COOPER HEWITT

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COOPER HEWITT'S PEN FACT SHEET
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CHANGING THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Cooper Hewitt's Pen has been developed to redefine today's museum experience and the public's engagement with design. Given to all Cooper Hewitt visitors as they enter the museum, the Pen will enable members of the public to "collect" objects, discover and explore information and ideas and become designers in their own right by creating their own digital drawings. Members of the public will also be able to record their visit using the Pen, view and share it online and supplement it during subsequent visits. A groundbreaking technology, the Pen as part of the museum experience gives all audiences a new way to learn, to experiment and to play designer.

DEVELOPMENT

The concept for the Pen was developed especially for Cooper Hewitt by Local Projects with Diller Scofidio + Renfro as a way to invite visitors to learn about design by designing themselves. Beyond working as a digital Pen for drawing, it encourages visitors to engage with the works on view in the museum, rather than looking at them through their mobile devices.

Turning a concept into custom-designed hardware has required an international team. Early prototypes of the Pen were based on Sistel Networks's vWand, an inventory control device used in health care. GE and Sistel Networks, working alongside Cooper Hewitt and Undercurrent, turned sketches into working prototypes. Sistel changed the way the vWand's electronics operated, and then GE's industrial design team designed a sleeker form for museum use. This collaborative industrial design process mirrors how designers solve real-world problems and the process that many of the objects in the museum's collection have undergone.

HOW IT WORKS

The Pen reads data from object labels throughout the museum. This data is stored in the Pen's onboard memory, which can then be accessed at interactive tables located in the museum galleries. These large-size, ultra-high-definition tables and screens facilitate use of the Pen to explore and manipulate the objects that visitors have collected; explore related objects in Cooper Hewitt's collection; understand the context of the collection; learn more about designers, design processes and materials; watch and share videos; and even create their own original designs.

The stylus tip of the Pen provides a far greater fidelity for drawing and sketching on the interactive tables than a finger, allowing the interactive tables to make the most of their ultra-high-definition displays.

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Each Pen is paired with the visitor's ticket, allowing them to later log in to the online record that they created of their museum visit. Visitors can also share all the objects that they have collected and created, as well as build their personal collection every time they visit.

IMMERSION ROOM

Cooper Hewitt's extraordinary collection of wall coverings will be featured in a new high-tech space, the Immersion Room, designed by Local Projects, where visitors select digital images of wallpapers—or sketch their own designs—and then project them onto the walls at full scale to see their impact. In addition to offering an entertaining interactive experience, the Immersion Room, for the first time, allows museum visitors to explore and appreciate Cooper Hewitt's wall coverings as they were intended to be installed.

DATA AND PRIVACY

Cooper Hewitt takes data ownership and privacy seriously. All visitors will be able to download all data collected by the Pen. If they wish, they can at any time completely delete their account. Aggregate information can be used to better understand visitor behavior and make improvements to the overall experience (e.g., managing wait times and improving traffic flow).

Cooper Hewitt's visitor experience is sponsored by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

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