

***Visual Journal: Harlem and DC
in the Thirties and Forties!***

**A Study of an Exhibition Presented by the
Center for African American History and Culture**

INSTITUTIONAL STUDIES



**Smithsonian
Institution**

***Visual Journal: Harlem and DC
in the Thirties and Forties***

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Center for African American History and Culture**

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Report 96-6

Summary

This report presents the results of a study of visitors to the exhibition *Visual Journal: Harlem and DC in the Thirties and Forties*. This exhibition was presented by the Center for African American History and Culture in the South Wing of the Arts and Industries (A&I) Building on the National Mall. It displayed the works of several African American photographers: Robert McNeill; Gordon Parks; Addison, Robert, and George Scurlock; and Morgan and Marvin Smith.

In the analysis, only when we come to the question of why individuals found particular images memorable do we see a strong pattern of difference among visitors: African Americans primarily cited personal, identity-related reasons, while Caucasians gave personal, imaginative, and cognitive reasons in relatively equal proportions. Overall, eight out of ten visitors came away from *Visual Journal* with a specific image in mind and could articulate their reasons for finding that image memorable.

These differences between African American and Caucasian visitors are less striking, however, than the similarities between them. Aside from ethnicity, the backgrounds of the African American and Caucasian visitors were identical in all respects but one: African American visitors were more likely to live in the local area. Moreover, African American and Caucasian visitors saw the same themes in the exhibition and took the same basic approach to the photographs when they identified similarities and differences between the photographers. Both groups also constructed a primarily personal relationship with the exhibition as a whole.

Acknowledgments

This study of visitors to the *Visual Journal: Harlem and DC in the Thirties and Forties* exhibition, presented by the Center for African American History and Culture, was conducted with the support and cooperation of a number of people. This publication provides an opportunity to acknowledge them.

Steve Newsome, Director, Anacostia Museum and Center for African American History and Culture suggested the study as a start towards systematically assessing the Center's exhibitions. Deborah Willis, Curator of Exhibitions, and Mark Wright, Research and Curatorial Assistant, helped us understand the Center's exhibition goals and offered considerable insight into the present exhibition.

Deirdre Cross, from the Center, and Joanna Banks, Clara Turner Lee and Habeebah Muhammad, from the Anacostia Museum, as well as several professional interviewers collected the data and prepared it for analysis. Their help is greatly appreciated. In the Institutional Studies Office, Audrey E. Kindlon and Kerry DiGiacomo, an intern from the College of William and Mary, helped to design the study and were the primary authors of the text. Andrew J. Pekarik was the primary reviewer of the text and assisted with the interpretation. Jean M. Kalata reviewed the document for publication.

Zahava D. Doering, Director
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I. Background

"[He] captured the history of an era, now these pictures have great value."
about Robert McNeill

Introduction

Visual Journal: Harlem and DC. in the Thirties and Forties was the fourth in a series of exhibitions presented by the Center for African American History and Culture. It displayed the works of several African American photographers - Robert McNeill; Gordon Parks; Addison, Robert, and George Scurlock; and Morgan and Marvin Smith - who "collectively created a comprehensive record of African American life during a pivotal time in American history."¹ The exhibition was located in the South Wing of the Arts and Industries (A & I) Building on the National Mall and was opened on April 18, 1996 and closed September 29, 1996.

The study was conducted to assist the Center for African American History and Culture in planning future programs. The fundamental aim was to understand how visitors conceptualized the exhibition as a whole, how they related to it, and what images they took away with them. We hoped to gain some insight into what, if any, differences in visitor experiences of the exhibition were based on race or ethnicity. Did African Americans look at this exhibition differently than Caucasians? Did they make different types of connections?

We also wanted to understand better how people experience exhibitions of photography in general. Did they appreciate this exhibition as an exhibition on the art of photography? Or did they see it as an exhibition on American history?

Exhibitions based solely on photographs are infrequent at the Smithsonian, especially those with photographers as prominent as the ones seen in *Visual Journal*. Most Smithsonian visitors encounter exhibitions based on objects, such as the First Ladies' gowns, or the ruby slippers, or the moonrock. Looking at photographs requires a different discipline than looking at objects, even other kinds of art objects. Unlike paintings, for example, which may or may not be founded on historical events, photographs capture a reality over which the artist, the photographer, has limited control.

The study is based on interviews with 214 visitors leaving the exhibition during a two-week period in May 1996.² In addition to being asked specific questions, visitors were

¹ *Visual Journal: Harlem and DC in the Thirties and Forties*. Washington, DC; Smithsonian Institution Press. Copyright 1996.

² A description of the visitors and a comparison of their characteristics with visitors interviewed in the Arts & Industries Building in two previous studies in Appendix B.

also invited to comment on the exhibition and specific photographs. These discussions were tape recorded, transcribed and analyzed.³

The Context

In the exhibition brochure, the Center for African American History and Culture described this exhibition as "another step in our effort to present new understandings of the African American experience." The Center's first exhibition was presented in August of 1994.

The results of this study show that the Center has a repeat audience among local visitors. About one in seven (14%) *Visual Journal* visitors who live in Washington, D.C. or the Maryland/Virginia suburbs recalled visiting another Center exhibition. It is much more difficult to create a regular audience of visitors from elsewhere in the United States or from foreign countries. About one in twenty (5%) of the non-local visitors had been to Center exhibitions in the past.

African American visitors were much more likely to be local residents than were Caucasian visitors. Almost two out of five (38%) African American visitors are local residents, while only one in six (16%) Caucasian visitors live in the Metropolitan Area. Residence was the only background factor that was significantly different between African American and Caucasian visitors. They were equivalent in other characteristics, such as gender, ages, education levels, who they visited with, familiarity with the Smithsonian, and prior knowledge of the exhibition.

Other Mall museums also present exhibitions on African American history. When asked directly if they could recall seeing another African American exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution, fifteen percent of all visitors recalled seeing one at the Smithsonian, including, but not limited to exhibitions by the Center.⁴

The Exhibition

The exhibition photographs feature African Americans ranging from the most famous - Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Louis, Jackie Robinson, Adam Clayton Powell - to the not-so-famous - a government charwoman, neighborhood children, construction workers. Some photographs represent important events in American history, such as Marian Anderson singing at the Lincoln Memorial, and others depict everyday events, such as a little boy playing a game of marbles with his friends. The exhibition includes posed portraits, people in everyday situations, and people in extraordinary situations.

The subjects and photographers were famous throughout the nation as well as within the African American community. Gordon Parks worked for the Farm Security Administration and later became a photographer for Life magazine, as well as a writer and filmmaker (e.g., he made the popular 1970's movie Shaft). Robert McNeill's

³ See Appendix B for a brief discussion of the methodology.

⁴ This number includes both repeat and first-time visitors, as it was possible for first-time visitors to have seen another exhibition the day we interviewed them.

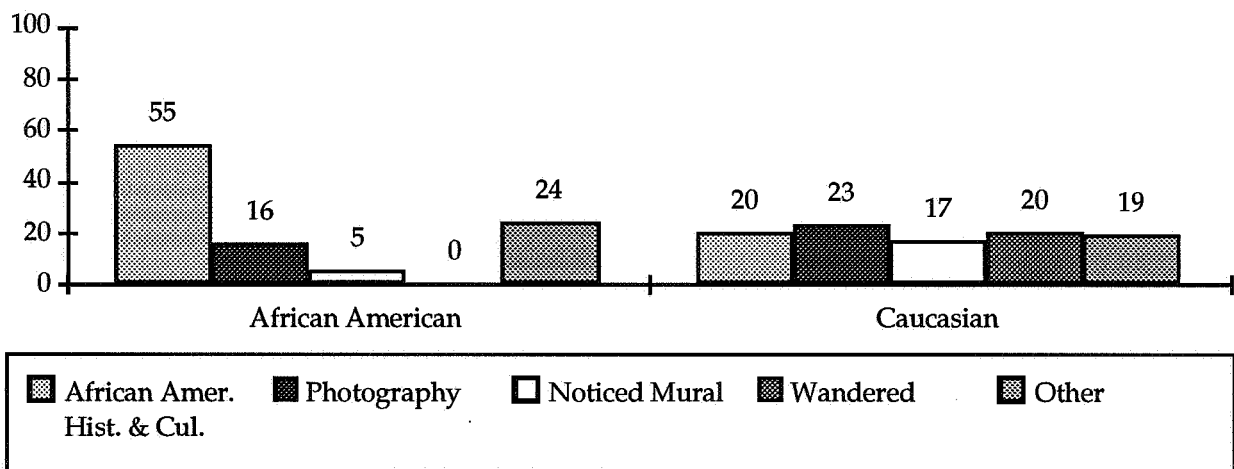
photographs appeared regularly in African American publications before he went to work for the Works Progress Administration Writers' Project. The Scurlocks worked out of their own studio in Washington, D.C., documenting much of the city's African American life. As the Scurlocks documented Washington, D.C., Morgan and Marvin Smith documented Harlem life from their own studio in Harlem. A brief biographical sketch of each photographer is in Appendix A.

The Visit

A visitor's experience of an exhibition can be affected by the reason for attendance and prior knowledge of the subject.⁵ One in six visitors (16%) knew about the *Visual Journal* exhibition before they came to the Arts & Industries building. If we add those who learned of the exhibition from the banner hanging over the north entrance (18%), a total of one third (34%) knew of the exhibition when they entered the building.

Once in the building, visitors came to the exhibition for different reasons. African American visitors were most likely to have entered the exhibition because of an interest in African American history (55%). Caucasian visitors were much more likely to have either wandered in or to have entered because they noticed the large photo mural at the front of the exhibition (37% total). See Figure 1.

Figure 1
 "What drew you to the exhibition?"
 African Americans and Caucasians*
 (In Percent)



*Figure excludes other minorities due to small sample size.

When specifically asked, nearly one-third (32%) of visitors said they were familiar with the photographers featured in *Visual Journal* prior to entering the exhibition. African Americans and Caucasians were about equally likely to be familiar with the photographers.

⁵ Doering, Z. D., Pekarik, A., Kindlon, A. E., *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*, March 1995, Report 95-3.

II. Results

Conceptualizing the Exhibition.

In order to understand how visitors perceived the exhibition, we asked a series of open-ended questions concerning the theme of the exhibition, similarities or differences among the photographers in the exhibition, and whether or not visitors felt a connection with the exhibition.

Theme. We often are able to get a sense of how visitors conceptualize an exhibition by asking them to identify its message. Unlike many other exhibitions the Institutional Studies Office (ISO) has studied, the *Visual Journal* exhibition did not have a single, overriding message.⁶ However, that does not mean that there was a lack of consistency within the exhibition or that it is impossible to ask visitors to look at the exhibition as a whole. A message implies that there is a certain point of view that the curator is trying to convey to the visitor, whereas a theme is a current that runs through all the items in an exhibition. We believed that the best way to ascertain a visitor's understanding of *Visual Journal* as a whole was to ask directly "What themes, if any, did you notice in the photos?" Nearly nine out of ten visitors (88%) were able to identify a theme. African Americans and Caucasians gave similar responses to this question.⁷

Fourteen percent of all visitors discussed how the photographers captured the diversity and reality of the African American existence during the 30s and 40s. They noted the range of subjects, from very successful and famous individuals to images of everyday people just going to church. These respondents mentioned the richness of African American life during that time and how the photographers focused on humanity.

Realism, a sense of the life of people. [The photographers] captured the black experience and humanity. There was a focus on people, major figures and everyday life.

Caucasian Male, Age 55, from Massachusetts

Each photo had a different aspect. Some (were) idealized, others mainly focused on poverty and reality of times instead of unrealistic images.

Caucasian Female, Age 63, from Arizona

⁶ See, for example, Doering, Z. D., Pekarik, A., Kindlon, A. E., *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*, March 1995, Report 95-3. Pekarik, A., Doering, Z. D., Bickford, A., *An Assessment of the Science in American Life Exhibition at the National Museum of American History*, November 1995, Report 95-5. Doering, Z. D., Kindlon, A. E., Bickford, A., *The Power of Maps: A Study of an exhibition at Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design*, September 1993, Report 93-5.

⁷ In other words, there were no statistical differences between the two groups with respect to this response. In this report significant differences have been measured using the Chi-square test, $p \leq .05$.

Various [themes]. The good times, the rough times. How people overcame obstacles to become the prominent people they are.

African American Female, Age 41, from Illinois

Approximately one-fifth (22%) mentioned only one specific aspect of the African American experience, such as famous people, successful professionals, family life, hardships, or celebration. In addition to focusing on only one dimension in the exhibition, for the most part these visitors appeared to define the African American experience depicted in the photographs as a dichotomy, emphasizing either those who were well off or those living in poverty.

During the 30s and 40s I thought blacks were living in poorer circumstances. This exhibition concentrated on upper classes instead of the downtrodden.

Caucasian Male, Age 61, from California

Amount of successful blacks in their fields, theater and education.

Caucasian Female, Age 72, from California

Black history and achievement of actors, teachers, and writers.

Hispanic Male, Age 38, From Richmond, VA

Plight of the blacks in the past in an urban environment.

Asian Male, Age 33, From California

A third theme was social problems (given by 15% of the total population), such as, racism, segregation, or discrimination.

In this country there's been a long uphill battle for blacks to be recognized. Particularly the doctor who separated blood -- no scientific distinction between the races.

Caucasian Male, Age 42, from California

About one quarter (28%) gave only general themes, responses that could be gained from the title alone. These included "the 30s and 40s in black history" and "Harlem and DC in the 30s and 40s." The remaining eight percent gave themes which were classified as "other."

Art Exhibition or History Exhibition? In order to understand whether visitors viewed the exhibition more as a show on the art of photography or on American history, we asked, "What kinds of differences or similarities did you notice among the photographers?" Those who said the similarities or differences were based on style (22%) could be interpreted as viewing the exhibition primarily as a photography show, while those who said the similarities or differences were based on content (46%) were probably more interested in what the images represented. The remaining one-third (32%) gave no answer. Once again African Americans and Caucasians did not differ in their responses.

Comments on the style of the photographs concentrated on photographic techniques or the difference between photojournalism and portraiture. Examples included "differences between studio photographers and 'in the street' photographers", "able to use lighting to perfection", "some just portraits, some told a story like the charwoman" and "artists perspective, views same subjects with differing composition of photos."

Visitors who made statements about the content of the exhibition commented on differences and similarities of the subject matter. Examples include "some geared towards celebrities, others geared towards everyday people", "Some were very natural, everyday life in Washington, DC, others were famous boxers, baseball players and politicians. It was a good mix of photos", "some melancholy others happy...", and "they all had a sense of sadness."

Individuals who were familiar with the photographers were much more attuned to similarities and differences in photographic styles. Respondents who were familiar with the photographers were equally likely to view the content of the photographs as they were the style (41% each). However, those unfamiliar with the photographers were far more likely to look at the content (47%) than the style (12%).

Previous Knowledge. We defined visitors who either knew of the exhibition or the photographers before they entered the building as having knowledge of the exhibition. Previous knowledge of an exhibition or the subject area itself may influence a visitor's reaction to that exhibition. Overall, over one third (38%) of the visitors had prior knowledge of the exhibition. Of those with previous knowledge, three quarters (72%) of them were repeat Smithsonian visitors.

Knowledge or lack of knowledge had no effect on what drew visitors to the exhibition, what kind of theme they identified, how they connected to the exhibition, what photographer they found most memorable, or why they found a particular image memorable.

Prior knowledge had an effect only on whether or not an individual described the differences between photographers on the basis of style. Among those with prior knowledge one-third (36%) viewed the exhibition for its style (i.e., they saw it as a photography show) and among those without prior knowledge only 14 percent viewed the exhibition for its style. However, the proportion of visitors with prior knowledge and those without prior knowledge who viewed the exhibition for its content was equal (44% each).

Exhibition Experiences

Connection. The *Visual Journal* study attempts to assess how visitors connected to the exhibition and whether or not they were able to select one item out of many similar items as playing a significant role in their museum experience.

When asked whether or not they made a connection, almost three quarters (72%) of visitors said that they did. Visitors' comments were coded into five categories of answers:

- 1) Personal: Time related - evokes memories, shows something one only heard of before, or had seen these photos previously
Identity related - share gender, social background, ethnicity, or race
Interest related - like photography, people depicted, sports or sports figures, or time period professional photographer.
- 2) Emotional: pride, sympathy, guilt
- 3) Cognitive: social issues, history
- 4) Aesthetic: beautiful, interesting
- 5) Don't know/didn't make a connection

Nearly half (47%) of all visitors reported that they responded in a personal way. The three sub-categories of personal connection can all be related directly to the exhibition title, or to a synopsis that could be found in a newspaper: time related - thirties and forties; identity related - Harlem (historically an African American community); and interest related - photography. Any publicity for the exhibition will most likely draw people with existing personal connections to these three areas, and so it is not surprising that visitors with prior knowledge of the exhibition reported these personal connections more than visitors who learned of the exhibition merely by wandering by.

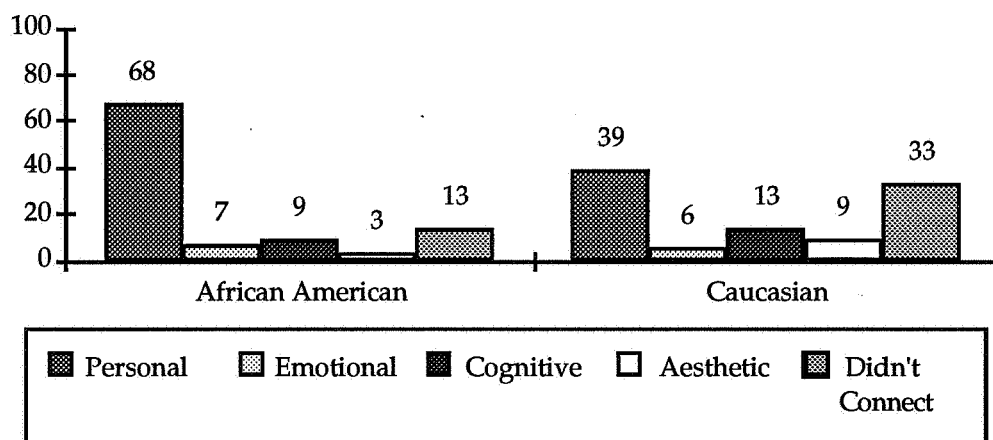
One in eight visitors gave cognitive answers, one in fourteen gave aesthetic responses, and one in twenty made an emotional connection to the exhibition.

African Americans were far more likely to connect to the exhibition on a personal level than were Caucasians. Most of this difference was in the category of identity-related responses. Of all African Americans, two thirds connected to the exhibition on a personal level and 13 percent did not connect at all. On the other hand, among Caucasians, one third felt a personal connection to the exhibition, and nearly the same percentage felt no connection. (See Figure 2.)

As an African American woman, and as a woman born in the 40s in the South, some of the photos were similar to the photos taken of me and my siblings.

African American Female, Age 50, from Georgia

Figure 2
Type of Connection, African Americans and Caucasians*
(In Percent)



*Figure excludes other minorities due to small sample size.

Looking separately at African Americans and Caucasians who connected to *Visual Journal* in a personal way, we discovered that equal proportions felt that the exhibition evoked memories for them. However, the two groups differed substantially in connections related to identity and interests.

African Americans were twice as likely as Caucasians to cite identity as a basis for their connection to the exhibition. Two examples of personal identity connections are given here. Both of the respondents, one African American, the other Caucasian, drew a parallel between the photographs and their own lives. The African American commented on the struggle of equality that concerned all African Americans and the Caucasian looked at the photos of the children and thought of his own children.

As an African American, it gave me the past of other African Americans in the 20th century. You don't see that often. The struggle that my parents and (my) parents' parents led. People actually lived like that not too long ago. History is often ignored, but the photos are capturing that.

African American Male, Age 29, from MD/VA Suburbs

The pictures of the children make me think of my own kids and about family life in general.

Caucasian Male, Age 34, from Illinois

Caucasians were twice as likely as African Americans to say that they connected to the exhibition because of a personal interest. These answers revolved around the time period or the photographs of famous celebrities. Below are the responses of two visitors who connected to *Visual Journal* because they had grown up during the period the photographs were taken and were able to remember childhood situations that were similar to those presented in the photographs.

Some of the things I can visualize from my growing up days in the 40s. I related to the period, not to the pictures.

Caucasian Male, Age 58, from South Carolina

We grew up in the South with a lot of segregation. That gave me an interesting perspective to look at them from. I enjoyed the music industry shots (also).

Caucasian Male, Age 43, from Hawaii

African Americans and Caucasians were equally likely to have an emotional response. In the following answers, for example, both visitors expressed pride, but in different ways. The first person expressed her pride in the closeness of African Americans at that time, the other in those who were successful.

Looking at those pictures, the bad times didn't seem so bad. Those were hard times these people experienced, but there is so much to be proud of. The pictures brought back so many good memories. We seemed close as a people then. I remember the good times.

African American Female, Age 56, from California

It made me real proud of the people who accomplished a lot and made me mad at the people who kept them back.

Caucasian Female, Age 38, from MD/VA Suburbs

Although the numbers are quite small (less than 10 percent), Caucasians were twice as likely as African Americans to cite an aesthetic connection to the exhibition.

The children pictured were very special and genuine. They are pure, their essence is visible. It transcends race.

Caucasian Female, Age 30, from Missouri

I was just interested in the visual richness of African American culture. I was very moved by it.

Caucasian Male, Age 39, from Minnesota

Nearly two-thirds of the visitors who were drawn to the exhibition by an interest in photography reported making a personal connection to the exhibition. Among visitors who were drawn to the exhibition by an interest in African American history and culture, two fifths made a personal connection. Over half of the visitors who were drawn in by the entrance photo mural or who wandered in had no connection to the exhibition.

What visitors left the exhibition with. Near the end of the interview, we asked, "As you leave this exhibition is there any one photo that stands out in your memory?" We asked visitors to take us back to the photograph and tell us why it stood out in their memory.

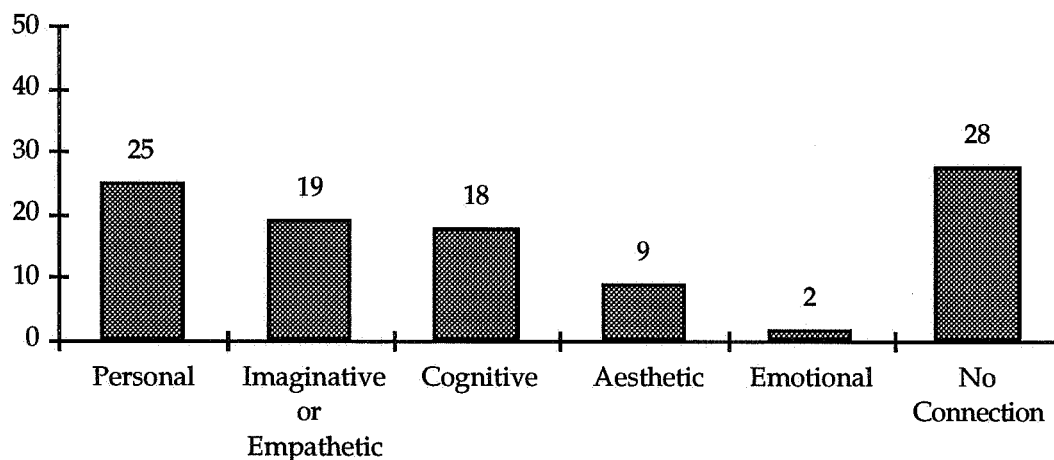
Three quarters of all visitors (72%) left the exhibition with a specific photograph or image in their mind. Their discussions of the photographs were tape recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

Among those who told us earlier that they had made a connection to the exhibition, over four-fifths left the exhibition with a specific photograph or memory in mind. Among those who did not, only half left the exhibition with a specific photograph or memory in mind. This suggests that feeling a connection is closely linked with remembering at least one image in the exhibition.

Visitors are more likely to spend time looking at photographs of subjects that already interest them or are familiar to them. For example, a visitor may spend more time looking at a photograph of Jackie Robinson than a photograph of the Dentists' Baseball Team because they already know who Robinson is. Previous knowledge and interest is extremely important in creating memories. The act of forming a memory is not directed by the photograph, but rather by the individual.⁸

When explaining why a particular photograph was memorable, twenty five percent gave personal reasons (photographs evoked memories, they identified either by race or gender, or the photographs held a special interest for them), nineteen percent gave an imaginative or empathetic response (it was memorable because of the expressions on the people's faces, what was happening in the photo, or the location of the action in the photo), eighteen percent gave cognitive responses (social issues or history), nine percent gave aesthetic responses, and two percent gave an emotional response. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3
Reasons why the Photograph was Memorable
(In Percent)



⁸ Alt, Michael & Griggs, Stephen(1984). Psychology and the Museum Visitor. In J. Thompson (ed.) *Manual of Curatorship: A guide to museum practices.*, p 390.

One third of all respondents (31%) identified photos by Gordon Parks as most memorable. Twenty one percent identified photos by Morgan and Marvin Smith, eighteen percent identified photos by Robert McNeill, and eight percent identified photos by the Scurlocks. The remaining visitors found nothing memorable or else did not mention a specific photograph.

There was a significant difference between men and women in the photographer whose work visitors found most memorable. More women (41%) cited the works of Parks, while more men mentioned McNeill (27%) or didn't know (24%).

Below is an individual's answer to the question of what will stand out in his memory. His response was categorized as personal. He could remember himself with his family in nearly the same situation.

Not really one particular photo. There are a great many of them. One of them is the Joe Louis fight. It reminds me of things that I used to do when I was growing up. I used to visit my grandparents. They only had a radio when I was growing up so we would gather around the radio and listen to stories. My family and I still do that when we can find a good radio station. It's tough to find. Those days are over.

Photograph: Robert McNeill "Championship Fight Reaction Joe Louis vs. James Braddock"

Here is his response to the question of how he connected to the exhibition. This response, too, was categorized as personal. He could envision a similar exhibition for Hispanics.

(I) did connect, because the exhibition tells a story of blacks in our country, which is not often told. As a Hispanic person, I hope we could do something like this with Hispanic photographers because our story needs to be told.

Hispanic Male, Age 39, from New Mexico

The following three people, all women, commented differently on the same series of photographs. The series, depicting Mrs. Ella Watson, a government charwoman, was the one most frequently mentioned as being memorable for visitors. The photograph "American Gothic" may have been the most famous photograph in the whole exhibition. This first response was categorized as cognitive.

The American Gothic, which I think I had probably seen at some point, but had not remembered. What strikes me is the traditional depiction of a domestic worker or charwoman holding a broom and a mop, which is a category to which she would have been relegated that time, standing in front of the American flag which should imply equality which in this case does not. She doesn't look angry or bitter, she looks resigned to her position but yet she carries a very dignified appearance as though she is not

ashamed of what she does, but on the other hand, the mop and the broom certainly relegate her to a rather low socio-economic class. I think the photograph speaks very clearly just what her position was in the 1940s.

Photograph: Gordon Parks "American Gothic (Mrs. Ella Watson)"

Here is her response stating how she had connected to the exhibition. It was categorized as personal in that it evoked memories for the woman.

Having lived through those times, it is interesting to see the differences - interesting to recall, including people and places from that era.

Caucasian Female, Age 63, from Arizona

Here is another response for the same series of photographs. This woman gave a personal, time-related reason for her memory of the photograph.

The woman with the little kids. It's the charwoman and I guess that whole area stuck out in my mind. I could really relate to that because the charwoman earned \$1,000 and my mother earned the same amount and she was also a single mother.

Photograph: Gordon Parks "Mrs. Ella Watson: A Government Charwoman for 26 years with three of the five children she supports on her salary of \$1,080.00"

Her response when asked how she connected to the exhibition was cognitive.

I found it interesting to see what life was like at that time. Charwoman, poor conditions, similar to how I grew up. You can improve if you work at it.

Caucasian Female, Age 55, from North Dakota

This third visitor gave a personal, identity-related reason for finding this photo series memorable.

Federal worker with the broom and the mop, I guess because I was a federal worker for 32 years. The federal government was good to me, I progressed quite well, from a 2 to a 13. It was progressive for me, as a black, and I was there doing opportunity (EEOC). And just seeing her, she had these 5 kids that she supported on \$1,080.00 a year. I think I kind of picked that figure out. Five children all in the house, she was working. I just felt a lot of strength coming from her. That was good. That was my favorite.

Photograph: Gordon Parks "Charwoman series"

Here is her emotional response when asked how she connected to the exhibition.

Looking at those pictures, the bad times didn't seem so bad. Those were hard times these people experienced, but there is so much to be proud of. The pictures brought back so many good memories. We seemed close as a people then. I remember the good times.

African American Female, Age 56, from
California

Looking at the three answers given as reasons for forming memories, we can see the range of interpretations. The first woman spoke more about the social issues of the time, the irony of Mrs. Watson posing with her broom and mop in front of the American flag. It is an image we might associate more with a United States Army General than a government cleaning woman. The second response was from a woman who compared her mother to Mrs. Watson. She projected her own situation onto Mrs. Watson's. There was no mention in the exhibition of Mrs. Watson being a single mother, yet the visitor said Mrs. Watson was just like her mother because they were both single mothers. The third woman compared her own career with the federal government to that of Mrs. Watson. Identifying with Mrs. Watson, she saw her as a symbol of strength.

Caucasians were ten times as likely as African Americans to give a cognitive response when asked why they found a photograph memorable. In the example below, the woman talks about an event that occurred at the time, but concentrates on the unusual nature of the shot the photographer took, rather than its content.

The lynching, the mothers marching on the Capitol after the Georgia lynching in the 40s. I haven't seen a picture like that before, a reaction instead of showing of the action. (The photograph shows) how other people in different places reacted.

Photograph: Robert H. McNeill "National Association of Colored Women members outside the White House to protest a lynching in Georgia, 1946"
Caucasian Female, Age 34, from Texas

Caucasians and African Americans were about equally likely to give an imaginative or empathetic response. The woman below imagines what the future holds for the young boys in the photograph by interpreting the looks on their faces.

Two boys looking at the new development that they might be able to move into. It presented hope about the future. They are looking towards the future that's how it appealed to me. It was after seeing stuff like this. The whole picture shows a sort of background.

Photograph: Gordon Parks "Frederick Douglass Housing Project: Boys overlooking the project, Anacostia, D.C., July 1942"
Caucasian Female, Age 72, from California

African Americans and Caucasians were also about equally likely to give an aesthetic response.

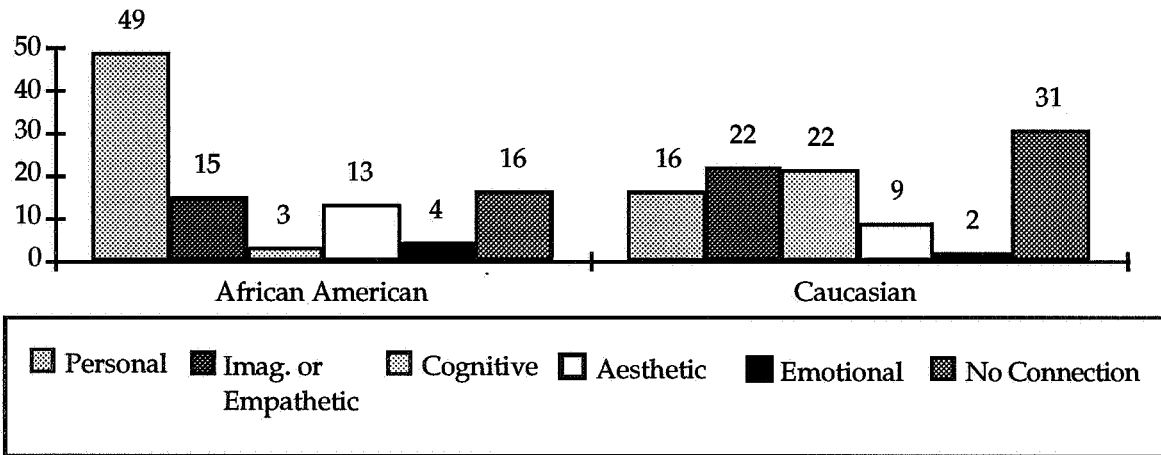
I love the one with the dancers. The frozen motion of that very difficult move, actually catching that instant is great.

Photograph: Morgan and Marvin Smith "Lindy Hoppers Frankie Manning & Ann Johnson, 1938"

Caucasian female, Age 45, from MD/VA Suburbs

Overall, Caucasians were significantly less likely to be able to cite a memorable photograph than African Americans. Over four fifths of African Americans were able to select a photograph and articulate why it was memorable, compared to just over two thirds of Caucasians. Nearly half of all African Americans gave a personal response compared to one out of six Caucasians. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4
Memories, by Race/Ethnicity*
(In Percent)



*Figure excludes other minorities due to small sample size.

Visitors whose memories of the exhibition were more imaginative or empathetic overwhelmingly chose a photograph by Gordon Parks (67%). In fact, the most frequently mentioned photographs throughout the entire exhibition, and especially within this category, were from Parks' series on the government charwoman. Of the respondents who said they connected on a cognitive level, one third identified a Parks photograph as most memorable and another third mentioned a photograph by Morgan and Marvin Smith. Visitors who responded personally were most likely to do so because of their reaction to a photograph taken by Morgan and Marvin Smith (37%), Robert McNeill (31%), or Gordon Parks (21%).

III. Conclusions and Interpretation

The results of this study suggest that visitors were drawn to the photographs in this exhibition primarily because of their subject matter. They saw them as compelling human images that evoked their own past, brought to mind social and historical issues, and aroused their imagination. Only those who were previously familiar with the photographers and had, presumably, come to see their work primarily in artistic terms were especially likely to view the exhibition as an exhibition of the art of photography.

From this study alone it is impossible to say whether the personal connections that dominated visitor responses to the exhibition were due to the specific contents of the exhibition or simply reflect the ways that people tend to respond to photography. We are currently analyzing some other datasets that we think might suggest an answer to this question.

The subject matter of the exhibition photographs would lead us to expect that African Americans would be strongly attracted to the show and the data shows that they attended at relatively high rates.

Responses of African American visitors to the exhibition and its photographs also differed from the reactions of Caucasian visitors in clearly predictable ways. First, and most obviously, African American visitors were more likely to report an identity-related personal relationship both to the exhibition and to a memorable photograph.

Second, African American visitors as a whole were more involved in the exhibition. They were more likely than Caucasians to be able to state how they related to the exhibition and they were more likely to be able to cite a memorable photograph. This reflects, in part, the nature of the subject matter. It is probably also due to the fact that more Caucasian visitors wandered in without a clear interest in the exhibition. In fact, one in five Caucasian visitors both did not report a connection to the exhibition and did not find any individual image memorable. We can assume that the exhibition had no impact on these visitors.⁹ In contrast all African American visitors either cited a connection to the exhibition or could name a memorable photograph.

These differences between African American and Caucasian visitors are less striking, however, than the similarities between them. As pointed out earlier, aside from ethnicity, the backgrounds of the African American and Caucasian visitors were identical in all respects but one: African American visitors were more likely to live in the local area. Moreover, African American and Caucasian visitors saw the same themes in the exhibition and took the same basic approach to the photographs when they identified similarities and differences between the photographers.

Both groups also constructed a primarily personal relationship with the exhibition as a whole. For the two-thirds of Caucasian visitors who related to the exhibition, the connection they identified was predominantly a personal one. Only when we come to

⁹ Exactly half of these unaffected Caucasian visitors said that they had wandered into the exhibition.

the question of why individuals found particular images memorable do we see a strong pattern of difference: African Americans were more likely to cite identity-related reasons, while Caucasians cited personal, imaginative, and cognitive reasons in relatively equal proportions. We could interpret this as suggesting that when an obvious, identity-based correspondence exists between the image and the visitor, this correspondence is the preferred source for the visitor's response. When this correspondence does not exist, the visitor may select randomly from a set of three relational strategies: personal linkage, imaginative engagement, or cognitive response.

In either case, the involved visitor constructed a meaning that was grounded in the image but that had relevance and echoes in his or her own life. Eight out of ten visitors came away from *Visual Journal* with a specific image in mind and could articulate their reasons for finding that image memorable. These visitors were obviously affected by the exhibition. The thoughts and feelings that they had in the presence of these photographs are now also part of their life experience.

Appendix A

The Photographers

The following photographer's biographical summaries are excerpts from the publication accompanying the exhibition *Visual Journal: Harlem and DC in the Thirties and Forties*. Washington, DC; Smithsonian Institution Press. Copyright 1996.¹

Robert McNeill (b.1917)

McNeill attended Howard University where, one day in 1937, he photographed Olympic superstar Jesse Owens' visit to the campus. The photograph was published in the four Washington daily papers as well as the two weekly black papers--the *Washington Tribune* and *Afro-American*. He also ran his own studio in Washington, D.C. As a result, a significant amount of his collection includes portraiture of African Americans in many different settings: choir rehearsals, vocational school graduations, birthday parties, weddings, and funerals. His photographs document the richness and variety of African American life in the 1930s and 1940s. McNeill's photographs provide a window into a healthy, vibrant African American community--a world that is not often seen or experienced in history books, lecture halls, and nightly newscasts.

Gordon Parks (b.1912)

Gordon Parks left his hometown in Kansas at the age of 16, making his way to Minneapolis and later Chicago. From 1935 to 1943, FSA (one the New Deal programs) photographers travelled the country documenting rural and urban America. Parks joined the unit in 1942. He worked for Roy Stryker, who ran the unit, and received extensive training as a photojournalist. It is the facial expressions in Parks's photographs that tell the story--of hard work and hardship, of the drudgery and struggle of people's daily lives -- whether the subject is an old peanut vendor or, a construction worker. During World War II, Parks worked for the Office of War Information as a correspondent, documenting life in wartime Washington. In 1949, Parks became a staff photographer for *Life* magazine and covered stories of interest to black and white America. He was the first African American to be recognized as a major photojournalist. He is particularly noted for his direct, realistic style in photographing American life.

¹ The abstracts were provided by Deborah Willis and Mark Wright, Center for African American History and Culture.

The Scurlock Studio

ADDISON (b. 1883 - d. 1964) , **ROBERT** (b. 1917 - d. 1994) and **GEORGE SCURLOCK** (b. 1919)

For Robert and George Scurlock, photography was a family tradition. Their father Addison was the founder of Washington, D.C.'s Scurlock Studios (est. 1911), which documented much of the city's black life for over half a century. The studio also documented local black leaders and prominent visitors to the city, as well as community life: activities at Howard University, conventions and banquets, sororities and social clubs, dances, weddings and cotillions, and local businesses. Both sons joined Scurlock Studios after graduating from Howard University. They began to implement the techniques they'd learned from their father and also to take the studio in new directions. The 1930s and 1940s witnessed a thriving black press and newspapers were looking for photographers who could provide them with on-the-spot images of historic events. The Scurlocks helped to fill this void. Addison, Robert and George Scurlock can be credited with preserving pictorial memories of some of the significant events and the political and civic leaders in Washington's history.

Morgan (b. 1910 - d. 1993) and Marvin Smith (b. 1910)

Morgan and his twin brother Marvin Smith were two of Harlem's leading photojournalists from 1934 through the early 1950s. They also operated one of Harlem's most popular commercial portrait studios, M. Smith Studio, located next to the Apollo Theater on 125th Street. Their studio was frequented by performing artists, writers, and historians. Their cameras captured political rallies and street demonstrations as well as the bread lines and street corner orators of the Depression.

The Smiths arrived in New York from Kentucky at the height of the Depression in 1933; they were 21 years old. In Harlem, the Smiths found a sophisticated black bourgeoisie. This class was the source and the audience for the "popular" or mass culture identified in newspapers through articles and advertising, and it was this group that found representation in the black press. The poor, the socially devastated, and to some extent the working class were not pictured, although newspapers relied upon those groups for economic support. In Harlem, the Smiths found a sophisticated black bourgeoisie. This class was the source and the audience for the "popular" or mass culture identified in newspapers through articles and advertising, and it was this group that found representation in the black press. The poor, the socially devastated, and to some extent the working class were not pictured, although newspapers relied upon those groups for economic support.

Appendix B

Characteristics of Visitors to the Arts & Industries Building: Three Studies

In this appendix we compare the demographic profile of visitors to the Arts and Industries (A & I) Building at different times. We include three studies: the *Visual Journal* study (conducted from May 11 to May 24, 1996); a brief study earlier in 1996 (January 20 to February 1); and a study that took place in 1990 (February 6 to March 16). Variations among the profiles reflect both significant seasonal effects (common to all Smithsonian museums) as well as differences in what was on view in the A & I Building. Nevertheless, the comparison may prove instructive in at least suggesting some special characteristics of visitors to exhibitions presented by the Center.

Several factors clearly influenced the composition of the audience in January 1996. First, the study began one week after the Smithsonian had been intermittently closed for a month due to a government-wide shutdown followed by a massive snow storm. Second, the study coincided with the opening of an exhibition, *Discover Orchids: Size, Shape, Color, Habitat, Fragrance*. Sixty five percent of the audience during that study came to the A & I Building to see the Orchid exhibition.

The 1990 study was conducted prior to the opening of the now closed Experimental Gallery in order to establish a base profile of the building's audience.

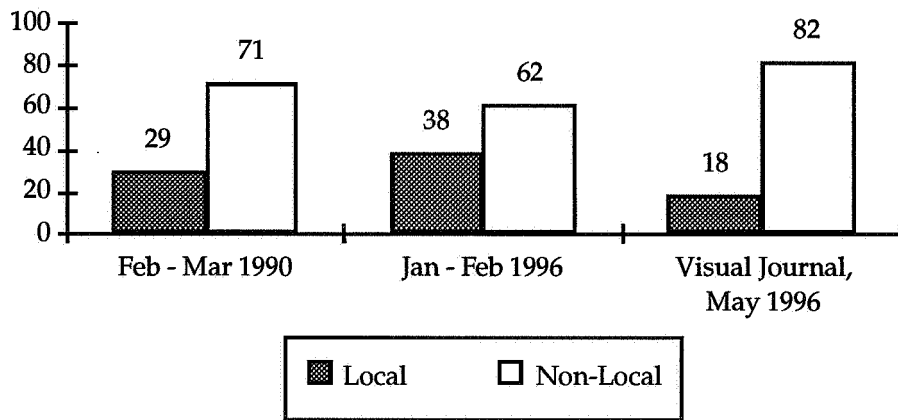
Gender and Age. The proportions of men and women were essentially the same in all three studies. Women visited *Visual Journal* in slightly greater numbers than men (52% women and 48% men). In both the 1990 and early 1996 studies, gender was closer to parity (51% male and 49% female in 1990 and 50% male and 50% female in early 1996).

Visitors to *Visual Journal* were an older audience than previously found in the A & I Building. Only two percent of visitors were children under the age of 12 years, compared to nine percent in 1990 and four percent in 1996. The large percentage of young children in 1990, however, may have been due to families visiting the building for the Discovery Theater. Sixteen percent of visitors to *Visual Journal* were between ages 55 and 64 and seven percent were age 65 or older. In the 1990 study these age groups contributed only eight percent and three percent, respectively, to the total visitor population at A & I.

Residence. The majority of visitors interviewed in all three studies came from outside the local area (Figure B.1). Visitors to *Visual Journal* who were from outside the greater Washington area comprised over four fifths (82%) of all visitors. Eighteen percent were local (4% resided within Washington, DC and 14% in the MD/VA suburbs). The percentage of local visitors was smaller than for audiences in 1990 and early 1996. In early 1996, the local audience (38%) was nearly double that of the local audience during the *Visual Journal* exhibition (18%). We have learned through many of our other studies, particularly the year long studies at NMAH, NMNH, NASM and the Freer/Sackler

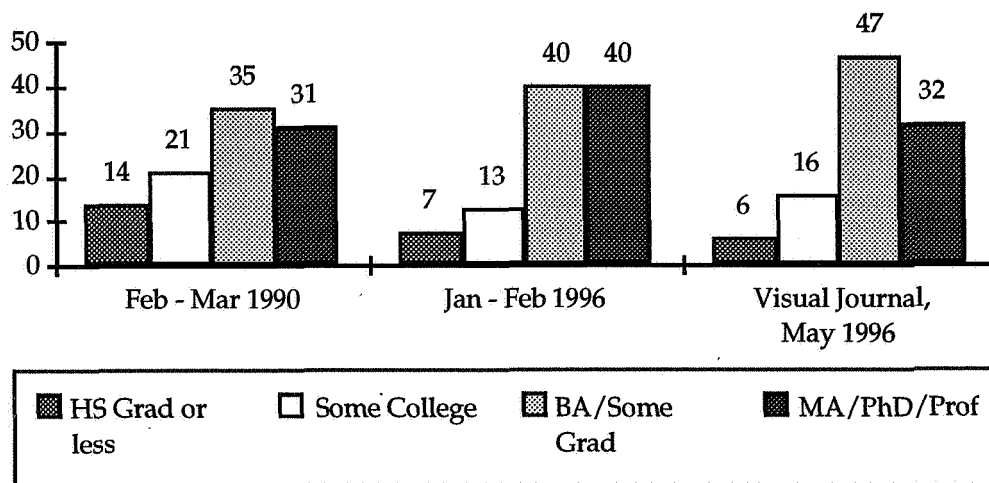
Galleries, that the proportion of local visitors is highest during the winter months (34% in winter compared to 19% in spring).

Figure B.1
Geographic Origins
 Arts and Industries Building
 (In Percent)



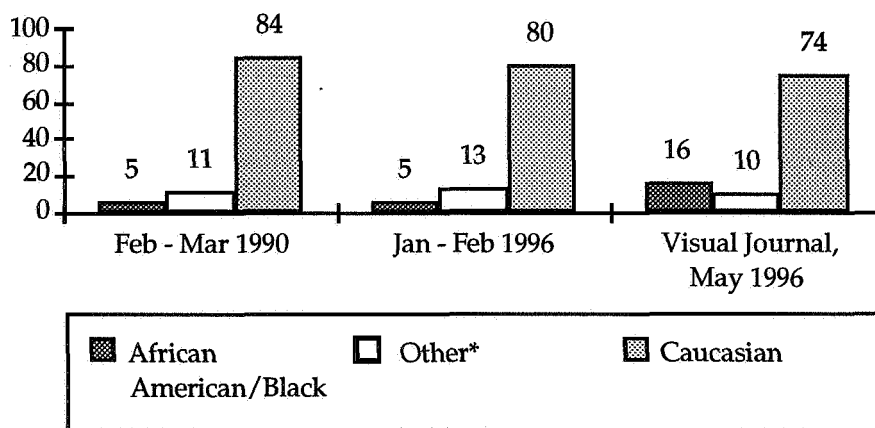
Education. As with other Smithsonian museums, the A & I Building attracts a highly educated audience (Figure B.2). Since 1990, it appears that educational levels have actually increased. In 1990, half (51%) had at least a Bachelor's degree. In early 1996, three quarters had at least a Bachelor's degree; during the *Visual Journal* study later in the year, this number was seventy one percent. These numbers increase even more when we look at audiences age 25 and older (who are considered to have completed their formal education). During the *Visual Journal* exhibition, seventy-nine percent of those 25 and older had received at least a Bachelor's degree; in early 1996 it was eight percent and in 1990 sixty-six percent. A & I Building visitors have higher educational attainment than visitors to the major Smithsonian museums. The combined results from year-long studies at NMAH, NMNH, NASM and the Freer/Sackler Galleries, show that two-thirds (66%) of visitors age 25 and older have completed at least a Bachelor's degree.

Figure B.2
Educational Attainment - Age 25 and Older
Arts and Industries Building
(In Percent)



Racial/Ethnic Identification. The majority of visitors to *Visual Journal* were Caucasian (74%), but African Americans (16%) visited in numbers previously unseen at A & I (Figure B.3). The remaining ten percent of *Visual Journal* visitors were members of other racial/ethnic minority groups. In 1990 and early 1996, African Americans comprised only five percent of visitors to the building. The profile of Smithsonian visitors, based on year long studies at NMAH, NMNH, NASM and the Freer/Sackler Galleries show about five percent African American visitors and thirteen percent as members of other racial/ethnic minority groups.

Figure B.3
Racial/Ethnic Identification-All Visitors
Arts and Industries Building
(In Percent)



Social Composition. Adults visiting as part of a couple comprised thirty-six percent of visitors to the *Visual Journal* exhibition. Visitors who came alone comprised twenty-nine

percent of the audience and visitors who were in a group that contained several adults (3 or more) were thirteen percent of all visitors. Twelve percent came as part of a school or tour group and the remaining ten percent came in groups that included children. The two 1996 studies were very similar in terms of social composition, but the *Visual Journal* study had more individuals who were members of organized groups but had separated from the group to see the exhibition. The results from the 1990 study show that one quarter (28%) of visitors were in groups that included children. As indicated above, this undoubtedly reflects attendance at the Discovery Theater. The general absence of children in the A & I Building differentiates it from the major Mall museums, but makes it quite similar to the Freer/Sackler Galleries.

First Visit vs. Repeat Visit. More *Visual Journal* visitors were making a repeat visit to the Smithsonian (59%) than making a first visit (41%). Over half (56%) of repeat visitors or thirty-three percent overall, had previously been to the Arts and Industries Building. In the 1990 A & I Building study, sixty two percent of visitors had been to the Smithsonian before, of which, sixty eight percent were making a repeat visit to the A & I Building.

Conclusion

The *Visual Journal* exhibition attracted a somewhat different audience to the Arts and Industries Building than other exhibitions. *Visual Journal* audiences were slightly older, and although the Smithsonian always attracts a larger non-local audience, the *Visual Journal* audience was somewhat more non-local than at other times.¹ Educational levels were higher in 1996 than previously. Perhaps most significantly, the *Visual Journal* audience was the most diverse of the three studies. This is most likely a direct result of the content of the exhibition.

¹This may be more indicative of the time of year than the exhibition itself.

Table 1
Arts and Industries Building

	1990	1996	1996
	February 6	January 20	May 11
	March 16	February 1	May 24
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	51.4	50.2	48.0
Female	<u>48.6</u>	<u>49.8</u>	<u>52.0</u>
	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>Age</u>			
0 to 11	9.4	3.8	1.5
12 to 19	8.4	2.2	6.2
20 to 24	10.6	4.3	7.9
25 to 34	22.8	20.4	22.0
35 to 44	24.4	25.1	23.7
45 to 54	12.8	23.6	16.1
55 to 64	8.4	14.3	15.7
65 and older	<u>3.1</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>7.1</u>
	99.9	100.1	100.0
<u>Geographic Origins</u>			
Washington, DC	6.9	10.0	3.9
MD/VA Suburbs	22.2	28.3	14.3
Other US	64.5	52.5	68.8
Foreign	<u>6.4</u>	<u>9.1</u>	<u>13.0</u>
	100.0	99.9	100.0
<u>Social Composition</u>			
Alone	17.9	35.9	29.4
Couple (Two Adults)	32.7	41.1	36.0
Several Adults	16.6	11.1	13.1
Group of Teens	2.1	0.2	1.9
School/Tour Groups	3.0	0.3	10.2
Adult(s) w/ Child(ren)	<u>27.6</u>	<u>11.5</u>	<u>9.5</u>
	99.9	100.1	100.0
<u>Education (All Ages)</u>			
Less than HS	15.3	5.5	5.2
HS Grad	13.0	5.6	8.4
Some College	20.5	13.0	15.7
BA/Some Grad	28.3	39.6	42.7
MA/PhD/Prof	<u>22.9</u>	<u>36.2</u>	<u>28.0</u>
	100.0	99.9	100.0

Table 1 (cont.)
Arts and Industries Building

	1990	1996	1996
	February 6	January 20	May 11
	March 16	February 1	May 24
<u>Education (Age 25 and Older)</u>			
Less than HS	1.0	1.9	0.5
HS Grad	12.5	5.3	5.6
Some College	20.8	12.7	15.7
BA/Some Grad	35.0	40.2	46.7
MA/PhD/Prof	<u>30.8</u>	<u>39.9</u>	<u>31.6</u>
	100.1	100.0	100.0
<u>Racial/Ethnic Identification</u>			
African American/Black	5.0	5.0	16.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.4	7.1	5.1
Caucasian	83.9	80.1	73.7
Native American	0.0	1.3	0.0
Hispanic	4.7	4.8	4.6
Other	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1.7</u>	<u>0.5</u>
	100.0	100.0	100.0
<u>Visit to Smithsonian*</u>			
First Time	38.0		41.5
Repeat	62.0		58.5
First Visit to A&I	19.8	42.2	26.0
Repeat Visit to A&I	<u>42.2</u>	<u>57.8</u>	<u>32.5</u>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
* In January/February 1996 a question asking respondents if they were making a first visit to the Smithsonian was not included in the questionnaire.			

Table 2
Profile of Visitors to the Visual Journal exhibition

<u>Is this your first visit to the Smithsonian?</u>	
Yes	41.5
No	<u>58.5</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>Where did you first hear about this exhibition?</u>	
Banner Outside	18.1
Wandered by	66.1
Friend/Family	2.4
Newspaper	0.8
Teacher/School Related	2.2
Map/Info Desk/Castle	7.2
SI Magazine	1.0
Guidebook	<u>2.3</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>What drew to this exhibition?</u>	
Interest in African American history and culture	25.6
Interest in Photography	23.1
Noticed Mural	16.0
Wandered In	15.5
Interest in Period/Era/DC or Harlem	7.9
Curiosity	7.5
Familiar with Photographers	1.4
Friend wanted to go in	2.0
Nothing else in A & I	<u>1.1</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>Did you see the video?</u>	
Yes	8.6
No	<u>91.4</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>Did you look at the books or photo albums in the resource room?</u>	
Yes	15.5
No	84.6
Total	100.0

Table 2 (cont.)
Profile of Visitors to the Visual Journal exhibition

<u>Before today, were any of these photographers familiar to you?</u>	
Yes	31.9
No	<u>68.2</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>Have you ever visited the Anacostia museum?</u>	
Yes	3.9
No	<u>96.1</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>What themes, if any, did you notice in the photos?</u>	
Diversity of African American Life	14.2
Specific Comment on one aspect of exhibition	22.4
General Comment	28.3
No Answer	12.2
Social Problems	14.9
Other	<u>8.1</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>What kinds of differences or similarities did you notice among the photographers?</u>	
Style	21.5
Content	46.1
Don't Know	<u>32.4</u>
Total	100.0
 <u>Visitors relate or connect in different ways to exhibitions.</u>	
<u>Can you describe how you personally related or connected, if at all, to this exhibition?</u>	
Evokes Memories	11.5
Shows something only heard of before	6.7
Saw these photos before	2.0
Gender, social	1.8
Ethnicity/Race	11.8
Like photography/people/sports/time period	11.0
Professional Photographer	1.7
Emotional	5.1
Cognitive	12.1
Aesthetic	7.2
Not Elsewhere Categorized	1.4
Didn't comment	<u>27.8</u>
Total	100.0

Table 2 (cont.)
 Profile of Visitors to the Visual Journal exhibition

As you leave this exhibition, is there any one photo that stands out in your memory? Why?

Evokes Memories	11.1
Shows something only heard of before	2.3
Saw these photos before	0.5
Gender, social	3.7
Like photography/people/sports/time period	7.5
Emotional	1.8
Cognitive	17.8
Aesthetic	8.7
Not Elsewhere Categorized	0.8
Empathetic	19.0
Don't know	<u>26.9</u>
Total	100.0

Name of Photographer mentioned

Gordon Parks	31.2
Robert McNeill	18.4
Morgan and Marvin Smith	21.2
Scurlock Studio	8.3
No photograph mentioned	<u>21.0</u>
Total	100.0

Appendix C

Study Methodology: *Visual Journal*

The *Visual Journal* Study is one of a series conducted by the Institutional Studies Office (ISO) to profile visitors to Smithsonian museums, to increase our knowledge of the visit experience and to provide information for future exhibition planning. Each study is designed to meet the particular needs of the sponsor using the resources available for the study. This appendix contains the rationale for the sample design, a discussion of the questionnaires, and information about the study's implementation.¹

Goals

The central goals of this study can best be phrased as questions:

1. What are the types of images that visitors are leaving the exhibition with?
2. What overall ideas are visitors coming away with?
3. How is an exhibition based on the history of one race/ethnic group viewed by other race/ethnic groups?

Overall Design

Data for the study were collected in personal interviews with a systematic scientific sample of visitors at the exhibition exit. Interviews were conducted every other day during a two week period starting May 11, 1996 and ending May 24, 1996.

For this project we used a "continuous sampling" technique, a special procedure developed for sampling a mobile population.² This allowed us to maximize resources by selecting individuals whenever interviewers were available and then adjusting the sampling weights for every fifteen-minute period, according to the number of people who passed the interviewing location during that period.

For this study, we used teams of two or three (one counter plus one or two interviewers). There were three interviewing sessions within each day of the week (11:00 - 12:30, 1:30 - 3:00, 3:30 - 5:00).

¹ For additional background about the study, see the Introduction to this report.

² 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).

Visitor cooperation with the study was high, the overall response rate was 87%.³ A total of 214 interviews were completed. The intercepted individuals represent a population of over 2,700 visitors to the exhibition during the survey periods. In appreciation for their cooperation, respondents were given a booklet, *Imagining Families* about a previous exhibition presented by the Center for African American History and Culture.

Questionnaire Development

The primary objective of the study was to collect data with which to address the exhibition's communication effectiveness and, if possible, to identify messages and impressions resulting from a visit to the exhibition. A secondary objective was to relate the visitors' experience to specific photographs and display strategies (e.g., the video or albums in the Resource Room). Third, we needed a profile of visitors to the exhibition to determine if the exhibition's audience differed from the overall visitorship to the Arts and Industries Building, as determined by previous studies. The questionnaires for the study, then, had to collect information with which to assess the extent to which the exhibition successfully communicated its messages, to assess exhibition elements, to address the audience profile issue and to allow for comparison with earlier studies.

The initial portion of the questionnaire collected general information about the visit. Aside from asking for residence and prior visits to both the Smithsonian and the Arts and Industries Building, we asked for visitors' sources of information, if any, and what drew them to the exhibition. After establishing some rapport with the visitors, we asked questions about various aspects of the exhibition. We used a series of open ended questions inquiring about the theme of the exhibition (Q7), the differences or similarities among the photographers (Q8), and the type of connection, if any, between the visitor and the photographs (Q9). (The questionnaire is in Appendix D.)

We also asked visitors if they had an opportunity to see either the video on Morgan and Marvin Smith or read any of the books at the rear of the exhibition and whether or not they had prior knowledge of the photographers. Visitors were asked which Smithsonian museums they visited or were planning to visit during this trip to Washington, DC. They were also asked if they had ever been to the Anacostia Museum - a Smithsonian museum devoted to African American History and Culture.

After the standard ISO demographic questions - who accompanied the respondent to the exhibition, education, age, race/ethnic identification, and gender - visitors were asked which photo stands out in their mind and why. The final question was whether or not the respondent recalled seeing another African American exhibition at the Smithsonian.

The questionnaire also included a section for recording administrative information that is necessary for empirical analysis. This included the time, date and the reason, if applicable, that an interview was not completed (e.g., Smithsonian employee).

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

Interviewers were trained to administer the survey with the aid of a manual developed for the study.⁴

Questionnaire development included experimentation with the order of the exhibition items. That is, we tried not only different items but also different orders.⁵ The order used in the final questionnaire asks several subjective, open-ended questions about the exhibition before objective forced choice items. In determining the final order of the items in the questionnaire, we sought to maximize the internal consistency of responses, while minimizing respondent fatigue and the respondents' feeling that they were being tested.

Sample Design and Selection

Survey Schedule. Resource and schedule constraints restricted the data collection to seven days during late May. Within each day, the schedule covered 4.5 hours instead of the 7.5 hours in which the museum was open. The actual schedule takes into account resource limitations as well as hypothesized variations in visitor types during different days of the week and times of the day (See Table 3 for interviewing schedule). During the seven days of the study, the schedule translates into approximately a 30% sample of hours.

Table 3
Interviewing Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>		
		11:00 - 12:30	1:30 - 3:00	3:30-5:00
11-May	Saturday	1*	2	3
13-May	Monday	4	5	6
15-May	Wednesday	7	8	9
17-May	Friday	10	11	12
19-May	Sunday	13	14	15
21-May	Tuesday	16	17	18
23-May	Thursday	19	20	21

* The number corresponds to the session number.

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.

⁵ Approximately 30 preliminary questionnaires were administered by Institutional Studies staff as part of questionnaire development.

Sample Selection.⁶ Within each time interval selected for the survey, a team of two or three interviewers were assigned to the study. A team leader, or "counter," used a mechanical counter and a stop watch to keep track of the number of persons exiting and maintained a record of the number of people exiting within 15 minute intervals. The counter also identified the visitors to be intercepted when an interviewer had completed one interview and was ready to begin the next. This method of selecting a sample keeps the interviewers fully occupied, compared to an equal interval selection method; the counter is essentially incorporating a self-adjusting selection interval.

Everyone, except those in escorted groups, was counted and the information recorded on a Sample Selection Form. In addition, when intercepts were made, the number on the mechanical counter ("count number") was recorded on both the Sample Selection Form and by the interviewer on the questionnaire.

Office Procedures. The questionnaires were reviewed in the office and prepared for data entry. The main purpose of this review was to ensure that the data file included the appropriate information for weighting the data. The weight for each questionnaire was defined as: the number of visitors counted in a specific 15 minute interviewing segment divided by the number of intercepts in the segment. For example, each of 4 questionnaires filled out in a given 15 minutes during which 40 visitors exited would be assigned a weight of 10, irrespective of when it was conducted during the 15 minutes (e.g., if the "count numbers" were 5, 12, 28 and 40). In the analysis, these weights were assigned to individual records, since respondents were not selected with equal probability throughout the survey.

Completion Rates and Response Bias

As shown in Table 2, overall 13.4% of all persons intercepted refused to participate in the survey. While a few refusals were due to language difficulties (30.3%), the majority of refusals (69.7%) were for "other" reasons (e.g., visitors in a hurry, not wanting to detain companions, etc.).

We compared separate demographic characteristics of visitors between those who completed interviews and those who refused for any reason. The high response rate and the results of logistic regression models suggest that there is no need to weight for non-response. Because of the relatively small number of refusals due to language differences, it was not possible to examine these types of refusals independently.⁷

⁶ The discussion is restricted to the mechanics of sample selection, rather than the rationale. See 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).

⁷ Data on file, ISO.

Table 4
Results of Data Collection: Visual Journal
(In Percent)

Type	N	%
<u>A. Composition</u>		
SI staff/contractors/Ineligibles	10	3.9
Visitors	<u>247</u>	<u>96.1</u>
Total	257	100.0
 <u>B. Disposition, All Eligible Visitors</u>		
Interviews	214	86.6
Non-Interviews	<u>33</u>	<u>13.4</u>
Total	247	100.0
 <u>C. Reasons for Non-Participation, Eligible Visitors</u>		
Refusal, Language difficulty	10	30.3
Refusal, Other	<u>23</u>	<u>69.7</u>
Total, Non-interviews	33	100.0
 <u>D. Response Rates</u>		
All eligible visitors*		86.6

* From B above.

Interviewer

--	--

ID

--	--	--	--	--

Count

--	--	--	--

Visual Journal: An Exhibition Study

Hello, my name is _____. I work for the Smithsonian and would like to talk to you about your visit to this exhibition.

***+1. Where do you live?**

- Washington, D.C.
- MD/VA suburbs
- Other U.S. _____
- Foreign _____

--	--	--

state/ctry

+2. Is this your first visit to the Smithsonian?

- Yes **GO TO Q5** No

+2a. How many times have you been to the Smithsonian before today?

--	--

+3. Have you been to this building before today?

- Yes No **GO TO Q5**

+3a. When was the last time you were here?

- w/in 6 mo. 2-4 years
- 7-12 months 4+ years
- 1-2 years

+4. Have you seen other exhibitions in this space before?

- Yes No **GO TO Q5**

+4a. Do you recall the topic?

- Yes No

+4b. What was it?

--	--

Now let's talk about the exhibition...

+5. Where did you first hear about this exhibition?

- Banner Outside Friend/Family
- Wandered By Newspaper
- Other _____
- a b c d e f

6. What drew you to this exhibition?

- Other _____
- Interest in Afr. Am. history and culture
 - Interest in Photography
 - Noticed Mural
 - a b c d e f

7. What themes, if any, did you notice in the photos?

--	--

8. What kinds of differences or similarities did you notice among the photographers?

--	--

9. Visitors relate or connect in different ways to exhibitions. Can you describe how you personally related or connected, if at all, to this exhibition?

--	--

+10a. Did you see the video?

- Yes No

+10b. Did you look at the books or photo albums (in the resource room)?

- Yes No

+10c. Before today, were any of these photographers familiar to you?

- Yes No



Now a few questions about you...

+11. Which of these Smithsonian museums have you visited on this trip to Washington? AND Which do you plan to visit during this trip?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| V | P |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air and Space | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African Art | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Art | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American History | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anacostia | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Castle/Visitors Center | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freer Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hirshhorn | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Int'l Gallery/Ripley | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural History | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portrait Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renwick Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sackler Gallery | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zoo | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holocaust Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NGA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DK | <input type="checkbox"/> |

+11a. Have you ever visited the Anacostia museum?

- Yes No

+*12. Who are you here with today?

- School trip Group of teens
 Tour group Several adults
 Adult w/child(ren) Child(ren)
 Adults w/child(ren) Alone **GO TO Q13**
 One other adult

+12a.. Are you all from the same area?

- All local All other U.S./foreign Mixed

+13. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Pre/grade school Some college
 Some HS Bachelor's degree
 HS graduate Some graduate study
 Assoc./Jr./Technical MA/Ph.D./Professional

+*14. What is your age?

--	--

+*15. What is your cultural/racial/ethnic identity?

- African Amer./Black
 Asian/ Pac. Islander
 Caucasian
 Hispanic/Latino
 Nat. Amer./AK native
 Other _____

+* 16. Gender (MARK DO NOT ASK)

- Male Female

17. As you leave this exhibition, is there any one photo that stands out in your memory? WHY?
 [Tape response/Re-enter exhibition if necessary]

_____	Exhibition		
_____	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>		

_____	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>		

18. Can you recall another African American exhibition that you have seen at the Smithsonian (that was particularly interesting?)

- Yes No If yes record below.

--	--

STATUS:		<input type="checkbox"/> SI staff/contractor					
Reason		<input type="checkbox"/> Ineligible					
_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Interview: 12+ years					
_____		<input type="checkbox"/> Interview: Child<12 years					
		<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal: Language					
		<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal: Other					
FOR OFFICE USE:							
Session	Shift	Segment					
<table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>			<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1			
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2					
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3					
Weight		<input type="checkbox"/> 4					
<table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table> . <table border="1" style="display: inline-table;"><tr><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td><td style="width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td></tr></table>							<input type="checkbox"/> 5
		<input type="checkbox"/> 6					

