

GLOBALIZATION 1.0

**A Study of Visitor Responses to
Encompassing the Globe:
Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries
At the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**

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Smithsonian Institution

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FOREWORD

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's *Encompassing the Globe* provided visitors with a new understanding of Portugal's central role in the world in the 16th and 17th centuries. The exhibition's 250-plus objects vividly depicted the consequences of Portugal's contacts with non-European cultures, providing new insights even for the many visitors who were to some extent already familiar with the textbook story of Portuguese exploration and mercantile expansion. As the exhibition text highlighted the quest for slaves, spices, and souls, the objects on display showcased the mingling of cultural and artistic influences in the works of sophisticated painters, sculptors, print makers, cabinet makers, cartographers, arms makers, and other artists and craftsmen from all over the world.

A study of an exhibition of this scope owes a great deal to many. My greatest debt is to Freer and Sackler Galleries (FSG) Director Dr. Julian Raby, who requested the study, and who recognizes the value of exploring visitors' perspectives. I am also very grateful to FSG Director of Education Theresa Esterlund, who consistently enlists the assistance of the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) to perform visitor studies, which are used to better meet visitors' needs.

I also wish to thank the members of my staff who contributed to this study. James Smith conducted qualitative interviews, administered the survey, analyzed the findings, and wrote the report. Andrew Pekarik assisted with the survey analysis and reviewed an early

draft of the report. Whitney Watriss critically reviewed and edited the final report. And Ioana Munteanu and Lance Costello assisted in administering the survey. All members of my staff give one another generous help and advice. Thanks also to OP&A intern Yasemin Irepoglu, who contributed to all phases of data collection, did the initial analysis of the qualitative interview findings, and wrote the first draft of the interview findings.

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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries, on view from June 24 through September 16, 2007, at the Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, featured more than 250 works from the diverse cultures within Portugal's trading empire.

Encompassing the Globe—hereafter, *ETG*—was the largest and one of the most ambitious exhibitions ever undertaken by the Sackler, bringing together an enormous range of objects from museums in China, India, Japan, South America, and Europe, including paintings, sculptures, metalwork, historic maps and prints, carved ivory, tapestries, and much more. The exhibition occupied most of the Sackler's exhibition space and overflowed into the neighboring National Museum of African Art.

The objects in *ETG* were grouped into six regional sections:

- ❖ The African Coast
- ❖ Brazil and the New World

- ❖ China: Merchants and Missionaries
- ❖ The Indian Ocean from Muscat to the Spice Islands
- ❖ Japan: Arrival of the Southern Barbarians
- ❖ Portugal and the Age of Discovery—the core section

Four of these sections (China, the Indian Ocean, Japan, and Portugal) were arranged like the spokes of a wheel off the exhibition entry space on the second floor of the Sackler Gallery. The entry to the Brazil section was located a few steps away. The African Coast section, in the adjoining National Museum of African Art, was accessed from the Sackler by traversing the Indian Ocean section. The Portugal section—featuring European work influenced by the Age of Discovery and art brought back to Europe by traders and explorers—was by far the largest, occupying a big part of the Sackler’s temporary exhibition space on the second level and all of it on the third level.

In the summer of 2007, the management of the Freer and Sackler Galleries (FSG) approached the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) to request a visitor study of *ETG*. FSG leaders were particularly interested in the following questions:

- ❖ Were visitors to *ETG* picking up on the intended theme of the exhibition, which was to portray Portugal’s trade empire in the 16th and 17th centuries as a precursor to the modern phenomenon of globalization, through which diverse cultures are brought—sometimes unwillingly—into contact through trade and commerce?
- ❖ In which sections of the exhibition were visitors spending their time?
- ❖ Which sections did visitors find most interesting, and why?
- ❖ What did visitors think about the sprawling layout of the exhibition, which covered more gallery space than any previous Sackler show?
- ❖ What did visitors like about the show? Where did they see weaknesses and the need for improvement?
- ❖ On the whole, how satisfied were visitors with the show?

To answer these questions and gain other insights into how visitors saw *ETG*, this study used two main research methods:

- ❖ A survey of a random sample of visitors exiting the museum through the Sackler pavilion.¹ Visitors completed 302 self-administered survey questionnaires, with a

¹ Because the exhibition had multiple exits and re-entry points, an exhibition exit survey was not feasible. However, the vast majority of those exiting the museum had visited *ETG*.

response rate of 86 percent. The frequencies of the responses to the survey questionnaire are provided in Appendix A.

- ❖ In-depth qualitative interviews with visitors in various parts of the Sackler Gallery. These were undertaken prior to the survey, and informed its content. The OP&A study team interviewed 24 people, in 22 interviews. It recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the interviews to search for common themes and well-articulated insights.

In addition, members of the study team inspected comment books in which exhibition visitors were invited to write their thoughts and reactions to the show.²

² As a general rule, comment-book entries must be considered with caution, because they tend to disproportionately represent the views of visitors with strongly positive or strongly negative opinions. However, bearing this caveat in mind, the study team found that comment-book entries did tend to reinforce the major points suggested by analyses of the survey data and qualitative interviews.



FINDINGS: SURVEY



Visitor Characteristics

Most visitors to Sackler exhibitions, including *ETG*, fall into one of two broad categories:

- Those who come to see a specific exhibition, usually the “headline” exhibition on display; and
- Those who come for a general visit (often “walk-ins” off the Mall, who tend to be more numerous during the high tourist season in the summer).

For *ETG*, a third distinct, albeit small, audience segment should be noted: visitors to the National Museum of African Art who wandered into the Sackler Gallery via the African Coast section of *ETG* and continued through the exhibition.

Among those in the museum specifically to see *ETG* was a contingent of individuals of Portuguese or Brazilian origin, many of them first-time FSG visitors, who were presumably drawn to the exhibition because of their personal connection to its subject.³

Intention. Two thirds (66 percent) of survey respondents came to the Sackler specifically to see *ETG*. This is broadly comparable to the figures recorded for other Sackler headline exhibitions such as *Hokusai* (86 percent), *In the Beginning* (76 percent), *Style and Status* (65 percent), and *Caravan Kingdoms* (58 percent).⁴

Previous Visits. About two fifths of respondents (39 percent) were first-time visitors to FSG—which is again broadly in line with the figures for other major Sackler exhibitions. Slightly over one third of respondents (35 percent) were FSG “recent regulars” (defined as having visited at least once in the previous year), and 22 percent were FSG “local regulars” (defined as DC metropolitan area residents who visited at least once in the previous year).

Sex. Consistent with the general pattern of art museum visitation, there were more females than males among survey respondents—56 percent and 45 percent, respectively.

Age. Divided according to generation, 1 percent of respondents were from the World War II generation (born 1901-24); 25 percent, the Postwar generation (born 1925-45); 23 percent, Leading Edge Baby Boomers (born 1946-55); 15 percent, Trailing Edge Boomers (born 1956-64); 23 percent, Generation X (born 1965-81); and 13 percent, Generation Y (1982-2001).⁵

Residence. Almost nine tenths of respondents (89 percent) were residents of the United States, and 44 percent were residents of the Washington metropolitan area.

Ties to Exhibition Subject. In response to a question about various ties to the subject matter of *ETG*, 8 percent of respondents indicated they were of Portuguese or Brazilian origin; 3 percent had lived in Portugal or Brazil; 25 percent had traveled to Portugal or Brazil; and 53 percent had studied or read about Portuguese or European colonial history.

³ Twelve percent of the survey respondents who came specifically to see *ETG* were of Portuguese or Brazilian origin, against only 2 percent of the respondents who did not come specifically to see *ETG*. Likewise, 16 percent of the first-time FSG visitors among respondents were of Portuguese or Brazilian origin, as against only 3 percent of repeat visitors.

⁴ These differences in magnitude are influenced in part by exogenous factors, such as the different times of year when the surveys were conducted (which affects the number of tourists on the Mall).

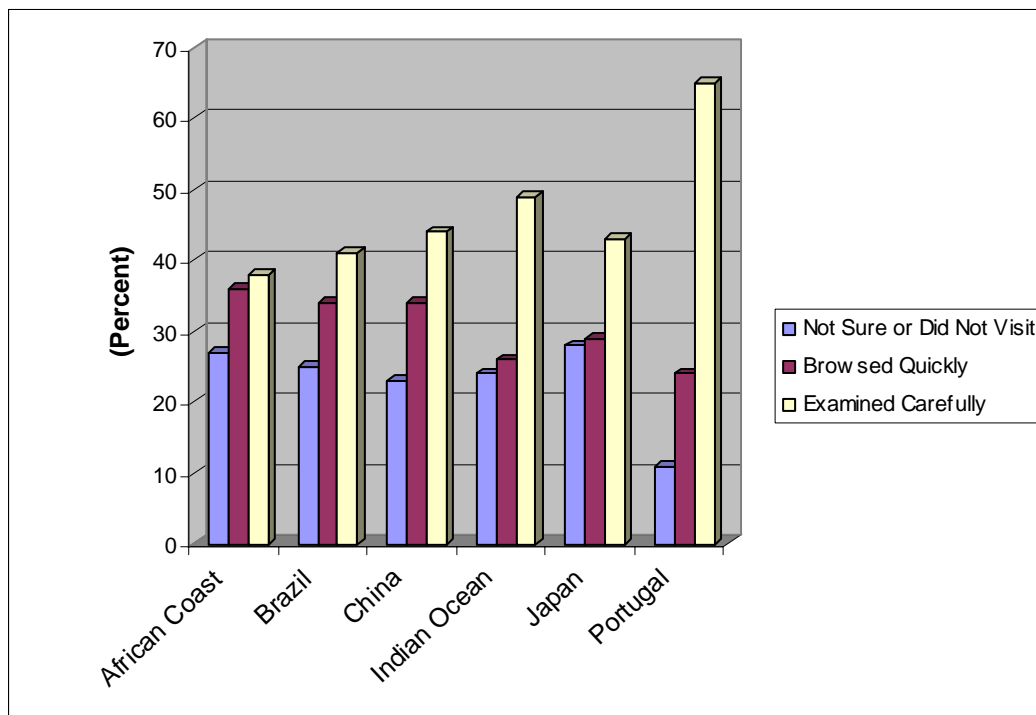
⁵ Because the survey was administered only to visitors 12 years of age and older, Generation Y presumably accounted for a higher share of visitors than the survey findings indicate.



Section Visitation and Preference

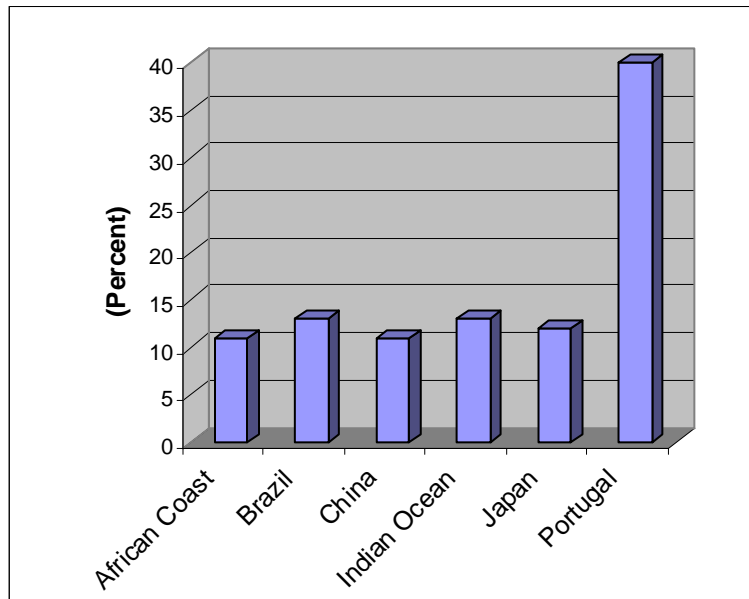
The section of the exhibition that visitors were most likely to recall visiting was the core Portugal section, with 65 percent of respondents noting they had examined it carefully, 24 percent saying they browsed it quickly, and only 11 percent saying they did not see it or were not sure. The remaining sections were broadly similar to each other in terms of the patterns of visitation, although all were less-visited than the Portugal section. (See Diagram 1.)

Diagram 1: Which Sections of *ETG* Did You Visit?



Respondents were also most likely by far to name the central Portugal section as the most interesting, with 40 percent of respondents choosing it. The remaining five sections were about equally likely to be chosen by respondents as most interesting: African Coast (11 percent), Brazil (13 percent), China (11 percent), Indian Ocean (13 percent), and Japan (12 percent). (See Diagram 2, next page.)

Diagram 2: Which Section of *ETG* Did You Find *Most* Interesting?



Visitors who came specifically to see *ETG* were more likely to examine it carefully than other visitors. In terms of individual sections, those who came specifically to see *ETG* were far more likely than other visitors to examine carefully the sections on the African Coast (42 percent versus 23 percent), Brazil (50 percent versus 27 percent), the Indian Ocean (58 percent versus 33 percent), and Portugal (78 percent versus 40 percent), and may have been slightly more likely to examine China and Japan carefully as well.⁶ Visitors who came to the Sackler specifically for *ETG* were also more likely than other visitors to examine multiple sections carefully, and less likely to skip or quickly browse sections.

Visitors who came specifically to see *ETG* were also far more likely than others to judge the central Portugal section the most interesting (48 percent versus 23 percent).

Visitors of Portuguese or Brazilian origin were more likely than other visitors to carefully examine the central Portugal section (84 percent versus 64 percent) and to judge this section most interesting (62 percent versus 38 percent). However, they were *not* more likely than other visitors to examine other sections carefully.

⁶ The data on these two sections are more ambiguous. Note that the China and Japan sections were the smallest and most easily accessible from the exhibition entry space.

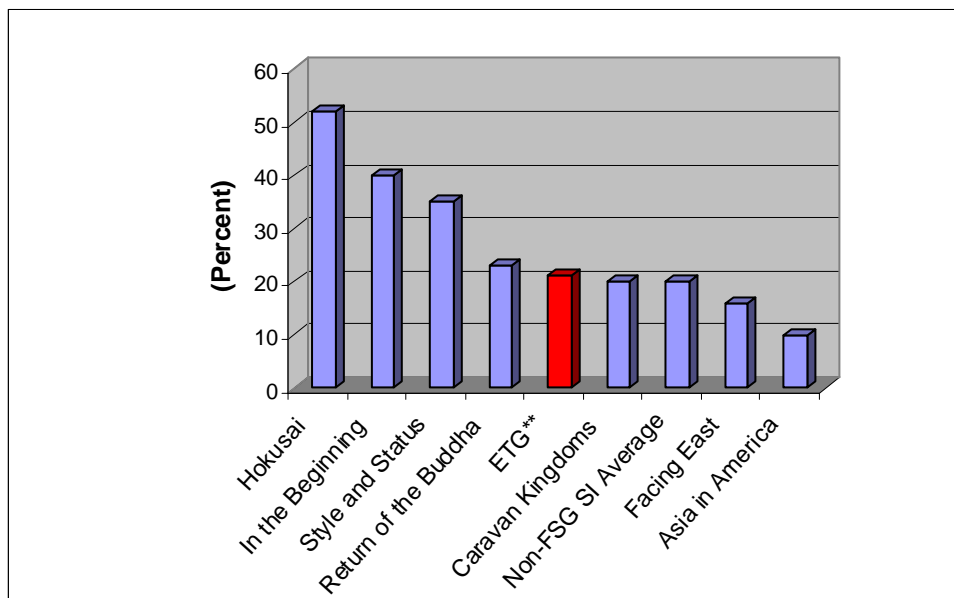


Overall Satisfaction

Visitor satisfaction ratings for *ETG* fell somewhat short of the high marks for audience satisfaction achieved by several other Sackler exhibitions of the past few years, particularly in terms of the percentage of visitors giving it the highest rating (*superior*) on OP&A's five-point satisfaction scale.

Superior Ratings. In terms of *superior* ratings, *ETG*'s 21 percent was comparable to those of *Facing East* (16 percent), *Caravan Kingdoms* (20 percent), and *Return of the Buddha* (23 percent), but lower than those of *Style and Status* (35 percent), *In the Beginning* (40 percent), and *Hokusai* (52 percent). The percentage of *ETG* visitors rating the exhibition *superior* was also comparable to the average (20 percent) for exhibitions at other Smithsonian museums.⁷ (See Diagram 3.)

Diagram 3: Visitors Rating Exhibition *Superior*

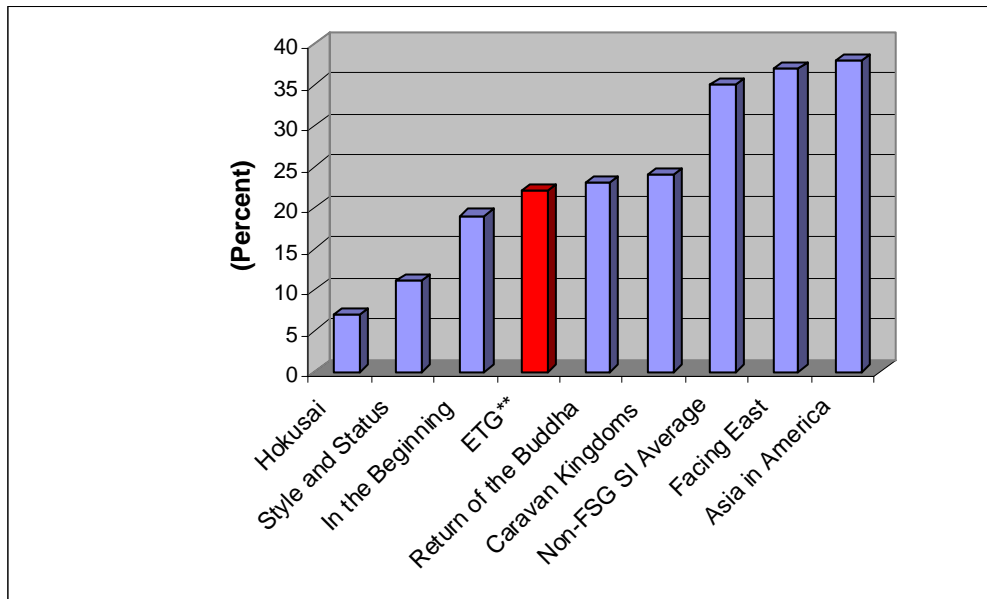


⁷ Based on 30 visitor exhibition studies conducted by OP&A over the past several years, using the same satisfaction scale as used for *ETG*, at the International Gallery of the Ripley Center and at the following Smithsonian museums: Air and Space, American History, American Indian, African Art, Postal Museum, and Natural History.

Low Ratings

When looking at the combination of the low ratings of *good*, *fair*, and *poor*, *ETG* fared slightly better in comparison to some other Sackler exhibitions. Its 23 percent figure was comparable to *In the Beginning's* 19 percent and much better than *Facing East's* 37 percent, but less impressive than *Style and Status's* 11 percent and *Hokusai's* 7 percent. And based on this metric, *ETG* fared considerably better than the Smithsonian average, excluding Sackler exhibitions, of 34 percent. (See Diagram 4.)

Diagram 4: Visitors Rating Exhibition *Poor*, *Fair*, or *Good*



Ratio of Superior to Good+Fair+Poor Ratings. If we assume a rating of *superior* connotes an unreservedly positive assessment and ratings of *good*, *fair*, and *poor* connote relatively critical assessments, the ratio

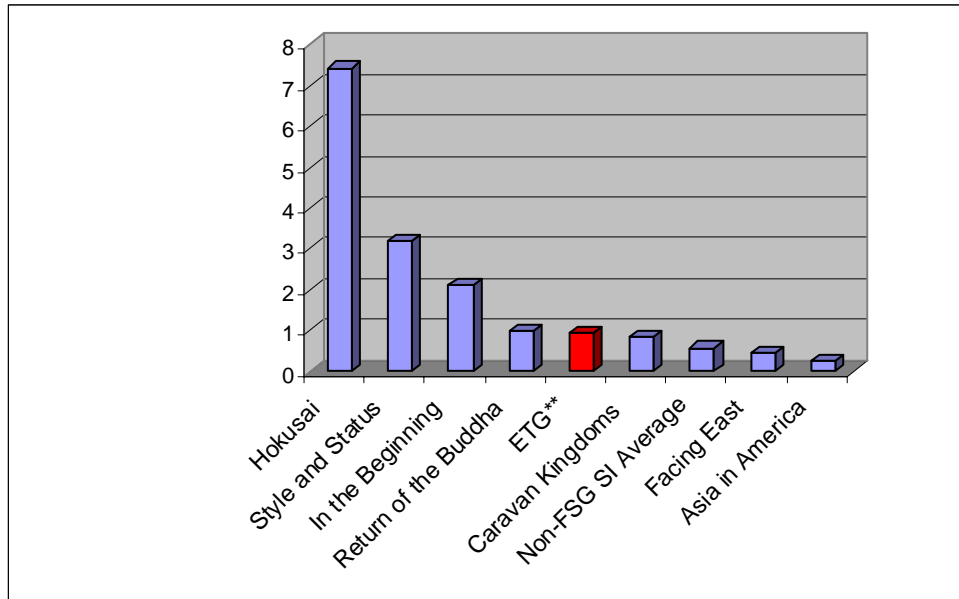
$$(\% \text{ Superior}) / (\% \text{ Poor} + \% \text{ Fair} + \% \text{ Good})$$

provides a useful index of visitor satisfaction.⁸ When this ratio is greater than one, it implies that visitors with an unreservedly positive view outnumber those who are at some level disappointed. For example, when the ratio is five, five times as many visitors hold an unreservedly positive view of an exhibition as are relatively critical of it. When the ratio is less than one, the opposite is true: critical visitors outnumber those with an unreservedly positive view.

⁸ Empirically, it does seem to be the case that visitors to Smithsonian exhibitions gravitate toward the *excellent* rating on OP&A's scale as a mid-point, and that ratings below this imply some degree of disappointment.

For *ETG*, the ratio was quite close to one, implying that the proportion of visitors with an unreservedly positive view of *ETG* was approximately equal to the proportion of visitors who were relatively disappointed with it. This was in the middle of the pack for Sackler exhibitions—although, again, well above the average for other Smithsonian museums. (See Diagram 5.)

Diagram 5: Ratio of Superior to Poor+Fair+Good Ratings



Visitors who specifically came to the museum to see *ETG* were more inclined to give it a *superior* rating (24 percent) than other visitors (14 percent), and less likely to rate it in one of the lower three categories (16 percent versus 36 percent).⁹ Visitors of Portuguese or Brazilian origin did not display any tendency to rate their satisfaction with *ETG* differently than other visitors, nor did first-time visitors.

⁹ High visit intensity (in the sense of examining multiple sections of *ETG* carefully) also tended to be correlated with a higher satisfaction rating, and low visit intensity (missing or browsing multiple sections) tended to be associated with lower satisfaction ratings. However, visit intensity was closely correlated with coming to the Sackler specifically to see *ETG*, and this is the more relevant causal factor. Likewise, FSG “recent regular” and “local regular” visitors were more likely to rate the exhibition *superior* than others; but “regular” status and coming to the Sackler specifically to see *ETG* were also highly correlated.



Suggested Improvements

One place to look for clues to explain visitors' satisfaction levels with *ETG* is to examine what visitors cited as desirable improvements. In the pre-survey interviews and survey pretesting, visitors offered criticisms that fell into two general categories:

- Orientation—some viewed the exhibition as physically difficult to navigate, with blind alleys, multiple exits, and no clear pathway for visitors to follow.
- Context—some suggested that the information available in the exhibition failed to adequately place the objects in their historical, cultural, and/or artistic context, or to provide a clear conceptual narrative.

Thus, the survey instrument asked visitors' opinions about the following specific improvements (percentages of respondents choosing each option are noted in parentheses):

- (1) More information on historical context (33 percent)
- (2) More information on artistic context (19 percent)
- (3) An orientation space at the beginning of the exhibition (22 percent)
- (4) A handout map showing exhibition layout (22 percent)¹⁰
- (5) An audio tour (26 percent)

The first two of these choices pertain to context, and are referred to below as “contextual improvements.” The third and fourth pertain to orientation, and are referred to as “orientation improvements.” The fifth overlaps both categories.

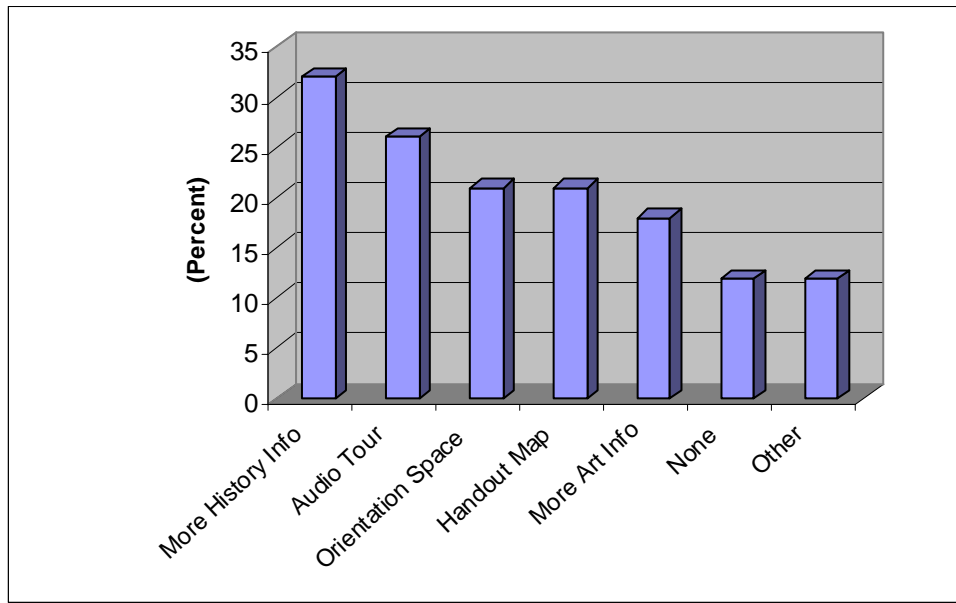
Visitors were also free to explicitly indicate that they saw no need for any improvements, or to write in their own suggestions for improvements. Twelve percent of respondents indicated they saw no need for improvements, and another 12 percent suggested improvements not specifically listed on the survey questionnaire, or elaborated on why they selected one of the five listed choices. (See Diagram 6, next page. Visitors' write-in responses are presented verbatim in Appendix B.)

The OP&A study team created two composite variables to identify visitors broadly interested in contextual improvements and orientation improvements, respectively. The first of these included all respondents who indicated they would like to see *one or more* of the contextual improvements (more historical context, more artistic context, or an audio tour). The second included all respondents who indicated a desire for *one or more* of the orientation improvements (an orientation space, a handout map, or an audio tour).

¹⁰ There was in fact such a map, which suggests that the high number of interviewees and survey pre-test respondents who wanted one were not aware of it.

Based on this analysis, more half of all visitors (52 percent) indicated they would like to see some kind of improvement associated with orientation concerns, and nearly three fifths (58 percent) indicated they would like to see at least one improvement associated with strengthening context.

Diagram 6: Survey Respondents' Suggested Improvements





FINDINGS: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

The purpose of the qualitative interview part of this study was to probe the feelings and thoughts of *ETG* visitors more deeply than would be possible through the survey. Although insights obtained in this way cannot be validly generalized to the larger population of exhibition visitors, the interviews raise some interesting issues and provide richer insight into how some visitors perceived the exhibition.



Underlying Themes

The OP&A study team asked all interviewees what they saw as the main theme or themes of the exhibition. Most interviewees who offered an opinion—some were just browsing the exhibition and declined to speculate—picked up on the general message of “cultures coming into contact.” Beyond that, there was little consensus. A surprising number focused on the religious dimension of this intercultural exchange. Some saw the meeting of cultures in positive terms; others mentioned the problematic or even tragic aspects. Some saw it mainly in terms of Portugal imposing its ways on the rest of the world; others saw it in terms of mutual influence. Some emphasized exploration, others colonial domination or commerce.

In a sense, interviewees’ thoughts about the theme of “encompassing the globe” appeared to mirror the ambivalence that many people today feel toward globalization. Just as

many people in the 21st century are simultaneously excited by the opportunities that globalization presents and anxious about the threats it poses, visitors to *ETG* grasped both the inspirational and dark sides of Portugal's global exploits in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Some visitors emphasized the wonder and excitement of exploration, or lauded Portugal's accomplishment in bringing so much of the world together in a more or less integrated global system of commerce:

It's not about Portugal; it's about the impact that Portugal had on all sorts of parts of the world. I'm always struck by how, at a particular moment, such a small group of people were able to have such a broad influence on so many parts of the world. I find it very impressive and almost moving to think about that.

Cultures and peoples came together because [the Portuguese] ventured out of their own little neighborhood. If it was not for that, everybody would be isolated. There would not be this exchange of culture throughout the world nowadays.

[The exhibition depicted] a period of time in which the overall thing was the excitement of discovery—the excitement of encountering new objects. So for me, I guess, the theme was a general sensation of a period of excitement and intermingling, without necessarily seeing it as a chronological process. I just got an overall view of 150 years of excitement and exploration.

Others, however, discussed the dark side of the Portuguese moment in world history—slavery, greed, exploitation, and cultural imperialism:

Certainly another theme that comes out is the quest for wealth. ... And then there is this sense of "Other people might be less than us." Think about the connection between slavery and sugar. Sugar represented power, but to get that sugar you needed somebody to do the work. So you looked to the African colonies to do that work.

[Another underlying theme was] certainly slavery on the one hand—the bringing of people from Africa and other places to do the labor. And then also—in a not very spoken way, but just from my general knowledge—the impact on the native peoples. ... The impact of European culture on the other cultures—that they are now producing artifacts that go back to Europe; they're producing Christian artifacts. The things that are going back are not necessarily their own cultural expression, but more what was dictated to them, what was wanted in Europe.

Of course, you have the colonialism and the slavery issue tied in. ... The Portuguese were definitely not the most enlightened colonialists.

And of course, many interviewees had a more ambivalent or neutral view of Portugal's efforts to "encompass the globe"—either seeing a balance of positive and negative

aspects, or discussing some central aspect (such as the spice trade) that was inherently neither good nor bad.

I saw it as being about the effects of the Portuguese arrival on different peoples and cultures. And “what happened” was very different in different places. The Chinese did a good job of keeping them at arms’ length, whereas Brazil was overrun and colonized.

The theme...? I don’t know what to say. The exploring of new worlds—would that be it...? Or maybe the colonization and trade—not only goods, but also of people. Because you know they took a lot of people from Africa in the time of colonization.

Visitor 1: *When you first walk in, you’re really hit with this sense of spices. And of course, that’s from the artwork that’s hanging from the ceiling. That sets the tone for the whole exhibit. This is all about the spice trade. Even if you don’t realize that, you would know something about it on an unconscious level.*

Visitor 2: *I didn’t get anything about the spices, except what I read on the walls. ... Where I read something about spices, I started looking for it. But I think I might have thought more of “trade routes” in general than spices specifically.*

One part of the inter-cultural exchange that many interviewees commented upon in some detail was the religious aspect, in particular the spread of Christianity. Indeed, some described this as the underlying thread of the exhibition. Here, too, a parallel can perhaps be seen with concerns that today’s globalization raises about the possibility of a “clash of civilizations” (in Samuel Huntington’s words) along religious lines:

I was expecting to see more on trade and commerce, but that did not come across strongly to me. There appeared to be much more emphasis on the religious dimension: the Catholic Church coming into contact with other cultures and what resulted.

My interest is not particularly religious, but I can see why there is so much of that focus in the exhibit. So much of [Portugal’s] purpose was missionary as well as mercantile.

[The exhibition portrays] how Christians settled the rest the world and what they brought with them, for good or for bad. And how that changed the world.

In Japan, there’s strong painting about martyrs. The Japanese are hanging and beheading the monks. So obviously, [the Portuguese] weren’t very welcome in that aspect.

In the Japan section, [it shows that] they turn against Christianity in a relatively short time, and try to maintain their own culture. I guess they saw Christianity as a threat to their own culture.



Objects and Aesthetics

Interviewees' comments on their object experiences in *ETG* were almost universally positive, often enthusiastically so. Visitors applauded the striking collection of objects and the strong aesthetics of the presentation with words such as "beautiful," "exotic," "magnificent," "exquisite," and "gorgeous." Several interviewees were particularly impressed by the range and diversity of items gathered together in the exhibition:

It is pretty accessible, because it has all sorts of different things. It's not just an art show. It has fabrics and maps and jewelry and screens and trunks and everything. So it's not just one type of thing to look at.

The parts that I have seen looked quite interesting, [with all the] examples of objects associated with Portugal's experiences in these places—things they discovered and things [other peoples] created in reaction to [the Portuguese]. I saw a couple wood pieces from France, for example, which were quite beautiful. And beautiful things in the Chinese part—examples of Chinese artwork.

We saw things from China and Japan, the Indian Ocean, India, Goa, Indonesia, Brazil, the African Coast. All inspired by Portugal; all local things where the individuals saw the Portuguese and interpreted that in their own way and their own art.

You might say there was a little bit from here, a little bit from there—but that to me just gave me a feeling of excitement at having all these different things to look at. All this interesting stuff, for me, imaginatively captured some of that spirit of excitement that these original explorers were feeling when these cultures came across each other for the first time.

A few visitors pointed out the downside of having such a huge number and variety of objects in a single exhibition:

I would definitely suggest that people come here, but I would tell them not to be overwhelmed, because there are a lot of objects. They might not be familiar with Asian art, and might get overwhelmed and not comprehend. So I would take that into consideration with who I'm telling to go, and where I'm telling them to focus.

If I really wanted to give it all equal attention, I'd have to come back again. You definitely can't do it in one trip. I was here for two and half hours or so, and even that wasn't enough; I just sort of reached a saturation point.

Among the huge variety of objects in the exhibition, interviewees frequently singled out the maps as a highlight:

I mainly came because I was interested in seeing some of the old maps, which I knew would probably be a part of the collection. I love old maps, especially since this is a period of history I am very fascinated in.

I initially saw the map section in the front of the show. I thought it was amazing. So I brought my husband, my father, and my daughter.

The maps were wonderful. I regret that I couldn't read any of those tiny little notations on the maps, whether they were in Latin or whatever.

The maps were especially interesting, it was interesting to see how they went from time periods, and how lands moved around as they figured out where everything belonged.

The craftsmanship on display also drew admiring comments:

[The] exquisite craftsmanship of people in that time. Neat, tiny, little wonderful craftsmanship.

The carved ivory—to be able, without a machine and just by hand, to put that kind of detail in it, and be able to repeat that.

Some of those religious pieces [in the Brazil section] are just magnificent. I never thought that such beautiful objects were incorporated into life there. There was a beautiful cross and beautiful wood-carved columns that were obviously part of a structure of some sort.

Many interviewees thought that the objects in *ETG*, in addition to appealing to the senses, were highly thought-provoking. They provided an interesting vehicle for gaining insight or entering imaginatively into the times, places, and circumstances in which they were created:

I like the aesthetics of the Japanese section. ... But also it was informative. They have these paintings of the Westerners with the big noses. There's this idea of, how did these other people see us?

A geography and history lesson, with art. ... I saw one father with his youngish sons, maybe eight or so, and he was explaining things to them in a very good way, I thought. "If we didn't have art like this, we wouldn't know how it was back then, because they didn't have cameras back then..." And I was thinking, "You know, he's doing a good job with that."

Thinking, for example, of the Brazilian exhibit, it has some artwork—like the paintings of natives—that's not really there for the art of it; it's there for the

information of it. ... I was amazed that they would actually take painters over there just to say “I want a record of this.”

I was really interested to see the exhibit on the first missionaries who visited Japan, and the mingling of Christian iconography with Japanese artistic styles. Whatever you think you know both about the cultures, when you see them coming together, you see it in a really unique and fresh way, as if for the first time. So that makes me see both cultures—and what I think I understand about them—with new eyes. It’s pretty much [like going] back in time.

I particularly enjoyed seeing the facets that artists and mapmakers and explorers choose to focus on, and what become popular representations of the different cultures, and the facets that are strange or unusual. Just to see how they come across in transmission—what’s focused on, what is exaggerated or opposed.

I liked the Moghul paintings in which the Portuguese appeared. ... It was interesting to me to see how the Portuguese were interpreted and depicted, and ultimately how, although they were in the [image], they were a relatively small and less impressive part of it. ... That was interesting, because in the end that was correct: the Portuguese did leave India. They stayed in Goa for a long time, but they did not dominate India. The Portuguese moment there was gone.

In addition to observations about the objects individually or collectively, some interviewees commented favorably on the overall “look and feel” of the exhibition.

I also liked the colors of the galleries. I think it goes with the precious metals and wood tones of everything. It tied it together in another way for me. Like the map was in a blue room, and there’s water in the map. I don’t usually enjoy colored walls in museums, but here it made a lot of sense—it set a tone for each gallery.

That element of “teleportation” or immersion, is satisfying. ... I’m not trained in any formal way in art. All I can say is it really looks appealing. ...I think the ambience does create a way that you can connect with things.



Historical Context

The comments on the historical context in *ETG* were more mixed than the overwhelmingly positive comments on the objects and aesthetics. Interviewees frequently noted that they found the information on particular objects, displays, or sections to be helpful and informative. Several said that the collection as a whole did a fine job of imaginatively evoking the Portuguese Age of Discovery. For example, one noted:

I came in looking more for the artistic side, but I always appreciate having historical information to situation myself, which I think was well provided. The information on the walls was just enough for me to imaginatively configure myself and have some kind of imaginative lens with which to view the objects, without getting lost in dates and trying to focus on something I “should” be reading. Sometimes I’ll go to an exhibit and I won’t read any of it, because it just seems like there’s too much of it, and I really want to be focusing on the objects. ... So I was satisfied with the information that was presented here, which I thought was just enough for my purposes.

However, a number of interviewees thought that the information failed to clearly place some objects in their larger historical context, or that the whole lacked an underlying narrative thread:

In the entry area with the huge compass, I would have liked to have seen a basic historical timeline that set all of the materials in the exhibition in their historical context. For example, after Constantinople was conquered by the Muslims, how Europeans felt their commerce with the Orient was threatened, which prompted the voyages of discovery. A lot of that context was in there, but it was in bits and pieces that you had to put together yourself.

It did divorce the historical context from a lot of this stuff we were looking at. ... For instance, the part on Japan—I don’t know the story very well of the Portuguese in Japan. We saw the picture of the massacre at Nagasaki, and I remember thinking, “Well, what really went on there?” I wish we knew a little bit more there to put that into a context.

My personal background, having been interested in this issue and having studied it, helped me put together the pieces in a way that maybe other visitors would have trouble doing. I don’t know if somebody just walking in and seeing the African artwork would really appreciate what it meant when the Portuguese were doing their deeds in Africa, or for that matter in India and Indonesia and places like that, where they were an arriving military power that was exerting their will on other cultures. I’m aware of that; I’m not sure if that was clearly described in the way the exhibit is put together. That could be a concern to someone.

Some interviewees found ETG’s historical information “Eurocentric” and therefore somewhat incomplete and distorted:

I didn’t get the impression that [the inter-cultural exchange] was mutual. I know that it was; but I didn’t have that impression.

Visitor 1: *In the Sri Lanka section, there are these little images of Christ—crystal ones. Maybe show some contemporary art made by Sri Lankans that either has just a little bit of Western influence, or none—to show what else was happening there, besides the Portuguese [influence]. I’m sure a million other things were*

going on, but we're only seeing that—which I understand, because that's the title of the show. But maybe just for comparison, show what else was going on.

Visitor 2: *Yeah—"before the Portuguese" and "after the Portuguese." It seems to be just "during the Portuguese." We need a "before" and an "after" to give it that historical reference.*

I would have liked more information on what happened to these different peoples once the Portuguese appeared in their lands.

The Islamic kingdoms spread from Spain into India and into Southeast Asia, and they had trading networks. When I went into the exhibit on Portugal's expansion into the spice trade, it made it sound like the Portuguese colonies in India were the first such trading colonies. And they weren't. ... So there is no indication that there was a larger history. I think it should've been placed within that context.



Exhibition Layout

The layout of the exhibit was the element that interviewees were most likely to discuss critically. Several visitors would have appreciated better way-finding aids or a better orientation section, and losing their sense of direction also appeared to detract from some visitors' understanding of the message of the exhibition. Interestingly, they also sometimes complained about the absence of elements—such as an introductory panel, handout map, or way-finding signs—that were in fact present or available in the exhibition:

*Well, to be quite honest, the beginning of it is rather confusing. There doesn't seem to be a central focus, unless I missed it. There **is** a clear entry point—that central part where you have the [five] different rooms to go to. [But] I didn't see an introductory piece or set of paragraphs or what have you.*

There should be some kind of beginning—a clear explanation of what this is, who are the sponsors (I'm sure that must be in there somewhere!) and what is this all about. I did not see that in my first try at it. ... I asked one of the guards about which way to go. Well, actually I said to him, "There's really no one way to go." And he said, "No." He said he would start with Brazil, because I think that was his origin. [Laughs] So that would have been helpful.

I made sure I saw it all, but it could have been daunting for someone less determined or less interested. It was neither circular nor linear—it was more sort of "in-and-out." ... Maybe just a little signposting would have helped; just some arrows, something to say "this way to" whatever the next thing was. That would have helped me.

I went through the first of the segments of the exhibit—on Portuguese exploration. And when it ended up, I had no idea where I was and had to walk all the way back through the exhibit to get to the central point.

I didn't know my way around. I wondered if the exhibit was trying to show the isolation [of the individual cultures]. I wondered if there was a central theme or idea for doing it that way. But if there was, then some description and explanation would make that much more visible. They put the center and everything coming out from it, but nothing connecting. Was it on purpose...?

One interviewee was also critical of the exhibition entry space because she did not see it as a suitably enticing lead-in to the exhibition:

I think something at the entrance that would be a little more impressive than this sculpture. I don't think this entrance area space is utilized well. Unless you are specifically going to this exhibit, you are not aware—it does not show the glory of the exhibit at the entrance. You have to go all the way in.

Some visitors, however, had no complaints about the layout of the exhibition:

It flowed very well from section to section, and sort of had a sense of theme in each room.

They have maps all over if you don't know which way you want to go. I think it fairly well leads from one thing to another. I didn't have any trouble.

They are sort of "blind" sections, [but] that's good in a way, because it makes you focus on the individual sections. ... So it doesn't flow like the usual exhibit, and that threw me off a little bit to start with. But when I think about it, there is a purpose for that too.

A few visitors offered comments, both positive and negative, about other elements of the physical environment of the exhibition, such as the lighting, temperature, or spacing of displays:

It seemed a little dark in some of the rooms I was in. ... I know lighting is an issue; one cannot have too much light if you want to preserve the objects.

One thing that I didn't like were the display cases that you were supposed to walk around, but were so close to the wall that you can't easily go behind them. ... We had seven people in our group, and [it was difficult] trying to move through the room with a square display case in the middle. ... But I enjoyed the space and how everything was grouped together.

The lighting is pretty good in this museum. Usually when there are so many cases, the lighting is a problem. I don't think it's a problem in this one. ...

Usually the lighting is at such an angle that it reflects back in your face; it's actually really good here.

I think the people employed here could be a little quieter. Because it's a very quiet museum, and [it's jarring] when you hear a lot of commotion going on in the gift shop or [from] the guards. ... But on the whole, they're very good employees. It is a very quiet museum; it's not like you're in the Natural History Museum.

It was interesting that the [wall text panels] were very long, rather than made shorter and placed in a variety of places. I think that some people simply walked by the long descriptions.

I'm frozen! Why do they keep it so cold?

Visitor 1: *Don't take down the objects so often! It really threw us for a loop, because [my museum studies class was] studying a particular object and the themes in the object, and there were quite a few different levels. Then all of a sudden, overnight, it disappeared. ...*

Visitor 2: *And even if we weren't doing a project here, I like visiting the same show over and over if some pieces strike me. And if one of those pieces was gone, I'd be pretty upset. If, say, I talked to someone about some sculpture that I loved, brought them here to see it, and it's gone—I might be upset about that.*

I don't think there was a big modern map to orient yourself [geographically]. Like, where exactly is the Strait of Malacca...? That would have been helpful, perhaps, so you go forth with "Okay, this is today's map," and then you see the way they drew it back then.



DISCUSSION

ETG was a very ambitious exhibition in scope and scale. The process of curating, organizing, shipping, and installing the exhibition lasted four years, with work starting in 2003. The logistics of assembling more than 250 objects from over 100 lenders in 15 countries were formidable; in the weeks prior to the show's opening, more than 75 couriers were working around the clock to deliver and unpack all of the exhibition objects. As noted above, the six-section layout was the largest exhibition by floor space in the Sackler's history. *ETG* involved the first collaboration on an exhibition between FSG and the adjoining National Museum of African Art, and represented a bold move by the Museum to step beyond its traditional, narrowly-defined focus on Asian art. In the words of FSG Director Julian Raby:

[ETG] expanded the definition of what our museums can achieve. The show looked at a critical moment in human history: a time when the world's oceans no longer divided men, but they began to be the principal conduit for the transmission of people, goods, ideas, and images. Europe's conception of the world and its wonders changed forever[.] (*Asiatica* annual report, 2007)

The critics recognized *ETG* as a signal accomplishment. For example, Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* described it as “...a show that glows like a treasury, radiates like a compass and seems as rich with potential information as the World Wide Web” (*New York Times*, June 29, 2007). Reviewers lauded both the show’s aesthetics and the many levels of meaning that it contained.

However, visitor satisfaction with *ETG* was only average by Sackler exhibition standards. Neither the survey nor the qualitative interviews provide definitive answers about why *ETG* seemed to excite visitors less than several other recent Sackler exhibitions, most notably *Hokusai* and *Style and Status*. *ETG* certainly succeeded in providing memorable object and aesthetic experiences for its visitors; interviewees almost universally noted their appreciation for the objects and aesthetics of the exhibition. Moreover, when asked why they found a particular section of the exhibition most interesting, a plurality of survey respondents made some reference to objects or aesthetics. (See Appendix B.)

Likewise, *ETG* seems to have succeeded in providing educational experiences for visitors. Interviews and comment book entries indicate many visitors learned new information or, more generally, gained a deeper understanding of what Portugal’s trade empire meant for that nation, for Europe, for the non-European cultures it encompassed, and for the world in general.

However, there were two key areas where visitors seemed less satisfied with the exhibition: *contextual information* and *physical orientation*. The study team envisions the typical *ETG* visitor as delighted by individual displays and appreciative of the opportunities for learning that the exhibition presented, but nevertheless somewhat confused, both physically and conceptually, about the bigger picture.



Context

The issue for many visitors who indicated a desire for contextual improvement probably was not so much an inadequate *quantity* of contextual information, as the overall lack of *coherence*. In fact, there was a great deal of explanatory wall text in *ETG*, by art museum standards. It is unclear, however, whether all this text added up to a clear narrative thread that bound the hundreds of objects and displays together. Visitors seemed generally to grasp that the concept of cultural contact and exchange was at the heart of the exhibition. But beyond that, there was little consensus about what the main message of *ETG* was—visitors expressed a wide variety of them—or if there even was a single message.

Such a narrative thread was probably more crucial for this exhibition than for other Sackler shows because of the sheer quantity and variety of material—art and artifacts covering hundreds of years, from cultures ranging from the Far East to South America. This might be part of the reason that smaller and more focused Sackler exhibitions such

as *Hokusai* and *In the Beginning* had higher overall satisfaction ratings, even though some of their visitors also perceived weaknesses in the area of informational context.

Although the survey did not ask about visitors' background interests, the study team gathers that many visitors were expecting *ETG* to be more of a history exhibition.¹¹ These visitors may have been disappointed by the lack of a clear historical narrative thread. Some evidence for this is that visitors who indicated they had studied or read about colonial history were more likely than others to choose "more information on historical context" as a desirable improvement (38 percent versus 27 percent).¹²



Physical Orientation

Orientation and informational context issues are to some extent intertwined. The absence of a clear narrative thread may have led to confusion about where to go. That confusion in turn may have led to puzzlement about the overall historical and thematic picture in which different sections of *ETG* were embedded.

Visitors who commented on the exhibition's layout generally disliked the out-and-back nature of some of *ETG*'s sections, which led to cul-de-sacs (Japan, China) or remote exhibition exits (Portugal) and required constant backtracking. The question of where they were "supposed to go next" seemed to vex some visitors. Although exhibition maps, floor plans, and wayfinding aids were available, many visitors seemed to be unaware of them.

At the extreme end of the orientation issues spectrum, some visitors were uncertain about the boundaries of the exhibition. This may have been the case in the Sackler itself, where some visitors appeared to be unaware that the permanent displays of Indian and Chinese art on the second level were separate from *ETG*. It was clearly the case at both ends of the African Coast *ETG* section. For example, while conducting an unrelated survey in the National Museum of African Art, OP&A staff encountered a steady trickle of visitors in the *African Vision* exhibition who believed they were still in *ETG*, and were confused about how to get back to the beginning. Likewise, some visitors exiting through the Sackler pavilion during survey or interview sessions had entered through the National

¹¹ Over half of all visitors—53 percent—indicated that they had "studied or read Portuguese or European colonial history," and the percentage was even higher for visitors who came specifically to see *ETG* (60 percent).

¹² It is difficult to say whether or how much this may have affected overall satisfaction with the exhibition. There was no statistically significant difference between the satisfaction ratings of visitors who indicated they had read/studied colonial history and other visitors. On the other hand, the average number of improvements suggested by visitors who had read/studied colonial history was higher than for other visitors (1.5 versus 1.2), implying these individuals were relatively critical of the exhibition. (The difference, while relatively small, was highly significant statistically.) The average was even higher for those who both read/studied colonial history *and* specifically came to the Sackler to see *ETG* (1.6).

Museum of African Art, ended up in the Sackler via the African Coast *ETG* section, and were, in some cases, unaware they had left the African Art Museum.

The analysis also revealed that FSG “local regular” visitors were more likely than others to name orientation improvements as desirable: 32 percent said they would have liked an orientation space (versus 19 percent of others) and 33 percent would have liked a handout map (also versus 19 percent of others). It seems curious that the visitor group who would presumably be most familiar with the museum’s layout was also most likely to cite a need for better orientation tools. Perhaps this result represents local regulars’ judgment of *ETG*’s physical layout as *relatively* confusing when compared with other Sackler shows they recall—all of which have been smaller (and generally more linear) than *ETG*.



APPENDIX A

Frequency of Responses To the *Encompassing the Globe* Survey

Note: Responses may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Is this your first visit to the Freer and Sackler Galleries (FSG)?

39%	Yes	
35%	No, I visited ____ times in the last year	<i>1 time: 15%</i>
		<i>2-4 times: 56%</i>
		<i>5 or more times: 29%</i>
25%	No, I last visited more than one year ago	

Today, did you come specifically to see the exhibition *Encompassing the Globe*?

66%	Yes
34%	No

Please rate your experience in the exhibition *Encompassing the Globe* today.

21% Superior
 56% Excellent
 19% Good
 3% Fair
 <1% Poor

How did the exhibition *Encompassing the Globe* compare with what you expected?

49% Better
 49% About as expected
 3% Not as good

Which geographical sections of *Encompassing the Globe* did you visit?

	Not Sure	Did Not Visit	Browsed Quickly	Examined Carefully
The African Coast	11%	16%	36%	38%
Brazil and the New World	9%	16%	34%	41%
China: Merchants and Missionaries	8%	15%	34%	44%
The Indian Ocean from Muscat to the Spice Islands	9%	15%	26%	49%
Japan: Arrival of the Southern Barbarians	11%	17%	29%	43%
Portugal and the Age of Discovery	6%	5%	24%	65%

Which geographic section of *Encompassing the Globe* did you find *most* interesting? (Mark only one)

40% Portugal
 13% Brazil
 13% Indian Ocean
 12% Japan
 11% Africa
 11% China

Why? *[Verbatim responses in Appendix B]*

What do you consider to be the main theme(s) or message(s) of *Encompassing the Globe*?
[Verbatim responses in Appendix B]

**Which of the following would have improved your experience in *Encompassing the Globe*?
(Mark one or more)**

- 33% More information on historical context
- 26% An audio tour
- 22% An orientation space at the beginning of the exhibition
- 22% A handout map showing exhibition layout
- 19% More information on artistic context
- 12% No improvements needed
- 12% Other *[Verbatim responses in Appendix B]*

Age: Average = 49 years Median = 51 years

Sex: 56% Female
45% Male

Where do you live?

- 89% United States
- 11% Other country

Which of the following apply to you? (Mark one or more)

- 53% I have studied or read about Portuguese or European colonial history
- 25% I have traveled to Portugal or Brazil
- 8% I am of Portuguese or Brazilian origin
- 3% I have lived in Portugal or Brazil
- 28% None of the above

If you have additional comments about the exhibition or museum, please write on the back of this form. *[Verbatim responses in Appendix B]*



APPENDIX B

Survey Write-In Responses

The survey asked two open-ended questions of respondents:

- What were their reasons for choosing a particular section of the exhibition as “most interesting”; and
- What did they see as the main theme(s) of the exhibition.

All responses to these open-ended questions are reproduced verbatim below, along with write-in responses to the survey question on suggested improvements and miscellaneous written comments provided by visitors.



Favorite Section: Reasons

Sixty-five percent of respondents wrote a response to the question of *why* they selected a particular section of the exhibition as “most interesting.” The OP&A study team coded these into several general categories:¹³

- **Objects/Aesthetics (27 percent):** Comments in this category cited the beauty, visual appeal, or inherent interest of the objects or their presentation.
- **Interesting Content (18 percent):** The general interest of the subject(s) or theme(s).
- **Personal Interest/Familiarity (16 percent):** The respondent’s own interest in, or knowledge of, the region.
- **Personal Connection (15 percent):** The respondent’s own personal ties to the region.
- **Depth/Scope/Variety (8 percent):** The quantity, thoroughness, or range of material.
- **Novelty (8 percent):** The new or surprising qualities of material.
- **Educational Value (6 percent):** The potential to learn new facts or information.
- **Context (5 percent):** Success in placing objects in a larger historical or cultural context.
- **Maps (5 percent):** Historical maps on display.

In addition, 5 percent picked a section as “most interesting” because it was the only one they visited, and 15 percent provided answers that defied coding (in some cases, because the responses were illegible or incoherent).

Because of the open-ended nature of the questions and the wide variety of responses, it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions from this information. However, it may be significant that a plurality of respondents referred to *objects* and *aesthetics* in some way when explaining why one section was more interesting to them than the others. As

¹³ Note that the percentage in parentheses indicates the *percentage of respondents who answered the open-ended question* with a response related to coded area. Because a single respondent’s answer may fall under multiple codes, the total percentages sum to well over 100 percent.

discussed above, the exhibition's success was most unambiguous in the area of object and aesthetic experiences.



Exhibition Theme

Sixty-eight percent of respondents wrote in an answer to the open-ended question of what they perceived to be the underlying theme of the exhibition. The OP&A study team coded these into several general categories:¹⁴

- **Intercultural Influence/Exchange (28 percent):** The “two-way” exchange of artistic and cultural elements among Portugal and the non-Western societies it engaged.
- **Trade/Commerce/Wealth/Economics (17 percent):** The economic motivations and consequences of Portugal's voyages of discovery.
- **Exploration/Discovery/Adventure (16 percent):** The element of exploring and encountering the unknown in the story of Portugal in the 16th and 17th centuries.
- **Portuguese/European Global Influence (16 percent):** The “one-way” influence of Europeans on the societies they encountered.
- **Globalization/Global Interconnectedness (15 percent):** Portugal's empire as the harbinger of the modern age of transnational communications, economics, and cultures.
- **Power/Domination/Exploitation/Colonialism (12 percent):** The “dark side” of the Portuguese Age of Discovery in the exploitation of non-Western cultures.
- **General History (11 percent):** The exhibition as a historical narrative illustrated with objects.
- **Religion/Christianity (9 percent):** The religious dimension of Portugal's global activities.
- **Art/Aesthetics (7 percent):** The art itself as the theme and purpose of the exhibition.
- **Growth of Knowledge (4 percent):** The contributions of the Portuguese to the world's geographical and cultural understanding of itself.

¹⁴ See footnote 12.

In addition, 5 percent of respondents expressed the view that there was no single underlying theme, or they could not identify one.

Perhaps the biggest surprise for the study team was the infrequency with which religion was mentioned. In the qualitative interviews, almost *all* interviewees spontaneously mentioned religion as a central theme within the exhibition. It is therefore interesting that, when asked for a single main message, survey respondents were generally inclined to choose other themes.

There appears to be some consistency in the responses to this query. Almost all of the most commonly suggested themes converge on the broad concept of *bringing a world of disconnected cultures and societies together*—through trade, exploration, conquest, and intercultural exchange. Thus, at least at a high level of abstraction, it appears that most visitors grasped the intended message of *ETG*.



Write-in Responses: Reasons for Choosing a Section as “Most Interesting”

Africa

- ❖ Beauty of individual pieces
- ❖ The reason I came today
- ❖ Music
- ❖ The paintings, the sculpture
- ❖ My son believes it has the most artistic piece value
- ❖ Very unusual pieces
- ❖ I know the least about this area.
- ❖ I'm black; looking for culture with my background
- ❖ I have visited the African Coast and it holds interest to me.
- ❖ My background (black)
- ❖ Because it was very interesting
- ❖ Art seemed more detailed
- ❖ It was new to me
- ❖ Fascinating sculptures, figures
- ❖ Discovery of African art
- ❖ It is my heritage
- ❖ We have a special interest in Africa, having lived there for many years
- ❖ Very cool art works
- ❖ Art combined African and European influences
- ❖ I have studied African art
- ❖ Lots of neat stuff
- ❖ I'm a sucker for gold and ivory
- ❖ Like African art
- ❖ The richness of African Christian culture
- ❖ Intricacy of workmanship

- ❖ It is very interesting
- ❖ I find African art interesting

Brazil

- ❖ Knew the least about it beforehand.
- ❖ I will be moving to Brazil soon
- ❖ It explored an area often left out of Global Studies
- ❖ I am interested in Brazil and Portuguese heritage
- ❖ Read information I wasn't so sure about
- ❖ I have visited Portugal (Lisbon) several times and I am very interested in the culture of Brazil
- ❖ Interesting life-size paintings
- ❖ Variety and quality of exhibit aesthetic
- ❖ Personal interest
- ❖ Spent the most time there
- ❖ Brazil interests me very much
- ❖ I was impressed by the paintings
- ❖ I'm originally from Recife, Brazil
- ❖ Paintings were impressive/displayed the crossing of cultures
- ❖ I hadn't seen it before
- ❖ Fascinating
- ❖ This hemisphere
- ❖ Connections with trade, culture
- ❖ I've lived there
- ❖ More on the indigenous people
- ❖ Entrance (incision)
- ❖ Very interested in Latin America/South America studies
- ❖ We visited only the Brazil section
- ❖ New stuff for me (Dutch)
- ❖ Only one I saw
- ❖ Was most interested in Brazil
- ❖ Because of my Brazilian cultural background
- ❖ I am from Brazil
- ❖ Historical understanding

China

- ❖ Age of items
- ❖ We live in China (Hong Kong)
- ❖ Only went to one - work across the street.
- ❖ For the minuteness of the works
- ❖ Beautiful
- ❖ Took a history course on China
- ❖ Very keen on Chinese Art, etc.
- ❖ Extensive knowledge of history
- ❖ Astrolabe and other navigational instruments
- ❖ Because I'm also from Eastern country
- ❖ Jesuit history and influence on China and vice versa
- ❖ A lot of items to see; information was new to me
- ❖ Seeing the Chinese lettering of Western ideas was fascinating

- ❖ I am fascinated by Chinese history/culture
- ❖ My interest in Chinese art
- ❖ This is the area I know something about.
- ❖ Familiarity with Chinese works
- ❖ Best art work
- ❖ Exuberant
- ❖ Just came back from three weeks in China. Very interested in the culture.
- ❖ Interested in China
- ❖ Religious art

Indian Ocean

- ❖ Studied classical Indian music
- ❖ Because I have never seen ivory and I have read so much about the Spice Islands
- ❖ Loved the sculpture!
- ❖ Learned a lot that I hadn't known before
- ❖ Know more about other areas
- ❖ Because it has good things
- ❖ Most CONTEXT
- ❖ Artifacts
- ❖ It had the best explanation
- ❖ Wonderful objects. Very good display.
- ❖ Quality of artifacts
- ❖ Greatest diversity of exhibits
- ❖ Artifacts and art
- ❖ Best stuff
- ❖ Spent most time; will be back
- ❖ Maps and works ... because it was new information and artifacts
- ❖ Many details
- ❖ Amazing things and culture
- ❖ Interesting
- ❖ I am interested in that part
- ❖ Because we had most things explained to us by a museum explainer

Japan

- ❖ Because of depiction of Portuguese in Japan
- ❖ Paintings of Christian martyrs
- ❖ Interest in Asia/Europe contact
- ❖ Our Japanese heritage
- ❖ Mix of cultural and artistic ideas/motifs
- ❖ Story of the invasion
- ❖ Clavell's *Shogun* provided context
- ❖ My aesthetic preference
- ❖ Nagasaki art
- ❖ Interplay/effect of Christianity on countries
- ❖ I learned about the martyrdom of Christians
- ❖ Longstanding interest in feudal Japan
- ❖ Sophistication
- ❖ Better and more artifacts

- ❖ With a Japanese woman who is a house guest
- ❖ Only one visited. We did not have time to visit. I will come back!
- ❖ Interest in Japan
- ❖ Japanese characteristics of Portuguese
- ❖ I like Japanese art
- ❖ Personal preference
- ❖ The Four Directional Figures
- ❖ Because it's a country who love[s] art
- ❖ Artifacts were interestingly displayed
- ❖ There are more objects offering a better, wider picture

Portugal

- ❖ It's exotic to me. It's beautiful.
- ❖ I'm Portuguese
- ❖ All most thorough, beautifully presented
- ❖ It shows how it was in the 1500s
- ❖ Richly described
- ❖ Found out new information
- ❖ Cartography
- ❖ Very complete
- ❖ This is [the] country of focus, so it was interesting to see how it influenced other countries.
- ❖ I don't know anything about the country
- ❖ Special interest
- ❖ More extensive
- ❖ The history of the explorations
- ❖ Nice maps—incredible for 1500s
- ❖ Most relevant
- ❖ It gave an impressive visual representation of the material results of Europe's earliest colonial ventures.
- ❖ Only area seen today
- ❖ Extent of knowledge, historical meaning
- ❖ Perhaps because it was the first part of the exhibit I visited and I hadn't begun experiencing fatigue. I especially like the maps.
- ❖ I love Portugal—one of my favorite countries
- ❖ The most detailed
- ❖ Maps
- ❖ I'm from Europe
- ❖ Didn't have time to see the rest
- ❖ Very well done
- ❖ Came to see ceramics
- ❖ Portugal was the initiator to get to know and learn about the other countries
- ❖ The ivory figures were astounding
- ❖ It is the main theme
- ❖ Mainly interested in history [and] in maps
- ❖ Liked maps
- ❖ Most related to my background and heritage
- ❖ Self-background history
- ❖ Only one visited
- ❖ Beautiful objects

- ❖ Objects
- ❖ How they altered the already beautiful objects was interesting
- ❖ Most detail
- ❖ Maps and objects exhibited
- ❖ Deduction
- ❖ Maps were awesome
- ❖ I am planning a trip to Portugal and Spain
- ❖ Breadth of materials presented
- ❖ More items, fuller picture of the time and discoveries
- ❖ More of Portuguese beginnings of exploration
- ❖ Personal interest
- ❖ Greatest personal interest
- ❖ We are of Portuguese descent
- ❖ Personal interest
- ❖ Because this was the first time I focused on Portugal as a nation of explorers, traders, and missionaries
- ❖ Most interested in the discoverers and their reasons for discovery
- ❖ Heritage—my homeland
- ❖ Animals
- ❖ Liked the animals
- ❖ I have learned something that I did not know before
- ❖ The art pieces were interesting
- ❖ Interesting art and exhibits
- ❖ Most general information
- ❖ Historically very interesting
- ❖ Good general info
- ❖ Variety of artistic media
- ❖ More maps and paintings
- ❖ Because it is connected to our culture. Africa is disconnected
- ❖ My Eurocentric background
- ❖ Too extensive for one visit
- ❖ I am very interested in this time period in Europe, 15th-17th centuries
- ❖ My new son-in-law is of direct Portuguese descent - educational purposes—wanted to know history
- ❖ Good info on historical context



Write-In Responses: Suggested Main Theme(s) or Message(s)

- ❖ Intercultural relations—confluence and competition
- ❖ Portugal—a small country becoming a world power
- ❖ Influence of culture on other
- ❖ Portugal explored the world very early and widely
- ❖ Cultural sharing
- ❖ The Portuguese were the best
- ❖ Portugal's outstanding contributions toward the enrichment of world culture.
- ❖ The artifacts/cultural
- ❖ Broadening of knowledge

- ❖ Time! Changing world
- ❖ The Portuguese were everywhere
- ❖ Trade, religion; lead/rule
- ❖ Exploration
- ❖ Showing the differences, but yet some similarities
- ❖ Showing how the world was viewed in past timeframes
- ❖ Reasons behind discoveries/Religious influences/Success of de-centralization
- ❖ The history and culture of the countries
- ❖ African influence on the world
- ❖ Antiquity of globalization
- ❖ Portuguese helped societies exchange ideas at an early time.
- ❖ Man's search for knowledge and mixing of cultures
- ❖ Explosion of connections
- ❖ Cultural links
- ❖ Art and religion from all over
- ❖ The influence of Portuguese exploration on cultural development
- ❖ Exchange of ideas between East and West
- ❖ That globalization is NOT a modern phenomenon but rather the continuation of history
- ❖ Artistic [illegible] of their regions during last 300-400 years
- ❖ Portugal's trade routes
- ❖ Cultural importance/legacy of Portugal's global exploration and trade
- ❖ Impact of West on the rest of the world, and vice versa.
- ❖ Cultural/intellecultural influences of Portugal worldwide.
- ❖ No one main theme
- ❖ This was a quick lunch-hour run through. We intend to visit again.
- ❖ How important developments c.1500 still are for today's world
- ❖ The effect of other cultures
- ❖ Contributions of Portugal
- ❖ The huge range of Portugal's influence in the larger world of the 16th and 17th centuries
- ❖ To teach others of history
- ❖ Eurocentric globalization was religiously-motivated
- ❖ How Portugal's visits to different countries affected art and crafts
- ❖ Cultural and historical impacts of the above-mentioned countries
- ❖ The a small nation could have such a huge—maybe negative—influence
- ❖ Cultural exchange/The beginnings of modern material culture
- ❖ Life and art
- ❖ The [illegible] of early colonialism
- ❖ Life is the same everywhere on this planet
- ❖ Trade/Exchange of ideas and cultures
- ❖ The interplay of Eastern and Western culture and religions
- ❖ Portugal history 16 and 17 centuries
- ❖ Globalization
- ❖ The wealth/the adventure
- ❖ Presented Portuguese Age of Discovery outside Europe
- ❖ Diffusion and intermixing of cultures
- ❖ The intermingling of cultures
- ❖ Globalization, the influence of various cultures
- ❖ The beginning of the exploration age/The discovery of new civilizations
- ❖ Portugal as the first engine of globalization
- ❖ History and adventure, travel, conquest
- ❖ The influence of travel and trade from Portugal

- ❖ Impact of different cultures on surrounding people
- ❖ Melding of the cultures and the simplicity of beauty
- ❖ European exploitation and its varied outcomes
- ❖ It's a small world after all
- ❖ Portugal connecting other world cultures via exploration
- ❖ The interactions among the "colonizer" and the countries being visited/colonized
- ❖ One of the topics was the effect of European missions
- ❖ Age of exploration was filled [with] "daring courageous adventures" that paid off big!
- ❖ To show art from different countries
- ❖ Citizens of the world, not citizens of a country
- ❖ The spread of Christian culture
- ❖ Don't trust the Portuguese
- ❖ There is great art with great diversity all over the world
- ❖ Portuguese wanted to gain riches and spread Christianity
- ❖ History of world and how we got here?
- ❖ Christianity
- ❖ Know where you come from, visit if possible
- ❖ Globalization at an earlier stage
- ❖ Lasting cultural influence of an imperial power
- ❖ History
- ❖ Exchange of cultural/artistic notions
- ❖ Importance of trade and travel
- ❖ Exploration
- ❖ Role of Portugal in exploration/ Imposition of culture and exploitation of people
- ❖ How Portugal shared riches/Knowledge of world
- ❖ The impact/influence of Portugal on the world
- ❖ Cross cultural immersion and discovery
- ❖ Portugal took the lead among Europeans in exploring the rest of the world
- ❖ Exploring fascinating cultures
- ❖ Wonderful country. Talented people.
- ❖ Portuguese success in building its version of an empire
- ❖ Globalization, cultural interaction
- ❖ Exploration, exploitation
- ❖ Damage to local cultures of colonialism
- ❖ The global network established by Portugal in the 16th century
- ❖ Power of a small country in early days
- ❖ Enormous expanse of Portugal's trading empire
- ❖ Navigation and development of Portuguese trade
- ❖ That Portugal was not always a backwater, and that there was significant influence between it and the people it contacted
- ❖ The quest for power!
- ❖ Effect of Age of Exploration—meeting of cultures
- ❖ Globalization/Exchange between cultures
- ❖ Bringing to light the scope of Portuguese colonial enterprise and cultural transformations resulting therefrom
- ❖ A global economy is not new
- ❖ The world is more connected than most think
- ❖ Greed
- ❖ Syncretism
- ❖ Cultures colliding and sometimes conflicting
- ❖ The Portuguese trade initiate[d] a complex web of international relations

- ❖ Discovery
- ❖ Portugal's discoveries
- ❖ Comparing differences of cultures
- ❖ Influence on other cultures
- ❖ Exploration
- ❖ Portuguese more agreeable to native populations, trade as unifying force
- ❖ Small motivated country breaking barriers to expand influence
- ❖ Portuguese discoveries
- ❖ Interconnections of politics, trade, and religion in Europe of the time
- ❖ Trade drives art. Seriously, you can't keep progress back. ART OUTLASTS POLITICS
- ❖ Exploring the world and bringing everyone closer
- ❖ Spread of culture via exploration
- ❖ Portuguese influence in world exploration, navigational history
- ❖ The artistic dialogue between the cultures
- ❖ Global encompassment
- ❖ Didn't see whole exhibit to determine this
- ❖ Colonialism/Cross cultural communication
- ❖ Cross cultural integration
- ❖ History
- ❖ History
- ❖ Trading and conversion of Christianity
- ❖ Impact of Western civilization to the world
- ❖ Quality of non-European art; effect of Europeans on non-Europeans
- ❖ Collecting the most important historic references and tying them together
- ❖ Portugal as a colonial empire
- ❖ History of area important to the world but neglected in U.S. school treatments
- ❖ ?
- ❖ Portuguese extended their culture around the world and were in turn influenced by the peoples they encountered
- ❖ Preservation
- ❖ Portugal['s] expansion and trade. Discoveries in New Worlds.
- ❖ Seemed too apologetic. Not enough about the cultural impact of this expansion.
- ❖ Impact of Portugal on world
- ❖ Mix of European and non-European cultures
- ❖ Spread/mix of civilizations, sometimes unintentional
- ❖ Portugal had a significant impact on bringing the world cultures together
- ❖ Portugal's importance as a trade empire
- ❖ Christianity
- ❖ Globalization
- ❖ I think we are meant to be reminded of Portugal's HUGE influence on world history.
- ❖ Concept of meaning of the earth and its treasures ... and most important ideas
- ❖ Navigation
- ❖ To reveal the consequences of inter-cultural exchange during the period in which Portugal dominated trade
- ❖ Early globalization
- ❖ Maps, art using animals, trade routes
- ❖ Historical exploration
- ❖ Collaboration between cultures
- ❖ We are bound by our creative expressions of our experience
- ❖ Exports (trade) also involve culture and art. Two-way exchange.

- ❖ Portugal's influence was cultural, not political. Made the world aware of other cultures as well as its own. Trade.
- ❖ Interactions of cultures
- ❖ Cross-cultural influences of Portugal and its sphere of influence
- ❖ Exploration and contribution to history
- ❖ We are all of one world
- ❖ Sharing of ideas across geographical borders
- ❖ When cultures meet, the art of the visitor and that of the visited nation is influenced, despite political differences.
- ❖ Artifacts of trade
- ❖ The world looked different from the inhabitants back then
- ❖ Portugal's incorporation of the cultures they discovered into their own. Portugal = multicultural.
- ❖ How Portugal explored and traveled
- ❖ The trading of ideas along with that of goods
- ❖ Portugal as pivotal [illegible] in Age of Exploration.
- ❖ Intrigued by the spread of art and culture, in particular the art of East [illegible] for European [illegible]
- ❖ Spread of culture and ideas
- ❖ Importance of trade
- ❖ Christianity/Influence of the Portuguese on the world
- ❖ Creation of new kind of empire based on trade and information, not land mass, and its short-term nature
- ❖ Role of religion in conquest
- ❖ Not sure.
- ❖ ?
- ❖ Cultural exchange along Portuguese trade routes
- ❖ Not sure!
- ❖ Portuguese colonial expansion through mercantilism
- ❖ Trade/Globalization in 17th century
- ❖ That Portugal was a world power and they produced many artifacts that account for that history.
- ❖ Portuguese influence around the world
- ❖ Spreading of culture, religious influence, spreading commerce
- ❖ It seemed too concentrated on Christianity
- ❖ Cultural contact and cross-fertilization
- ❖ Effects of colonization
- ❖ Explorations of past culture through art
- ❖ Exploration in the olden days
- ❖ Positive and negative aspects of imperialism/colonialism /drawbacks and benefits of cultural exchange
- ❖ N/A
- ❖ Portugal's far-reaching influence
- ❖ Culture preceded Western colonization
- ❖ Brave new world, or maybe brave old world
- ❖ Explore and exploit = \$\$\$
- ❖ You have the most appropriate themes
- ❖ Portugal's advancement/Christianity's rise
- ❖ Exploration/education/commerce
- ❖ The impact of Western religion on Eastern cultures
- ❖ There are fabulous things everywhere

- ❖ Portugal's naval expeditions, their mapping of the world
- ❖ The confusion/fusion of cultures
- ❖ Discovery of new world



Write-In Responses: Improvements

- ❖ Spot docents to explain individual rooms
- ❖ More advertisement, esp. outside of Washington
- ❖ Would LOVE audio tour
- ❖ Posted map [instead of handout map] to save paper. If there was a map, I missed it but I used the compass on the floor
- ❖ Introductory video
- ❖ Smaller than expected
- ❖ We were very lost!
- ❖ At times the heavy presence of objects from the collections of other European nations begged [for] explanation
- ❖ Smaller book of the exhibition to purchase.
- ❖ Is there one place that's better to begin?
- ❖ Some sections are TOO short
- ❖ More items
- ❖ All of it still wonderful
- ❖ Mirrors behind some of the exhibits, such as the various boxes
- ❖ Where was the intro panel? I think I toured the show backwards, but I'm not sure. Confusing layout.
- ❖ More kid-friendly pieces
- ❖ More info on other influences besides art: naturalist, literature, ideas, science
- ❖ A recommended route through the galleries. I had difficulty figuring out which items/rooms in the collection were part of the Portugal exhibit
- ❖ An orientation video at the beginning
- ❖ Some of it was hard to read with dim lighting and dark background
- ❖ Maps showing locations of ports or carry around map of all these places on wall?
- ❖ A booklet or handout should be available
- ❖ We brought grandchildren to NMNH; my wife has a foot injury and has difficulty walking, so we were not able to enjoy the exhibit as would have otherwise
- ❖ Better layout!
- ❖ Difficulty in continuing the tour. Note: Conversated with the administrator to underscore the lack of arrows, maps, etc. to help find one's way
- ❖ An exhibition map; exhibit is spread out in different sections of the museum
- ❖ I think a lot would be gained from having more information from the colonies' perspective on Portuguese colonization
- ❖ Tour bypassed Africa
- ❖ If I had not had a docent tour, I would have liked an audio guide
- ❖ We participated in a tour. We would have liked to hear the talk and have 5-10 minutes to tour room
- ❖ An introductory video
- ❖ Relationship between areas

- ❖ In the Chinese section, no explanation of the SIX astro/navigation instruments. What are the SIX? Can't see the top cover of the artifact. Use mirror or change angle.
- ❖ A contemporary MAP of the world showing where these places are and showing the progression of Portuguese exploration
- ❖ More tours
- ❖ [Audio tour would be a] major improvement
- ❖ [More information on] artifacts
- ❖ A film
- ❖ Information content was VERY low
- ❖ Better flow. I had to retrace some areas and missed others
- ❖ Modern maps showing locations
- ❖ Some labels need better info
- ❖ The layout is difficult to navigate.
- ❖ More historical information on the impact of Portuguese exploration on the people of those countries/regions. This exhibit made no effort to house the artifacts in enough of the historical context, which was largely a history of extreme violence and domination of indigenous people.
- ❖ More big pictures
- ❖ [A handout map showing] by year [exhibition layout]/ Map to [illegible]
- ❖ More light, but I know it's bad for the objects
- ❖ Satisfied
- ❖ Overall very well done
- ❖ More on Kerala—India



Write-In Responses: Miscellaneous

- ❖ I am a social studies teacher in the Midwest and only wish I lived closer so that I could bring my [students] here to experience visual[ly] what they are reading about. Have you ever considered doing a video for a virtual guided tour of the various exhibits? B.J. Herrick/ Waterloo, Iowa/bherr55444@aol.com.
- ❖ The parts of the exhibit I studied might have been explained by audio tours—why do the Portuguese monarchs have Roman/Greek mythological gods on their Christian rugs?
- ❖ The exhibit was wonderful. Better employees at the gift shop, or more.
- ❖ [Visitor refused to fill out survey because she said the directions were "just terrible." She was very frustrated and hated the show as a result. She could not believe it was taking place at FSG.]
- ❖ As a teacher, I am interested in cross-cultural influences
- ❖ I took a guided tour that was really great
- ❖ More interesting than I had expected
- ❖ Exhibit confirms disconnection of art from science. Was CP Snow right for the wrong reason? The object[s] become passive—what was once function becomes static and turns into something once admired for functionality and aesthetics— and now just some pretty object. Here's a chance to tie in art, history, science of navigation and exploration—to bring the arts and sciences for the public.
- ❖ Excellent collection of artifacts
- ❖ How about showing the impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples in South America?

- ❖ It was not favorable to see this exhibition in one time. It took us three visits to see the entire show. There should be more guided tours, especially in the absence of an audio guide, and they should have and provide more information than the one we followed. A good audio guide would solve this problem (and provide much-needed funds[s] to this institution).
- ❖ One ivory and silver box is mislabeled as "tortoise and silver"—should be relabeled. Thanks!
- ❖ More exhibits showing Portugal's contacts with Kerala, India, especially Calicut. Showing Vasco da Gama's expeditions.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Cover, Left to Right:

Portrait of Afonso de Albuquerque. Goa, India, 16th century. Mixed technique on wood. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo: José Pessao.

Page 2

Miracle of Saint Francis Xavier. André Reinoso (active 1610-1641). Portugal, 1619-22. Oil on canvas. Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa/ Museu de Sao Roque, Lisbon, Portugal.

Page 4

Rhinoceros-horn cup. China, Ming dynasty, early 17th century; mounted in Goa, India, second half of 17th century. Rhinoceros horn, gold filigree. Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Kunstkammer, Vienna.

Page 7

Casket of Matias de Albuquerque. Goa, India, last quarter of 16th century. Gold filigree with enamels. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo: José Pessao.

Page 16

Southern Barbarians in Japan. Japan, Edo period, 17th century. Pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper. The Freer Gallery of Art.

Page 26

Plate. Portugal, second half of 15th century. Silver. Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon, Portugal. Photo: José Pessao.

Page 30

Knife case. Kongo peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo or Angola, 16th-18th century. Ivory. Image © 1987 City of Detroit Purchase, Detroit Institute of Arts.

Page 33

World map from “Insularium Illustratum.” Henricus Martellus (active 1480-96). Florence, Italy, ca. 1489. Ink and color on vellum. Image © The British Library Board.