

MORE ASIAN ART EXPERIENCES:
VISITOR PREFERENCES AND RESPONSES TO
TWELVE CENTURIES OF JAPANESE ART FROM THE IMPERIAL COLLECTION

Institutional Studies Office

Smithsonian Institution



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*TWELVE CENTURIES OF JAPANESE ART FROM THE IMPERIAL COLLECTION***

Steven J Smith

Andrew J. Pekarik

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Institutional Studies Office
Smithsonian Institution
900 Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20560
(202) 786-2289

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Abstract

Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collection was a special exhibition in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. This study was conducted primarily to replicate the results from the September, 1997 study of the Sackler exhibition *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion*. The Institutional Studies Office collected data in a systematic survey of visitors at the Sackler Gallery main entrance, *Twelve Centuries* entrance, and the *Twelve Centuries* exit.

Twelve Centuries visitors were more experienced with the Galleries compared to Sackler visitors during the *Puja* study. They included more Asians and more suburban residents.

As in *Puja*, answers to questions about satisfying experiences with Asian art define two sub-groups of similar size among all visitors entering the Sackler and the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition. One sub-group consists of visitors who said (either in their first or second choice) that they find aesthetics most satisfying ("moved by beauty"); the other is composed of those who said that they find information most satisfying ("enrich my knowledge"). The third sub-group consists of those who chose something other than aesthetics or information as their most satisfying type of experience with Asian art in general.

Out of every 10 visitors, three chose aesthetics and information; three chose aesthetics but not information; three chose information but not aesthetics; and one chose neither aesthetics nor information.

If we look at the first choice of most satisfying Asian art experience, we find that approximately one third (36%) chose aesthetics, one third (33%) chose information, and one third (31%) chose one of the other nine alternatives.

Half (52%) of the visitors interviewed indicated that they had come to the Sackler to see the *Twelve Centuries* Exhibition. *Twelve Centuries* was most satisfying to visitors as an aesthetic experience. *Twelve Centuries* was less satisfying to visitors as an information experience.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the individuals who worked with us on this study of visitors to the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition.

Sarah Ridley, Assistant Head of Education for the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery worked with us in coordinating the study. The exhibition curators, Jim Ulak, Curator of Japanese Art, and Ann Yonemura, Associate Curator of Japanese Art, helped us to determine what information from exhibition visitors would be useful to the staff.

In the Institutional Studies Office, special thanks are due to Jean M. Kalata who coordinated the data collection and Kaya Townsend who assisted with every stage of the study, from pre-testing questionnaires to report preparation.

Of course, without the participation of nearly 500 visitors to the Sackler Gallery, this study would not have been possible. Their participation in the survey is appreciated.

Zahava D. Doering, Director
Institutional Studies Office

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Introduction

Twelve Centuries of Japanese Art from the Imperial Collection, a special exhibition of Japanese painting and calligraphy, was presented from December 14, 1997 until March 8, 1998 in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Because of the fragility of many of the items, the exhibition was presented in three installments, lasting approximately 3 weeks each.¹

This study was conducted primarily as a follow-up to the September, 1997 study of the Sackler exhibition *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion*. That study indicated that the audience could be divided into three major groups based on the experiences with Asian art that visitors indicated were most satisfying to them. The three groups were 1) those who found aesthetic experiences most satisfying, 2) those who preferred information, and 3) those who preferred other types of experiences. The *Puja* study also indicated that visitors were most likely to choose information as their most satisfying type of experience in the *Puja* exhibition.²

The *Twelve Centuries* study sought to replicate these results with a larger sample, at a different time of year, and with an exhibition that was less likely to be seen as an information experience. Additional questions asked visitors about aspects of the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition that were of interest to the Sackler staff.

METHOD

The Institutional Studies Office conducted a systematic survey of visitors at three locations: the Sackler Gallery main entrance, the *Twelve Centuries* entrance, and the *Twelve Centuries* exit. A total of 480 interviews were completed out of 514 attempts, giving an overall response rate of 93 percent.

¹ December 14, 1997 - January 7, 1998, January 13 - February 4, 1998, and February 10 - March 8, 1998.

² Pekarik, A. J., Doering, Z. D. & Kalata, J. M. (1998). *The Asian Art Experience: Visitor Preferences and Responses to Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion*. (Report No. 98-4). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Key Results

THE VISITORS

Comparing those who entered the Sackler Gallery during the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition with those who entered the Sackler Gallery during the *Puja* study (Table A-1), we find that those who came during *Twelve Centuries* were more suburban (43% vs. 26%), more likely to come with one or more companions (72% vs. 60%), and more likely to be US-resident Asians (17% vs. 11%).

Twelve Centuries visitors were also more experienced with the Galleries compared to Sackler visitors during the *Puja* study:

- a higher percentage of visitors during the *Twelve Centuries* study had visited both the Sackler and the Freer previously (55% v. 42%); and
- a higher percentage of visitors during the *Puja* study had never been to either the Sackler or the Freer previously (41% vs. 31%).

EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES

Entering visitors were asked, "For a moment, look back on your experiences in Asian art exhibitions, and think about which ones were most satisfying. I'd like you to choose from this list the one kind of experience that has tended to be most satisfying for you when looking at Asian art." Visitors at the end of the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition were asked, "For a moment look back on your experience in this exhibition, and think about what was most satisfying. I'd like you to choose from this list the one kind of experience that was most satisfying for you when looking at this exhibition."

The same list of experience alternatives was used for both questions. The list offered 11 options: (The words in parentheses are abbreviations used in this report.)

- I see my children learning new things. (children)
- I enrich my knowledge, gain information or understanding. (information)
- I feel a spiritual connection. (spiritual)
- I imagine myself in other times or places. (imagination)
- I am moved by the beauty of the art. (aesthetics)
- I think what it would be like to own such things. (own)
- I continue my professional development. (professional)
- I see old, rare objects and paintings. (rare objects)
- I share a relaxing visit with friends or family. (social)
- I recall my travels, childhood experiences, other memories. (memories)
- Other: _____ (other)

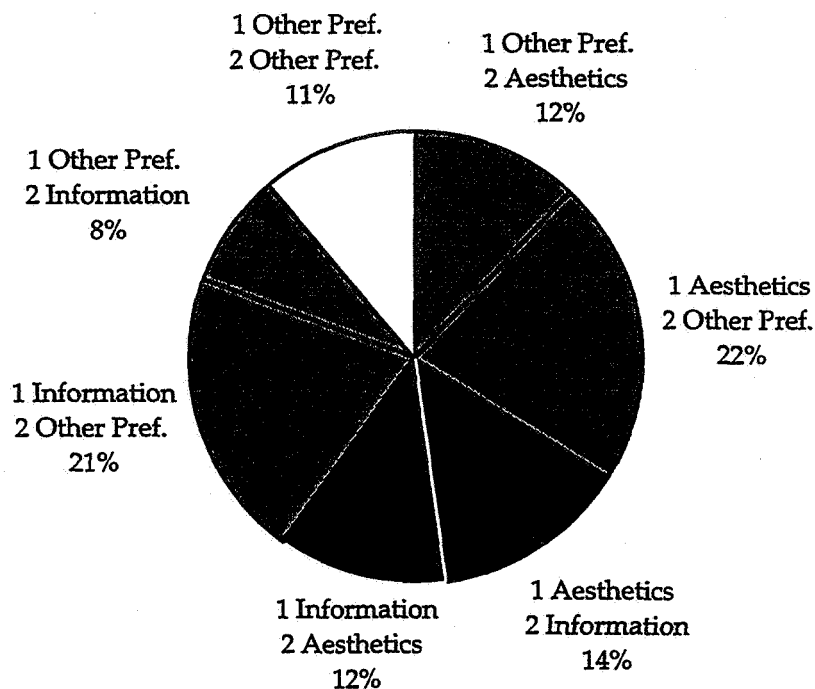
After one of these statements was selected, the visitor was asked for a second choice.

As in *Puja*, answers to questions about satisfying experiences with Asian art define two sub-groups of similar size among all visitors entering the Sackler and the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition. One sub-group consists of visitors who said (either in their first or second choice) that they find aesthetics most satisfying ("moved by beauty"); the other is composed of those who said that they find information most satisfying ("enrich my knowledge"). The third sub-group consists of those who chose something other than aesthetics or information as their most satisfying type of experience with Asian art in general.

If we graph both the first and second choices that visitors made on entering the Gallery or the exhibition, we find considerable overlap in these preference categories, as shown in Figure 1. (See also Table A-2.)

Out of every 10 visitors, three chose aesthetics and information (solid black slices in Figure 1); three chose aesthetics but not information (shaded slices on the right); three chose information but not aesthetics (shaded slices on the left); and one chose neither aesthetics nor information (white slice).

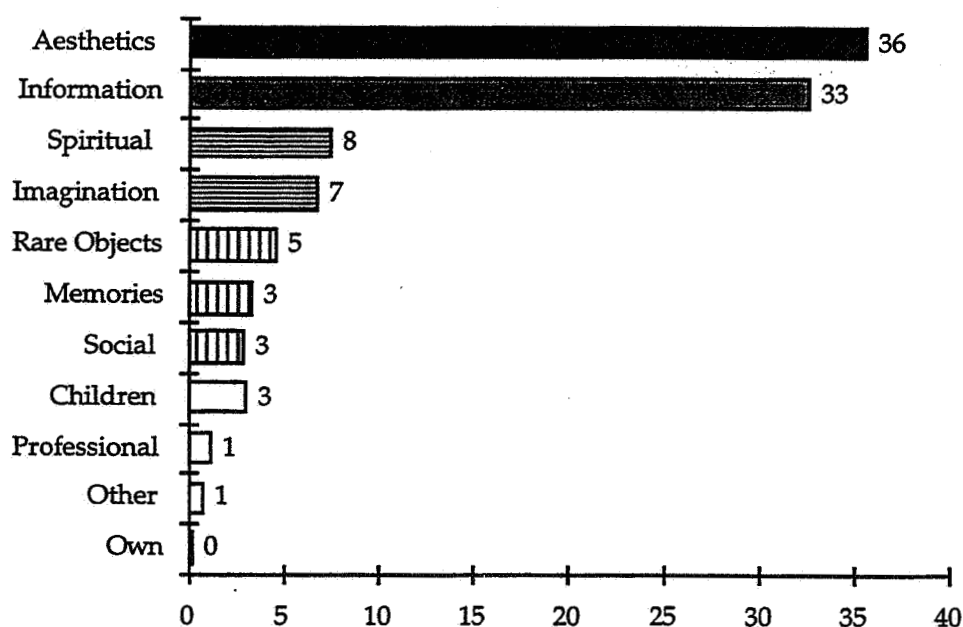
Figure 1
Most Satisfying Asian Art Experiences
First and Second Choice
(In Percent)



Source: Table A-2

If we look at the first choice of most satisfying Asian art experience, we find that approximately one third (36%) chose aesthetics (black bar in Figure 2), one third (33%) chose information (shaded bar in Figure 2), and one third (31%) chose something else. See Table A-3. Those who prefer experiences other than aesthetics or information can be further divided into two sub-types: those who prefer either spiritual or imagination (15%), and those who prefer either memory, social, rare object, or own (11%).³ A spiritual or imaginative experience tends to be more private, introspective, and abstract, while memories, social, rare object or own imply a more direct connection to the external and the concrete.

Figure 2
Most Satisfying Asian Art Experiences (First Choice Only)
(In Percent)



Source: Table A-3

³The remainder consists of the 5% who prefer kids, professional development or other. The subdivision is based on patterns in the combinations of first and second choices. See Table A-2.

TWELVE CENTURIES VISITORS

Half (52%) of the visitors interviewed indicated that they had come to the Sackler to see the *Twelve Centuries* Exhibition, and another 11 percent came for other specific reasons. Visitors entering *Twelve Centuries* did not differ from visitors entering the Sackler Gallery in any demographic characteristics.⁴

Twelve Centuries was most satisfying to visitors as an aesthetic experience. Forty percent of visitors exiting *Twelve Centuries* said that their most satisfying experience in the exhibition was aesthetic. By comparison, 36 percent of entering visitors said that their most satisfying experiences with Asian art in general were aesthetic. (See Figure 3 and Table A-3.)

Visitors to *Twelve Centuries* also found special satisfaction with rare objects and social experiences. They were more likely to select these two types of experience than entering visitors who were asked what was most satisfying for them about Asian art in general. (See Table A-4.)

Twelve Centuries was less satisfying to visitors as an information experience. Although one-third of entering visitors said that they found information experiences most satisfying with Asian art in general, only 17 percent found such experiences most satisfying in *Twelve Centuries*.

When asked specifically if they learned anything new about Japanese art or history in the exhibition, eight in ten (82%) said that they had learned something new, and four in ten (43%) gave an example of learning that could be categorized as information.⁵

Seven in ten visitors (69%) said that they were surprised by something in the exhibition, primarily by the Western-influenced oil paintings of the Meiji Period.⁶

Despite the fact that over one-third of the entering visitors were oriented towards learning information about Asian art, the optional audio tour (with cassette player and headphones) was not popular. Three out of four visitors (77%) noticed it, but only one in ten visitors (9%) took the tour.⁷ Younger visitors (under 30) were less likely to notice the audio tour, as were people who gave themselves above-average ratings in their knowledge of Asian art.⁸

⁴They were different in some other ways, however (see Table A-4). Visitors entering the Sackler were more likely to have not visited the Freer Gallery the day of the interview, visitors exiting *Twelve Centuries* were more likely to say they intend to visit the Freer, and visitors entering *Twelve Centuries* were more likely to have already visited the Freer the day of the interview. These results imply that Sackler visitors were more likely to visit the Freer only after they had seen *Twelve Centuries*, and that some who entered the Freer came to the Sackler later to attend the exhibition.

⁵See Appendix B, Q12 for details.

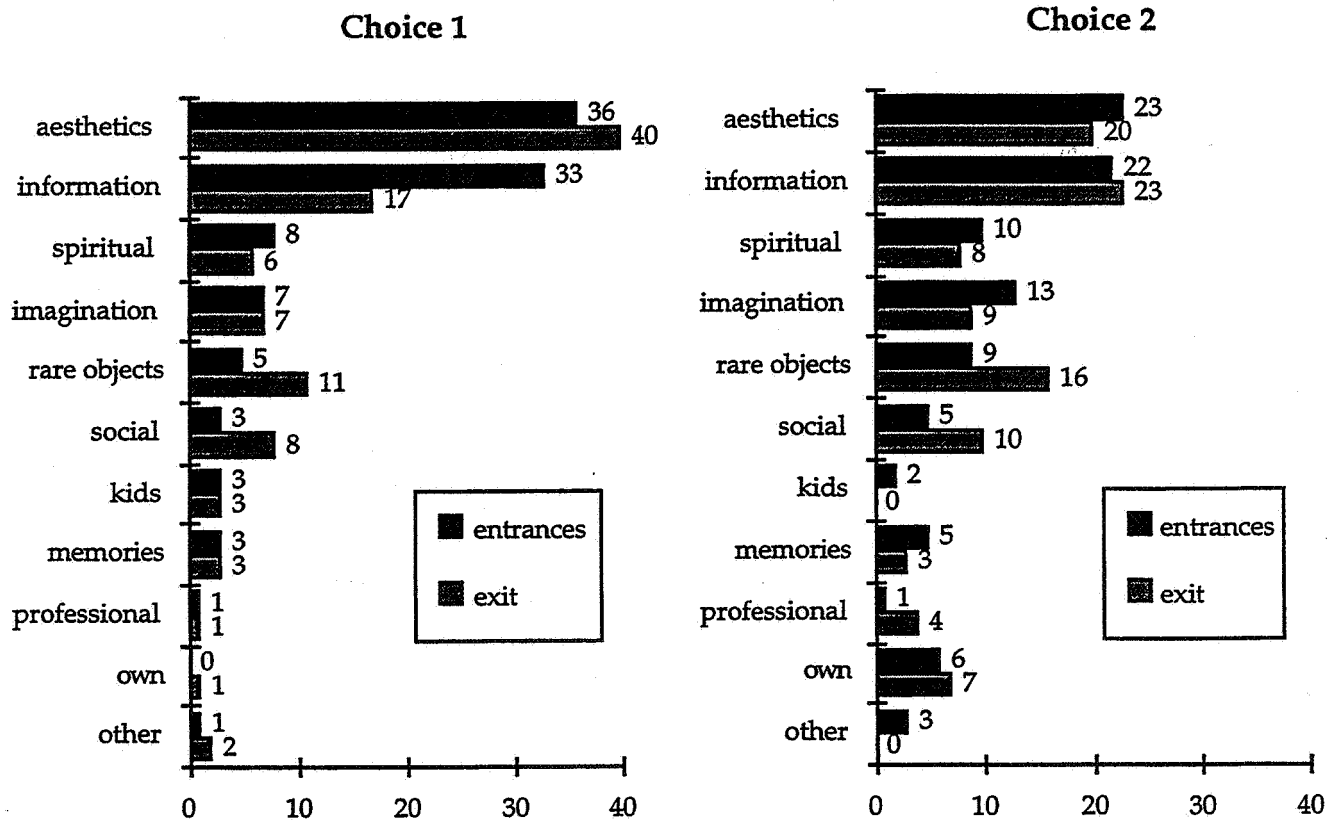
⁶Appendix B, Q13.

⁷Appendix B, Q10.

⁸Data on file, ISO.

Figure 3
Most Satisfying Asian Art Experiences
 (Sackler Entrance and *Twelve Centuries* Entrance)

vs.
Most Satisfying Experience in *Twelve Centuries* (Exhibition Exit)
 First and Second Choices
 (In Percent)



Source: Table A-3

OTHER RESULTS

Self-rated Knowledge of Asian Art. Overall, visitors in this study rated their knowledge of Asian art relatively low. This may reflect a lack of confidence in the extent of their knowledge rather than actual low levels of knowledge. On the scale of one ten:

- over half of the entering visitors (53%) rated themselves between 1 and 3,
- one-third (35%) rated themselves between 4 and 6, and
- the remaining 12 percent of visitors rated themselves between 7 and 10.⁹

This is nearly identical to the knowledge of Asian art ratings that were given by visitors during the *Puja* study in September, 1997.¹⁰

Text. Visitors to *Twelve Centuries* appear to be positively disposed to reading text information, in general.¹¹

- 26 percent of visitors exiting *Twelve Centuries* said they read nearly all of it;
- altogether 57 percent of *Twelve Centuries* visitors said they had read more than half of all the *Twelve Centuries* texts.

The percentage of visitors who read nearly all of the text is lower than was recorded at the *Puja* exit (43%) but the percentage who read more than half of the texts was higher (57% vs. 44%).

Attendance at Art Museums. Sackler visitors attend art museums frequently. In the last year:

- one-third visited 1 to 3 times,
- four-tenths visited 4 to 12 times, and
- one-fourth visited 13 or more times.¹²

Visitors in the *Puja* study attended art museums in the past year with nearly identical frequency.

⁹Appendix B, Q5.

¹⁰(1-3: 54%, 4-6: 34%, 7-10:12%)

¹¹Appendix B, Q11.

¹²Appendix B, Q21.

Discussion

The Sackler audience during *Twelve Centuries* differed slightly from the audience during the *Puja* study, probably because the Sackler Gallery audience varies according to the special exhibition schedule and the length of time that an exhibition is available. The *Twelve Centuries* audience was more experienced with the Galleries and more aesthetically oriented than those drawn to the museum during the *Puja* study. Nonetheless, the overall pattern of their satisfying experiences with Asian art were very similar.

Once again an interest in information and aesthetics dominates these visitors' most satisfying experiences with Asian art in roughly equal degrees.

Although visitors summarize their most satisfying experiences with Asian art in a consistent way across the two studies, these preferences do not prevent them from responding to each exhibition in a unique way. *Puja* was primarily appreciated as an information experience, while *Twelve Centuries* was primarily appreciated as an aesthetic experience. Presumably every exhibition in the museum provides a different pattern of satisfying experiences.

Some important questions about visitor preferences remain:

- When visitors leave the Sackler or the Freer what kinds of experiences were most satisfying to them in the Galleries as a whole?
- To what extent do the past satisfying experiences of visitors accurately represent their expectations for this visit?
- If visitors do not have a satisfying experience of the kind that they usually prefer or that they expect, do they mind?

Appendix A

Tables

1. Demographic Characteristics of Visitors, Puja Study and <i>Twelve Centuries</i> Study	10
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Table A-1
Demographic Characteristics of Visitors
Puja Study and Twelve Centuries Study
(In Percent)

	Sept. 97 Sackler Entrance	12th Century Sackler & Exhibit Entrance
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	48	53
Male	<u>52</u>	<u>47</u>
Total	100	100
<u>Age</u>		
12to 19	2	4
20 to 24	1	7
25 to 34	19	15
35 to 44	20	21
45 to 54	29	24
55 to 64	18	17
65 or older	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	100	100
<u>Racial/Ethnic Identity</u>		
Asian/Pacific Islander	17	17
Minority	6	6
African American/Black	3	2
Hispanic/Nat. Amer./Multi	3	4
White	<u>77</u>	<u>77</u>
Total	100	100
<u>Racial/Ethnic Identity – US Only</u>		
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	17
Minority	6	6
African American/Black	3	2
Hispanic/Nat. Amer./Multi	3	4
White	<u>83</u>	<u>77</u>
Total	100	100
<u>Residence*</u>		
Washington, DC	17	17
MD/VA Suburbs	26	43
Other US	48	36
Foreign	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>
Total	100	100

*Difference statistically significant
($\chi^2(3, 616)=16, p<.01$)

Table A-1
Demographic Characteristics of Visitors
Puja Study and Twelve Centuries Study
(In Percent)
(cont'd)

	Sept. 97 Sackler Entrance	12th Century Sackler & Exhibit Entrance
<u>Group Composition*</u>		
Alone	40	28
Pair of adults	41	47
Several adults	14	14
Adult(s) and child(ren)	4	9
School/Tour/Teens	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	100	100
*Difference statistically significant ($\chi^2(4, 632)=11, p<.05$)		
<u>Education (ages 25 or older)</u>		
High School Graduate or less	5	3
AA/Jr.Coll/Tech/Some College	7	9
Bachelor's/Some Graduate	35	35
MA/PhD/Professional	<u>54</u>	<u>52</u>
Total	100	100
<u>Visitor Type*</u>		
New to Both Galleries	31	31
New to Sackler only	11	8
New to Freer only	4	5
Familiar with both galleries	<u>55</u>	<u>56</u>
Total	100	100
*Difference statistically significant ($\chi^2(3, 620)=9, p<.05$)		

Table A-2
Most Satisfying Experiences with Asian Art
 Combinations of First and Second Choices
 Sackler and Twelve Centuries Entrance Combined
 (In Percent)

First Choice	Second Choice	Percent	Subtotals	First Choice	Second Choice	Percent	Subtotals
aesthetic	information	14.2	14.2	imagination	information	1.6	
information	aesthetic	11.3	11.3	spiritual	information	1.4	
aesthetic	spiritual	5.3		memories	information	1.4	
aesthetic	imagination	4.9		children	information	1.0	
aesthetic	rare things	3.2		social	information	0.8	
aesthetic	own	2.6		professional	information	0.8	
aesthetic	memories	2.6		own	information	0.4	
aesthetic	social	1.4		rare things	information	0.2	7.6
aesthetic	other	1.3		spiritual	imagination	1.8	
aesthetic	professional	0.3		spiritual	social	0.5	
aesthetic	children	0.2	21.7	imagination	spiritual	0.6	
information	imagination	5.5		imagination	rare things	0.4	
information	rare things	4.7		imagination	own	0.3	
information	social	2.7		imagination	social	0.3	
information	spiritual	2.5		imagination	children	0.3	4.0
information	own	1.6		rare things	imagination	0.7	
information	children	1.5		rare things	memories	0.6	
information	memories	1.5		rare things	social	0.5	
information	professional	1.1		rare things	children	0.3	
information	other	0.8	21.7	rare things	own	0.3	
spiritual	aesthetic	4.0		memories	spiritual	0.7	
imagination	aesthetic	3.7		memories	rare things	0.4	
rare things	aesthetic	1.9		memories	imagination	0.4	
children	aesthetic	0.8		social	own	0.8	
memories	aesthetic	0.6		social	other	0.5	
social	aesthetic	0.6		social	memories	0.3	
professional	aesthetic	0.4	11.8	social	spiritual	0.2	5.6
				professional	spiritual	0.2	
				children	spiritual	0.6	
				children	rare things	0.5	
				children	own	0.2	
				other	other	0.8	2.2

Table A-3
Most Satisfying Asian Art Experience in General vs. in Twelve Centuries Exhibition
(In Percent)

Preference	Choice 1		Choice 2		Choice 1 or 2	
	Sackler/12 Cent.	12 Cent.	Sackler/12 Cent.	12 Cent.	Sackler/12 Cent.	12 Cent.
	Entrance	Exit	Entrance	Exit	Entrance	Exit
Aesthetics	36	40	23	20	59	61
Information	33	17	22	23	55	40
Spiritual	8	6	10	7	18	14
Imagination	7	7	13	9	20	16
Rare Objects	5	11	9	16	14	28
Memories	3	3	5	3	8	5
Children	3	3	2	0	5	3
Social	3	8	5	10	8	18
Professional	1	1	1	4	3	5
Own	0	1	6	7	6	8
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	100	100	100	100	200	200

Table A-4
Significant Differences in Most Satisfying Experiences
With Asian Art (Entrance) or the Twelve Centuries Exhibition (Exit)
(In Percent)

	Sackler Entrance	12 Centuries Entrance	12 Centuries Exit
<u>Most Satisfying Experiences (First choice only)*</u>			
Aesthetics	38	34	40
Information	29	36	17
Imagination	9	5	7
Spiritual	9	7	6
Rare Objects	4	5	11
Own	0	1	1
Social	1	4	8
Memories	4	3	3
Other	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	100	100	100
*Differences Statistically Significant ($\chi^2(20, 480)=33.2, p<.032$)			
<u>Information Most Satisfying*</u>			
Selected as first or second choice	53	56	40
Did not select at all	<u>47</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>60</u>
Total	100	100	100
*Differences Statistically Significant ($\chi^2(2, 474)=9.5, p<.009$)			
<u>Rare Objects Most Satisfying*</u>			
Selected as first or second choice	8	17	27
Did not select at all	<u>92</u>	<u>83</u>	<u>73</u>
Total	100	100	100
*Differences Statistically Significant ($\chi^2(2, 474)=16.7, p<.001$)			
<u>Social Most Satisfying*</u>			
Selected as first or second choice	7	9	18
Did not select at all	<u>93</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>82</u>
Total	100	100	100
*Differences Statistically Significant ($\chi^2(2, 474)=9.7, p<.008$)			

Appendix B

Responses to Questions in the Twelve Centuries Study

Total completed interviews: 480

Sackler Entrance: 151 *Twelve Centuries* Entrance: 166 *Twelve Centuries* Exit: 163

Q1: Is today your first visit to the Sackler gallery?

40% Yes
60% No

Q1a: How many times have you been here before?

(repeat visitors only: N=292)

33% 1-3
23% 4-9
44% 10+

Q2: Did you visit the Freer Gallery today?

14% Yes
57% No
29% Intend to go

Q3: Before today, have you ever visited the Freer Gallery?

65% Yes
35% No

Q3a: How many times have you been there before today?

(repeat visitors only: N= 317)

41% 1-3
21% 4-9
38% 10+

Q4: Aside from the Freer/Sackler, have you ever seen Asian art in a museum or gallery elsewhere?

77% Yes
23% No

Q4a: Where was that? (1st answer)
(only those who answered the previous question: N=409)

20% NY/ Phila./ Boston/ East Coast
18% China/ Japan/ Taiwan/ Asia
12% Metropolitan Museum of Art
12% San Francisco/ Los Angeles/ Seattle/ West Coast
9% London/ Paris/ Rome/ Europe
9% National Gallery of Art / DC Other
5% Chicago/Minneapolis/ midwest
3% Boston Museum of Fine Arts
1% Atlanta/ Memphis/ southeast
1% Canada
1% Louvre
1% Asian Art Museum of S.F.
1% Art Institute of Chicago
1% Walters Gallery (Baltimore)
4% Unspecified

Q5: How knowledgeable would you say you are about Asian art on a scale from 1 (low) to 10 (high)?

2% 10
1% 9
3% 8
6% 7
7% 6
16% 5
12% 4
17% 3
23% 2
13% 1

Average score: 3.8 (SD = 2.2)

Median score: 3

Middle 50% range from
2 to 5

Q6: Choose the one kind of experience most satisfying for you when looking at Asian Art. (choice1)
(Sackler and exhibition entrance visitors only: N=317)

36%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
33%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
8%	I felt a spiritual connection
7%	I imagined myself in other times or places
5%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
3%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
3%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
3%	I saw my children learning new things
1%	I continued my professional development
0%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
1%	Other

Q6a: Choose the one kind of experience most satisfying for you when looking at Asian Art. (choice2)
(Sackler and exhibition entrance visitors only: N=317)

23%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
22%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
13%	I imagined myself in other times or places
10%	I felt a spiritual connection
9%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
6%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
5%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
5%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
2%	I saw my children learning new things
1%	I continued my professional development
3%	Other

Combined responses to Q6

(i.e., the percentage of visitors who gave these experiences as either of their two choices for most satisfying experience with Asian art:)
(Sackler and exhibition entrance visitors only: N=317)

59%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
55%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
20%	I imagined myself in other times or places
18%	I felt a spiritual connection
14%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
8%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
8%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
6%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
5%	I saw my children learning new things
3%	I continued my professional development
4%	Other

Q6: Choose the one kind of experience most satisfying for you when looking at this exhibition. (choice1)
(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

40%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
17%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
11%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
8%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
7%	I imagined myself in other times or places
6%	I felt a spiritual connection
3%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
3%	I saw my children learning new things
1%	I continued my professional development
1%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
2%	Other

Q6a: Choose the one kind of experience most satisfying for you when looking at this exhibition. (choice2)
(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

20%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
23%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
16%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
10%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
9%	I imagined myself in other times or places
7%	I felt a spiritual connection
7%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
4%	I continued my professional development
3%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
0%	I saw my children learning new things
0%	Other

Combined responses to Q6

(i.e., the percentage of visitors who gave these experiences as either of their two choices for most satisfying experience with this exhibition:)
(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

61%	I was moved by the beauty of the art
40%	I enriched my knowledge, gained information or understanding
28%	I saw old, rare objects and paintings
18%	I shared a relaxing visit with friends or family
16%	I imagined myself in other times or places
14%	I felt a spiritual connection
8%	I thought what it would be like to own such things
5%	I recalled my travels, childhood experiences, other memories
5%	I continued my professional development
3%	I saw my children learning new things
2%	Other

Q7: Was there something in particular that you came to see or do in this museum today?

63% Yes
37% No

Q7a: What was that?
(only those who said 'yes' to the previous question: N=325)

JAPAN RELATED: (87%)

84% *Twelve Centuries*
1% Genji
1% To see Japanese Silks
1% Japanese Wood block prints

CHINA RELATED: (3%)

3% Chinese exhibit/ Silk Route exhibit

SOUTH/ WEST ASIA RELATED: (2%)

1% Puja
1% Iranian Pictures

OTHER SUBJECT AREAS: (1%)

1% Buddhist Art

GENERAL: (7%)

2% Gather information
2% Gift shop/Museum shop/
Bookstore/Buy present/
Buy card
1% To show Asian art to
children/Relative
1% Meet someone/Personal
1% Lecture at the Freer Gallery

Q8: Before today had you heard about this exhibition?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

73% Yes
27% No

Q8a. Where did you hear about it?
(only those who said 'yes' to Q8: N=119)

PUBLICATIONS: (47%)

30% Washington Post
8% SI magazine
7% Newspaper/Magazine unspecified
2% NY Times

PERSONAL CONTACTS: (36%)

29% Friend/Relative
3% School/University
2% Japan America Society
2% Invitation/ SI Mailing

OTHER: (17%)

10% Ad on the street
2% World Wide Web
2% Hotel
1% Radio
1% WETA
1% Other

Q8b. What had you heard about it?
(only those who said 'yes' to Q8: N=119)

DESCRIPTIVE: (49%)

40% Imperial/ 12 Centuries/
Japan/ That it's here
6% From the private
collection of emperor
2% Large exhibition of
Japanese art
1% Japanese culture

EMOTIONAL RESPONSE: (34%)

16% A must-see/Excellent/
Wonderful
10% Interesting
8% Beautiful

RARITY/IMPORTANCE: (9%)

3% Rare collection
3% Important Japanese
Artists/Important Art
2% First time outside of
Japan
1% Historically Interesting

OTHER: (8%)

3% That it's leaving in a week
3% Genji
1% That it surprisingly had
more modern art
1% Japanese paintings on silk

Q9. Before today have you visited this exhibition?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

15% Yes
85% No

Q9a. How many times?
(only those who said 'yes' to Q9:
N=25)

36% 1
36% 2
28% 3+

Q9b. When? [Excludes the current visit]
(only those who said 'yes' to Q9:
N=25)

48% First rotation only
11% Second rotation only
15% First and second rotations
8% Third rotation only
5% All three rotations
5% Second and third
9% First and third

Q10. Did you notice that there is an audio guide for this exhibition?
(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)
77% Yes
23% No

Q10a. Did you use it?
(only those who said 'yes' to Q10:
N=122)
12% Yes
88% No

Q10b. Why not?
(only those who said 'no' to Q10:
N=107)

NO INTEREST: (34%)

23% Like to look, not hear
Like to read/Learn on own/
11% Don't care/Didn't want to bother/Didn't consider it

NO RESOURCES: (18%)

16% Time constraint
2% Costs money

NO CONTROL/COMFORT: (7%)

6% Can't control how long want to spend at individual paintings/
Can't set own pace
1% Don't like earphones/
Annoying

NO NEED: (6%)

5% Went with person who knows Japanese art
1% Already knew about Japanese art

NO ENGLISH: (4%)

4% Only in English/my English not good

NO QUIET: (3%)

3% Likes quietness/Don't like to be talked to in a museum/
Distracting

SOCIAL FACTORS: (4%)

3% Talk with companion
1% Went with Children

PREVIOUS USE/TOUR RELATED: (7%)

4% Usually don't but wish had after hearing tour guide
2% Used it in a previous visit/Had tour guide in previous exhibit
1% Took a mini tour instead

OTHER: (17%)

17% Unspecified/ Other

Q11. Approximately how much of the text information on labels and wall panels in this exhibition have you read?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

14% almost none
30% less than half
30% more than half
26% nearly all of it

Q12. Did you discover anything new about Japanese art or history in the exhibition?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

82% Yes

18% No

Q12a. What was that?

(only those who said 'yes' to Q12: N=133)

INFORMATION: (43%)

History: (11%)

8% Historical periods in Japan

1% The early Heian Period

1% History—people who documented Emperor's lives

1% Political Structure

Art History: (8%)

3% Names of Artists - i.e. Hokusai

3% Difference between the Chinese and Japanese writing

2% Chinese influence on Japanese calligraphy

Emperor: (6%)

1% Importance of art in the Imperial Court

1% Specific Emperors

1% Emperor's patronage/ Sponsorship of art

1% That the beauty was reserved for the Imperial family

1% The Acquisition of Artifacts/Art

1% Training of Imperial members

Culture: (3%)

3% Japanese Folktales

STYLE: (21%)

16% Western influence/oil paintings/European training/ Meiji Period/ Impressionistic landscapes

3% Realism/ More realistic than expected

1% Blown-roof perspective

1% Showed a comic side, cartoon—hadn't know that that existed

PHYSICAL FEATURES/THINGS OBSERVED: (15%)

Color/Age/Scale: (8%)

4% Color/Shades

3% Preservation/ Age of

Scrolls/Age of art/Age of paper

1% Large size of the art

Materials: (3%)

1% Woven hangings instead of framing/ Different silks pieced together/Silks used as frames/ wall hangings

1% Used Watercolors/ Not thick paint

1% Ink drawings

Calligraphy: (3%)

3% Calligraphy/Techniques

Presentation: (1%)

1% Reflections on paintings

SPECIFIC ITEMS: (8%)

5% Genji

1% Poppy in the Morning

1% The Emperor's picture

1% Kokinshu

IMPRESSIONISTIC RESPONSES: (7%)

Quality/skill: (5%)

2% High quality of art/Beauty

2% Control of medium/ Artistic skill

1% Delicacy of detail and texture

Comparisons: (2%)

2% So Different (Like a different planet)/ All new

GENERAL INTERPRETIVE CONCLUSIONS: (6%)

3% How the Japanese viewed nature

1% Overall feeling of Japanese culture

1% Importance of puppies in Japanese art

1% Connection between recitation of Japanese poetry and literacy rate

OTHER: (12%)

1% Tea caddies and what their purpose was (Wrong Exhibition)

1% That her niece was not interested in Asian art

1% Can't remember/Not sure

9% Unspecified/Learned general things

Q13. Did anything in the exhibition surprise you?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

69% Yes

31% No

Q13a. What was that?

(only those who said 'yes' to Q13: N=112)

STYLE: (31%)

- 29% Western Influence/Oil paintings/European training/Meiji Period/ Impressionistic landscapes
- 1% Had thought that style/Pattern of art unchanging/The dynamic quality of the art
- 1% Realism/More realistic than expected

IMPRESSIONISTIC RESPONSES: (21%)

Quality/Skill: (12%)

- 11% High quality of art/Beauty
- 1% Delicacy of detail and texture

Comparisons: (3%)

- 3% More recent art not as good as the older art — too garish

The Exhibition: (3%)

- 2% That the Japanese let the collection out of the country
- 1% Rare items

General interpretive conclusions: (1%)

- 1% Importance of Calligraphy in Japanese Art

Emotional response: (2%)

- 2% Peaceful

PHYSICAL FEATURES/THINGS OBSERVED: (18%)

Color/Age/Scale: (9%)

- 3% Color/Shades
- 5% Preservation/Age of Scrolls/Age of art/Age of paper
- 1% Large size of the art

Materials: (5%)

- 5% Woven hangings instead of framing/Different silks pieced together/Silks used as frames/wall hangings

Calligraphy: (4%)

- 3% Calligraphy/Techniques
- 1% The characters, language so different from western

INFORMATION: (16%)

History: (3%)

- 2% Historical periods in Japan
- 1% Shogun

Culture: (4%)

- 1% Swastika
- 1% Poetry/ Waka & Tanka
- 1% Japanese Folktales
- 1% Mythology

Art History: (4%)

- 3% Importance of Narrative in Japanese art
- 1% Chinese influence on Japanese calligraphy

Emperor: (1%)

- 1% Emperor's patronage/Sponsorship of art

Presentation: (4%)

- 1% That the labels were helpful
- 3% Was expecting more art and more info about art

SPECIFIC ITEMS: (12%)

- 4% Amount of textual material, almost too much
- 2% No monkeys
- 1% No Wood block prints
- 1% Scroll of Ministers/ Regents
- 1% Fox painting
- 1% Intricate paintings of animals/ More animals than expected
- 1% Waterfall
- 1% That the exhibit had 3 outstanding paintings — Warrior going to Battle, Poet with Little Girl, Message to the Empress

OTHER: (4%)

Connection uncertain:

- 2% Lacquer
- 1% Dojo

Context of the Visit: (1%)

- 1% Being interviewed

Q14. Did you happen to notice that the exhibition is not arranged in chronological order?

(only those who visited the exhibition: N=163)

51% Yes

49% No

Q14a. How do you feel about that?
(only those who said 'yes' to Q14: N=91)

14% Like that is was not chronological

21% Wish that it had been chronological, or

65% Don't really care one way or the other

Q16. Different people have different backgrounds. Would you please tell me which of the following describe your experience with Asia or Asian Art?

Yes	No	
45%	55%	I traveled/lived in Asia
44%	56%	I read books about Asian art/history/culture
14%	86%	My job involves Asia in some respect
27%	73%	I took classes in Asian art/history/culture
57%	43%	I have a general interest in Asian Art
11%	89%	None of the above

Q20. When you were a child did your parents take you to your local art museum?

53% Yes

47% No

Q20a. Where these visits . . .

(only those who answered 'yes' to Q20: N=285)

20% Rare,

48% Occasional, or

32% Fairly frequent.

Q21. In the last year, how many times did you visit an art museum of any kind?

4% 0 times

28% 1 to 3 times

20% 4 to 6 times

22% 7 to 12 times

13% 13 to 20 times

9% 24 to 40 times

4% 40 or more times

Average number of times: N=12
(SD=13)

Median number of times: N=6

Middle 50% range from 3 to 15

Residence

17% Washington, DC

43% MD/VA Suburbs

36% Other US

4% Foreign

Age

4% Under 20

7% 20 to 24

15% 25 to 34

21% 35 to 44

24% 45 to 54

17% 55 to 64

12% 65 and over

Average age: 45

Median age: 45

Middle 50% of visitors range from ages 33 to 56

Education

(Age 25 or older, N=431)

4% HS grad or less

8% Some college

35% Bachelor's

43% MA/PhD/Professional

Visit group

31% Alone
44% Pair
16% Three or more adults
9% Adult(s) with child(ren)

Race/ethnicity

(US residents only: N=455)

17% Asian/ Pacific Islander
78% Caucasian
5% Other

Gender

54% Female
46% Male

Appendix C

Survey Design and Implementation

INTRODUCTION

The study was designed (i) to replicate the results from the 1997 study of the Sackler exhibition *Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion* with a larger sample, at a different time of year, and with an exhibition that was less likely to be seen as an information experience, and (ii) to ask visitors about aspects of the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition that were of interest to the Sackler staff.

METHOD

Data for this study were collected by means of personal interviews with respondents who were selected using a "continuous" systematic sample design. At pre-determined times of day and every day of the week, interviewers intercepted visitors who were identified through a special procedure developed for sampling a mobile population.¹ We used teams of two or three people (one to select respondents for interviewing plus one or two interviewers) to conduct the study. Interviewers administered a questionnaire with both pre-coded and open-ended questions, to eligible respondents and thanked the participants with bookmarks from previous exhibitions at the Sackler Gallery.

Data were collected from three systematic samples: visitors entering the Sackler Gallery, visitors entering the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition (Entrance Surveys), and visitors exiting the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition (Exit Survey).² Interviewing was conducted between February 17-March 8, a total of 9 days during the third rotation of the exhibit.

Interviews were conducted on each day of the week. Exit and Entrance Surveys were coordinated so that the same people could not be selected for both. Visitor cooperation with the study was extremely high -- 93.5% percent of eligible respondents completed interviews in the Entrance Surveys and 93.1% percent in the Exit Survey -- for an overall response rate of 93.4%.³ Altogether 480 interviews were completed (151 at the Sackler entrance, 166 at the *Twelve Centuries* entrance, and 163 at the *Twelve Centuries* exit) out of 514 attempts (167 at the Sackler entrance, 172 at the *Twelve Centuries* entrance, and 175 at the *Twelve Centuries* exit). The intercepted individuals represent a population of about 5,050 visitors to the exhibition during the survey period.

¹ The procedure and its rationale are described in Z. D. Doering, A. E. Kindlon and A. Bickford, *The Power of Maps: A Study of an Exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design*. Report 93-5. (Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1993).

² The samples were independent.

³ See below for a discussion of these response rates and the response bias in the study.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The initial portion of both the Entrance and Exit Survey questionnaires collected general information about the visit. Aside from asking about prior visits to the Freer and the Sackler Galleries, we asked about visitors' previous experience with Asian art and their self-rated level of knowledge about Asian art.

The core of the survey was a question about satisfying experiences with Asian art. We used the list of alternatives developed in the *Puja* study. The list of experience alternatives was attached to two different questions. One question, used at the entrance to the Sackler Gallery and the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition, asked which of these the visitor found most satisfying when looking at Asian art in general. The other question, used at the exit to the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition, asked which of these the visitor had found most satisfying in the *Twelve Centuries* exhibition.

In addition to these experience-satisfaction questions, visitors to the exhibition were asked where they had heard about it and what they had heard, how many times they had visited it before, whether or not they noticed and used the audio guide and what they liked or disliked about it. They were also asked about their reading behavior in the exhibition, what they discovered about Japanese art or history, what surprised them, and whether or not they noticed or minded that the exhibition was not in chronological order.

An identical set of personal background characteristics was collected from all visitors: residence, experience with Asia or Asian art, frequency of annual visits to art museums, who accompanied the respondent on their visit, age, educational attainment, experience visiting art museums as a child, racial/ethnic identification and gender.

The questionnaire also included a section for recording administrative information. This included the time, date and location of the interview, and the reason, if applicable, that an interview was not completed (e.g., Smithsonian employee). An interviewer training manual was developed for the study.⁴

COMPLETION RATES AND RESPONSE BIAS

As shown in Table C.1, overall 6.6 percent of all persons intercepted refused to participate in the survey. While two refusals were due to language difficulties, the rest (34) were for "other" reasons (e.g., visitors in a hurry, not wanting to detain companions, etc.).

⁴ General interviewing instructions were based on Institutional Studies, *A Manual for Interviewers*. Prepared for the 1988 National Air and Space Survey. Report 88-3. (Washington, D. C. : Smithsonian Institution, 1988). The general instructions and question-by-question specifications for this study are available from the Institutional Studies office.

Table C.1
Results of Data Collection: *Twelve Centuries Survey*
(In Percent)

Type	Total		Sackler Entrance		Japan Entrance		Japan Exit	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
<u>A. Composition</u>								
Si staff/contractors	30	5.5	18	9.7	6	3.4	6	3.3
Visitors	<u>514</u>	<u>94.5</u>	<u>167</u>	<u>90.3</u>	<u>172</u>	<u>96.6</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>96.7</u>
Total	544	100.0	185	100.0	178	100.0	181	100.0
<u>B. Disposition. All Eligible Visitors</u>								
Interviews	480	93.4	151	90.4	166	96.5	163	93.1
Non-Interviews	<u>34</u>	<u>6.6</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9.6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6.9</u>
Total	514	100.0	167	100.0	172	100.0	175	100.0
<u>C. Reasons for Non-Participation</u>								
<u>Eligible Visitors</u>								
Refusal, Language difficulty	2	5.9	1	6.3	0	0.0	1	8.3
Refusal, Other	<u>32</u>	<u>94.1</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>93.8</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>91.7</u>
Total, Non-interviews	34	100.0	16	100.0	6	100.0	12	100.0
<u>D. Response Rates</u>								
All eligible visitors		93.4		90.4		96.5		93.1

There are no statistically significant differences between participants and non-participants in any of their basic characteristics.⁵ Due to the high response rate and our analyses of response bias, we did not weight for non-response. However, we did need to weight the data because our sampling procedure does not select respondents with equal probability. Each respondent's record received a weight derived from the probability of selection within each sample selection interval.

⁵ Data on file, ISO.