

Photo Figures for Part IV

Exhibit Labels

An Interpretive Approach

Third Edition

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ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

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Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com


86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE

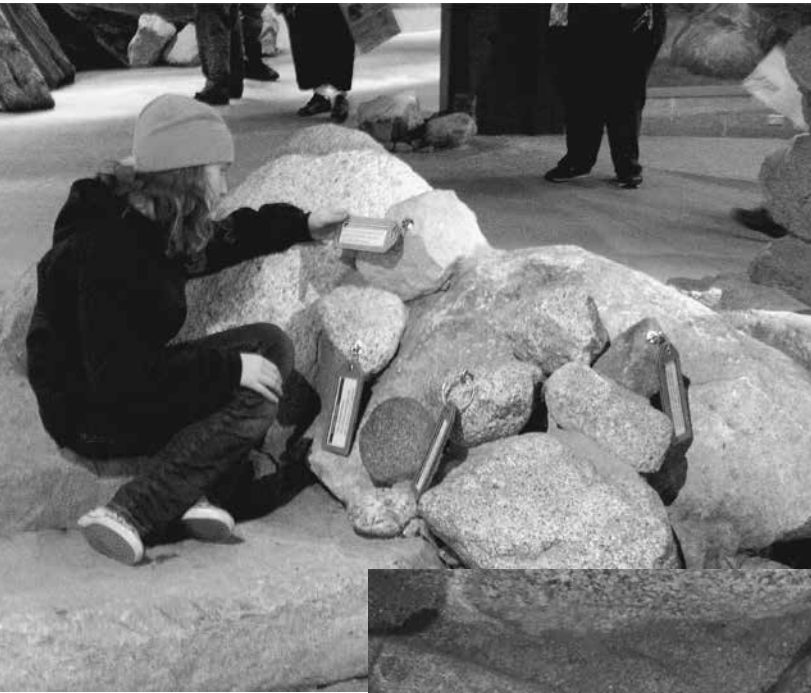
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
<to come>

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.



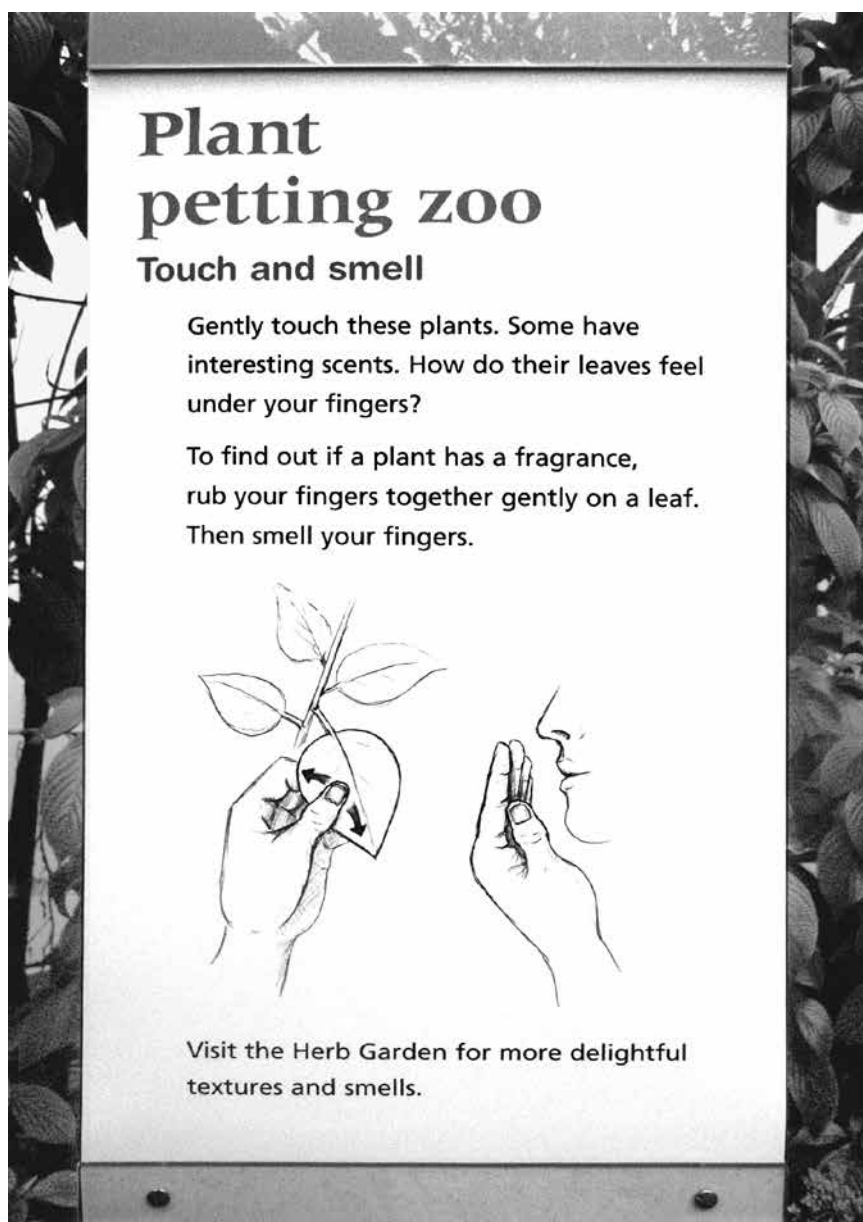
Rocks talk

The caption for El Capitan Granite speaks in the first person, and its location encourages close looking, reading, and even touching the object. Truly visitor friendly.

Plant petting zoo

What to do and notice is clearly stated in words and shown in the gender-neutral drawing.

The label could be even shorter by leaving out the second sentence of the first paragraph.





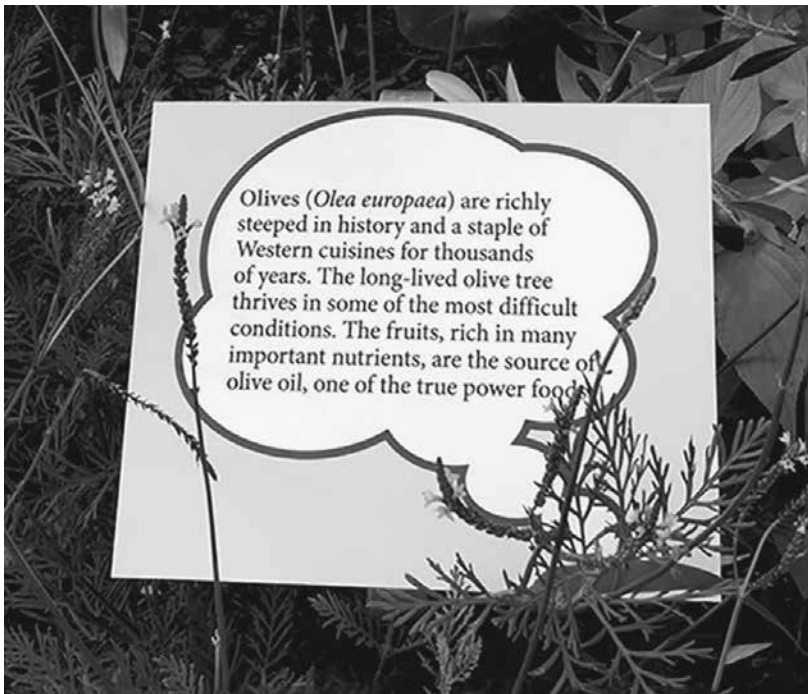
Reading rail videos

Small, short, silent, constantly looping videos—like the one at the far right on this reading rail—can bring belongings to life by showing how people use them.



White school Black school

Great example of how images, words, and objects work together to clearly and strongly communicate the ideas.



Olives

The thought-bubble design suggests that the plant is thinking, but the voice is impersonal. The design and the content don't match.

Butterfly connection

The interactive station shows two butterflies: One was wild, the other was farm raised. Which is which?

When visitors can answer the question posed by looking closely at clues given in the interpretive labels, the experience is more engaging than just guessing.





Sticky notes

Visitors like to give feedback, and good questions encourage thoughtful responses.

Here, lots of emotive feedback resulted from the prompt to share a personal story about a local fire.



Will it burn?

The answer to all three of these questions is “yes,” which builds to a generalization about the combustible materials of typical homes and barns in 1871 Chicago.

It’s often a good idea to show multiple examples of the same idea.



Galileo handset

Two important things to tell visitors about audio experiences: What the topic is and how long it will last. These orientation cues help them decide if they want to pick up the headset, press the button, and start listening.

How much time visitors spend with AV depends on how engaged they become with the content. Two minutes is a long time in museum time. Keep it short.

Ball launcher

Drawings known as “use diagrams” work better than photographs or wordy instructions to quickly explain how to operate an interactive element.





Listen to Vivian Maier
experiment with
a tape recorder.

Escuche a Vivian Maier
experimentar con
una grabadora.

Cell phone QR code

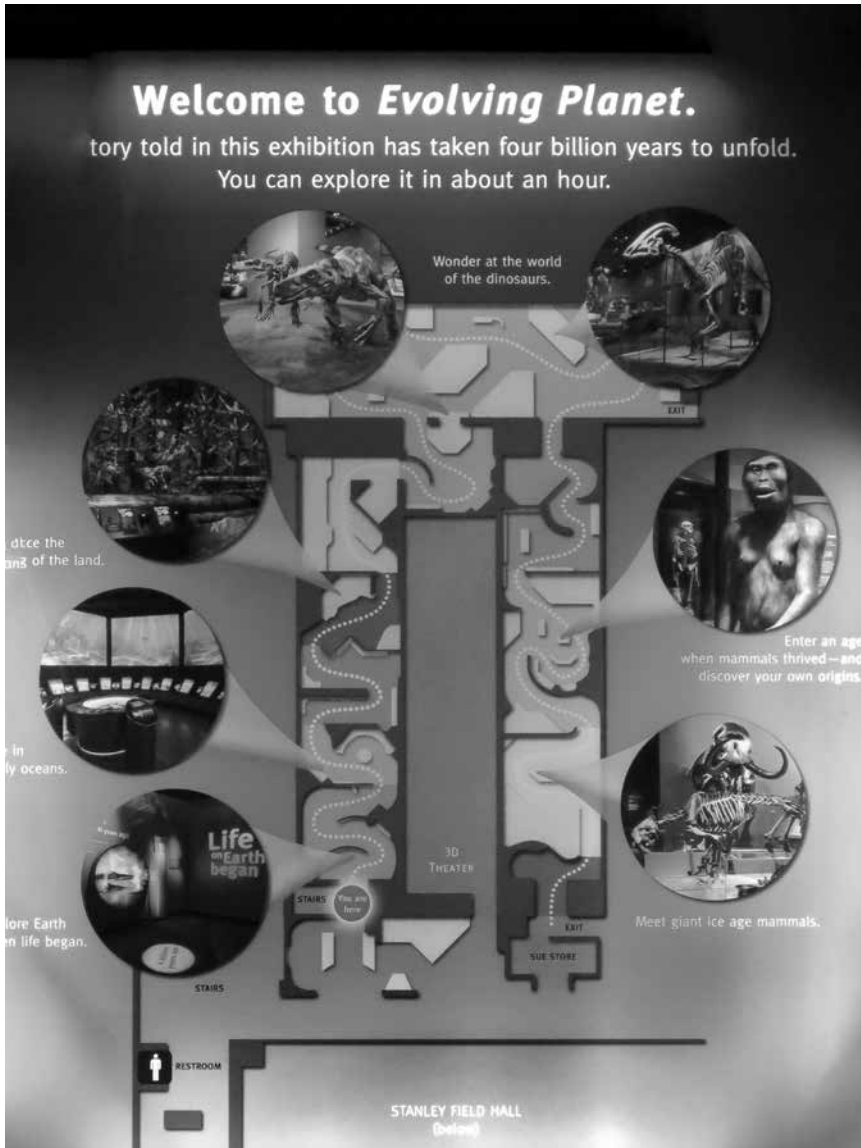
The graphic of the cell phone gives the QR code context. Adjacent text tells visitors what they'll hear. Links to audio and video are much more rewarding than links to more text.



Iguano

If there is room on the sign for a caption, put it there. Don't bury it in a QR code. Words on the sign offer quicker access and easier sharing with others in a social group.





Welcome to Evolving Planet

It's a complicated set of halls in a one-way layout.

Drawings or icons and words would be easier to read than photos on this exhibit floor plan. But nothing can fix the fact that this kind of huge exhibition is a daunting challenge for many visitors.



Vikings entrance

This doorway looks like an entrance, but it's not.
The "EXIT ONLY" text on clear glass is hard to read.

Entrance letters and arrow need to be much larger to
improve orientation.

Arrow

It takes more than an arrow taped to the floor to overcome visitors' natural tendency to turn right.

A well-designed environment will use multiple clues—including architecture, light, and signage—for clear orientation to the correct entrance of an exhibition.

