

HOKUSAI



A STUDY OF VISITORS TO THE EXHIBITION
AT THE ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, DC



Director's Preface

The Spring 2006 exhibition of 180 paintings, drawings, prints, and printed books by Katsushika Hokusai at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery beguiled visitors who were moved by beauty, creativity, and the opportunity to experience rare art, and the understanding that it is possible to express greatness. I visited the exhibition several times and heard visitors remark about the artist's ability to consistently produce high quality art for such a long period of time – art that captured the essence of things.

Bringing forth visitors' insights concerning *Hokusai* required the cooperation of staff from both the Freer and Sackler Galleries and the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A), especially during the conceptualization phase of this study. Initial conversations with the curator, Ann Yonemura, and representatives from education, design, and external relations departments of the museum helped OP&A staff to ask relevant questions and focus the data collection effort. Names of those who implemented the study are listed below. I thank all of the participants who assisted in the formulation and implementation of a study that reminds us of our immersion in a near-perfect exhibition. I also thank Julian Raby, the Director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, who has allocated the time and resources necessary to stop and look at how the visitor is affected by the exhibitions at the Freer and Sackler Galleries, and, as important, to apply the lessons learned.

Carole Neves
Director
Office of Policy and Analysis

Credits

Study Design..... David Karns, Andrew Pekarik
Survey pretesting Zahava Doering, Diane Rubin
Comment book transcription, analysis, and report Sarah Oakman
Survey data collection..... David Karns, Alicia Keesler, Andrew Pekarik,
..... Erin Pettigrew, Samantha Williams
Survey data preparation David Karns, Alicia Keesler, Andrew Pekarik
Survey analysis and report Andrew Pekarik

Table of Contents

Director's Preface	i
Credits	i
Table of Contents	1
The Exhibition	2
The Visitor Study	2
Central Questions	3
The Performance	4
The Attraction	5
The Overall Visit	6
The Presentation	6
The Rating	7
The Experiences	8
Additional Findings	9
Views of Hokusai	10
Appendix A: The Hokusai Visitor Comment Book	11
Appendix B: Survey Responses	17
Appendix C: Additional Tables	29



The Exhibition

Hokusai, an exhibition of works by the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), was presented from March 4 to May 14, 2006, at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. The exhibition celebrated the 100th anniversary of the gift to the nation by Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919) of his collection of Asian and American art and the founding of the Freer Gallery of Art, the museum jointly administered with the Sackler Gallery.

This exhibition of 180 paintings, prints, drawings and printed books included 41 paintings from the Freer Gallery, the largest and most important collection of Hokusai's paintings, as well as masterpieces from collections throughout the world.

The exhibition was presented on two floors of the museum. The first part of the exhibition, on the upper level, was organized chronologically and presented Hokusai's life in stages based on the different names he used through his career. The contents of this first section were primarily prints, printed books, and sketches. The second part of the exhibition, featuring Hokusai's paintings, was organized by theme: humanity, literature and legend, the natural world, the supernatural world, and Hokusai's last years. The exhibition included a reading alcove with books about Hokusai.

Special programs were scheduled during the exhibition, including demonstrations of music, percussion, and drawing at the entrance to the museum, as well as concerts, lectures, tours, and a symposium.

The Visitor Study

The Director of the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Dr. Julian Raby, requested that the Smithsonian's Office of Policy and Analysis evaluate this exhibition, giving special attention to questions of importance to the museum's curatorial and education staff. Since some of these questions were limited to the audience in the exhibition itself, while others had to be addressed in the larger context of the museum's overall audience, the study was divided into two parts. Part one was a survey of visitors entering the museum just before a music demonstration took place at the entrance to the exhibition, and a separate sample of visitors leaving after a music demonstration. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the two independent samples on April 22, 2006. Questionnaires were completed by 228 visitors for an average response rate of 72 percent. Part two of the study was a survey study of visitors entering the exhibitions, and a separate sample of visitors leaving the exhibition. These self-administered questionnaires were distributed on April 29 and 30. Including exhibition entrance and exit samples, 1084 visitors completed questionnaires for an average response rate of 87 percent. In addition a small number of open-ended interviews were conducted with exiting visitors to help determine the questions and options that should be included on the survey, and the visitor comment book was transcribed and analyzed.

Central Questions

The Performance

Demonstrations of music, percussion, and drawing were presented in the entrance area in front of the exhibition on some weekends. This mingling of performance, audience, and exhibition was relatively unusual for the museum. Would visitors find these demonstrations beneficial? Would the sounds interfere with the experience of visitors? Should demonstrations like these be considered for future exhibitions?

The Attraction

There was some expectation that the exhibition would draw a large audience. An exhibition of Hokusai's work, presented at the Tokyo National Museum in 2005, achieved renown as the most visited art exhibition of the last 20 years, with over 9,000 visitors per day. How many visitors would travel from out-of-town to Washington, DC just to see this exhibition? How did visitors find out about the exhibition? Would there be something special about the characteristics of the *Hokusai* audience?

The Overall Visit

Will visitors go to the shop? Will they visit the adjoining Freer Gallery?

The Presentation

Unlike most exhibitions at the Sackler Gallery, the two parts of the Hokusai exhibition followed different organizing principles: chronological and thematic. Lighting was dim, due to the fragile nature of the objects, especially the prints, but the walls were colored. Did visitors like the exhibition as it was presented? Was there anything about the design that was a problem for them? Was the reading alcove used by many visitors?

The Rating

Exhibitions at the Smithsonian are regularly rated by visitors using this scale: poor-fair-good-excellent-superior. Over the past few years, major exhibitions at the Sackler Gallery have had high ratings, with generally 20-35 percent of visitors marking "superior," the highest category. How would Hokusai compare? What characteristics of the Hokusai audience would be associated with higher- or lower-than-average ratings?

The Experiences

Previous studies of Sackler Gallery audiences have clarified the diversity of experiences that visitors seek when they come to the museum, and have demonstrated how specific exhibitions highlight particular experiences for visitors. Which experiences would be highlighted in the Hokusai exhibition? Are there any audience characteristics that are associated with particular kinds of experiences?

Views of Hokusai

How are visitors responding to Hokusai? What is his appeal to them? Why did Hokusai's art and life draw visitors to this exhibition in such large numbers?

The Performance

The demonstration on April 22 was a shamisen demonstration presented on a small, low platform in front of rows of seats set up outside the exhibition entrance. The demonstration was very well attended and drew its own audience. Over one in five visitors (22%) who entered the museum in the several hours before the demonstration came specifically to attend the performance.

These performance-directed visitors differed from other visitors to the Gallery in three ways:

1. **They were coming for the performance more than for the exhibition.** Less than one out of five of those who came to the Sackler Gallery for the performance said that they also came to the Gallery for the exhibition. Overall about one in five visitors (18%) was coming only for the performance. **Even so, they were planning to visit the exhibition.** Overall only 1 percent of entering visitors was planning not to visit *Hokusai*.
2. **They have much less background in Japanese art and culture/history compared to other visitors.** One in four of them (24%) are very interested in Japanese art and one in seven (15%) are very interested in Japanese culture/history, compared to 62 percent of the other visitors who are very interested in Japanese art, and 53 percent of the other visitors who are very interested in Japanese culture/history.
3. **They represent a new audience for the Gallery.** Over three out of five (61%) of these performance-directed visitors were in the Sackler Gallery for the first time (compared to 34% of other visitors). Moreover, these performance visitors are twice as likely to be new visitors who do not regularly visit Asian art exhibitions or museums elsewhere (31% vs. 15% of other visitors).

Four out of five of the visitors (84%) who heard the performance indicated that it had enhanced their visit. Most visitors (68%) who left the museum during the survey period after the demonstration heard at least part of the performance, yet only a tiny percentage (2% of all visitors) indicated that the performance had detracted from their visit.

BOTTOM LINE

THE DEMONSTRATION BROUGHT A NEW, FRESH AUDIENCE TO THE GALLERY, ENCOURAGED THEM TO SEE THE EXHIBITION, AND PLEASED MOST OF THOSE WHO HEARD IT, WHETHER THEY HAD COME FOR THE DEMONSTRATION OR NOT.

The Attraction

The audience was very strongly focused on the Hokusai exhibition. On the day of the performances about three out of four visitors (72%) came to the Gallery specifically to see the exhibition, and on the days without performances this rose to a surprisingly high nine out of ten (86%). No other Sackler Gallery exhibition studied to date has experienced such a dedicated audience.

Half of the audience was from the Metropolitan Washington area. This is typical for special exhibitions at the Sackler Gallery. Although one in seven visitors (15%) indicated that they had come from outside the local area specifically to see the Hokusai exhibition, most of these visitors live less than 20 miles from the Gallery.

The major sources of information about the exhibition were word of mouth (31%) and newspaper and magazine articles (29%). The internet and newspaper advertisements also had a noticeable impact on awareness. One in eight visitors (13%) had visited the exhibition previously.

Overall there are three factors that are strongly associated with coming to the museum specifically to see the Hokusai exhibition:

1. **A strong interest in Japanese art.** Those who came to the museum to see Hokusai are very interested in Japanese art compared to other visitors (61% vs. 45%).
2. **A higher anticipation of aesthetic and understanding experiences.** More of those who came to the museum specifically for the exhibition are very much looking forward to being moved by beauty (82% vs. 69% among other visitors) and to increasing their understanding (72% vs. 56%).
3. **Being older.** Those who came to the museum for Hokusai are more likely to be over 55 (42% vs. 22%), and less likely to be under 30 (14% vs. 26%).

BOTTOM LINE

THE MAJORITY OF VISITORS HEARD ABOUT THE EXHIBITION FROM WORD OF MOUTH AND FROM ARTICLES IN PRINT MEDIA. ON DAYS WITHOUT PERFORMANCES NEARLY ALL OF THEM CAME TO THE MUSEUM SPECIFICALLY TO SEE THE EXHIBITION. THEY WERE DRAWN TO IT BY A STRONG INTEREST IN JAPANESE ART AND A DESIRE FOR AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES AND INCREASED UNDERSTANDING.

The Overall Visit

Approximately half (46%) of the visitors who entered the Sackler Gallery planned to visit the Freer/Sackler shop before leaving. About one in four (27%) planned to visit the Freer Gallery in the adjoining building. Around one in three were undecided (32% for the Freer; 39% for the shop).

BOTTOM LINE

ALTHOUGH *HOKUSAI* VISITORS WERE PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON EITHER THE EXHIBITION OR THE PERFORMANCE, THE SHOP WAS A MAJOR DESTINATION FOR THEM.

The Presentation

Visitor remarks in the comment books praised the exhibition design, especially the arrangement of works, the wall colors, and the lighting, although some objected to the low light levels.

The texts were praised for their content but criticized for their poor visibility. Specifically visitors remarked in the comment books on the small-sized print, low contrast between text and background, and inconvenient placement of labels. This criticism was quantified in the survey. One in three visitors (34%) felt that easier-to-read labels would have enhanced their visit. The difficulty that visitors had with the labels may have hindered some experiences: Those who criticized the labels were less likely to report very much reflecting on meaning (50% vs. 61% for other visitors) and increasing understanding (58% vs. 69% for other visitors).

Significant percentages of visitors wanted more information. One in four visitors to the exhibition (25%) would have liked more information on the making of prints and paintings, and one in five (22%) would have liked more information on Hokusai's life and times. One in four (29%) felt that the exhibition was fine as it was and no changes or additions were needed.

Visitors who came to *Hokusai* because someone else in their group had suggested it (“tagalongs”) were less likely to stop in the reading alcove. One in four of them (25%) stopped there, compared to two in five (38%) of those who were either alone or who had initiated the visit. Overall one in three visitors (34%) read something in the alcove.

BOTTOM LINE

THE EXHIBITION DESIGN OVERALL WAS WELL-RECEIVED, BUT THERE WAS A PROBLEM WITH THE VISIBILITY OF TEXTS, AND SOME VISITORS WANTED MORE INFORMATION.

The Rating

Visitors leaving *Hokusai* gave the exhibition an unusually high rating – 52 percent rated it “superior,” the highest category on the scale. Only 7 percent rated it less than “excellent.” This is the highest rating observed at any Smithsonian exhibition or museum in the four years that this scale has been used. Older visitors were especially enthusiastic: among exiting visitors ages 55 and over, two out of three (64%) rated *Hokusai* as “superior.”

Those who came to the museum specifically to see *Hokusai* gave the exhibition a much higher rating than those who came for other reasons. Among those who came to the Sackler Gallery to see *Hokusai*, 56% rated it as “superior” as they were leaving it; compared to 26% of those who came to the Sackler Gallery for other reasons.

Visitors came predisposed to liking the exhibition. Visitors entering the exhibition were asked how they thought they would rate the exhibition when they saw it. One in three (33%) felt that they would probably rate it as “superior.” This anticipated rating is already very high, comparable to the rating (35% “superior”) that exiting visitors gave to the most recent major exhibition at the Sackler Gallery.¹

Even so, the exhibition exceeded visitor expectations by a large margin. Three out of five (59%) exiting visitors said that the exhibition was better than they expected.

BOTTOM LINE

VISITORS GAVE THIS EXHIBITION AN UNUSUALLY HIGH RATING. EVEN THOUGH THEY CAME EXPECTING TO BE PLEASED, *HOKUSAI* SURPASSED THEIR EXPECTATIONS.

¹ An Exquisite Feast for the Eyes: A Study of Visitors to *Style and Status: Imperial Robes from the Ottoman Empire*, Office of Policy and Analysis, Smithsonian Institution, April 2006. Available at: <http://www.si.edu/opanda/docs/Rpts2006/StyleStatus.final.060425.pdf>

The Experiences

Visitors were asked about seven experiences:

- Increasing my understanding
- Gaining information/knowledge
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I am looking at
- Spending time with friends/family
- Being moved by beauty
- Seeing rare/valuable art
- Imagining other times or places

Visitors entering the exhibition were asked how much they were looking forward to these experiences and those leaving were asked how much they had found these experiences satisfying in the exhibition. The choices were “not at all,” “somewhat,” and “very much” for each experience.

Among entering visitors the strongest anticipated experience was aesthetic. Four out of five entering visitors (80%) indicated that they were very much looking forward to being moved by beauty. About two out of three visitors were looking forward to increasing understanding (68%), gaining information (65%), and seeing rare art (67%). Roughly half were looking forward to reflecting on meaning (55%), imagining other times and places (51%), and spending time with friends or family (44%).

Among exiting visitors three experiences were more satisfying than anticipated:

- **being moved by beauty,**
- **seeing rare/valuable art, and**
- **imagining other times or places.**

Nine out of ten exiting visitors (86%) indicated that they had found the aesthetic experience very satisfying, three out of four (77%) said that seeing rare art was very satisfying, and three out of five (61%) marked imagining as very satisfying.

THE BOTTOM LINE

MOST VISITORS CAME LOOKING FOR AN AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, AND BY THE END OF THE EXHIBITION NEARLY ALL OF THEM HAD HAD A VERY SATISFYING ONE. THE EXHIBITION ALSO PROMPTED VISITORS TO IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE IN HOKUSAI'S TIME.

Additional Findings

Visitors under the age of 30 had a less enthusiastic response to the exhibition. One-third of them (32%) expected to rate the exhibition as “superior” when entering it, and, in fact, that is the same rating that visitors of the same age gave when exiting it (34% “superior”), although more of them rated the exhibition as “excellent” when leaving (52% on exit vs. 41% on entrance). In line with that below-average rating, visitors under 30 were less likely than other visitors to say that the exhibition was better than they expected (47% said it was better, compared to 58% of those ages 30-54, and 67% of those ages 55 and over). Although the visitors under 30 are not as familiar with the Sackler Gallery and Asian art exhibitions as older visitors, most of them (63%) have either been to the Gallery before or regularly see Asian art outside of Washington, DC.

Some experiences in the exhibition were more effective for female visitors. Male and female visitors were equally looking forward to **reflecting on meaning** when they entered Hokusai (overall 52% were very much looking forward to it), but among visitors leaving the exhibition, many more females found reflecting on meaning very satisfying (67%) compared to males (49%). This same pattern is apparent with **seeing rare/valuable art**. Among entering visitors 67 percent of both men and women are looking forward to it, but among exiting visitors 83 percent of women indicated that they found this experience very satisfying, compared to 70 percent of the men. In addition, men and women were equally looking forward to **gaining information** (67% “very much”), but upon leaving the exhibition women had as many information experiences as they had anticipated (69%), but men had fewer of these experiences than anticipated (59%).

BOTTOM LINE

THE EXHIBITION WORKED BETTER FOR VISITORS OVER THE AGE OF 29, AND FOR WOMEN.

Views of Hokusai

The numerous remarks left by visitors in the comment books suggest a narrative underlying the appreciation of this exhibition. Specifically,

1. **Hokusai is an exceptional artist, one of the world's greatest.** Visitors repeatedly refer to him as a “genius,” and compare him to Leonardo, Rembrandt, Goya, Dali, and Picasso.
2. **In its detail, variety, expressiveness, and mix of the natural and supernatural, Hokusai's work presents a unique “vision” of the world.** A number of visitors describe this world as “magical,” “enchanting,” “wondrous,” and “spiritual.” One called it “a world of dreams.” They also remark that it is “astounding” and “breathtaking” in its beauty.
3. **Hokusai's amazing talent and this “profound” vision led some visitors to speak of him in spiritual terms.** They say, for example, that Hokusai “saw the sacred in the ordinary and showed it to us;” that “he did reach the Divine;” “He saw his way into living and non-living beings;” and that “God touched his hand, and Freer preserved it.” As one visitor wrote, “The depth of his journey blesses me.”
4. **In responding to their image of the artist as a great, inspired genius, and their direct encounter with the beautiful, magical world of his art, many visitors are deeply moved.** They write, for example, “I am speechless with wonder and delight;” “one of the most sublime experiences of my art-viewing life;” “I have tears in my eyes and my knees are weak;” it “touched my heart;” it “touched my soul;” “it touched me profoundly;” and “the beauty brings tears to the eyes.”

The arrangement of the exhibition into two parts, one focusing on Hokusai's long career and the other on the subjects of his painting, was a key support for this narrative. By equally emphasizing the artist and the images, it provided a richer and deeper view than either method alone would have accomplished. As one visitor wrote, “I loved the chronological display. It made the man become real to me.” And as another remarked, “I found the arrangement of the exhibit enhanced the enjoyment.”

Hokusai's long, productive, creative life impressed visitors and may be a reason why older visitors were especially enthusiastic. As one visitor wrote, “It's amazing to see a man so prolific in his artistry through the 80s! Inspires me to do the same.”

These responses suggest that the exhibition's popularity is rooted in the way it reinforces Western views of inspired artistic genius, while it supports ideas of Eastern spirituality by offering beautiful images which communicate a deep awareness and appreciation of the natural and supernatural world.

BOTTOM LINE

VISITORS RESPONDED EQUALLY TO HOKUSAI (AS A PROLIFIC, LONG-LIVED GENIUS) AND HIS ART (AS DEPICTING A WONDROUS, MAGICAL, AMAZING WORLD).

Appendix A: The *Hokusai* Visitor Comment Book

Including comments written by children and by adults, 672 comments were transcribed from the Visitor Comment books of the *Hokusai* exhibition. (Identification of child commenters was subjective, based on language, handwriting, or age, if given.)

ADULT COMMENTS

Positive General Comments

Among these recorded remarks there was a general overall satisfaction with the *Hokusai* exhibit, with very few negative comments recorded in the comment books. Typical comments centered on positive adjectives, such as, “spectacular,” “beautiful,” “extraordinary,” and “brilliant, brilliant, brilliant, simply brilliant.” Another commenter wrote “Magnificent – as fine a display – better, in fact, than any collection I saw in Kyoto or Tokyo. I’ve seen this exhibit twice and I may return once more.” A number of comments described personal memories the exhibit evoked, inspiration received from Hokusai at various stages in their life, and some even left short poems or musings inspired by Hokusai’s work.

A number of these visitors were very taken by the rich colors of the exhibit, and the variety and depth of the artist’s work. Some were very surprised about the influence Hokusai had on modern artists in the West, and wished the text of the exhibition had explored this theme to a greater extent. Visitors who wrote comments were also appreciative of the level of detail in the text panels exploring the artist’s personal history and of the linkage between his various name changes and defining points in his life. Other comments addressed the presentation of the exhibition, for example, lighting and color schemes, and yet others remarked favorably on the chronological and thematic presentation of the material.

Exhibit Objects

Many comments about the objects of the exhibition actually focused on individual works that visitors found to be their favorite or that were the most thought-provoking for them. A number of comments focused on the innovative techniques and beauty of the paintings and woodblocks. Other comments were made regarding the fabric mountings on his scroll paintings.

- *“Breathtaking exhibit. I loved how Hokusai showed a duck half in and half out of water. And the poetry of the one hundred poets.”*
- *“The wall scrolls were absolutely invaluable to me. They offered an insightful look into Hokusai’s era and into Japan’s history in general.”*

- *“This was just stunning. I can’t believe I was really looking at the original ‘Great Wave’ and so many of Hokusai’s beautiful paintings and woodblock prints.”*
- *“This exhibition is best one with your knowledge and endeavor. I am so lucky to see this opportunity. I think Bay Viewing Mt. Fuji is one pair with his last work Mounting Dragon and Mt Fuji, and we can know his inmost heart and his wishes [sic].”*
- *“Amazing, both technically and aesthetically. I had not known what an accomplished painter he was and the variety of techniques and styles he employed. This exhibit left me full of awe.”*

Presentation

The presentation of the exhibit evoked both positive and negative remarks. Most visitors understood the need for the dim lighting, but felt the exhibition design staff should have made certain accommodations for this need in their label placement and text size.

A representative sample of positive remarks praise the display and the background colors of the exhibit, and comment that the lighting caused the artwork to “glisten.”

- *“I found the arrangement of the exhibit enhanced the enjoyment. His later works are astounding in their beauty.”*
- *“I loved the depth and expression and emotion in his paintings and woodblocks. Fabulous exhibit of a great artist. I liked the gray and maroon walls. The lighting was perfect. Also thought the framing was complementary. Curious about the process of wood blocking. Curious about the connection between names and his multiple identities... Overall, loved the poetry and paintings section the best.”*
- *“The staff behind the ‘technical presentation’ – mounting and lighting deserve high praise... this was a difficult exhibit to present – it glistens.”*
- *“It was wonderful! Seeing prints in a book are no comparison to seeing the real thing. I loved the chronological display. It made the man become real to me. Thank you.”*
- *“Fantastic. I like how works were spaced wider apart towards the end of the exhibit. Very comfortable way to view them. Great themes and design. Thanks for poem translations.”*

Negative comments on the presentation include:

- *“the exhibition is too dark. It is like seeing the paintings under water. The dim light is spectrum deficient so that one cannot feel the color relationships.”*

The Information

The labels and text panels received a mixed review of comments – they either really loved the labels or they really disliked them. Positive comments centered on the value of the information provided in the text panels, and negative comments focused on the size of the label text, contrast of the background to the text, or placement of placards.

Positive Remarks

- *“This is a wonderful exhibit with excellent captions as the Sackler usually does in most of their shows.”*
- *“Excellent written descriptions of each work. Good thematic organization.”*
- *“Best curatorial notes in any exhibit I saw.”*
- *“All of these explanations are very nice. They are well investigated and easy for our understanding.”*

Negative Remarks

- *“Fabulous exhibit, significantly compromised by the too-small print of explanatory notes. People already stood too close to the works (impeding other’s ability to see from a more reasonable distance) and the inscriptions made the problem worse. Please reconsider this arrangement.”*
- *“The exhibition was amazing. I enjoyed looking through it and/over though I barely read the subtitles of each picture. Maybe next time put a bit more excitement to all the subtitles.”*
- *“This is a wonderful exhibition. Would like to see the written material in larger fonts and at eye level where possible and sharper contrast between letters and background, color wise.”*
- *“Consider including original scripts in labels – at least the title. These would convey meaning that the Romanized words just don’t carry.”*

More Information

A familiar remark is the one concerning requests for more information than what is provided in the text of the exhibition. While many comments state that the information provided was excellent, these visitors are left with many unanswered questions. For *Hokusai*, these requests encompass interests in the woodblock printing process,

influences on the artist's life, and the influence of the artist on modern art. Some comments focused on the need to translate more of the calligraphy as an integral part of understanding the art, and some expressed an interest in having a brochure or catalogue to take home with them that provided more contextual information than what was provided on the wall.

Context and Process

- *“Extraordinary exhibit, wonderfully arranged. I am still curious as to how Hokusai was as a man. I would like to put his life in general in more context.”*
- *“I would be interested to know the process of woodblock art-making and how did Hokusai make his paintings. This is what's missing from an otherwise excellent exhibition.”*
- *“Amazing collection but no mention of his influence on modern art, no info on historical context, and no mention of how he was influenced by events/cultural milieu/other artists in his life to me – except in passing ref to European art.”*
- *“So inspiring. It would have been cool if you could have displayed examples of the kinks of tools and paints he used and the woodblocks used to make prints. Thank you.”*

Translations

- *“Beautiful, but incomplete. Poetry is so much a part of Japanese aesthetic that it is a shame so little was translated for those of us who are not bilingual. But it is a real pleasure to see so much fine brushwork.”*
- *“Please translate the calligraphy.”*

Audio Guides

- *“Beautiful exhibit. As a 71 year old, my visit would have been enhanced if it had been accompanied with an audio tour and the description of the art had been printed in a larger format.”*

Brochures/Catalogues

- *“Beautiful exhibition – I wish there was a brochure and/or something more to explain a broad cultural context.”*
- *“Beautiful, very thorough – where are the brochures?”*

CHILDREN'S COMMENTS

What They Liked

The young visitors to the *Hokusai* exhibit who wrote comments expressed a great interest in Hokusai and his paintings, finding surprise that he was the first artist to create manga and that he influenced today's Japanese anime. Many left comments concerning which painting was their favorite and how this exhibit may have influenced their own artistic creativity.

- *"I discovered that he is a very talented person and how the very first manga looked. My very fav painting is '100 Bridges' because I like how it looked from birds eye. I was amazed by his astonishing talent."*
- *"I didn't know he coined the term 'manga' or that he used so many pen names through his life. I can see how he influenced many Japanese animators."*
- *"The exhibit was very expressive and reminded me a lot of things in my life. I liked the rivers and the little boy playing the flute."*
- *"It seemed like Hokusai's paintings were arranged like a 'village' by what he drew and where they were. That was kind of cool. I also liked the fan."*
- *"I love how he draws/paints the really beautiful or the really ugly, but how they look like he caught them in the middle of them dancing."*

What they Disliked

Unfavorable remarks generally reflect boredom, or the physical difficulty of viewing artwork that is not presented at the child's viewing height, causing neck strain. Other comments centered on temperature or lighting.

- *"This was boring."*
- *"I didn't really like it. I had to look up and that hurt my neck."*
- *"The pictures were so cool. Think about some heat. It was cold and dark."*

Questions

Some of the questions children had upon exiting the exhibition were rather insightful, and can be represented these examples:

- *“What was his inspiration to be an artist?”*
- *“I wonder why animals are drawn fictionally? Are they real or were they? [sic].”*
- *“I am curious about the gods.”*
- *“Hokusai wrote a lot of pictures which are of the Edo Shidai. The tiger is fierce-looking, especially in the eyes. I wanted to know how he got to think of those ideas. Thanks.”*

Appendix B: Survey Responses[†]

Sackler Gallery history

"How many times have you previously visited this museum, the Sackler Gallery?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
First visit	41	32
1-4 previous visits	22	32
5 or more previous visits	37	36
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	222	1068

Intention for the visit

"What led you to visit the Sackler Gallery?" [Choose one or more]

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Came to see the Hokusai exhibition	72	86
Came to see another exhibition	9	4
Came for a general visit	5	11
Wandered by the building	5	3
Came for a program/event/performance	22	
Total	113	104
Number of respondents=	222	1078

Plan for the Hokusai exhibition

"Do you plan to visit the Hokusai exhibition?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
Yes	97
No	1
I'm not sure	2
Total	100
Number of respondents=	84

[†] Entrance and Exit results for either the Museum survey or the Exhibit survey are shown separately only when the differences between them are statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Previous visit to Hokusai

"Have you visited the Hokusai exhibition before today?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Yes	14	13
No	86	87
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	218	1084

Information sources

"How did you know about the Hokusai exhibition?" [Choose one or more]

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
Word of mouth	31
Newspaper or magazine article	29
Internet/museum website	14
Newspaper or magazine advertisement	13
Museum banners outside	8
Museum calendar or mailing	7
Advertising poster	4
Freer/Sackler program/event	2
Television/radio	2
Museum tour	0
I didn't know about the Hokusai exhibition before today	15
Total	125
Number of respondents=	86

Came to DC for Hokusai

"Did you come to Washington primarily to see the Hokusai exhibition?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
I live in the area	38
Yes	15
No	47
Total	100
Number of respondents=	87

Freer visit

"Do you plan to visit the Freer Gallery today?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
I have already been there today	6
I do not plan to go today	28
I plan to go later today	27
I'm not sure	39
Total	100
Number of respondents=	88

Shop visit

"Do you plan to visit the Freer/Sackler shop today?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
I have already been there today	2
I do not plan to go today	20
I plan to go later today	46
I'm not sure	32
Total	100
Number of respondents=	88

Music performance

"Did you hear the music performance at the entrance to the Hokusai exhibition?"

Choice	Museum exit Percent
No	32
Yes, and it enhanced my visit	56
Yes, and it detracted from my visit	2
Yes, and it neither enhanced nor detracted	10
Total	100
Number of respondents=	128

Japanese art interest

"How interested are you in Japanese art?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Very interested	52	59
Somewhat interested	33	40
Slightly interested	13	
Not interested	2	1
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	87	1068

Japanese culture and history interest

"How interested are you in Japanese culture/history?"

Choice	Museum entrance Percent
Not interested	3
Slightly interested	13
Somewhat interested	40
Very interested	44
Total	100
Number of respondents=	87

Motivator

"Who in your group suggested visiting the Sackler Gallery today?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
I did	46	42
Someone else in my group did	32	32
I am visiting alone	22	26
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	220	1041

Familiarity with Asian art

"Do you regularly visit museums/exhibitions of Asian art outside of the Washington DC area?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Yes	61	57
No	39	43
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	224	1068

Residence

"Where do you live?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
United States	96	95
Other country	4	5
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	224	1068

Residence -- U.S. regions

Category	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Metro Area Washington DC	42	49
Southeast	16	15
Mid-Atlantic	21	19
Midwest	3	3
New England	5	2
Mountain Plains	3	2
West	5	4
Unspecified U.S.	4	1
Other Country	1	5
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	224	1068

Age

"What is your age?"

Age Category	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
12 to 24	9	7
25 to 29	9	8
30 to 34	11	11
35 to 39	6	8
40 to 44	12	8
45 to 59	9	7
50 to 54	14	12
55 to 59	9	13
60 to 64	8	11
65 to 69	9	8
70 and over	4	7
Total	100	100
Mean age=	45	48
Median age=	45	50
Number of respondents=	221	1046

Gender

"What is your gender?"

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Male	47	45
Female	53	55
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	218	1016

Visit group

"With whom are you visiting today?" [Choose one or more]

Choice	Museum entrance and exit Percent	Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
I am alone	21	23
With one adult	50	54
With several adults	24	21
With teens	3	3
With children 12 or younger	10	5
Total	108	106
Number of respondents=	220	1058

Exhibition rating

Exhibition entrance: "How do you think you will rate the Hokusai exhibition when you leave?"

Exhibition exit: "How would you rate the Hokusai exhibition?"

Choice*	Exhibit entrance Percent	Exhibit exit Percent
Superior	33	52
Excellent	53	41
Good	14	6
Fair	0	1
Poor	0	0
Total	100	100
Number of respondents=	460	561

*Statistically significant difference between entrance and exit (p<.05)

Experiences

Exhibition entrance: "How much are you looking forward to the following experiences?"

Exhibition exit: "How satisfying were the following experiences for you in the Hokusai exhibition?"

Increasing my understanding		Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Choice		Percent
Very much		68
Somewhat		30
Not at all		2
Total		100
Number of respondents=		1034

Gaining information/knowledge		Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Choice		Percent
Very much		65
Somewhat		33
Not at all		2
Total		100
Number of respondents=		1033

Reflecting on the meaning of what I am looking at		Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Choice		Percent
Very much		55
Somewhat		41
Not at all		4
Total		100
Number of respondents=		1023

Spending time with friends/family		Exhibit entrance and exit Percent
Choice		Percent
Very much		44
Somewhat		28
Not at all		28
Total		100
Number of respondents=		1003

Being moved by beauty*	Choice	Exhibit	Exhibit
		entrance	exit
		Percent	Percent
	Very much	80	86
	Somewhat	19	14
	Not at all	1	0
	Total	100	100
	Number of respondents=	487	543

*Statistically significant difference between entrance and exit (p<.05)

Seeing rare/valuable art*	Choice	Exhibit	Exhibit
		entrance	exit
		Percent	Percent
	Very much	67	77
	Somewhat	26	19
	Not at all	7	4
	Total	100	100
	Number of respondents=	491	546

*Statistically significant difference between entrance and exit (p<.05)

Imagining other times or places*	Choice	Exhibit	Exhibit
		entrance	exit
		Percent	Percent
	Very much	51	61
	Somewhat	43	33
	Not at all	6	6
	Total	100	100
	Number of respondents=	474	540

*Statistically significant difference between entrance and exit (p<.05)

Total number of experiences*	Choice	Exhibit entrance	Exhibit exit
		Percent	Percent
	None	7	2
	One	3	4
	Two	10	10
	Three	19	19
	Four	22	20
	Five	14	16
	Six	25	29
	Total	100	100
	Number of respondents=	442	503

*Statistically significant difference between entrance and exit (p<.05)

Expectation

"How did your experience compare to what you expected?"

Choice	Exhibit exit
	Percent
It was not as good	2
It was what I expected	39
It was better	59
Total	100
Number of respondents=	556

Enjoyment

"Please rate the Hokusai exhibition on your personal enjoyment."

Choice	Exhibit exit
	Percent
Superior	50
Excellent	41
Good	8
Fair	1
Poor	0
Total	100
Number of respondents=	556

Improvements

"Which of the following would have enhanced your visit to the Hokusai exhibition?"

[Choose one or more]

Choice	Exhibit exit Percent
Easier-to-read labels	34
More info on making prints/paintings	25
More info on Hokusai's life/times	22
More woodblock prints	16
Clearer statement of key themes	10
More paintings	8
No changes/additions needed	29
Total	144
Number of respondents=	522

Total number of improvements Choice	Exhibit exit Percent
None	29
One	39
Two	22
Three	7
Four	2
Five or Six	1
Total	100
Number of respondents=	522

Reading alcove

"Did you look at any books in the reading alcove?"

Choice	Exhibit exit Percent
Yes	34
No	66
Total	100
Number of respondents=	532

Appendix C: Additional Tables

The Performance

Came for a program and Came to see *Hokusai*

Museum Entrance & Exit Percent	Came for program only	Came to see Hokusai and program	Came for Hokusai only	Came for Hokusai and other reason	Came for other reasons only	Total
Reason for visit	18	4	61	7	10	100

Number of respondents=224

Came for a program and Interest in Japanese art

Museum Entrance Percent Came for a program/event	Interest in Japanese art				Total
	Not interested	Slightly interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	
Came for a program/event	5	38	33	24	100
Came for other reason(s)	1	5	32	62	100

Number of respondents=84

Came for a program and Interest in Japanese culture/history

Museum Entrance Percent Came for a program/event	Interest in Japanese culture/history				Total
	Not interested	Slightly interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	
Came for a program/event	10	35	40	15	100
Came for other reason(s)	2	6	39	53	100

Number of respondents=84

Came for a program and First-time visitor

Museum Entrance & Exit

Percent Came for a program/event	First visit to Sackler		
	Yes	No	Total
Came for a program/event	62	38	100
Came for other reason(s)	34	66	100

Number of respondents=219

Came for a program and First-time visitor who does not go elsewhere

Museum Entrance & Exit

Percent Came for a program/event	First visit and does not regularly visit Asian art elsewhere		
	First visit and does not regularly see Asian art elsewhere	Repeat visit and/or regularly sees Asian art elsewhere	Total
Came for a program/event	31	69	100
Came for other reason(s)	15	85	100

Number of respondents=224

The Attraction

Came for *Hokusai* and Interest in Japanese art

Exhibit Entrance Percent	Interest in Japanese art			Total
	Not interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>				
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	0	39	61	100
Came for other reason(s)	1	54	45	100

Number of respondents=508

Came for *Hokusai* and Anticipated experiences

Exhibit Entrance Percent	Looking forward to being moved by beauty			Total
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>				
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	1	17	82	100
Came for other reason(s)	3	28	69	100

Number of respondents=486

Exhibit Entrance Percent	Looking forward to increasing understanding			Total
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>				
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	2	26	72	100
Came for other reason(s)	3	41	56	100

Number of respondents=489

Came for *Hokusai* and Age

Exhibit Entrance Percent	Age			Total
	Age under 30	Ages 30 to 54	Age 55 and over	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>				
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	13	45	42	100
Came for other reason(s)	23	47	30	100

Number of respondents=500

The Presentation

Easier-to-read labels would have enhanced and Satisfying experiences

Exhibit Exit Percent Easier-to-read labels would have enhanced the experience	Reflecting on meaning was satisfying			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	Total
Marked easier-to-read labels	3	47	50	100
Did not mark easier-to-read labels	4	35	61	100

Number of respondents=506

	Increasing understanding was satisfying			
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	Total
Marked easier-to-read labels	1	41	58	100
Did not mark easier-to-read labels	2	29	69	100

Number of respondents=509

Motivator for visit and Stopping in reading alcove

Exhibit Exit Percent Who suggested visiting the Sackler Gallery?	Did you look at anything in the reading alcove?		
	Yes, I did	No, I didn't	Total
I am alone	37	63	100
I did	38	62	100
Someone in my group did	25	75	100

Number of respondents=505

The Rating

Age and *Hokusai* rating

Exhibit Entrance
Percent

Age	Anticipated <i>Hokusai</i> rating at exhibition entrance				Total
	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior	
Age under 30	2	25	41	32	100
Ages 30 to 54	0	13	57	30	100
Age 55 and over	1	10	52	37	100

Number of respondents=451

Exhibit Exit
Percent

Age	<i>Hokusai</i> rating at exhibition exit				Total
	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior	
Age under 30	1	12	52	35	100
Ages 30 to 54	0	7	44	49	100
Age 55 and over	1	2	33	64	100

Number of respondents=538

Came to see *Hokusai* and *Hokusai* rating

Exhibit Entrance
Percent

Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	Anticipated <i>Hokusai</i> rating at exhibition entrance				Total
	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	0	12	53	35	100
Came for other reason(s)	2	25	51	22	100

Number of respondents=459

Exhibit Exit
Percent

Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	<i>Hokusai</i> rating at exhibition exit				Total
	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior	
Came for <i>Hokusai</i>	1	5	38	56	100
Came for other reason(s)	0	10	64	26	100

Number of respondents=557

Additional Findings

Age and First-time visitor who does not go elsewhere

Exhibit Entrance & Exit
Percent

First visit and does not regularly visit Asian art elsewhere

Age	First visit and does not regularly see Asian art elsewhere		Total
	First visit and does not regularly see Asian art elsewhere	Repeat visit and/or regularly sees Asian art elsewhere	
Age under 30	37	63	100
Ages 30 to 54	19	81	100
Age 55 and over	14	86	100

Number of respondents=1031

Gender and Reflecting on meaning

Exhibit Exit
Percent

Reflecting on meaning was satisfying

Gender	Reflecting on meaning was satisfying			Total
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	
Male	4	47	49	100
Female	2	31	67	100

Number of respondents=511

Gender and Seeing rare/valuable art

Exhibit Exit
Percent

Seeing rare/valuable art was satisfying

Gender	Seeing rare/valuable art was satisfying			Total
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	
Male	5	25	70	100
Female	2	15	83	100

Number of respondents=516

Gender and Gaining information

Exhibit Exit

Percent

Gender	Gaining information was satisfying			Total
	Not at all	Somewhat	Very much	
Male	3	38	59	100
Female	1	30	69	100

Number of respondents=511

