



The Peale, Quatrefoil Associates Announce Collaboration, Launch “The Lab”

Partnership To Yield Research, Evaluation, and Prototyping of Next-Level Museum, Exhibition Experiences

Baltimore, MD (February 16, 2023)—Today, [The Peale](#) and [Quatrefoil Associates](#) announced “The Lab,” a new collaboration through which Baltimore’s Community Museum will serve as a laboratory to conduct research, evaluation, experimentation, and testing of next-generation museum experiences and exhibition designs with community and cultural heritage partners.

Quatrefoil will help The Peale tell its 200+ years of “core stories” through multi-sensory and immersive experiences that employ soundscapes and accessible interactives in the historic museum building. Students in the [Accomplished Arts Apprenticeships](#) program based at The Peale will help build and install the new exhibits. The team will also develop experiences that connect with the Peale’s communities in public spaces across Baltimore and online.

“The Peale has been a place of experimentation and innovation since opening in 1814 as America’s first museum building,” said Nancy Proctor, The Peale’s Chief Strategy Officer and founding Executive Director. “With support from Quatrefoil, The Lab will further The Peale’s work to evolve the role of museums in society, helping them better serve the communities, creators, and culture keepers of today.”

The Peale’s diverse audiences and commitment to accessibility make it an inclusive platform where creators and cultural organizations of all sorts can prototype and play. Like The Peale, Quatrefoil puts storytelling and community at the center of their practice, tapping connections between people and places to cultivate belonging and human-centered museum experiences.

“The cultural field is at a tipping point,” said Michael Burns, partner at Quatrefoil and founder of the [Omnimuseum Project](#). “Through the Lab at The Peale, we can put tools and resources in the hands of individuals and communities as well as museums and institutions to help democratize access to informal learning experiences for people wherever they are.”

The Lab is actively seeking projects that enable collaborations with community members as well as museums and cultural institutions. To participate in the Lab’s research and connect with its resources, visit www.Lab.ThePeale.org

About The Peale

The Peale is Baltimore’s community museum, based in the first museum building in America. It was founded in 1814 by Rembrandt Peale of the Peale family of artists, museum innovators, and entrepreneurs. Peale introduced gas light to his museum as a way of selling tickets after dark, and established the first city-wide gas street light network in the U.S., as well as the company known today as Baltimore Gas and Electric. His father, Charles Willson Peale, had opened the first museum in the

country in his home/studio in Philadelphia in 1784, and developed the diorama display format to show natural history specimens in their habitats. The Peales' Philadelphia and Baltimore museums were the first in the U.S. to exhibit prehistoric animals.

The Peales were also quick to adopt new technologies and used "physiognotrace machines" to generate silhouette "selfies" as instant souvenirs for museum visitors. Moses Williams, enslaved in the Peale household, grew from physiognotrace operator to become a successful silhouette artist, earning his freedom a year earlier than stipulated by Pennsylvania law under the 1780 gradual emancipation act. After Reconstruction, the Peale Museum in Baltimore hosted the first public school in the state of Maryland to offer a secondary school education to people of color. It became Baltimore's first Municipal Museum in 1930, and was shuttered in 1997.

After 20 years of standing vacant followed by a 5-year, \$5.5 million renovation, the historic Peale Museum building now includes The Moses Williams Center, a teaching gallery and home base for the Accomplished Arts Apprenticeship program, which helps young people from Baltimore's disinvested communities earn while they develop careers in the historic preservation trades, exhibition installation, and related skills powered by the arts. The Peale also stewards a growing digital collection of more than 2000 Baltimore stories, and hosts exhibitions, performances, and events created by the city's artists and storytellers in all media. Learn more at ThePeale.org

About Quatrefoil

Quatrefoil creates award-winning exhibitions and accessible interactives for museums, science centers, zoos and aquariums, historic places, cultural sites, and visitor attractions. We bring an expert team of artists, engineers, and storytellers to every phase of exhibition and project development, from master planning, accessibility, sound and graphic design to multimedia interactives and program development.

Our collaborative approach centers community voices to create inclusive experiences that connect visitors' stories with collections and promote participation in programs. In partnership with the [Omnimuseum Project](#), we develop new approaches to informal learning, and offer audience research, evaluation, testing, prototyping, and digital storytelling services through the Lab at [The Peale in Baltimore](#), America's first museum building.

We aim to extend the museum visit beyond its walls to reach new audiences and activate informal learning in communities, cities, outdoor spaces and online. We love science and nature centers, small museums and historic places, and also work with some of the world's largest museums and government agencies. Recent partners include the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibitions Service, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Calfee Community and Cultural Center, the Annapolis Maritime Museum, Port Discovery Children's Museum, the Museum of Boulder, The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, the Go for Broke National Education Center, and the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. Learn more at Quatrefoil.com

Media Contact: Crossword Media 410-929-0199 PR@Crossword.media

Peale Contact: Nancy Proctor, 301-642-6257 CSO@ThePeale.org

Quatrefoil Contact: Michael Burns 240-444-6115 MWBurns@Quatrefoil.com