



Evaluation of the National Museum of African Art's 2012 Community Day




**Join emcee Shelly Bell as we
Re-imagine Africa: Eclectic Vibrations**








SEPT. 15
1-5:30 P.M.

- Seek and shoot photo scavenger hunt
- Live fashion sculpture
- Get fit with Zumba
- Make an Egyptian-style necklace
- Gaze at the African sky (10 a.m.-12 p.m.)
- Paint a pyramid
- Reduce stress and rejuvenate with Qi Gong
- Explore the universe
- African rhythms and storytelling
- Get painted


 **Smithsonian**
National Museum of African Art

950 Independence Avenue SW Washington, D.C.
Take Metro's blue or orange line to Smithsonian station
africa.si.edu



October 2012

 **Smithsonian Institution**

Office of Policy and Analysis
Washington, DC 20013

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Preface

Every September for the past five years, the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) hosts Community Day, an event that brings together performers, artists, musicians, and creative people of all stripes to celebrate African art and culture. This year, members of the public and the local African and African American communities were invited to explore, experience, and “re-imagine” the robust cultural legacy of the African continent. This report describes the people who attended Community Day on Saturday, September 15, 2012, *Re-Imagine Africa: Eclectic Vibrations*, and how these attendees perceived the offerings of the Museum. This evaluation, alongside other visitor research efforts at NMAfA, leads the Museum closer to understanding its visitors and supporters, as well as its weak spots and strengths.

I would like to recognize NMAfA’s staff, above all Education Specialist Nicole Shivers, and her department, for their commitment to understanding the Museum’s visitorship and requesting evaluations of Community Day two years in a row, 2011 and 2012 respectively. Within this report, OP&A compares the 2012 event data with data collected at Community Day 2011 to illustrate similarities and differences between the two years.

A team of OP&A staff and interns led by Claire Eckert undertook this study. The study team worked with Nicole Shivers and NMAfA intern Clare Donnelly to develop the questions on the exit survey and interview guide. OP&A’s Sarah Block, Yifei Chen, Hyemin Kim, Yeonjung Kim, Hannah Pheasant, Maria Raviele, Philipp Schaefer, and Whitney Watriss administered the survey and conducted face-to-face interviews the day of the event. Maria Raviele analyzed the quantitative data and summarized the frequencies and findings. Sierra Coe analyzed the interviews and wrote the qualitative sections of the report. Claire Eckert compiled the qualitative and quantitative information to generate the final report. I appreciate their hard work and ability to pull together as a team.

Carole Neves, PhD
Director, Office of Policy and Analysis
Smithsonian Institution

Introduction

The National Museum of African Art's (NMAfA) mission is to foster the discovery and appreciation of the visual arts of Africa. As part of this task, each year NMAfA hosts a Community Day celebration to increase visitors' appreciation of the creative practices and traditions of Africa. The 2012 Community Day, *Re-Imagine Africa: Eclectic Vibrations*, sponsored by Chevron, General Mills, and Cakes by Sweet Bobbies, highlighted the diverse range of African cultural expressions through fun, interactive children's games; health and wellness exercises and demonstrations; fashion, design, music, and art performances; hands-on activities; and a cake station (for those who desired a treat after doing a Zumba demo). The Museum bustled with performers, artists, and curious visitors of all ages throughout the day (1:00 – 5:30 PM, Saturday, Sept 15, 2012). (For complete event schedule, see Appendix A).

NMAfA enlisted the Smithsonian Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) to conduct an evaluation of Community Day 2012, a continuation of the work OP&A began the previous year with an evaluation of Community Day 2011. The 2011 evaluation was part of a larger report to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the sponsor of a series of programs at the Museum that reached African immigrant populations in the Washington, D.C. area. Like the 2011 study, this evaluation records visitor demographics, satisfaction ratings, experiences, interests, and attitudes toward the event and the Museum. The 2012 survey data and interviews are compared to the findings of the 2011 study to show what variations exist between the two years.



Farafina Funkdified (The Adinkra Group)¹

¹ Photo credit for all photographs in the report: Jyll Turner.

Methodology

The study team collected visitor information through an exit survey and semi-structured visitor interviews.

OP&A designed the survey instrument (see Appendix B) with input from NMAfA's event staff. The study team administered the survey and conducted interviews from 1:00-5:30 pm on the day of the event, intercepting every visitor exiting the Museum at the main and subterranean level exit-ways². OP&A asked all visitors leaving the building, with the exception of Smithsonian badge holders and visitors under the age of 12, to participate in the survey. The study team intercepted 329 visitors. Of that total, 281 visitors completed the survey; 48 either refused to participate or were unable to do so because of a lack of familiarity with English (the latter were classified as "Language Refusals"). The response rate was 85%, slightly higher than the previous year's 82%.

In tandem with the surveying at the Museum exits, members of the study team spoke with visitors inside the building posing questions from an Interview Guide developed by OP&A (see Appendix C). Team members did 49 one-on-one and small group interviews to capture the opinions of 70 individuals. The study team audio recorded the interviews and soon after transcribed them for analysis. OP&A organized and analyzed the written transcripts using NVivo 9.2 software.

In this report, the survey data and the interviews from Community Day 2012 are presented alongside the survey findings of 2011.



A sugary treat for visitors courtesy of Cakes by Sweet Bobbies

² The museum's ground level doors are located on Independence Avenue near the gate to the Enid A. Haupt Garden and the museum's subterranean exit-way connects to the International Gallery in the Smithsonian's Ripley Center building.



A young visitor expresses himself at the Interactive Mural Pyramids activity station.

Findings

Visitor Characteristics

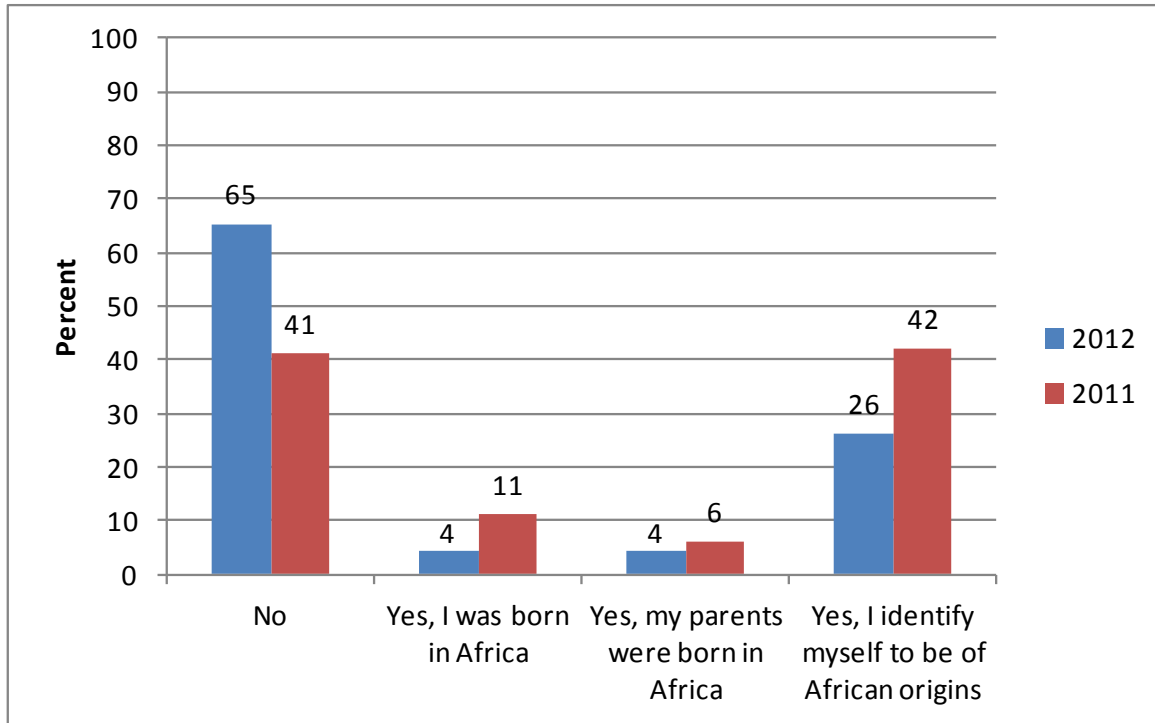
African Descent and Connections to Africa

Survey

Community Day aims to attract a wide range of people and is free and open to the public. The Museum is also interested in fostering community and welcoming people from African immigrant communities to the Museum to join the conversation. In 2011, one of the target audiences for Community Day, *The Power of the Word*, was African immigrant community members; thus NMAfA staff was particularly interested in visitors' connection to Africa.

Both the 2012 and 2011 surveys asked event visitors to answer a question about their decent. On the 2012 survey, of visitors who responded to the survey question "Are you of African descent?" 65% responded *no*, 4% responded they were *born in Africa*, 4% indicated their *parents were born in Africa*, and 26% responded *of African origins*. Compared to respondents from Community Day 2011, there was an overall decrease in respondents who identified as having some type of African descent. (Figure 1, next page).

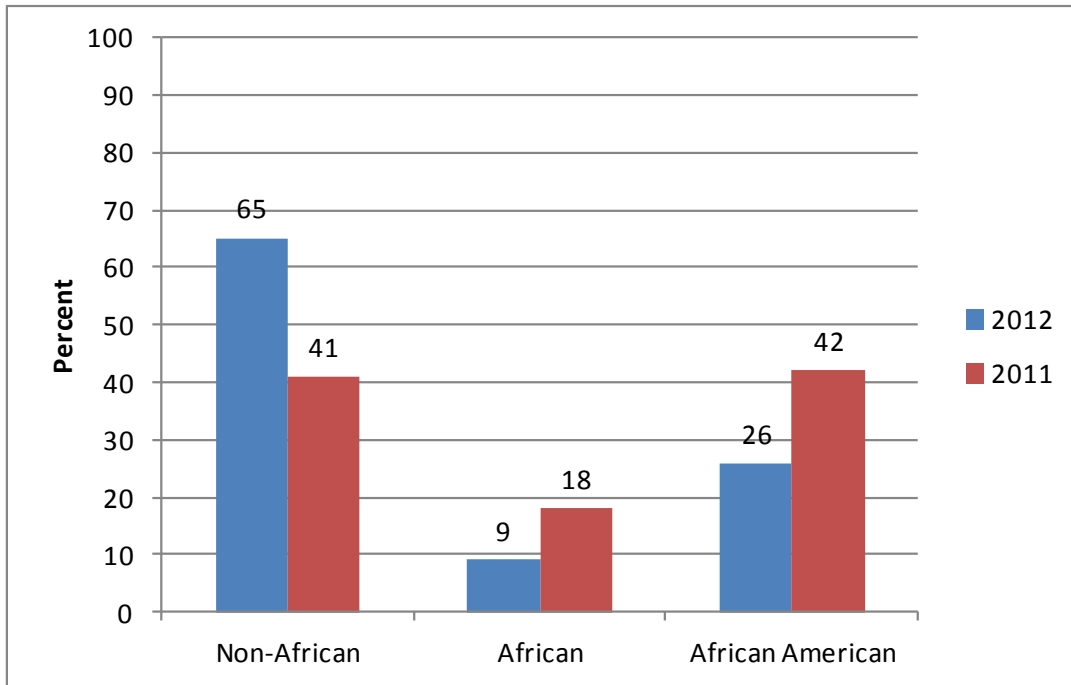
Figure 1: Identification with African Descent, 2012 vs. 2011



For purposes of further analysis, OP&A combined visitors who said that either they or their parents were born in Africa into a single category, referred to here as “Africans.” Using this definition, Africans comprised 9% of survey respondents³. For the sake of convenience, the other two groups are referred to as “non-Africans” (those who responded *no* to the question of African descent) and “African Americans” (those who identified themselves as being *of African origins*, but were neither born in Africa nor the children of parents born in Africa). The majority of respondents to the survey were non-African; this represents a marked shift in respondent characteristics from last year, when the majority of respondents were African American. (Figure 2, next page).

³ This is half as many as at the previous Community Day, where Africans comprised 18% of respondents (OP&A report *Summative Evaluation of the National Museum of African Art's 2011 Community Day*)

Figure 2: African Descent Categories



Ten survey respondents provided the African country in which they were born while thirteen survey respondents indicated the country in which one or both parents were born. A majority of the countries identified in both instances were West African: Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

Table 1: Countries of Origin for African Survey Respondents

African Country	Number of visitors born there	Number of visitors whose parents were born there
Algeria	3	2
Cote D'Ivoire	1	0
Egypt	1	0
Ethiopia	0	1
Kenya	0	2
Liberia	2	0
Nigeria	1	5
Senegal	0	1
Sierra Leone	0	1
Togo	1	0
Tunisia	0	1
Uganda	1	0

First-Time vs. Repeat Visitors

Survey

Among survey respondents, nearly three quarters (74%) indicated that this was their first time visiting NMAfA, while 26% had visited previously. The average number of previous visits by repeat-visitor respondents was ten while the median was six⁴.

First-time visitors were more likely to rate their overall experience lower than repeat visitors. This is explored further in the section on Overall Satisfaction below.

Interviews

About two thirds of the interviewees were visiting the Museum for the first time. Some of these people attributed their low attendance to the Museum's lack of publicity and less prominent location on the Mall. For example:

I think the problem is that it is behind the Castle, so I never end up coming out this way. I always arrive from the Metro station that points you to the Natural History Museum. So I completely forget about it.

Event-Specific vs. General Visitors

Survey

The majority of survey respondents (61%), did not come specifically for the Community Day event, while the remainder (39%) did come specifically for Community Day. Among repeat-visitor respondents, over half (57%) came specifically for Community Day, while about a third (33%) of first-time visitors visited in order to attend this event.

African American respondents were most likely to visit for Community Day (47%), followed closely by African respondents (46%). Non-African respondents were less likely to have visited for Community Day (34%).

Event-specific visitors were slightly less likely than general visitors to rate their overall experience at the event *Excellent* or *Superior*⁵.

Interviews

Just under half of the individuals interviewed came to the Museum specifically for Community Day. Interviewees who were unaware of Community Day were either attracted to the building by the commotion outdoors created by the Zumba demonstrations, fashion models, and the outdoor tent, or just happened to be visiting NMAfA that day. Most of the interviewees who did not know about Community Day were thrilled to have stumbled onto it. Many who came for the activities were

⁴ Excluded from the average and median are 5 visitors who indicated they had visited more than 50 times.

⁵ 44% compared to 57% combined *Excellent* and *Superior* ratings, for event-specific and general visitors respectively.

curious to see what it was about or thought it would be entertaining for their children. Below are some responses to the question “Why did you come to Community Day?”

It's just the excitement and seeing all levels of the involvement from our community from our youth up to our elders. It connects to the spirit of the diaspora. To be part of Community Day is quite gripping.

I love culture, creativity, and people, and when you bring it all together, we are all learning. It is always a fun event, but it is a little noisy.

We've attended a number of different Family Days at the Smithsonian and we always have a great time when we go.

We just got here 15 minutes ago so we're still exploring and taking it all in. When we got here we heard the drummers and it drew us in. We started looking at some of the exhibits and are trying to get a feel for what the Museum has since this is our first visit.

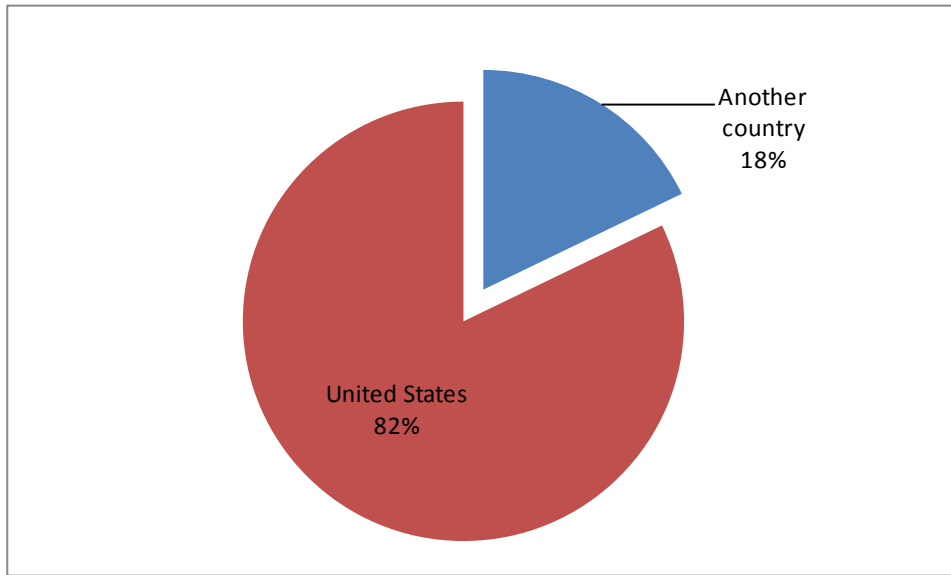
Residence

Survey

Slightly more than eight out of ten (82%) survey respondents lived in the United States. The rest, 18%, were from another country⁶. (Figure 3, next page).

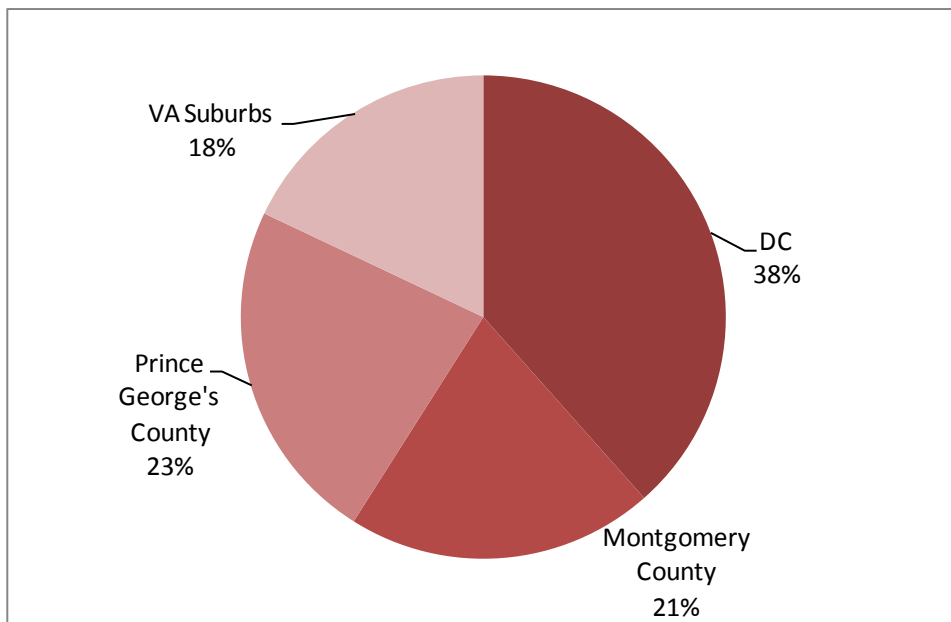
⁶ The percentage of respondents from another country is more than double that from Community Day 2011, which was 7%.

Figure 3: Where do You Live?



Based on the zip codes provided by survey respondents, 39% were from the DC metro area (defined as DC, Maryland's Montgomery and Prince George's counties, and northern Virginia). The breakdown of residence within this 39% is shown in Figure 4⁷.

Figure 4: Breakdown of DC Metro Area Visitors



⁷ Compared to Community Day 2011, the percentage of respondents from these areas is similar overall although with a decrease in respondents from DC (48% to 38%) and increases from Montgomery County (15% to 21%) and VA suburbs (13% to 18%).

Besides respondents from the DC metro area and international visitors, most respondents were from the Mid-Atlantic (15%) or Southeast regions (11%).

Sex

Survey

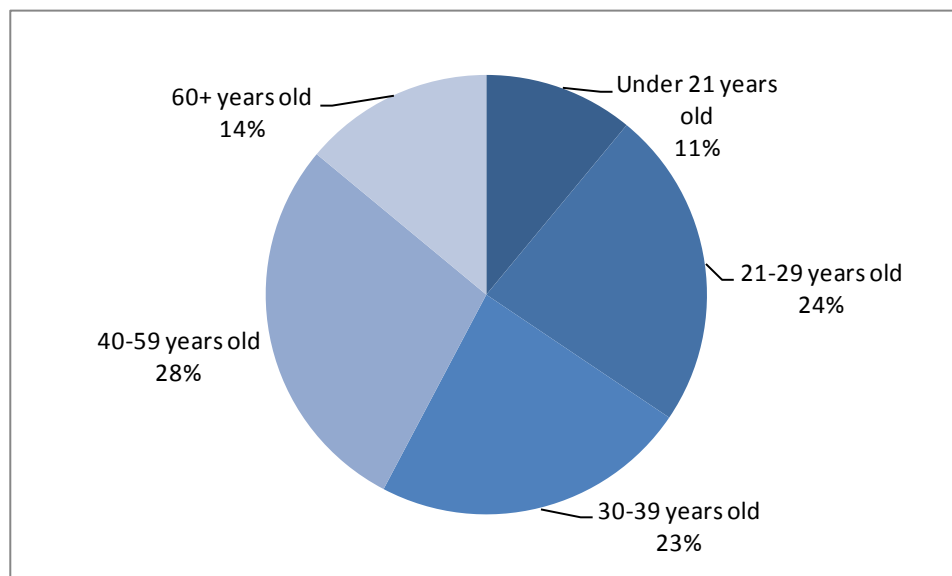
More females (64%) than males (36%) visited the Museum during Community Day. These figures are comparable to those from Community Day 2011 (63% female and 37% male).

Age

Survey

The average age of visitors to Community Day was 38 while the median age was 36. Using age brackets previously employed in NMAfA in other evaluation questionnaires, visitor ages can be divided into five categories: Under 21 years old (11%), 21-29 years old (24%), 30-39 years old (23%), 40-59 years old (28%), and 60+ years old (14%).

Figure 5: What Is Your Age?



Group Composition

Survey

The majority of respondents were visiting with others (77%, *organized group* and *with other people* combined). Most groups were comprised of only adults (40%), followed by adults with youth under 18 (22%)⁸. (See Figures 6-7, next page). The mean group size was 3 and the median group size was 2.

⁸ These numbers are similar to Community Day 2011, with 47% of respondents traveling in adult-only groups and 25% visiting in groups with adults and youth under 18.

Figure 6: With Whom Are You Visiting?

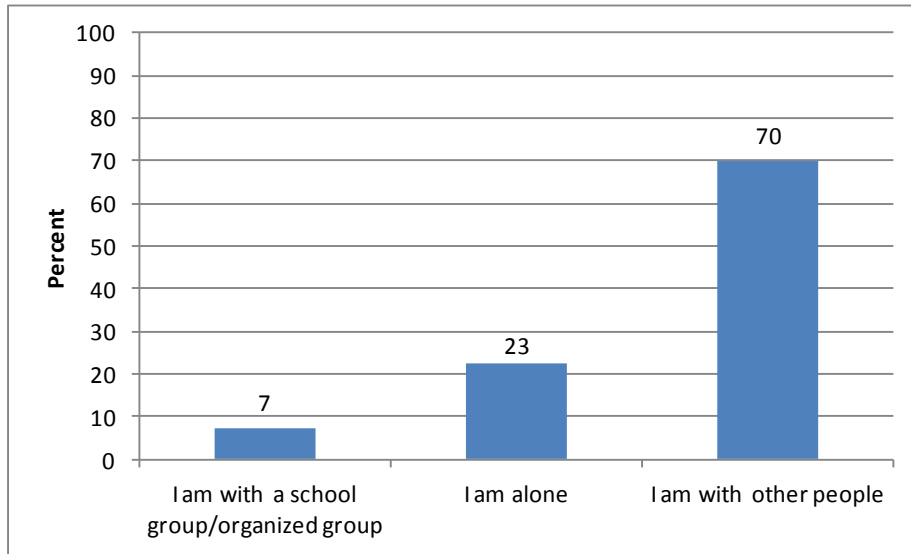
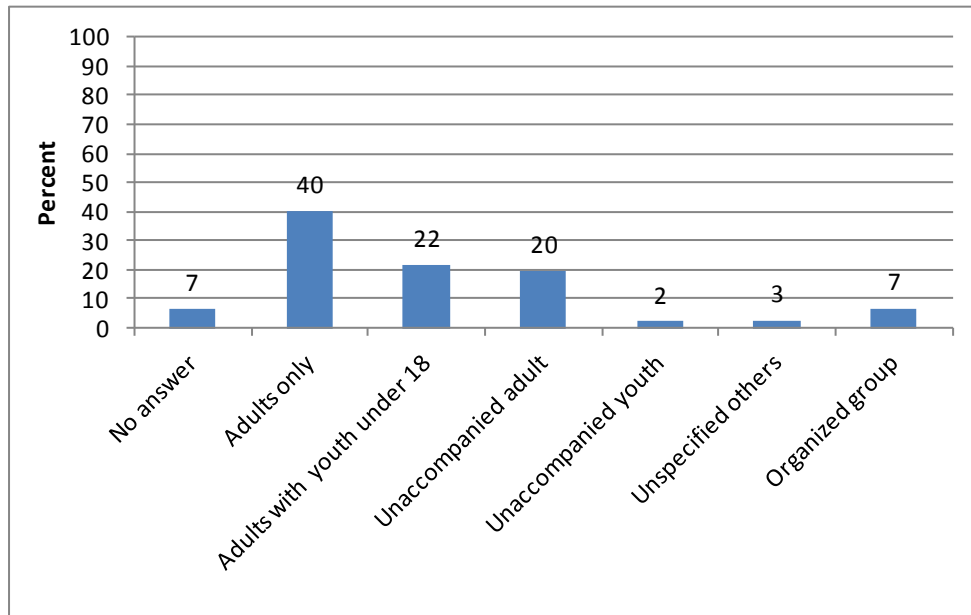


Figure 7: Group Composition



Visitor Interests

Survey

The survey asked respondents about their levels of interest in African art and cultures, African history, health and wellness, hip hop culture, fashion, and attending more events like this. Among all respondents, interest levels were high, with *very interested* ranging from 52% to 73% for all subjects except hip hop culture, where 42% of respondents indicated *very interested*. Health and

wellness, hip hop culture, and fashion also had more respondents indicating *not interested* with 6%, 23%, and 14% respectively (See Figures 8-12).

Overall, Africans and African Americans were more likely to be *very interested* in African art and culture and African history than non-Africans, while African Americans were more likely to be *very interested* in health and wellness, fashion, and hip hop culture than Africans and non-Africans. When 2012 *very interested* responses are compared with 2011 Community Day *very interested* responses, nearly all decreased from the previous year⁹.

Figure 8: Interest in African Art/Cultures

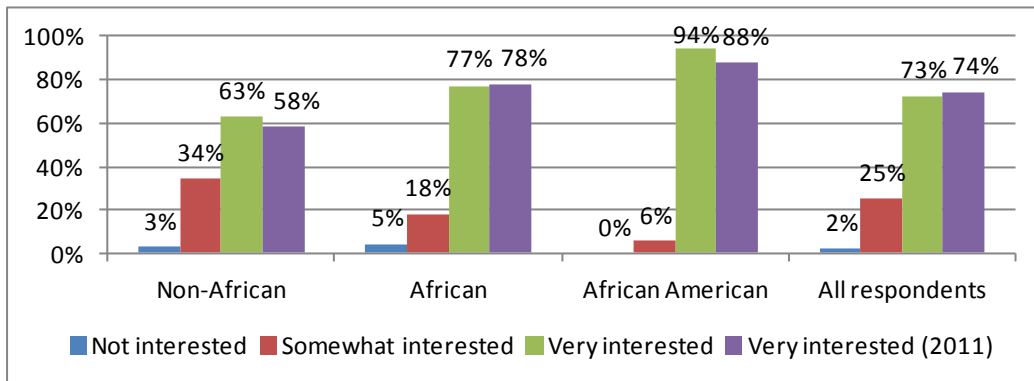
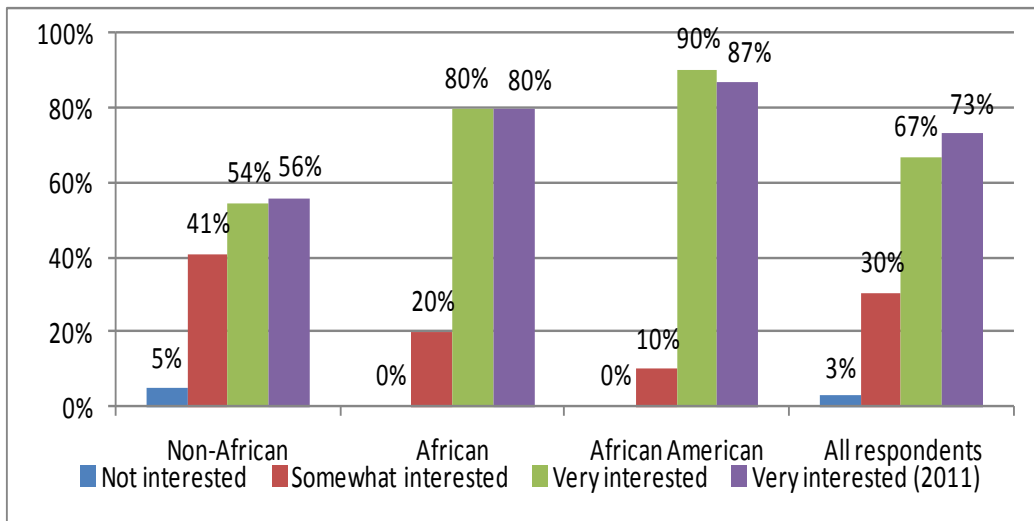


Figure 9: Interest in African History



⁹ Exceptions to this include interest in African art/cultures by non-Africans and African Americans, interest in African history by African Americans, interest in fashion by non-Africans and African Americans, and interest in similar events by African Americans.

Figure 10: Interest in Health And Wellness¹⁰

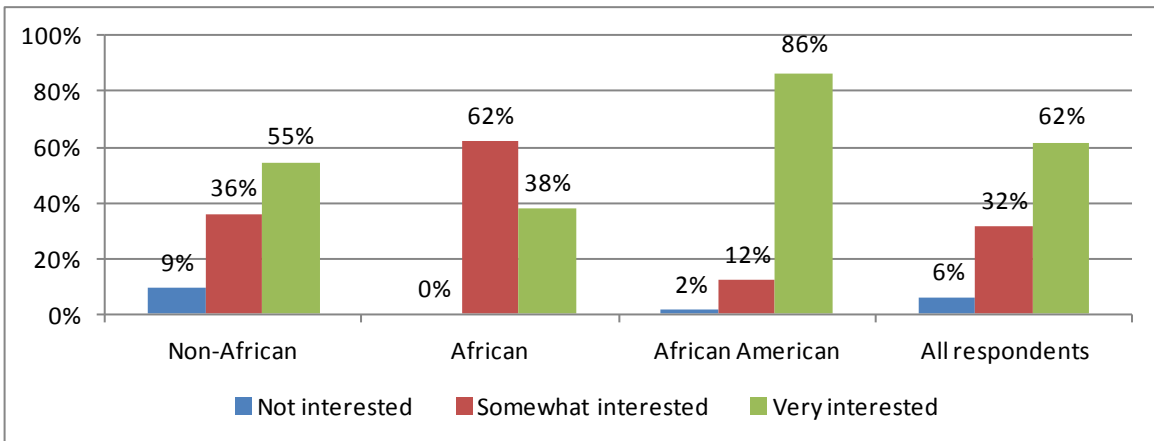
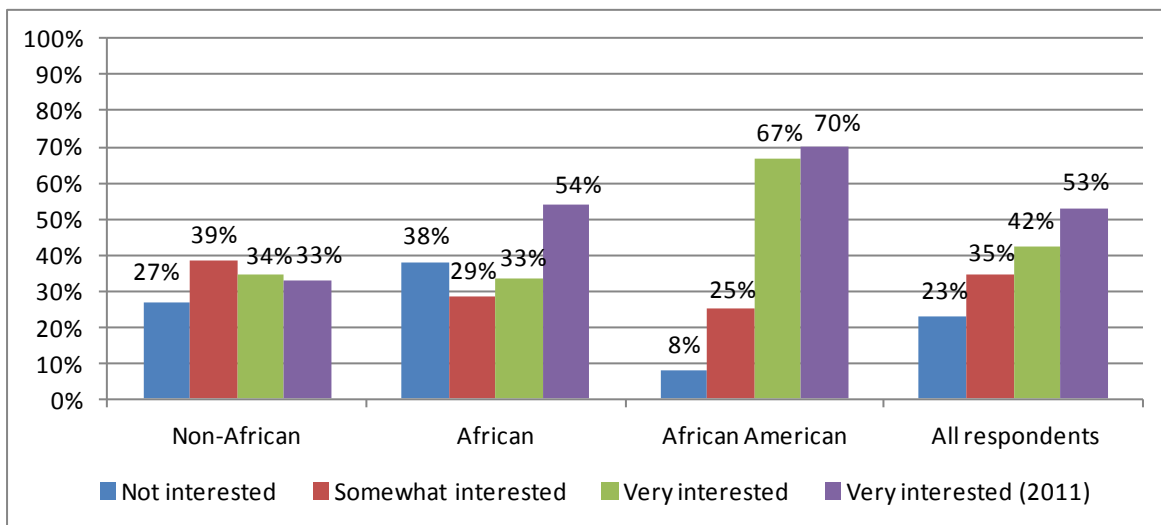
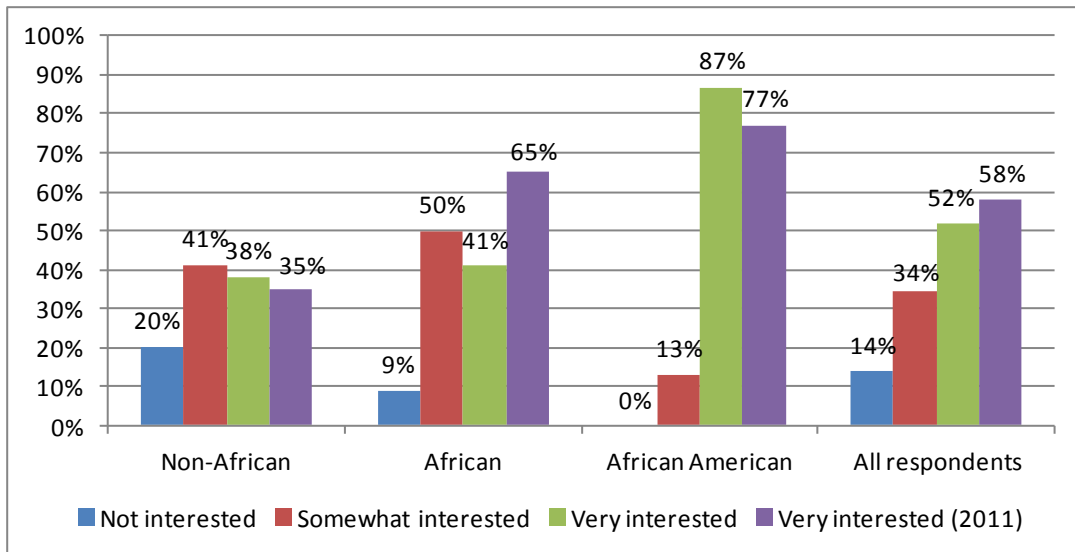


Figure 11: Interest in Hip Hop Culture



¹⁰ No comparable data is available since this question was not asked for Community Day 2011.

Figure 12: Interest in Fashion



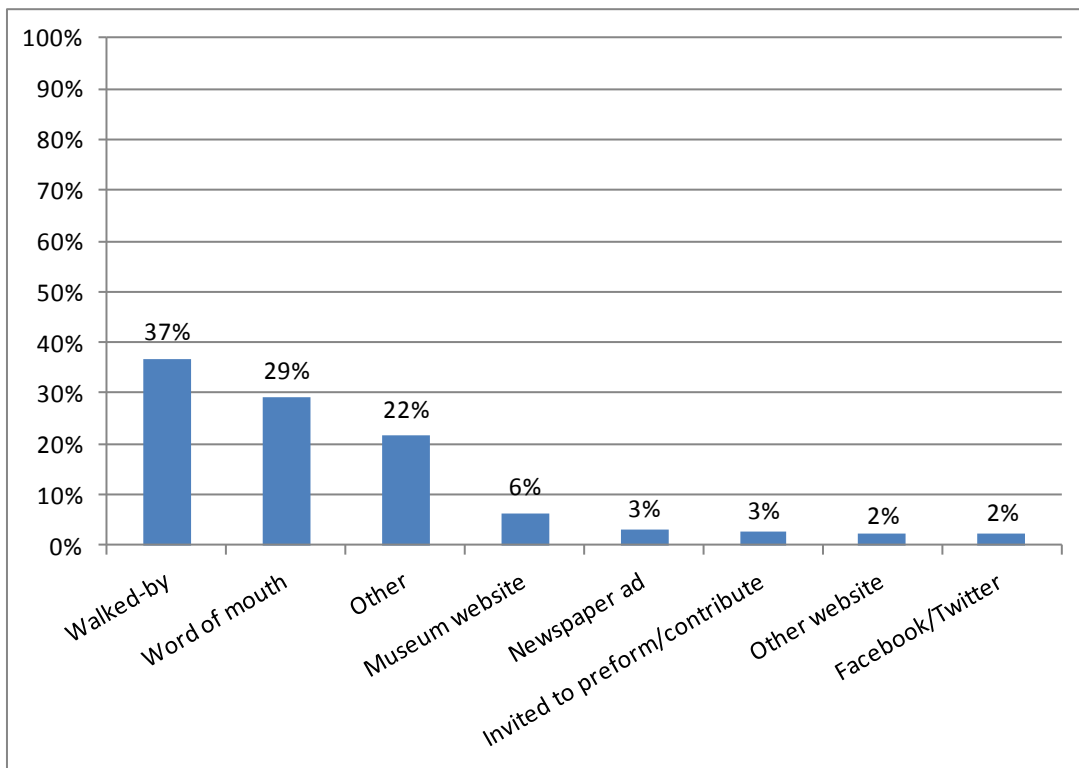
Outreach and Marketing

Survey

The majority of respondents learned about Community Day from *walking by* (37%), while word of mouth from *friends/family* (29%) was the next-most-common way respondents heard about the event¹¹. (Figure 13, next page).

¹¹ The primary means by which people learned about Community Day flipped from 2011, which was word of mouth, followed by walking by.

Figure 13: How Did You Hear about Community Day? (All respondents)



In all descent groups, word of mouth from *family/friends* and *walked by* were the most common. More African American respondents than other descent groups¹², learned about the event from being invited to perform (8%); more African respondents learned about Community Day through the newspaper (10%) compared to other descent groups¹³ and more non-African respondents (9%) learned about the event through the Museum website compared to other descent groups¹⁴.

Interviews

The interviewees who came specifically for Community Day had seen an advertisement, attended the event a previous year, or were supporting friends and family who were invited to perform (e.g. Joy of Motion dancers, Dressing the pART models, etc).

¹² 1% of non-African and African respondents were invited to perform at Community Day.

¹³ 2% of non-African respondents and 4% of African American respondents learned about the event from the newspaper.

¹⁴ 4% of African respondents and 2% of African American respondents learned about Community Day through the museum website.



Groove Elements: Youth Hip Hop (Joy of Motion Dance Center)

One interviewee said he receives emails about upcoming NMAfA events, while another visitor wanted to receive emails, but was not currently. Additionally, there were articles in newspapers and ads around Washington about the *African Cosmos* exhibit that attracted visitors to the Museum. A few of the people interviewed mentioned that more advertising was needed to let people know about the event, especially in schools. A teacher commented:

I don't think it was publicized widely enough, because I didn't see it anywhere. I heard about it through one venue, so I don't think it was advertised. . . . I think the advertisement could have been a little stronger. The schools needed to have something on paper.

Some interviewees suggested that the Museum should do more outreach. They commented that it would be nice if presentations, with objects from the Museum, were offered to schools to get children interested in the Museum and African art and culture in general. One interview suggested that the Museum should produce a traveling Community Day, with exhibits from the Museum.

Basically, the need to reach out [is what the Museum needs to work on]. Like I said, children are open to ideas. Adults are so jaded; so closed-minded. A lot of them have never even been to this Museum. They don't even know where it is. They're clueless and so one of the things I probably would do is get a bus and take some things to their community. And do it there, in their community space, as an introduction, and hopefully then you can draw them here. That's what I would do. I would do a bus tour of the Museum.

Experiences

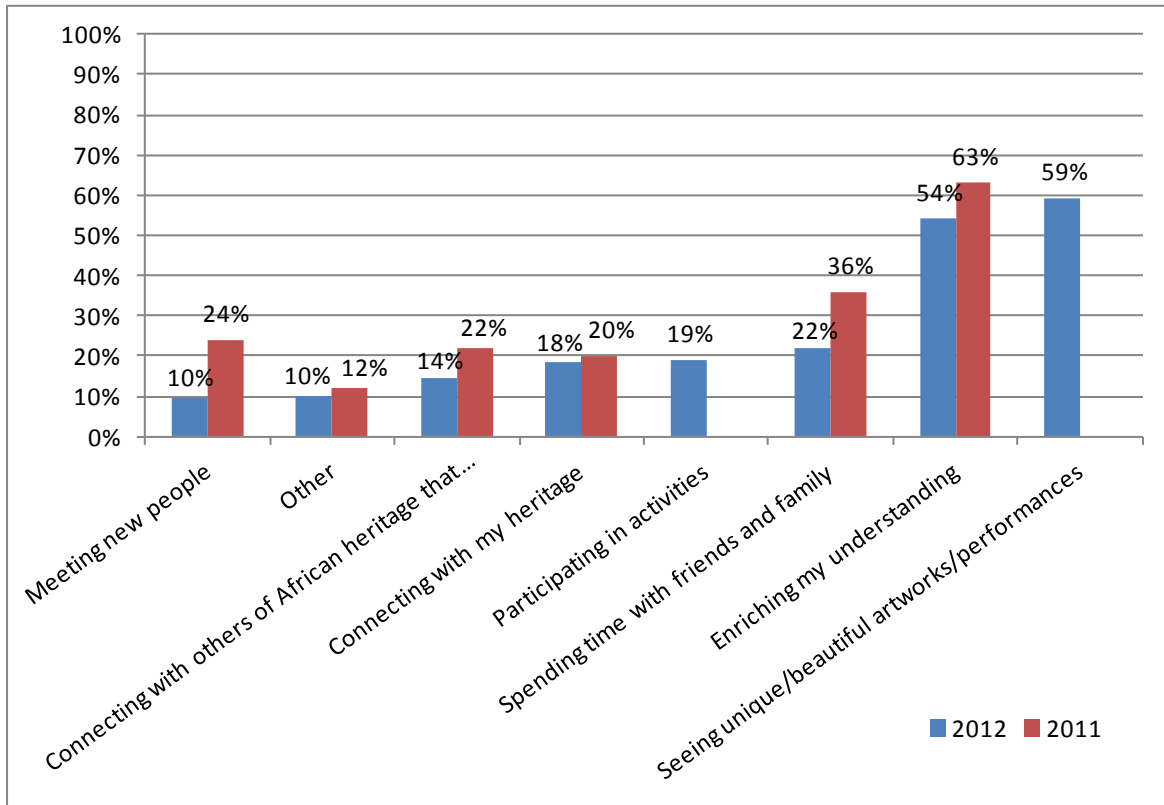
Satisfying Experiences

Survey

Among all respondents, the most satisfying experience identified was 'seeing unique/beautiful artworks/performances' followed by 'enriching my understanding'. A comparison between satisfying experiences marked between 2012 and 2011 Community Day shows a drop in all

categories¹⁵; there is an especially marked difference seen for the experiences ‘meeting new people’ and ‘spending time with friends and family’.

Figure 14: Satisfying Experiences (2012 vs. 2011)



Both Africans and African Americans found ‘connecting with my heritage’ a satisfying experience, while African Americans were more likely to select ‘connecting with others of African heritage that live locally’ as a satisfying experience compared to other descent groups. (Figures 15-16)

¹⁵ Two choices, ‘participating in activities’ and ‘seeing unique/beautiful artworks/performances’, were not asked on the 2011 Community Day survey and have no comparative data.

Figure 15: Connecting with Others of African Heritage That Live Locally (2012 vs. 2011)

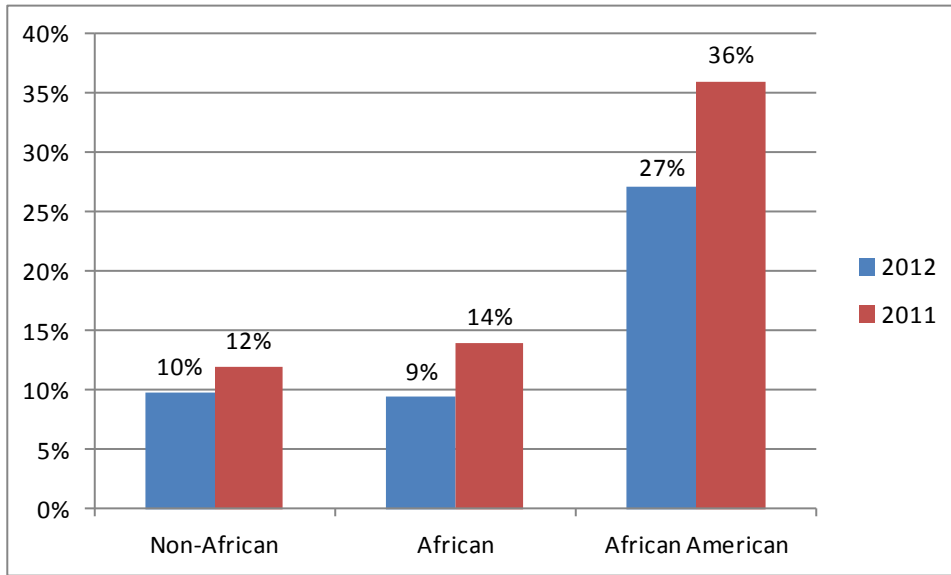
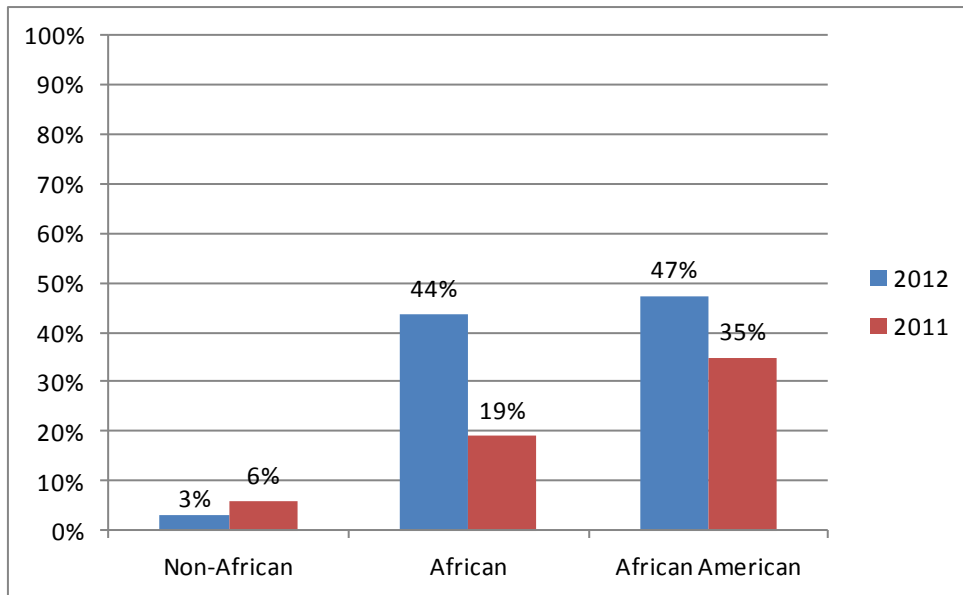


Figure 16: Connecting with My Heritage (2012 vs. 2011)



The most satisfying experiences for nearly all descent groups were the choices of ‘enriching my understanding of African art/culture’ and ‘seeing unique/beautiful artworks/performances’. However, fewer African respondents chose ‘enriching my understanding of African art/culture’, both when compared to Community Day 2011 and when compared with the other groups. (Figures 17-18, next page)

Figure 17: Enriching My Understanding of African Art/Culture (2012 vs. 2011)

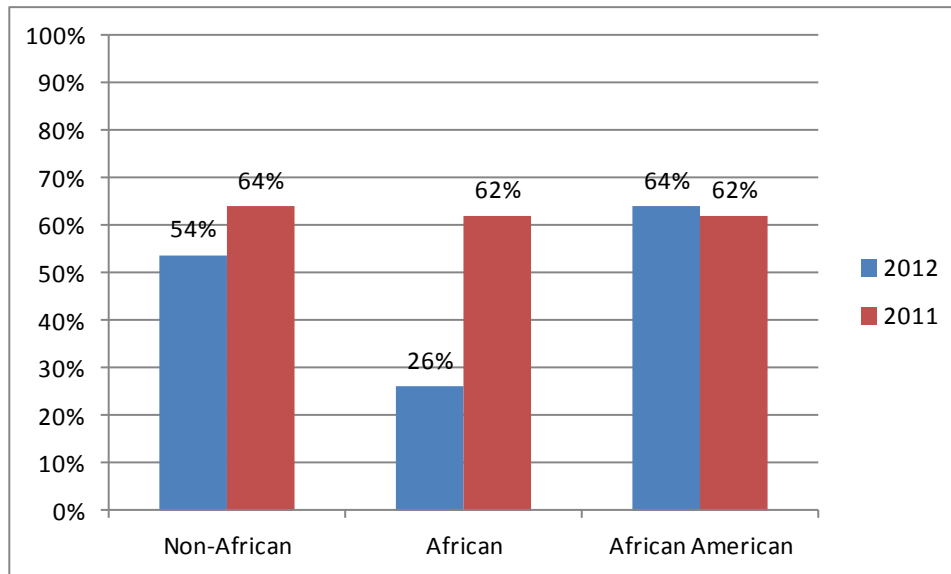
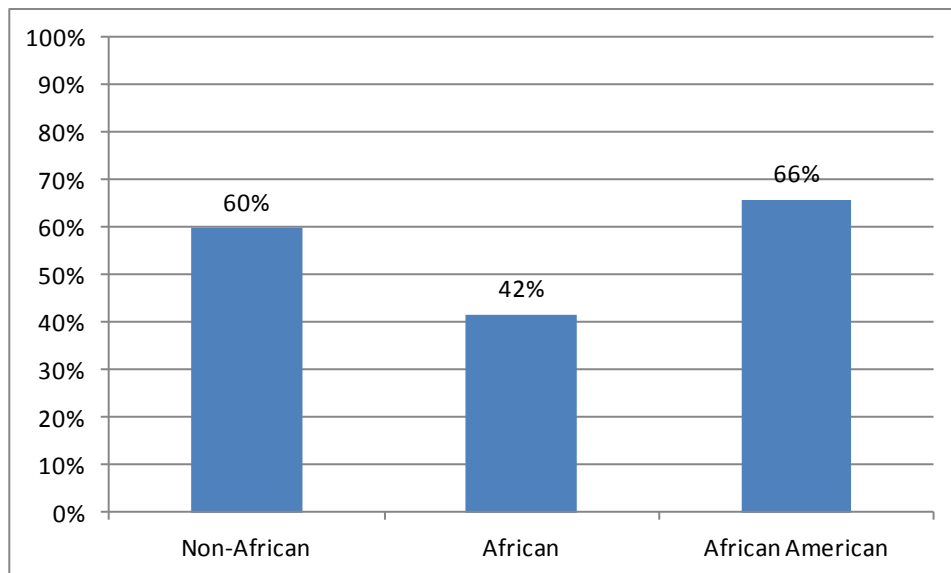


Figure 18: Seeing Unique/Beautiful Artworks/Performances¹⁶



¹⁶ Not asked for Community Day 2011

Surprises

Interviews

Many of the interviewees stated that they had few preconceived ideas about the Museum, due to it being their first time visiting. Despite this, visitors expressed excitement about what they encountered in the Museum. Many remarked that they were impressed by the diversity of the countries and cultures represented by the art on display. Some visitors were surprised to find contemporary art in the Museum while others were surprised by the presence of ancient art.

I guess the mix of modern art [was surprising]. It was an interesting juxtaposition when we saw the Lalla Essaydi exhibit mixed with the very political art mixed with the ancient Egyptian art. So that was surprising. And I wasn't expecting the community thing, so that was nice.

I didn't expect it [to be modern]. When you think of a museum you think of old ancient artifacts in glass cases and the idea that its more modern and more interactive [is really nice], especially a day like today where there's so much going on; it's really engaging the community.

Many interviewees were surprised by Community Day and most enjoyed how relaxed, friendly, and engaging it made the Museum. A few compared Community Day with the ambiance of other museums and stated that they preferred the atmosphere of this event.

Everything [is surprising]. It is different for me. I like the fact that [my daughter] likes it and she is learning things. I love it and it is exciting.

Social Interactions

Interviews

Interviewees had positive interactions with the Museum staff and volunteers.

Interviewer: You said earlier that the people are so personable. Please explain.

Visitor: Yes! I think the staff for all the activities were outstanding. Everyone was trying to be helpful, even the security staff. Everyone seemed to be very patient with all the questions and directing the people. I thought that was cool.

There were not many comments on interactions between museumgoers, except general statements that it was nice to see all the people there, such as, "It's good to see all different people coming in to be part of this."

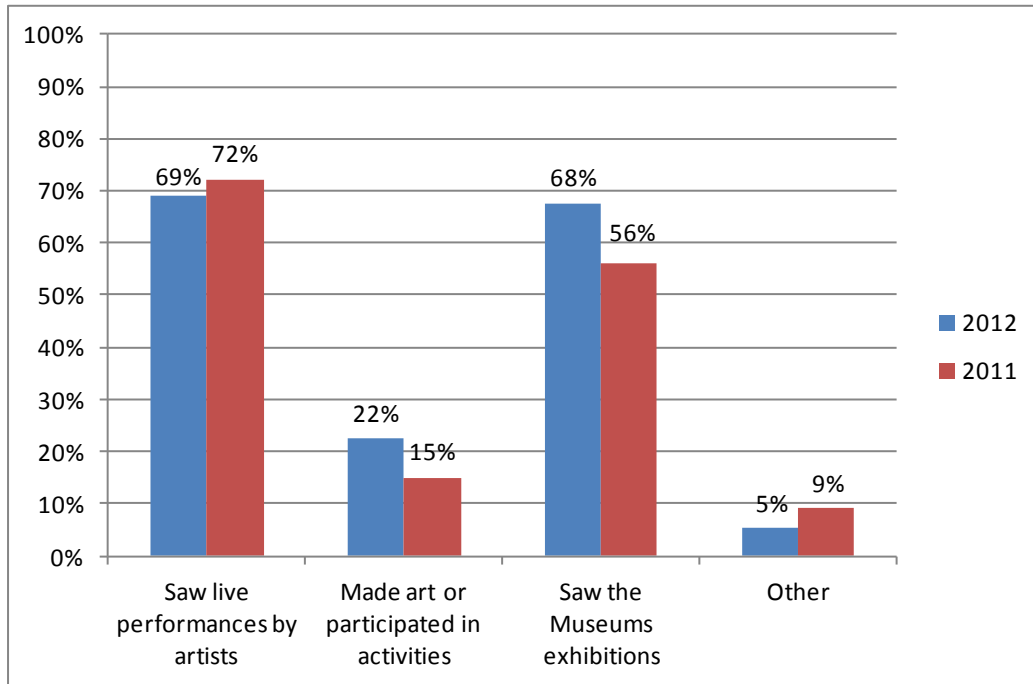
Activities

Survey

The most common activities respondents participated in were watching live performances (69%) and seeing the Museum's exhibitions (68%), while about one fifth (22%) of respondents made art or participated in activities. Compared to Community Day 2011, slightly fewer respondents saw

live performances, while slightly more saw the Museum’s exhibitions and made art or participated in an activity.

Figure 19: Participation in activities (2012 vs. 2011)



Interviews

On top of the normal exhibits in the Museum, visitors were able to participate in many activities and watch performances. Interviewees were amazed by the amount and diversity of interactive activities, including a scavenger hunt, henna tattoos, work/play/learning stations, pyramid painting, jewelry making, face painting, and performances of drumming, storytelling, dance, music, and a fashion show (for the scavenger hunt guide, see Appendix D). Visitors commented that due to the assortment of things to do, there was something to entertain visitors of all ages.



Henna tattoos

Because I saw there was Play-Doh, painting the [pyramids], out there the Zumba, and all this stuff. I’m like, “My kids would love this.”

For me, [it is important that a museum is interactive because] you can only learn so much by reading the panel and moving on. There’s something much more intellectually stimulating, an interaction you get and a broader conversation there that digs deeper,

that passive reading wouldn't do.



North African dance in a gallery displaying artwork by Lalla Essaydi

The Dressing the pART fashion show and the dance performances were attended the most by the interviewees. While most of the people interviewed who attended a dance performance enjoyed it, some thought that there needed to be more traditional African dance. Many visitors were very impressed and surprised by Dressing the pART.

First of all it [Dressing the pART] was just surprising. The outfits were great and detailed. It was almost like, "Am I looking at a real person or is this a statue?" I didn't know if they were authentic costumes or if they were made for the event. It's pretty cool.

Interviewees also took part in jewelry making, pyramid painting, hennas, and face painting. While other activities were mentioned, these seemed to be the ones in which interviewees most commonly participated. Other interviewees expressed a desire for more activities for adults, like storytelling or the gourd-making workshop.

A few people were interviewed before they had a chance to partake in the activities or while they were in the middle of their visit. Most interviewees expressed interest in participating in activities and exploring the Museum.

[Besides the jewelry making activity], we just watched a show upstairs in the pavilion. We're going to go do face painting and go check out some of the exhibits.

Some interviewees were less interested in attending the activities and more focused on the exhibits.

We also wanted to be sure we saw most of the exhibits before doing any of the events. But this is a great setup. I see kids running around being all excited and that's always exciting to see kids excited about something these days.

There were a few comments that the lighting was too low, which made it difficult to see some of the objects and read their labels, especially for people with visual impairments.

I think if you're visually impaired, you could have sometimes a brighter light source in some places, but for the most part it's pretty easy to get around. I like it here.

Although some people found the layout of the building confusing, most said that they liked the configuration of the building as well as the different exhibits. Some of the interviewees were hungry; they would have liked a place to get food and eat inside the Museum. One visitor thought that the Museum should have its own Discovery Room or children's area. Other visitors thought the

event was too loud and found it difficult to communicate to others in their group because of the noise.

It was good. I thought the speakers were a little loud on the top floor, especially the last thing. So I couldn't really communicate with the kids, but they even watched some of the North African dancing and the models.



Dressing the pART: Sculpture Gets Stylish Procession (My Closet LLC)

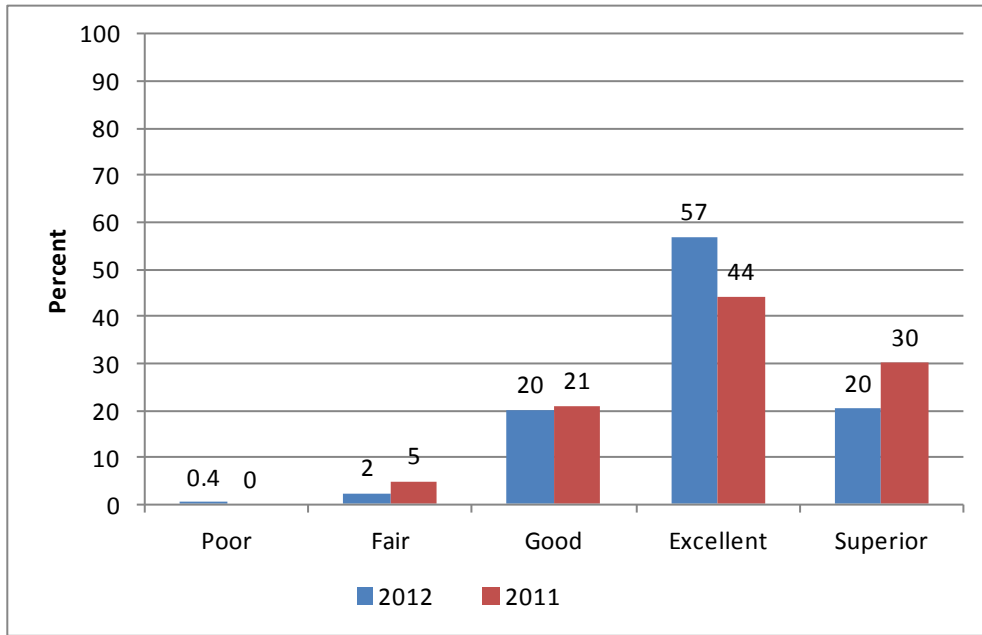
Outcomes

Overall Satisfaction

Survey

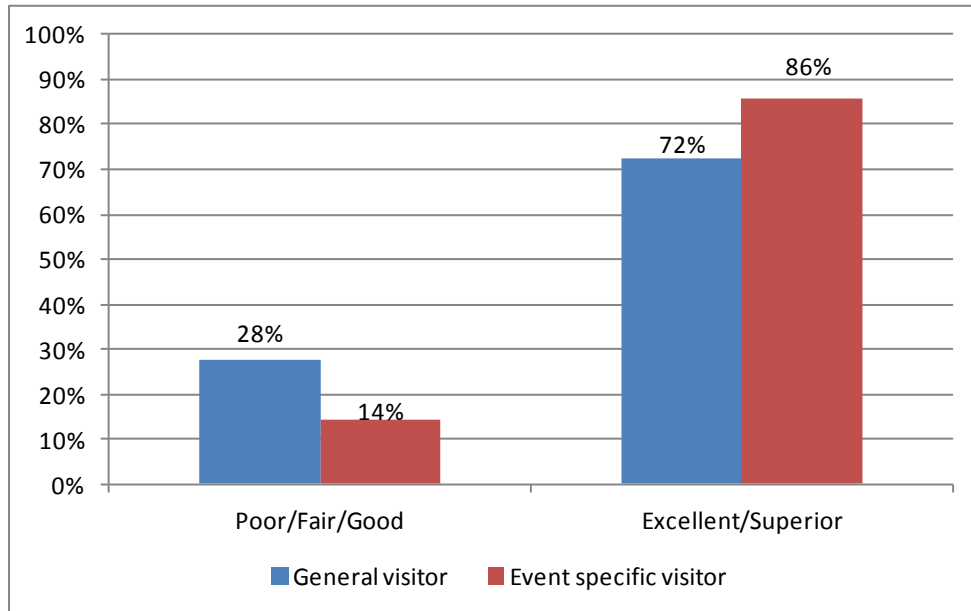
On OP&A's five-point scale (*poor, fair, good, excellent, superior*), about three-quarters of respondents rated their experience *Excellent* or *Superior* (57% *Excellent*, 20% *Superior*) while less than a quarter of respondents rated their experience as *Good* or below (0.4% *Poor*, 2% *Fair*, 20% *Good*). These ratings are comparable to Community Day 2011; however, ratings of *Superior* for 2011 were higher than 2012. (Figure 20, next page) Community Day 2012 received the average NMAfA exhibition *Superior* rating, which is 20%.

Figure 20: Overall Experience Ratings (2012 vs. 2011)



When experience ratings are combined (*Poor + Fair + Good* and *Excellent + Superior*), general visitors are more likely to provide a rating of *Poor/Fair/Good* than event-specific visitors¹⁷.

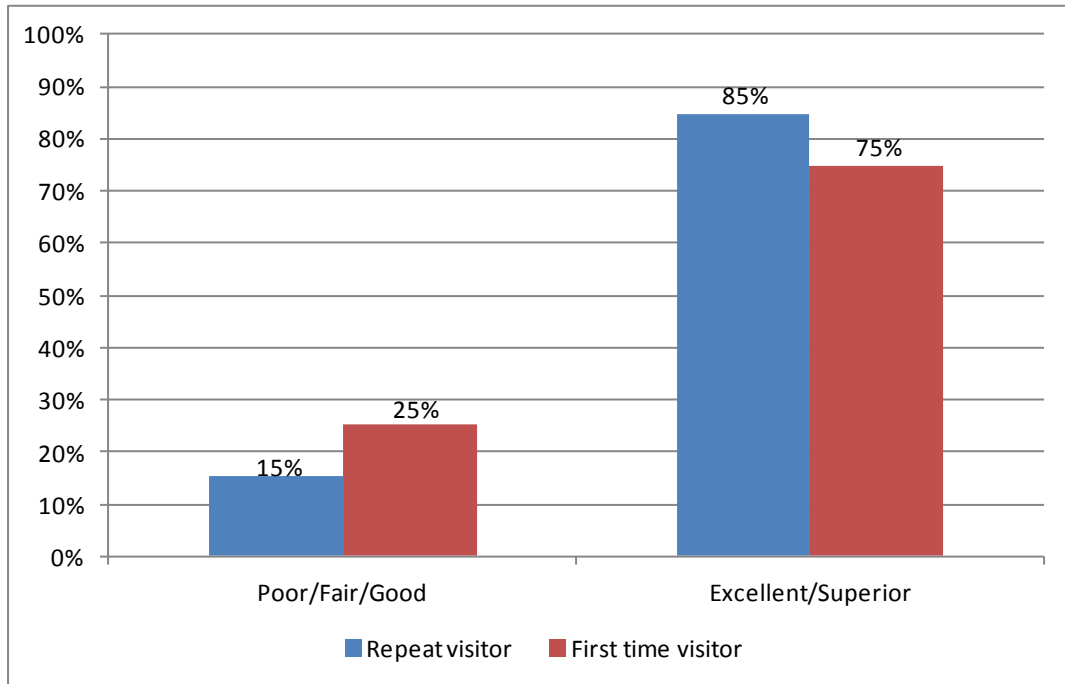
Figure 21: General vs. Event-Specific Visitor Experience Ratings



¹⁷ Compared with Community Day 2011, *Excellent/Superior* ratings from both general and event-specific visitors went up (67% *Excellent/Superior* for general visitors and 80% *Excellent/Superior* for event-specific visitors in 2011).

First time visitors to the Museum were also more likely to provide a rating of *Poor/Fair/Good* than repeat visitors¹⁸.

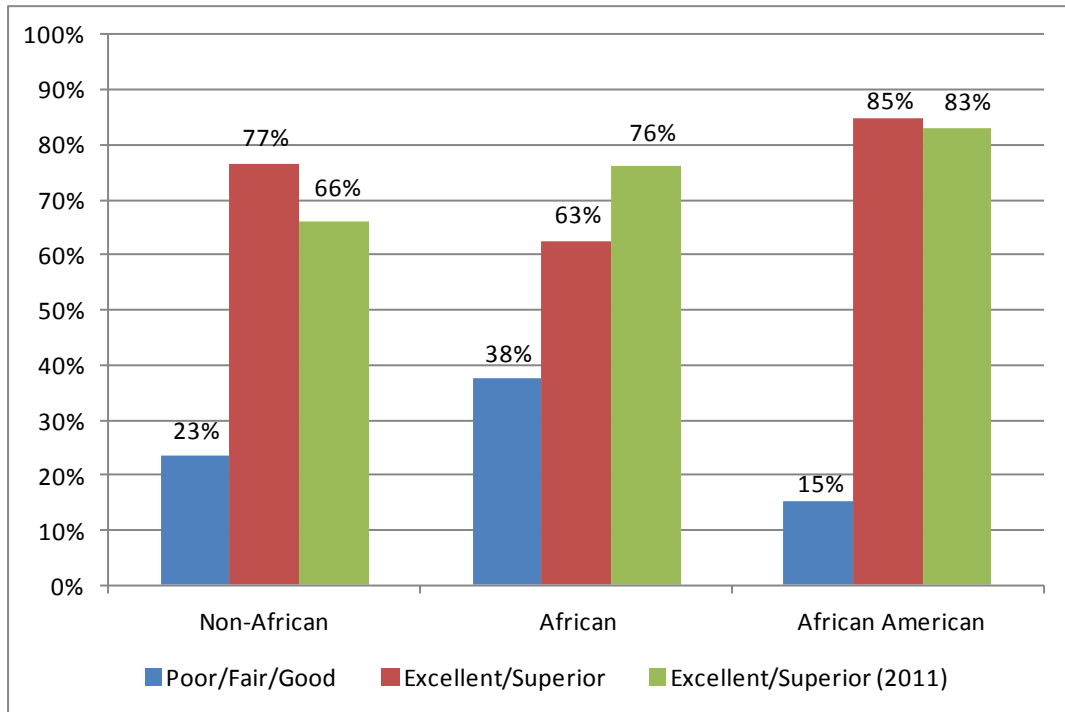
Figure 22: Repeat vs. First-Time Visitor Experience Ratings



The event was rated highly among all descent groups; however, African American respondents provided higher *Excellent/Superior* ratings than other descent groups. Compared with Community Day 2011, experience ratings of *Excellent/Superior* remained about the same for African American respondents, increased for Non-African respondents, and decreased for African respondents. (Figure 23, next page)

¹⁸ Compared to Community Day 2011, 2012 *Excellent/Superior* ratings are higher for repeat visitors (73% *Excellent/Superior* for 2011) and the same for first time visitors (75% *Excellent/Superior* for 2011).

Figure 23: Experience Ratings among Descent Groups (2012 vs. 2011)



Benefits

Interviews

Interviewees expressed many benefits of attending the event. There seemed to be eight general themes to these benefits: getting people into the Museum, providing something positive for young people to do, evaluating cultural awareness and keeping current, bringing people together, learning, counteracting the negative image of Africa portrayed in the media, reconnecting to African roots, and general enjoyment.

Getting people into the Museum:

I definitely think [that these types of events are important to draw people of my generation (college age) into the Museum]. If a person's not really interested in the history of a place, if you add a liveliness to it, it may interest them more. Like if you have the dancers and the real musicians they may be more curious to learn about the history and they may be more interested to delve into what the sculptures are.

This event is just the marketing tool to get them in and expose them to what's here. Maybe offer some tours while people are here.

Yes, [this is a good way to get people into the Museum]. For example, we went to the Sackler Gallery for the first time when it hosted a New Year's event. Maybe it was a community day also, and it was so lovely. I think we've been here five months and we've been there seven times. So maybe we will fall in love with this Museum also.

Providing something positive for young people to do:

It's good to see young people doing something positive with themselves.

[The Museum should] do this once a quarter or more often than once a year because I think it makes people aware and it brings kids out. I think, if we're talking about benefits, the real benefit is having young kids see the music and the art. It develops a dialogue between the parents and the kids about [culture]—rather than about how was your day at school? To which they say, "oh, I wrote, I painted". You could be engaging them. There are a lot of hands-on activities that create an open mindedness for art and possibly [help kids find] a talent. Maybe twice a year—just a little more often.

Evaluating cultural awareness and keeping current:

Well, the number one thing that brings me back is that it's the African Art Museum. Being of African American descent, it's always fascinating to see the art that comes out of Africa and to be able to elevate my cultural awareness about African and African American art.

Bringing people together:

The general benefit that I see is that as you walk around you see people of all nationalities coming through. White, Asian, African, American, Hispanic. The benefit is that we get to understand that culturally ... we're connected. Our cultures are very connected. Drumming that you hear today is similar to drumming you might hear in Cuba and other Latin American countries. I think what happens is that people come to these kinds of events and they become more culturally aware and more sensitive to other people. That's the greatest benefit, I think.

It is good to see different people. People come together to learn about different things. It is not just one race of people here; it's a whole lot of people. It is a good community thing to learn and interact and to find out what happened in the days of old.

Learning:

I think it's a great day and a great opportunity for people to come out and learn about art and I commend the Museum for having these kinds of activities.

It has been very educational, very cool. The exhibits are great. There is a lot you can learn from.

Hopefully the kids will learn a little bit from having some fun.

I did [learn about African culture or art]. I learned more about the depictions of women in African art just by coming through the womanhood side of this mosaic area, which was very nice. How they are so instrumental to African culture and to the pride that everyone feels from African culture

Interviewer: What do you feel that you've learned?

Visitor: Just history, culture, there's always something new to learn about.

Child: I learned about the planets. They have a lot of stars. They are really yellow and shiny. I did African dances. And I touched the water. I did the Zumba. I didn't paint my face yet.

A few people said that the event changed their understanding of Africa. The diversity of the cultures within Africa and the contemporary African art in the Museum amazed many visitors. The symbolic nature of the art surprised some and a few enjoyed seeing Africa from an African perspective instead of from an outsider's. Other interviewees did not have a change in perception, but they were reminded of past understanding or had their current perceptions confirmed.

In one sense [my experience at the Museum] tells me that there is a lot of art coming out of Africa. Africa as a continent is keeping up with the technology and art.

There's always one side of Africa you hear about in maybe the politics of Africa and the current affairs, but we are looking at Africa from the Africans' perspective. ... It's very interesting to see the African perspective and how they see themselves.

Now we know that the art that we see really has meaning, other than just our pleasure. There is a very meaningful statement in everything. There are statements being made, without speaking words.

In my opinion, when you think of African culture you think of sub-Saharan Africa; [this Museum expands our understanding of Africa].

[This event has] most definitely [contributed my understanding of Africa]! It made it enjoyable for me. It definitely made me love the culture more and be interested in learning more and coming back again.

Counteracting the negative image of Africa portrayed in the media:

It really changed my perspective of Africa, because a lot of the publicity toward Africa is very negative. So this Museum is like a celebration. ...Well, there is a lot of conflict in Africa and what they show on TV of Africa is very destitute and very violent. ... There is so much more to the culture than that, so this kind of shows that people do smile and have fun and dance there. It's not how it appears to be [in the media].

It's not just for [my daughter] to learn, it's for me to learn too. She cannot really read, but [I help her] by reading to her about the different cultures and places, the different tribes, the different ways to dance, and the different marriage [practices]; it is just different. It is different [from] what you read in the newspapers about Africa. Some of the stuff you read is depressing, but when you get here, you see that not everything is bad.

I feel a connection in the sense that I know that I am black men, with African roots, but I believe that the media as it is today doesn't always necessarily portray Africa in the best light. You don't ever really see a lot of African culture or anything else other than on the National Geographic channel. You don't get to see all the rich history unless you come to a museum like this. So these types of events are fantastic. It's more than what you see on National Geographic.

Reconnecting to African roots:

Being an African American man, sometimes you may get so caught up in the American side that you forget about the African side. So this gives you the opportunity to come back to your roots and to get a better understanding of both sides of what it is to be African American.

What I liked most too is that this here represents the true American society. There's ways to represent all different cultures and diversity in the city here. This is important, when there is an opportunity to reconnect to your roots and your past. It seems like there is something for everyone.

General enjoyment:

Mother: Yes [we are enjoying it]! She is having fun and so as long as she is having fun, I am having fun.

Interviewer: Are you having fun?

Daughter: I am having fun and I had a really great time.

It definitely brings some kind of funness to it. It kind of feels like it's coming alive.

Interviewer: Do you think they've learned anything other than just having fun? Does making these bracelets mean anything?

Visitor: I think they're mostly having fun.



A young visitor with her face painted.

A common comment was that Community Day should be held more than once a year. It was recommended that it be conducted anywhere from twice a year to every month. There was also praise that the Museum does such innovative, creative events like African Underground and Community Day.



African Mosaic: Egyptian eye + Egyptian-style choker necklace making (left) and Zumba (right)

Perceptions of the Museum

Interviews

Many of the interviewees did not limit their comments to only Community Day activities, and talked about the Museum and its exhibits. But few were there only to experience the Museum and not to participate in the event. Visitors loved having all the collections together in one place.

I think it's great. Normally you wouldn't be able to see so many things in one place. I don't think so. It's very nice. It's so big, as I told you before. If you go around you can have a picture of the culture of the African people of all the regions.

A few interviewees commented that the labels for the objects, while good, left museumgoers wanting more. A few visitors wanted more information on the people and culture of Africa. They also wanted information on how the different objects fit into those cultures since most African art has a purpose. Some of the interviewees wanted more basic versions of the labels for children and recommended trying to find ways of building levels of information into the labels to accommodate the different levels of education of the visitors. It was recommended that educators should be asked to get involved to help create labels with educational benefit.

I'm thinking about it from a child's point of view too. If you had a children's exhibit with different language, maybe it could better explain to children what they're looking at. Because if I was a kid, I probably would have a hard time trying to understand the labels. I think it would probably better inform the kids. As far as my point of view [as an adult], it's excellent.

I guess I want to know more about the culture of the people who did the art. [And] what [the art is] used for, because African art has a purpose. They didn't do this just to hang on the wall. It had a function. I'd like to know more about the function of the art.

There were many comments on making the Museum more interactive. While some people were interested in the technical side of interaction, such as through smartphones and audio tours, others preferred more personal interaction with docents, Museum personnel, academics, and artists.

I kind of prefer the people. There was one video and I enjoyed that it was there, but I would have preferred if someone was there. So it would have been great to have someone to ask. Like if there were people over by the snake, I could say "Hey, tell me about this."

There was a request for more seating, especially with the videos. Overall, people enjoyed being able to tie what they viewed at the Museum to current events. The exhibits that most people mentioned viewing were *African Cosmos*, *Lalla Essaydi*, and *African Mosaic*. There was a concern voiced about Nigerian art being overly represented and that it would be nice to have better defined separations of the art from different countries so visitors get a better understanding that Africa contains many countries with individual art and culture. Some of the interviewees stated that they would have liked to see some historical displays or information added to the Museum.

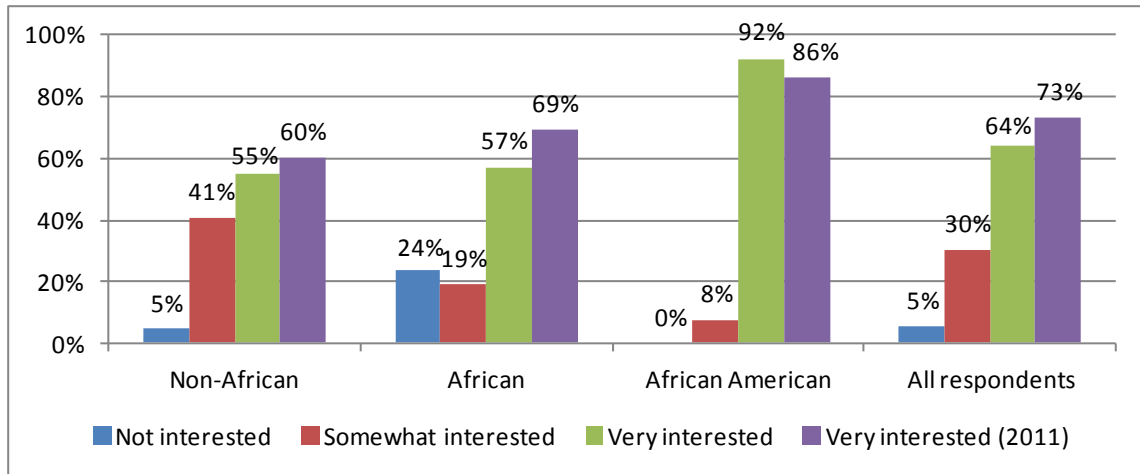
I don't know if there was any historical presentation. It would be interesting if there was. I know that's lacking for a lot of community events about Africa. It's usually more like music and art, but they don't really get in to the political history. ... I think it's important. I think a lot of Africans who grow up in America don't get to know about the leaders who made the continent and the countries what they are today. I think that could be incorporated.

Future Plans

Survey

Interest in future events similar to Community Day was high among all respondents. However, African Americans were more likely to be *very interested* in attending events like Community Day than other descent groups. Compared with results from the Community Day 2011 survey, overall interest in events like this decreased among all descent groups, with the exception of African Americans. (Figure 24, next page).

Figure 24: Interest in More Events Like This (2012 vs. 2011)



Interviews

About two thirds of the visitors interviewed expressed a desire to return to the Museum. While no one said they did not intend to come back, one couple stated that they would only return for another event or if they were bringing someone else. Many noted that they had such a pleasant time they would bring friends and family next time.

So [the Museum has] been a long time in existence and is growing. I am a school teacher, so I bring students here. And I come to workshops for teachers here. It's full circle.

Yes, this is really cool. Having the music in the back is really cool. I've been to a lot of quiet museums and it's nice to contemplate, but this feels more like a community.

I love to bring my kids here get them enlightened. When we come back here as a family, I definitely will bring them. It would be nice if Community Day was going on.

Some of the people interviewed said they would come back because there were too many things to do in one visit. Others wanted to come back to look at the exhibits when the Museum is quieter.

My grandson found some of it strange. So I was telling his mother on the phone that we really need to bring him back. And then we can take more time in the exhibit hall. . . . Yeah, [we'll come back to see the exhibits], because it's too much going on. So when we come back, it can be more focused on that. But I did spend time in front of the palace door and we talked about that.

There is also excitement about the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the benefits it will bring in the future. Interviewees were excited to see how the museums would work together.

Conclusion



Overall, visitors enjoyed the event and felt that they, and their companions, had benefited. There were differences between the attendees of 2011 and 2012. For example, a higher proportion of 2012 visitors were neither African nor of African origin. One explanation could be that last year's marketing efforts to attract African populations from neighborhoods in D.C. was effective, primarily in spreading the word within communities (the number one way that visitors heard about the event in 2011 was by word of mouth). In 2012, the Museum's emphasis was less on targeting Africans and African Americans and more on welcoming everyone to the Museum. As well, this year's outdoor activities were highly visible, which may be why more visitors were passersby than in the previous year.

Community Day was successful in drawing new visitors; a third (33%) of first-time visitors visited in order to attend Community Day. While the event attracts many different people, it is particularly successful at attracting African Americans, who were most likely to visit for Community Day (47%), followed closely by African respondents (46%). Non-African respondents were less likely to have visited for Community Day (34%).


While many of the activities were geared toward children, more people were travelling in groups of adults as opposed to families. It may be worth investing in new promotion strategies to encourage more families to attend. Over the longer haul, NMAfA will build a reputation as a place that serves families by offering consistent children-friendly programs, such as Community Day.

Community Day was a fun-while-learning, positive, and uplifting experience for most visitors, and some thought it should be held more than once a year, anywhere from twice a year to every month. There is interest and potential for the Museum to be a social hub for families and people in the area, as it already has a strong record of innovative, creative events, like African Underground and Community Day, to build on.

Appendix A - Event Schedule



Smithsonian
National Museum of African Art



Community Day

September 15, 2012
1–5:30 p.m.



Re-imagine Africa: Eclectic Vibrations

Emcee: Shelly Bell

10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Under African Skies **PAVILION**
20-minute planetarium show

1–5 p.m.
Photo scavenger hunt **HAUPT GARDEN**
Membership **SUBLEVEL 1** [*museum store corridor*]
Cultural table **SUBLEVEL 3**
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt

1–4:30 p.m.
Interactive science demonstrations **HAUPT GARDEN + SUBLEVEL 1**
Albus Cavus
Interactive Mural Pyramids
OUTSIDE COURTYARD [*access via exit by elevators in Pavilion*]
Albus Cavus
African Mosaic: Egyptian eye + Egyptian-style
choker necklaces **SUBLEVEL 2** [*workshop*]
Pier Penic
Face painting and temporary tattoos **SUBLEVEL 3**
Miss Busy Bee



Cakes by Sweet Bobbies **SUBLEVEL 2**

2-4:30 p.m.

SUBLEVEL 1 [*Lalla Essaydi: Revisions*]

SUBLEVEL 2 [*African Cosmos: Stellar Arts*]

Dressing the pART: Sculpture Gets Stylish
My Closet LLC

1 p.m.

Zumba **HAUPT GARDEN** [*fountain*]
Hips Fitness with Michelle Hunter

Groove Elements: Youth Hip Hop **PAVILION**
Joy of Motion Dance Center

1:30 p.m.

Qi Gong class **SUBLEVEL 2** [*lecture hall*]
Manifest Ra

2 p.m.

Zumba **HAUPT GARDEN** [*fountain*]
Hips Fitness with Michelle Hunter

Drumming & Storytelling **PAVILION**
Brother AH and the World Music Group Ensemble
Barbara Johnson, guest storyteller

2:30 p.m.

North African Dance **SUBLEVEL 1** [*Lalla Essaydi: Revisions*]
Silk Road Dance Company

3 p.m.

Zumba **HAUPT GARDEN** [*fountain*]
Hips Fitness with Michelle Hunter

3:30 p.m.

Farafina Funkdified **PAVILION**
The Adinkra Group

North African Dance **SUBLEVEL 1** [*Lalla Essaydi: Revisions*]
Silk Road Dance Company

Restorative therapies **SUBLEVEL 2** [*lecture hall*]
Elva Anderson

4 p.m.

Zumba **HAUPT GARDEN** [*fountain*]
Hips Fitness with Michelle Hunter

Qi Gong class **SUBLEVEL 2** [*lecture hall*]
Manifest Ra

4:45 p.m.

Dressing the pART: Sculpture Gets Stylish Procession **PAVILION**
My Closet LLC

Appendix B – Survey

Community Day

National Museum of African Art

September 15, 2012

Was today your first visit to this museum, the National Museum of African Art?

- Yes
- No, I have visited it approximately ___ times before

Today, did you come to this museum specifically for this event, *Community Day*?

- No
- Yes

Please rate your overall experience at today's event.

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent
- Superior

How did you hear about this program?

[Mark all that apply]

- Friends/family
- Ad in a newspaper
- Blog/other website
- Museum website
- I was invited to perform/contribute
- Walked-by
- Facebook/twitter
- Other: _____

What experiences did you find *especially* satisfying at today's event, *Community Day*? [Mark one or more]

- Enriching my understanding of African art/cultures
- Connecting with others of African heritage that live locally
- Seeing rare or beautiful artworks
- Connecting with my heritage
- Spending time with friends and family
- Meeting new people
- Participating in activities
- Other: _____

What did you do at today's event? [Mark one or more]

- Saw live performances by artists (dance, readings, etc.)
- Made art/participated in activities (e.g., Zumba, Qi Gong, face painting, etc.)
- Saw the Museum's exhibitions
- Other _____

How interested are you in....

	Not Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
African art/cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
African history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health and wellness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hip hop culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fashion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending more events like this	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you of African descent?

- No
- Yes, I was born in Africa, specify country: _____
How long have you lived in the U.S.?
- My parent(s) were born in Africa, specify country(ies): _____
- Yes, I identify myself to be of African origins.

*Where do you live?

- United States, specify ZIP code:
- Another country, specify: _____

*Are you... Male Female

*What is your age?

*With whom are you visiting today?

- I am with a school group/organized group
- I am alone
- I am with other people

*If you are with others, how many people other than yourself are with you? [Write the NUMBER of people]

- # of Adults (18 and over)
- # of Youth (12 to 17)
- # of Children (11 and under)

Thank you for your input!

Appendix C – Interview Guide

Community Day event, Saturday, September 15, 2012

Hi – we are talking to visitors about their experiences at Community Day today... I would like to ask you some questions.

Reasons for attending and Connection to the Museum

What brought you to the Museum today? Did you come specifically for Community Day?

Follow up: If yes, why?

Have you been here, the National Museum of African Art, before?

Follow up: If yes, tell me about your last visit. If no, why haven't you been here before?

Experiences at event and Learning

Please tell me about your experience here today at this event.

What activities did you participate in? What did you like the most?

Did anything disappoint you?

Did anything surprise you? If yes, what? Why?

Did you find out anything about African culture or art today that you didn't know before? If yes, what?

Has your understanding of Africa changed or been enriched by your experiences here today? If yes, how? If no, why not?

Benefits

What are the benefits of coming to this event, for you specifically? (Out of all the benefits you just described, what do you think is the most important to you?)

Connection to Africa and Social experiences

What is your connection [if any] to Africa?

Tell me about any experiences you have had with other people at this event today. (friends/family, staff or strangers)

Future involvement with the Museum

Would you be interested in coming back to the Museum? If yes, to do what? Why?

Appendix D – Scavenger Hunt Guide

READY FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP?

Form a team with a small group of friends or family. Name your team and pick an adult to take pictures with a camera (or camera phone) of your scavenger hunt adventures.

READY TO BEGIN?

Choose at least 10 tasks from the list. Once the team has completed the scavenger hunt, bring your photos back to the table to get a prize!

WANT TO BE A PART OF OUR SCAVENGER HUNT SESSION?

Tell your team photographer to tweet (@NMAFA) or to email your favorite team photos to DonnellyC@sl.edu or ShiversN@sl.edu! Select photos will be uploaded onto our website. By sending your photos to African Art, you agree to allow the Scarborough Institution to access your images for public use.

Team name

Take a picture of your team members . . .

- making silly expressions after getting their faces painted
- posing like a model with their necklaces from the art workshop
- with something in each color of the rainbow
- using their bodies to spell out A-F-R-I-C-A
- jumping in the air
- high-fiving someone who is from Africa
- waving like royalty on the museum's grand staircase
- with one of the dancers from the Silk Road Dance Company
- showing their muscles at the Zumba fitness workout
- rocking out with Farafina Funkdified
- sneaking into another group's photo

- looking through a window with someone in traditional African dress
- hugging someone who works at the museum
- dancing in front of the Castle
- around the National Museum of African Art display sign outside the garden gates
- with something from five different African countries (list the countries below!)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix E – Frequency Table

Was today your first visit to this museum, the National Museum of African Art?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	No(First time visitor)	20%	29%	38%	26%
	Yes(Repeat)	80%	71%	62%	74%
	Average number of previous visits:				
	Average	16	8	21	17
	Median	10	3	5	10
Today, did you come to this museum specifically for this event, <i>Community Day</i>?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Yes	34%	46%	48%	39%
	No	66%	54%	52%	61%
Please rate your overall experience at today's event.		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Poor	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Fair	2%	8%	0%	2%
	Good	21%	28%	15%	20%
	Excellent	61%	44%	56%	57%
	Superior	16%	20%	29%	20%
How did you hear about this program? [Mark one or more]		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Friends/family	32%	26%	26%	29%
	Walked by	34%	34%	43%	37%
	Ad in a newspaper	2%	10%	4%	3%
	I was invited to perform/contribute	1%	1%	8%	3%
	Museum website	9%	4%	2%	6%
	Other	24%	22%	15%	22%
	Other website	2%	5%	2%	2%
	Facebook/Twitter	2%	1%	5%	2%

What experiences did you find especially satisfying at today's event? [Mark one or more]		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Enriching my understanding of African art/cultures	54%	26%	64%	54%
	Connecting with others of African heritage that live locally	10%	9%	27%	14%
	Seeing unique/beautiful artworks/ performances	60%	42%	66%	59%
	Connecting with my heritage	3%	44%	47%	18%
	Spending time with friends and family	15%	11%	42%	22%
	Meeting new people	8%	13%	13%	10%
	Participating in activities	18%	10%	26%	19%
	Other	9%	25%	9%	10%
What did you do at today's event? [Mark one or more]					
		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Saw live performances by artists (dance, readings, etc.)	68%	63%	74%	69%
	Made art/ participated in activities	20%	51%	20%	22%
	Saw the Museum's exhibitions	71%	26%	74%	68%
	Other	4%	3%	8%	5%

How interested are you in...		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
African art/cultures	Not interested	3%	5%	0%	2%
	Somewhat interested	34%	18%	6%	25%
	Very interested	63%	77%	94%	73%
African history	Not interested	5%	0%	0%	3%
	Somewhat interested	41%	20%	10%	30%
	Very interested	54%	80%	90%	67%
Health & Wellness	Not interested	9%	0%	2%	7%
	Somewhat interested	36%	62%	12%	32%
	Very interested	55%	38%	86%	62%
Hip hop culture	Not interested	27%	38%	8%	23%
	Somewhat interested	39%	29%	25%	35%
	Very interested	34%	33%	67%	42%
Fashion	Not interested	20%	9%	0%	14%
	Somewhat interested	42%	50%	13%	34%
	Very interested	38%	41%	87%	52%
Attending more events like this	Not interested	4%	24%	0%	5%
	Somewhat interested	41%	19%	8%	30%
	Very interested	55%	57%	92%	64%
Are you African descent?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	No	100%	0%	0%	65%
	Yes, I was born in Africa	0%	50%	0%	5%
	Yes, my parents were born in Africa	0%	50%	0%	4%
	Yes, I identify myself to be of African origins	0%	0%	100%	26%
Where do you live?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	United States	75%	96%	96%	82%
	Another country	25%	4%	4%	18%
	Local	35%	39%	55%	60%
	Non local	65%	61%	45%	40%

Are you male or female?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Male	46%	22%	37%	36%
	Female	54%	78%	63%	64%
What is your age?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	Under 21	12%	10%	9%	11%
	21-29	21%	10%	34%	23%
	30-39	25%	38%	15%	23%
	40-59	26%	38%	28%	28%
	60-100	15%	4%	14%	14%
	Mean	35	30	36	39
	Median	35	35	31	36
With whom are you visiting today?		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	I am with a school group/organized group	6%	12%	11%	7%
	I am alone	23%	36%	17%	23%
	I am with others	71%	52%	72%	70%
If you are with others, how many people <u>other than yourself</u> are with you? [Write NUMBER of people]		Non-African	African	African American	All visitors
	No answer	5%	8%	4%	7%
	Adults only	41%	24%	45%	40%
	Adults with youth under 18	22%	20%	17%	22%
	Unaccompanied Adult	21%	32%	21%	20%
	Unaccompanied youth	2%	4%	2%	2%
	Unspecified others	3%	0%	3%	3%
	Organized group	6%	12%	8%	7%