

**Art, Love, Museums, and Motives:**  
**An ethnomethodological market survey of**  
**visitor experiences and the blockbuster**  
**exhibition.**

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Department of Art Education

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Art, Love, Museums, and Motives: An ethnomethodological market survey of visitor experiences and the blockbuster exhibition.**

**Samantha Caldicott**

Although the term “Art Lover” is something that our society uses in everyday language, little is known about what this term means. How do museum visitors characterize the Art Lover? How does an Art Lover’s experience of art differ from that of a Non-Art Lover? In answering these two questions, this study seeks to understand a museum visitor’s self-identification as an Art Lover and the role that this identification plays in the quality of their museum experience. Using a framework of Ethnomethodology and Marketing Research techniques, a written questionnaire consisting of thirty-five questions was administered. In April 2003, over one-hundred visitors to the Montreal Museum of Fine Art completed the questionnaire. Seven visitors participated in follow-up interviews. It was found that 22% of museum attendees in this study do not consider themselves Art Lovers. Analysis of both questionnaire and interview results revealed that all participants – regardless of their love for art – shared many of the same responses, emotions, and behaviours. However, in comparing the experiences of Art Lovers to Non-Art Lovers, a marked difference was found in the relative

intensities and values associated with these motives, emotions, and behaviours. Art Lovers expressed a high level of intensity in their desire to seek out museum experiences and subsequently reported an elevated level of satisfaction with their experience of the exhibition. The results of this study suggest that to consider oneself an Art Lover is directly and positively related to the quality of an individual's museum experience. This study also suggests that a significant proportion of museum visitors are people who do not consider themselves Art Lovers and that museums need to better address this segment of their public.

To my grandfather: for understanding the importance of education and its value  
as an investment.

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# Chapter 1

## The Look of Love Introduction

I was astonished to find out that some of the people I go to Art Museums<sup>1</sup> with do not consider themselves "Art Lovers."<sup>2</sup> Why then do they spend precious leisure time and entertainment dollars going to look at art? In a climate where public art institutions are under increasing pressure to be accountable to their existing audience and to attract new audiences, knowing what motivates people to visit an art museum cannot be anything but useful. What is the relationship between a person's concept of the Art Lover and their museum-visiting behaviour?

During a visit to the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) I discovered that my friend, Diana<sup>3</sup>, does not love to look at art. This intrigued me given that she and I have often gone to the NGC together for exhibit openings, concerts, and for

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term "art museum" as opposed to "art gallery" in order to infer or suggest a large public institution as opposed to smaller and occasionally commercial displays of visual art. Calgary professor Jennifer Eiserman states that "In Canada, we refer to public institutions that exhibit work but do not usually have a collection as 'art galleries.'" (2001, p.25). The Canadian Museums Association provides the following general definition: "...a non-profit, permanent establishment, exempt from federal and provincial income taxes, open to the public at regular hours, and administered in the public interest, for the purpose of collecting and preserving, studying, interpreting, assembling and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment, objects and specimens of educational and cultural value, including artistic, scientific (whether animate or inanimate), historical and technological material" ([www.museums.ca](http://www.museums.ca), 2001).

<sup>2</sup> A term that often comes up in casual conversation, it seems as though no one has yet undertaken the task of defining the term. A quick Internet search reveals some of the ways in which the term "Art Lover" is currently being used to sell flowers, advertise art historical travel adventures 'for the discriminating art lover,' and as personal descriptions on Internet dating services.

Another interesting use of the term can be found in descriptions of pre-eminent architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh's The House for an Art Lover. Designed in 1901 and finally built in Glasgow from 1989 to 1996. Today, the House for an Art Lover demonstrates how art lovers express their desires – it is one of Glasgow's most prestigious visitor attractions and has established itself as a highly rated venue for corporate and private dining.

guided tours. In addition, while traveling on business, going to the local art museum is on Diana's "Top 5" list of things to do in every country that she visits. Given the frequency with which she visits art museums, I had presumed her to be an 'Art Lover.' I thought she fit my personal definition of the term – to be among that group of people who are passionate about the act of looking at artworks. However, by her own definition, she is not an Art Lover. A quick survey of my friends and acquaintances revealed that Diana is not alone in her indifference towards art or her museum visitation patterns. I later conducted a pilot study, interviewing three potential Non-Art Lovers regarding their beliefs and associations. This study revealed that the concept of "Art Lover" is broad, and that it does have an impact on a visitor's motives for and expectations of the museum experience.

Why do people – be they lovers of art or not – spend precious leisure time and entertainment dollars going to look at art? The motives of a self-proclaimed Art Lover seem obvious. However, curiosity surrounds the motives of someone who asserts a lack of love for the primary object - the treasures of art museums - yet goes to museums anyway. In their study of European Art Museums in the sixties, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel equated Art Lovers with 'people of taste' (1990, p.109). The authors conclude that a love of art is an aesthetic pleasure that must be cultivated. As such, it is logical to assume that cultivated members of a society will seek out the aesthetic pleasures available within the walls of art museums. Does this then lead one to conclude that the absence of a love of art

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<sup>3</sup> All names have been changed to protect the privacy of informants and participants.

denotes a lack of culture? What of those art museum visitors who are not seeking aesthetic pleasure? If it is not primarily the art that draws them to the museum, what then does lure them? Is their visit perhaps initiated by a friend, colleague, or family member? In such a case does the gallery simply become an excuse or focus for a social outing?

The climate for museum management has changed since the time of Bourdieu and Darbel's study. Public institutions are increasingly aware of the diversity of their publics and of those who remain beyond the institutions' walls. Attempts are made through research, promotion and programming to attract a broader audience and to provide them with the tools needed in order to understand and appreciate the art works on display. Family fun days are advertised in local papers, musical concerts are offered in conjunction with radio stations, free guided tours are profuse, and blockbuster exhibition advertisements plaster the insides and outsides of public transportation. Some might argue that this type of activity – aggressive advertising, concerts, singles' clubs – does not enhance the excellence of an institution, its scholarship, or reputation. There is concern that the significance of the art within the museum experience is denigrated. In sum, increased popularity and attendance figures are often seen as coming at a high cost to the fundamental purpose of a cultural institution.

Italian researchers Vanda Zammuner and Alessandra Testa (2001) point out that art institutions have been embroiled in a "hot and interesting debate" for the

fulfillment of their cultural-educational mission within the limitations of each institution's specific resources. "How to increase the number of visitors, and how, and in what ways, to satisfy customers' cognitive, aesthetic, material, and other needs constitute shared concerns..." (p.89). The authors highlight the relationship between an institution's managerial approach and their position within these 'shared concerns.' "Art institutions differ in the extent to which their policy is based on the belief that art ought to be/come [sic] a best-selling product, marketed to, and consumed by, as many new consumers as possible... regardless, at times, of the educational-cultural aspect of the subjective visit experience, or of institutional aims." (p.89). As consumers, Non-Art Lovers – when drawn to the gallery by a peripheral event or by a friend – assist the institution in meeting its attendance quotas and governmental calls for the democratization of public museums. Art Lovers, if the conclusions of Bourdieu and Darbel's study still hold true, constitute the core audience for art museums. Today, what relationship exists between one's definition of the love of art and their motivations for visiting an art museum?

Through a deeper understanding of visitor motivations and expectations, art museums in general may be able both to meet their educational-cultural goals while expanding their audiences, the aim being to remain true to the unique institutional role of the art museum, "...not measured in attendance figures and popularity, but in terms of the heightened awareness – aesthetic, historical, scientific, humanistic..."(Graburn, 1984, p.177).

## **Chapter 2**

### **Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood Theoretical Underpinnings**

In order to understand the relative value placed on the museum experience by Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers it is necessary to define the concept of the museum experience and to devise a method of measurement. However, such definition and devising is not independent of previous critical thought or theory. From which theoretical framework can the museum experience best be understood and analysed?

#### **1.1. The Museum Experience**

In order to examine the ways in which people use museums and to understand museums from a visitor's perspective, it is important to consult the work of John Falk and Lynn Dierking. Their 1992 publication, *The Museum Experience*, looks at the total museum experience "from the moment the thought occurs to someone to go to a museum, through the remembrance of the museum visit, days, weeks, and years later,"(p.1). Rather than focusing on a single type of institution or a unique type of visitor, Falk and Dierking develop a framework for understanding the common stands and the unique complexities of the museum experience, the similarities and differences among all types of museums and among the full range of visitors. This framework, the Interactive Experience Model, is a means by which to organize and interpret interdisciplinary

research; not simply from museology, but also relevant conclusions from anthropology, sociology, and psychology.

Falk and Dierking's Interactive Experience Model is based on the dynamic relationship and interplay of three contexts; the personal context, the social context, and the physical context. Each context, the authors state, is continuously under construction by the visitor. The visitor's experience is understood through the interaction of all three and no less. "Whatever the visitor does attend to is filtered through the personal context, mediated by the social context, and embedded within the physical context. Viewing the process in terms of the interaction of visitor-constructed contexts helps us recognize that the choices visitors make [effect]... the difference between a *potential* museum experience and the *actual* one." (pp. 3-4)

As "education-oriented" museum professionals, John Falk and Lynn Dierking work towards improving the visitor's museum experience. In the years leading up to 1992, they conducted various research projects into the nature of the museum experience. Of the over two hundred interviews they conducted, recurring themes in peoples' recollections of museum experiences led Falk and Dierking to the three contexts and to the Interactive Experience Model. The key themes are described as follows:

- All had personalized the museum visit. Most details recalled related directly to an interest or concern that existed *before* the museum visit.
- All could explain whom they were with and why.

- All could place the museum visit within a general geographical context. Nearly all referred to some aspect of the museum's physical context.
- Most could recall at least a few exhibits and some specific details about them, though none could recall everything he [sic] saw. In addition, nearly everyone remembered roughly how long he was in the museum and his mental state at the time, such as being bored or "hassled." (p. 119)

The first theme comprises the personal context. Elements such as knowledge, experience, interests, motivations, and concerns are all part of this context that helps shape what an individual enjoys and appreciates, how they wish to spend their time, and what experiences they seek for self-fulfillment. Essentially, an individual's personal context defines the personal agenda an individual imposes upon a museum visit. A visitor's personal context can be anticipated through key factors such as; age, education, income, race, museum experience, specific interest in topics covered by the museum, social responsibilities such as family or a visiting relative, and general leisure-time preferences (p. 23).

The second theme ties into the social context. Regardless of whether an individual arrives at the museum alone or in a group, they invariably come into contact with other visitors or museum staff. This contact, and factors such as crowded exhibition spaces, will have an effect on the individual's behaviour (p.3). Though Falk and Dierking suggest some factors (the well-being or enjoyment of other members of the group; matters of social management such as scheduling, lunch, and physical comfort) as possible means for measuring or assessing a

person's social context, they admit that this element of experience is underrepresented in existing literature. "Given the importance of the social context to what is learned and remembered, the role of social interaction in museum learning deserves more study" (p.120).

The third theme, that relating to the Interactive Experience Model's physical context, can be simply defined as the physical setting. The architecture, the "feel" of the building, the objects and artefacts on display, are all factors representing the physical context. "How visitors behave, what they observe, and what they remember are strongly influenced by the physical context" (p.3). For instance, if an exhibition is carpeted, a visitor's fatigue is lessened and their experience altered. Falk and Dierking note that as part of the physical context, time and place are strongly linked in memory. "Most [of 200 people interviewed] described the feel and gestalt of the museum. Physical size and the complexity of the layout seemed to be salient, particularly for the children" (p. 121).

## **1.2. Measuring the Museum Experience**

By identifying factors from all three contexts, a means of understanding the individual visitor's museum experience has been constructed. However, the task of placing value on this experience – value that could later be compared to the relative worth of the experiences of other visitors – has yet to be identified.

It has already been established that this research is not interested in measuring the role of the art museum through attendance figures and popularity, "but in terms of the heightened awareness – aesthetic, historical,

scientific, humanistic..." (Graburn, 1984, p.177) that it can provide. It has also been established that this research seeks to examine the ways in which people use museums and to understand museums from a visitor's perspective. Thus, from the perspective of the individual visitor, what ranking would they give their museum experience? By asking a random sampling of museum visitors to answer a series of questions that establish their personal, social and physical contexts<sup>1</sup>; as well as questions that rank the experience from their unique perspective<sup>2</sup>; the museum experience can be both understood and quantified in such a way as to make comparisons possible.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

When searching for a theoretical framework that could encompass my thinking, I came across the following definition of Ethnography: "The scientific description of nations or races of men [sic], with their customs, habits, and points of difference" (Simpson & Weiner, 1989 p.425). Though I am developing a scientific description of humans, I continued to search for theories that are more applicable to my post-modern thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> Visitors were asked questions that established contextual factors; such as their age, education, income, whether they were visiting alone or with someone and why, if they were aware of the people around them, and what importance they gave to the architecture of the museum.

<sup>2</sup> Among other related questions, museum visitors were asked to describe the pleasure they got from their visit and to rank their enjoyment of their experience of a specific painting.

## **2.1 Phenomenology to Ethnomethodology**

From Sociology I extracted a concept of Phenomenology as "...a method of philosophy that begins with the individual and his own conscious experience and tries to avoid prior assumptions, prejudices, and philosophical dogmas" (Freund 1986 p.211). My approach is phenomenological as it examines the phenomenon of the visitor's experience as this experience is understood in its immediacy by the visitors (or social agents) themselves.

Phenomenological approaches to social science research became known through the work of, among others, Alfred Schutz. In turn, Schutz's work influenced the research of a then Harvard graduate student named Harold Garfinkel. In 1967 Garfinkel generated a branch of Phenomenology that he would later call Ethnomethodology. As Simpson and Weiner put it: Ethnomethodology is

A style of sociological analysis associated with H. Garfinkel (b.1917), which seeks to expose and analyse the methods by which participants in a given social situation construct their commonsense knowledge of the world.(1989, p.425)

The appeal of Ethnomethodology is its focus on the participant within a given social situation and how such participants "create and understand the bases for their actions" (Frank 1986 p.104). The actions or behaviours of participants in the given situation of a museum could thus be accessed through theories stemming from Garfinkel's Ethnomethodology.

Where the prefix 'ethno' denotes an investigation into meanings as they are understood by social actors themselves, Ethnomethodology takes the investigation further. In Garfinkel's approach, the long-standing anthropological method of observation is rejected as an imposition of researcher interpretations upon participant understandings. From Falk and Dierking's perspective, "The answer to the question why people visit museums is much more difficult and requires careful analysis; direct observation of visitors will not suffice" (1992, p.12). Ethnomethodology makes use of the social actor's own frame of reference. As Frank (1986) puts it "...the imposition of academic concepts on situations often leads to analyses too far removed from this frame of reference to be of interest. Perhaps the most immediate contribution of ethnomethodology has been that it forced sociologists to examine the extent to which they impose a view of social reality on the world rather than endeavouring to understand the often strange and illogical ways in which social actors actually act" (p. 105).

The social actor is, in this sense, understood to know what they are doing. Rather than being passive subjects of study, participants are viewed as active creators of knowledge and participants in the study of the social world. Therefore, it is the researcher's task to uncover the "...commonsense resources, procedures, and practices through which the members of a culture produce and recognize mutually intelligible objects, events, and courses of action. ...social actions and social organization are produced by knowledgeable agents who guide their actions by the use of situated commonsense reasoning" (Heritage

2000 p.856). In this concept, Garfinkel has drawn on Schutz's notion that the social actor approaches the world with a 'stock of knowledge at hand' made up of commonsense constructs and categories derived from the individual's social origins. Social origins are not necessarily unique or mutually exclusive. As Heritage puts it; "A shared social world, with its immense variegation of social objects and events, is jointly constructed and recognized throughout, and thus ultimately rests on, a shared base of procedures of practical reasoning that operationalize and particularize a body of inexact knowledge" (2000, p.857). Such inexact knowledge, Garfinkel tells us, is part of a dynamic social process, one that cannot be distilled to a "common culture" but necessarily requires "*ad hoc* practices." The recognition, description and coding of actions and events is inherently approximate. Thus Ethnomethodology's research position has been descriptive and naturalistic rather than explanatory or experimental.

With respect to museum visitors, their experiences, and their motives, such a descriptive and naturalistic approach seems appropriate. I aim to access the 'internalized norms' of participants and how these norms act as motivators of museum visiting behaviour.

## **2.2. Arts Marketing**

With respect to understanding behaviour, marketing theory provides many tools and strategies. Critics of marketing refer to intimidation and coercion, deceptive advertising and manipulation. In reality, true marketing philosophy places the customer at the focus of all institutional actions and choices.

Marketing “is a sound, effective technology for creating exchanges and influencing behavior [sic] that, when properly applied, *must be* socially beneficent because its major premise is responding to customer needs and wants” (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996, p.36).

Other definitions of marketing concur. Canadian marketer and educator, François Colbert states that “[t]he goal of marketing is optimization of the relationship between companies and customers and maximization of their mutual satisfaction,” (1993, p.8). *The Dictionary of Marketing Terms* (1988) defines marketing as “... the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals,” (Bennett in Colbert, 1993, p.8). Implied within these definitions are four crucial elements: consumer need, satisfaction of this need, a link between company and consumer, and optimization of profits. Colbert cautions that maximization and optimization are not synonymous. Maximization is a focus on profits while optimization strives to “obtain the best possible profits while taking into account organizational or environmental elements such as ensuring employee welfare, creating a solid corporate image, satisfying the customer, or getting the company involved in its community,” (1993, p.8).

A specific approach to marketing is required when the profits being optimized are, for the most part, non-monetary. Unlike the philanthropy of Social Marketing – a specific branch that aims to alter consumer behaviour and

improve social welfare – marketing the arts has its origins in survival. As traditional forms of support for the arts declined, marketing was integrated into museum management in order to “...find new ways of expanding their audiences and their sources of financial investment.” This inevitably meant that marketing had to play an increasingly vital role as cultural organizations sought ways of making dramatic changes in their fortunes (Kotler & Andreasen, p.7).

In marketing, research is conceived of as part of a system that fuels organizational decision-making. “Marketing Information Systems” or MIS represent an “...arsenal of tools useful in the decision-making process,” (Colbert, 1993, p.203). Kotler and Andreasen define market research as the planned acquisition and analysis of data, measuring some aspect or aspects of the marketing system for the purpose of improving an organization’s marketing decisions,” (p.212). Effectively, research plays a crucial role in understanding customer attitudes and behaviour and planning marketing strategy. From Colbert’s ‘arsenal of tools’ it is possible to generate and to access three types of data: internal data (company information such as sales and attendance reports), secondary data (publicly or privately published information that is largely available at the library), and primary data (which is obtained directly from the consumer through market studies, polls, surveys, and the like). This research project is especially concerned with accessing primary data.

In order to yield primary data, market research theory suggests three types of research: exploratory, descriptive, and causal. Exploratory research –

such as discussion groups, case studies, and observation – is preliminary and superficial by nature. It is best used for defining a problem or suggesting hypotheses. Causal research involves the specific analysis of the effects of one variable on another. Descriptive research “...seeks specific information on a given topic. It usually starts from a hypothesis, which is tested and confirmed or disproved.” (Colbert, 1993, p.212). Kotler and Andreasen talk of descriptive data – such as family status, occupation, education, media habits, satisfaction, and intentions for future patronage – as descriptions of one point in time or descriptions of trends or pattern changes over time. “Descriptive data usually serve management decisions in three ways: (1) monitoring performance to indicate whether strategy changes are needed, (2) describing consumers for segmentation decisions, and (3) serving as the basis for more sophisticated analysis” (pp. 220-221). Thus, results from descriptive research could determine the factors to be used in a specific decision, or to generate a socio-demographic profile of a specific audience, or to outline the characteristics of a particular market group. Typical descriptive research methods include mail-in surveys, telephone surveys or polls, and personal interviews. Colbert advocates the personal interview method as it “... is effective if the marketer wants to obtain fairly complex data. It enables the interviewer to use visual material and to clarify or repeat questions. This technique allows the respondent who has not understood a question to ask for additional information and lets the interviewer delve deeper into certain answers,” (1993, pp.213-214).

Thus, I come to the crux of the applicability of arts marketing as a theory upon which to 'pin' my research. As previously established, in order to understand the relative value placed on the museum experience by Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers, it is necessary to both define and devise a method of measurement for the concept of museum experience. Falk and Dierking have provided a definition, as well as a number of factors that could be considered for analysis. In order to strengthen this relative means for measuring experience, it is beneficial to understand museum visitor choices and behaviours through an appreciation for their decision-making processes.

Few would argue that museum visitors, consumers of the museum experience, base their decisions and subsequent behaviour on a certain amount of information. Colbert describes this information as divisible into two categories: internal information (based on previous experience) and external information (such as the type of product, word of mouth accounts, etc.), (1993, p.78). "A company could not effectively market a product without a good understanding of the type of information consumers use to make purchasing decisions and the way in which the information is perceived and used – in other words, the decision-making processes," (Ibid.) Following Colbert's logic, there are three key types of variables that influence a consumer's decision; those related directly to the consumers themselves, those related to the purchasing context or situation, and those concerning the products being considered. This individual/product/situation triad forms the basis for an understanding of the

decision-making process. This process is typically motivated by, "...an imbalance between the consumer's current and desired states. The wider the gap between the two states, the stronger the consumer's motivation will be. ...More often than not, the consumer will not be influenced by any stimulus, regardless of the pressures applied. Consumer motivation to buy a product is largely related to previous experience and level of product involvement," (Colbert, 1993, p.80).

A museum visitor's previous experience can be understood easily enough through Falk and Dierking's Interactive Experience Model and information that respondents provide. In marketing, the relationship holds that "[t]he broader the experience, the shorter the decision-making process," (Colbert, 1993, p. 83). The concept of "product involvement", however, merits further academic delineation:

...consensus is that the term may be understood as the feeling of importance or personal interest associated with the product in a given situation.... Rothschild suggests the following definition: "Involvement is a state of motivation, arousal or interest. This state exists in a process. It is driven by current external variables (the situation; the product; the communications) and past internal variables (enduring; ego; central values). Its consequents are types of searching, processing and decision making." Involvement may therefore be considered a reflection of the importance of a specific product for an individual in a given situation (Colbert, 1993, p.81).

In the given situation of an art museum, the specific products a consumer chooses to purchase may be knowledge, relaxation, entertainment, or others. Colbert suggests that visitors may be seeking such benefits as exoticism,

relaxation, enrichment or escapism, cultural enrichment, stimulation, peer approval, excitement, entertainment, education, social prestige, and child development, (1993, p.85). These benefits are often difficult for consumers (and researchers) to identify and especially to measure. Dominant marketing theory contends that consumers undertake an overall evaluation of the cultural product, using a holistic process of decision-making that is both cognitive and structured. This theory holds that consumers are cognitive beings who analyze the various characteristics of a product in order to optimize their consumption of it. However, an alternate view of the decision-making process is that it is not utilitarian but rather experiential.

Some products are not purchased on the basis of objectively viewed features or specific functions, but rather their purchase forms a total experience, an attempt at hedonistic gratification. In the case of products such as a visit to the art museum, an experiential approach to consumer motives and decision-making may be more appropriate. As a decision-making process, the total experience relies heavily on emotional elements (love, hate, joy, boredom, fatigue, etc.). According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), these decision-making processes are particularly popular with consumers of cultural products. In terms of the evaluation mechanisms that consumers use, affective processes have been found to be most typical in the purchase of works of art. However, Colbert cautions that most decision-making processes are neither entirely cognitive nor entirely affective; they are a blend of both processes. As such, a

market researcher should be aware both of this affective dimension and the more widely accepted, utilitarian view of the decision-making process, (1993, p.91).

### **3. Conclusion**

From ethnomethodological and art marketing theories a suitable framework is available for understanding and analyzing the museum experience. Using Falk and Dierking's Interactive Experience Model, the concept of the museum experience is defined and measurable. Thus, it is possible to proceed with an investigation of the relative value placed on the museum experience by Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Love Stories**

#### **A Review of the Literature**

Now that a theoretical framework for this research has been established, it is possible to situate the entire project within the broader context of related literature. Museology may no longer be considered a new area of investigation. It has been over ten years since Falk and Dierking (1992) developed their Interactive Experience Model in order to view an already extensive body of literature – not simply from museology, but from also from the fields of psychology, anthropology, and sociology - on museums and the experiences that they offer. However, little has been written about the concept of the Art Lover or its relative impact on museum visiting. Thus, the following chapter attempts to place my research within information that exists on related issues of – among other things – the museum experience, recent trends in museum management, thoughts on audience research, and the role of art museums in contemporary western society. Given the broad nature of this information, I have divided it according to perspective, that of the visitor is kept separate from the institutional perspective. Subsequently, under each of these two perspectives the information has been divided into three contexts. The contexts are in keeping with Falk and Dierking's Interactive Experience Model. Thus, for each perspective a personal, social, and physical context is discussed.

Where Falk and Dierking endeavoured to generate a model for 'understanding the common stands and the unique complexities of the museum experience, the similarities and differences among all types of museums and among the full range of visitors,' this research is concerned with the specific intricacies of art museums, Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers.

In the twenty years since Marilyn Hood's *Museum News* article "Staying away: Why people choose not to visit museums," researchers have attempted to answer this question or to understand its correlate: why people *do* choose to visit museums? Hood describes the dilemma faced by museologists as follows:

You want to learn about your audiences – the people who visit your museum and those who do not – but you don't know where or how to begin. That's a common dilemma for museum personnel, who recognize that getting some solid information about what people expect from a museum experience, how they react to exhibits and programs, and how they learn in museums can help improve staff decisions about programming, exhibit design, learning opportunities and audience development. (1986 p.25)

In the mid-eighties, museums were abuzz with audience research activities:

Evaluation activities are undergoing a renaissance in the museum field. Audience research,...and research about museum learning are concepts that are now part of our professional vocabulary. (Munley, 1986, p.19)

With the arrival of a new decade, audience research took on a new sophistication and sought new forms of critical analysis and thought:

These days, more and more museums are turning to market research – once the sole province of toothpaste makers and detergent manufacturers – to overhaul their images and to help make decisions about what hour to be open, how to write a wall

label, how much admission to charge and, perhaps one day, even what kind of art to show. (Vogel, 1992, p.1)

In the early part of this new millennium museums continue to advance their understanding of visiting and non-visiting individuals. The following pages reflect a mere portion of the work that has already been conducted.

## **1. The Visitor's Perspective: Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers in Context**

Falk and Dierking remind us that "The decision to visit a museum involves matching personal and social interests and desires with the anticipated physical context and the associated activities of a museum," (1992, p.3). Given this theory, it is logical to now make note of what is already known about the elements and factors of each of the three contexts of the Interactive Experience Model.

### **1.1. The Personal Context Contextualized**

In addition to quantifiable demographics such as age, education, income, and race, key factors within the personal context include knowledge, experience, interests, motivations, and concerns. Factors such as these are held to shape what an individual enjoys and appreciates, how they wish to spend their time, their leisure preferences, and what experiences they seek for self-fulfillment. What literature exists to improve understanding of these factors?

Many studies have been done over the years to generate a socio-demographic profile of those who visit art museums. Typically speaking, an art museum's audience is of higher education and income levels than the general

population, predominantly Caucasian, and between the school ages and retirement ages.<sup>1</sup> Factors such as these present an outward profile of museum audiences. However, the key concerns of this study (love and motives) are not likely to be elucidated through mere demographics. Understanding a visitor's knowledge and previous experience of art and art museums is crucial in the contextualization of personal environment. Falk and Dierking caution:

Museum visitors do not catalogue visual memories of objects and labels in academic, conceptual schemes, but assimilate events and observations in mental categories of personal significance and character, determined by events in their lives before and after the museum visit. This is our definition of learning in this book. What separates learning from experience is that not all experiences are so assimilated; those that are can be said to have been learned, (1992, p.123).

By this definition, the experience of events and observations is the origin of learning. When such experience is 'assimilated,' it can thus be considered learned or knowledge. In their discussion of learning, Falk and Dierking highlight two mechanisms for permanent or long-term learning: previous and subsequent learning. A recurring example in their text is derived from an interview with one of their informants. During this interview, the informant recalled detailed memories of a childhood experience at the museum, seeing Charles Lindbergh's airplane *Spirit of St. Louis*. The informant had learned about Lindbergh and his plane at school, but when he saw the plane itself and remarked through his

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<sup>1</sup> Falk & Dierking (p.20) state that "[m]yriad demographic studies of museum visitors have been conducted over the years in an attempt to specify the age and social profile of visitors." They reference a number of studies in their 'notes' section; the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the American Association of Museums, Marilyn Hood, Gudykunst et al., Balling & Cornell, D.J. Duncan, and a study entitled *Leisure and recreation places* as points of reference for museum visitor profiles.

observations certain details of the plane, Falk and Dierking assert that it was then that this informant assimilated the information and converted it into knowledge and long-term learning, (p.124). "To the extent that learning appears to require both previous experience and subsequent reinforcement, it follows that people with greater previous experience are likely to learn more than people with less experience," (p.125). Does it then also follow that those who are most likely to learn are also most interested in the learning that art museums offer?

In 2001, Italian researchers Zammuner and Testa used questionnaires to study the perceptions and motivations of visitors to so-called blockbuster exhibitions as compared to visitors of museum permanent collections. They found that the two different types of displays attract visitors with similar socio-demographic profiles who judged their satisfaction with the visit similarly. Where visitors differed was in their interest for art versus a need for entertainment. In a comparison of blockbuster and permanent exhibition management strategies, Zammuner and Testa found that the institutions attracted visitors with different motivations, induced different art-visit perceptions, and satisfied different social and cognitive needs. The researchers advocate the pursuit of "management goals and strategies that do not forget the need to actually help people meet art,...helping them understand it and develop an intrinsic interest for it" (p.95). It may seem presumptuous to assert that understanding itself would lead to an intrinsic interest in art and the institutions that display it. Professor and Art

Educator Jennifer Eisman (2001) argues that adherence to a binary definition of understanding – one where the viewer either does or does not understand the content of an exhibition – “leads to a great deal of dis-comfort for viewers” (p.17). In 1991, a study conducted by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts found that non-visitors “reported that they did not visit art museums because they did not feel they belonged there and that they would not be able to understand the work” (in Eisman, p.17). Eisman suggests that belonging, community, comfort, and understanding can be achieved with a reconceptualization of understanding, one based on Georg Gadamer’s ‘tertiary definition’ of the word: “one person coming to an understanding with another about something they both understand” (Gadamer, 1960/1997, p.xvi in Eisman, p.17). Rather than approaching a work of art like a scientific specimen and rather than trying “to strip away all the variable, subjective elements of our perception, leaving only the universal idea,” Eisman argues that aesthetic understanding is not about absolutes. “It is about the experience of being swept up in the current of meanings and traditions connected with the object” (p.19). It now seems plausible that in helping visitors understand the works on display, an intrinsic interest in them may be developed and thus a greater audience and a stronger community instituted. Zammuner and Testa conclude that, “Whatever the cultural-ideological beliefs that underlie institutional policies, meeting the concerns outlined above – increased audience and

customers' satisfaction – requires knowing visitors' motivations, perceptions, and needs" (2001, p.89).

In order to gain a better understanding of motivations, perceptions, and needs it is useful to delve into the vast body of research in leisure studies. In defining leisure – identifying segments of human leisure preferences, and studying the criteria that people use in selecting leisure activities – one can gain insight into the way an individual's personal context defines the personal agenda they impose upon a museum visit. In their 2003 article on identity and leisure, Australian researchers Wearing and Deane provide the following definition of the leisure experience:<sup>2</sup>

There is almost universal agreement that the perception of freedom of choice and intrinsic motivation are necessary (ie [sic] must be present) before an individual will experience leisure.... It is our belief, therefore, that the leisure state is similar in its psychological properties to mystic experiences, peak experiences and flow experiences...In our view leisure experience is characterized by increased intensity of emotions and sensitivity to feelings, which can be both positive and negative.

Certainly similar comments could be made about experiences of love. It too is 'characterized by increased intensity of emotions.' Visitors are free to choose to visit an art museum or not (unless they have been commandeered by a school teacher or parent). However, are motivations for visiting an art museum intrinsic? Do individuals have an inherent motive for the leisure experiences offered by museums? Perhaps, as Wearing and Deane suggest, "...leisure is the

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<sup>2</sup> This definition is originally from Tinsley and Tinsley (1986) "A theory of the attributes, benefits and causes of leisure experience," Leisure Sciences, 8(1)1-45.

time in which an individual is free from the responsibilities of everyday work and family life and is hence able to pursue individual activities chosen by them for their own pleasure, personal development and re-skilling,” (Wearing & Deane, 2003, p.10). A museum visit, like tourism, provides an individual with “certain autonomy over their lives, free from the disciplines of work and the responsibilities of home” (Ibid.). Wearing and Deane found that for ecotourism and outdoor recreational experiences, an opportunity was provided for individuals “to learn through experiences and the benefits accrued from such experiences can fundamentally influence identity, and subsequently affect groups and communities” (p.10).

This relationship between identity and leisure-time choices was investigated by Gudykunst, Morra, Kantor, and Parker in 1992. The authors generated a market segmentation strategy based on placing individuals into three categories according to their leisure-time orientations: cultural or intellectual, organization or club, and participation.<sup>3</sup> Evidently enough, “...people who tended to choose leisure-time activities from the ‘cultural or intellectual’ category – concert-going, theater, movies, reading for pleasure, and traveling and touring – were the same people who tended to be museum-goers,” (in Falk & Dierking, 1992, p.16). But what of people who wish to spend their time oriented towards organizations or clubs, or through participation? Do they not

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<sup>3</sup> Gudykunst et al. acknowledge a shortcoming in their study in that it “primarily examined middle class, white Americans.” Further studies, they say, should address populations in higher and lower income brackets as well as minorities. “The utilization of different populations, such as those suggested, is necessary in light of the influence of availability of activities upon what respondents do,” (1981, p.41).

perceive that an art museum can offer them the sort of experiences that they seek for self-fulfillment?

In seeking experiences, Marilyn Hood theorizes that people use six major criteria to judge potential leisure activities. These criteria are: being with people or social interaction, doing something worthwhile, feeling comfortable and at ease in one's surroundings, having the challenge of a new experience; having an opportunity to learn, and participating actively. In addition to these criteria are the important considerations of investing time and money and the relative personal importance of the activity. "[I]n short, the costs and the benefits of any given choice," affect the potential museum visitor (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p.13). Through Hood's research in Toledo, Ohio, it was discovered that the three criteria ranked highest by frequent visitors (those who visited three or more times per year) were: learning, challenges, and 'worthwhileness'. These same criteria were actually ranked as unimportant by people who did not visit museums. Occasional museum visitors (those who visit once or twice a year), on the other hand, do see value in the experiences offered by museums. However, there is a great deal of competition for the leisure time of the occasional visitor. Hood notes that "...they opted to visit museums only occasionally...most likely to visit museums during special exhibitions [such as *Voyage Into Myth*], museum-sponsored family events, or at special times, such as when they were entertaining an out-of-town visitor," (Hood, 1983, p.54). In this competitive market museums are not always well placed to compete for this audience.

"...[M]useum professionals' values tend to be more in line with those of frequent visitors; hence, museums generally offer or emphasize the very qualities that are least appealing to occasional and non-visiting populations. For example, 'selling' the museum as an extension of school (in fact, emphasizing learning at all) might entice frequent participants, but could deter occasional visitors and be a reason for non-participants to avoid museums. Museums that promote themselves as good places for families to explore, discover, and enjoy each other in a relaxed setting would be more likely to draw visitors from among the groups that do not visit, or visit only occasionally," (Hood, 1983, p.56).

In addition to the many factors and aspects of the personal context suggested by Falk and Dierking, I would like to propose that an individual's identity plays a role in the conceptualization of their personal context. Phrases such as; "that's not for me," or "it's not my thing," belie a personal, cultural, and social self-identification in relation not simply to the arts, but to many aspects of our society - bungee jumping, monogamy, Catholicism – from which people will voluntarily exclude themselves. In adopting a self-conceptualization as an Art Lover or not, what is it that someone is saying about themselves? Are Art Lovers people of taste, as Bourdieu and Darbel suggest, (1990, p.109)? If so, what does that make Non-Art Lovers? What is a love of art? Bourdieu and Darbel describe it as 'aesthetic pleasure cultivated' (Ibid.). However, it could also be conceived as hedonistic consumption. Given the focus of this research, these questions merit further investigation from within existing literature.

Love. This little four-letter word is loaded with meanings and significances. Dissanayake uses 'Love' in the title of her book but opts for the term 'mutuality' when building her argument. The subject of love, Dissanayake asserts, is confused and confusing. "Often, like intimacy, it refers automatically to romantic love and sex ('lovemaking'). I use the words 'love' and 'intimacy' in this book because of their intrinsic appeal, but what I mean by both words is more usefully addressed with a less familiar (and less culturally freighted) word – 'mutuality'" (2000, p.19). Dissanayake admits that love and mutuality are not always synonymous. Where mutuality is characterized by intimacy, the word also imparts the notion of being shared. Love, on the other hand, has been dramatically referenced in poetry, song, theatre, and life as a sort of madness, a mystery, an illusion. More clinically, Dissanayake adds, "it is viewed as projection, narcissism, self-delusion, or nature's trick for propagating the species" (Ibid.).

Dissanayake presents examples from numerous non-western societies where individuals are not nearly as obsessed with romantic love as North Americans and Europeans seem to be. The suggestion is that some Western societies have lost sight of:

...mutuality with other individuals, acceptance by and participation in a group, socially shared meanings, assurance that we understand and can capably deal with the world, and the opportunity to demonstrate emotional investment in important objects and outcomes by acts and experiences of elaborating (2000, p.168).

Does pursuing love, having love, giving love, obsessing over love fill a void in our contemporary existence? Where love and traditional sources of comfort are absent, our overtly commercial society has been known to seek solace in non-natural elements. Can loving art, or at least identifying yourself as someone who loves art, replace the traditional bonds and connections, feelings of belonging that Dissanayake so convincingly describes?

## **1.2. The Social Context Contextualized**

Falk and Dierking admit that this aspect of the Interactive Experience Model is underrepresented in available literature. What effect does visiting alone have on the quality of experience, especially as compared to visiting an exhibition with a group? One would imagine that visiting with a group would bring with it concerns for the well-being and enjoyment of other members of the group (especially for the individual who suggested and instigated the visit). Visiting with a group might also bring with it challenges of social management such as scheduling, lunch breaks, transportation co-ordination, and physical comfort. When visiting alone, how often do individuals come into contact with other visitors or museum staff? What effects do crowded exhibition spaces have on the museum visitor's behaviour? These questions represent aspects of a visitor's social context. Understanding factors such as these would lead to a greater comprehension of the social context.

One opportunity for understanding is through anthropologist Nelson's Graburn's 1984 article entitled, "The Museum and the Visitor Experience."

Graburn accesses the social context of a visitor's museum experience by examining the 'debris' of past experiences that visitors bring with them. Such debris leads to "...*experiential needs* in that person's life that a museum may be expected to fulfill" (p.180). Drawing from the theories of social geographer Sheldon Annis, Graburn identified three experiential needs: reverential, associational, and educational. A visitor's educational and reverential needs are discussed later in this chapter. A visitor's associational need is, however, useful in the consideration of a social context. Graburn asserts that visitors often have a need

...for a social occasion. In this function, the museum is analogous to the tourist site, the spectator sport, the beach, the theme park, and shopping for fun. The significance of the museum visit lies primarily in the fact that it is a *shared* experience. Families who go to museums as part of their sightseeing are able to relate to each other in their roles as couples, parents, and siblings in a more direct and relaxed way than within the confines of the ordinary workaday world." (Graburn, 1984, p.181)

The experience of visiting an art museum with one's family has been found to have a significant influence on future museum visiting habits. "[P]atterns of leisure activities, such as museum-going," market researcher J.R. Kelly asserts, "are generally learned through a process of socialization....In general, the family is the main associational context of leisure learning and such learning appears to continue through the life cycle for many persons," (1977, p.131). Kelly suggests that "...rather than building on public and school programs, leisure providers might do well to analyse the kinds of activities likely to have been begun with

family or friends and develop reintroduction programs that are contextually familiar and attractive....The relative unimportance of formal programs and the importance of informal relations may present an important clue for recruitment of the uninvolved" (p.132). Kelly calls for "[f]urther research on how leisure socialization is integral to developing selfhood and self-presentation in home, community, and school contexts," adding that such research would, "open a new avenue of explanation of leisure decisions and meanings" (Ibid.).

Social interaction was also found to contribute significantly to the construction of meanings within the context of tourist experiences. Like shared experiences in the museum, interactions with family and friends impact the development of meaning and subsequent behaviour. From a symbolic interactionist perspective,<sup>4</sup> "[b]ehaviour is largely governed by the individual's social definition of the situation, interaction with others in the social milieu, and the self concept [which is] governed to a large extent by others in a social process," (Stryker in Wearing & Deane, 2003, p.7). This perspective takes into account the "status and significance of others in a group as the dominant construct, as opposed to research based in psychology, which regards the influence of others as peripheral in relation to individual decision-making" (Ibid.).

### **1.3. The Physical Context Contextualized**

Museum architecture has undergone a number of challenges over the past twenty years. As designer Robert Venturi put it, art museums used to request a

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<sup>4</sup> For a broader take and description of the symbolic interactionist perspective see Stryker, S. (1980) Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version. California: Benjamin/Cummings Publications, p.27.

very straightforward program or set of requirements when commissioning an architect. Now, this program has become "one of the most complicated in existence" (Venturi in Posner, 1988, p.68). Where the nineteenth-century museum was made up of nine-tenths exhibition space and one-tenth 'other' spaces, contemporary museums are more likely to devote two-thirds of their space to 'other' functions. Venturi listed some of the spaces that architects are called upon to design: "spaces for films, lectures, concerts, and other sorts of performances; one or more restaurants and their kitchens; a shop; studios; laboratories; computer facilities; conference rooms; sufficient offices, bathrooms, and locker rooms for the staff required to run all the programs; and of course, a large, important, festive space in which to hold special dinners and gala celebrations" (Posner, 1988, pp.68-69). In this context, it is easy to see how author Ellen Posner can say "that museums are threatening to trivialize the art they house" (1988, p.67).

This being said, an art museum is still a prestigious and sought-after commission for an architect. Careers are made and broken by art museum commissions; Frank O. Gehry became a household name after his Guggenheim Bilbao commission, and Michael Graves' career is still recovering from New York's Whitney extension "post office" critique. People come to expect that the local art museum will be grand, palatial. When North Americans began to build public art museums, "the buildings were meant to serve as little palaces of culture and emblems of civilization in cities whose inhabitants wished earnestly to

demonstrate that they were not living in cultural wastelands” (Posner, 1988, p.68). People expected greater and still greater things from art museums, more activities, more things to eat, more things to buy. “By the 1970s full-service restaurants, vast book and gift shops, and jam-packed ‘blockbuster’ exhibitions had become standard” (Ibid.).

The resulting complexity of a museum’s layout and the swell of peripheral stuff have meant that visitors are often exhausted by the time they actually get to see works of art! Some visitors may also find themselves distracted by the smell of food or disillusioned by the overwhelming commercialism of numerous satellite boutiques situated at the exit of any major exhibition. Priorities seem to have shifted away from contemplation toward stimulation, consumption and the lowest common denominator. Posner takes the hard line and suggests that “art museums seem to be sliding toward an aesthetic that is about commerce more than anything else.” Posner waxes nostalgic about:

When museums were thought of primarily as places for the conservation, study, and display of works of art, new structures were designed both to suggest that opportunities for repose and contemplation were available within and to symbolize what were believed to be the uplifting properties of art: hence the park and suburban settings, the important-looking colonnaded entrances and celestial domes, the exhilarating flights of steps (1988, p.68).

Things are not as bad as they may have seemed to Posner in 1988. Visitors are not hard-pressed to find the galleries, at least, not at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Over the last twenty years, visitor facilities in art museums have simply changed according to evolving audiences. Hooper-Greenhill describes how

"learner-centred approaches to teaching introduced over the last thirty years have encouraged critical and questioning visitors, who are not content to be told what to think; an emphasis on consumer power has resulted in a demand for high standards of visitor facilities" (2000, p.150).

Posner (and others) are critical of dramatic shifts in museum management, those that place too strong an emphasis on market demands and trends forsaking the tenets of their original institutional purpose and mission. One danger of responding to market demand without first considering the museum's mission is that the physical context of a visitor's interactive experience is put at risk by "compromising a reasonably contemplative environment by [placing] temporary shops or food services in the middle of galleries" (Ames, 1989, p.8). In 1989, museum educator Peter Ames extolled the virtues of democratizing museum spaces, but cautioned against the excessive use of marketing in museums:

The democratization of museums in the last fifteen years [1974-1989] has benefited museums and their public tremendously, capitalizing on the assets and increasing the vitality and economic well-being of the former while broadening the horizon and stimulating curiosities for the latter. But it would be unfortunate if museums were to compromise their educational roles and settle for popularity. "Museums should be rewarding learning environments, and any attempt to settle for mass popularity alone is to sell museums short (*New Scientist*, 1983)" (p.14).

The environment, physical context, or "feel" of an art museum should be focused on meeting visitor needs and expectations – not simply the 'two-thirds other' stuff – let us not forget that at the centre of visitor experiences and

expectations of an art museum is the art itself. What is on display and how it is displayed will have the primordial impact on a visitor's museum experience.

## **2. The Institutional Perspective: Art Museums in Context**

Many have tried to shed light on the various reasons why people choose to spend their time and money on a visit to a museum. Using various formative and summative techniques of inquiry, museum professionals have sought to better understand their visiting (and non-visiting) publics (Soren, 2000; Vogel, 1992; Hood, 1986; Hood, 1983; Weil, 2000). Museums have been under pressure to be accountable for public funding and to seek out new sources of funding. According to Vogel,

With government financing down...and private donations in the doldrums, museums are more eager than ever to get paying customers through the doors. At the same time, they find themselves competing for the public's leisure time. Thus the lure of market research (1992, p.1).

Government financing isn't the only traditional source of support that has declined. Corporate giving, private giving, sales of services and ancillary marketing (catalogues, gift shops) all experienced a period of decline. In the 1980s and on into the 1990s, corporate donations to the arts levelled off or, in some specific cases, declined. Many corporations shifted priorities back to "bottom-line" investments. In the United States, the Federal Tax Reform Act of 1986 reduced incentives for individuals to donate cash or other gifts to the arts, including museums (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996, p.7). These and other environmental trends lead many cultural institutions to look for new means of

expanding their audiences and their financial resources. Another threat to museum attendance, is the fact that "... the audience for the arts is growing old at a very rapid rate and must be significantly augmented by new, excited young people who want to experience the art and do so outside the confines of their own family room," (Kotler and Andreasen, 1996, p.13).

Critics of market research are worried about museums enticing warm bodies through the doors simply for the sake of meeting a government quota. Museums are not fast food restaurants, shopping malls, or amusement parks. They must be prepared to address the greater needs, values and expectations of their audience (Graburn, 1984; Annis, 1974, 1986; Henry, 2000). Marilyn Hood, a well respected museum consultant, put it thus,

...we need to focus on how individuals make decisions about the use of their leisure time and energy, to concentrate on the *psychographic* characteristics of both current and potential visitors – their values, attitudes, perceptions, interests, expectations, satisfactions. Once these factors are identified, we can examine how nonparticipants differ from participants in order to determine whether or not museums are offering or can offer the kinds of experiences that nonparticipants value and expect. Then we can develop ways, within the scope of our organizations and our abilities, to reach these elusive audiences (1983, p. 51).

It is clear from the quote above that Hood believed in broadening the museums audience by engaging the "nonparticipant." Hood suggested that by engaging the nonparticipant in a positive museum experience, one that is grounded in values already held by the nonparticipant, museums could inspire repeat visitation. In a more recent article, Carole Henry (2000) argued that:

...museum educators must understand the museum experience from the perspective of the visitor and have conducted numerous studies in which each of [three] contexts are controlled in order to determine their significance (Henry, 2000, p.99).

The three contexts referred to by Henry are personal (the visitor's life experiences, interests and expectations), social (with whom the individual visits) and physical (the objects on display, architecture, and atmosphere). Henry's assignment of significance to these contexts is drawn from the researchers John Falk and Lynn Dierking. Falk and Dierking asserted that individual experiences of museums differ as a result of the various relationships between these three contexts "...and because each [visitor] makes choices as to which aspects of that context to focus on." (Falk and Dierking in Henry, 2000, p.99)

Graburn (1984) is also interested in this notion of context. Graburn's reference to the visitor's life experiences as "the debris of events that the visitor brings to a museum..." is an expansion of Annis's notion of experiential needs. These needs, as mentioned in the discussion of a visitor's social context, are reverential, associational, and educational.

The reverential need "designates the visitor's need for a personal experience with something higher, more sacred, and out-of-the ordinary than home and work are able to supply." Evidence of the continued relevance of a museum's reverential role is found in studies conducted by Barbara Soren (2000). Soren concluded that "...often this association of looking at art as a peaceful, relaxing, even serene experience may be the motivation individuals need to choose the art

museum when they have a few hours to spend on their own, with family, or with friends" (2000, p.12).

A visitor's educational need is elucidated through the understanding of "the museum [as] a *cultural production* from which many people expect to learn something about the world..." (Graburn, 1984, p.181). The third need, an associational need, has been discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Thus, here, I would like to address merely one point that Graburn brings up regarding visitor needs for a social occasion. For some people, a trip to the museum can be analogous to going to the beach or a theme park, to shopping for fun or going to a ball game (Ibid.). Relating or associating the museum to the tourist site can send shivers of fear through the souls of those scholars who continue to build museums into something beyond mere simulacra, to differentiate themselves from the garish theme park, the commercial shopping mall, or the un-intellectual spectator sport. Some would argue that in meeting the needs of the visitor, the museum is effectively reducing itself to the lowest common denominator, to the 'unwashed masses'. This argument clings too heavily to old notions that a love of art is innate and that art museums offer exclusivity. It has been over thirty years since Bourdieu and Darbel's critical conclusion:

The museum presents to all, as a public heritage, the monuments of a past splendour, instruments for the extravagant glorification of the great people of previous times: false generosity, since free entry is also optional entry, reserved for those who, equipped with the ability to appropriate the works of art, have the privilege of making use of this freedom, and who thence find themselves legitimated in their privilege, that is, in their ownership of the means of appropriation of cultural goods, or to paraphrase Max

Weber, in their *monopoly* of the manipulation of cultural goods and the institutional signs of cultural salvation (1990, p.113).

In the time since this conclusion was written, museum management has been working towards sincerity in their generosity, working against monopolies and cultural exclusivity, working towards democratization. This is not to say that these goals have been obtained. In the preface to Museums, Society, Inequality, Editor Richard Sandell writes:

Whilst there is a growing consensus of the importance of broadening access to museums and diversifying their appeal and visitor profiles, relatively few museums have purposefully explored their wider social role to engage with and impact upon social issues facing their communities. Nevertheless, there is a growing body of museums and museum workers who view their social role and purpose beyond that of simply facilitating access to the museum. Museums are beginning to explore their contribution towards the combating of *social* as well as *cultural* inequality (2002, p.xvii).

My research assumes that in Canada's major art museums there is not only a vision of 'their social role and purpose beyond that of simply facilitating access,' but also a willingness to act on this view. It is this willingness that leads to peripheral programming and to an interest in the results of visitor surveys and the insights they offer.

## **2.1. The "Personal" Context Contextualized**

For an individual, the key factors that make up their personal context are factors such as: age, education, income, and race. In profiling the institution, age, funding structure, permanent collection, and mission can be used to construct a corresponding context. As defined by the Canadian Museums

Association in Chapter 1, a museum is non-profit and permanent and open to the public. It collects and preserves, studies, interprets, assembles, and exhibits objects of educational and cultural value “to the public for its instruction and enjoyment” (2001). An institution’s age will affect how well it is established within its community and how well-developed its collection of ‘objects’ is. The type of objects collected and exhibited will unquestionably change the personality of an institution; as evidenced in the differences between an art museum and a zoo. The funding structure that an institution relies on will necessarily affect the relative emphasis placed on securing either large donations or attracting the largest possible audiences. But above all, the mission will define the institution itself.

In theory, a museum’s mission emanates from its charter (usually quite broad), its role (to collect, preserve, and educate), and its tax exemption.... Theoretically, the trustees...and senior staff determine their community’s current needs, articulate the best focus for the museum mission, and limit its scope sufficiently so that it may be advance with the resources available (Ames, 1989, p.5).

When a mission is well designed and given the support of the museum’s staff, it provides direction for the institution and focus for its often limited resources.<sup>5</sup> Museum educator Peter Ames advocates the striking of a balance between market forces leaning “toward entertainment, stimulation and making learning fun” (1989, p.7) and the mission (concerned with education and the quality of the message presented by exhibitions). In institutions where there is an

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<sup>5</sup> Zammuner and Testa have also provided an interesting discussion of resource-allocation and blockbuster exhibitions. See elsewhere in this chapter.

imbalance, market-driven exhibitions favour entertainment at the expense of education, or staff-driven policies limit public access (both literally through reduced opening hours or figuratively through exclusionary communication strategies). Rather than sinking to the lowest common denominator or retaining antiquated elitist paradigms, when a balance is struck, the economic well-being of the institution improves and the curiosities of audiences are stirred. "For museums, as with most educational nonprofits, meshing and balancing mission and market forces is the best way to maintain standards yet be intelligible...to meet the needs of our communities yet attract new audiences – in short, to advance their missions" (Ames, 1989, p.14).

Of course, balancing market forces with institutional, internal cultures requires knowledge of the market forces at play. "To educate effectively, particularly in short stints, knowing the age, education level, motivations, and interests of the audience is critical" (Ames, 1989, p.6). Conventionally, institutional knowledge hinges on the expertise of curators, educators, designers, public relations, technicians and the many other specialists that work towards an institution's mission and mandate. Along with the museum's collection of art, it is this specialist knowledge that builds an institution's reputation. However, to what extent are institutions aware of market forces, what is their knowledge of and approach to their audiences?

Hooper-Greenhill suggests that "...the pedagogic approach of the modernist museum was (and is) based on an understanding of communication as

transmission; while the pedagogic approaches being developed by the post-museum<sup>6</sup> can be analysed by understanding communication as an integral part of culture as a whole,” (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.125). The modernist museum saw its visitors as deficient, as people who lacked information and were in need of instruction: they were conceived as empty vessels to be filled. They were the ‘general public,’ an undifferentiated mass. These days – in the culture of Hooper-Greenhill’s ‘post-museum’ – the mass is being broken into niches and market segments. However, Hooper-Greenhill advocates taking understanding of audiences further than mere market segmentation, by applying concepts derived from critical pedagogy, “which embraces the issues of narrative, difference, identity and voice, demands a recognition both of the processes of interpretation actively used by multi-cultural audiences and of the political implications of the use of the visual culture of the museum” (Ibid.). References to the museum as a political entity will be discussed in relation to the institution’s social context. Narrative, difference, identity, voice, race, and processes of interpretation are issue that relate directly to the visitors’ personal contexts.

Hooper-Greenhill discusses at length the pedagogical approach of the modernist museum. Though this approach is still advocated by a minority of institutions, its relevance here is only to provide context and contrast to the current pedagogical approach of institutions such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA). By Hooper-Greenhill’s definition the modernist museum began

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<sup>6</sup> Hooper-Greenhill uses the term ‘post-museum’ to refer to museums that have evolved beyond modernist ideologies.

as the nineteenth-century European public museum "tasked with the production and dissemination of authoritative knowledge" (2000, p.126). Knowledge in this sense is unified, objective, and transferable. Museum pedagogy in this sense is based on a concept of objects as singular sites for the construction of knowledge and meaning. Through the object, knowledge is transmitted from the expert to the novice, from the museum to its audience. This type of communication has been called the 'hypodermic needle', 'bull's eye', 'magic bullet', or more commonly, the 'transmission' model of communication. It assumes that the person receiving the message is open to receive it, efficiently, and in the same way as any other person would. This model is grounded in behaviourist explanations of education which propose that learning takes place as a response to stimulus. Hooper-Greenhill points out that "[a]ccording to this simple model of learning, effects are specific reactions to specific stimuli, so that one can both expect and predict a close correspondence between what is learnt and what is taught..." (2000, p.133). Here the 'teacher' holds all the power and the 'receiver of the message' is assumed to be cognitively passive. This assumption is grounded in an "atomistic view of the self," one that ignores the degree to which an individual is "shaped by shared meanings, inflected through experience, has the capacity to change and modify itself through learning, and may objectively consider and develop itself. In other words, people are seen as individuals without curiosity, without capacity to change, and as merely the absorbers of external stimuli," (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.135). Thankfully, in recent years,

communication theorists have made inroads into the concept of 'the active audience'. It is now widely accepted that factors external to the technical process of information transfer mediate the effectiveness of communication. The art does not speak for itself.

Communication is no longer seen as a strictly technical process. Social and cultural aspects of communicative processes are now taken into consideration, aid in explaining the complex relationships that structure acts of understanding between people, and take into account the active character of the interpretive strategies that people use to make meaning. The impact of this concept of communication is acutely felt in the meaning-making strategies of museums:

In social and cultural theory, the turn towards acknowledging the significance of the interpretive paradigm and the growing recognition of the generative power of culture and communication leads to an insistence that representation does not reflect reality, but grants meaning and confers value; in this way it is constitutive of reality (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.138).

...the cultural view of communication addresses the methods by which what counts as 'common sense', 'art', or 'science' at any one time is brought into being. Within this view, communication is a much broader process, one which examines ideas in their historical, social and institutional matrices. The significance of communication is as an integral part of culture. Culture itself arises from and is embedded within words, images, symbols, ideas and actions that in their articulation result in social effects. Naming, classifying and displaying, the basis on which museums operate, have what Hacking has called 'looping effect'; tacit or explicit choices made by people to adapt or resist cultural classifications that affect their lives and identities (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.139).

As active participants in communication, museum visitors enact a cultural model of communication, one that can be understood through the concept of

critical pedagogy. "Critical pedagogy is based on the acknowledgement of culture not as monolithic and unchanging, but, as Giroux describes, as a site of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences and voices come together amidst diverse relations of power and privilege" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.140). Pedagogy is seen as a cultural production, not as a one-way transmission of information. Critical pedagogy is proposed to be a "cultural practice engaged in the production of knowledge, identities and desires" (Ibid.).

The role that an art museum plays in the production of knowledge, identities, and desires is significant. In marketing theory, consumer motivation is described as "...an imbalance between the consumer's current and desired states. The wider the gap between the two states, the stronger the consumer's motivation will be" (Colbert, 1993 p.80). The modern museum, based on the behaviourist transmission model sought to communicate through stimuli. However, "[m]ore often than not, the consumer will not be influenced by any stimulus, regardless of the pressures applied. Consumer motivation to buy a product is largely related to previous experience and level of product involvement" (Ibid.). Consumer or visitor motivations are not conceived through a modernist model, but through the cultural communication model of Hooper-Greenhill's post-museum. Thus, the institutional knowledge of and approach to its audiences has evolved to appreciate the active capabilities of the people who pass through its doors.

Just as an individual's identity plays a role in their personal context, so too does the institutional identity and philosophical underpinning aid in the construction of its 'personal' context. The importance of this is felt in the concluding remarks of Dissanayake's book *Art and Intimacy*. The punctuation with which Dissanayake ends her book is a quote, reproduced in full, from American author Robert Hughes.

One of the ways you measure the character – indeed, the greatness – of a country is by its public commitment to the arts. Not as a luxury; not as a diplomatic device; not as a social placebo. But as a commitment arising from the belief that the desire to make and experience art is an organic part of human nature, without which our natures are coarsened, impoverished, and denied, and our sense of community with other citizens is weakened....The arts are the field on which we place our own dreams, thoughts, and desires alongside those of others, so that solitudes can meet, to their joy sometimes, or to their surprise, and sometimes to their disgust. When you boil it all down, that is the social purpose of art: the creation of mutuality, the passage from feeling into shared meaning, (2000, p.203).<sup>7</sup>

## **2.2 Social Context Contextualized**

By definition museums are open, public places. As such they exist within a context of social usage, responsibilities and opportunities. The notion of an Art Lover is a social construction, something that people build based on previous assumptions and experiences, not simply of love or of art, but of the social environment where the two often meet: the art museum.

The museum is a political entity; regulated by politicians and, in the context of this study, largely funded with public money. For years, modernist values have been deeply entrenched. The visual culture of museums has been a

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<sup>7</sup> From an after-dinner speech at the Plaza Hotel, published in the *New Yorker*, 27 May 1996, pp.33-34.

technology of power. "This power," Hooper-Greenhill insists, "can be used to further democratic possibilities, or it can be used to uphold exclusionary values" (2000, p.162). With an understanding of the museum as a form of cultural politics, institutions can choose to develop identities that destabilize modernist values.

In society, public museums were viewed as yet another system of domination. Johnson introduces Pierre Bourdieu's 1993 examination of the field of cultural production as follows:

...systems of domination find expression in virtually all areas of cultural practice and symbolic exchange... [like dress, sports, food, etc.] Although they do not create or cause class divisions or inequalities, 'art and cultural consumption are predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to fulfil a social function of legitimating social difference' and thus contribute to the process of social reproduction (p.2).

Acknowledging the contribution museums make to legitimating social difference opens the door to combating exactly this social function. Hooper-Greenhill would have us employ the power of visual culture to the end of further democratizing the museum context.

Museums may be seen as cultural borderlands, where a range of practices are possible, a language of possibilities is a potential, and where diverse groups and sub-groups, cultures and subcultures may push against and permeate the allegedly unproblematic and homogeneous borders of dominant cultural practices. By viewing museums as a form of cultural politics, museum workers can bring together the concepts of narrative, difference, identity and interpretive strategies in such a way as to create strategies for negotiating these practices....multiple subjectivities and identities can exist as part of a cultural practice that provides the potential to expand the politics of democratic community and solidarity. By

being able to listen critically, museum workers can become border-crossers by making different narratives available, by bridging between disciplines, by working in the liminal spaces that modernist museum practices have produced (2000, p.140).

As the results of this study unfold, I anticipate that both exclusionary values and democratic possibilities will be audible in participant self-identifications. As a participant in the social context of the institution, visitors will be affected (either consciously or not) by the museum's borderland opportunities or division legitimization.

### **2.3 Physical Context Contextualized**

...institutions...have no inherent worth or dignity. No matter how venerable, noble or encrusted with tradition any particular museum may be, at the bottom it is still nothing more than a human fabrication, an organizational contrivance through which some group or other hopes to achieve some short or long-term objective. Whatever worthiness a museum may ultimately have derives from what it does, not from what it is (Weil, 2000, p.1).

Stephen Weil's comments help to put this next section into perspective. What a museum is – physically – is an enclosed space to house art works and the people who come to visit them. This description is intentionally simplistic. I have already acknowledged the impact a museum's physical existence has on the experience of a museum visitor: "What is on display and how it is displayed will have the primordial impact on a visitor's museum experience" (p.12). From the institutional point of view as well, "the design of a viewing sequence that combined circulation paths with exhibition spaces, has always been the main issue..." (Cerulli, 1999, p.1). Of course, without a physical setting there would be no context within which to have a museum experience. Thus, the

institutional formulation of physical context merits more than a simplistic description.

Florentine professor Cristina Cerulli presented an historical review of 'physical museums' in an effort to provide a framework for virtual (i.e.: Web-based) exhibition spaces. This review highlights the relevance of socio-cultural incentives for museum layout:

The spatial organisation of Museums is also strongly informed by the ways in which collectors, including the Museums themselves as such, are organised and in what way do they organise the space to display their collection. In his essay *Museums without walls* Malraux<sup>8</sup> defines the museum, with and without walls, as a spatial relation expression of the ordering of the social as well as the ordering of the works of Art (1999, p.1).

As times and social thinking changes, so too do museum layouts. Hooper-Greenhill provides the following description of museum layout during the time when modernist theories were dominant:

The modernist museum was intended to be encyclopaedic, to draw together a complete collection, to act as a universal archive. It was structured through deep-rooted binary divisions. Its spaces were divided between those that were private and those that were public. The private spaces were the spaces for knowledge production, irrevocably separated from the public spaces for knowledge consumption (2000, p. 126).

Shifting from modernist mentalities to more contemporary modes of thinking, exhibition design and spatial 'expressions' have tested out a variety of physical manifestations. At the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), exhibition design introduced a section of displays that encouraged visitors to complete comment cards and

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<sup>8</sup> Cerulli cites Malraux, A. (1953) "Museums Without Walls" in The Voices of Silence. Martin Secker (ed.) London, GB: Warburg.

then add them to the arrangement itself. "By encouraging people to experience objects with all of their perceptual capabilities (cognition, emotion, imagination, intuition and physical interaction) the museum can become a much richer forum for the showcasing of living cultures" (Worts, 1995, p.220).

Rather than being viewed as a mausoleum, the Douglas Worts, the AGO, and many others are now advocating that museums view themselves as a forum where visitors play an active role in the creation of meanings (no longer singular, truth and meaning are accepted to be pluralistic).

The reorganisation of museum culture is premised on a new relationship between the museum and its audience, and a major part of this is a new and more dynamic approach to the encounter between the visitor and the museum narratives. Formerly austere spaces, established as sites for the use of the eye, have been reinvented as spaces with more colour, more noise, and which are more physically complex. This represents a shift in what Bennett calls 'the ratio of the senses.' Museums are also using the World Wide Web to link communities, cultures and collections across the world.... Objects have become mobilisers of both actual and virtual conversations (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.148).

## Chapter 4

### What's Love Got To Do With It? Statement of the Research Question

**Love:** - *n.* **1** an intense feeling of deep affection or fondness for a person or thing; great liking. **2** sexual passion. – *v.tr.* **1** feel love or deep fondness for. **2** delight in; admire; greatly cherish. **3** *colloq.* Like very much (*loves books*).

**Lover:** *n.* **4** a person who likes or enjoys something specified (*a music lover; a lover of words*) (Allen, 1990, p. 893)

There are many different kinds of love: filial, platonic, romantic... According to this quote above from the *Oxford Dictionary*, a love of art can be considered to bring with it intensity and depth, affection, fondness, and great liking. Does this necessarily hold true in the self-perceptions of art museum visitors? Do all those who visit an art museum recognize themselves as Art Lovers? Responses to the pilot survey that I conducted proved that a love of art is not a requirement or necessarily a motive for a visit to an art museum; people who do not consider themselves art lovers *do* go to art museums. What value is then left in the experience of art if there is no intensity and depth, no affection, fondness or great liking?! By comparing the experiences of Art Lovers to those of Non-Art Lovers I aim to understand the relative value of the art museum experience.

To my knowledge, museological research has yet to investigate the museum experience from the point of view of the affective or emotive trait 'Love'. A limited number of previous research projects, however, may be

considered to have a peripheral relevance to this topic. For instance the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Alan Darbel makes reference to art lovers as people of taste (1990, p.109). Theorist Ellen Dissanayake connects love and art in her 2000 publication *Art and Intimacy*, but is not greatly concerned with any requisite relationships to museum experiences. For the most part, the relationship between Art Lovers and their museum experiences is an undeveloped area of museological research. In developing this study, it is my intention not simply to enter into this area of research but also to satiate my own curiosity about the connections to be made among concepts of the museum experience as an act of affective, emotive, or hedonistic consumption.

## **Chapter 5**

### **'Tain't What You Do (It's The Way That Cha Do It) Ethnography and Marketing Methodological Intimacy**

Given the dual nature of the research question, the most effective way of answering it is to draw from the strengths of both Ethnography and Market Research.

Today, museum audiences are being reconceptualised. The mass is being broken down and differentiated, but new ways of thinking about visitors are themselves not yet sufficiently sophisticated. Marketing approaches address audiences as 'visitors' or 'non-visitors', demographic target groups which are subject to 'niche marketing'. Although these approaches can lead to a review of the 'products' of the museum in relation to the needs of each target group, this does not go far enough. (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000 p.125)

Marketing, in Hooper-Greenhill's opinion, falls short of being able to develop an understanding of how culture shapes consciousness, "and how the museum specifically relates to this process" (Ibid. pp ix & x). In order to investigate this question, Hooper-Greenhill suggests;

An approach based on the concept of critical pedagogy, which embraces the issues of narrative, difference, identity and voice, demands a recognition both of the processes of interpretation actively used by multi-cultural audiences and of the political implications of the use of the visual culture of the museum (Ibid. p.125).

Thus, I have applied the concept of critical pedagogy to the ethnomethodological and marketing methods used in investigating my question of the relative experience of Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers.

## **1. Pilot Research Project & Pre-tests**

My earliest investigations of phenomena related to the research question took place with casual inquiry into the museum-visiting motivations and behaviours of my friend and self-professed Non-Art Lover, Diana. Diana, by all accounts, is a frequent museum visitor in that she will visit museums between four and six times a year. Often, the museums she visits are art museums. However, it was not the art that attracted her to the institutions. While on vacation or in her home town, many of these visits were motivated by Annis's associational need for an excuse or focus for a social outing. Though Diana is not dispassionate about the art, she is certainly not passionate about it either. This led me to question the role that the art plays in the museum experiences of visitors who arrive at the art for other reasons.

I thus undertook a pilot study and interviewed three potential Non-Art Lovers regarding their beliefs and associations. The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow for the exploration of topics that I may not have been able to anticipate. This preliminary study revealed that the concept of "Art Lover" is indeed highly complex. Personal definitions of the term proved to be closely linked to notions of knowledge, elitism, identity, and behaviour. Personal motives for and expectations of the museum experience were found to be closely linked to an individual's conception of the term and their identification as an Art Lover or not.

I became extremely curious about Non-Art Lovers who go to art museums. Why on earth do they visit art museums? How many of them are there in comparison to Art Lovers? Are museums addressing their needs through the programming that is currently available?

Based on the information gained during the pilot interviews, I developed a small written questionnaire to be administered on-site at an art museum.<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire was administered during one day early in the month of December 2002 at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) in Ottawa. With the NGC's support, I recruited participants at random from visitors exiting the Gallery. Clipboard in hand, I was stationed at the top of the exit ramp and next to the Gallery's information desk. I was not, however, there all day. The NGC also conducts visitor surveys throughout any given day. Therefore, the information agent and I took turns recruiting participants to either one survey or the other. My response rate was high, as few people declined to participate. However, only two of the sixteen respondents identified themselves as Non-Art Lovers. As this represented a mere 12.5% of museum visitors, it was clear that I would need a much larger sample of visitors in order to draw any significant conclusions about their comparative museum experiences.

I considered a more focused approach to sampling art museum visitors and began to investigate the possibility of surveying attendees to special in-gallery events which are designed to attract a broader audience. In today's climate of

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a copy of the pre-test questionnaire used at the NGC.

museum management, institutions make extra efforts to attract new audiences and to provide them with instruments for understanding and appreciating the art. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) advertises family fun days in the local paper, the NGC has overnight adventures for local community groups, and the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) hosts a singles' night. Unlike the ROM, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)'s programme "After Hours" was not conceived for singles but in order to introduce the AGO to a new demographic. The AGO combined music and visual arts in order to attract an audience already disposed to attend musical events and potentially convert them into regular visitors to the Gallery. The AGO's programme, with its focused and overt approach to recruiting new audiences, presented an excellent opportunity to investigate museum visitors who's primary motive for visiting an art museum is not necessarily the art itself. Unfortunately, the AGO's programme was discontinued. Thus, I made the decision to combine the strengths of combined survey and interview research methods to a general survey frame of art museum audiences to a specific event, such as a blockbuster exhibition.

## **2. Research Instruments**

The goal of my investigatory methods is two-fold: to access museum visitor behaviour through a market research survey as well as to understand the context and meaning of this behaviour through follow-up interviews with a limited number of survey respondents. My research was conducted in two distinct phases: a written questionnaire and follow-up interviews.

### **2.1.1 Written Questionnaire**

A substantial questionnaire<sup>2</sup> was developed with the assistance of Concordia marketing professor, Jordan LeBel, and the MMFA's Director of Communications, Danielle Champagne. The questionnaire consisted of thirty-five questions, many of which contained sub-sections. This sizable questionnaire took between twelve and twenty minutes for participants to complete. In total, 118 visitors completed questionnaires (58 in English and 60 in French) over the course of six days.

The questionnaire contained a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions that addressed demographic and psychographic, behavioural and intellectual aspects of participants and their museum experiences. Rather than limit the scope of my questionnaire based on a priori assumptions, it was my intention to extract from survey participants a comprehensive reconstruction of their experience. Question design thus took into account issues of narrative, participant self-identification, voice, and individuality, as well as a recognition of the processes of interpretation used, and participant perceptions of the political implications of the museum. The resulting data was indeed comprehensive and allowed me to pursue an analysis based on trends revealed by the data itself. These trends were subsequently used in the design of the follow-up interviews.

Section A of the questionnaire addressed participant motives for and satisfaction with museum visits. Question 1 asked visitors to write their motive for today's visit, while question 2 asked that they select one typical motive for

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for copies of the final questionnaire in both English and French.

general visits to art museums. Question 3 gave participants a list of various factors that people typically cite as motives for art museum visits and asked participants to rank each factor on a scale of one to seven (where one is seen as insignificant and seven primordial). The factors listed were: 'the art', 'beauty', 'learning', 'inspiration', 'something to do', 'chance to spend time with friends/family', and others. Question 4 was formatted in the same way but asked to what extent participants 'take away' certain items after a visit. The items listed included: 'knowledge', 'relaxation', 'feeling of belonging', 'desire to learn more about the art', and others. Question 5 asked for a written description of the pleasure obtained from their visit.

Section B addressed socialization and art museum visiting habits. Questions 1 and 2 asked participants to select the category that identified the time passed since their last visit and the number of visits that they typically take in a given year. Initial socialization to museum visiting was addressed through question 3, while question 4 looked at the current social dynamic of the respondent's museum visiting.

Section C, the largest section, asks the survey respondent to recall with immediacy the visit that they have just taken through the exhibition. Through a series of rankings, categories and short answer questions, section C attempts to access the participant's thoughts and behaviours during their visit. The section begins by asking participants to recall their visit: "Try to remember the one painting that made a particularly lasting or strong impression on you. Attempt to

recall how you felt, how you stood, what you thought....” Participants then described this ‘one painting’ and used their memory of the encounter in ranking their enjoyment of it and the various feelings that they experienced (questions 1 through 5). Feelings such as blissful, excited, confused, calm, and unmoved were ranked on a scale of one to seven, where seven represents “very much”. Next they were asked to describe their reaction to the painting by ranking a series of behaviour-based items (question 6). These items included: “I stood with my arms crossed,” “I shook my head in disagreement,” “I moved forward to get a closer look at it,” “I considered the artist’s talent,” “I was aware of the people around me,” and twenty other items for a total of twenty-five items to rank. Next, section C elicits information about the didactic tools used by the participant during their visit (questions 7 and 8). Did they listen to the audio guide, read the wall panels or the catalogues provided? Question 9 looks loosely at Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi’s concept of flow.<sup>3</sup> Did visitors lose track of time during their visit? Finally, questions 10 through 13 take a holistic approach to describing the museum visit by asking if visitors came alone, if they visited other sections of the museum, and if they purchased anything in the gift shop.

Section D contains primarily open-ended, qualitative questions that ask participants to describe their own personal definitions as related to the research

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<sup>3</sup> Similar to an aesthetic experience, a flow experience “is made possible by the active exercise of powers [such as cognitive] in meeting environmental challenges [such as the visual].” This activity requires concentrated attention, focus on the “limited stimulus field of the artwork,” resulting in a focus exclusively on the present moment and the omission of other concerns (past, future). This enjoyable state is usually linked to professional athletes or musicians but can also be experienced by anyone who devotes their mental skills to an optimally challenging experience. For more information about Csikszentmihalyi’s notion of flow see his essay in R.A. Smith (Ed.) (2000) Readings in Discipline Based Art Education.

question. Question 1 asks "Whom do you envision as an art museum's audience?" Next, participants identify themselves as either an Art Lover or Non-Art Lover. Then they are asked in questions 3 and 4 to provide their definition of the term "Art Lover" and to list what kind of art they are referring to. Finally, they are asked to rank their knowledge of art on a scale from one to seven, where one signifies "not knowledgeable" and seven is considered "very knowledgeable."

Section E, the fifth and final section, seeks to generate a socio-demographic profile of the survey respondent by asking their age, gender, level of education, and annual income.

Crucially, the final question in the survey asks if participants would be willing to take part in a thirty-minute interview, scheduled at their convenience, to further discuss their museum visit. This question is the sole means by which interview participants were recruited.

### **2.1.2 Outline of procedures**

Following in the now-cold footsteps of Bourdieu and Darbel, my focus is on large, urban populations and the institutions that house their cultural capital<sup>4</sup>. Geographic and financial limitations prevented me from conducting a comprehensive study, thus I chose to focus my research on the most suitable of

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<sup>4</sup> This is a term often used by Bourdieu to refer to wealth in intangible cultural resources. Sociologist Craig Calhoun describes, "Bourdieu's key original insights are that there are immaterial forms of capital – cultural, symbolic, and social – as well as material or economic form and that with varying levels of difficulty it is possible to convert one of these forms into the other" (in Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives 1993, p.69).

central Canada's three major urban communities; Montreal, Ottawa, or Toronto. The institutions to consider were thus the National Gallery of Canada (NGC), the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA). Each institution is of comparable size, situation within their respective communities, and mandate. During the pilot and pre-test phases on my research I investigated all three institutions and evaluated the suitability of each to my research question, resource limitations, and time-frame. It became rapidly apparent that the MMFA's upcoming blockbuster exhibition represented the best opportunity to access not simply core-museum visitors, but also tourists and infrequent visitors who may be attracted by the fame and popularity of the artists being presented. With the enthusiastic welcome and support of the MMFA's Communications Division, the MMFA was clearly an ideal research site for my inquiry.

The exhibition in question is *Voyage Into Myth: French painting from Gauguin to Matisse from the Hermitage Museum, Russia*. Included in this major exhibition are over seventy works by artists such as Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, Cezanne, and a number of other French artists. The exhibition was organized by the AGO, the MMFA, and the State Hermitage Museum. It was hosted by the AGO in Toronto from October 12, 2002, to January 5, 2003, before it traveled to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. *Voyage Into Myth* opened at the MMFA on January 31, 2003, and ran until April 27, 2003, meaning that the exhibition was accessible over the Easter long weekend.

I recruited survey respondents as they left *Voyage Into Myth* by asking visitors at random if they would be willing to help with my master's thesis. This highly personal approach was effective as it appealed to participant generosity and philanthropy. Visitors were asked to complete a twelve-minute, written questionnaire on their experience of the *Voyage Into Myth* exhibition.

Data collection took place on-site at the MMFA from Wednesday, April 16, 2003, through to Monday, April 21, 2003, inclusive. Visitors were sampled during all six days, at irregular intervals from 10:00 when the exhibition opened to 19:00 when it closed.

The written questionnaires were administered in both of Canada's official languages. By the end of the six-day data collection period, 58 English surveys had been completed and 60 French surveys for a total of 118 surveys.

### **2.2.1 Interviews**

The methods used during the interviews were largely based on a book by I.E. Seidman (1991) entitled, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. This guidebook advocates in-depth interviewing as a powerful means for understanding participant experience. In Seidman's own words, "Interviewing provides access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior. A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience," (Seidman, 1991, p.4). Given

the limited scale of my research, such an in-depth approach was not called for. Thus I conducted a single, half-hour interview with each of the follow-up participants rather than the three half-day interviews called for in Seidman's description of in-depth interviewing.

The goals and objectives of the seven follow-up interviews were to understand the context and meaning of museum visitor behaviour within the perspective of their self-identification as an Art Lover or not. Here the research attempts to uncover the 'internalized norms' of participants and how these norms act as motivators of museum visiting behaviour. Without imposing the researcher's a priori assumptions or categories, the interviews began with the individual museum visitor and their own conscious experience. Where the written questionnaires gathered extensive and quantifiable information, the interviews were intended to add depth and richness to the trends that appeared during the analysis of the surveys. Within the given situation of an art museum, how does a visitor create and understand the bases of their actions?

The interviews were formatted in a semi-structured way. I had prepared a sequence of questions<sup>5</sup> to ask, however, it was never my intention to strictly follow this list. By allowing for deviation from the prescribed list, I was free to explore topics as they arose. The interviews began with an ice-breaking preamble; I thanked the participant for meeting with me and inquired as to any difficulties they may have had in getting to the meeting point or interview

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix C "Interview Questions"

location. I then introduced myself and the research project. At this point the participant was asked to complete a written consent form.<sup>6</sup>

The interview then began in earnest with a question about the participant's first experience of an art museum. This question, along with others, made use of information provided on the participant's survey. For instance, Dahlia had listed her first art museum experience as having taken place when she was only eight years old and that it was her family that had accompanied her. The interview question then asked if she had any memories of her first art museum experience and what that was like for her. Within the prescribed list of questions, the second topic addressed the reconstruction of a "bad experience" in a museum. This was followed by asking for an account of a "good experience." At this point, I found that participants were 'warmed up' and comfortable recounting their experiences. In most cases, the topics and order of questions differed from one interview to another. For the most part, the remainder of the interview dealt with topics such as museum audience, Art Lover definitions, and the pleasure(s) of visiting art museums.

Interviews were designed to last thirty minutes. This time-frame was extended when the participant wished to continue, but for the most part thirty minutes was sufficient to address the topics in question.

### **2.2.2 Outline of procedures**

Of the 118 people who volunteered to complete a written survey, only 21 offered to participate in a follow-up interview. This represents a volunteer rate

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<sup>6</sup> For the written questionnaires consent is understood by the mere participation, in writing, of respondents.

of less than 18%. This rate, however, is not surprising. Most visitors who completed the written questionnaire were already making a generous gift of their time (between twelve and, in some cases, twenty minutes). By the time participants reached the final question of the questionnaire, most felt that they had already done their part and did not volunteer for the follow-up interview. The interview recruitment strategy was not aggressive. I did not pressure survey respondents to be interviewed while we were both at the research site. Rather, respondents were left to make their own choice of participation upon reading the request for volunteers at the end of the survey. The twenty-one individuals who did volunteer were all highly motivated to participate.

Of those twenty-one survey respondents, six were francophone and thus impractical for the interview given the additional time required to translate and analyze responses in a second language. Of the remaining fifteen anglophone volunteers, three live outside of the greater Montreal area. These three were also discounted. Thus I was left with twelve potential interview participants. All twelve were contacted, two withdrew their offer to participate and ten interviews were scheduled at the discretion of participants, to be carried out as quickly as possible following recruitment. In the end – and much to my disappointment – three participants were unable to meet with me and only seven one-on-one interviews were conducted.

An audio recording was made and researcher notes were taken during each interview. The quality of the audio recordings is, unfortunately, inconsistent.

When scheduling the interviews, I had made an effort to propose interview locations that would be convenient and familiar to participants. As a result, many of the interviews took place in local coffee shops, where the ambiance is amiable and refreshments are readily available. However, each coffee shop has its own approach to background music and its own dynamic - often colourful - clientele. There is much ambient noise in many of the recordings, but participant responses are still audible.

### **3. Supplemental Data Collection**

Once the decision had been made to conduct research at the MMFA during the exhibition *Voyage Into Myth*, I endeavoured to collect supplemental data on the MMFA, the exhibition and factors relevant to my research. All this was done in order to enhance understanding and contextualization of visitor responses to both written questionnaire and interview questions. Preliminary supplemental data collection was also useful in the creation of questions that could later be asked.

I began this initial phase of data collection with frequent visits to *Voyage Into Myth* and preliminary research into the MMFA. My first visit to the exhibition was as a casual visitor accompanied by a friend from out of town. I attended the exhibition as I would any other. My expectations were based on presumptions that I had made based on advertising that I had seen around town: in the metro stations, in the newspaper, and plastered to numerous

construction sites.<sup>7</sup> My friend and I went through the exhibition very quickly, surprised by the small scale of the exhibition and by the relative inequalities of the works presented (the works of Picasso, Gauguin, and Matisse are presented along with little-known works by lesser-reputed artists such as Henri Le Fauconnier, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, and Jean Puy). Subsequent visits to the exhibition were to familiarize myself with the works on display and to make casual observations of its visitors.

In keeping with ethnomethodological theory, my casual observations were never intended as scientific or for analysis within the scope of my research. However, based on my observations I was able to prepare and refine the items provided within the written questionnaire's section C question 6, visitors' behavioural reactions to a painting of their choice. During my visits to the exhibition I observed visitors behaving as one would expect: pointing to paintings, getting up close, reading the wall text, yawning, and keeping their hands behind their backs or in their pockets. Other behaviours that I observed were unexpected or the sort of conduct that could often be taken for granted or go unnoticed: shifting their weight from one foot to another, crossing their arms, tilting their head, and nodding or shaking their head. Still other behaviours carried with them a small element of surprise: some visitors asked security guards about the art, others took notes, and some even seemed not to be

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<sup>7</sup> Many of Montreal's cultural and nonprofit organizations subscribe to a postering service. This service blankets the city with posters, placing them – not exclusively – on the plywood façades of construction sites.

looking at the art at all but were (like me) looking at the other visitors. To my excitement, these observations led to more questions than they did speculative theories.

Perhaps the most interesting initiative within my supplemental data collection was an informal meeting with Danielle Champagne, the Director of Communications at the MMFA. We met on May 21, 2003, after most of my data had already been collected and much of the questionnaire data analysed by comparing the responses of anglophones to francophones.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, much of our meeting was spent discussing the relative linguistic backgrounds of MMFA audiences.

In a city whose population is 71% francophone and 29% anglophone or other, the MMFA has had to fight for their French audience. It has only been in the last thirty years that the institution has overcome its long history of anglophone patronage and usage. Perceptions of elitism were rampant. Now the French communities have begun to appropriate the institution as their own. As Champagne puts it, one need only read the names on the donors' plaque in the lobby to understand the linguistic history of the institution. Now the MMFA boasts a ratio of 83:17, French to English, "Friends" or individuals who have purchased memberships to the institution.

With specific regards to the *Voyage Into Myth* exhibition, Champagne was able to report exhibition attendance of 205,000 visitors over the course of eighty-

seven days. This represents a huge success for the museum. The publicity approach for the exhibition had been to undertake a number of focused and variegated initiatives. Of the five audience segments identified by the MMFA, the top four had been targeted as potential visitors to *Voyage Into Myth*. The five segments are defined as follows:

Visual Art Lover	As the MMFA's core audience, members of this segment are likely to see any exhibition presented by the institution.
Art lover	This segment is just as likely to attend the opera as they are to visit the art gallery.
Lover of cultural outings	For this audience segment, the appeal is not strictly art but could also include an outing in search of exotic food.
Lover of outings	Quite simply, this segment likes to get out of the house, be it to the art gallery, a rock concert, or a hockey game.
Couch potatoes	The happiest place for this audience segment is their couch. This segment is not likely to ever step foot in an art gallery – they are far too comfortable at home.

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<sup>8</sup> This initial data analysis is not presented within the scope of this research. Though there is a wealth of interesting conclusions to be made based on this comparison, it is peripheral to the focus of my research. It is also the sort of information that may reveal itself in a future publication authored by me.

The educational approach for the exhibition was to focus resources on the provision of didactic tools that visitors could access while touring the exhibition. In addition to extensive wall panels, and an ample stock of the exhibition's catalogue, an elaborate audio guide was developed. For a nominal fee, visitors could rent an audio guide that provided multiple layers of information about the art on display and the Russian collectors who first purchased them. Guided tours of the exhibition would have been highly problematic given the popularity of the exhibition and the size of the galleries within which it was displayed. The space was quite simply too crowded to be conducive to group tours.

#### **4. Limitations of the Study**

In addition to the importance of theoretical contextualization, it is important to recognize the limitations of any study. In this research there are a number of factors to consider, such as: the sample size, the type of exhibition surveyed, respondent reliability, response subjectivity, refusal to answer, sampling errors, vague or inaccurate answers, and human error caused by the researcher.

First and foremost, the relatively small size of the sample imposes limits on the analysis of the data. For instance, of 118 survey respondents only 26 identified themselves as Non-Art Lovers. This number is too small to use in a Varimax rotation or factor analysis of visitor reactions to and feelings about their museum experience. Essentially, such a small sample limits the comparisons that can be made.

Secondly, *Voyage Into Myth* was a very specific type of exhibition. As a major blockbuster exhibition of highly popular and famous artworks, it most likely attracted a broader audience than most temporary exhibitions and perhaps all permanent exhibitions. The advantage for my study is that such a broad audience represents a wider frame from which I could sample. However, it could be argued that this sample-frame is not representative of a typical art museum audience. As such, relative comparisons and socio-demographic profiles generated from my data may be limited to the context of similar, high-profile, temporary exhibitions.

Next, a fair amount of trust is given to the reliability of respondent accounts. How accurate are their memories when reporting on past actions and psychological functions during museum visits? With regards to the written questionnaires, respondents had just completed their visit, thus their experiences were fresh in their minds. During the interviews, however, a great deal of emphasis is placed on recalling past visits. How reliable are descriptions of events, actions and psychological functions that took place many years before?

Finally, the subjectivity of responses should be considered as a potential limitation of the study. Frank (1986) reports an occurrence in ethnomethodological studies when no routine or commonsense solution is available to social actors and they become:

...suggestible, acceding to whatever sources provide guidance that seems to provide a way out that will be judged socially correct by others who may be observing. The main concern of social actors seems to be finding a solution that will not make them appear to

have lost control of the situation or to have failed to do what most people would judge “right” under the circumstances. (p.104)

As an example, Frank recounts a situation where a study of the internal norms of jurors found that the jurors were more likely to do what they thought the judge wanted them to do rather than making an independent decision based on the arguments of the lawyers. In the eyes of the jury, the judge represented public opinion or social suitability. Are questionnaire and interview participants able to respond according to their own commonsense solutions or are they “suggestible”?

Another matter to consider is the rate of refusal, the relative number of museum visitors who did not want to complete the written questionnaire. While at the museum, I took careful notes in order to track the number of refusals and to minimize their impact. Appendix D, “Data Collection Schedule” presents the day-to-day refusal rate for the six days of data collection at the MMFA. Overall, less than a third of the people who were approached refused to participate.<sup>9</sup> Such a small refusal rate cannot be held to alter the randomness of the sample or to negate its translatability.

Randomness of the sample was ensured through the use of a ‘simple sampling’ method<sup>10</sup> and by both sampling over the course of six full days and by an aggressive strategy to approach the next person who passed by the seating area where the survey was taking place. “Sampling errors,” Colbert cautions,

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<sup>9</sup> 52 of the 170 people that were approached refused to participate. This represents 30.6% of the total.

<sup>10</sup> The simple sampling method consists of simply “selecting at random from population studied. Each individual has the same probability of being chosen” (Colbert, 1993, p.219).

"can yield results that are not representative of the over-all population being studied. These errors arise when the sampling method is inadequate or when the size of the sample is insufficient" (1993, p.214). As previously mentioned, the sample size for the Non-Art Lover sub-category is regrettably small. Ideally, a sample should include a sufficient number of respondents, chosen at random, who represent the population studied in order to generate significant statistics. In a study such as this, where a newly-defined segment of the population is being explored, a sample smaller than thirty is unfortunate but not unusable.<sup>11</sup>

Just as respondent reliability and response subjectivity are possible sources of error, so too are vague or inaccurate answers. "This error may be caused by sheer ignorance on the part of a respondent who wants to give any answer rather than appear stupid or who wants to answer according to perceived consensus on a particular issue." Much like the 'suggestibility' of respondents described by Frank, Colbert describes "...a natural tendency to furnish socially acceptable answers (e.g., inflating annual book purchases if the activity is perceived as valued), and even just the desire to please the interviewer" (1993, p.214).

The interviewer is acknowledged in both ethnomethodology and marketing to play an active role in the creation of meaning, both at the data-collection phase and the analysis phase of any research programme. Human

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<sup>11</sup> Any sample smaller than 30 is considered "non-parametric" and a specific set of statistical methods apply. A sample of this size does not allow the researcher to generalize the results as if they were the same for an entire population. Colbert suggests that in cases such as these, a researcher should consult: Siegel, S. (1956) Non Parametric Statistics New York: McGraw-Hill, Series in Psychology, 312pp.

error is always a possibility. However, in the wise words of art educator, Lise Dubé:

There is no way to take into account all of the unknowns, therefore remaining open to the process is necessary. Within the theories and methods that I have chosen, unpredictability is a given and flexibility is - at the very least - a necessity (1998, p.31).

Before presenting the results of the study, I would like to present a final note about "Non-Art Lovers". I acknowledge that this term is an artificial construction. It sets up a binary opposition of the Cartesian kind, "that imposed fixed ordering structures such as same/other, centre/margin, mind/body, black/white,..." (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000, p.141). Such an opposition works against my attempts to embrace multiculturalism and hybridity. A more dialectical approach that acknowledged the gradations or various levels of depth in one's love for art would have been better suited to the multiplicity of dimensions within identity. However, this research is exploratory. By asking visitors to situate themselves in such a stark (black/white) dualism, I force them to pick a side and to define it. Further research into the role self-identification plays within visitor experiences would do well to consider a more dialectical approach to the question, one that considers a full range of possible identities.

## Chapter 6

### **Mon manège à moi (Tu me fais tourner la tête) A Summary of the Findings and Analysis of the Results**

One-hundred-and-eighteen surveys were completed and the data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software. Lengthy, text-based, qualitative questions were encoded and analyzed using techniques derived from ethnomethodology. The sample of 118 participants (see Table 1) was divided and compared according to participant self-identification as either an Art Lover or not. These two sub-samples consist of 86 and 26 participants respectively. Six questionnaire respondents identified themselves as neither one nor the other; consequently, all six are excluded from the research findings.

Table 1: Participant Self-Identification

	<b>Total <i>n</i></b>	<b>Art Lover</b>	<b>Non-Art Lover</b>	<b>Non-response</b>
<b>Number of participants</b>	118	86	26	6
<b>Percentage of Total</b>	100	73	22	5

#### **1. Personal Context**

When assessing the demographic profiles of the 86 Art Lovers in this study, it was found that they are 55% anglophone and 45% francophone, evenly spread between the ages of 18 and 64, 69% female and 31% male,<sup>1</sup> and – for the most part – are either making between \$32,000 and \$64,000 a year (30%)

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the sample was never intended to be equally balanced across the two genders. The final overall sample is slightly more than 64% female.

or surviving with an income of less than \$12,000 (29%). The Non-Art Lovers on the other hand are 42% anglophone and 58% francophone; rather than being evenly spread over the range of ages those between the ages of 35 and 44 are not represented in the sample of Non-Art Lovers. The sample was 46% female and 54% male, and they are evenly spread across income categories ranging from \$64,000 to less than \$12,000 per year. A comparison of these two demographic profiles is not particularly remarkable except perhaps for the over-representation of men and the larger proportion of francophones in the Non-Art Lover category.

A comparison of levels of education and perceived knowledge of art yielded little additional insight.

Table 2: Comparative Levels of Education

	Number of Participants		Percentage of the Total	
	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers
<b>High School</b>	12	5	14.0	19.2
<b>College</b>	14	5	16.3	19.2
<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	34	7	39.5	26.9
<b>Masters Degree</b>	16	3	18.6	11.5
<b>Doctoral Degree</b>	5	4	5.8	15.5
<b>Other</b>	5	2	5.8	7.7
<b>Total <i>n</i></b>	86	26	100	100

Both the Art Lover subgroup and the subgroup containing those who did not identify themselves as art lovers had representatives in every one of the six

possible education levels. For the Art Lovers, the majority of participants obtained at least a bachelors degree (40%). Twenty-four percent had gone further and obtained graduate degrees. The percentage of Non-Art Lovers that obtained bachelor's degrees was slightly lower (27%), however, 27% of Non-Art Lovers had gone further and obtained graduate degrees. Notably, 15.4% of Non-Art Lovers had doctoral degrees while only 5.8% of Art Lovers had a PhD. When asked to rank their knowledge of art on a scale of one (not knowledgeable) to seven (very knowledgeable), Art Lovers responded with a mean score of 4.19. Non-Art Lovers, however, obtained a mean score of 3.17.<sup>2</sup> The Non-Art Lovers answered with scores between two and five on the scale; none of them considered themselves completely ignorant or exactly expert. The Art Lovers, on the other hand, did use the full range of the scale; some consider themselves novice while others identify themselves as having expert knowledge. What does all this mean? Non-Art Lovers cannot be dismissed as uneducated, or as considering themselves entirely uninformed.

Using Marilyn Hood's definition of three museum-visiting categories – the frequent visitor, the occasional visitor, and the non-participant<sup>3</sup> – an investigation of participant art museum visiting patterns becomes quite interesting.

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<sup>2</sup>A one-way analysis of variance confirmed that this difference is statistically significant (df (1, 111),  $p < .001$ ).

<sup>3</sup>Hood's categories are discussed at length in Chapter 3, the literature review. The non-participant visits an art museum 0-1 times per year, the occasional 2-3 times and the frequent more than 4 times per year.

Table 3: Comparative Frequency of Typical Museum Visits

	Number of Participants		Percentage of the Total	
	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers
<b>0-1 visit per year</b>	24	9	28.2	34.6
<b>2-3 visits per year</b>	36	15	42.4	57.7
<b>4-6 visits per year</b>	16	0	18.8	0
<b>7-12 visits per year</b>	7	2	8.2	7.7
<b>13-24 visits per year</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>&gt;25 visits per year</b>	2	0	2.4	0
<b>Total <i>n</i></b>	85*	26	100	100

\*one participant did not answer this question

Not surprisingly, most participants in both sub-groups were occasional visitors (visiting 2-3 times per year). Fifty-eight percent of the Non-Art Lovers and 42% of the Art Lovers are occasional visitors. This represents 51 of the 112 total participants or, 46% of the useable sample.<sup>4</sup> Where the comparison becomes interesting is when it is discovered that 27% of the Non-Art Lovers had been to an art museum in the past two months. According to Marilyn Hood, this fact qualifies them as frequent visitors. However, when asked the verifying question of "How often do you *typically* visit within a given year," only 8% of Non-Art Lovers qualified as frequent visitors. These individuals admitted to visiting between 7 and 12 times a year.<sup>5</sup> Conversely, a high number of Art Lovers were

<sup>4</sup> Recall that 6 participants have been excluded since they did not identify themselves as either an art lover or a non-art lover.

<sup>5</sup> A quick review of these two mini-groups revealed little. The 2 frequent-visiting Non-Art Lovers had nothing in common except their gender! One of them is young (under 18) and described visiting with his family. He defined an art lover as someone who "goes to a lot of art museums" and perhaps he simply doesn't see himself in that mould yet. The other man in this category did not provide a definition of the Art

found to fall under Hood's definition of "non-participants." Twenty-eight percent of Art Lovers stated that they only visit between 0 and 1 times a year. This infrequent visiting by Art Lovers is corroborated by the fact that 20% of this subgroup wrote that it had been more than a year since their last visit to an art museum. Surely, if they considered themselves to be Art lovers, they would be seeking out more frequent experiences of and direct contact with art?

There are two key aspects of these results to consider: First, the individual's self-identification as an Art Lover and secondly, the factors that lead to or prevent visiting an art museum.

### **1.1. Art Lovers**

When questionnaire respondents were asked to check either the 'yes' or the 'no' box in order to situate themselves within the Art Lover dualism, they were also asked to write their definition of the concept, "Art Lover." The hundred and twelve answers that were given are as diverse as the people who filled out the questionnaires. As mentioned, the coding procedures for these responses were inspired by ethnomethodology and without a priori assumptions. Careful review of verbatim written responses led to the synthesis of participant definitions through the use of synonyms and associations. For instance, participant definitions of the Art Lover as, someone who "has love for art,"<sup>6</sup> someone who "likes art and culture," and someone who is "passionate" about art

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Lover and remains something of a mystery. The 31 non-participant Art Lovers were generally under the age of 18 and listed "school" as their typical motive for visiting an art museum. However, in order to make an accurate assessment of this phenomenon, a more detailed analysis is required. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>6</sup> All quotes from participant questionnaires are anonymous. The sources of these quotes are therefore not cited in the body of this study.

were all taken to be definitions centred on an emotional response to art. This type of synthesis led to four types of definitions: the emotional, the intellectual or reasoned, the behavioural, and the character-based.

This first, and most obvious, definition type relates directly to love. The emotional description of an Art Lover pays homage to love itself and uses emotion as its key defining aspect. Words such as love, like, passion, feelings, and emotion encompass much of this definition type. There are, however, three other key subcategories of this definition type to consider. First, notions of connectedness – what Dissanayake calls mutuality<sup>7</sup> – were apparent in some of the written responses. For instance, the Art Lover “feels connected to and enjoys the experience of seeing and experiencing art.” Second, the importance of an appreciation for art was expressed in many of the responses (“appreciate art and its different variations along with artistic talents”). The fourth and final subcategory of emotional definitions relates to beauty. “Sensibility for beauty” or someone who “has a passion for the beauty that radiates from a painted canvas” were the sort of statements made about the importance of beauty to the Art Lover.

The intellectual or reasoned type of definition involves a preoccupation with knowledge, learning, curiosity, or interest. This type can be further divided into two sub-categories of definition: a focus on existing knowledge or someone who is already initiated into the art world and a preoccupation with the acquisition of knowledge or someone who is curious and interested. Participants

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 3 for a discussion of Dissanayake’s research and the relationship between mutuality and art.

who defined the Art Lover as initiated wrote “knowledgeable, has studied” or “knows all the details.” Definitions of the curious included “curious about the aesthetics of things,” or “interested in art, either for the art object itself or for the historical reference or significance.”

The third type of definition, the behavioural, encompasses definitions that describe how the Art Lover spends his or her time and energy. This definition type can also be subdivided. Three main concepts of Art Lover-like behaviour were uncovered: use of time, use of money, and patterns of thought. For instance, an Art Lover’s use of time could be making an “effort to see art while travelling,” or going “out of their way to view paintings, go to concerts, theatre, etc.” Art Lover-like use of money refers to “consum[ing] art (buy[ing] paintings, etc.)” or to being “...ready to travel and pay to see it.” The third sub-category within this type of definition could be situated under the umbrella of the intellectual or reasoned type of definition, however, I have consciously conceptualized it as part of Art Lover behaviour in order to assert its active quality. Patterns of thought are not static like curiosity or knowledge; rather I conceptualize this third sub-category as an active mode of cognitive response to works of art. The relevance of cognitive responses was evident as some questionnaire respondents defined the Art Lover as someone who “analyzes art,” or as “someone that can critically analyze the art and [the] circumstances which inspired it.”

The fourth type of definition is that which relates to the character of the Art Lover. Questionnaire respondents described the Art Lover not in terms of their intellectual preferences, emotional responses, or behaviour, but in terms of aspects that define their character and values. One respondent wrote that an Art Lover is someone "for whom art holds an important place in their life." Others wrote that Art Lovers are cultivated, open-minded, ready to discover, and that they "like to look at things in a different way than most people." Another important aspect of this definition sub-category is that it includes those who themselves make art, whether they are professional or not.

Coincidentally, these four definitions bear a striking resemblance to the four dimensions of the Aesthetic Experience described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in his essay "Notes on Art Museum Experiences" published in 2000. After interviewing museum professionals and conducting audience focus groups, Csikszentmihalyi discerned four major components for the aesthetic experience:

One is a cognitive dimension through which the art object appeals to prior knowledge and extends its boundaries. Another appeals to emotions that are difficult to express in rational terms, yet appear to enrich our lives. The third dimension concerns the purely visual impact the object makes and the perceptual refinements it causes in the viewer. And the last category includes the ways in which works of art help us understand ourselves and other people by making us reflect on what transpired in the encounter with the work of art (p.397).

Csikszentmihalyi highlights that the relative importance given to each of these components varied between the group of professionals and the group of visitors, the key difference being that without the requisite contextual

knowledge, visitors are instead “hoping for surprise and excitement as they escape temporarily the predictable confines of existence in an environment where the constraints of everyday life appear to be suspended” (p.398). Visitors, Csikszentmihalyi asserts, do not expect “intellectual thrills” from attending a museum. Is this assertion and its converse pursuit of ‘surprise, excitement, and escape’ necessarily evident within visitor perceptions of Art Lovers and their defining priorities?

Returning again to the questionnaire, its data, its four categories of definition and their various sub-categories, a total of ten types of definition were found among the 147 definitions participants provided.<sup>8</sup> By coding all 147 definitions and situating them within their individual sub-categories, it is possible to compare the defining principles of the Art Lovers to those of the Non-Art Lovers.<sup>9</sup> Table 4 presents a breakdown of the various categories and the relative responses of both Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers. Art Lovers overwhelmingly (61%) defined themselves using an emotional categorization. Intellectual, behavioural, and character-based definitions were each given a relative significance of roughly 10% to 13% in the description of an Art Lover. Non-Art Lovers, on the other hand, seemed to place a greater importance on these factors. In order to define the Art Lover, Non-Art Lovers relied primarily on

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<sup>8</sup> Some respondents made more than one point in their definition of the Art Lover. For example, one respondent wrote that an Art Lover is someone who is “knowledgeable, regularly informs themselves, consumes art (buys paintings, etc.).” This definition falls under three different sub-categories; that of the intellectual/knowledgeable, the behavioural use of time, and the behavioural use of money.

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, of the six respondents who did not identify themselves as either an Art Lover or a Non-Art Lover, only one of them even bothered to provide a definition of the concept “Art Lover.” That definition has not been included in the final analysis.

intellectual and behavioural aspects; each of these categories represented a third of the responses given by Non-Art Lovers. The remaining third of their definitions consisted of emotional traits (24%), character-based (6%) and other aspects (3%).

Table 4: Art Lover Definitions Per Category

Definition Category Subcategory	Number of comments made by 112 respondents.			Percent of total responses		
	Art Lover	Non-Art Lover	All	Art Lover	Non-Art Lover	All
<b>Emotional</b>						
a: love, like, passion...	6	40	46	18.2	35.1	31.3
b: mutuality	1	9	10	3	7.9	6.8
c: appreciation	0	13	13	0	11.4	8.8
d: beauty	1	8	9	3	7	6.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>53.1</b>
<b>Intellectual</b>						
a: knowledge / initiated	9	5	14	27.3	4.4	9.5
b: acquiring knowledge / curious / interested	2	10	12	6.1	8.8	8.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>17.7</b>
<b>Behavioral</b>						
a: use of time	6	9	15	18.2	7.9	10.2
b: use of money	3	1	4	9.1	0.9	2.7
c: patterns of thought	2	3	5	6.1	2.6	3.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>16.3</b>
<b>Character-based</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.4</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>100.1</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

It is difficult to know what to make of these results. At face value, it seems that Art Lovers define themselves by their emotional responses and attachments to

art.<sup>10</sup> Non-Art Lovers, when asked to define the 'other', the Art Lover, provide a relatively balanced description based on all aspects of emotion, intellect, behaviour, and character. To what extent do they situate themselves outside of the definitions that they provide? This sort of question is best answered through the intimacy and depth of inquiry provided by one-on-one interviews. However, before getting to the data and analysis of the seven interviews conducted, it is perhaps useful to situate the definition of the Art Lover within the context of participant perceptions of art museum audiences in general.

## **1.2. Audience**

Section D of the written questionnaire asks; "Whom do you envision as an art museum's audience?" The resulting participant perceptions were first separated according to the participants' self-identification as an Art Lover or not. Next the responses were split according to either their demographic or psychographic<sup>11</sup> nature. The third sorting of this data came as a result of participant focus on art museums being for everyone, that anyone could be a part of the art museum audience. Given the strength of this focus – 25% to 30% of all responses – comments related to this universal notion of audience were treated separately. In the end, four profiles of an art museum audience

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<sup>10</sup> It is interesting to note that although the questionnaire asked for general definitions of the Art Lover, many self-proclaimed Art Lovers wrote their definitions in the first person. "I have drawn & painted & love all forms of art that refine our senses of the real world."

<sup>11</sup> In market segmentation, there are four foundational bases: 1) general objective measures such as age, income, place of residence and social class, 2) behaviour-specific objective measures such as past behaviour in purchase frequency, loyalty, and decision role, 3) general inferred measures such as personality, psychographics/life-styles, and values, 4) behaviour-specific inferred measures such as beliefs, benefits sought, personal influences and stage in decision-making process. Lifestyles or psychographic inferred measures assume that "we do what we do because it fits into the kind of life we are living or want to live." A person's activities, interests, and opinions (AIOs) are the measures used to identify a consumer's lifestyle and segment them accordingly (Kotler & Andreasen, 1996, p.157, p.173).

were discerned: the Art Lovers' profile of everyone and their general profile, the Non-Art Lovers' profile of everyone and their general profile. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate this structured analysis of responses.

The Art Lovers profiled an art museum's general audience demographically as people who were generally older (over forty), educated, of middle class or more affluent means, and fulfilling the roles of artists, students, or families. One respondent wrote that an art museum's audience consists of "*élite: qui a reçu éducation, a de l'argent ou qui s'intéresse beaucoup à la culture (arts en général).*" Psychographically, the Art Lovers profiled the general audience as those who appreciate beauty, are intelligent or want to learn, are calm, cultured, open-minded, enjoy new experiences, have a need for culture, and who are Art Lovers.<sup>12</sup>

Those Art Lovers, who stated that an art museum's audience is unspecific, that it includes everyone, generated the following profile: An art museum's audience, in their estimation, consists of everyone, young and old, from every background, a cross-section of humanity. "People of varied education, with varying motivations and ages – any particular stereotype seems contradicted." Though this utopian universalism was strongly felt among Art Lovers (18.5% of comments), some qualifications of the universal were also made. One respondent admitted that though the general public is the audience hoped for... "I believe it is restricted to a fairly educated and middle class (at least)

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<sup>12</sup> Note that this question regarding audience was asked before any mention was made on the questionnaire about Art Lovers. Thus, any responses that included Art Lovers were unprompted.

audience.” When Art Lovers wrote ‘everyone’ they often meant; “everyone open minded”, “anyone creative”, “anyone curious”, “anyone willing to spend a little time and money”, “anyone willing to do something interesting and instructive”, “everybody who has a little sense for beauty”, “everyone cultured”, “everyone happy or sad”.

Table 5a: Art Lover General Profiles of Art Museum Audience

<b>demographic profile</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 86)</b>	<b>psychographic profile</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 86)</b>
varied/all	2	interest in the arts	9
older	6	appreciate beauty	3
"better educated"	7	art lovers	9
has money	3	calm	3
affluent/upper income	3	cultured	4
middle class & up	3	curious	4
mostly women	1	enjoy new experiences	2
homosexual men	1	enjoy/want to learn	5
"elite: qui a reçu education, a de l'argent ou qui s'intéresse beaucoup a la culture (arts en general)	1	"sophisticated" pseudo connoisseurs and connoisseurs of art	1
school groups	3	intelligent	2
artists	4	need for culture	1
families	2	open minded	4
not visible minorities (depends on the exhibition).	1	people of similar cultural background	1
students	5	quiet	1
historians	1	style "artiste"	1
		want to benefit from culture	3
		who behave according to accepted modes of museum	1

Table 5b: Art Lover "Everyone" Profiles of Art Museum Audience

<b>demographic profile</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 86)</b>	<b>psychographic profile</b>	<b>Frequency (N = 86)</b>
all/anyone/everyone	17	anyone open minded	1
all ages / young and old	4	anyone creative	1
from every background /cross-section of humanity	2	Anyone curious	1
"People of varied education, with varying motivations and ages - any particular stereotype seems contradicted."	1	Anyone willing to spend a little time & money	1
		Anyone willing to do something interesting & instructive	1
everybody in theory, better educated	1	everybody who has a little sense for beauty...	1
		everyone cultured	2
		everyone curious	1
		everyone happy or sad	1
		art lovers	3

Non-Art Lover perceptions of general and utopian art museum audiences did not differ greatly from those of the Art Lovers. Demographically, an art museum's general audience is older (fifty to sixty years old), educated and knowledgeable about art, and fulfilling the roles of artists, students, or tourists. Unlike the Art Lovers, Non-Art Lovers did not comment on the income status of this general audience. Psychographically, the Non-Art Lovers profiled the general audience as those who have an appreciation for art, are moved by or passionate about art, those who are curious, intelligent, abstract thinkers, and interested in learning, are cultured, "artsy" individuals, "deep-rooted," open-minded and open-spirited people: "people like me." This general profile of an art museum's audience represents 75% of the comments made by Non-Art Lovers.

Table 6a: Non-Art Lover General Profiles of Art Museum Audience

demographic profile	Frequency (N=26)	psychographic profile	Frequency (N=26)
Students	4	"artsy" individuals	1
Young	1	abstract thinkers	1
older people (50-60).	3	appreciation for art	1
Educated	1	cultured	5
knowledgeable of art	1	curious	1
Tourists	1	deep-rooted	1
regular people	1	intelligent	1
artists	1	interested in learning more about art	2
		moved by art	1
		open minded	1
		open spirited people	1
		passionate about the arts	2
		people like me	1

The remaining 25% of comments were focused on creating a profile of the 'everyone' or a utopian vision of an art museum's audience. Non-Art Lovers asserted that art museums are for everyone (even Non-Art Lovers like themselves). "Art touches everyone in different ways." Again, a quick profile or qualification of 'everyone' was generated. Non-Art Lovers added that what they meant when they wrote 'everyone' was; "everyone a little educated", "all who are interested," "all who are cultured". *"Les visiteurs sont variés, mais j'imagine que le visiteur type aime l'art."*

Table 6b: Non-Art Lover "Everyone" Profiles of Art Museum Audience

demographic profile	Frequency (N=26)	psychographic profile	Frequency (N=26)
everyone	5	all cultured	1
everyone a little educated	1	all interested	1
art touches everyone in different ways	1	"Les visiteurs sont varies mais j'imagine que le visiteur type aime l'art."	1
university graduates	1		

The parallels between definitions of Art Lovers and of audiences seem to suggest that both those who identify themselves as Art Lovers and those who do not consider themselves to be part of an art museum's audience. Thus, in attempting to understand why a self-proclaimed Non-Art Lover would be a frequent museum-goer and why an Art Lover could be considered one of Hood's 'non-participants', it would seem that the answer does not lie in an individual's self-identification as an Art Lover or not. Perhaps the understanding can be found in analyzing factors that lead to or prevent visiting an art museum.

### **1.3. Expectations: Enjoyment**

Satisfaction and enjoyment are ways of assessing the significance a museum visit may hold for a visitor. To this end, survey respondents were asked to rank their enjoyment of looking at one of the paintings in the *Voyage Into Myth* exhibition on a scale of 1 to 7 (where 1 represented 'not at all' and 7 signified 'very much'). Art Lovers ranked their enjoyment with a mean value of 6.27. Non-Art Lovers, on the other hand, obtained a mean value of 5.87 out of 7. Given that these statistics are derived from a small sample of Non-Art Lovers (only 23 of the 26 actually ranked their enjoyment), it is thus difficult to draw firm conclusions.<sup>13</sup> It seems as though the Non-Art Lovers are 'all over the map' with regards to their enjoyment of looking at art. Perhaps this in itself is the crux of the issue; Non-Art Lover enjoyment of art is inconclusive, unpredictable,

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<sup>13</sup> A one-way analysis of variance confirmed that this difference is not statistically significant (df (1, 101, p=.130).

and unreliable. Perhaps Non-Art Lovers are aware of this randomness and do not count on necessarily *enjoying* the art when they visit an art museum.

#### **1.4. Pleasure**

Encompassing a broader perspective, survey respondents were also asked to describe the pleasure they experienced during 'today's visit' as a whole and not simply the enjoyment of looking at one of the paintings included in the exhibition. Responses to this question were written and thus treated as qualitative data to be coded according to the same methods as the Art Lover and audience questions. Careful review of the responses revealed that participants had difficulty describing pleasure, instead, many of them wrote about the source of what caused their pleasure. Thus, in coding the data I divided responses according to whether they refer to the cause of pleasure or the effect of pleasure itself. From the responses, I generated seventeen preliminary categories of 'causes.' These were then synthesized into the following eight cause categories: negative<sup>14</sup> (such as 'I did not enjoy my visit'), art, inspiration, meaning, social, experience, visual, and transported. Responses also generated eleven preliminary categories of 'effects' which were later synthesized into the following seven effect categories: negative, intensity, emotional, intellectual, social, sensory, and indescribable. Table 7 shows the frequency of comments concerning the causes and effects of pleasure described by respondents.

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<sup>14</sup> Some examples of the negative comments made by participants are: "some art was flat, dull, too noisy," "too short," "not a high level of pleasure, it was not that good." "too crowded," and "thank god it's over. I can go to lunch!"

Table 7: Frequency of Comments Regarding Cause and Effect of Pleasure During the Visit

Cause			Effect		
	<i>Art Lover</i>	<i>Non-Art Lover</i>		<i>Art Lover</i>	<i>Non-Art Lover</i>
negative	8	4	negative	2	3
art	29	2	intensity	10	4
inspiration	11	3	emotional	13	4
meaning	17		intellectual	9	7
social	9		social	3	3
experience	3		sensory	5	1
visual	8		indescribable	3	1
transported	3				
<i>Ttl. no. of comments</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>9</i>		<i>45</i>	<i>23</i>

Comparing the frequency of causal comments between Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers shows that Art Lovers unquestionably derive pleasure from the art itself (33% of comments). Together, inspiration and meaning make up 32% of the remaining possible sources of pleasure for the Art Lovers. Non-Art Lovers, on the other hand, wrote very little about the causes of their pleasure. Only nine causal comments were made, and four of those were negative comments (the other five were about the art or inspiration). It seems that rather than spending time elaborating on the sources of their pleasure (or displeasure); Non-Art Lovers went straight ahead and described the effects of their pleasure. These effects were predominantly intellectual in nature; "better understanding of this period in painting," "*décloisonnement intellectuel*,"<sup>15</sup> "enlightening," and "educational."

<sup>15</sup> This roughly translates to intellectual de-fragmentation – something that people often do to the files stored on their computer's harddrive.

Statements about pleasure made by Art Lovers were divided among three major categories; emotional, intellectual, and statements of intensity. These three categories combined made up over 70% of all Art Lover comments about pleasure effects.<sup>16</sup> "Immense" pleasure, joy/stimulation/relaxation, and learning were some of the key effects described by Art Lovers. Only two negative comments about pleasure effects were registered by the Art Lovers. Unquestionably, their pleasure was palpable and traceable to the experience of art. Art Lovers, not surprisingly, take pleasure in the experience of art.

Non-Art Lovers did not seem to take quite the same assertive pleasure. Where the dictionary defines pleasure as "a feeling of satisfaction or joy," (Allen, 1990, p.914) Non-Art Lovers used words like 'pleasant', 'enjoyable', 'like', 'fun', and 'relaxing' to describe their pleasure in the experience of art. These are not very powerful or passionate words: by no means do they fit the 'intense feeling of deep affection or fondness' that characterizes definitions of love.<sup>17</sup> Words like 'blissful', 'enraptured', and 'thrilled' seem more characteristic of true love.

### **1.5. Feelings**

As yet another means for understanding the Non-Art Lover, all survey respondents were asked to rank the extent to which they felt various feelings during their experience of a particular work of art in the *Voyage Into Myth* exhibition. On a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much), participants answered the question; "As you looked at the painting, to what extent did you feel..." for

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<sup>16</sup> Art Lover comments about effects represent only one-third of all Art Lover comments about pleasure.

<sup>17</sup> Definitions such as that provided by The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, Oxford: Clarendon Press, ( 1990 p.893).

eighteen different emotions. The emotions were chosen to fit within six categories; both positive and negative versions of active emotions, passive emotions, and emotions associated with love. Table 8a illustrates these six categories and each of the eighteen emotions ranked by participants.

Table 8a: Emotional Terms by Category Groupings

	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Love/Hate</b>
<b>Positive</b>	Excited Thrilled Delighted	Peaceful Relaxed Calm	Blissful Enraptured Admiration
<b>Negative</b>	Frustrated Confused Hesitant	Bored Depressed Tense	Disgusted Unmoved Ambivalent

The intention was to generate a factor analysis of participant responses, however, the sample of Non-Art Lovers was simply too small (twenty-six people) to generate such an analysis. Descriptive statistics were thus generated through SPSS to better understand the nature and the intensity of emotions felt by either Art Lovers or Non-Art Lovers. Not surprisingly, the positive emotions were consistently ranked higher by the Art Lovers than by the Non-Art Lovers, with 'admiration' ranking the highest for the Art Lovers (6.01), and 'calm' for Non-Art Lovers (5.10). Active emotions such as 'delighted' and 'thrilled' were ranked significantly lower in intensity by the Non-Art Lovers. These active emotions were strongly felt by the Art Lovers, garnering mean rankings of 5.72 and 3.72 respectively. When it came to experiencing delight, Non-Art Lovers expressed a mean ranking of only 4.52, a significant drop from the intensity felt by Art Lovers ( $df (1, 101)$ ,  $p < .005$ ). Thrilled was given a mean ranking of only 2.62 by Non-Art Lovers, again a significant drop from the intensity felt by Art Lovers ( $df$

(1,99),  $p < .033$ ).<sup>18</sup> Aside from this, the intensity of positive feelings changed only slightly depending on respondent self-designations as an Art Lover. The negatively-associated emotions all scored mean rankings of less than 2 on the 7-point scale. Little difference was measured in the responses of Non-Art Lovers to Lovers. Both groups ranked ambivalence the highest of all negative emotions. Table 8b, "Significant Differences in Participant Ranking of Emotions" illustrates the relative means and connections between all eighteen emotional terms. Overall, it can be said the Non-Art Lovers felt blissful, enraptured, delighted, relaxed, admiration, peaceful, and especially calm. They felt moderately thrilled and excited. They did not feel disgusted, confused, depressed, frustrated, hesitant, tense, unmoved, or bored. Art Lovers did not feel disgusted, bored, frustrated, unmoved, depressed, hesitant, tense, or confused. They did, however, feel thrilled, excited, blissful, enraptured, relaxed, peaceful, calm, delighted and above all admiration. Given the elevated rankings that Art Lovers gave to these feelings, it can be said that Art Lovers felt the level of intensity that one would expect of 'love' while Non-Art Lovers experienced more passive feelings towards the art.

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<sup>18</sup> For the most part, the mean values provided by the SPSS software can be considered reliable. However, for some feelings, a significant standard deviation and standard error was registered. The most reliable calculations are those relating to: excited, bored, thrilled, delight, admiration, and enraptured. Error could have been generated by the small size of the Non-Art Lover sample and the challenges of translation. Though a word may translate easily between English and French it does not necessarily carry with it the same cultural and social associations.

**Table 8b: Significant Differences in Participant Ranking of Emotions**

<b>Emotion</b>	<b>mean<sup>19</sup></b>		<b>Df</b>		<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>L<sup>20</sup></b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>Between groups</b>	<b>Within groups</b>	
Admiration	6.01	4.64	1	102	.000
Delighted	5.72	4.52	1	101	.005
Thrilled	3.72	2.62	1	99	.033
Bored	1.13	1.55	1	97	.054
Excited	3.99	3	1	101	.062
Confused	1.49	1.1	1	98	.115
Enraptured	4.59	3.9	1	98	.163
Blissful	4.34	3.86	1	100	.300
Disgusted	1.04	1	1	98	.367
Relaxed	4.96	4.61	1	102	.438
Peaceful	5.11	4.77	1	101	.448
Unmoved	1.29	1.48	1	98	.525
Ambivalent	1.95	1.71	1	95	.536
Depressed	1.31	1.2	1	97	.661
Calm	5.24	5.1	1	100	.755
Frustrated	1.26	1.2	1	97	.801
Tense	1.48	1.4	1	98	.807

<sup>19</sup> Mean ranking out of 7, where 1 is the lowest possible intensity.

<sup>20</sup> L denotes "Art Lover" and NL denotes "Non-Art Lover".

### 1.5. Takeaway

It has been established that – with few differences or distinctions – both Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers are taking pleasure in their visit and experiencing positive emotions. But what do they get out of the experience, what do they ‘take away’ from the museum experience? I asked them: “...indicate to what extent you ‘take away’ each of the following items after a typical museum visit.” Participants ranked twelve items on a scale of 1 (very rarely) to 7 (very often). The twelve items were largely based on Marilyn Hood’s categorization of things that people look for in a leisure experience. Using SPSS, the mean ranking for each item was generated and sorted according to Art Lover/Non-Art Lover designations. Table 9 provides an overview of all twelve items and their mean scores.

Table 9: What Respondents Typically ‘Take Away’ From Their Art Museum Experience

<b>Art Lover</b>			<b>Non-Art Lover</b>		
<b>Rank</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>
1	Knowledge	5.83	1	Pleasure	5.31
2	Pleasure	5.77	2	Knowledge	5.08
3	Lifted	5.53	3	Satisfaction	5.04
4	Satisfaction	5.53	4	Doing something worthwhile	5.04
5	Doing something worthwhile	5.2	5	Lifted	4.62
6	Inspiration	5.01	6	Inspiration	4.23
7	Desire to learn	4.92	7	Relaxation	4.2
8	Relaxation	4.74	8	Desire to Learn	4.12
9	Rejuvenation	4.04	9	Pride	3.21
10	Pride	3.81	10	Rejuvenation	3.13
11	Feeling of Belonging	3.75	11	Feeling of Belonging	2.5
12	Souvenir from the Gift Shop	2.55	12	Souvenir from the Gift Shop	2.31

The four highest-scoring items were all items selected by the Art Lovers. Knowledge ranked highest of all with a mean value of 5.83 on the 7 point scale. Pleasure, 'Feeling of being lifted beyond daily concerns', and satisfaction were the next three highest scoring items. The highest-ranked item by Non-Art Lovers was ranked fifth overall - pleasure. The other key items that Non-Art Lovers typically take away are knowledge, satisfaction, and 'sense of having done something worthwhile'. Non-Art Lovers assigned each of these items a mean value of 5. Items that scored low enough to be considered 'left behind' or not taken away from a museum experience are 'gift or souvenir from the shop' (mean value of 2.31 to 2.55) and for Non-Art Lovers, a feeling of belonging (mean 2.5).

With the progressive analysis of successive questions regarding perceptions of the Art Lover, pleasure, enjoyment, and items taken away, it seems as though having a love for art is synonymous with deriving pleasure from direct contact with art and the expanding of one's knowledge, or betterment of the self. The previous pages have served to build both qualitative and quantitative measures of personal context and its relationship to a self-identification with a love for art. The social and physical contexts of Falk & Dierking's Interactive Experience Model still beg exploration.

## **2. Social Context**

In this section, I will present and analyze the findings of the study that relate to an individual's social context for museum experiences. As established

by Falk & Dierking, social interactions and associations will impact a museum visitor's behaviour and the relative quality of his or her experience. In this study, attempts were made to ascertain with whom visitors go to museums and why. This was not a focus of the study but a small, inseparable element of an attempt to understand the museum from the visitor's point of view.

The first inquiry into the visitor's social context was made by asking if they were visiting the MMFA alone or not. In both categories (Art Lovers and Non), only 7% of respondents were visiting alone. The remaining 93% were accompanied by an assortment of friends, family members, and lovers. I mention lovers not simply because this study is preoccupied or infatuated with romantic attachments and intense bonds, but because of the frequency with which participants described the person that they were with as their 'boyfriend' 'girlfriend' or 'partner.'<sup>21</sup> I was amazed and encouraged to discover that nearly 30% of all survey respondents were visiting the MMFA with their lover. In Table 10, "Who Were People With at the *Voyage Into Myth* Exhibition?" this propensity to share the museum experience with a loved one is inescapable. The key categories, friend, friends, romantic partner, and family are all indicative of a close, loving bond. However, the question remains; what impact does this have on the individual's museum experience?

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<sup>21</sup> 'Partner' in this sense *does* refer to a romantic attachment as opposed to a business or professional relationship.

Table 10: Who Were People With at the *Voyage Into Myth* Exhibition?

<b><i>With Who</i></b>	<b>Art Lovers</b>		<b>Non-Art Lovers</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percent</i></b>	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percent</i></b>	<b><i>Frequency</i></b>	<b><i>Percent</i></b>
Friend	12	17.4	6	27.3	18	19.8
Friends	9	13	4	18.2	13	14.3
Romantic partner	21	30.4	6	27.3	27	29.7
Family	16	23.2	4	18.2	20	21.8
Schoolmates	7	10.1	2	9.1	9	9.9
2 friends & my son	2	2.3			2	2.2
Husband, 2 daughters & 1 friend	1	1.4			1	1.1
Mother, sister & friend	1	1.4			1	1.1
<b><i>Number of people</i></b>	<b><i>69</i></b>		<b><i>22</i></b>		<b><i>91</i></b>	

Or more precisely; "If with someone, what was the main reason why you came accompanied?" Answers to this question were often quite predictable: "family outing", "class trip", "time spent together." There were nonetheless some particularly interesting reasons for some of the groupings. One Non-Art Lover wrote: "to allow my children the experience of an art museum" as the reason for not visiting alone. Would this person have even visited at all had there not been this desire to expose their children to art? Another Non-Art Lover stated that "we do this every year. It is an occasion," or as Nelson Graburn and Sheldon Annis would say, it is an excuse or a focus for a social gathering. Even an Art Lover confessed that they "don't go to museums without a little pressure." In addition to predictable answers from the Art Lovers, one set of friends confessed that they were 'killing time' before happy hour. Others offered reasons such as a "team building event" or "shared experience of pleasure." "It's nicer to be able to talk about what I see with someone I like." "We are

artists and this is how we get our kicks!” Another respondent simply wrote: “for love.”

As interesting as these results are, are they typical or are they simply a product of the circumstances of that visitor’s particular day? In order to situate social visiting habits in the broader realm of ‘typical’ visiting habits, participants were asked with whom they typically visit art museums. Participants were given five pre-determined categories to choose from; alone, one friend, more than one friend, a date, and a family member. There was also an option to write ‘other’ associations as they desired. Visiting alone was typical for 7% of Non-Art Lovers (as it was for the day of the survey), however, 13% of Art Lovers stated that they typically visit alone. For Art Lovers, visiting with one friend or a family member was most common (41.8%). The same could also be said of the Non-Art Lovers (57.7%). Visiting with a date, such a strong trend for visits to *Voyage Into Myth*, was listed as typical for 15% of Art Lovers and 23% of Non-Art Lovers (or 16.7% of all 112 survey respondents). Given that 30% of visitors to *Voyage Into Myth* were there with their lover, but only 17% of visitors typically visit an art museum with their ‘date’, it would seem that *Voyage Into Myth* attracted visitor groupings that were more ‘romantically inclined’ than usual. Given the nature of this exhibition, its blockbuster designation, its broad appeal, and its thematic leanings towards voyage, it is not surprising that a trip through the exhibition should be seen as an excellent experience to share with a lover. But I am merely drawing this conclusion based on who visitors brought with them to

the exhibition. It would now be highly constructive to examine why they chose to spend their leisure time at the MMFA.

## **2.1. Motives**

*Voyage Into Myth* was no ordinary exhibition. This exhibition was truly composed of masterworks; works by Gauguin, Matisse, Cezanne and others. The paintings were on loan from Russia's Hermitage Museum and seeing them in Montreal was a rare opportunity. These are facts that did not go unnoticed by the people who filled out the written questionnaires. The first question on the survey asked "Why did you come to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts today? Please be as explicit as possible." Participants responded: "I love art from this period and am unlikely ever to travel to Russia." "Told is once in a lifetime experience." "Opportunity to see great works of art by Gauguin and others first hand."

Descriptions of participant motives for 'today's visit' were treated like other qualitative questions, and coded according to key themes from within the responses themselves. Nine initial themes were extracted: the art, social motives, curiosity or intellectual motives, school, sense of obligation, opportunity, inspiration, escape and other motives. Table 11 lists these nine themes and their relative frequencies within participant responses. Motives related to the art, socializing and curiosity far outweighed the other six categories.

Table 11 Today's Motive

category	Art Lover			Non-Art Lover		
	<i>sample of comments</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>sample of comments</i>	<i>freq</i>	<i>%</i>
the art	"love these paintings by these artists" "had studied the art in school now wanted to see the real thing"	62	55.9	"to learn more about Gauguin and Matisse. I love paintings but am far from a 'fine connaisseur'"	14	41.2
social	"shared experience" "was invited by friend"	17	15.3	"to accompany friend that loves Gauguin"	7	20.6
intellectual	"rare opportunity to see such master works, to study painting techniques up close"	4	3.6	"learning, curiosity, interest, intrigue"	5	14.7
school	"class trip"	6	5.4	"class trip"	2	5.6
obligation	"cornered: exhibition ends soon & friend wanted to go"	3	2.7	"annual tradition, I enjoy art but am fairly ignorant"	2	5.6
opportunity	"free tickets, love painting from this era" "unique opportunity"	13	11.7	"free tickets"	2	5.6
inspiration	"inspiration"	1	0.9		0	
escape	"love art - helps me deal with the horror of the rest of life"	1	0.9	"to appreciate the theme of voyage through art"	1	2.9
other	"to see what Montreal has to offer in the sense of art" "time to reflect, relax"	4	3.6	"gift shop"	1	2.9
<i>totals</i>		<i>111</i>			<i>34</i>	

Interestingly, Non-Art Lovers were more motivated by curiosity and intellectual reasons than the Art Lovers. It seems as though Art Lovers know what they are getting themselves into, while Non-Art Lovers look forward to seeing or learning something new. As one Art Lover put it: "We read about this exhibition - having seen so many of the images of these paintings in movies or books about the artists. We have come as a family to finally see them in person."

How do the motives expressed for this particular visit compare to those labelled by participants as typical motives for visiting an art museum? Participants were asked to pick the single most typical motive for an art museum visit from a list of thirteen possible motives. The items listed were derived from the literature (Marilyn Hood in particular), from the pilot interviews, and from the pre-test survey questionnaire. Participants expressed a great deal of difficulty with this question. Selecting just one motive was a challenge. Many survey respondents rebelled and selected more than one motive (17% of the Art Lovers and 19% of the Non-Art Lovers). The remaining members of the survey sample selected primarily from five key motives. Table 12 "Typical Motive" illustrates graphically that the art was the typical motive for 52% of the Art Lovers and 27% of the Non-Art Lovers, making it by far the strongest motive for all. The relative value given to the remaining four motives is curious. The second-highest-ranked motive by Non-Art Lovers was "spend time with friends/family." This motive did not rank at all with the Art Lovers; not a single one of the eighty-six Art Lovers listed it as their typical motive for visiting an art museum. In fact, other than the art, the only motives to really register any sort of importance with the Art Lovers were beauty (8.1%) and school trip (4.7%). Non-Art Lovers, in addition to 'spending time' and 'the art,' listed learning (11.5%) and school trip (7.7%) as other typical motives for them. Thus, when forced to pick just one motive, Art Lovers are decidedly motivated by the art while Non-Art Lovers have

other motives (social, educational) for visiting. Does this necessarily mean that Art Lovers are not motivated to learn or socialize during their museum visits?

A second question regarding motives was asked. Rather than forcing respondents to choose their primary motive, they were asked to rank each of fifteen possible motives on a scale of 1 (not important at all) to 7 (very important). Mean values were used to measure the relative ranking of each motive by the two visitor categories (see Table 12).

Table 12: Key Significant Differences in Participant Ranking of Typical Motives

<b>Motive</b>	<b>mean<sup>22</sup></b>		<b>df</b>		<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>L<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>Between groups</b>	<b>Within groups</b>	
Art	6.69	6.00	1	111	.000
Beauty	6.01	4.84	1	109	.000
Inspiration	4.84	3.46	1	104	.002
Something to do	3.13	4.32	1	106	.005
Entertainment	3.73	4.67	1	102	.037
Learning	6.06	5.56	1	110	.057

Art, not surprisingly, was far and away the highest-ranked motive: 6.69 out of 7 for the Art Lovers and 6 out of 7 for the Non-Art Lovers.<sup>24</sup> With regards to Art Lover motivations for learning and socializing, the rankings given to these two

<sup>22</sup> Mean ranking out of 7, where 1 is the lowest possible intensity.

<sup>23</sup> L denotes "Art Lover" and NL denotes "Non-Art Lover".

<sup>24</sup> Again, standard deviation scores for many of the motives were high. The most reliable mean values are those for art, beauty, learning, inspiration, something to do, and entertainment. The motive "chance to spend time with friends/family" scored a significant error of 0.208.

motives (6.06 out of 7 and 4.06 respectively) shows that these are indeed strong motives for Art Lover visits. Beauty (6.01) and inspiration (4.84) also ranked as key motives. For the Non-Art Lovers, key motives included learning (5.52 out of 7), visual excitement (4.87), beauty (4.84), entertainment (4.67), and chance to spend time with friends/family (4.63). Of these, visual excitement and entertainment bring up an interesting question: are Montreal audiences like Italian? In other words, does Zammuner and Testa's conclusion translate to this sample of participants? With a mean score of only 3.73, entertainment was the 10<sup>th</sup> highest (or 6<sup>th</sup> lowest) ranked motive by Art Lovers. It was ranked just slightly above "something to do on vacation" which scored a mean of 3.49. Different motives and expectations indeed: It seems that the applicability of Zammuner and Testa's conclusions to Canadian audiences merits further investigation. This investigation, however, is not possible within the scope of this study. For now, suffice to say that Non-Art Lovers are motivated by more than just the art. Although Art Lovers are driven to museum experiences that are educational, beautiful and visually exciting, they do not lend the same significance to the entertainment value of an experience that Non-Art Lovers do.

## **2.2. Socialization**

Socialization, in a general sense, can mean to organize on socialistic principles or to make social.<sup>25</sup> In the context of museum socialization, the term has been taken to refer to the initiation that an individual has into the museum world. A limited inquiry into factors of socialization was made during this study

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<sup>25</sup> According to Allen's 1990 version of the Concise Oxford Dictionary, p.1154.

in an attempt to connect self-identification as an Art Lover with early socialization to art museums. When asked the age at which they first visited an art museum, the eighty-six Art Lovers listed ages from one to seventy-eight. The twenty-six Non-Art Lovers in this study had their first visit between the ages of two and fifty-three. The range of ages is undeniably large, however, the mean age for Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers was found to be quite similar, 13.32 years old and 13.52 years old respectively. Thus it would appear that an individual's identity as an Art Lover is not affected by the age at which they first visit a museum.

Where the question of socialization becomes interesting in this study is when we begin to look at who they were with when this first visit was made. Survey respondents were asked the open-ended question "with whom did you go?" Art Lovers gave eight different answers (alone, family, friend, sister, mother,<sup>26</sup> school, boyfriend, romantic partner), while Non-Art Lovers only gave five (alone, family, friend, mother, and school). Table 13, "With whom did you go on your first visit?" shows the relative frequency and percent values that each answer obtained.

There are two interesting conclusions that can be made from these results.

First, 7.7%<sup>27</sup> of Non-Art Lovers went alone on their first visit to an art museum.

If, as a Non-Art Lover, they do not feel an intense affection for the art, and they are not sharing the experience with someone, then why did they go? It would seem that these individuals were not intimidated by what some call elitist

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<sup>26</sup> Note that 'mother' was a prominent response, garnering 8.5% of all responses.

<sup>27</sup> This represents only 2 people from the study sample.

Table 13: With Whom Did You Go On Your First Visit?

	Number of Participants		Percentage	
	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers	Art Lovers	Non-Art Lovers
<b>Alone</b>	7	2	8.1	7.7
<b>Family</b>	26	7	30.3	26.9
<b>Friend</b>	10	2	11.6	7.7
<b>Mother</b>	8	2	9.3	7.7
<b>School</b>	20	10	23.3	38.5
<b>Romantic partner</b>	3	0	3.5	0.0
<b>Other/No answer</b>	12	3	14	11.5
<b>Totals</b>	86	26	100.0	100.0

perceptions of art institutions. The second interesting conclusion is that a higher percentage of Art Lovers (77% as compared to 61% of Non-Art Lovers) were socialized to museums outside of the formal school system. Can it thus be assumed that visiting the museum for the first time as part of a school trip is less likely to give you a love for art than visiting with family or friends? Is non-academic socialization to museums more likely to 'breed' frequent museum visitors?

The relevant data was analyzed further to investigate the connections between the age at which someone first visits, with whom they first visit, and the current frequency of their museum visiting tendencies. By aggregating Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers together, it was determined that 14.4% of all respondents first visited a museum before they were school-aged, 45% before

they were teenagers, 18% before they reached the age of maturity, and 22.6% during their adult years. Though visiting with family was the primary source of socialization (38.2%), 25.4% of all first visits took place with the school. Of those who were less than eighteen years old when they first visited, 31.7% first visited with school and 52.2% with their family. If we discount for now those whose first visit took place during their adult years and look only at the younger age group; we can look more closely at the role the school plays in creating frequent museum visitors. This complex relationship is illustrated in Table 14, "Socialization: age, school, and visiting frequency." As Table 14 shows, only 11.5% of those socialized by school now report that they visit museums more than 3 times a year as opposed to 29.4% of those socialized outside of school who become frequent museum visitors later in life.

Table 14 Socialization: age, school, and visiting frequency

		Less than 18 years old on their first visit				18 years or older on their first visit	
		<i>Visited for reason other than School</i>		<i>Visited because of School</i>		<i>All reasons for visiting</i>	
		frequency	percent	frequency	percent	frequency	percent
no. of respondents		51		26		24	
typical frequency of visits	<i>0-1 times</i>	10	19.6	12	46.2	8	33.3
	<i>2-3 times</i>	26	51	11	42.3	11	45.8
	<i>4-6 times</i>	8	15.7	1	3.8	3	12.5
	<i>7-12 times</i>	5	9.8	2	7.7	2	8.3
	<i>13 -24 times</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>25 or more</i>	2	3.9	0	0	0	0
Art Lover		43	76.8	18	69.2	17	81
Non-Art Lover		11	19.6	8	30.8	4	19

What can now be concluded about the social contexts of Art Lover and Non-Art Lover museum experiences? Both groups are equally as likely to visit alone or to bring a loved one with them. Unlike Non-Art Lovers, Art Lovers do not consider spending time with friend/family as a typical motive for an art museum visit. However, they rank it as a significant secondary motive. Thus, contact with others while experiencing the museum was an important consideration regardless of one's love for art. These 'others' tended to be primarily family and friends, with a large proportion of visitors sharing their visit with their romantic partners or lovers. On a less positive note, recall that crowding was a key catalyst for negative comments about the pleasure of an art museum visit. This aspect of the social context was prominent in visitor responses and must be acknowledged for the impact it had on the quality of visitor experiences. Blockbuster exhibitions such as *Voyage Into Myth* are often in danger of overcrowding. Their mass appeal is bound to garner high attendance; though the MMFA extended their hours to accommodate the larger crowds, many still felt that the exhibition was too crowded.

### **3. Physical Context**

Crowding is a symptom of limited physical resources. After all, a museum is an enclosed space with limited capacities for both the display of art works and the volume of public access. What did the results from this study reveal about a visitor's experiential physical context? Falk & Dierking talk about 'museum

fatigue’ – the effects of increased time in the gallery causing both physical and psychological fatigue – as a major factor in altering visitor behaviour as a result of the physical context (1992, p.56). A researcher named Arthur Melton found that American museum audiences tended to turn right, instead of left, once inside an exhibition (Ibid.). Though much interest in previous studies has been paid to a visitor’s use of time and the categorizing of behaviours, this study was interested in making connections and comparisons between the experiences of Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers. Thus, the questions asked sought to identify concrete and comparable gestures or actions.

### **3.1. Reactions**

If a visitor yawned during their visit, nodded their head in agreement, or smiled while looking at a painting, these actions could be taken as indicators of involvement with the experience. Shifting their weight from one foot to another could be construed as making an effort to be more physically comfortable while they prolonged their viewing of a particular painting. Moving forward to get a better look or going back to see the same painting more than once are strong indications of making an effort to connect with the art works. The rankings that Art Lovers gave to twenty-five possible actions and behaviours were compared to those of the Non-Art Lovers. Significant differences were found in the extent to which participants ‘smiled,’ ‘moved forward to get a closer look’ at the painting, were ‘aware of the people around’ them, ‘imagined things about the artist,’ and

'considered the artist's talent.' Table 15, "Significant Differences in Behavioural Reactions to Art" shows the relationship between these most significantly

Table 15 Significant Differences in Behavioural Reactions to Art

Reaction	<i>Art Lovers</i>	<i>Non-Art Lovers</i>	significance
	mean value (on 7 point scale)		
<i>total number of participants, n</i>	86	26	
Imagined things about the artist.	3.79	2.43	0.007
Moved forward to get a closer look.	5.86	4.42	0.000
Was aware of the people around me.	4.06	2.74	0.007
Considered the artist's talent.	5.73	4.50	0.001
Smiled.	4.65	3.08	0.005

different reactions. Participant self-reports indicate that Art Lovers responded more actively and with greater intensity than the Non-Art Lovers. By moving forward to get a better look they are adapting their physical proximity to the art, in effect adjusting their physical context. By being aware of the people around them, Art Lovers are acknowledging their social context<sup>28</sup>. Finally, by imagining things about the artist and considering the artist's talent they are enacting patterns of thought indicative of an Art Lover's personal context. Non-Art Lovers were far more passive and ranked their reactions consistently lower than did the Art Lovers.

The highest-ranked reactions by Non-Art Lovers were 'went back to look at the same painting again' (5.13 out of 7), 'considered the artist's talent' (4.50),

<sup>28</sup> One might expect that the Art Lovers were more focused on the art and therefore less aware of the people around them. However, my reading of these results is that Art Lovers were highly aware of the people around them as a result of crowding in this blockbuster exhibition and of the high percentage of people who brought someone with them to the exhibition.

'wanted to know what others thought of the painting' (4.50), 'felt the urge to discuss the painting with someone' (4.42) and 'moved forward to get a closer look at it' (4.42). Going back and moving forward suggest that Non-Art Lovers were indeed acting to improve their experience. However, wanting to know what others thought and feeling the urge to discuss the painting seem to suggest perhaps a strong interest in the social dimensions of a museum experience. Of these 'top four' reactions, only one received a lower ranking by Art Lovers as compared to Non-Art Lovers. Art Lovers were not nearly as interested in knowing what others thought of the painting, ranking it only 3.75 out of 7.

### **3.2. Architecture**

Another aspect of this study looked at visitor perceptions of, and motivations by, museum architecture. For Art Lovers, architecture ranked seventh of fifteen typical motives for visiting an art museum (mean score 3.9 out of 7). This ranking was just below that of 'chance to spend time with friends/family' and before 'something to do on vacation'. For Non-Art Lovers, the architectural motivation was eighth overall, with a mean score of 3.63. However, none of the survey respondents listed architecture as their primary typical motivation for a visit. The perception of architecture as an art form plays into the relative importance placed on the architecture of the museum and on an individual's conceptualization of the physical context. It is thus interesting to

note that 67% of Art Lovers consider architecture within their definition of the art that they love. Only 35% of Non-Art Lovers felt the same.

Aside from these aspects, few participants commented on the physical context of their museum visit. A handful of visitors commented that the exhibition itself was too short and that they were disappointed not to see more works by Gauguin or whoever their favourite artist may have been. On the whole, participant comments related to the personal and social aspects of their experience.

## Chapter 7

### **Too Wonderful For Words Follow-up Interviews and Discussion**

As previously mentioned, seven follow-up interviews were conducted in order to extend and enliven my understanding of the questionnaire results. This was – as the following pages will illustrate – certainly the result of the interviews. Participants discussed at length their perceptions of the Art Lover and the impact that this perception has on their museum experience.

Of the seven participants interviewed, two do not consider themselves Art Lovers, thus making it possible to delve deeper into each of the sub-groupings associated with the questionnaire.<sup>1</sup> However, given the limited number of interviews conducted, any conclusions drawn or assumptions made are tentative. That being said, the richness of the interview transcripts provides insight into the relative quality of and motivations for art museum experiences between the sub-group of Art Lovers and that of Non-Art Lovers.

According to the five self-identified Art Lovers, an Art Lover is<sup>2</sup>:

Somebody who enjoys looking at art. When I go to the museum I take the whole afternoon. I plan to go and look, enjoy and learn. I want to go see works that I already like. [I] especially like the works that I go and think, 'wow, it would be nice to be there. Look at the landscape' (Heike, p.1).

...willingness to gain some knowledge, hopefully of [the] culture of what you're going to see (Dahlia, p.2).

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix E provides an overview of the various interview participant profiles.

<sup>2</sup> The words of the interview participants are reproduced in as much detail as feasible. This is done in order to allow the participants to 'speak for themselves' and to allow readers of this study to derive their own interpretations of participant comments.

Like gourmet cooks who narcissistically know all the recipes, it is silly for someone to only know composition or context, I mean the history is interesting but actually looking... that can be incredibly moving. That is the difference, that's what makes someone an Art Lover in my eyes (Lily, p.2).

... not just understanding, but also appreciating and enjoys looking at... maybe even doing it depending on your abilities I guess... someone who is willing to dedicate time and whatever to art. In order to appreciate it, to be an Art Lover or something like that, you have to understand it at least on some level. I'm a sports lover, I understand sports. That's my thing. Some people it's Picasso... (Ben, p.1).

For the Art Lovers, understanding the works played a strong part in their definitions. Heike, for instance, likened her definition to the understanding of music. "Understanding...well, many people have different interpretations, so understanding can mean a lot of things" (p.1). For some art works – like a Mark Rothko painting – Heike asserts that a certain amount of understanding is required in order to enjoy the visual qualities and the intensity of the colours. However, having studied music, she has an understanding of the harmonies and rhythms; she can anticipate what is coming next. Her understanding helps her to like classical music. "In that term, in linking understanding to enjoyment, there is some connection to be made" (Ibid.).

Rebecca and Rose, the two Non-Art Lovers interviewed, also emphasized the importance of understanding and knowledge in the defining of an Art Lover. Rose situates herself at a distance from the 'artsy people':

Art Lovers, like artsy types, they're enthusiastic so they'll like know about all the artists and about some of his work... they have a big

range of artists... they'll want to see more. Well, like I like art but I wouldn't keep track of it or bother to get information on it. You wouldn't really have a negative point of view in art at all if you were an Art Lover. A person who is really, really involved in everything art; getting to know the colours, textures, the dates and the art, the kind of paper that was used... An Art Lover sees more detail in the work, can get more out of it (Rose, p.2).

... I guess I feel that in order to be a lover of anything, one must be really immersed in it. Like to be a music lover you need to be immersed in it, to know a lot about it. And that could be just me, that could just be my thinking and I feel like I just don't know so much about art so maybe I don't like it so much if I had ever taken courses or made an effort to, or had an interest to, learn more (Rebecca, p.4).

Both Rebecca and Rose seemed to have strong images of an 'artsy' person, a type of social identity with which they themselves did not identify:

Artsy people, I imagine, would want to develop their own art and not try to imitate other people's art. Those people, like on St. Laurent, like you know, or like in the Old Port, they're doing their own art work. [Referring to sidewalk artists, portraitists, photographers] or um, people who are in art classes, but not in the beginning, they're in the later parts, cause they want to develop their own style....Ya, beginning students too. Art is not just painting but music, dance, all forms of art (Rose, p.2).

I see like, the way I see society is divided into separate roles, cases, and I guess that I've been intimidated to go to museums often times it's because I feel that I'm not always getting out of it what I'm supposed to get out of it. And I see these artsy people, you know, with their poetry and different genres... I wish I could explain it better... people who *can* think abstractly, people who are not necessarily going with the flow of the rest of society. This is maybe why I have always avoided museum experiences because I don't see myself as really fitting into that mould of what a museum person should be or artsy person should be. Okay so maybe it's a subconscious thing that I've told myself "Okay I'm not going to like the museum" (Rebecca, p.3).

I asked Rebecca where she got this notion of the 'artsy' person:

I don't know, maybe movies, maybe media, maybe anything. Like, you know the brooding guy who hasn't eaten in five days, with the leather jacket. Talking about one piece of art for five hours going into intricate detail where the brush was pointed in one area – that sort of stuff gives me a headache! I don't know if I just don't think in that way, but the whole concept just turns me off! (Rebecca, p.3)

Rebecca's distaste for intricate discussions of seemingly mundane details is in direct opposition to pleasures expressed by both Ben and Dahlia:

...more enjoyable for me to have someone to talk about it with – they may have the same opinion about it, they may not – but you could stand there for five hours and talk about it because I've seen something that they haven't seen or we're seeing the same thing or whatever, you know, there's thousands of different ways you could look at that. That to me is enjoyable. I like that. I like being able to go in there and say maybe he meant this or the book says this or whatever. I like that (Ben, p.2).

To me, for me I just find that absolutely astounding that someone can do that. Like Pollock just going in a room throwing some canvas on the floor and you then get something beautiful out of it – and sometimes you don't. But that's what I find even more fascinating is that they are not necessarily in it to become the best artist. And a lot of times, like Van Gogh, I think it's Van Gogh, like he died and no one really knew about him. And he never knew how much people loved his art. Which is just tragic. I think that that adds to my appreciation as well. That also touches me; that so many artists become successful after they have died (Dahlia, p. 3).

Such personal preferences as these – for sharing discussions, knowing about the artist's life – are loudly expressed by the Art Lovers interviewed: Lily considers herself fanatical in her reading of art reviews, Margaret is passionately devoted to reading every artist's biography before seeing their artwork, Ben has only ever gone to the museum alone once, and Dahlia spoke at length on how visiting art

museums brought her and her brother closer together as siblings. What do comments such as these reveal about the interactive experience of art museum visits? Is it possible to describe the different quality of experience between those who consider themselves Art Lovers and those who do not? The results of the written questionnaire revealed that Art Lovers and Non-Art lovers differ in the intensity of emotions felt and that Non-Art Lovers are motivated by more than just the art. Using, once again, Falk and Dierking's Interactive Experience Model of art museum visits, what insights can be gleaned from these seven interview informants? In this analysis of the interview transcripts, I am not interested in demographic traits or comparisons. It is far more revealing to consider the psychographic expressions of informants: what are their opinions, interests, and actions as expressed in their own words?

### **1. Personal Context**

When asked to describe a good art museum experience, Margaret related the following:

...when I was in my early twenties, in France and Holland and England. Going into the "Jeu de Paumes" - the impressionist museum - and you know at the time I was reading a lot. I was reading the life of Gauguin, no, uh Rodin, so I went into his museum. And I was reading about Van Gogh and I went to his museum. I read Michelangelo... you know I had three or four months - I was very lucky. I wasn't working and I had this very rich experience of just reading and going a lot to galleries and just seeing things... (Margaret, p.1).

Rose, a Non-Art Lover by her own admission, is not without an appreciation for the role knowledge and learning play in the museum experience. Rose had

written on her questionnaire that the pleasure she had at the MMFA on the day of the survey was “very pleasant, relaxed, educated.” During the interview I asked Rose to describe in greater detail what she meant by ‘educated’:

I like to learn things. To grow and to see other people’s points of view, to see their expressions; not just on opinions or feelings but on written facts. So you know when I was looking at that book on the artist; I was like ‘oh, wow’. In the exhibition, my friends were looking at [Matisse’s *Game of Bowls* (1908)] and not really appreciating it, when I read about it, [it] made sense to me. People in general constantly like to grow and develop, you know, go up the ladder. It’s not just money but there’s pleasure in it too. I think that people totally get some sort of intellectual pleasure out of it (Rose, p.2).

The learning available in museums touches on something deeper, something very personal for Heike. Experiencing art isn’t simply a way of seeing other points of view or expressions, but also an opportunity to learn about other times:

I go and expect to learn something, but not necessarily just for art but for history and culture too...society and a way to learn about the past. From art you can also learn how people felt or experienced things in the past. The art from just after the industrial revolution...when industry started getting, growing,...you have so many pictures of factories in work, in art, you have smoke and steam....It was important enough to keep there for all times on the canvas.

It’s personal for me, the interest in the past. I like to imagine what it would have been like to live in those times. What would my life have been like if I lived like in the middle ages? Renoir, he has so many paintings with women or with girls...a girl brushing her hair, or at the piano...and somehow, I don’t know, they remind me so much of my sister...or me and my sister at the piano...it’s like I can see that picture as part of real life (Heike, p.2).

## 2. Social context

In assessing the social context, Falk and Dierking look for aspects relating to visiting alone or in a group, coming into contact with other visitors or museum employees, exhibition crowding, and matters of social management (scheduling, eating, physical comfort, etc.). As I've already suggested, an individual's social context can also be affected by indirect social contacts made with the artist, empathy felt for subjects of an art work, or some sort of affinity felt as a result of an association made. Heike's description of Renoir's picture being part of real life is an example of what Dissanayake would call mutuality, human connections being made cognitively and in absentia.

What impact does this concept of the social context have on an individual's behaviour or on the quality of their museum experience? Using Margaret's notion of an art museum's audience as a starting point, the people in the museum are already a specific type. As Margaret put it, "you have to be kind of interested in what's going on beyond your square block to even get yourself to an art museum" (p.2). The questionnaire results showed that art museum audiences are perceived as open-minded people. The interviews showed that these seven museum visitors are not only open-minded but also affected by connections made to other members of their society:

...going to the Museum of...Contemporary Art with my brother. Cause we really connected then. It allowed us to connect, like get closer as brother and sister...cause we were not so close, that age difference, six years – it was difficult to get to that point where we both respected each other. It used to be 'well, you're looking down on me all the time' so you know; me and my brother had it tough.

And it was that, going together to the museum and him showing me his art and what he was interested in and what he thought about that piece, really made us connect and again - like I said - it introduced me to a whole new art that I really love and I never would have liked it unless, you know, until he really pushed it forward. It's not necessarily just the museum but connecting with my brother (Dahlia, p.2).

I don't enjoy going to the museum as much [by] myself as I do with someone else. Because if I go with someone else then I can discuss things you know....Standing there and talk for a few minutes whereas when I'm by myself I think 'that's nice what he did there: okay next' (Ben, p.2).

It's kind of like sharing a joke with someone, like on TV and you have to look over and laugh with them. I don't know why that is. I'm the sort of person that I have to share things. It's like I'm transferring my optimism. No, not optimism, my love for it and I'm trying to get that person on board with me and say 'come on, this is the most beautiful painting you've ever seen, how could you not like that? It's hard to explain exactly. (Dahlia, p.3)

For the Non-Art Lovers, sharing the museum experience wasn't the only significant aspect of the social context. Both Rose and Rebecca recounted times when going with a friend or group and encountering museum employees can have a negative effect on an overall museum experience:

...well, it's kind of intimidating sometimes...the first time I went into the Museum of Fine Arts, like I didn't know that you weren't supposed to go so close to the paintings, cause I didn't know about things like protection. And taking pictures...I wasn't sure about the conduct, like how you're supposed to act. Like you see in movies sometimes, like people take their dates to museums... I felt like "oh wow I'm in a museum, this is a classy place!"

Those people that were there, you know in the jackets, they said you know, 'don't go so close'...After that, I was like 'oh! Don't touch anything.' Taking pictures, I never saw anyone do it so I figured that it wasn't allowed.

You know, you see these people at the entrance and the doorways and you're like "what are they doing there?! They're just standing there." You know, I kind of understand now, they don't want you to touch the artworks...and everything's big, quiet and clean... you don't want to be like unprofessional or I don't know...don't want to make a mess... ya (Rose, p.1).

When describing a group tour of European cities, Rebecca described:

...'museum overload.' I don't like being forced into anything. I like to go on my own free will. Not that they forced us, just that it was like, "this is where we're going now" and all I could think was "Okay, when will this be over?!" If I want to check it out then it'll be something that I'll absolutely love. As I get older, I'm taking that step myself and wanting to check things out. I've been getting a little bit more into art, feeling out what I like and what I don't like. I think that it comes as I've gotten older (Rebecca, p.1).

I didn't have a time limit either...sometimes if you're going with a school trip or even a friend...sometimes I find that there's a time schedule that you end up having to go by. And I don't like time restraints. I like to do things at my own pace. And I think that that really takes away from an art experience or a museum experience (Rebecca, p.2).

### **3. Physical context**

The Montreal museum - at least on the day that I went - it was too crowded and I'm not comfortable with that. If I want to get lost in a painting, if I really want to get into something...crowds and all that, I find it really takes away from the whole experience (Rebecca, p.1). And the fact that there was like a bazillion [sic] people there that day...it was loud, it was noisy, it was claustrophobic. I think that had I gone at a different time I may have felt differently but I think that the climate and everything combined, it turned me off (Rebecca, p.2).

Crowding seems to be a common point of intersection between the social and physical contexts. It takes a great deal of effort for a museum to generate a

physical context for the visitor's comfort. Rebecca was critical of the MMFA's crowding and architectural layout in general:

And the architecture, the reconstructed...it was just so beautiful. That definitely added to the whole experience, on the one hand, as you're looking at this beautiful painting, then you look out the window and see all the gardens. I think that the way a museum is built, the way it actually is, the structure also adds or can take away from the experience. I find the Montreal museum really cold. To be honest, I haven't really been to many museums in Canada; I've mostly been to museums abroad. I find, I don't know if it's a European thing, that they're so grandiose, you know the Sistine Chapel or Chateau Versailles. I find that those surroundings that are almost surreal, that really helped me to get into the whole experience of the art...and I enjoyed it so much more whereas here I feel like it's like a shoebox... (Rebecca, pp.2-3).

Rebecca's experiences of European museums certainly established the criteria by which she judges other museums. Grandiose, however, is not necessarily a positive trait in museum architecture. When asked to describe a bad museum experience, both Heike and Ben vividly recalled experiences of getting lost in overgrown history museums. The 'shoebox' museum design does have its advantages. For Rose:

Good experience?...[we] went to the Fine Arts museum and [I] thought 'wow, nice, quiet, away from the city and noise'. You could actually stop and think, look at what other people did and try to figure it out, think about what they were thinking about and relate it to us today, you know? What did people think of them while they were painting... try to delve into their thoughts and interpret what they were thinking (Rose, p.1).

For Rose, the MMFA was successful in generating an atmosphere that was conducive to looking at and thinking about the art works on display. Earlier that

same day, Rose had had her first ever museum experience. She and a friend had gone to the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC).

I didn't know about art before. I just went spontaneously. [There was] art with shadows – fascinating, soap bottles. I got information like about life, places... I don't remember much now but at the time I was like "oh, wow!". [There was another] art using sound... my friend left and I got to be there all by myself. [I] really felt that I was in a different place. That experience was like "wow, this is really cool!" I think I was like eighteen. I think that was the first time that I went. (Rose, p.1)

I asked Rose to describe what she meant by 'fascinating':

...nothing that I had experienced before: like all my senses, I couldn't see anything, but because of the sound...like in the darkness, I could sort of imagine things. I felt like I was in a black hole, outer space. Like nothing I had ever experienced before and I didn't know that it was possible (Rose, p. 3).

Lily lamented the fact that she stopped making art when her job took up all of her energy. Making art had been an important outlet for her. I asked if she found going to art museums a good substitute for immersing herself in the thought processes and first-hand experiences of creativity. Lily responded that she goes regularly to the MMFA just to see the permanent collection, to visit her favourite works. She also described an exceptional experience that she had at the MAC:

They had the most crazy installation there, that made me laugh and laugh. ... It was this huge room and they had flags on the ceiling, this lovely orange fabric and they had hired several peacocks ... going up through this orange thing, like a telephone pole and they had somebody up there winding and unwinding a dirty typewriter ribbon from a little thing on the floor, meanwhile these peacocks are walking around on the polished wooden floor... it was the most wonderful installation that I had ever seen! I mean the humour and the pleasure it gave me, which is absolutely

incredible, I absolutely adored it. I told everyone to go see it (Lily, p.1).

This quote illustrates the opportunities presented by the physical space of a museum to present art and facilitate significant visitor experiences. Lily is a highly experienced and frequent museum visitor; she is not easily impressed. However, despite her knowledge of art and vast experience with art museums, Lily still finds it difficult to express the quality of her experiences. In the quote above she uses words like 'incredible,' 'wonderful,' 'adored,' and then adds 'absolutely' in order to emphasize the potency of her expressions. As Lily put it, trying to describe the pleasure of experiencing art is "an amorphous thing – like grasping at fog" (p.1). This difficulty was felt by all seven of the interview participants, regardless of the intensity of their experiences, opinions, or feelings. Their difficulty, in turn, makes it exceedingly difficult for me to determine the relative quality of experience between the Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers in the sample. This difficulty is compounded by the limitations of this study. Seven informants do not make for a large sample and as such any conclusions are not translatable to a larger population. In addition, those seven could be considered exceptional individuals for volunteering to participate in the interviews. The recruitment methods used were not aggressive and no remunerations were offered. What motivated these individuals to give up their time and opinions? An interest in museums: each participant – whether they considered themselves an Art Lover or not – expressed a deep interest in going to museums.

Pierre Bourdieu and Alan Darbel stated in 1969 (republished again in 1990) that aesthetics is a dimension of the ethics (or ethos) of class. "In order to 'taste', that is 'to differentiate and appreciate' the works on display and in order to understand them and give them value, the uncultivated visitor can only invoke the quality and quantity of the work put into them, with moral respect taking the place of aesthetic admiration" (p.47). In this duality, Bourdieu and Darbel discount moral respect in favour of aesthetic admiration. The Art Lover, in this estimation, is capable of the primary form of aesthetic pleasure: the joy of aesthetic perception, the delight of informed appreciation based on the ability to decipher the art object. Conversely, the uncultivated, ungifted, Non-Art Lover is resigned to 'simple *aisthesis*' or sensations and affections (p.46).

Bourdieu and Darbel have clutched a portion of the 'amorphous thing'. Both Rose and Rebecca expressed a great deal of moral respect for museums and for art. Did they – or any of the other twenty-four Non-Art Lovers in this study – experience pure joy and delight as a result of 'informed appreciation'? Yes, most definitely. Rose, in her description of reading the exhibition catalogue and making the connection to Matisse's *Game of Bowls* expressed more than mere sensations and affections for the experience. Rebecca also expressed something akin to 'the delight of informed appreciation' when she described being immersed in an outdoor exhibition:

In Norway there was the Earth from Above exhibition – the same one that came here – and I spent hours walking around it. I loved those pictures cause I'm a traveller you know...truly it was an exhibition, but it wasn't in the context of a museum; it was in the

open air, it was at the pier – I was totally immersed in it to the point that I took home ten prints – even though I was backpacking and I spent three weeks trying to preserve those things only to find out that they had them here too! If that's considered art – which I think it is – I really enjoyed that and I think that I was able to understand more at an intellectual level just because it's something that I was a little bit more knowledgeable about and some of the places, I picked prints of places that I want to go... (p.4).

Knowledge about the art, its context or subject is a key element to the intensity of feelings towards art. In this sense, Bourdieu and Darbel's thirty-year-old assertions still hold true. However, I take issue with the authors' reliance on class in the identification of those who are capable of loving art. What is 'class' to society now? Do we still allow concepts of class, hierarchies, and identities to dictate our emotive responses to art? This question is, quite evidently, too large to fully address here and now. However, I would like to point out that if class is indicated by income and education, the differences between the Art Lover and Non-Art Lover sub-groups is negligible. Many Art Lovers stated that they make less than \$12,000 a year or between \$32,000 and \$64,000 a year. The same could be said of the Non-Art Lovers. Sixty-four percent of Art Lovers had at least a Bachelor's degree while this percentage was fifty-two for the Non-Art Lovers. Thus, the class differences between the two groups were insignificant.

What does seem significant is the individual estimation of knowledge about art: Non-Art Lovers ranked their knowledge with a mean score of 3.17 out of 7 while Art Lovers ranked their knowledge at a mean value of 4.19. This knowledge can be seen as impacting on the intensity of the emotions felt during the museum visit. Art Lovers repeatedly scored higher levels of intensity when

ranking to what extent they felt excited, relaxed, admiration, and other emotions. Art Lovers were also more active than Non-Art Lovers in their reactions to the art works. They were more likely to report that they moved forward to get a closer look, to have been aware of the people around them, and to have smiled.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Table 15 on page 114 for the relative strength of these reactions.

## Chapter 8

### **Just One of Those Things Summary and Implications of the Investigation**

Why do people who do not love art go to art museums? If, as I have suggested, a love of art can be considered to bring with it intensity and depth; affection, fondness, and great liking, then an Art Lover is necessarily someone who expresses depth and intensity in their affections for art. However, people who do not consider themselves art lovers *do* go to art museums. A love of art is thus not a requirement or necessarily a motive for a visit to an art museum. What value remains in the experience of art if there is no intensity and depth, no affection or fondness?

What is an Art Lover? Constructing a profile of this notion has permitted an understanding of its converse: someone who does not love art. According to the Art Lovers who participated in this study, an Art Lover is someone who experiences a significant, positive, emotional response to art, be it love, passion, appreciation, or mutuality. According to the Non-Art Lovers who participated in this study, an Art Lover is also someone who is knowledgeable about art and behaves or acts on their fondness for art. For many Non-Art Lovers, this level of knowledge and requisite behaviour were what prevented them from identifying themselves as Art Lovers but it has not prevented them from visiting art museums. Of the 118 people who participated in the written questionnaire, 20% did not consider themselves to be Art Lovers. They do, however, enjoy looking

at art. Art ranked as the primary, typical motive for Non-Art Lover visits to an art museum.

Who then is a Non-Art Lover? Within the context of this study, a Non-Art Lover is most likely to be male, earning up to \$64,000 a year, reasonably well educated (52% with a Bachelor's degree or higher), and francophone (58%). Understandably, this last descriptor is unique to the environment being studied. In Montreal the population is 71% francophone and 29% anglophone yet the population of Non-Art Lover francophones in this study is 58%. The MMFA has worked tirelessly to gain a stronger following from the francophone communities in and around Montreal. In the last thirty years the institution has overcome much of its history of anglophone patronage and usage (83% of the museum's "Friends" are now francophone). However, it seems as though those francophones who have integrated visiting the MMFA into their lives have not yet adopted the same love for the art as the more traditionally socialized anglophone audiences have.

Why, then, do Non-Art Lovers spend precious leisure time and entertainment dollars going to see art? Simply because someone does not consider themselves an Art Lover per se does not necessarily mean that they are not motivated to art museum experiences. On a scale of 1 to 7, Non-Art Lovers ranked the art at 6 as the main motivation for visiting an art museum. Other strong motives for visiting were social or intellectual. Non-Art Lovers saw a visit to the art museum as an opportunity to spend time with friends and family;

conversely this opportunity was not seen as a fundamental motive by the Art Lovers. Art Lovers instead ranked sharing the experience as a significant secondary motive but not a motive in and of itself. Art Lover motives were highly focused on encountering the art itself, witnessing its beauty and sensing inspiration. In the world of love, such a focused and exclusive relationship is highly valued. Non-Art Lovers, on the other hand, were 'distracted' and placed value on other elements of museum experiences, such as visual excitement and entertainment. Their 'wandering eye' suggests that the bond between the individual and the art work is casual, like dating in high school as opposed to serious monogamy.

Did a lack of love for art show up in the Non-Art Lovers' behaviour during their museum visit? The results of the survey showed that, compared to those who profess a love for art, the Non-Art Lovers were less likely to report that they move forward to get a better look at the art or to smile. Such outward expressions and efforts to connect with a work of art are assertive actions that exhibit individual preferences. Either Non-Art Lovers lack the desire to get closer, the significance of response to spark a smile, or the confidence to act on their thoughts and feelings. Non-Art Lover responses to the questionnaire and during the interviews consistently suggested a lack of confidence. They often second-guessed themselves or acted tentatively during both the research program and their visit to the art museum.

Is the museum experience of a Non-Art Lover different from that of an Art Lover? It would be next to impossible to argue that any two museum experiences are identical. Rather, the complexity of the museum experience provides for a wide range of possible experiences and necessitates an equally complex model for investigating the experience.

As previously mentioned, Non-Art Lovers placed value on many elements of the museum experience. In addition to the art, elements such as visual excitement and entertainment were prized aspects of the overall experience. Such 'distractions' and a 'wandering eye' present a less focused bond between the Non-Art Lover and the art object, one I have likened to casual dating. Through this lack of focus, Non-Art Lovers may be excluding themselves from the pleasures of total involvement with works of art. "A heightened and intensified state called flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) has been described when people play with total involvement, particularly in activities that require great physical exertion (for example, running and working out), sustained concentration (for example, artistic or intellectual creation), or both. Those who have felt flow may liken it to other transcendent states because of the felt loss of ego or self-consciousness, and the high (Dissanayake, 2000, p. 164). Even though most people in contemporary society do not experience trancelike states of self-transcendence, most people will know some variety of these experiences. Dissanayake gives the example of an aerobics class where a large group of people move to the same driving beat. "Moving together with others in time,

especially in high-energy activity does produce elation..." (Ibid.). Contemporary rave culture is premised on this elation and transcendence as a result of often hypnotic, organic, seductive musical beats. Visual art, like music and dance, is also capable of eliciting love-like, flow-like states. Questionnaire respondents reported feeling blissful and enraptured while looking at a painting. Art Lover interview participants related feelings of being transported or experiencing a high:

...that was my high obviously after visiting [the exhibition] again, you know. Being able to point out everything that I really liked to my boyfriend...You know...like no one's getting me off this cloud! (Dahlia, p.3)

This study is not the first to suggest the close similarities between experiences of art, love, and even religion. Ellen Dissanayake (2000), in her multidisciplinary investigation Art and Intimacy, argues that both art and love originate from the most basic state of human nature, from our need to belong, connect, and express ourselves. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, Dissanayake describes how our western society is obsessed with love (2000, p.168). We treat love as though it were the meaning of life, or humanity's ultimate purpose. One need only listen to the latest songs on the radio, see the latest film, or watch any television commercial to see how prevalent images of idealized love are in our everyday environment.

After six days spent at the exhibition and extensive analysis of participant comments, I see many connections between the study data and research into the social components of museum visiting. For instance, Francois Colbert's

discussion of market segmentation talks of the psychographic descriptors – “variables that involve values and opinions” (1993, p.111) – that are often used to segment museum audiences. Colbert describes a person who “worries about the social image he or she will project by attending certain events” (Ibid.). This type of person is not rare – we all know someone like this. How many people like this exist within the sample of 112 Art Lovers and Non-Art Lovers?<sup>1</sup> Understandably, this was not a question asked on the questionnaire or during the interview. However, I find it curious that someone would identify themselves as an Art Lover but visit art museums so infrequently as to qualify as a non-participant. If they profess a love for art, why do they not act accordingly? Can their self-identification be trusted or were they merely being suggestible when they checked off the “yes” box on the questionnaire? There is no way of knowing, unquestionably, whether or not a participant’s responses are completely genuine. However, this connection between Art Lovers and infrequent visiting raises my suspicions.

What social image is someone projecting by identifying themselves as an Art Lover? According to the Art Lovers in this study, an Art Lover is someone who experiences a significant, positive, emotional response to art be it love, passion, appreciation, or mutuality. They are also well-educated and of middle-class standing or higher. The social image of the Art Lover is a positive one. It reflects particular traits that are valued in our first-world society. This is a good image to project. Art museums and the events they house are often avenues

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<sup>1</sup> Recall that 6 of the 118 people surveyed did not identify themselves as either an Art Lover or not.

to 'see-and-be-seen.' In "Society's need to see and be scene" (2002) Ray Conlogue presents sociologist Alan Blum's meditations on what a "scene" really is:

...if you walked into Toronto's Queen Street Bamboo Club in the heyday of punk circa 1979,...you discovered pretty quickly whether you were on stage or watching. And "on stage" included not just the performers, but their pals, hangers-on, and privileged critics. These actors knew who they were, and they knew who you were, because they'd seen you there before. You were part of that essential group, the "idle onlookers," and you had come back to catch some more of their performance (p.R2).

These idle onlookers are essential to a scene, just as an audience is essential in the theatre. Conlogue, Blum, and Sartre are all critical of America's attempt at scene-making. Sartre remarked that European writers were happy to hang out with other writers while American writers felt vaguely guilty about their art and spent their spare time with "real" people like bricklayers (in Conlogue, 2002 p.R2). In Europe, clever elites recognized the value of scenes and slyly supported them.

But on this side of the ocean, the cult of the individual and the mania for marketing everything in sight has led to a proliferation of pseudo-scenes. Architects labour mightily to build the mall that will spawn a scene, and Chambers of Commerce long for sanitized ones that will attract tourists (Ibid.).

It is this non-surreptitious, self-serving, and insincere exploitation of the urban scene that leads individuals like me to question the motives of people who identify themselves as Art Lovers but do not actually visit museums. This is not to say that the majority of museum visitors are only there to associate themselves with the museum scene. Recall that only 28% of self-identified Art

Lovers qualified as non-participants.<sup>2</sup> This percentage is equal to only twenty-four people and represents a small fraction of the 118 survey participants. This fraction is, in fact, smaller than the fraction of Non-Art Lovers studied (twenty-six) who had chosen to experience the museum.

Non-Art Lovers chose to visit the art museum for a number of reasons, for the art, to spend time with loved ones, out of curiosity, and to learn something. Non-Art Lovers express a concrete expectation to end their museum experience with greater knowledge, insight, or understanding than they had when they began. Constructing an analogy from the world of romantic love, one could say that they were going on a 'blind date' or perhaps are still in the 'honeymoon' phase of their relationship with art. Prior knowledge, existing familiarity, or previous experience are limited but a sufficient willingness is in place. Participant descriptions of art museum audiences frequently mentioned the importance of willingness: "Anyone who is curious and is willing to spend a little time & money and do something interesting & instructive." In Chapter 3, I quote Falk and Dierking stating that, "to the extent that learning appears to require both previous experience and subsequent reinforcement, it follows that people with greater previous experience are likely to learn more than people with less experience" (p.125). Does this not necessarily mean that those with less experience are less interested in the learning that art museums offer. The Non-Art Lovers in this study expressed an interest in learning that was equally as strong as that expressed by the Art Lovers. Both sub-groups ranked learning as

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Table 3 "Comparative Frequency of Museum Visits" on page 80.

their second-strongest motive for a visit.<sup>3</sup> More Non-Art Lovers (11.5%) than Art Lovers (2.3%) listed learning as their primary motive. Non-Art Lovers also affirmed that a desire to learn more about the art is something that they typically take away from a visit.<sup>4</sup> For the Non-Art Lovers interviewed, learning was not only a motive or an expectation, but also a source of pleasure:

I like to learn things....Intellectual pleasure...People in general constantly like to grow and develop, you know, go up the ladder. It's not just money but there's pleasure in it too (Rose, p.2).

Motivated and willing to learn, museum visitors who do not love the art still represent a fertile ground for instilling the tenets of an art museums mission. Though they may not be the core of a museum's audience, as they become increasingly familiar with the works of art, they establish the previous experience that Falk and Dierking assert is one of the mechanisms through which experiences are assimilated and true learning takes place (1992, p.125).<sup>5</sup> The second mechanism is subsequent reinforcement. Such reinforcement could take place during future museum visits, conversations with others after the visit has taken place, or through access to any number of didactic and published sources of information.

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<sup>3</sup> Please refer to Table 12 "Key Significant Differences in Participant Rankings of Typical Motives" on page 107.

<sup>4</sup> On a scale of 1 to 7, "desire to learn" was given a ranking of 4.12 by the Non-Art Lovers.

<sup>5</sup> "Museum visitors do not catalogue visual memories of objects and labels in academic, conceptual schemes, but assimilate events and observations in mental categories of personal significance and character, determined by events in their lives before and after the museum visit. This is our definition of learning in this book. What separates learning from experience is that not all experiences are so assimilated; those that are can be said to have been learned" (Falk & Dierking, 1992, p.123).

As fertile ground, Non-Art Lovers may represent an opportunity to increase not only the number of visitors but also repeat visitations by existing audience members. Non-Art Lovers are willing to visit the museum and they are willing to learn. They also place a great deal of importance on the social dimensions of the museum visit. They are likely to bring someone to the museum with them. By satisfying the cognitive, aesthetic, material and other needs of Non-Art Lovers, museums may be able to advance their cultural and educational missions (Zammuner & Testa, 2002, p.89).

A love of art is not necessarily a prerequisite for choosing a museum visit, though it may grow out of the experience:

I felt like I was grounded when I was in the museum. It was very nice, you know, like you're not just going to work to work, like there's purpose, there's beauty in life, there's beauty in art. It's nice to appreciate that. (Rose, p.3).

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## Appendix A<sup>1</sup>

# Questionnaire



Concordia  
UNIVERSITY

Thank you for taking the time to provide your thoughts and opinions.

This research is being conducted by the graduate student Samantha Caldicott as part of her M.A. thesis research into museum visitor motivations and expectations, under the supervision of Dr. Richard Lachapelle of the Department of Art Education at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

A cause des ressources limitées, ce projet de recherche est rédigé en anglais seulement.

Merci de votre compréhension.

### Section A: Please describe yourself

1. How far from the National Gallery of Canada do you live?  
☐ I live in Ottawa      ☐ I live in Gatineau  
☐ I live in the NCR      ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your present occupation? \_\_\_\_\_
3. The highest level of education you have achieved so far?  
☐ High School      ☐ College      ☐ Bachelors      ☐ Masters  
☐ Doctorate      ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Your age? ☐ over 65      ☐ 55-64      ☐ 45-54      ☐ 35-44  
☐ 25 - 34      ☐ 18-24      ☐ under 18
5. Your gender? ☐ female      ☐ male

### Section B: Visiting Art Museums

1. When did you last visit an art museum? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many times have you visited an art museum in  
- the last year? \_\_\_\_\_  
- the two years before that? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> This document has been reformatted from its original legal-sized document to fit on letter-sized paper. In the process, the original spaces provided for participant responses have been removed.

3. With whom do you normally visit art museums?

☐ alone    ☐ one friend    ☐ more than one friend  
☐ a family member    ☐ a club or cultural group  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

4. How is visiting alone different from having someone with you?

### **Section C: Motivations & Expectations**

1. Why are you at the National Gallery of Canada today?

2. Please list everything that you have done since entering the building today.

For example: did you check your coat, go to the bookstore or café, follow a guided tour, read a wall panel, what exhibition(s) did you see:

3. Why do you usually visit art museums?

4. Please go back to the reasons that you have just listed in question 3 and assign each one of them a rank of importance. The most important reason should be assigned a number one, the second a number two and so on.

5. What, if anything, prevents you from visiting art museums?

6. What do you expect an art museum to offer? Please assign each offering a degree of importance on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1 = crucial, and 10 = insignificant.

☐ high quality art on permanent display  
☐ new exhibitions on a regular basis  
☐ exhibition catalogues available for purchase  
☐ a quiet, peaceful, atmosphere for contemplating the art works  
☐ seating in the galleries  
☐ wall panels and other printed materials to aid in understanding  
☐ audio guides  
☐ guided tours  
☐ lectures  
☐ music concerts  
☐ hands-on studio workshops  
☐ a restaurant  
☐ a bookstore or gift shop  
☐ other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

7. What do you expect to gain from a visit to the art museum?

8. Whom do you envision as an art museum's audience?

9. Do you consider yourself an "Art-Lover"?      \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

10. How do you define the term Art-Lover?

11. Has your initial consideration changed? Please re-answer, do you consider yourself an Art-Lover?      \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

May the researcher (Samantha Caldicott) contact you to clarify or to gain additional insights into your comments?      \_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_ no

If so, please provide your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you again for taking the time to provide your opinion.  
Happy Holidays!



My name is Samantha Caldicott, I am a graduate student in the Department of Art Education. As part of my M.A. program, I am conducting a research project on people's reactions to art.

This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. David Pariser of the Department of Art Education at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

## Section A

2. What typically motivates you to go to an art museum? Check only one box.

- 3. Using the scale below, please indicate how important is each of the following factors in your decision to go to an art museum. Please fill in each box.**

the art	music concerts	other events
school trip	inspiration	Quiet
the gift shop	something to do	entertainment
beauty	visual excitement	Architecture
learning	chance to spend time with friends/family	something to do on vacation

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**4. Using the scale below, please indicate to what extent you 'take away' each of the following items after a typical museum visit. Please fill in each box.**

Very rarely    1        2        3        4        5        6        7        Very often

Gift or souvenir from the shop		Feeling of belonging		Desire to learn more about the art	
Knowledge		Inspiration		Satisfaction	
Relaxation		Pleasure		Rejuvenation	
Feeling of being lifted beyond daily concerns		Sense of pride		Sense of having done something worthwhile	

**5. How would you describe the pleasure you got from today's visit?**

### Section B

**1. When did you last visit an art museum?**

- ☐ last week      ☐ last month      ☐ last 2 months  
☐ last 6 months      ☐ last year      ☐ more than a year ago

**2. In a typical year, how many times do you visit the art of an art museum?**

- ☐ 0-1 times      ☐ 2-3 times      ☐ 4-6 times  
☐ 7-12 times      ☐ 13-24 times      ☐ 25 or more times

**3. Think back to the very first time you went to an art museum.**

**3a.** How old were you? \_\_\_\_ **3b.** With whom did you go? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. With whom do you typically visit art museums?**

- ☐ alone      ☐ one friend      ☐ more than one friend  
☐ a date      ☐ a family member      ☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

### Section C

Take a few minutes, and try to recall your visit... Try to remember the one painting that made a particularly lasting or strong impression on you. Attempt to recall how you felt, how you stood, what you thought as you were looking at this painting. Now, with this vivid recollection of the painting and your experience of it, please answer the following questions.

**1. Do you remember the title of the painting?** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you remember the artist's name? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

3. Describe what the painting looks like: \_\_\_\_\_

4. How much did you enjoy looking at this painting? (please circle one number) Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very much

5. As you looked at the painting, to what extent did you feel... (please fill in each box) Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very much

Blissful		Relaxed		Hesitant	
Peaceful		Confused		Tense	
Excited		Bored		Calm	
Enraptured		Unmoved		Ambivalent	
Disgusted		Thrilled		Delight	
Frustrated		Depressed		Admiration	

6. Using the scale below, please indicate your reaction to the painting... Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very much

**As I looked at the painting, I... (please fill in each box)**

• I stood with my arms crossed.	
• I felt the urge to discuss the painting with someone.	
• I imagined things about the artist.	
• I wished that the room were empty.	
• I pointed to the painting.	
• I smiled.	
• I laughed.	
• I yawned.	
• I shook my head in disagreement.	
• I nodded my head in agreement.	
• I thought about what it meant.	
• I shifted my weight from one foot to the other.	
• I felt the urge to tell someone what I saw.	
• I wanted to know what others thought of the painting.	
• I was bothered by the people around me.	
• I moved forward to get a closer look at it.	
• I could see in my mind places I have been to, people I have met, images from my past	
• I wanted to know how the painting was made.	
• I analyzed the way that it was composed.	
• I analyzed the style of the painting.	

• I was aware of the people around me.	
• I considered the artist's talent.	
• I lost track of my surroundings and the people around me.	
• I was reminded of personal memories.	
• I went back to look at the same painting again.	

**7. What percentage of the comments on the audio guide did you listen to?** ☐ all ☐ about half ☐ less than 25% ☐ did not get the audio guide

**8. Tell me more about today's visit... (place a 'X' mark in the appropriate column)**

<b>Did you...</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
read the writing on the walls?		
read the catalogue on the benches?		
you attend a lecture?		
you attend a film screening?		
read a review of the exhibition?		
visit the museum's web site?		
talk to a friend/colleague about it?		
see an advertisement for the exhibition?		
Where ? _____		

**9. How strongly do you agree with each of the following statements? Again, please use the scale provided.**

Not at all    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    very much

I probably will tell someone about this exhibition later.	
This visit challenged me.	
I lost track of time during this museum visit.	

**10a. Today, you visited the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts...**

☐ alone                      ☐ with \_\_\_\_\_

**10b.** If with someone, what was the main reason why you came accompanied? \_\_\_\_\_

**11. While you visited this exhibition (*Voyage into Myth*) did you spend some time in the permanent collection of the Museum?**

☐ yes                              ☐ no

**11a.** If yes: which section(s) of the permanent collection did you visit?

**12. How likely are you to come back and see this exhibition again?**

Not likely at all    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Very likely

**13. Did you buy anything at the gift shop today?**    ☐ yes                      ☐ no

**13a.** How much did you spend, including taxes?

**13b.** What did you buy?

**13c.** What products would you have bought if they were available?

#### Section D

**1. Whom do you envision as an art museum's audience?**

**2. Do you consider yourself an "Art-Lover"?** ☐ yes ☐ no

**3. How do you define the term "Art-Lover"?**

**4. When you define the term Art Lover, what kind of Art are you referring to?**

- |  |   |                                  |                                    |
|--|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> painting        | <input type="checkbox"/> music            | <input type="checkbox"/> theatre | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> architecture    | <input type="checkbox"/> installation art | <input type="checkbox"/> dance   |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> performance art | <input type="checkbox"/> photography      | <input type="checkbox"/> other   | _____                              |

**5. How knowledgeable are you about Art? (please circle one number)**

Not knowledgeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very knowledgeable

#### Section E

**1. Your age?** ☐ over 65 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 35-44

☐ 25 - 34 ☐ 18-24 ☐ under 18

**2. Your gender?** ☐ female ☐ male

**3. The highest level of education you have achieved so far?**

- |                                      |                                  |                                    |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> High School | <input type="checkbox"/> College | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelors | <input type="checkbox"/> Masters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other   |                                    |                                  |

**4. Your total individual annual income?**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under 12,000     | <input type="checkbox"/> 12,000 - 32,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> 32,000 - 64,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 64,000 - 104,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 104,000 - 150,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 150,000    |

**IMPORTANT:** Would you be willing to take part in a 30-minute interview, scheduled at your convenience, to further discuss your museum visit? ☐ yes ☐ no

If YES, please provide your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

OR e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for taking the time to help me.**



Mon nom est Samantha Caldicott; je suis une étudiante au Département d'éducation de l'art à l'Université Concordia. Dans le cadre de mon programme de maîtrise, j'ai décidé d'étudier les réactions qu'ont les visiteurs d'un musée envers les objets et pièces qui y sont présentées.

J'apprécierais énormément que vous m'accordiez quelques minutes de votre temps pour répondre à mon sondage. Votre participation est entièrement volontaire et me serait fortement utile. Vos réponses seront traitées dans la plus stricte confidentialité.

Cette étude est menée sous la supervision du Professeur David Pariser du Département de l'éducation de l'art à l'Université Concordia, Montréal, Québec.

Merci

### Section A

**1. Pourquoi êtes vous venus au Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal aujourd'hui ? Soyez le plus explicite possible.**

**2. En général, qu'est-ce qui vous motive *principalement* à aller à un musée ? Cochez une seule réponse.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> l'art                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> concerts                  | <input type="checkbox"/> autres évènements     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> éducation                             | <input type="checkbox"/> sortie d'école            | <input type="checkbox"/> inspiration           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> le visuel                             | <input type="checkbox"/> excitation                | <input type="checkbox"/> tranquillité/sérénité |
| <input type="checkbox"/> architecture                          | <input type="checkbox"/> la beauté                 | <input type="checkbox"/> la boutique           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> amusement                             | <input type="checkbox"/> une sortie pour m'occuper |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> quelque chose à faire en vacances     |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> passer du temps avec amis(es)/famille |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> autre _____                           |  |  |

**3. En employant l'échelle ci-dessous, veuillez indiquer l'importance de chacun des facteurs suivants dans votre décision d'aller à un musée d'art. Remplissez chaque case.**

Pas important du tout 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Très important

L'art	
Sortie d'école	
La boutique	
Beauté	
Une sortie pour m'occuper	

Concerts	
Inspiration	
Éducation/désir d'apprendre sur l'art	
Excitation visuelle	
Passer du temps avec amis(es) ou	

Autres évènements	
Tranquillité	
Amusement	
Architecture	
Quelque chose à faire en vacances	

		famille			
--	--	---------	--	--	--

**4. En employant l'échelle ci-dessous, veuillez indiquer dans quelle mesure vous « emportez » ou « retirez » chacun des items suivants après une visite typique à un musée. Remplissez chaque case.**

Très rarement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Très souvent
Souvenir ou cadeau de la boutique			Sentiment d'appartenance			Sentiment d'accomplissement		
Connaissances			Inspiration			Satisfaction		
Relaxation			Plaisir			Rajeunissement		
Sentiment d'être élevé au delà des préoccupations quotidiennes			Sentiment de fierté			Sentiment d'avoir fait quelque chose de valable		

**5. Comment décririez vous le plaisir que vous a procuré cette visite-ci?**

### Section B

**1. À quand remonte votre dernière visite à un musée d'art ?**

- ☐ une semaine    ☐ un mois    ☐ deux mois  
☐ six mois    ☐ un an    ☐ plus d'un an

**2. Dans une année typique, combien de fois allez vous au musée ?**

- ☐ 0-1 fois    ☐ 2-3 fois    ☐ 4-6 fois  
☐ 7-12 fois    ☐ 13-24 fois    ☐ 25 fois ou plus

**3. Remémorez vous la toute première fois où vous êtes allés à un musée d'art.**

**3a.** Quelle âge aviez-vous ? \_\_\_\_\_ **3b.** Avec qui étiez vous ? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Habituellement, avec qui visitez vous les musées ?**

- ☐ j'y vais seul(e)    ☐ avec un(e) ami(e)  
☐ avec plusieurs amis(es)    ☐ avec conjoint(e)  
☐ avec membre(s) de la famille    ☐ autre \_\_\_\_\_

### Section C

Prennez quelques minutes et tentez de vous souvenir de votre visite d'aujourd'hui... Souvenez vous du tableau qui vous a le plus marqué. Tentez de vous souvenir de votre réaction envers ce tableau, votre comportement alors que vous le regardiez, vos réflexions, pensées, etc. Maintenant, avec ce souvenir clair à l'esprit, veuillez répondre aux questions suivantes.

**1. Quel est le titre du tableau ?** \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ je ne m'en souviens pas

**2. De quel peintre était ce tableau ? \_\_\_\_\_** ☐ je ne m'en souviens pas

**3. Pouvez vous donner une description sommaire de ce tableau ?**

**4. Combien de plaisir que vous a procuré ce tableau ? (encerclez un seul chiffre)** Peu de plaisir 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beaucoup de plaisir

**5. En regardant ce tableau, dans quelle mesure avez vous été ou ressenti chacune des émotions ou états suivants ? (veuillez remplir chaque case)** Pas du tout 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Énormément

Joie		Relaxation		Hésitation	
Paisible		Confusion		Tension	
Excité(e)		Blasé(e)		Calme	
Envouté(e)		Indifférence		Ambivalence	
Dégoûté(e)		Électrisant		Ravi(e)	
Frustration		Déprimé(e)		Admiration	

**6. À l'aide de l'échelle ci-dessous, indiquez dans quelle mesure chacun des énoncés suivants décrit adéquatement votre réaction au tableau qui vous a le plus marqué.**

Pas du tout 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Tout à fait exact

**En regardant le tableau... (veuillez remplir chaque case)**

• Je me tenais les bras croisés.	
• J'aurais aimé discuter du tableau avec quelqu'un.	
• Je m'imaginai des choses au sujet de l'artiste.	
• J'aurais aimé être seul dans la pièce.	
• Je pointais le tableau du doigt.	
• Je souriais.	
• Je baillais.	
• Je me secouais la tête en désaccord.	
• Je pensais à la signification du tableau.	
• Je me dandinai en déplaçant mon poids d'un pied vers l'autre.	
• Je ressentais le besoin de décrire ce que je voyais à quelqu'un.	
• Je riais.	
• J'aurais aimé savoir ce que d'autres pensaient du tableau.	
• J'étais dérangé par la présence des autres visiteurs.	
• Je me suis rapproché pour pouvoir mieux voir.	
• Je pouvais visualiser des endroits où j'étais allé, des gens que j'avais rencontrés, des images de mon passé.	
• Je voulais savoir comment le tableau avait été peint.	
• Je me secouais la tête en approbation.	
• J'analysais la composition du tableau.	
• J'étais très conscient(e) de la présence des gens autour de moi.	

• Je considérais tout le talent de l'artiste.	
• J'ai perdu conscience de l'environnement et des gens autour de moi.	
• J'analysais le style du tableau.	
• Des souvenirs personnels me sont revenus à l'esprit.	
• Je suis retourné pour regarder le tableau une seconde fois.	

**7. Quel pourcentage des commentaires du guide-audio avez vous écouté ?**

☐ 100% ☐ environ 50% ☐ moins de 25% ☐ je n'ai pas pris le guide audio

**8. D'autres détails sur votre visite. (placez un 'X' dans la case de votre choix)**

<b>Avez vous...</b>	<b>OUI</b>	<b>NON</b>
Lu les notes sur les murs ?		
Lu les catalogues de l'exposition sur les bancs ?		
Assisté à une présentation ?		
Assisté à la projection d'un film ?		
Lu une critique de l'exposition ?		
Visité le site « web » du musée ?		
Parlé à un(e) ami(e)/collègue de l'exposition ?		
Vu une publicité pour l'exposition ? Où ? _____		

**9. Dans quelle mesure êtes vous d'accord avec les énoncés suivants ?**

Pas du tout d'accord 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Parfaitement d'accord

Je vais probablement parlé de cette exposition à quelqu'un plus tard.	
Cette visite m'a procuré un certain défi.	
J'ai perdu toute conscience du temps qu'il était lors de ma visite.	

**10. Lors de cette visite au Musée des Beaux Arts de Montréal, vous étiez... ☐ seul(e) ☐ accompagné(e) de \_\_\_\_\_ (passez à 10b)**

**10b.** Pour quelle raison êtes vous venus accompagnés ?

**11. En visitant « L'invitation au voyage », avez vous pris le temps de visiter la collection permanente du Musée des Beaux Arts ?**

☐ oui (passez à 11a) ☐ non

**11a.** Si « oui » quelle(s) section(s) de la collection permanente avez vous visitée(es) ?

**12. Quelle est la probabilité que vous reveniez visiter cette exposition ?** Très improbable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Très probable

**13. Avez vous acheté quelque chose à la boutique ?** ☐ oui ☐ non

**13a.** Combien avez vous dépensé, incluant les taxes ?

**13b.** Qu'avez vous acheté ?

**13c.** Quel produit auriez vous achetés s'ils avaient été disponibles ?

#### Section D

**1. Selon vous, qui est le visiteur type d'un musée d'art ?**

**2. Vous considérez vous comme un « Amateur d'art » ?** ☐ oui ☐ non

**3. Comment définissez vous le terme « Amateur d'art » ?**

**4. En définissant le terme « Amateur d'art » à quelle type d'art faites vous référence ?**

- |                                       |                                  |   |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> peinture     | <input type="checkbox"/> musique | <input type="checkbox"/> théâtre                  | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> danse   | <input type="checkbox"/> « l'art d'installation » |                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> photographie | <input type="checkbox"/> autre   | _____   |                                    |

**5. Comment qualifiez vous vos connaissances sur l'art ? (encerclez un seul chiffre)**

Peu de connaissances 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Vastes connaissances

#### Section E

**1. Votre âge?**

<input type="checkbox"/> 65 ou plus	<input type="checkbox"/> 55-64	<input type="checkbox"/> 45-54
<input type="checkbox"/> 35-44	<input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34	<input type="checkbox"/> 18-24
<input type="checkbox"/> moins de 18		

**2. Votre sexe :** ☐ masculin ☐ féminin

**3. Votre plus haut niveau de scolarité jusqu'à présent ?**

- |                                     |                                    |                                       |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> secondaire | <input type="checkbox"/> collégial | <input type="checkbox"/> baccalauréat | <input type="checkbox"/> maîtrise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> doctorat   | <input type="checkbox"/> autre     |                                       |                                   |

**4. Votre salaire annuel ?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> moins de 12,000 \$               | <input type="checkbox"/> 12,000\$ - moins de 32,000 \$   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 32,000 \$ - moins de 64,000 \$   | <input type="checkbox"/> 64,000 \$ - moins de 104,000 \$ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 104,000 \$ - moins de 150,000 \$ | <input type="checkbox"/> plus de 150,000 \$              |

**IMPORTANT: Accepteriez vous de participer à une courte entrevue de 30 minutes environ, cédulée selon vos disponibilités, afin de discuter de votre visite au musée ?** ☐ oui ☐ non

Si 'oui', veuillez indiquer votre nom: \_\_\_\_\_

Numéro de téléphone : \_\_\_\_\_

ou votre adresse électronique: \_\_\_\_\_

**Merci de m'avoir aidé.**

## **Appendix C**

### **Art, Love, Museums, and Motives Interview Questions**

Prepared by Samantha Caldicott

Wednesday, May 28, 2003

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The following is a list of questions prepared by the researcher. During the interview, these questions will be adapted or omitted at the discretion of the researcher.

#### **Preamble**

1. Thank the participant.
2. Be sure that they had no trouble getting to the interview site.
3. Introduce my self and the research project.
4. Be sure to collect the completed consent form.

#### **Interview Questions**

- First experience
  - Where, who, what, when: describe your memory of it
  - How did this experience affect your future art museum visiting habits/preferences?
- Bad experience
  - Where, who, what, when: describe your memory of it
  - (How important is it for you to understand the art?)
- Good experience
  - Where, who, what, when: describe your memory of it
- Do you consider yourself a museum-goer? Why?
- When did you become a museum-goer?
  - (Has your formal education influenced your museum visiting preferences?)

<p>On the survey that you filled out at the museum you said that you envision an art museum's audience as:.... Where did you get this vision from? How accurate is it?</p>	
--	--

Should art museums & galleries seek out a broader audience? Why?

<p>When defining the Art Lover you wrote that an Art Lover is: ... Could you please talk a bit about your definition?</p>	
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- Where did you get your definition or perception from?
  - On a pedestal; knowledge, education, wealth, status
  - Emotional response; pleasure, passion, visual
  - Makes effort to experience
  - Appreciates
  - Knowledgeable, understands art
  - Makes art
  - Appreciation of beauty, expression, reflection of humanity
  - More than mere/superficial interest in art

<p>On the survey, you described that particular visit's pleasure as: ... Could you please talk a bit about that?</p>	
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- Is there such a thing as intellectual pleasure? Do you seek it?

**Thank you!**

## Appendix D

# Data Collection Schedule

**Research Site:** Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

**Dates:** Monday, April 14 to Sunday, April 20 2003  
50 English & 50

**Target:** French

**DAY 1**

**Wednesday, April 16, 2003**

**Target: 22**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00		001 & 002	2	001 & 002 were together No one in the giftshop until 10:30.
11:00	12:00	003, 004, 005, 006 & 007, 008	009	2	How long does it take? 12 – 15 minutes. 009 picked up the survey without solicitation
12:00	13:00		010, 011, 012 & 013		012 corrected some of FR translation! Timing seems to be problem for non-response.
13:00	14:00	014 & 015, 016 & 017		4	Seems to be people taking a quick look on their lunch break
14:00	15:00		018, 019 & 020		By 2pm the place is very busy and there is no where to sit because of teenagers
15:00	16:00				
16:00	17:00	021	022	2	021 & 022 young couple now is quiet = good response not a lot of people here alone
17:00	18:00	023 & 024, 026 & 027	025, 028 & 029, 030	3	025 is with 023 & 024 030 is only 10 years old definitely more women
18:00	19:00	031 & 032		5	Seems to be a younger crowd at this time of day. 026 & 027 helped themselves
19:00	20:00				This place is so busy that it is impossible to move in the gift shop, let alone sit & write.
20:00	21:00				I'm calling it a day (c. 19:45).

**Totals:**

**17**

**15**

**18**

**DAY 2**  
**Thursday, April 17, 2003**

**Target: 18**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00		033 & 034	4	Still quiet in the exhibition. Non-response because of lack of interest. Everyone seems French!
11:00	12:00	035 & 036 & 037, 038 & 039	040 & 041, 042, 043	3	043 helped himself. Where are the Anglos?!
12:00	13:00				
13:00	14:00	044 & 045	046	2	046's boyfriend declined.
14:00	15:00	047, 048 & 049		1	14:00 – 14:30 benches taken over by a large school group.
15:00	16:00		050, 051	3	
16:00	17:00	052	053		Has been sort of a steady flow all day... not too busy but often a place for people to sit at the bench.
17:00	18:00				Okay, now it really is quiet in here. Non-response: tired, parking metre about to run out, "don't like ya <u>that</u> much"
18:00	19:00	054, 055 & 056	057	2	057 is marketer & really liked the survey!
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>	

**DAY 3**  
**Friday, April 18, 2003**

**Target: up to E30 & F30**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00		058 & 059, 060		It's busy already by 10:45! Apparently lots of groups & is typically busy on weekends. Overhearing visitors talk about it being too crowded.
11:00	12:00	061 & 062	063, 064 & 065		Now I'm thinking that it would have been interesting to have picked a specific age group to study.
12:00	13:00		066, 067	4	067's partner said no. Mostly Francophone again. It's <u>very</u> busy in the gift shop!
13:00	14:00	Lunch break			
14:00	15:00		068 & 069, 070 & 071	3	Everyone is Francophone! Non-response because "10 minutes is too long for a survey."
15:00	16:00	Break because it is too busy			
16:00	17:00				
17:00	18:00	072, 073 & 074			Benches are often full (being hogged) and there are very few Anglophones.
18:00	19:00		075 & 076		
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	

**DAY 4**  
**Saturday, April 19, 2003**

**Target: up to E39 & F39**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00	077, 078 & 079		3	No one in the gift shop before 10:30.
11:00	12:00	080 & 081	082		082 helped himself. I'm going to try to pace myself by leaving now and returning after noon.
12:00	13:00	083 & 084, 085			083 helped himself and then helped me to recruit 084 and 085.
13:00	14:00	Simply too busy for recruitment.			
14:00	15:00				
15:00	16:00				
16:00	17:00	086	087		
17:00	18:00	088, 089 & 090	091		088 and 091 helped themselves.
18:00	19:00				
<b>Totals:</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	

**DAY 5**  
**Sunday, April 20, 2003**

**Target: E48 & F48**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00	092	093	1	092's wife declined.
11:00	12:00	094 & 095, 096	097, 098	2	096 and 098 are both from the same bus tour from st-jean-sur-richelieu.
12:00	13:00			2	Non-response based on length of survey. 12:00 – 12:45 took a break.
13:00	14:00	099, 100 & 101	102		099, 100, 101, and 102 are all visiting together.
14:00	15:00				
15:00	16:00		103		
16:00	17:00	104	105 & 106	1	Non-response because person had been at the gallery since 1pm and was tired.
17:00	18:00				
18:00	19:00				

**Totals:**                      **8**                      **7**                      **6**

**DAY 6**  
**Monday, April 21, 2003**

**Target: up to E60 & F60**

Time		Response			Notes
Start	Stop	Eng	Fr	No	
10:00	11:00	107	108 & 109		The crowd this morning is older couples & young families. Seems like an affluent crowd too.
11:00	12:00		110 & 111, 112 & 113	2	112's brother and mother declined.
12:00	13:00		114		It has been hard to find Francophones and a place to sit at the benches: slow going.
13:00	14:00		115, 116		
14:00	15:00	118	117		
15:00	16:00				
16:00	17:00				
17:00	18:00				
18:00	19:00				

**Totals:**

**2**

**10**

**2**

## Appendix E: Interview Participants

pseudonym	Participant no.	Participant language	age	gender	education	income (in \$1,000/yr)
Ben	55	Eng	25-34	M	BA	12-32
Dahlia	49	Eng	25-34	F	BA	32-64
Heike	26	Eng	18-24	F	BA	under 12
Lily	52	Eng	55-64	F	MA	32-64
Margaret	45	Eng	55-64	F	MA	32-64
Rebecca	95	Eng	18-24	F		
Rose	56	Eng	25-34	F	College	32-64