



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-253393-OMS-23
Project Category: Lifelong Learning

Whitney Museum of American Art

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$250,000
Amount of cost share:	\$282,438

The Whitney Museum of American Art will launch a three-phase project to assess, update, and deploy interpretation strategies geared toward visitors with disabilities, particularly those who identify as D/deaf and hard of hearing, Blind and with low vision, with ambulatory disabilities, neurodivergent, and more. The project will develop new standards for accessible digital interpretation and implement them across new materials focused on approximately 50 time-based media works. A cross departmental museum team will work with an advisory committee, focus groups, and an evaluator to carry out a user-centered iterative evaluation process, including completing a needs assessment. As a result, the museum will have institutional guidelines for accessible interpretation and standards for preserving these digital materials. This project will also inform the museum's future accessible digital interpretation for time-based media and all other forms of art.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion
- Digital Product Plan
- Performance Measurement Plan

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Project Justification

Goal, Challenge, and Target Group: With the proposed project, A New Disability User-Centered Model for Time-Based Media Interpretation, the Whitney Museum of American Art seeks to further Museums for America's objective to advance shared knowledge and learning opportunities for all (IMLS Objective 1.2). The project aims to empower lifelong learners (IMLS Goal 1), specifically the broad array of learners with disabilities, through new research and materials that connect exhibitions, interpretation, and digital media (IMLS Objective 1.2).¹

Time-based media (TBM) are produced by artists and acquired by the Whitney in ever greater numbers, but they are also some of the most difficult artworks for people with disabilities to experience and learn from (see supplemental material for the Whitney's approach to defining target group of people with disabilities).² In galleries, there is inconsistent implementation of interpretive resources around these works and, overall, there has been less creation of interpretive resources for TBM works than for other types of art. Online-only digital projects such as Artport commissions and the ongoing Sunrise/Sunset series have received little interpretation. Moreover, interpretive resources that are created for gallery installations become difficult to find once exhibitions close, and learners of all sorts may struggle to find these materials on the Museum's website. Captioning solutions to date, including the most recent tool for mobile devices developed in 2021, have received mixed feedback informally.

With this grant, the Whitney aims to improve how this part of its collection, which is critical to telling the full story of American art in all its diversity and complexity, is accessible for learners with disabilities. The proposed project will begin from their experiences, perspectives, and goals, as well as build into new cross-departmental guidelines and workflows. It will then further test and iterate upon that work with the target audience of lifelong learners with disabilities in the context of a large temporary collection installation with broad, urgent themes of American art, culture, and history.³ The Museum hypothesizes that digital media

¹ Over 900,000 people with disabilities live in New York City, plus millions more who visit the city annually (*AccessibleNYC*, 2021 Edition, by the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities). Nationally, 61 million people, more than 1 in 4 adults, live with some form of a disability (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html#:~:text=61%20million%20adults%20in%20the,have%20some%20type%20of%20disability>, accessed Nov 11, 2022). The World Health Organization estimates that 1 billion people worldwide have a disability and face significant barriers, from lack of captioned materials and ASL interpretation to accessible formats, large print or braille, and plain language (https://www.who.int/health-topics/disability#tab=tab_1, accessed Nov 11, 2022).

² By time-based media, or TBM, the Whitney means: film and video, sound, new media (internet, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and more), and installations in various formats, as well as internet works such as the 90+ commissions for *Artport*, the Museum's online portal/gallery begun in 2001 (<https://whitney.org/artport>) and the ongoing internet commission series Sunrise/Sunset. While all of the Whitney's curators work with TBM, two field-leading TBM curators have been at the Whitney for over 20 years each: Chrissie Iles, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Curator, and Christiane Paul, Curator of Digital Art; the Whitney's film department was among the first at an American art museum, begun in 1974 by John G. Hanhardt. Today, the Museum's TBM collection numbers over 850 artworks and is a leading repository for this vital artform.

³ The proposed project methodology is informed by recent thinking around best practices in museum accessibility and the broader field of accessibility. As stated in the American Alliance of Museums article by Laureen Trainer, Heather Pressman, Danielle Schulz, Caroline Braden, Charlotte Martin, Lynda Kennedy, and Alyssa Carr, *Museum Accessibility: An Art and a Science* (Oct 21, 2022): "People with disabilities should be the ones leading the conversation about their own interests and needs, a principle summed up in the expression 'nothing about us without us.'" Similarly, Silvia Soler Gallego argues that the creation of accessible resources such as verbal description increases social inclusion and the democratization of knowledge, and that Blind and low vision people should actively participate in the creation of these

solutions will be an important part of offering new ways to experience and learn from TBM artworks within in-gallery exhibitions and in digital environments, two related but distinct types of experiences where TBM can be made more accessible.

As an example, the Whitney's free-of-cost John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation Lobby Gallery currently has on view the recently acquired film *2 Lizards* (Meriem Bennani and Orian Barki, 2020). Originally released episodically on Instagram, the film is a touching and surreal depiction of New York City during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there are no financial barriers to enjoying the film and its spoken dialogue has captions, nonetheless it lacks: comprehensive CART captioning to allow D/deaf people to enjoy the ambient sounds and music critical to the work; verbal descriptions to allow Blind and low-vision people to understand the animation and cinematic backgrounds; as well as social narratives or plain language to allow neurodivergent people to understand its complexities.

In the past, the Whitney has created award-winning accessibility interpretive resources for many artworks in its collection. It also has a long history of access programs and working with artists with disabilities (see supplementary material for this history through 2016). However, it does not yet have a systematic approach to producing and sustaining accessible interpretive resources for TBM, like *2 Lizards*. In aiming to create this holistic approach, it is important to bring in direct inputs from the disability community.⁴

Strategic Plan: To solve such a challenge, this project unites and advances each priority within the Whitney's May 2017-approved strategic plan. Writ large, the plan aims to better connect the Whitney and the world around it; bringing together audience voices to inform how the Museum thinks about lifelong learners and best accessibility practices for interpreting a growing collection of TBM works makes that commitment real. Specifically, the proposed project builds on each of the strategic plan priorities: 1. *Art* (makes artworks more accessible and increases interpretation resources for the collection, furthering recommendations of Collection Strategic Plan conducted Sep 2019–Feb 2023), 2. *Artists* (same as art, plus will bring artists with disabilities into the conversation), 3. *Audiences* (lowers barriers to participation, brings audience feedback into interpretation plans), 4. *American* (increases resources to engage with the key question of what American art is), 5. *Staff* (builds staff evaluation capacity and increases cross-departmental work and practices), 6. *Equity and inclusion* (increases the Museum's inclusivity), and 7. *Digital* (asks how to make the collection more accessible via digital channels and tools, including digital artworks; begins to implement relevant parts of a digital strategy plan conducted by consulting firm Siberia Sep 2022–Jan 2023). (See Strategic Plan Summary.)

Beneficiaries: The project benefits three groups. Most directly, and the project's target group, it will benefit people with disabilities. This group will include learners with disabilities, artists with disabilities, art historians and scholars with disabilities, as well as educators working with these groups and who may themselves have disabilities. These constituents will be involved from the beginning of the project via an advisory group and focus groups, contributing to a needs-assessment around more robust interpretive materials from which they can learn themselves, share with their communities, and use to teach. Another group to benefit from the project will be Whitney staff, from visitor services colleagues and security attendants to curators and educators. Staff will have more readily available resources to share with the public and, will be able to expand their own learning; they will also participate in content feedback and improve their evaluation capacity through the grant process with the evaluator. After the grant, staff will be able to increase their own learning and professional experiences by using findings to participate in conferences or contribute articles on the project from various angles. (The grant proposal process has already brought together a cross-departmental group of stakeholders who work in smaller groups but do not often get to approach or work on a problem together.) The third distinct group of beneficiaries is the Whitney's education department, which

resources. ("(Re)Imagining the museum: Communicative and social features of verbal description in art museums," *Disability Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 42 No. 1 (2022): Winter 2022).

⁴ Ibid.

is leading the Museum in thinking about the public intersectionally across multiple identity traits such as race/ethnicity, disability, generation/age, and more.⁵ Largely through the active participation of the first two groups, the Museum will be looking to benefit lifelong learners through this project and represent their potential perspectives across its planning and programs, and this grant will give the education staff more materials, data, and knowledge to deploy in their work across different but intersecting populations such as schools, teens, seniors, community-based organizations, the general public, and more.

Project Work Plan

Activities: This project is conceptualized across three phases.

PHASE I: September 2023–March 2024

The Whitney will convene three groups during this grant. Internally, the project leads will be part of a team of 8-10 cross-departmental stakeholders—the Whitney Accessibility and Inclusion Working Group (WAIWG), which will meet at least monthly—representing access programs, archives and research resources, audio/visual, curatorial, digital content, and digital development. Two external groups of participants will be sought through disability community partners (see supplementary materials, letters of support). An 8-person advisory committee will be developed from the Museum’s partners in access programs, teachers and educators who work with people with disabilities, and artists with and without disabilities working with the Museum or in its collection. Working closely with Whitney staff, the advisory committee will also help with the creation of at least 6 focus groups.⁶ These external focus groups, led by the evaluator with the project team and in coordination with the WAIWG, will help to engage in a needs assessment process to determine what resources are relevant to develop and to expand in order to make TBM at the Whitney accessible to all.

Over this grant the Whitney will partner with nationally recognized museum consultant, evaluator, and educator Sheri Levinsky-Raskin of SJLR Solutions LLC to embed evaluative thinking into interpretation planning, centering audiences’ needs towards enhancing user experience. Phase I will launch a needs assessment and gap analysis internally with Museum staff and externally with audiences from disability communities. This work will aim to collect qualitative and quantitative inputs that will offer user-insights regarding the design of interpretative resources for TBM art and inform the design of the new guidelines for Museum-wide practices and workflows.

To begin, SJLR Solutions LLC will prepare an evaluation plan for review and refinement with the project team and the WAIWG. Meetings with staff members will be scheduled to collect information about existing interpretive resources and programming, especially access interpretation materials since 2015 (when the Museum moved to its current site), current relationships and associations with members and advocates of

⁵ This project aligns closely with the Whitney’s commitment to becoming increasingly bilingual in English and Spanish. While not the focus of this grant, the project team expects that some findings from the research will support ongoing efforts to be more inclusive to Spanish-speakers, as well as that some tools developed might work equally well for translation efforts. Spanish-speaking people with disabilities will be welcome to join focus groups and additional resources will be made available as necessary to support their participation.

⁶ Access program staff will work with the project team to highlight the project to program partners and participants such as ADAPT community network, local schools for students with disabilities, and more. Curatorial and education staff will consider which artists with disabilities might wish to participate in the project, drawing from a range of artists with whom the Whitney has worked such as Emily Barker, Kayla Hamilton, Christine Sun Kim, Kinetic Light, and others. The project team will also consider how to open access to participation beyond existing partners.

disability communities, and previously collected data and feedback from visitors.⁷ These initial meetings will offer opportunities to define areas where evaluative thinking and processes associated with projects and responsibilities should center around user experience, and where there are existing questions about engaging audiences from disability communities and designing high-quality accessible resources and experiences.

Simultaneously, project members, in coordination with the advisory group, will recruit individuals representing disability communities to participate in the project's focus groups (Phase I) and user-testing activities (Phases II and III). Focus groups will be designed to collect insights from audience groups about their needs, expectations, challenges, and current problem areas regarding interpretive materials for the Whitney's TBM, and to discuss factors that contribute to and could lower accessibility barriers. In addition to these discussions, TBM works from the Museum's collection will be presented during the focus group meetings and participant reactions and conversations will be documented. The exact number of focus groups is not yet certain and will be determined once participant recruitment begins. It is expected that there will be six or more focus groups, each with 5–7 participants.⁸ It is intended that each focus group will be homogenous so that discussions can be driven by specific responses and built on shared or similar experiences within each group, although select opportunities for conversations across these groups will be considered in light of the Whitney's commitment to intersectional and inclusive thinking.⁹

Insights gleaned from the staff meetings and focus groups will be essential to the work of the Whitney's Interpretation, Access and Inclusion, and Digital teams during Phase II, including those distilled into a report from SJLR Solutions LLC.

PHASE II: *April–November 2024*

The Whitney's Interpretation, Access and Inclusion, and Digital teams, in conversation with the WAIWG and project advisory group, will use the findings from Phase I to develop an interpretative plan that responds to the needs of those engaging with the Museum's TBM. They will determine which resources are most relevant to lifelong learners with disabilities and how such materials can be best accessed. Additionally, iterative testing will continue to allow the Whitney to test developing hypotheses and solutions: at the start of

⁷ Project lead Emma Quaytman, Coordinator of Interpretation and Research, will lead the audit of past materials, bringing in additional staff within education and the archives as relevant. In terms of existing data, the Whitney sustains various audience research efforts that this project will look to unite for the first time from a perspective of accessibility, inclusion, and learning. These include regular audience intercept surveys in the Museum's lobby, periodic website accessibility testing, access program feedback, online program surveys, past online member experience surveys, and more. The Museum's Chief Strategy Officer and incoming FAO Schwarz Family Foundation Fellow, who will be working with the access team for 2 years beginning in summer 2023, will be particularly useful partners in this data assessment.

⁸ As described and recommended in the 2021 *Qualitative Research* article by Filippo Trevisan, "Making focus groups accessible and inclusive for people with communication disabilities" (<https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941209418460>), the project's focus groups will be developed applying universal design principles. They will incorporate varied facilitation methods such as CART and verbal description, different response possibilities inclusive of high- and low-tech augmentative communication methods, and they will welcome a support person should the participant with a disability want someone to attend with them. Additionally, as noted above, the focus groups will be smaller in size and ideally held at the Whitney so that the setting is engaging and dynamic (with travel costs covered by the grant). Information materials and project fact-sheets will be distributed to all potential focus group participants, and informed consent forms will be required for participation, as it is expected that all participants will have autonomy in their decision to participate.

⁹ This approach acknowledges that people might identify with more than one disability, or that multiple participants might speak Spanish, as well as creating opportunities for additional challenges or unexpected solutions to arise.

Phase II, working with members of the Phase I focus groups, the Whitney will again pilot usability and impact including how the Museum might adjust its website's structure to better highlight, beyond the term of any single exhibition's duration, accessible resources that will expand people's understanding of American art. These pilots will focus on TBM works installed in the Whitney Biennial 2024, and will test new materials, digital tools, and in-gallery interventions during the exhibition's installation (spring to fall 2024). The Interpretation team will then begin to develop new resources—digital products such as visual descriptions, captions, ASL videos, and social narratives—to support accessibility for approximately 30 TBM artworks that will be installed in a major permanent collection exhibition opening in fall 2024. These newly developed resources will be available alongside upcoming digital Artport and Sunrise/Sunset commissions (Phase III). In total, the working group will create interpretation resources that implement the new accessibility guidelines for approximately 50 TBM works ranging in complexity.

As new materials are developed, the project team will also begin to leverage and, where necessary, further enhance/improve the use of existing tools within the Whitney including: The Museum System (TMS, the Whitney's collection management system), ResourceSpace (an open-source digital asset management system the Whitney has used since 2018 to support its Media Preservation Initiative, also focused on TBM), and Whitney.org.¹⁰ These tools will support cross-departmental conversations around establishing new workflows and guidelines to archive and preserve the resulting accessible interpretation materials and, where possible, those audited from past work in Phase I. For example, if videos and films are captioned, a transcript will be stored; if a verbal description is recorded, the audio file will be saved with the corresponding artwork. Proper and systematic storage of these resources will ensure that exhibited artworks will always include accessible resources, that the Museum defines parameters to sustain online resources as they are being developed with such important disability audience inputs.

The new interpretive materials created (Phase II) and deployed (Phase III) within the project period will connect to the Whitney's permanent collection exhibition and to its objects directly, as well as to concurrent digital commissions. Moreover, these assets will help frame the artworks to which they relate within an overarching institutional interpretive narrative. Such resources and materials present an excellent opportunity to conduct some iterative design-process testing and preliminary user-testing to collect feedback and insights towards refinement of an interpretive resource or materials. During Phase II, select Phase I focus group participants will continue their involvement in the project. The project team and WAIWG will advise the SJLR Solutions team on what TBM works will be available for iterative and user-testing with disability community members. It is expected that there will be options inclusive of, but not limited to, audio and video resources, interviews with artists, scholars, and curators, and verbal and alt text descriptions of artworks, working opportunistically with what is currently in the galleries and active online commissions. SJLR Solutions LLC will submit a second project report at the end of Phase II.

Sheri Levinsky-Raskin of SJLR Solutions LLC will also meet with select Museum staff to reflect on the newly developed internal guidelines, workflow opportunities, and implications. She will work closely with the project team and WAIWG to identify staff members who should participate in trainings on evaluative strategies and user-experience assessment techniques. It is expected that these same staff members will participate in the planning and implementation of the iterative and user-testing during this Phase of the project, as well as in Phase III, which will support them in gaining first-hand experience putting concepts into practice. The evaluator's project commitment will thereby help the Museum build evaluative capacity so that staff members can continue to bring audience inputs into their work beyond the timeframe of this project.

¹⁰ The Media Preservation Initiative was an important project to increase the Whitney's capacity to preserve and document TBM works (<https://whitney.org/conservation/mpi>). It is continued now as a Media Preservation Network. The capacity both around TBM documentation at the Whitney, as well as TBM-focused workflows, will further augment the opportunities around a TBM-focused interpretation and accessibility initiative and aid their sustainability.

PHASE III: *December 2024–June 2025*

Finally, the project will be evaluated on how the new interpretive resources are used and how they impact the lifelong learner. SJLR Solutions LLC will conduct a series of user-tests with participants from the focus groups in Phase I and the testing groups in Phase II, and with other user-groups representing members of the Museum's general visitorship, as well as other disability community members, artists, advocates, families, and friends.¹¹ These tests will be conducted both in the new permanent collection exhibition's galleries and in online settings with the platforms expected to show best usability, as both sites for TBM artworks will be updated based on findings to date from the project. Phase III thus allows for an authentic comparison with how much the Whitney has learned since the start of the project.

Once the testing has concluded, SJLR Solutions LLC will prepare a final report documenting the evaluation process, findings, and recommendations for the Museum's project team and WAIWG. The Whitney's project team will prepare a final report describing learnings from this project. Working with the WAIWG, and in consultation with the project's advisory group, it will also further revise the Museum's interpretive plan and update the organization's accessible interpretation guidelines that will be disseminated internally and, after the grant term, presented at industry conferences.

Project Management, Resources, and Tracking: The project will be led internally by the Whitney's Helena Rubinstein Chair of Education Cris Scorza, who has previously successfully completed IMLS grants (at other institutions), alongside Director of Interpretation and Research, Anne Byrd, and Coordinator of Interpretation and Research, Emma Quaytman, for whom this work will be an important professional development opportunity. The three members will work closely with SJLR Solutions LLC's Levinsky-Raskin, who has substantial experience on IMLS Museums for America Grants, within a 3-phase project structure that over 22 months allows for deliverables at the end of each phase, and adjustment as needed, in terms of schedule and finances. The project leads' and evaluator's work will be further supported by the cross-departmental 8-10 person WAIWG.

The grant funds would allow the Whitney to add capacity and necessary budget-extending financial resources around iterative audience-centered research and interpretation planning at a key moment when the institution has newly articulated strategic priorities for its collection interpretation, digital strategies, and accessibility. Being able to appropriately compensate the advisory group and focus group participants is essential. Grant funds would also critically supplement the technical and digital developments needed for this type of work. In addition, through the matching requirement structure, the grant facilitates convening a group of cross-departmental stakeholders to further these conversations, which will have long-lasting institutional benefits both formally via project outcomes, such as the accessible interpretation guidelines, and informally via new internal relationships and conversations.

Risks: Every person with a disability is unique, so there is always a risk that the developed resources may not meet each visitor's needs, especially in light of ever-evolving technologies and artists' ongoing innovations. Nevertheless, the Whitney is eager to engage in this iterative research and development process with members and advocates of various disability communities. Centering audiences' needs for more accessible interpretation, the Museum is also relying on internal expertise across accessibility, digital development, TBM documentation, collection management, and more, which will help mitigate these factors alongside the iterative nature of the project design.

Project Results: How the Project Will Advance Knowledge and Benefit People with Disabilities

¹¹ While world-renowned user experience firm Nielsen Norman Group research shares that it only takes feedback from as few as 5 users to determine usability and identify areas for continued improvement, the opportunity to test new resources both with those who were involved with the project from its beginning and individuals not familiar with the project will provide interesting and useful comparative data.

The project's primary aim is to define and meet the highest standards of accessibility for interpreting for people with disabilities its collection of TBM artworks, ultimately generating a sense of belonging for lifelong learners who identify as disabled and non-disabled.

To the public, these improvements will be seen via new interpretive materials, tools, and interfaces both in the galleries and through digital tools made available on whitney.org. With the iterative user testing process defined in the grant, the project team will be able to track these results over its three phases from establishing a baseline at the project's start, to iterative testing during Phase II, to responses to the newly designed materials in Phase III. The Whitney expects that the resources generated as part of this project will extend participants' understanding of what American art is, which is the central question that the Museum seeks to address with its program and that is an urgent one in this country today. Success means that lifelong learners with disabilities can access these artworks and interpretive resources on their own terms and join this important conversation directly. Moreover, the project team would like to see more educators and faculty using the Whitney's resources to introduce their students and communities to the diversity of American art and explore researching, writing, and creating distinct art histories that are inclusive of people with disabilities as artists, students, scholars, and lifelong learners. These practices will make it easier for artists with disabilities to be confident in working with the Whitney to present work in any medium, knowing that the staff has the capacity, knowledge, and commitment to working accessibly and inclusively to present and interpret the art on view.

Internally, this project's outcome will mean staff have a coherent, practical, sustainable set of guidelines and workflows that define how to approach TBM works, which ultimately could be adapted to other types of art shown at the Whitney. The new accessible interpretive materials generated by the grant around the Whitney's TBM artworks will be documented and preserved for future use, joining past accessible interpretive materials researched in Phase I of the grant (centralized and reprocessed, as needed), and any pilot materials generated in Phase II. Focused primarily on works in the collection or in the Biennial 2024—some of which might enter the collection—the interpretive materials around approximately 50 TBM artworks will have an impact beyond the grant period both through the Whitney's website or other digital spaces, such as ResourceSpace, available to learners interested in American art, as well as for future installations of these artworks at the Whitney. The resources developed for these objects will begin the process of creating accessible interpretive materials for more collection holdings, both in TBM and other mediums, and for special exhibition presentations as well. Lastly, the project team is eager to share these findings, guidelines and practices with the field, which will have a multiplying effect on the outcomes from this project.

Sustainability: As described above, sustainability is an essential consideration to this project across multiple perspectives. First, focusing on accessible interpretation for artworks that will be shown repeatedly extends the useful life and relevance of these materials, prompting the need to document and preserve them within data management systems that themselves will be assessed and upgraded as needed during the grant. Again, by focusing on TBM, this grant tackles the most challenging types of artworks to make fully accessible to audiences with disabilities. By creating solutions and greater understanding of how to work with these assets, the project paves the way for work around accessible interpretation across the Museum's entire collection. Second, over the grant's 22 months, new guidelines and cross-departmental workflows will be conceived and implemented and that will continue to be maintained beyond the course of the grant. Similarly, the WAIWG will continue to meet, which also adds capacity to the Whitney in thinking about accessibility challenges.¹² Lastly, the evaluator's work with the project leads, team, and WAIWG will have a lasting impact on staff capacity to design and implement audience-centered research and evaluation.

¹² This working group format mirrors other working groups at the Whitney, such as the Indigenous Art and Artists Working Group, that bring together cross-departmental stakeholders and consistently engage outside experts and audiences. This format has been successful in suggesting, implementing, and sustaining ongoing institutional change around areas where expertise is not and should not be held solely within one department.

Types of Digital Products Created

For this project, which centers on the creation of new types of accessible interpretation materials for time-based media artworks, digital products are one of the core grant outcomes. In Phase I of the grant, the project team will assess audience needs, audit the accessibility of existing interpretation resources for artworks in the Whitney's collection, and identify a range of solutions to respond to the needs of different learners with disabilities. In Phase II, after piloting revised or new interpretative products for approximately 15 artworks already on view, the Interpretation team will work with colleagues across Access, Curatorial, and Digital Development to prototype the new standards around interpretive materials for about 30 artworks that will be installed in a major new permanent collection exhibition along with approximately 5 digitally available artworks on the Whitney's website. Responding to inputs from different learners with disabilities, the project team anticipates the digital interpretation products will use many of the following formats, some, if not all, in combination. While not new on their own, the imperatives of working with time-based media, including digital formats, require consideration of how to best deploy these formats in ambitious, experimental ways. These assets are expected to include:

- Visual descriptions: having worked with static works to support Blind and low-vision audiences, vividly describing time-based media will have to explore real-time descriptions for works that are sometimes variable or interactive. Using multiple audio channels with multiple perspective descriptions, including the voice of low-vision audiences, would expand people's understanding of the artwork.
- Captions for time-based media: previously produced for D/deaf visitors of static works, these have typically been either simple transcripts of dialogue or descriptions of non-verbal sounds. New solutions may combine these functions to create a richer, non-literal experience of a work, allowing audiences to experience it in a multi-dimensional fashion.
- American Sign Language videos: examining how to facilitate the viewing of time-based media while simultaneously viewing an ASL interpreter poses a unique set of challenges. Of the Whitney's existing 64 ASL videos, four offer gallery-based interpretation of time-based works, while four more present ASL-interpreted interviews with performance artists. Feedback from learners with disabilities and the evaluator will offer new suggestions for pathways forward to best meet this community's needs in the galleries and online, where many people encounter these videos via the Whitney's YouTube channel or through the Museum's website.
- Social narratives: the Whitney has used these resources to allow neurodivergent visitors to learn what to expect with immersive installations, as well as overall upon arrival to the Museum. They have proved useful to audiences beyond neurodivergent ones, too. Exploring how these might be enhanced and shared will be a useful tool to consider with learners with disabilities.
- Digital artist commissions: launched in 2001, Artport is the Whitney's portal to Internet art and an online gallery space for net art commissions and new media art. Typically launching 5-6 new online commissions per year, Artport ranges from AR narratives to interventions in the Museum's website, and beyond. The commissions offer critical, incisive perspectives on the role of technology in contemporary life. The grant-funded project will explore ways in which these artworks can be opened up to all audiences. Since the artists themselves typically develop the technical side of these products—working closely with the Whitney's Senior Developer primarily on launching the works on the Whitney's website—this project expects to work with the artists, too, in conceptual and practical terms to respond to the needs identified by learners with disabilities.

Availability, Access, and Sustainability of Digital Products

The Whitney consistently creates digital content and works closely with artists, curators, and external parties as part of its normal operations. The Museum's staff are accustomed to obtaining all appropriate rights clearances, including image and music licenses. The Whitney makes its digital content available to the public free of charge on whitney.org and on the Museum's social media channels (such as YouTube). It ensures that all content on whitney.org is archived in perpetuity, and all video content is archived on the Whitney's servers and can be migrated to another platform should YouTube no longer be sustainable.

The types of products described above will be freely available on the Whitney's website in formats chosen to reflect the needs articulated by users, that meet both technical and aesthetic criteria of the Whitney, and that can be documented and preserved for future uses. To assure the latter, the project team will collaborate closely on its digital product development with the Whitney's Senior Developer and the Director of Research Resources to make sure that the products are durable, can be found easily by the learners with disabilities through the website or other public digital channels, and that they become part of each artwork's object record to be available for future Museum projects.

Both the Digital and Research Resources teams are invested in this project and bring complementary expertise. For example, the Research Resources team has been building its knowledge and capacity to document and preserve diverse types of media since 2018 through the Museum's Media Preservation Initiative (MPI). MPI was a project that assessed, documented, and preserved the Museum's growing collection of 850+ time-based media works, in collaboration with the conservation department. That project led the Whitney to the open-source digital asset management program ResourceSpace, which supplements the collection management database The Museum System commonly used across art museums. As part of this grant, the Whitney will explore how to select and optimize the best possible back-end tool to support the work and the digital products this grant will enable the Museum to create. Existing expertise within the Museum, supplemented if necessary by a short external technical engagement, will allow for alternative possible solutions to the question of archiving and sustainability for the new digital resources. Such solutions will impact the project's success during the grant period and beyond, as they are likely to prove applicable to the already growing interpretation ambitions across the collection.

Performance Measure	Data We Will Collect (e.g., counts, costs, weights, volumes, temperatures, percentages, hours, observations, opinions, feelings)	Source of Our Data (e.g., members of the target group, project staff, stakeholders, internal/external documents, recording devices, databases)	Method We Will Use (e.g., survey, questionnaire, interview, focus group, informal discussion, observation, assessment, document analysis)	Schedule (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, beginning/end)
Effectiveness: The extent to which activities contribute to achieving the intended results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The grant’s core is 3 iterative phases of focus groups and user testing. Small groups comprising people with disabilities—of which there will be at least 6 5-7-person groups—will work with an evaluator to yield qualitative and quantitative data about how they can access and use, and what they want to learn from the Whitney’s time-based media, including digital artworks. This testing will be managed by the project leads and an internal group of stakeholders and be informed by collaboration with an external advisory group of 8-10 teachers, learners, and artists with disabilities or who work with learners with disabilities — Quarterly, the project team will assess and update the number of time-based media works that are accessible by its current definition, tracking towards the grant goal of providing new accessible interpretation materials for 50 time-based media works by the end of the grant period and completing an audit of past accessible interpretation materials back to 2015 — Over the course of the grant, project leads will document the agendas for the monthly meetings of the internal Whitney Accessibility and Inclusion Working Group to assess the progress across the types of conversations held, challenges addressed, and solutions tried — Expert evaluator SJLR Solutions LLC will provide 3 reports (1 each at the end of each grant phase), which will document high-level trends, key insights, questions, and recommendations in written and visual formats and which will become reference documents for the project team and the Whitney as a whole after the grant — The Whitney’s Education Staff will conduct brief entry, mid-grant, and exit interviews or collect written surveys with the advisory group and focus groups requesting feedback on the grant process — The evaluator will work closely with the project team and working group to provide implicit training opportunities across the 22 months, and explicit staff trainings in Phase III, which will expand the Whitney’s ability to do future audience-centered research and testing 			

<p>Efficiency: How well resources (e.g., funds, expertise, time) are used and costs are minimized while generating maximum value for the target group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Twice annually, project leads will assess staff time spent on the project to calculate and record the value of that time, including the number internal groups meet — Twice annually, project leads will update the number of external meetings held and participation fees paid as well as internal working group meetings held — During Phase II of the project, a new working document of accessible interpretation guidelines will be developed and shared with internal stakeholders and others to inform institutional practices; these will be updated and revised thereafter, including through work in Phase III — At the end of each project phase, the Whitney will receive a report from the evaluator — During Phase I of the project, the Whitney will audit its historical interpretive products with a focus on time-based media-related assets at least back to 2015 in order to bring these into the project scope in terms of possible user-testing and as material that can be added into the systems to better share them with the public in future exhibitions and through the suggested digital channels such as the website or ResourceSpace; these resources will supplement the new interpretive materials being generated during the grant period, adding to the impact the grant will have in the Whitney creating more accessible interpretive resources for lifelong learners
<p>Quality: How well the activities meet the requirements and expectations of the target group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Input from the target group of people with disabilities will be gathered in 2 complementary ways, both directly through focus groups across the 3 phases of the grant and through an advisory committee that has ongoing relationships with the Whitney and that meets 8 times, during all 3 phases of the grant; these two groups will be focusing on questions about their expectations during nearly all of their meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The project team will work directly with the target group to provide the accommodations and support necessary to allow individuals to participate fully in meetings and to create a welcoming and open environment for conversation, connection, and critical feedback — By using each phase of the project for focus groups and user testing, the target group has an opportunity to give direct feedback on the work of the grant and whether it meets their expectations
<p>Timeliness: The extent to which each task/activity is completed within the proposed timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Every six months, the project leads will assess the activities completed to date against the proposed Schedule of Completion; where there are discrepancies, they will make plans for how to adjust upcoming activities to complete the grant's activities within the time and budget parameters — Evaluator's evaluation proposal reflects the 3 phases described in the grant and breaks the proposed work, time commitment, and fee into three parts to align with the proposal's timeline, allowing for timely completion, or, if necessary, adjustment as the grant progresses, to assure its timely and effective completion