

# M ART + TECHNOLOGY ANNOUNCEMENT

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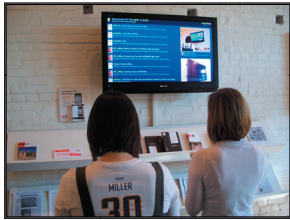
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MUSEUM USES TECHNOLOGY + NEW MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH VISITORS From QR codes to location-based social networks, Mattress Factory blurs line between “here” and “there”

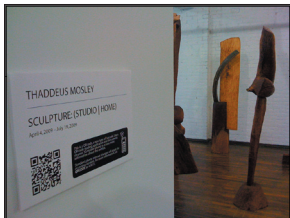
PITTSBURGH, PA (May 18, 2009) – Leave it to a museum known worldwide for pushing artistic boundaries to also push the technological envelope. Currently, the Mattress Factory, a museum of contemporary installation art located in Pittsburgh, is experimenting with three unique technology initiatives designed to deepen visitors’ experiences.

“On the exhibitions side of the organization, the Mattress Factory has been exploring the intersection of art and technology for quite some time,” says Jeffrey Inscho, who oversees Audience Engagement programs for the museum. “We feel the natural next step is to transfer that technological curiosity to the visitor and invite them to participate with it during their MF experience.”



**1** SCREENtxt is a mashup of several technologies and platforms. When visitors arrive at the Mattress Factory they are greeted with a 42” flat-screen television that displays a live text message (SMS) and photo stream sent directly by visitors from their mobile phones. Through a partnership with BrightKite, a location-based social network, and Twitter, the enormously popular micro-blogging platform, all SCREENtxt activity is also viewable online through a portal on the Mattress Factory’s blog.

Essentially, visitors are now able to communicate with each other in a backchannel about the artwork they are viewing. With SCREENtxt content also being viewable online, a participant who visited the museum weeks ago is able to communicate with someone currently on-site and engage in a dialogue about the art they both experienced at the museum.



**2** The Mattress Factory is also the first museum in the United States to utilize QR code technology as a visitor engagement tool. QR codes are two-dimensional barcodes that contain information. The “QR” stands for “Quick Response,” because the information contained in the code can be quickly, easily and reliably accessed in a matter of seconds from most 3G mobile phones.

In an attempt to reduce the quantity of printed gallery guides the museum produces, the Mattress Factory has placed a number of these codes on exhibition title cards throughout the galleries. Each code contains different information; some access video of artists talking about the piece the visitor is viewing or video of the artist installing the work, some display still images and background information, while others contain short anecdotal text messages about the pieces they are near.



**3** MF iConfess is an innovative approach to broaden the Mattress Factory’s outreach and hear directly from visitors using technology in a new way. Computer hardware combined with YouTube’s Quick Capture feature allows visitors to record their thoughts and then upload their responses directly to a YouTube channel created for the project.



In the museum’s first-floor lobby, a private, confessional-like structure has been crafted in which museum visitors are asked to broadcast their answers to the question, “What does the Mattress Factory mean to you?” Uploaded responses are as varied as the visitors making the videos. One visitor from Scotland says, “I really like that the emphasis here at the Mattress Factory is on space and community,” while another visitor quips that “the Mattress Factory is the only art museum where he actually had fun.”

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The Mattress Factory is a museum of contemporary art that presents “art you can get in to” – room-sized environments, created by in-residence artists. Located at 500 Sampsonia Way, on Pittsburgh’s North Side, since 1977, the Mattress Factory is hailed as the best facility for installation art in the United States.