ACTIVATING YOUR SPACE TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND APPEAL TO NEW AUDIENCES
I want to inspire a discussion on how to activate your space to increase engagement and to attract new audiences.

VISIONAIRE, like ARLIS, believes that lives are enriched by engagement with visual arts, design and cultural heritage.

We also agree that art information professionals are some of the best equipped to present and curate this knowledge.
Over 25 years ago, VISIONAIRE started as a unique publication concept that has since grown into a creative and experiential agency.

Throughout our evolution, there has been one constant tenet: the experience.
Even our publications are only able to be fully appreciated in person because they need to be...

TOUCHED
VISIONAIRE
EST. 1991

VISIONAIRE 33 TOUCH
SMELLED
VISIONAIRE
EST. 1991

VISIONAIRE 42 SCENT
TASTED
VISIONAIRE
EST. 1991

VISIONAIRE 53 SOUND
SEEN
AND EVEN BURNED.
But our exclusive limited editions can reach only a finite audience. At a certain point, we wanted to talk to more people, we wanted to expand beyond the traditional publishing model.

Here we outline 6 key concepts that can lead to engaging and attracting a broader audience.
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: THE GIVEAWAY

TRANSFORMING A LIMITED EDITION INTO AN UNLIMITED EXPERIENCE

REMIXING AN ARCHIVE

REPEATING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH REIMAGINED FUNCTIONALITY

REPEATING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INTERACTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE INSTALLATIONS

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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
Our first concept is obvious and when executed correctly can be very successful. One of the easiest ways to attract people is to give something away for free.

For VISIONAIRE 65, we gave away close to 200K art posters by 36 major contemporary artists and celebrities to anyone who came to Times Square in NYC during the Frieze Art Fair, Miami Beach during Art Basel Miami, and the CAA Building in LA during the Oscars.
We absolutely believe in the power of art and creative thinking. “FREE” is how we spread that knowledge and contributed to the democratization of contemporary art.

By giving away free posters outside places where some of the same artists were being sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars, we made art a little more approachable to a broader audience.
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:
THE GIVEAWAY

NEW YORK CITY

MIAMI

LOS ANGELES
By juxtaposing pop culture icons with serious contemporary artists, the public was exposed to artists they may never have heard of or even think they would be interested in.

For example, a visitor who showed up to get a poster of Gigi Hadid also walked away with a political poster by Glenn Ligon. And since they like the supermodel, maybe they’ll Google the artist… a door has been opened.
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: THE GIVEAWAY

[Images of bags with text: "VICTORIA" "FREE" "DULT" and "BREATHE WALK DIE"]
Many libraries have amazing content at your disposal. A well-curated stack of printed matter you no longer want can become an effective activation.

Just as museums, art galleries, and art fairs can be intimidating to the uninitiated, so too are “institutions” of knowledge daunting. Imparting information that is curated or pre-selected is a nice soft opening to an otherwise overwhelming space.
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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
We truly enjoy creating VISIONAIRE issues and love the labor of making our concepts a reality. Due to the nature of our publications, they are inherently very limited as well as expensive. That is why we relish the opportunity to expound upon the core concepts by translating them into public events.

For VISIONAIRE 64 ART, we invited famous artists, personalities, and celebrities to give us selfies that conceptual artist John Baldessari transformed into works of art by adding color shapes.
In order to make this limited edition into an unlimited experience, we then took John Baldessari’s color shapes and installed them as giant sculptures in the lobby of the Chrysler Building, thereby allowing the public to participate in the issue concept.

By doing this, we offered the opportunity for people to generate their own content. In this way, they are participating in the experience as well as sharing the results on social media which even furthers the reach and created yet another way these concepts live on beyond the initial publication.
TRANSFORMING A LIMITED EDITION INTO AN UNLIMITED EXPERIENCE:
BRINGING A VISIONAIRE EDITION TO LIFE
This next exhibition was inspired by Rafael De Cárdenas’ *Architecture at Large* book. We chose some of his designs and re-created them in the format of an op-art maze.

Not only does this open up the concept of architecture and design for everyone to experience in a really fun way, it encourages social media, which further spreads the word.
TRANSFORMING A LIMITED EDITION INTO AN UNLIMITED EXPERIENCE: BRINGING AN ART BOOK TO LIFE
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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
For our 25th anniversary, we wanted to highlight the entire collection of VISIONAIRE issues, but we didn’t want to simply revisit the past. We decided to invite artists to choose an issue to be inspired by and to make a 1–3 minute film that we cheekily called a “commercial”.

They were given total freedom. The results were very entertaining and brought past work into current times. For instance, artists Charlie Le Mindu and Alice Rosati interpreted VISIONAIRE 26 FANTASY from 1998 in 2016.
REMIXING AN ARCHIVE:
VISIONAIRE 26 FANTASY REINTERPRETED BY CHARLIE LE MINDU AND ALICE ROSATI
The film project lived primarily online. When we wanted to bring this concept into a physical space, we showed the films along side the VISIONAIRE issues, thereby connecting print to digital.
REMIXING AN ARCHIVE:
VISIONAIRE ARTIST COMMERCIALS EXHIBIT
For our 38th issue, we sourced 4000 vintage novels—which were sitting in a warehouse gathering dust—and revitalized them by adding artists’ contributions in a way they did not disturb the integrity of the book.
REMIXING AN ARCHIVE: VISIONAIRE 38 LOVE
MAKING CONTENT ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC: THE GIVEAWAY

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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
A repeat audience requires an installation that possesses the clever property of enticing visitors to keep coming back.

Cadillac hired us to do their arts programming in their NYC space with the mandate to increase foot traffic and social media.
One of our activations reimagined the aesthetics of *Toiletpaper Magazine* by the artists Maurizio Cattelan and Pierpaolo Ferrari as a 1-bedroom apartment, where visitors could hang out, read, eat their lunch, have a meeting, even take a nap... all of which they did, as well as take millions of photos.

These kinds of spaces can be much more fulfilling than simply opening up a café. Let the space be used for what it was originally intended... learning.
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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
A project that is interactive and transformative is a good way to keep visitors coming back to check on progress.

A prime example of this is “The Kiss” by Urs Fischer. This innovative project features the iconic sculpture by Rodin subverted by allowing the public to literally transform it into their own work.

Another example is Yayoi Kusama’s “Obliteration Room,” in which guests are allowed to leave their mark wherever they choose.
REPEATING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INTERACTIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE INSTALLATIONS

“THE KISS” BY URS FISCHER

“THE OBLITERATION ROOM” BY YAYOI KUSAMA
These projects spark so many conversations about iconography, the classics, destruction vs preservation vs creation, history vs the now, human nature...

That’s what we all want to do: inspire conversation and thought and actions. People come back because it is not the same from day to day.
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INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
We produced a Virtual Reality film with the artist KAWS. In the film, we take viewers on a studio visit which is in itself a rare treat. But then the studio visit becomes a roller coaster of animated characters.

We mounted the VR as a public art installation at the New York Public Library. We had a line of eager people down 5th Avenue wrapped around 42nd Street waiting to get in.
INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY
We liked the idea of the classic library full of printed books juxtaposed with this new digital version of publishing. To connect the two were all the artist’s books in the library.

The VR Headset now lives alongside those books and the Visionaire collection at the NYPL.
PITFALLS

— Things will take longer to produce than you expect
— Artists do not always do what you expect
— Budgets

Libraries are a wealth of information and you are the arbiters of this knowledge. You have the ability to translate that knowledge into a myriad of multi-media experiences that engage and reach new audiences and spread the word globally.
AT VISIONAIRE WE HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED GREATLY IN THE POWER OF PRINT BUT ALSO IN THE POWER OF THINKING BEYOND PRINT.
THANK YOU

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