

The Museum of Modern Art

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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART FORMS TECHNICAL CONSORTIUM WITH FIVE MUSEUMS

The Museum of Modern Art has joined with major art museums from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago in forming a consortium to study the educational uses of interactive videodiscs. Funded by a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the one-year pilot project will be administered by the Education Department of The Museum of Modern Art.

Philip Yenawine, director of the Department of Education at The Museum of Modern Art and chairperson of the consortium, states, "This is the first instance of a concerted effort among museums to create new ways of reaching our diverse audiences. Acting together, we can experiment with a technology demonstrating vast educational potential in ways we could not alone."

At the end of the year, the consortium will have developed a prototype educational program using the technology of interactive videodiscs. Initially, a modest bank of images drawn from each of the participating museum collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art will be stored on the pilot videodisc. (Videodiscs have a storage capacity of 54,000 still images, thirty minutes of moving images, or any combination of the two.) Its computerized program will demonstrate three different methods of using the stored images or "image bank":

1. A public education program that will offer visitors the chance to expand their visual skills and knowledge in a way that is both entertaining and informative.

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2. A database search program allowing students, teachers, or researchers, for example, to gain ready access to stored images or browse at random through the image bank.
3. A self-authoring system in which staff members of each participating museum can design their own programs and applications for retrieving stored information.

Evaluation of the pilot disc and its applications are an integral part of the project. A final report incorporating its findings and recommendations will be distributed to educators and other museum professionals later in 1988. In addition, a plan will be formulated to produce a full-scale videodisc, which will be composed of the six museums' major holdings of paintings and works on paper created between 1860 and 1914 by European and American artists. The completed disc will be linked by computerized public education, database, and self-authoring programs.

Other participating institutions are The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Brooklyn Museum; The Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and The Philadelphia Museum of Art. The project will be coordinated by Susan Stedman with the firm of Nicholson & Cutrona and consultants Jim Hoekema and Robert Stein. After concluding this initial project, the consortium intends to continue generating ongoing collaborative efforts among art museums that want to share their expertise and resources in implementing educational programs based on technology.

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For further information, please contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.