



VISITOR EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSES

TO INSCRIBING MEANING

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

IN SCRIBING
MEANING

WRITING + GRAPHIC IN AFRICAN
SYSTEMS
ART

A STUDY PREPARED BY THE
OFFICE OF POLICY & ANALYSIS
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MARCH

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PHOTO IDENTIFICATIONS:

All items shown are in the collection of the National Museum of African Art, except as noted.

Cover:

Left: Bruce Onobrakpeya (b. 1932, Nigeria). *Ibiebe ABC III*. 2000

Right: Master of Mulongo (Luba peoples, Democratic Republic of the Congo). *Headrest*. Mid-late 19th century

Page 7: Igbo peoples (Nigeria). *Mask*. No date.

Page 8: (Egypt). *Bi-Folio from the Qur'an*. Late 14th century. Sackler Gallery.

Page 10: Asante peoples (Ghana). *Wrapper*. Mid-late 19th century.

Page 11: Iké Udé (b. ca. 1966, Nigeria). *Untitled #16*. 1997.

Page 13: Tuareg peoples (Niger). *Pendant (tanfuk n' azraf)*. Early-mid 20th century.

Page 14: Kurumba peoples (Burkina Faso). *Storage vessel*. Mid-20th century.

Page 15: Rudzani Nemasetoni (b. 1962, South Africa). *Urban Testaments II*. 1995.

Page 16: Osman Waqjalla (b. 1925, Sudan). *Husam alsalam*. Ca. 1988.

DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic systems in African Art, shows how Africans acquired and shared knowledge to interpret meaning. The ability to design and make art with alphabets and symbols illustrates the complexity of humans and their ability to communicate with one another.

As I walked through this exhibit I gained a better understanding of the importance of and synthesis among art, anthropology, and linguistics. Descriptions on jewelry, body art, cave paintings, depictions of symbols on pottery shape the past and future.

I would like to thank Sharron Patton, the Director of the National Museum of African Art, for valuing the visitors' perspectives. Christine Kreamer provided guidance regarding the objectives of the exhibition, I also want to thank her. Ioana Munteanu and Andrew Pekarik designed the study, collected the data, conducted the analysis and wrote the report. They are part of my excellent staff. I would also like to thank Hillary Friedman for her assistance with analyzing background materials, conducting in-depth background interviews, and designing and pretesting the questionnaires. All three devoted a great deal of time to this study.

Carole M.P. Neves
Director
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Smithsonian Institution

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THE EXHIBITION



Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art is an exhibition organized by the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) in association with the Fowler Museum at UCLA. It was presented at NMAfA between May 9 and August 26, 2007. The exhibition included over 100 works of art ranging in time from early Egyptian to contemporary. They included many different media (e.g., paintings, sculptures, prints, photography) and artifacts (e.g., everyday objects, ritual objects, talismans, popular arts). The scripts that appeared in the exhibition are those that are particularly evident in both traditional and contemporary African arts. They include phonetic alphabets which convey language, as well as ideographic symbols which represent ideas.

The contents reflect, in the words of NMAfA curator Christine Kreamer, “Africa’s long engagement with written and graphic systems as part of the broader global history of writing and literacy.” The project was inspired by the sense that although African writing systems are thousands of years old and are an important part of the world history of writing, they have received little attention outside of Africa. The exhibition and accompanying book were a collaboration among Christine Kreamer, Mary (Polly) Nooter Roberts of the Fowler Museum, Elizabeth Harney of the University of Toronto, and scholar and independent curator Allyson Purpura.

The exhibition was divided into seven thematic sections:

- Ways of Knowing. (This section served as an intro room for the exhibit.)
- Inscribing the Body.
- Sacred Scripts.
- Inscribing Power.
- Writing Politics.
- Words Unbound: Exploring the Book.
- Word Play.

The exhibition also included an activity room with a film, computer stations, and a space for children and visitors to draw.

The exhibition was on view at the same time as *African Vision: The Walt Disney-Tishman African Art Collection*, an exhibition of exceptional artworks from a recently donated collection. During the period of this study, NMAfA also hosted a portion of the exhibition *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries* presented in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, a museum of Asian art that is physically linked to NMAfA. In the galleries that adjoin the Sackler Gallery, NMAfA displayed the section of the Portugal exhibition with art created on the Atlantic coast of Africa under the influence of Portuguese traders. Both the Disney-Tishman exhibition and the Portugal exhibition were much more heavily publicized than *Inscribing Meaning*, and many visitors to the museum during the period of the study were drawn to the museum by those exhibitions.



THE QUESTIONS



LEARNING

The first goal of the study was to determine the degree to which the exhibition achieved curator Christine Kreamer's primary aim: to increase the number of visitors who know that Africa has writing systems.

EXPECTATIONS

Inscribing Meaning primarily was designed to be a learning exhibition, but it was being shown at a time when many visitors were drawn to the museum by *African Vision*, a primarily aesthetic presentation. How many visitors were looking forward to learning?

MUSEUM EXPERIENCES

How do the experiences reported as especially satisfying by exiting visitors compare to the ones that entering visitors said they were especially looking forward to?

RATING

How did visitors rate the exhibition? Is there a connection between rating and any characteristics of viewers or their responses? By using the same scale that OP&A has applied elsewhere at the Smithsonian, it is possible to compare the rating for this exhibition with ratings of other exhibitions studied at NMAfA and elsewhere.

PROBLEMS

Preliminary interviews with visitors suggested that some people were encountering difficulties finding texts for objects, some had not realized that the exhibition had an introductory section, and some did not notice or use the activity room. How serious were these issues for exiting visitors?

IMPROVEMENTS

Some people interviewed at the exhibition offered suggestions for improvements. Chief among them were adding background music, providing more contextual information about African culture, and offering more translations of the writing that appeared on the exhibition objects. How popular would these suggestions be with exiting visitors overall?

MAIN IDEA

How many exiting visitors would be able to articulate the main idea that the exhibition is trying to communicate? Is there an idea that dominates? How does the willingness to articulate a main idea relate to other experiences or responses in the exhibition?





STUDY METHOD

In order to determine whether the exhibition affected visitors' knowledge, the study used an entrance-exit design. The data was collected during one weekend, August 18 (exit) and 19 (entrance), 2007 when all entering and exiting visitors were given self-administered questionnaires to complete.

All visitors over the age of 12 were given questionnaires. Response rates were very high – 96% on entrance (232 questionnaires completed) and 93% on exit (303 questionnaires completed). Responses to all survey questions are in Appendix A, Table 1.

This method yields results that cannot be formally generalized to the whole population of exhibition visitors.¹ Rather, the results represent all visitors present on the survey dates--a “snapshot” of visitors. However, provided the visitors did not differ in any systematic way from visitors on other days,² the results can be used, with the appropriate cautions and caveats, to provide insight into the exhibition's visitors more generally.³

THE AUDIENCE

Males comprised close to half of the audience. The average age of all visitors was 37 (median age 34). One quarter of the visitors (25%) came from the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area; one tenth (11%) came from outside the United States.

The demographic characteristics of entering visitors and exiting were similar. However, the entrance data was weighted to account for an unusually high percentage of repeat visitors (34% on entrance, compared to 23% on exit and 26% in *African Vision*.)

¹ Results that would allow formal generalization to the whole population require a method that covers the entire period of the exhibition. The study team chose to interview all visitors rather than a “random sample,” because the exhibition team judged that visitor flow to the exhibition was such that a random-sample survey could not be completed in a reasonable amount of time.

² As noted below there seemed to have been an unusually high number of repeat visitors on the entrance day. The data was weighted to account for this. No other significant anomalies were noted.

³ For example, the results of a survey conducted on an exhibition's opening weekend might not be representative of visitation more generally, as there might be a higher percentage of those specifically interested in seeing the new exhibition and a lower percentage of casual visitors than at other times. Similarly, systematic differences are likely on closing weekends, holiday weekends, or weekdays when public schools are not in session.

LEARNING

Visitors were asked, “In your opinion how true is each of these statements?”

- Writing is not particularly important in Africa.
- Art is extremely important in Africa.
- Music is not particularly important in Africa.

Each statement had four reply options: *Not true at all*, *Somewhat true*, *Very true*, and *I do not know*. Half of entering visitors (51%) already knew that writing is important in Africa (i.e., they marked “Not true at all”), one-fifth of entering visitors did not know (19%), and the others were either incorrect or partially correct. Upon exit, however, two-thirds of visitors (64%) answered correctly and one in ten (10%) did not know. This shows that **the exhibition achieved its primary aim** of increasing visitor awareness of the importance of writing in Africa. Moreover, this increase was true both for visitors new to the museum and for visitors who had been in the museum before. The responses of the two other statements did not differ between entrance and exit.



EXPECTATIONS

Entering visitors were asked which museum experiences they were especially looking forward to in the exhibition. Five were chosen by about half:

- *Enriching my Understanding* (55%)
- *Being exposed to different cultures* (52%)
- *Gaining information/knowledge* (51%)
- *Seeing rare art* (49%)
- *Being moved by beauty* (45%)

One was selected by one-third:

- *Spending time with friends/family* (35%)

The remaining three were selected by one-quarter or one-fifth of the visitors:

- *Imagining other times or places* (26%)
- *Reflecting on the meaning of what I see* (25%)
- *Connecting with my heritage* (20%)

On average entering visitors selected 3.3 of these experiences. **Entering visitors were slightly more interested in learning experiences than in art experiences.**

MUSEUM EXPERIENCES

Only one experience, *Reflecting on the meaning of what I see*, was marked significantly more often at exit than on entrance (25% on entrance; 37% on exit). In other words, the exhibition encouraged visitors to think more deeply than they were expecting when they entered.

The other eight experiences were selected by exiting visitors to the same degree that they were chosen by entering visitors. For these eight experiences, visitors overall found exactly what they were looking for – neither more nor less.

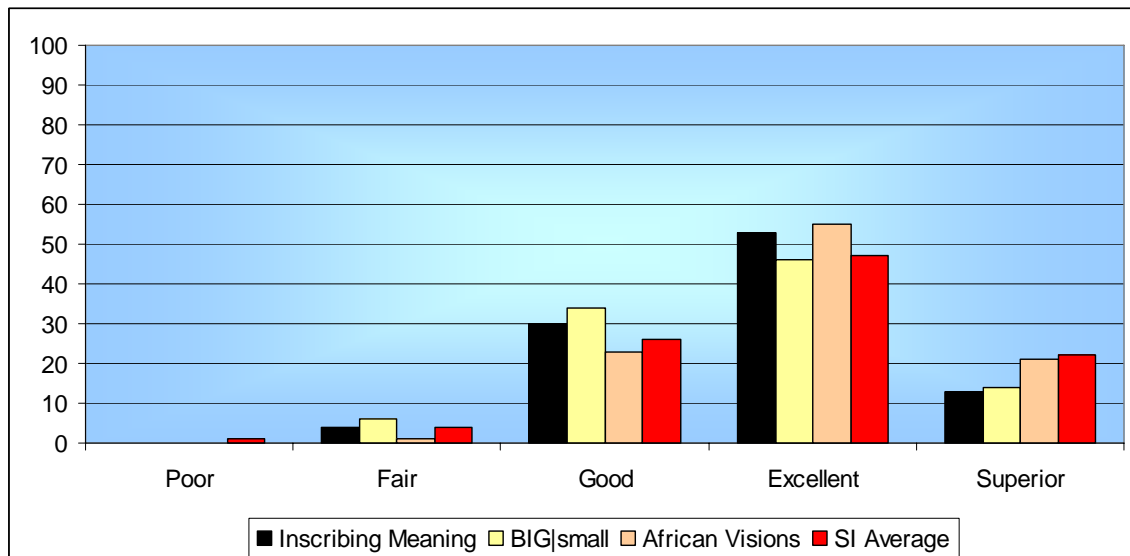
RATING

Exiting visitors rated the exhibition as follows:

- Superior 13%
- Excellent 53%
- Good 30%
- Fair 4%
- Poor 0%

As shown in the graph below, the rating that visitors gave to Inscribing Meaning was very close to the rating visitors gave to the exhibition *BIG/small* that was in the same gallery, and is somewhat lower than the rating visitors gave to *African Vision* (which is close to the average of the 38 Smithsonian exhibitions studied by OP&A since 2004).

Visitors who said that connecting with my heritage was especially satisfying were more likely to rate the exhibition Superior, compared to other visitors (27% vs. 8%), as were those who said that being moved by beauty was especially satisfying (23% vs. 8%).





PROBLEMS

Respondents were asked about difficulties that had been reported by some interviewees during the pre-survey interviews.

- One in three visitors (33%) sometimes had trouble locating the text for an object.
- Three out of five (57%) did not notice that the exhibition had an introductory room (although those who did notice felt that it served its purpose well).
- One in ten (10%) did not see the activity room; half (48%) did not use it; and two in five (38%) used it and felt that it had enhanced their experience in the exhibition.

IMPROVEMENTS

During the pre-survey interviews visitors were asked about possible improvements. The survey offered three of these options to visitors. The improvement most favored by exiting visitors was background music, which was selected by nearly half (46%).

Translations were selected by more than one-third (37%), and additional contextual information was chosen by one quarter (26%). Write-in suggestions included subject-matter experts to answer questions, paintings about the history of the period, movie, handouts/brochures, more balance between ancient and contemporary, more interactives, and ethnic food.

MAIN IDEA

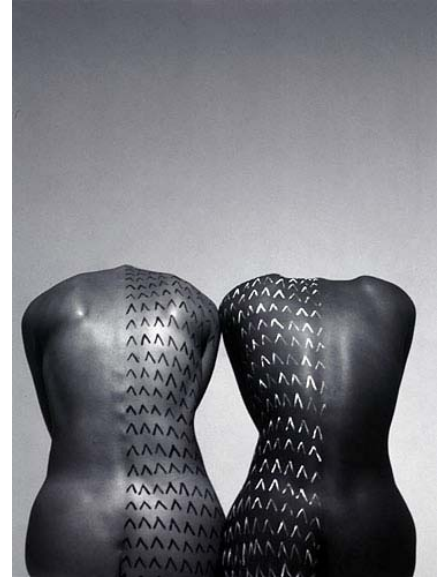
Altogether 172 exiting visitors (58%) offered an articulation of the main idea as they saw it. At least twelve themes can be identified among these responses. Here are five examples for each theme:

Writing

The importance of written words and forms
The importance of text
Writing has been used in Africa for about 5000 years.
The word
Importance of word/scripture

Art

Communicate how important art is to other cultures
Richness and higher levels of Africa's art than most people think
African art is intelligent and beautiful
Art and life
Art speaks to us



Writing and art

How line and word are combined for visual aesthetic intention
How writing is expressed in various forms of art
Language and art are integrated; pictures speak
Written language as art
Intersection between visual and written art

Language

Showing how language is a necessary part of life
The use of language has meaning on many different levels
There is language and meaning in everything we do
To understand the collaboration of languages shared by countries/people
To show how language itself is an expression of identity, and how changed in it reflect changes in culture, thinking, and meaning

Communication

Art and writing as means of communication
To let us understand how different can be the means used to communicate
People used creative ways to communicate
Both the power and limitation of words to communicate across cultures and time periods
Writing as a form of communication is just as important and rich in Africa as music and art

Symbolism

The broad idea of semantics, from writing to other symbols
Tell about African writing symbols
Symbols communicating a deeper meaning

*The value and symbolism of the communicated word
Expressing time and ideas through symbolism*

History/Culture

*Exposing others to the history of African communication tools through various media
Writing in many forms existed throughout Africa and can be linked with healing, religion,
celebration, and documentation*

To counter the impression that Africa does not have a long written history

The different ways to convey the importance of culture and history

A culture that must be told so that it does not fade away

Diversity

There are various forms of written expression throughout the entire continent of Africa

Variety and importance of writing in Africa

*The various powers of written language, and the very many different ways it can be
employed*

There are many different ways in Africa to communicate

There are really different African arts, African regions, African people

Power

The power that the written word has in conveying history, social commentary

The uses and power of written language in African culture

Writing equals power

Words are much more than words – they can change people and cultures

The struggle for voice in art takes place even when words are present – especially so

Knowledge

General information for people of any age or race

To increase knowledge about Africa

Culture importance of our heritage; describing our knowledge

To let you receive information on Africa, not just its slavery

Learning

Understanding

To enhance people's understanding of Africa

There are cultural universals which enrich one's understanding of self/others

A way for me to understand a tradition that has a deep historical context

Opening the mind to other cultures

Helping connect people to other cultures

Other

Breaking boundaries

Preservation of a moment is universal and is shared throughout cultures

Who we are; why we are here

In these exhibits they are trying to express the truth of Africa

Continuity and multiplicity of cultures

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS

REFLECTING ON MEANING

Only one experience, reflecting on meaning, was found among exiting visitors to a significantly greater extent than among entering visitors. Those who marked reflecting on meaning as a satisfying experience on exit were more likely to have suggested that more translations of writings would have enhanced their visit (51% of them suggested it vs. 29% of all other visitors).

SATISFACTION

Inscribing Meaning was more effective for some categories of visitors and not as effective for others (see Appendix A, Table 3).

Higher Superior ratings were associated with:

- Those who reported connecting with my heritage
- Those who reported being moved by beauty
- Those who came specifically to see the *Inscribing Meaning* exhibition
- Those who found their experience in the exhibition *better than expected*
- Those who left the exhibition saying they were *very interested* in African art and/or African culture

Higher Excellent ratings were associated with:

- Those who reported enriching my understanding
- Those who reported gaining information/knowledge
- Those who left the exhibition saying that they were *interested* in African art and/or *interested* or *very interested* in writing systems

Higher Fair or Good ratings were associated with:

- Those who left the exhibition saying they were *not interested* or *somewhat interested* in African art and/or African culture and/or writing systems

Taking these together we can note that the more intellectual experiences (enriching my understanding and gaining information) were associated with Excellent ratings, while the more emotional or personal experiences (being moved by beauty and connecting to my heritage) were associated with Superior. Those who rated the exhibition in the lower categories left the exhibition reporting lower levels of interest in the topic compared to visitors who gave the exhibition higher scores.



NEW VS. REPEAT VISITORS

The OP&A study team looked into greater detail at the responses of both visitors who came to the National Museum of African Art for the first time – new visitors – and of those who have been to the museum at least once before the day they were surveyed – repeat visitors. (See Appendix A, Table 2.)

Demographically, a higher percentage of new visitors to the museum said they lived outside the Washington D.C. metropolitan area when compared to the repeat visitors. The new visitors to African art museum were also ten years younger on average than repeat visitors.

For visitors entering the exhibition....

When compared to the new visitors,

- A higher percentage of repeat visitors came specifically to see the exhibition
- A higher percentage of repeat visitors marked that they feel a personal connection to Africa
- Higher percentages of repeat visitors said they were very interested in African culture and almost twice as many repeat visitors said they were very interested in art in general, and/or very interested in African art.

For visitors exiting the exhibition....

The two categories of visitors responded differently with respect to their museum experiences, their interests, offering a main idea, and suggesting background museum as an improvement.

Museum experiences. Four experiences were marked much more often among exiting repeat visitors than among exiting new visitors:

- Gaining information/knowledge
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw
- Being moved by beauty
- Enriching my understanding

Looking at the question more deeply, is this because repeat visitors found more experiences than they had anticipated, or because new visitors found fewer? The answer is “both.” For two of these experiences, gaining information and reflecting on meaning, the increase for repeat visitors between entrance and exit is larger than for new visitors. For the other two, being moved by beauty and enriching my understanding, the decrease for new visitors between entrance and exit accounts for the



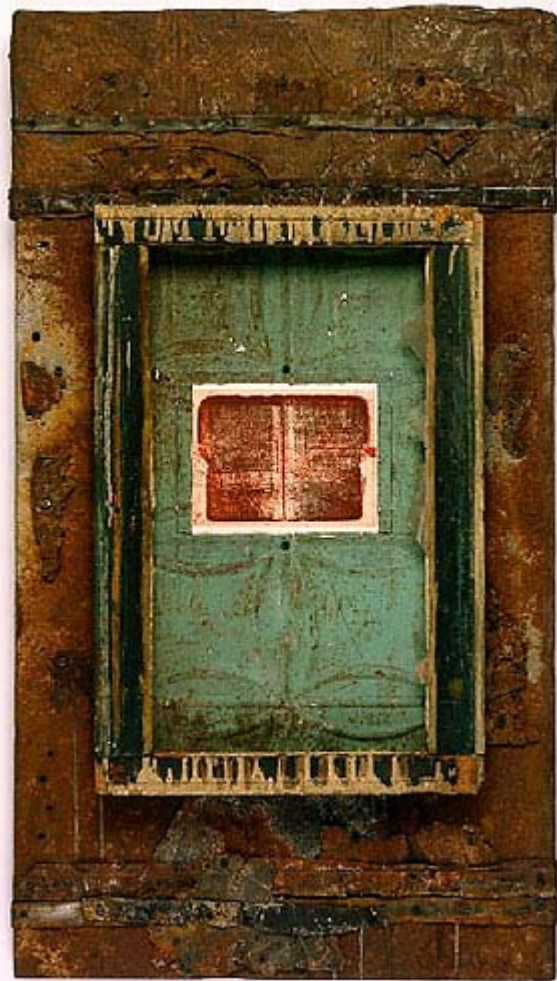
difference. In other words, new visitors had a harder time finding beauty and understanding than they anticipated, while repeat visitors had an easier time finding information and reflecting on meaning.

As pointed out earlier, only one experience, reflecting on meaning, increased significantly from entrance to exit for visitors overall. That was equally true for both new and repeat visitors.

Interest. When compared to new visitors, a higher percentages of repeat visitors said they were very interested in African art, and/or very interested in African culture.

Main idea. Repeat visitors were much more likely to suggest a main idea that the exhibition is trying to communicate.

Improvements: New visitors marked more often than repeat visitors that background music would have improved their visit to *Inscribing Meaning*.



DISCUSSION

This exhibition clearly achieved its central aim: It raised from 52% to 64% the proportion of visitors who realized that writing was particularly important in Africa. In addition, it inspired 37% of visitors to reflect on meaning, a 12% increase over the number who had expected to do that when they entered. The intellectual impact is articulated in the range and depth of the responses that visitors provided when asked for the main idea of the exhibition.



There were some areas, however, in which the exhibition could have been improved. The percentage of visitors who sometimes had trouble locating text labels (33%) was significant, as was the percentage of visitors who did not realize that the first room was an introduction to the exhibition (57%). This matters, since only about one in seven visitors feel that having such an introductory room in an African art exhibition is not important.

The suggested improvement of background music was fairly popular with new visitors, and could be considered in the future, at least as an experiment.

New visitors entered with much lower levels of interest in art, African art, and African culture, compared to repeat visitors, in general. Nevertheless, new visitors were looking forward to the same kinds of experiences that repeat visitors were looking forward to, and both groups found more reflecting on meaning than they had anticipated. In other words, this was a thought-provoking exhibition for both new and repeat visitors.

Having a satisfying aesthetic experience was not the most important expectation for either new or repeat visitors; both groups of these African art visitors marked it as the fifth most anticipated experience. Repeat visitors listed seeing rare art as their second most anticipated experience; for new visitors seeing rare art was their fourth most anticipated experience. And for both groups learning experiences were paramount (understanding for new visitors, and information for repeat visitors). *Inscribing Meaning* was effective for both new and repeat visitors but the exiting repeat visitors had a higher average of satisfying experiences than exiting first-time visitors.

Overall these findings suggest that the exhibition provided visitors with effective opportunities for learning about African culture and its means of communicating.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

TABLE 1: SURVEY RESPONSES FOR ENTERING VS. EXITING VISITORS

	Entrance	Exit
	Percent	Percent
Is this your first visit to this museum, the National Museum of African Art?		
Yes	77	76
No	23	24
Total	100	100
Today, did you specifically come to the museum to see this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?		
Yes	28	26
No	72	74
Total	100	100
What experiences are you especially looking forward to in this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?		
What experiences were especially satisfying to you in this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?		
Enriching my understanding	55	50
Being exposed to different cultures	52	47
Gaining information/knowledge	51	52
Seeing rare art	49	50
Being moved by beauty	45	38
Spending time with friends and family	35	32
Imagining other times or places	26	27
Reflecting on the meaning of what I see/saw	25	37
Connecting with my heritage	20	25
In your opinion, how true is each of these statements?		
Writing is not particularly important in Africa		
Not true at all	51	64
Somewhat true	22	13
Very true	9	14
I do not know	19	9
Total	101	100
Art is extremely important in Africa		
Not true at all	8	5
Somewhat true	6	8
Very true	79	83
I do not know	7	4
Total	100	100
Music is not particularly important in Africa		
Not true at all	78	70
Somewhat true	2	3
Very true	12	14
I do not know	8	12
Total	100	99
Note: For variables with significant differences between entrance and exit:		
	Exit greater than Entrance	
	Entrance greater than Exit	

	Entrance Percent	Exit Percent
What is your age?		
Age grouped by generations (ages 12 or older only)		
World War II (born 1901-1924)	0	0
Postwar (born 1925-1945)	8	6
Leading-edge Boomers (born 1946-1955)	12	11
Trailing-edge Boomers (born 1956-1964)	18	15
Generation X (born 1965-1981)	32	37
Generation Y (born 1982-2001)	30	31
Total	100	100
Age in three categories (ages 12 or older only)		
12 to 29	39	42
30 to 54	45	42
55 and older	16	16
Total	100	100
Average Age	37	36
In general, how interested are you in the following?		
African Art		
Not interested	6	2
Somewhat interested	24	22
Interested	33	35
Very interested	38	41
Total	101	100
Art in general		
Not interested	2	2
Somewhat interested	15	17
Interested	40	38
Very interested	43	44
Total	100	101
African culture		
Not interested	5	2
Somewhat interested	21	17
Interested	36	36
Very interested	37	45
Total	99	100
Writing systems		
Not interested	10	7
Somewhat interested	34	30
Interested	29	34
Very interested	27	29
Total	100	100

	Entrance Percent	Exit Percent
How would you rate this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning? (Exit only)		
Poor		4
Fair		30
Good		53
Excellent		13
Superior		100
Total		
How did this exhibition compare to what you expected? (Exit only)		
Not as good		5
About as expected		49
Better		46
Total		100
Did you have trouble locating the text for any objects? (Exit only)		
Often		1
Sometimes		33
Never		66
Total		100
Did the activity room enhance your experience in this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning? (Exit only)		
Yes		38
No		4
I did not use it		48
I did not see it		10
Total		100
Did you notice that this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning, had an introductory room? (Exit only)		
No		57
Yes		43
Total		100
If yes, how well did it serve that purpose?		
Not well		1
Somewhat well		16
Very well		17
(no answer)		9
Total		43
In your opinion, what is the main idea this exhibition is trying to communicate? (Exit only)		
(offered a response)		58
(did not respond)		42
Total		100
Was this idea new to you?		
Yes		15
No		40
(no answer)		3
Total		58
Which of the following would have enhanced your visit to this exhibition? (Exit only)		
Background music		46
Additional contextual information		26
Translation of writing/script		37
Other		8

TABLE 2: SURVEY RESPONSES FOR NEW AND REPEAT VISITORS, ENTRANCE & EXIT*

	Entrance Percents		Exit Percents	
	New	Repeat	New	Repeat
Today, did you specifically come to the museum to see this exhibition?				
Yes	23	42	24	31
No	77	58	76	69
Total	100	100	100	100
What experiences are you especially looking forward to in this exhibition?				
What experiences were especially satisfying to you in this exhibition?				
Being moved by beauty	42	54	34	48
Enriching my understanding	53	60	47	61
Gaining information/knowledge	49	54	48	65
Reflecting on the meaning of what I see/saw	23	32	33	48
Do you feel a personal connection to Africa?				
Yes	52	69	59	69
No	48	31	41	31
Total	100	100	100	100
Where do you live?				
United States	86	98	85	99
Other Country	14	2	15	1
Total	100	100	100	100
Region				
Metropolitan Washington DC	10	62	15	54
Elsewhere	90	38	85	46
Total	100	100	100	100
With whom are you visiting?				
I am with one or more teens	9	6	14	1
* Includes only variables where there are significant differences between New and Repeat visitors				
Note 1:	For variables with significant differences between New and Repeat visitors:			
	Higher Percentage for Repeat visitors			
	Higher Percentage for New visitors			
Note 2: Some totals do not equal 100 due to rounding.				

TABLE 3: EXHIBITION RATINGS BY SURVEY QUESTIONS*

	EXIT RATINGS			Total
	Fair/Good	Excellent	Superior	
	Percents	Percents	Percents	
ALL EXITING VISITORS	34	53	13	100
Today, did you specifically come to the museum to see this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?				
Yes	24	56	20	100
No	37	52	11	100
How did this exhibition compare to what you expected?				
Not as good	93	7	0	100
About as expected	46	50	4	100
Better than expected	12	63	24	99
What experiences are you especially looking forward to in this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?				
What experiences were especially satisfying to you in this exhibition, Inscribing Meaning?				
Connecting with my heritage	18	55	27	100
Being moved by beauty	20	57	23	100
Enriching my understanding	23	63	14	100
Gaining information/knowledge	24	62	14	100
Spending time with friends and family	21	62	18	101
In general, how interested are you in the following?				
African Art				
Not interested	40	40	20	100
Somewhat interested	63	36	2	101
Interested	24	65	11	100
Very interested	25	53	22	100
African culture				
Not interested	57	29	14	100
Somewhat interested	53	43	4	100
Interested	34	59	7	100
Very interested	25	52	23	100
Writing systems				
Not interested	53	37	11	101
Somewhat interested	47	41	13	101
Interested	26	60	14	100
Very interested	25	59	16	100
* Includes only variables where ratings are significantly different from expected				
Note: The percentages that are unexpectedly high are highlighted:				

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

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Inscribing Meaning

1. Is today your first visit to this museum, the National Museum of African Art? Yes No

2. Today, did you specifically come to the museum to see this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? Yes No

3. What experiences are you especially looking forward to in this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? [Mark one or more]

- Being moved by beauty
- Enriching my understanding
- Seeing rare art
- Gaining information/knowledge
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw
- Imagining other times or places
- Connecting with my heritage
- Spending time with friends and family
- Being exposed to different cultures

4. In your opinion, how true is each of these statements?	Not true at all	Somewhat true	Very true	I don't know
Writing is not particularly important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art is extremely important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music is not particularly important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In general, how important is it for you to have an introductory room in African Art exhibitions? Not Important Somewhat Important Very Important

6. Do you feel a personal connection to Africa? Yes No

7. Where do you live? United States, Zip Code:
 Other Country, Specify: _____

8. What is your age?

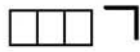
9. What is your gender? Female Male

10. With whom are you visiting? [Mark one or more]

- I am alone
- I am with one or more adults
- I am with one or more teens
- I am with one or more children (under 12 years of age)
- I am with an organized group

11. In general, how interested are you in the following?	Not Interested	Somewhat Interested	Interested	Very Interested
African art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
African culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your assistance!



Inscribing Meaning

1. Is today your first visit to this museum, the National Museum of African Art? Yes No

2. Today did you specifically come to the museum to see this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? Yes No

3. How would you rate this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? Poor Fair Good Excellent Superior

4. What experiences were especially satisfying for you in this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? [Mark one or more]

- Being moved by beauty
- Enriching my understanding
- Seeing rare art
- Gaining information/knowledge
- Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw
- Imagining other times or places
- Connecting with my heritage
- Spending time with friends and family
- Being exposed to different cultures

5. How did this exhibition compare to what you expected? Not as good About as expected Better

6. Did you have trouble locating the text for any objects? Often Sometimes Never

7. Did the activity room enhance your experience in this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*? Yes No I did not use it I did not see it

8. Did you notice that this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*, had an introductory room? No Yes

If YES, how well did it serve that purpose?

Not well Somewhat well Very well

9. In your opinion, how true is each of these statements?

	Not true at all	Somewhat true	Very true	I don't know
Writing is not particularly important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art is extremely important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music is not particularly important in Africa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. In your opinion, what is the main idea this exhibition, *Inscribing Meaning*, is trying to communicate?

11. Was this idea new to you? Yes No

12. Which of the following would have enhanced your visit to this exhibition? [Mark one or more]

- Background music
- Additional contextual information
- Translations of writing/script
- Other _____

13. In general, how important is it for you to have an introductory room in African Art exhibitions? Not Important Somewhat important Very Important

14. Do you feel a personal connection to Africa? Yes No

15. Where do you live? United States, Zip Code:

Other Country, Specify: _____

16. What is your age?

17. What is your gender? Female Male

18. With whom are you visiting? [Mark one or more]

- I am alone
- I am with one or more adults
- I am with one or more teens
- I am with one or more children (under 12 years of age)
- I am with an organized group

19. In general, how interested are you in the following?

	Not Interested	Somewhat Interested	Interested	Very Interested
African art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Art in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
African culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing Systems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your assistance!