



designing museums for the myspace generation

how gary goddard entertainment works to create museum experiences for a sound-byte society

Gary Goddard and colleague Taylor Jeffs aren't your typical museum patrons. "We certainly respect them, but I wouldn't say they top the list of our must-see destinations," says Goddard. "In fact, our average visit is probably around half an hour, just long enough to take in the essence of what's being presented," adds Jeffs, Creative Director of the Los Angeles-based design firm Gary Goddard Entertainment.

At 25, Jeffs sees himself as the perfect model patron. "My generation was the first to grow up on Nintendo, Game Boy, and ultimately, the Internet. If my attention's shot, imagine the future when today's youth, raised on the iPhone and Xbox, are calling the shots in terms of vacation planning."

It's this outlook that has served as the guiding mantra for GGE's design team. "I'm constantly searching for the ideas that would compel me to stop, or at least slow down a little," Jeffs adds.

In mid-2005, the firm took on two high-profile museum projects, both currently entering the final stages of construction and set to premiere this winter.

First to open is the GRAMMY MUSEUM, currently slated to premiere December 7th at the new LA LIVE center in downtown Los Angeles. Encompassing four floors and 30,000 square feet, the museum blends interactive software-driven displays, memorabilia exhibits, and a culminating theatre experience to create what Goddard describes as a venue in which "guests will be able to experience music like never before."

Across the country in Hershey, Pennsylvania, the all-new HERSHEY STORY complex is readying for its January gala opening. According to Goddard, it's "much more than a museum. Under the same roof, guests can experience a candy-making kitchen, chocolate tasting, cafe, and an expansive retail component."

"With both the Grammy Museum and Hershey Story, we've conceptualized experiences which go beyond mere static exhibits. A simple display of objects and graphics is no longer enough- patrons now require context, relevance, and engagement to allow these facilities to compete sufficiently with other forms of modern entertainment," Goddard continues.

Jeffs agrees, "The line we walk is trying to find the right tone somewhere between mass-market appeal and the seriousness of the objects and ideas themselves. Audiences will be increasingly demanding in the decades to come. For museums, the status quo is a death sentence."

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Above: An artist's rendering of the Grammy Museum. Below: The new Hershey Story Museum comes alive at night. Photos courtesy of Gary Goddard Entertainment.



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