

make new creative designs. A jury of renowned designers and curators selects ten finalists and three winners. The final award comes with a prize of €10,000. The second edition in 2015 attracted a staggering 892 top-class entries. Some award winners end up with their work sold through the Rijksmuseum store, such as the 2014 entry featuring makeup based on a specific color scheme of a work of art.⁵ The Rijksmuseum has been thrilled with the results. Entries range from the fun to the weird to the inspirational. The third international edition of the Rijksstudio Award started in September 2016.

For the next iteration of the Rijksstudio, the Rijksmuseum is considering an upload tool, for people to upload their own works of art, and enhanced social elements so users can interact with each other more.

Going with a more open business model generated lots of publicity for the Rijksmuseum. They were one of the first museums to open up their collection (that is, give free access) with high-quality images. This strategy, along with the many improvements to the Rijksmuseum's website, dramatically increased visits to their website from thirty-five thousand visits per month to three hundred thousand.

The Rijksmuseum has been experimenting with other ways to invite the public to look at and interact with their collection. On an international day celebrating animals, they ran a successful bird-themed event. The museum put together a showing of two thousand works that featured birds and invited bird-watchers to identify the birds depicted. Lizzy notes that while museum curators know a lot about the works in their collections, they may not know about certain details in the paintings such as bird species. Over eight hundred different birds were identified, including a specific species of crane bird that was unknown to the scientific community at the time of the painting.

For the Rijksmuseum, adopting an open business model was scary. They came up with many worst-case scenarios, imagining all kinds of awful things people might do with the museum's works. But Lizzy says those fears did not come true because "ninety-nine percent of people have respect for great art." Many museums think they can make a lot of money by selling things related to their collection. But in Lizzy's experience, museums are usually bad at selling things, and sometimes efforts to generate a small amount of money block something much bigger—the real value that the collection has. For Lizzy, clinging to small amounts of revenue is being penny-wise but pound-foolish. For the Rijksmuseum, a key lesson has been to never lose sight of its vision for the collection. Allowing access to and use of their collection has generated great promotional value—far more than the previous practice of charging fees for access and use. Lizzy sums up their experience: "Give away; get something in return. Generosity makes people happy to join you and help out."

Web links

- 1 www.europeana.eu/portal/en
- 2 www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio
- 3 www.etsy.com/ca/listing/175696771/fringe-kimono-silk-kimono-kimono-robe
- 4 www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio-award; the 2014 award: www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio-award-2014; the 2015 award: www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rijksstudio-award-2015
- 5 www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/rijksstudio/142328--nominees-rijksstudio-award/creaties/ba595afe-452d-46bd-9c8c-48dcbdd7f0a4