, VP Exhibitions and Collections, National Building Museum:** It's very rare that museums are no photos anymore. I mean and that change has just been in the last five years.

**Narrator:** And when museums host selfie-friendly shows, they become **blockbusters**. The exhibit "Wonder" helped break the Renwick Gallery's yearly attendance record in its first six weeks. 2015's summer show "The Beach," at the National Building Museum brought in 30% of annual attendance in just two months and when the Hirshhorn held a three month show of Kusama's Infinity Mirrors, the museum increased its membership by a whopping 6,566%.

Instagramability **drew in** a crowd that might not have come to museums **otherwise**.

**Young Museum Visitors:** Honestly I'm here just to take pictures, you know. I saw lots of pictures on Instagram and that **prompted** me and my friends to come here.

**Narrator:** But for museums who still have rules about taking photos, it's hard to keep visitors from snapping pictures. Like this 2013 installation in the skylight of the Guggenheim Museum by James Turrell.

The colors and simplicity made it serious Instagram **bait**. Thousands of people posted photos of it, even though the artist asked that no photos be taken since they would **detract** from everyone's experience. That concern is real and research is starting to prove it.

**Barasch:** Just the act of photo taking itself, and choosing what to **capture**, changes the nature of your experience and that alone is changing how people go through museums.

### Vocabulary continued...

- **alongside** - close to the side of; next to
- **inherently** - in a permanent, essential, or characteristic way
- **photographable** - easily photographed
- **figure out** - learn; discover
- **explosive** - (of an increase) sudden and dramatic
- **ban** - prohibit
- **copyright** - the exclusive and assignable legal right, given to the originator for a fixed number of years, to print, publish, perform, film, or record literary, artistic, or musical material
- **boldly** - in a confident way
- **mediate** - form a link between
- **blockbuster** - film, book, or other thing that is a great commercial success
- **draw in** - attract people to an event or show
- **otherwise** - in circumstances different from those present or considered
- **prompt** - cause or bring about
- **bait** - something intended to entice someone to do something
- **detract** - diminish the worth or value of
- **capture** - record in a photo

*Vocabulary continued on next page...*

*Video Script continued on next page...*



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**Video Script continued...**

**Narrator:** The research Barash conducted found that when museum goers were instructed to take photos for social media, they enjoyed the experience less.

**Barasch:** Having the intention to post or share photos in mind while you're taking the photos, can actually remove you from the experience.

**Narrator:** Now both Instagram pop-ups and traditional museums are facing a **tricky** question: limit photography and potentially limit who **shows up**, or allow it and possibly change the experience. At **Refinery29's** pop-up experience, that means having some rooms where phones are supposed to be **put away**.

**Museum Guide:** I think it's time you **put** those cellphones **to bed**, what do you say? How about we Insta-connect with one another?

**Narrator:** At the end of the day, even if social media is a big part of why so many people show up, people are showing up. And if this means more people engage with art they wouldn't have **paid attention to** otherwise, that feels pretty **promising** for the future of art.

**Vocabulary continued...**

- **tricky** - (of a task, problem, etc.) requiring care and skill because difficult or awkward
- **show up** - arrive; come to spend time somewhere
- **Refinery29's 29 Rooms** - Brooklyn, NY funhouse filled with inspirational decor especially well-suited to instagram photos
- **put away** - put something in the place where you usually keep it when you are not using it
- **put to bed** - finish dealing with something
- **pay attention to** - to listen to, watch, or consider something or someone very carefully
- **promising** - likely to be successful or very good

**Your Turn! Using new vocabulary is the best way to learn and remember it.**

- 1 Choose three words or expressions from the video that are new to you and write a sentence using each one in the box below.
- 2 Try to use them in a context that is familiar to you to help you retain them.
- 3 Please ask for feedback on your sentences in the next lesson.

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