SAMPLE SHANTY PROPOSAL - Opticon ASP2020

please note: we have updated our mission, Artistic Goals and guidelines since the 2020 applications. Questions and criteria have changed for 2022.

Tell us about your shanty! *

Opticon is a camera obscura on ice. It is a trip into the past, entertainment, a learning opportunity, and a moment for participatory artistic expression. We aim to teach a little history of photography and art, a bit of science, and to have some unusual fun.

Our shanty design was conceived when thinking about the current ubiquity of photography, and how it came to be. In today's selfie culture, there is little reflection about the physics behind photography or the evolution of the devices and technologies that led to what photography is today.

Photography started with a simple device known as the camera obscura. The earliest mention of this type of device was in the 4th Century BC by Mozi, a Chinese philosopher. The name was first used by German mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler in 1604.

Camera obscura is Latin and literally means "dark room", which is a succinct and accurate description. In its simplest form, it is a room without light but for a small pinhole in one wall. The light that comes through that pinhole projects an inverted scene from outside on the opposite wall.

As a drawing aid, the camera obscura allowed tracing a projected image to help produce a highly accurate representation. It was used by artists including Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio and Vermeer. It was developed further into the earliest photographic camera in the first half of the 19th century when it was used to expose light-sensitive materials to the projected image.

In a room, tent or hut, the projection can be diverted onto a horizontal surface, such as a table. An 18th-century overhead version in tents used mirrors to invert the image, inside a kind of periscope on the top of the tent. In Victorian and Edwardian times, these tents or huts (and sometimes castles) became popular seaside attractions in both Europe and the US. Today, notable examples can still be found in Venice Beach, Cadiz, Trondheim and Edinburgh.

Building on this Victorian tradition, we propose Opticon, a camera obscura shanty on Bde Unma echoing those seaside attractions.

Opticon has a circular wooden base. Yurt-like walls of colored corrugated plastic are curved for rigidity and layered for strength. A weatherproof cupola on the top houses the traditional mirror and lens. The view is projected downwards on to a central viewing round table top in the darkened room.

Inside Opticon, visitors will experience a live, moving and magical projected image of nearby

shanties and other visitors in and around the event, against an ever-changing backdrop of the snowscape, weather and distant lakeshore. As the mirror is repositioned, the view changes. This simple activity has attracted and entertained holiday-goers for centuries.

Just like the aforementioned Renaissance artists, we want to use Opticon for drawing and tracing and making art. At scheduled times, available paper and markers will be provided to encourage kids of all ages to make their own masterpieces by tracing the view on paper laid out to cover the central viewing table.

Outside, information panels summarize the history and science, while frames hold and highlight a few selected completed visitor drawings.

Groups of visitors may position some of their party outside within view, while others observe them from inside via the projection.

Visitors more interested in digital activities can shoot unusual photo or video of the image on the central table, tracings in progress, or friends outside in view, appropriate for Instagram and other social media. With views of the other art shanties and the surrounding environs, these photos and posts automatically promote the event.

Part II: Artistic Goals

Mission:
Art Shanty Projects is an artist driven temporary community exploring the ways in which relatively unregulated public spaces can be used as new and challenging artistic environments to expand the notions of what art can be.

Artistic Goals:
• Projects should push artists skills and development and engage an audience.
• Projects should respect the environment of the lake, as well as respect the community that already exists, with the understanding that the lake has an established relationship with non-artist patrons.
• Projects should be engaging to audiences of all kinds—audience engagement is essential to the success of the experience, for both artist and audience.

Questions to consider:
• How does the project expand notions of what art can be?
• How does the project use the unique environment?
• What is the plan for audience interaction inside or around the shanty?
• ASP has a commitment to being inclusive when selecting artists and serving audiences. Please share with us how your artist team and/or project embodies or addresses this. Considerations include providing a diverse artistic perspective and/or being welcoming and safe to diverse populations from the Twin Cities and beyond (being mindful of intersections of race, class, gender, age, etc.) and addressing potential barriers for participation (language, mobility, hearing, sight or otherwise).
• Does the project address how different audiences will interact with this project?

Share how your project will fit within the mission and artistic goals of Art Shanty Projects: *

Opticon offers a rich variety of engagement, a combination of participatory art making, and references themes from social history, art history, the history of photography, and the history of science and technology.

It uses the unique environment of the winter lakescape directly, by the projection of its image inside a darkened room. Opticon encourages interaction with that image through viewing, tracing and drawing. It is about seeing the surroundings and perceiving reality through a different lens, literally and figuratively.

Please note that our shanty materials and design strive to be ecologically responsible. The lumber and plywood are salvageable, reusable, and ultimately biodegradable. The polypropylene plastic reduces the need for complex mixed material assemblies and with useful and decorative colors reduces the need for additional coatings or decoration that might reduce reusability or recyclability. It is designed to be assembled in a way that facilitates disassembly for reuse and recycling.

In terms of accessibility, the low platform/floor will have a low angle ramp up to the main platform, and the inside area should be sufficient for those with mobility issues, wheelchairs, walkers or strollers. The activities are relatively simple, to accommodate cognitive impairments. There are no audio components or alternative activities or content for non-sighted individuals, though they could speak with staff. Hearing impairments shouldn't affect the experience.

As an immigrant woman of color (POCI), Silvana is connected to local Latinx and Hispanic communities that will be invited to participate in our shanty. The colorful exterior will reference bright Latin American tropical colors. Didactic materials will be bilingual, in English and Spanish, as will be most of our staff.

Part III: Feasibility

Address your ability to build and capacity to staff the project from 10am-4pm each weekend during the festival in January and February, 2020. We had a record number of people during our last on-ice program in Minneapolis in 2018. With the potential of thousands of visitors per day, how will the interactive aspect of your shanty accommodate the potential flow of traffic and handle crowds? Think about ways you can engage the audience both outside and inside the shanty. Has the project given thought to its potential challenges, risks or failures?

Please articulate your ability to build and staff your project: *

We are a team of 4 people lead by Silvana Agostoni, committed to the design, construction, installation and removal of our shanty. We have provisional commitments from 4 additional people for staffing during the festival. We are all active outdoors people and have the clothing, skills, experience and fitness to handle adverse weather.

Silvana Agostoni is a Latinx artist living in Minneapolis. She works primarily in photography with a research based practice and holds an MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York.

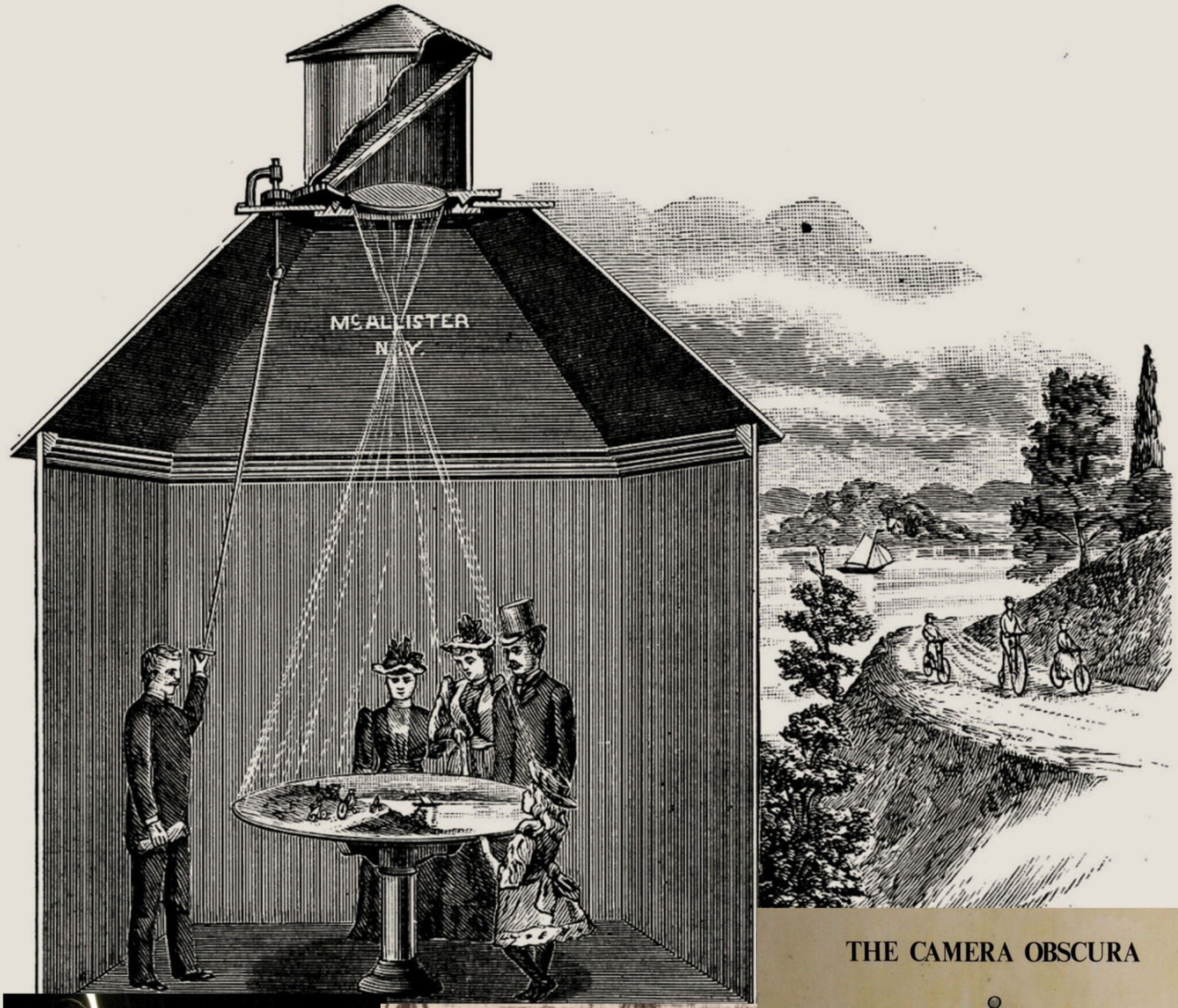
Leader of construction will be Charles Buchwald, an experienced professional fabricator. Charles and Silvana have designed and successfully produced more than 40 art and museum exhibits.

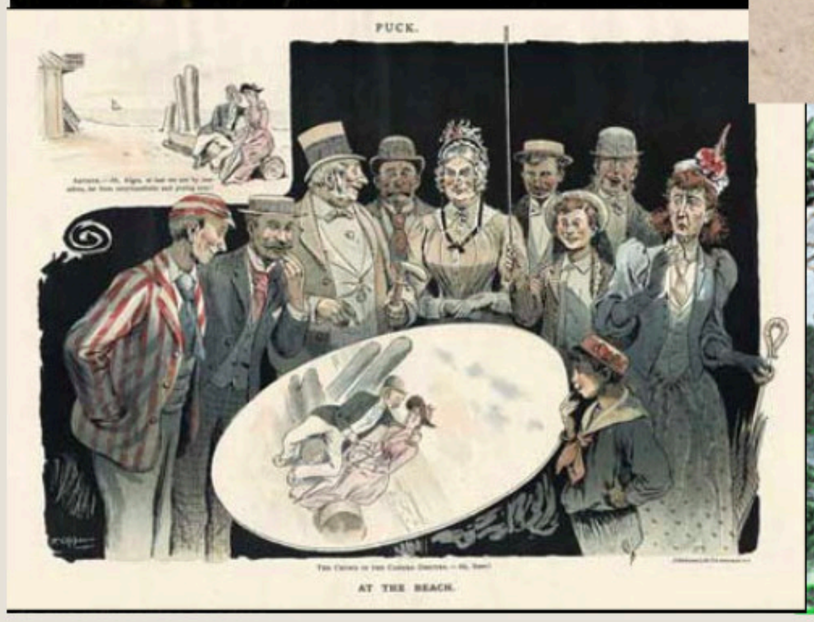
Opticon's yurt-like, gothic dome is simple, waterproof, weatherproof, and structurally strong. 2-3 layers of corrugated plastic form the walls and insulate the dome. The slippery, angled shape sheds wind, rain and snow. A polycarbonate shield protects the mirror and lens from snow and contaminates. The platform is typical staging. With very few moving parts there is little chance for show stopping breakdowns or required maintenance.

The design provides circulation space around the central projection viewing table top. If visitor volumes are high they can circulate in the door, around the table, and out again, optionally with group members outside to appear in the projected image. We can avoid drawing and tracing activities during busy periods to improve visitor circulation rates.

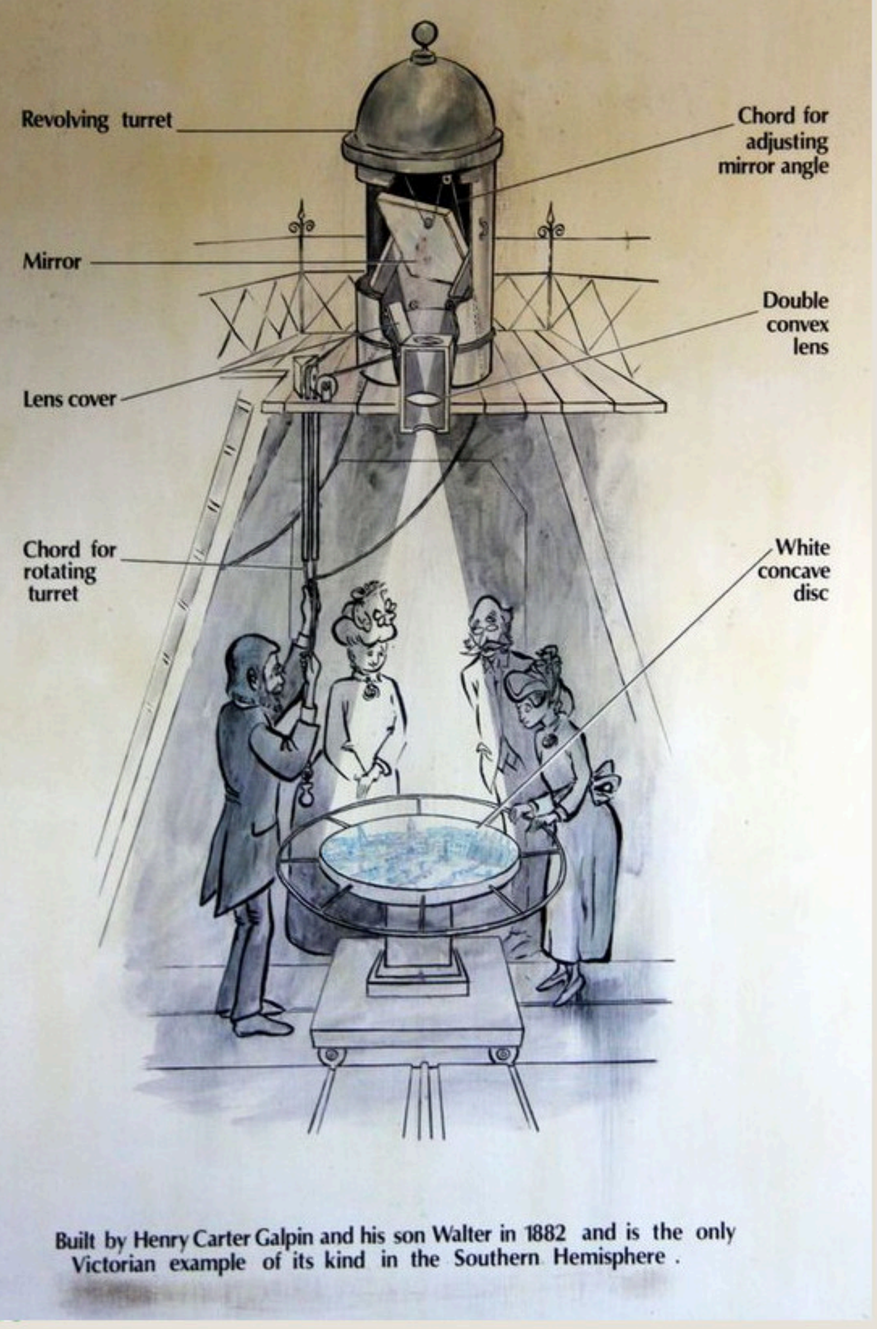
We hope to design a way to display some of the drawings in or outside the shanty, and during lower traffic rates we could also change these displays.

Staff can be positioned inside or outside, depending on traffic volume and activities. They will also be able tell the audience about the historical context of camera obscuras as entertainment or artistic tools, discuss the artistic goals, or physics and optics involved.





THE CAMERA OBSCURA



Built by Henry Carter Galpin and his son Walter in 1882 and is the only Victorian example of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere .

OPTICON
ART SHANTY 2020

EXTERIOR
ELEVATION

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INTERIOR
SECTION