



Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety—PEAS

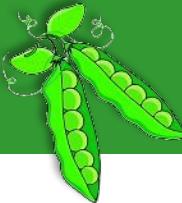
Should I exhibit this?

PEAS Access and Safety Framework

ARCS St. Louis

Thursday, November 20, 2025

10:15-11:15 am, Regency Ballroom



Panelists



Julianne Snider

Emeritus Director
*EMS Museum & Art
Gallery*

PEAS co-lead

• PEAS and the
development of the
framework



Suzanne Hale

Acting Director &
Collections Manager
*Gregory Allicar
Museum of Art*

• Applying PEAS
framework to
assignment for college
students in museum
studies course



Jeffrey Hirsch

Principal
HirschCultureWorks LLC
PEAS founding member

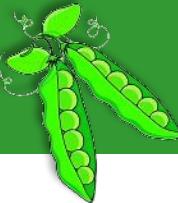
• Strategies &
Nudges



Sebastián Encina

Curator and Director of
Curation & Exhibition
*Minnetrista Museum
& Gardens*

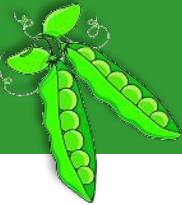
• Moderator
ARCS Board of
Directors



Agenda

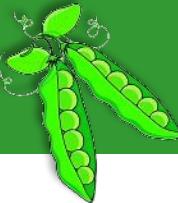
Should I exhibit this? PEAS Access and Safety Framework

1. Introduction
2. History & Need
3. Framework
4. Case Study
5. Next Steps
6. Questions & Discussion



ARCS & PEAS

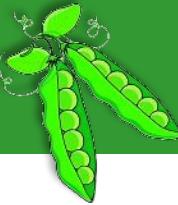
- Purpose
- Resources
- Introduction



PEAS working group mission

The Promoting Exhibit Access & Safety (PEAS) working group advocates for an interdisciplinary approach and iterative process to designing, building, and managing exhibitions; one that balances public access, preventive conservation, and security; to provide a safe environment for visitors and promote collections preservation.





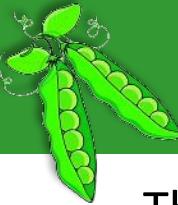
PEAS members

Wide spectrum of professional backgrounds and expertise

- collections management
- visitor services
- architecture
- facilities management
- exhibit design
- conservation
- risk management
- security

Benefits of multidisciplinary teams

- Better working relationships across specializations
- Broader sources of information for better understanding of visitor behaviors and motivations
- Enhanced understanding and support from the public for collections care
- Reduced risk to collections



PEAS vison/action

The working group strives to provide a platform for engagement in challenging conversations and collaborative solutions to detrimental interactions between visitors and collections through:

- Collecting & compiling data on visitor interactions with exhibits
 - gain insights into visitor behavior
- Researching & reviewing new methodologies to protect collections on exhibit
 - enhance public access
 - cultivate behaviors that promote collections care
- Offering interdisciplinary expertise, advice, & resources
 - to those seeking to improve visitor safety & protect collections on exhibit
- Promoting & advocating for the implementation of proven strategies within the field



PEAS resources & bibliography

- Scholarly resources
- Related to collections access and safety
- Different perspectives & disciplines
- Grouped thematically
 - risk management
 - security
 - collections & conservation
 - visitor experience & education
 - https://www.zotero.org/groups/4754124/promoting_exhibit_access_and_safety_peas/items/4XXB5BGF/library
 - etc.

The screenshot shows a Zotero library interface with a red border. The left sidebar lists 'Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety' and other group libraries. The main area displays a list of resources with columns for Title, Creator, Date, and a preview icon. The right sidebar shows detailed information for the selected item, 'Waller chapter 4 Collection Risk Assessment' by Waller, including the URL <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/319401101>. The abstract notes: 'Preservation is one of the three major subsystems within a collection management system. It is a forward-looking subsystem. It needs to anticipate what might go wrong, resulting in failure to preserve, because preservation requires identification and control of specific causes of harm arising in the future. It must be managed in as'.





PEAS focus issue

Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals

Volume 20, Issue 2, June 2024

- Reflecting current practices
- Offering practical solutions & effective methods
- Intersection of access & safety perspectives

Topics include:

- challenges requiring new thinking in museum security
- the problem of compromise in Conservation and exhibit decision making
- adopting a holistic approach to safety, collection management, and the visitor experience
- a collaborative approach to hazardous & contaminated

<https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/cjxa/20/2>





PEAS framework

2025: PEAS Access and Safety Framework

Goal—create a decision-making tool for collections & conservation professionals use

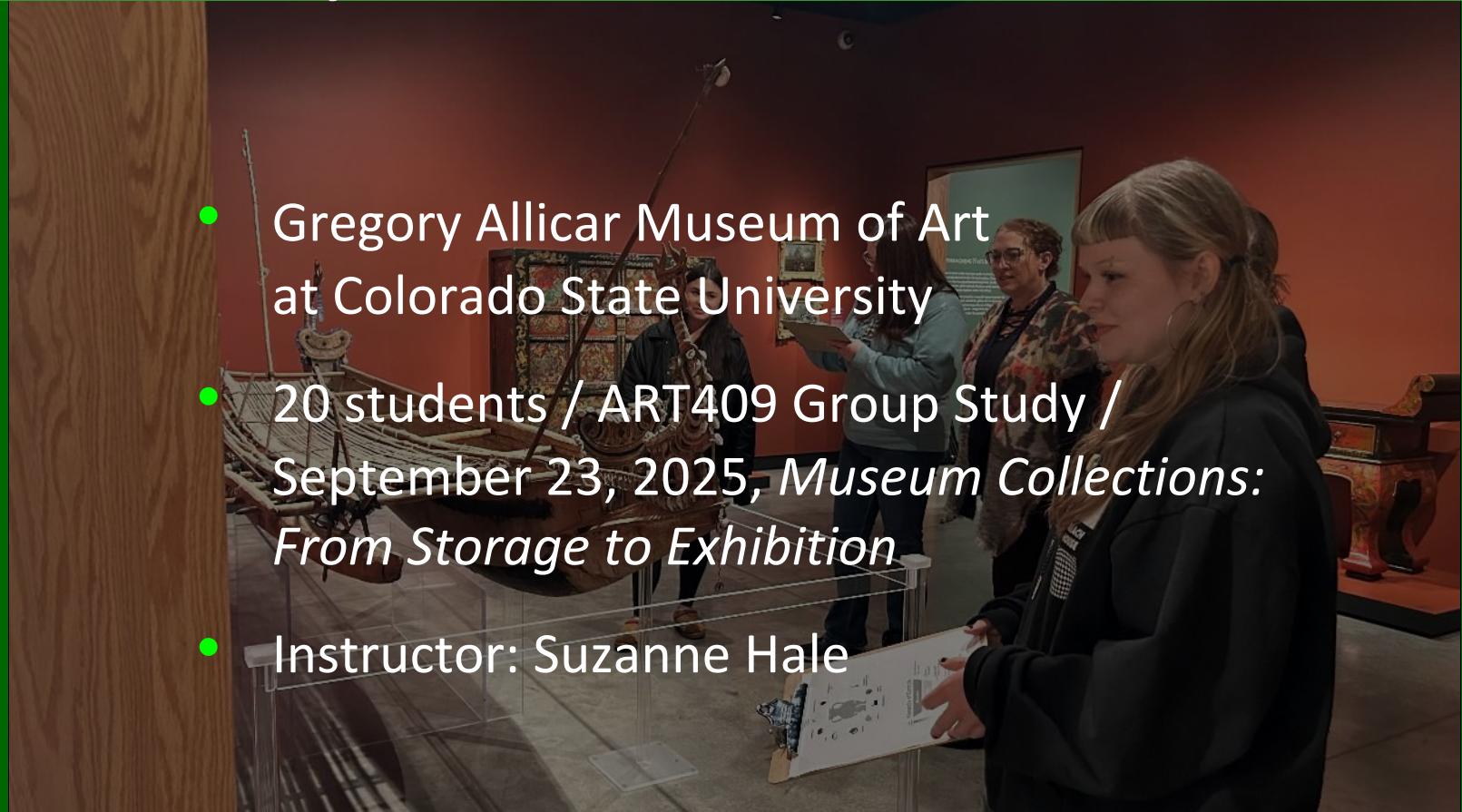
Purpose—help users to:

- identify key considerations for object safety and visitor access
- facilitate and encourage substantive discussions with institutional decision makers, leadership, curators, and other stakeholders on access and safety of collections and visitors



Case Study for PEAS framework

- Gregory Allicar Museum of Art at Colorado State University
- 20 students / ART409 Group Study / September 23, 2025, *Museum Collections: From Storage to Exhibition*
- Instructor: Suzanne Hale



PEAS framework

ACCESS AND SAFETY FRAMEWORK EXERCISE



PEAS

2025

Overview

This exercise will serve as a tool for Collections and Conservation staff to talk with leadership/curators/other stakeholders or decision makers about access and safety for collection items and the individuals that interact with them. This exercise is intended to prompt and frame conversations with colleagues around the risk decisions we are making for collections to provide access and provide points to consider when discussing access and safety with organization leadership.

PEAS framework

Directions

- You can also do this exercise independently or collaboratively with colleagues.
- To start, pick a collection item. Then, answer the following questions through the lens of yourself or your organization, or both. Your individual perspective may align or may contrast with that of your organization.
- Using your answers from the guiding questions, list out your top three priorities for access and safety in the chart below.
- Your museum's unique mission and collection type will have bearing on the answers so try to be as detailed as possible.
- Please note: life safety issues are not the focus here and always take priority. For the purpose of this exercise, assume that life safety issues have been addressed already

Contact Us:

Promoting Exhibit Access and Safety (PEAS)



PEAS framework

Guiding Questions

1. What is the collection item?
2. Provide additional context of the collection item and its relationship to the mission of the museum?
3. Who are the stakeholders? What is their relationship to the collection item?
4. How did the item get into the collection?
5. How do you/your institution define access?
6. Who accesses the item?
7. Why is the item accessed?
8. How do you define safety?
9. What are the environmental condition requirements of the collection item? What impacts may that have on other items it is displayed with?
10. Who may have interests in interacting inappropriately with the item? How are you (or your institution) defining 'inappropriate'?
11. What exhibit conditions might inadvertently increase risks of damage to the collection item by museum staff or visitors? Inadequate barriers and signage?
12. Which of the agents of deterioration is the item most susceptible to? How can you mitigate those risks?

Assignment for class

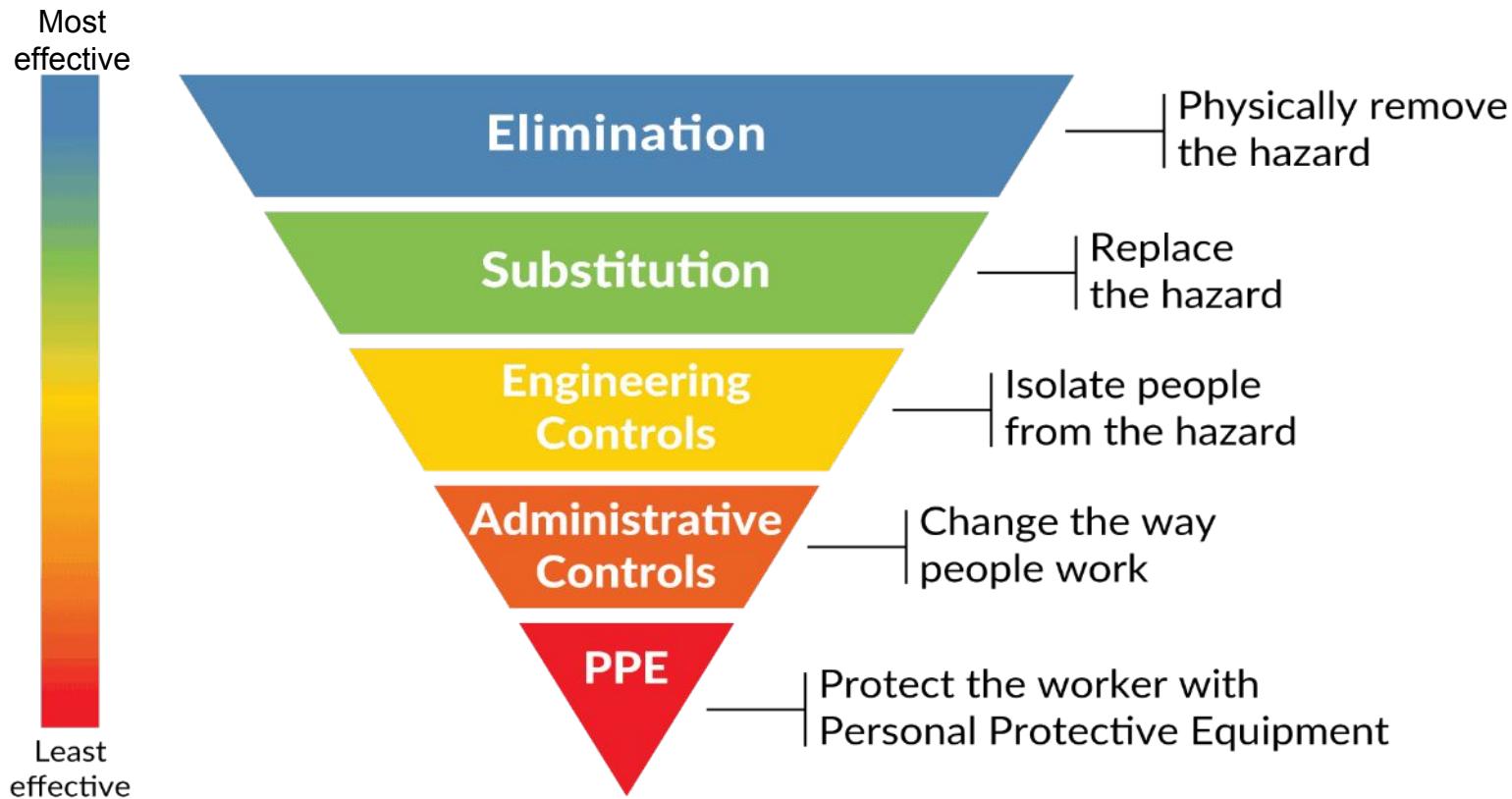
In groups of 4-5, pick a collection item on view
and answer these questions:

1. Which agents of deterioration are the biggest risks to this item?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
2. What display conditions might increase risks of damage to the item?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
3. What display conditions might increase safety risk to museum staff and visitors?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
4. Are there other problems that could arise from the display of this item?
 - How can interpretation information or presentation change the problem?

Agents of Deterioration



Hierarchy of Controls



Items on display



Nyamwezi Artist (Tanzanian), female thrown chair, wood

Gregory Allicar Museum of Art

gift of Michael and Patricia Coronel, 2021.20.3

Items on display



Insect display drawer

loan from C. P. Gillette Museum of Arthropod Diversity, CSU

Items on display



Clara Nulty, *Paperwork*, 2023-present

graphite, colored pencil, and ink on used envelopes
loan from the artist

Items on display



Unidentified Artists, Kwaiawata Islands or Marshall Bennett Islands, Waga (Outrigger Canoe)

20th century, wood with shells, pigments, plastic, and raffia, Gregory Allicar Museum of Art,
CSU, gift from the Denver Art Museum, Joan and George Anderman Collection, 2009.6

Applying the PEAS framework



Applying the PEAS framework



Assignment for class

In groups of 4-5, pick a collection item on view
and answer these questions:

1. Which agents of deterioration are the biggest risks to this item?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
2. What display conditions might increase risks of damage to the item?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
3. What display conditions might increase safety risk to museum staff and visitors?
 - How can these risks be reduced?
4. Are there other problems that could arise from the display of this item?
 - How can interpretation information or presentation change the problem?

Summary of responses from 4 groups

1. Which agents of deterioration are the biggest risks to this item?

Students identified likely agents of deterioration based on...

- Materials used
- Display situation
- How can these risks be reduced?
 - Consistent climate control
 - Covering with acrylic
 - Adding and improving display barriers
 - IPM practices

Summary of responses from 4 groups

2. What display conditions might increase risks of damage to the item?

- Height and orientation of item
- Item being uncovered
- Label being difficult to view
- How can these risks be reduced?
 - Changing height or orientation of item
 - Rotating in alternate items
 - Improving barriers
 - Moving label to eye level

Summary of responses from 4 groups

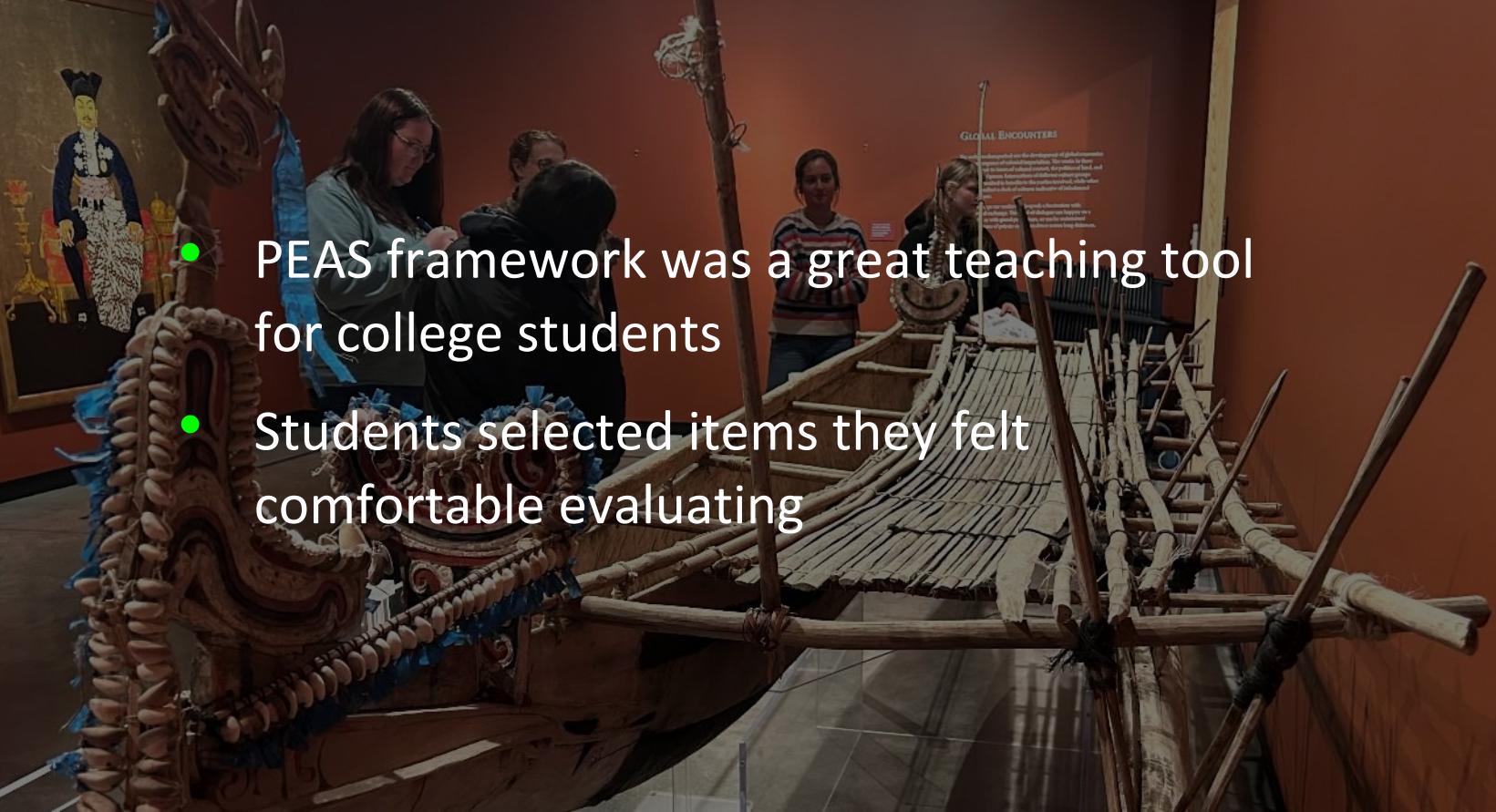
3. What display conditions might increase safety risk to museum staff and visitors?
 - For staff – handling, installing, and deinstalling
 - For visitors – interacting with item, e.g., sitting on chair or bumping into or climbing into outrigger; slipping on paper from installation that might fall off the wall
- How can these risks be reduced?
 - For staff – proper PPE / two installers
 - For visitors – adding magnets to paper installation / modifying barriers

Summary of responses from 4 groups

4. Are there other problems that could arise from the display of this item?
 - Adding acrylic covers may detract from visual experience and artist's intent (paper installation)
 - Large functional items may invite visitors to interact with them (chair and outrigger)
 - Anxiety or phobia (insect display drawer)
 - How can interpretation information or presentation reduce the problem?
 - Adding implied barriers



Case Study takeaway



- PEAS framework was a great teaching tool for college students
- Students selected items they felt comfortable evaluating

Case Study takeaway

PEAS framework was a great teaching tool for college students

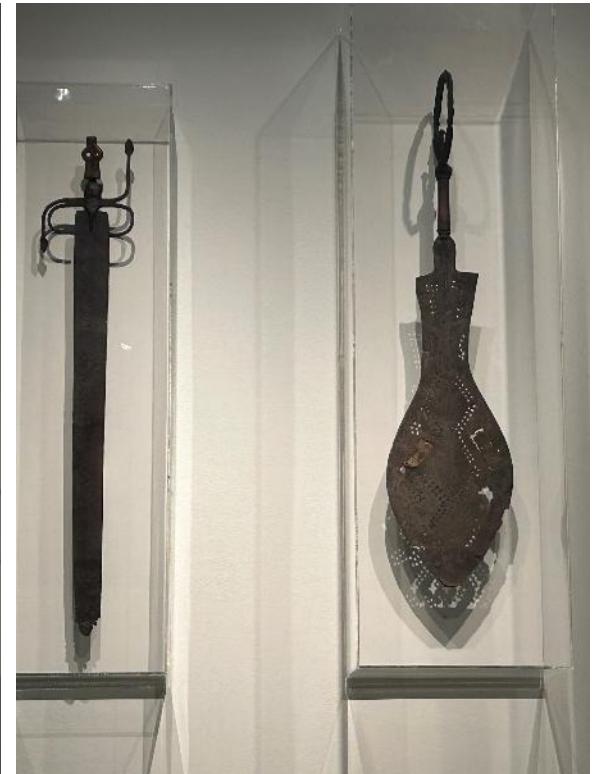
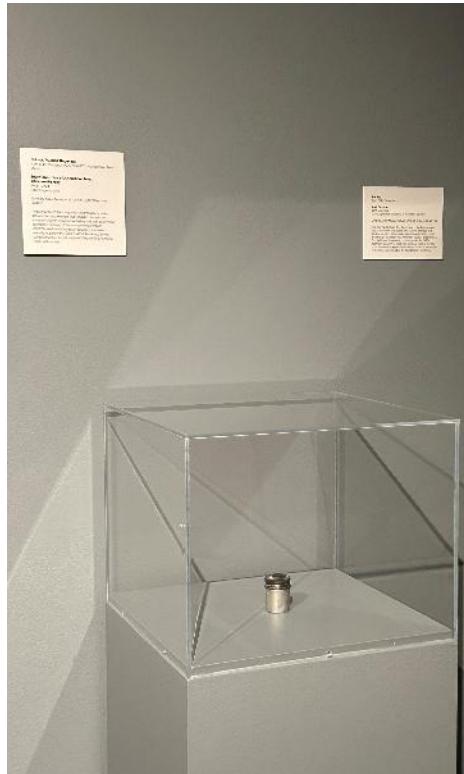


- Students needed an abbreviated assignment introduction
- Students looked closely and considered issues thoughtfully
- Students used common sense
- Students learned collaboratively through small interactive groups

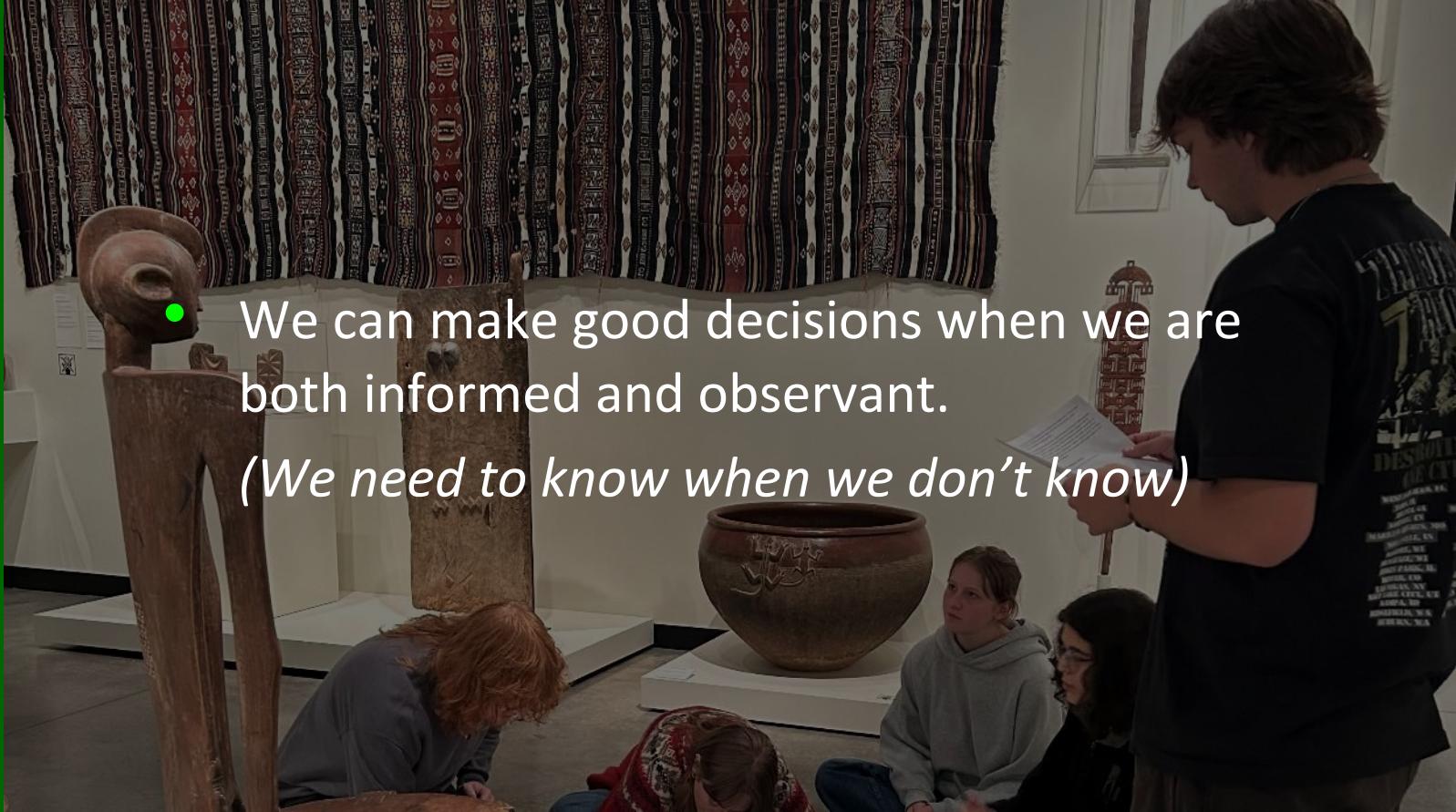
Case Study takeaway

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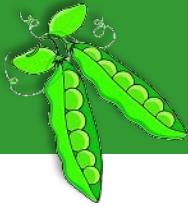
- Students avoided items with content concerns
- Students avoided items with cultural issues
- Students avoided items with problematic materials



Concluding thought

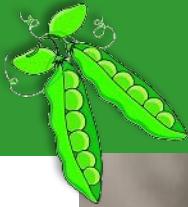


- We can make good decisions when we are both informed and observant.
(We need to know when we don't know)



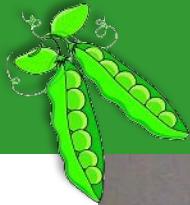
Strategies

Nudges



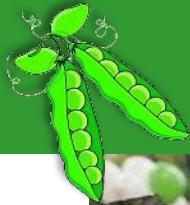
The Amsterdam Urinals





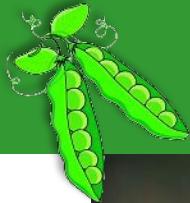
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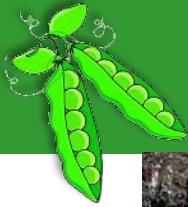
Trader Joe's





Trader Joe's





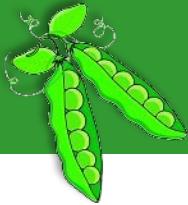
Bryant Park



1970s

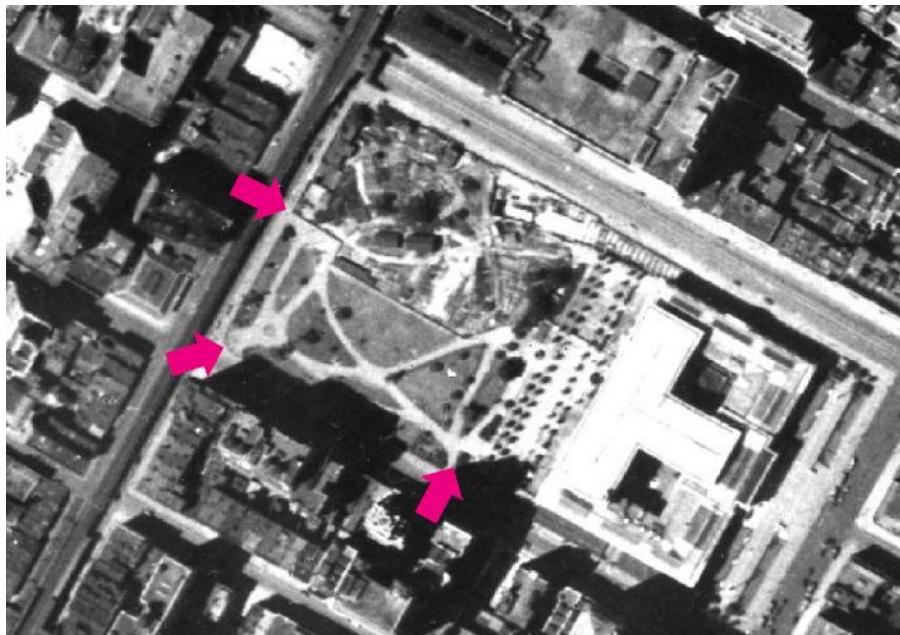
2010s

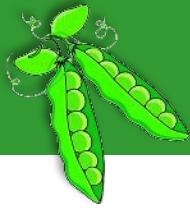




Bryant Park

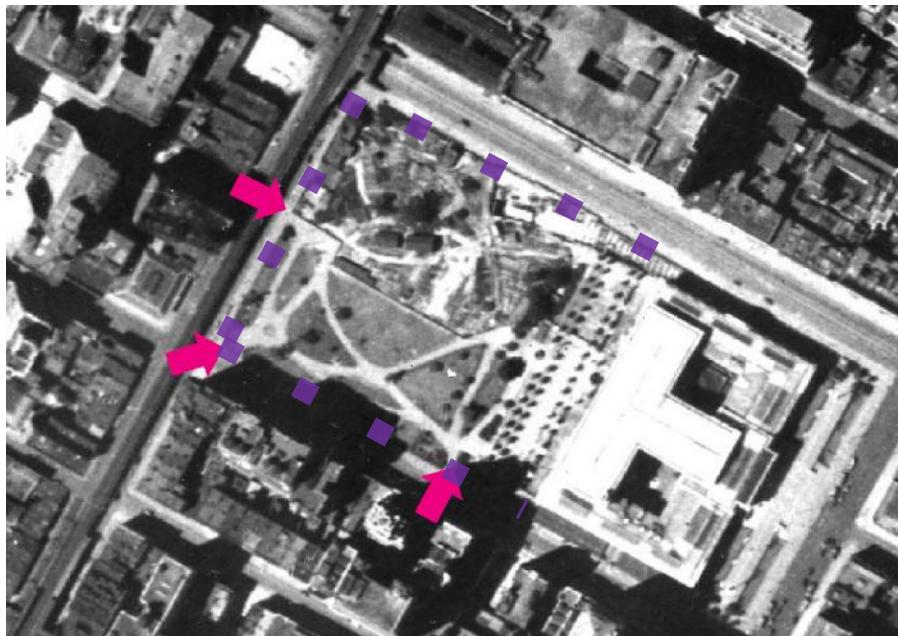
1970s

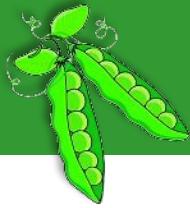




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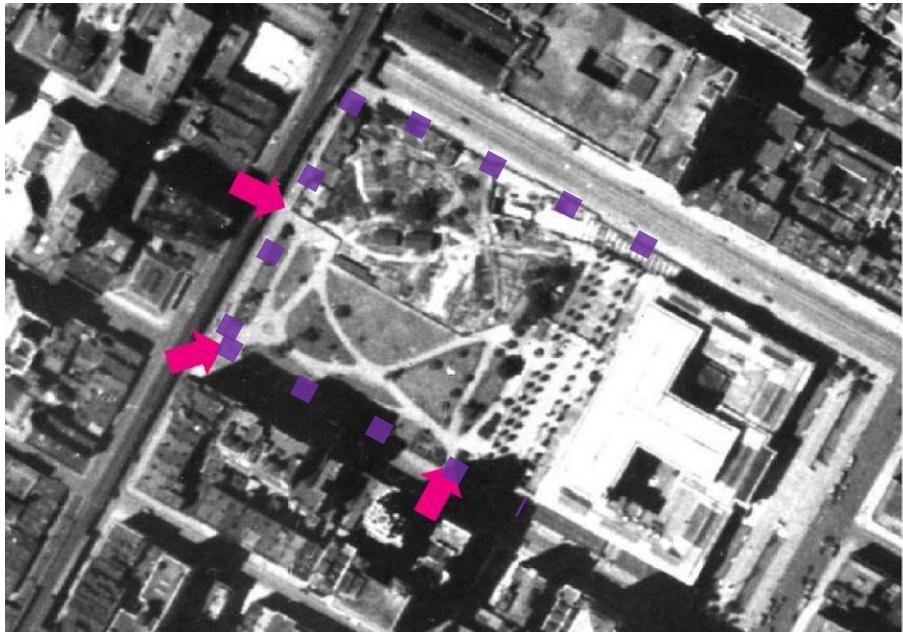
1970s





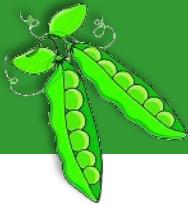
Bryant Park

1970s



2010s

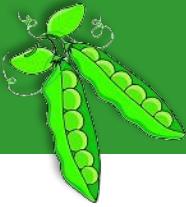




Bryant Park



Project for Public Spaces
<https://www.pps.org/projects/bryant-park>



Key capabilities

1

Support

Provides evidence for the decisions you are making.

2

Knowledge

Provides information for unknown and unfamiliar cases.

3

Big Picture

Consider all factors that go into exhibitions.

4

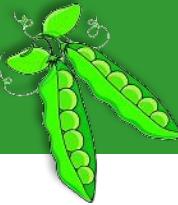
Instruction

Training for non-collection staff and early collections professionals.

5

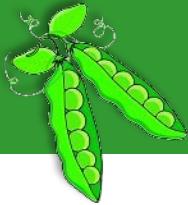
Policy

Codify the decisions we make to protect art and objects.



Target audiences

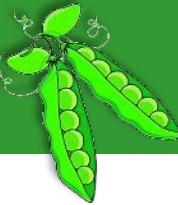
- Collections Team
 - Support when your expertise is not heeded
- Small Museums
 - Who do not have the staff to advise
- Non-Collections Museum Staff
 - Explains to them why we do what we do
- Vendors
 - Who do not work in museums
- Funders/Donors
 - The steps we take to protect their gifts



PEAS framework

Ask us anything!

Share your thoughts!



Resources

Questions?

Please reach out to: SI-PEAS@si.edu

<https://ncp.si.edu/PRICE-PEAS>

Julianne Snider: jxs1030@psu.edu

Suzanne Hale: Suzanne.Hale@colostate.edu

Jeffrey Hirsch: jeff@hirschcultureworks.com

Sebastián Encina: sencina@minnetrista.net

Thank you!