

TOURING *Two Can Play That Game* by Thomas “Detour” Evans

September 21 – December 8, 2019

This object sheet emphasizes experiential inquiry-based learning by asking questions to visitors about how they connect individually to the work.

WITH VISITORS

INFORM: Thomas Evans (aka Detour) is the creator of this multi-sensory interactive installation. His philosophy in creating his works is that **“art should be a part of your life, rather than just in it.”**

ASK: What is something for you that is a part of your life, not just in it?

INFORM: Detour created this interactive, site-specific mural: when you gently touch, the mural responds with sound as a form of multi-sensory engagement. While touch is unusual for museums, Detour challenges expectations of static artworks separating the viewer from the work. By engaging the viewer, Detour’s work requires active participation in which visitors are an integral part of completing the creative and artistic process.

- Thomas Evans took on the name Detour as a reflection of his perspective of being open to changing paths and going in new directions. He took an actual detour from his profession to find his artistic growth. For more information about the artist, read the “About the Artist” section.

DIRECT: People to touch their hand with their finger Note the difference between touching lightly and pushing gently. Light touch is all that is needed. **Spend some time interacting with “Two can play that game”.** While there are wires on the interactive, these wires are meant to be touched – **NOT PLUCKED OR STRUMMED.**

- While you experience this, look for times you need to remind visitors to be gentle and that the mural is sensitive to touch. Ensure visitors are not plucking or pulling strings as those behaviors can damage the mural.

ASK:

- **How does your multi-sensory engagement influence your connection to the work visually, aurally, and kinesthetically?**

DIRECT: Try working with other people to elevate the creative experience.

CONNECT: Implore the audience to think about how this interactive mural connects to the tactile gallery. Here is an additional statement from Joy Armstrong via the Detour Press Release:

- “For many years, the Fine Arts Center has celebrated the importance of physical engagement with visual art with the Mashburn|Marshall Tactile Gallery, a space where visitors are invited to touch the art. Detour’s interactive installation expands upon this philosophy of multiple modes of engagement with the inclusion of sound, resulting in a true collaboration between the artist and the viewer—the installation is only complete with visitor participation by gentle touch,” said Armstrong. “While most museum objects remain hands-off, Detour’s innovative work reminds us that all art may be deeply experienced when we engage with multiple senses. You will find that sight, sound, and

smell can weave together to form rich experiences with art and create meaningful participation in the creative process.”

MORE INFORMATION

- The artist is able to change the sounds remotely; perhaps the next time visitors come in, the sounds will be different.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Thomas Evans (aka Detour) is a Denver-based painter, muralist, and installation artist, internationally renowned for his brightly colored portraits and large-scale artworks. Inspired by breakdancing and hip hop, Evans often exists at the intersection of art and music, notably with his innovative use of technology to create touch sensitive surfaces that respond with sound. For years, the artist dreamed of creating touchable, interactive paintings that would stimulate multiple senses at once, breaking down barriers and assumptions surrounding fine art. That vision was finally brought to fruition with a major public debut during Evans’ stint as a Creative in Residence at the Denver Art Museum in the fall of 2017. As he mixes new media with traditionally accepted modes of representation, Evans challenges expectations of static artworks that are positioned literally (and figuratively) beyond the viewer’s reach. Through physical engagement with the work, museum visitors become active participants in the creative process as collaborators with the artist and fellow guests, resulting in a unique, memorable experience. For Evans, art should be “a part of your life, rather than just in it.”

Now a Colorado icon, Evans dedicated himself to a full-time studio practice a mere half dozen years ago, and quickly exploded into the Denver arts scene. His 2012 MBA degree from the University of Colorado Denver has served him well, implementing marketing savvy to build his artistic spirit of social activism and passion for community into a professional career. National acclaim came in 2016 with acknowledgement from the Huffington Post about *They Still Live*, a series combining photography, DNA mapping, and African objects, sponsored by Ancestry.com. The artist and his work have been featured by CNN, numerous digital and print publications, radio and television outlets, and most recently, on the Netflix show *My Next Guest Needs No Introduction With David Letterman*, for which Evans painted two portraits, one of the eponymous host and one of guest artist Jay-Z.

Evans adopted the moniker of Detour as a break dancer living in Germany, and has since traveled to locations across the globe, from Tanzania to Argentina and France. For Evans, experimentation is essential to growth, and the willingness to explore a different path—taking an actual detour—is what helped him to make a dramatic professional shift and begin to find his artistic voice. Yet, Denver remains home for the artist, who celebrates its distinct cultures, relaxed style, and supportive art scene with growth that parallels his own development as a creative force. In his artist statement, he says that his work “consists of channeling concepts and issues about the urban arts culture through portraits of minority and urban subjects,” hoping to raise awareness of certain communities with artistic interventions as a “building block between the viewer and the message,” leading to greater understanding.

For more about Thomas “Detour” Evans, visit: www.iamdetour.com