

A Survey of Visitors to

Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian

at the George Gustav Heye Center of
NMAI, New York City

May 2012
Office of Policy & Analysis
Smithsonian Institution



Introduction¹

The NMAI New York is the exhibition and education facility of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in New York City.² In second floor galleries with a total of about 14,800 sq. feet, it provides a venue for both permanent and temporary exhibitions. A range of public programs—including dance performances, music, films, and seminars take place in other spaces in the building. NMAI New York’s mandate is to explore the diversity of the Native people of the Americas and “the strength and continuity of their cultures from the earliest times to the present.”³ On October 23, 2010, NMAI New York premiered *Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian* (IoN), the first major reinstallation since the New York facility opened. This exhibition incorporated some interpretive techniques and installation approaches that are new to NMAI New York.

About a year ago, the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) was asked to assess IoN from the perspective of the visiting public, in contrast to internal curatorial critiques or published professional reviews.⁴ OP&A proposed a two-stage assessment; first, in-depth interviews with

¹ Image names and photo credits are on page 19 (last page).

² Created by the legislation that established the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), and named the George Gustav Heye Center, this facility opened in 1994 at the historic Alexander Hamilton US Custom House in lower Manhattan. The NMAI Act in 1989 (*Stats. at Large of the USA* 1989 103:1336), transferred the George Gustav Heye collections to the Smithsonian Institution. In addition to a major storage and care facility, the Cultural Resource Center, and the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) on the Mall, the 1989 transfer agreement required a presence in New York City: the George Gustav Heye Center in the US Custom House.

³ Source: NMAI NEW YORK website, <http://www.nmai.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=visitor&second=ny> (accessed October 24, 2011).

⁴ See, for example, the *New York Times* review of *Infinity of Nations* [<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/06/arts/design/06infinity.html?scp=1&sq=cecile%20ganteaume&st=cse>] and a

and observations of visitors to the exhibition would be conducted. These would provide initial data for analysis, as well as identify issues that require further study. A report based on the observations was submitted to NMAI in November 2011. Second, new issues, as well as specific interests of the curatorial and education staff, would be addressed by means of a sample survey. This report is based on the second phase, a sample survey of visitors exiting IoN conducted by NMAI New York and OP&A staff.⁵

Contents

The next section describes the IoN exhibition and the two exhibitions adjoining IoN at NMAI New York NMAI New York during the time interviews were conducted. These are the main spaces that visitors were about to enter as they exited from IoN, when they were intercepted and interviewed. These are also exhibitions that visitors could have visited before entering IoN. Next, the methodology of the survey is described in more detail and a profile of the interviewees is provided. The profile of visitors to the museum is compared to that of visitors to NMAI New York available from a statistical sample survey conducted in 2009-2010. We then continue with the results and a summary/discussion section.

Exhibition Description

Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) was organized by NMAI curator Cécile R. Ganteaume. In the course of the exhibition's development over 40 historians and community members worked together to accurately interpret the Native American objects selected. IoN's intent is to give a global and chronological perspective on some 700 works of art. The origins of these works of art range from the southern tip of South America, through Central and North America to Arctic and Subarctic regions.



clip of IoN's Curator on PBS Sunday Arts Program [<http://www.thirteen.org/sundayarts/video/national-museum-of-the-american-indian-infinity-of-nations/1259/>]

⁵ In OP&A, Zahava D. Doering had overall responsibility for the study. Sarah Block, who worked on both studies, helped develop the survey questionnaire and supervised the data processing. Kimberly A. Stern, an OP&A intern, helped with data preparation. Cécile Ganteaume and Duane Blue Spruce, NMAI curators, provided input for the survey contents. Margaret Sagan, Visitor Services Manager at NMAI NEW YORK, and her volunteers conducted most of the data collection sessions. Their professionalism is to be commended. Nadine Hanemann, a graduate intern at OP&A from Leuphana University Lueneburg, Germany, analyzed the data and wrote the report, with guidance from Andrew Pekarik and Lance Costello, OP&A staff members.

The exhibition's introductory area, separated by a small area from the end of the adjoining exhibition, *Time Exposures: Picturing a History of Isleta Pueblo in the 19th Century*,⁶ contains a display of headdresses, largely collected by George Gustav Heye, to demonstrate the sovereignty of Native Americans across the hemisphere. The exhibition text reads:

Throughout North, Central, and South America, Native nations have often been guided by leaders recognized for their abilities to maintain reciprocal relationships and to coordinate collective efforts through their oratory and judiciousness. The right within a culture to don a headdress such as those shown here depends first on the acquisition of cultural knowledge and second on the ability to use that knowledge for the benefit of the people. These headdresses represent the right of Native peoples to govern and instruct themselves according to their own laws, customs, and prophecies.

The exhibition then describes each of 10 Native regions in both object installations and interactive stations. Each section contains a focal point intended to display the interconnectedness of Native peoples before the arrival of Europeans. Contemporary work by Houser (Warm Springs Chiricahua Apache) and Rick Bartow (Mad River Wiyot) constitute the final exhibition sections. Throughout the exhibition, text panels refer to George Gustav Heye's legacy and include stories of his collecting expeditions. The exhibition was designed to give visitors the opportunity to experience the diversity of Native American sovereign cultures through a rich collection of historical items. A schematic of the exhibition and the surrounding spaces is available in Appendix A. As can be seen in that drawing, the exhibition galleries of NMAI are in a wide U-shaped space, with IoN occupying the majority of the space and other exhibitions adjacent to it at either end.

Exhibits Adjacent to IoN

From September 17, 2011-June 10, 2012 NMAI New York displayed the *Time Exposures: Picturing a History of Isleta Pueblo in the 19th Century*. This exhibition, organized by the Pueblo of Isleta, includes the works of some of the most prominent and well-known western photographers and artists, including Edward Curtis, A.C. Vroman, A.Z. Shindler, Karl Moon, John Hillers, and Charles Lummis. In 1881, the railroad companies forcibly took land in the center of Isleta Pueblo in the Rio Grande Valley. The railroad built there brought scores of tourists to the area. Professional non-Native photographers and artists traveled to the Isleta Pueblo to capture everyday Pueblo life. *Time Exposures* portrays Native lives before the arrival of tourists and other visitors, the changes imposed over the following decades, and the ways in which the people of Isleta Pueblo worked to preserve their way of life. Through these photographs, the exhibition tells the story of life on the Isleta Indian Reservation in the 19th century and its lasting effects on life today as viewed by its contemporary inhabitants. Facing the second floor

⁶ This temporary exhibition, on view at the time the study was conducted, is described in the next few pages.

gallery this installation was in the left section of the U, the East Gallery, and preceded the IoN introductory gallery described above.

From October 29, 2011–April 15, 2012, in the museum’s photo corridor gallery, NMAI New York displayed *Carl Beam-Organized by the National Gallery of Canada*. This retrospective of Carl Beam (Ojibwe, 1943–2005) included 41 works in a range of media (paintings, ceramics, constructions, and video). The exhibition opened with the artist's early works and included his famous *The North American Iceberg*, the first work by a Native artist to be purchased by the National Gallery of Canada as a start of their collection of contemporary Native art.

Other artworks in the exhibition were organized into themes such as *The Columbus Project*, a large body of work that re-examines European contact. A selection of Beam's ceramics demonstrate the artist's study of ancient Anasazi and Mimbres pottery from the US Southwest and his later works that incorporated Japanese firing and glazing techniques. This exhibition was installed in the right section of the U and, depending on where a visitor entered, either preceded or followed the last (contemporary art) section of IoN; this is known as the West Gallery.

Methodology

Between Saturday, February 18th and Sunday, March 4th 2012, NMAI New York staff and volunteers, trained and assisted by OP&A staff, conducted the survey. Visitors were intercepted at each of the three possible exits from the exhibition space: from the IoN introductory area into the *Time Exposures: Picturing a History of Isleta Pueblo in the 19th Century* exhibition, from the center gallery doors (exiting from the middle of the IoN exhibition), and from the end of IoN at the entry to the *Carl Beam* exhibition. During the survey periods, a total of 38 hours, 1,152 visitors exited. Potential respondents were approached, asked for their participation, and a clipboard with the questionnaire and a pencil. From the exiting visitors, a total of 524 were intercepted, and 430 surveys were completed, yielding a response rate of 84%. (See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix C for frequencies of responses.)



Demographic and Visitor Characteristics

About two in three of the exhibition’s visitors were US residents (65%) (and within these almost half were local⁷ (44%)). There were slightly more women than men (53% vs. 47%). One in ten respondents identified themselves as American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous American. One percent of the visitors were NMAI charter members.

Eight in ten visitors were accompanied by others (79%): seven in ten came with adults⁸ (73%), one in ten with older youth (11%) (age 13-18), and two in ten with children 12 or under (15%).

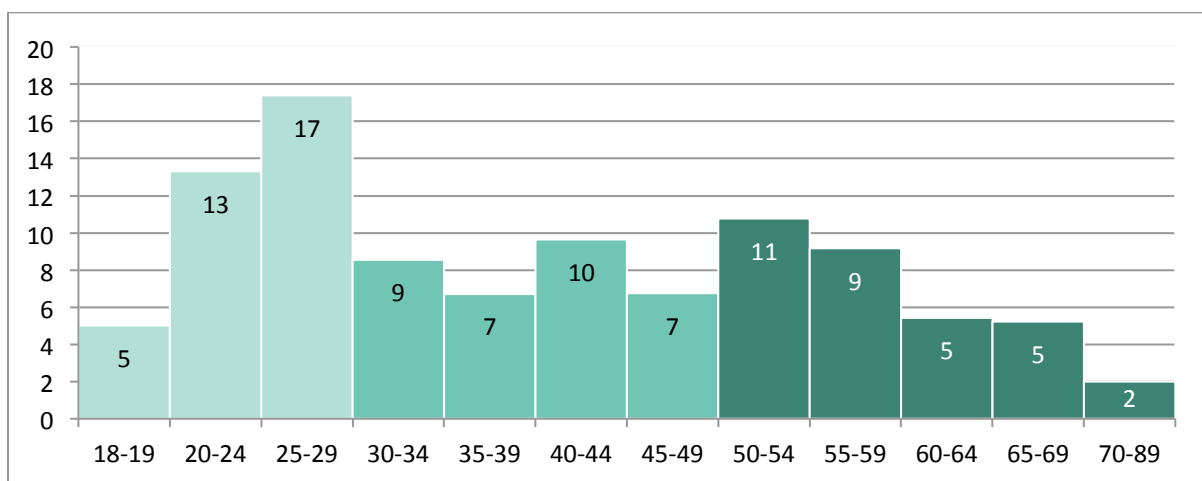
The large majority of visitors, especially international visitors, were visiting NMAI New York for the first time (82% of all visitors; 74% of US visitors; 95% of international visitors). While at the museum, they saw not only IoN, but also the other exhibitions. *Time Exposures* and *Carl Beam* were seen by 49% each, and *Small Spirits*, a doll exhibition on the first floor, by 39% – one in five visitors that were interviewed had visited all of the above exhibitions (19%).

IoN received considerable press and other media coverage; however, the survey results show that just one in four visitors came specifically to see IoN (25%). There was a residence difference: one fourth of international visitors (22%), compared to one third of US visitors (31%) indicated that they came specifically to see this exhibition.

Age

The average age of visitors was 40 and the median was 39. Divided into three roughly equal age groups– the youngest third of visitors were 29 years old and younger, the middle third ranged from 30 through 50 years old, and the oldest third were older than 50 (see colored groups).

Figure 1: Distribution of IoN Visitors, in 5-Year Age Groups (in percent)



⁷ Local is defined as living within a 20 mile radius of the museum.

⁸ 18 years of age or older.

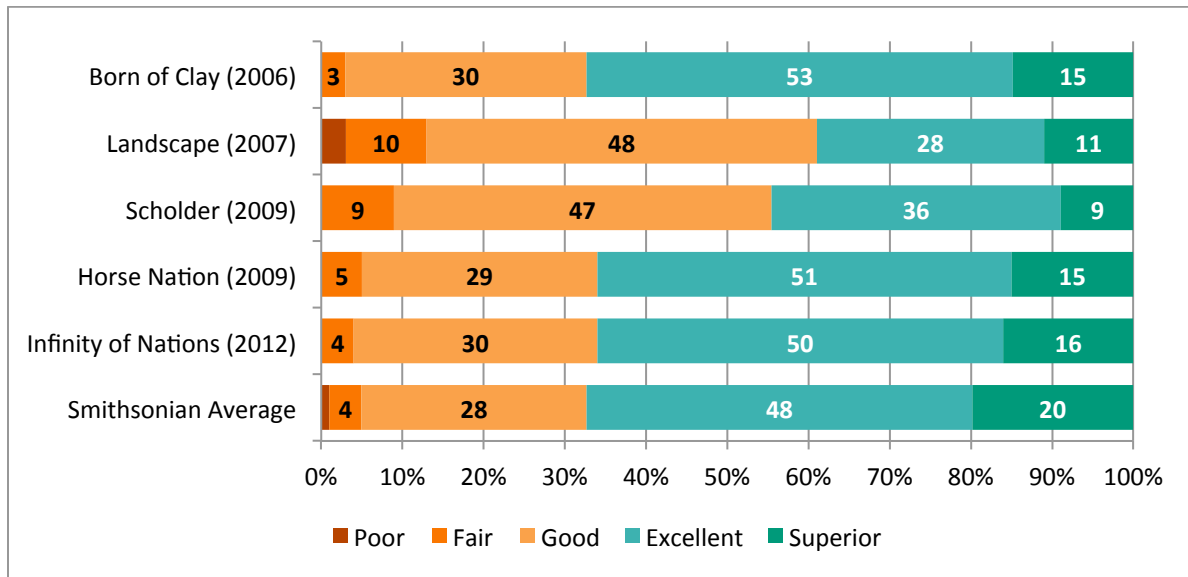
Older visitors were more likely to have come specifically to see IoN compared to younger visitors: one-third of the people over 50 came specifically to see the exhibition compared only one in five visitors in the younger two groups (32% vs. 20%). In addition, the older museum visitors were more likely to be repeat visitors. Whereas one-third of visitors who were over 50 indicated that they have visited the museum before, this was the case for just one in eight visitors 50 or younger (30% vs. 13%).

Rating

One of the main reasons for conducting the study of IoN was to obtain a rating of the exhibition from visitors. As shown on the questionnaire, the fourth question asked the visitor to rate their overall experience in IoN on a five-point scale: Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent and Superior. From previous study results, OP&A has found that most visitors mark Poor, Fair, or Good when they are critical of their experience to some degree; select Excellent when they are satisfied with their visit; and rate their experience Superior when they feel that their visit was so special that Excellent is not adequate.

Overall, the ratings show a positive response to the exhibition. As shown in Figure 2, about one in six visitors marked Superior (16%) and half marked Excellent (50%). One in three marked a rating lower than Excellent (Good, 30%; Fair, 4%; or Poor 0%). The visitors' rating of IoN almost reached the Smithsonian average rating of exhibitions and was essentially the same as the last exhibition rated at NMAI New York (*A Song for a Horse Nation*).

Figure 2: Visitor Ratings for *Infinity of Nations*, previous exhibitions at NMAI New York and the Smithsonian Average (in percent)



Age was a factor in rating. The oldest third of visitors 50 and older was more likely to rate the exhibition Superior (24% vs. 13% of others).

As can be seen below, international visitors tend to apply a stricter standard to the rating⁹. Foreign residents were more likely to rate IoN Poor, Fair, or Good (45% vs. 29% for US visitors), and less likely to rate the exhibition Superior (10% vs. 20% for US visitors).

Independent of geographical background, the rating for IoN was above the average rating of overall experience at NMAI New York measured in the 2009-2011 survey: 17% vs. 11% Superior. Both US and international visitors rated it higher than the two-year average: international visitors were twice as likely to rate their overall experience in IoN Superior compared to the NMAI New York average (10% vs. 5%) and US visitors who rated IoN Superior increased by fifty percent (20% vs. 14%).

Figure 3: Visitor overall experience ratings for *Infinity of Nations* (in grey: compared to the two-year average of NMAI New York), separated by US and International visitors (in percent)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Superior	Total
US visitors	0	3	26	51	20	100
<i>(general at NMAI New York)</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>100</i>
International visitors	1	5	39	46	10	101
<i>(general at NMAI New York)</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>99</i>
Total	0	4	30	49	17	100
<i>(general at NMAI New York)</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>101</i>

Rating and Gender

Although there is no difference overall between male and female visitors with respect to the rating, the role of gender becomes prominent when taken in conjunction with residence. Specifically, international female visitors rated IoN more critically than women from the US (44% Good 43% Excellent, and 7% Superior for international females; 19% Good, 58% Excellent, and 21% Superior for US females). Notably, there are no significant rating differences between men who live inside and outside of the US.

Rating and Visit Aim

As already mentioned, one in four visitors came specifically to see IoN (25%). More international visitors claimed to have come purposely to this exhibition than visitors from the US (31% vs. 22%). However, while the expressed reason for their visit did not influence the rating of the international audience, it was associated with a significant difference in the US visitors' rating:

⁹ This difference between US visitors and international visitors has also been documented in other Smithsonian studies at NMAI NEW YORK (e.g., *Horse Nation* in 2009), and also at museums on the National Mall.

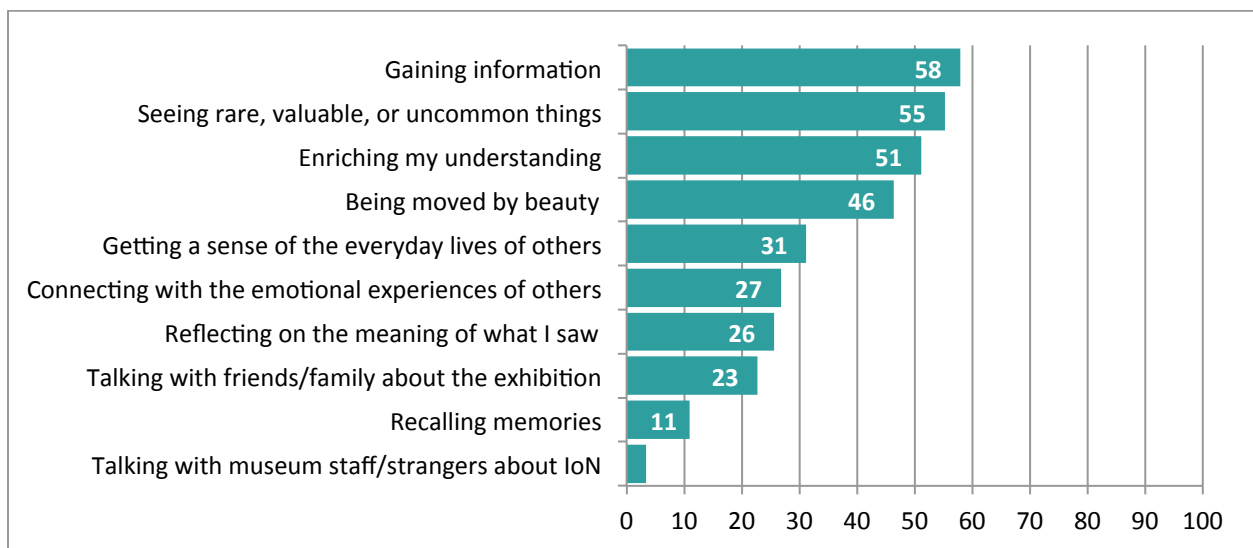
US visitors who came purposely to this exhibition were more likely to rate it Superior than general US visitors (31% vs. 16%).

Experiences

From a list of ten experiences, visitors were asked to choose the ones they found especially satisfying in this exhibition. On average, survey respondents selected three out of the ten experiences (US visitors averaged 3.6; international visitors averaged 2.8).

As shown in Figure 4, there are three experiences that were selected by the majority of the visitors: *Gaining information* (58%), *Seeing rare, valuable, or uncommon things* (55%), and *Enriching my understanding* (51%).¹⁰ Four were chosen notably more often than in the NMAI NEW YORK 2009-2011 study: *Gaining information* (58% vs. 48%), *Seeing rare valuable things* (55% vs. 41%), *Being moved by beauty* (46% vs. 31%), and *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (31% vs. 20%),

Figure 4: Experience Frequencies (in percent)



Experiences and Residence

As before, there were differences between US and international visitors. US visitors were more likely to:

- *Enrich their understanding* (60% vs. 35%),

¹⁰ Among those who visited with others, 27% overall marked that they found Talking with friends/family about the exhibition especially satisfying. This percentage was significantly higher among US residents (33%) than among international visitors (17%).

- *Gain information* (65% vs. 44%),
- *Talk with friends/family about the exhibition* (27% vs. 15%),
- *See rare, valuable, or uncommon things* (59% vs. 48%)

On the other hand, more international than US visitors reported that they recalled memories while visiting IoN (15% vs. 9%).

Experiences and Age

Compared to the younger audience, the oldest third of visitors were more likely to select the following experiences:

- *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* (36% vs. 21% of others)
- *Enriching my understanding* (62% vs. 48% of others)
- *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw* (33% vs. 22% of others)
- *Recalling memories* (17% vs. 9% of others)
- *Being moved by beauty* (54% vs. 43% of others)

Experiences and Gender

In addition to age differences, there were also gender distinctions. Female visitors were more likely to choose two experiences compared to men: *Gaining information* (62% vs. 53%), and *Talking to friends/family about the exhibition* (26% vs. 18%)

Experiences and First/ Visit Specific/ Visit with

Among US visitors, there was a significant difference in the experiences selected as satisfying between those making their first visit to the museum and those who had visited previously. Among international visitors there were no differences between first time and repeat visitors with respect to experiences. repeat visitors were more likely than new visitors to select the following experiences:

- *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* (50% vs. 20% of new visitors)
- *Enriching my understanding* (75% vs. 54%)
- *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (49% vs. 29%)
- *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw* (38% vs. 23%)

In addition, US residents who visited the museum specifically for this exhibition were less likely to report *Seeing rare, valuable, or uncommon things* (44% vs. 63%) as especially satisfying. International visitors' experiences were not significantly associated with the reported reason for visiting.

US, visitors' experiences at the exhibition also differed somewhat depending on whether they came alone or with others. Solo US visitors were more likely to mark *Enriching my understanding* and *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* than visitors who came with others (78% vs. 56%, and 46% vs. 23%).

On the other hand – and rather obviously – US residents who came with others were more likely to select *Talking with friends/family about the exhibition* than those who visited alone (33% vs. 4%). In looking at those who selected *Talking with friends/family about the exhibition* more closely, the data showed no difference between visitors who were accompanied by adults or those with children.

Experiences and Rating

For US residents (but not for international visitors, with one exception) the experiences marked by visitors have significant positive associations with their ratings. For example, US residents who marked the following experiences were approximately twice as likely as other visitors to rate their overall experience Superior, and half as likely to rate it as Poor, Fair, or Good (PFG).

- *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* (32% Superior & 16% PFG for those who marked this item vs. 13% & 35% for those who did not),
- *Being moved by beauty* (30% Superior & 19% PFG vs. 10% & 38%)
- *Enriching their understanding* (23% Superior & 20% PFG vs. 13% & 44%),
- *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (29% Superior & 18% PFG vs. 14% & 35%),
- *Reflecting of the meaning of what I saw* (31% Superior & 18% PFG vs. 14% & 33%).
- *Recalling memories* (26% Superior & 0% PFG vs. 18% & 35%)

There is just one experience that the international audience marked and that was significantly associated with their rating: Those who were *Talking with friends/family about the exhibition* were more likely to rate the exhibition Superior (24% vs. 7% of those who did not) and less likely to rate IoN in the lower three categories (PFG: 48% vs. 24% who did).

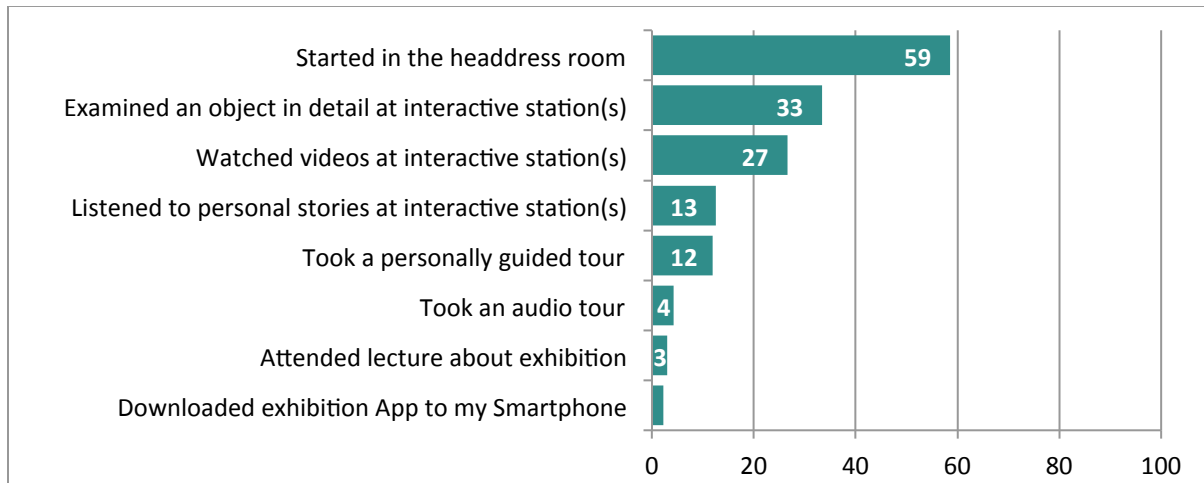
Not only the kinds of experiences, but also the number of experiences that US visitors marked were related to their rating. If the visitors' number of experiences were above average, they were more likely to rate the exhibition Superior (36% vs. 11% of visitors who marked below average) and less likely to rate IoN in the lower three categories (PFG: 13% vs. 39% of visitors who marked below average).

Visitors' Activities

Out of a list of eight activities that visitors could mark, the majority indicated that they *Started in the headdress room* (59%) (Figure 5). One third of visitors marked that they *Examined an object in detail at interactive station(s)* (33%) and one in four *Watched videos at interactive station(s)*

(27%). Most of the other activities, those that were marked by 12% of visitors or fewer, were not available to all visitors (e.g., tours or lectures).

Figure 5: Visitors' Activities Frequencies (in percent)



Activities and Residence

Overall, US and international visitors to IoN were alike with respect to their activities. However, US visitors were more likely to take a personally guided tour (15% vs. 6% of international visitors).

Activities and First/ Visit Specific/ Visit with

Compared to those who came with others to the museum, solo visitors were more likely to take an audio tour (10% vs. 3% of those who came with others). Visitors accompanied by others were more likely to use the exhibition app; and within this group, those who came with teens (ages 13 to 18) were more likely to mark that they downloaded the exhibition app to their Smartphone (6% vs. 1% of those who came just with adults). Also, visitors who came with children ages 12 or under were more likely to mark that they examined an object in detail at an interactive station(s) (43% vs. 30% of those who came just with adults).

Activities and Experiences

Activities with object elements were connected to more aesthetic experiences. For example, US visitors who started in the headdress room were more likely to mark *Being moved by beauty* (55% vs. 36% of those who didn't), while international visitors who started in the headdress room were more likely to report *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (39% vs. 12%).

Similarly US residents who *Examined objects in detail at interactive stations* were more likely to mark *Enriching my understanding* (69% vs. 53% of visitors who didn't mark this), *Seeing rare,*

valuable, or uncommon things (68% vs. 52%), and *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* (43% vs. 21%).

For both US residents and international visitors, *Examining objects in detail at interactive station(s)* was strongly associated with *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw* (US: 39% vs. 17% of those who didn't examine at an interactive station; international: 45% vs. 18%).

In addition, there were specific experiences that correlated with the activities at the interactive stations for US Residents. US visitors who had stopped at one or more interactive stations – to watch videos, listen to personal stories or examine objects in detail – were more likely to mark *Connecting with the emotional experiences of others* (38% vs. 19% of those who didn't), *Enriching my understanding* (67% vs. 49%), *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (41% vs. 23%), *Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw* (33% vs. 17%), and *Seeing rare, valuable uncommon things* (65% vs. 49%).

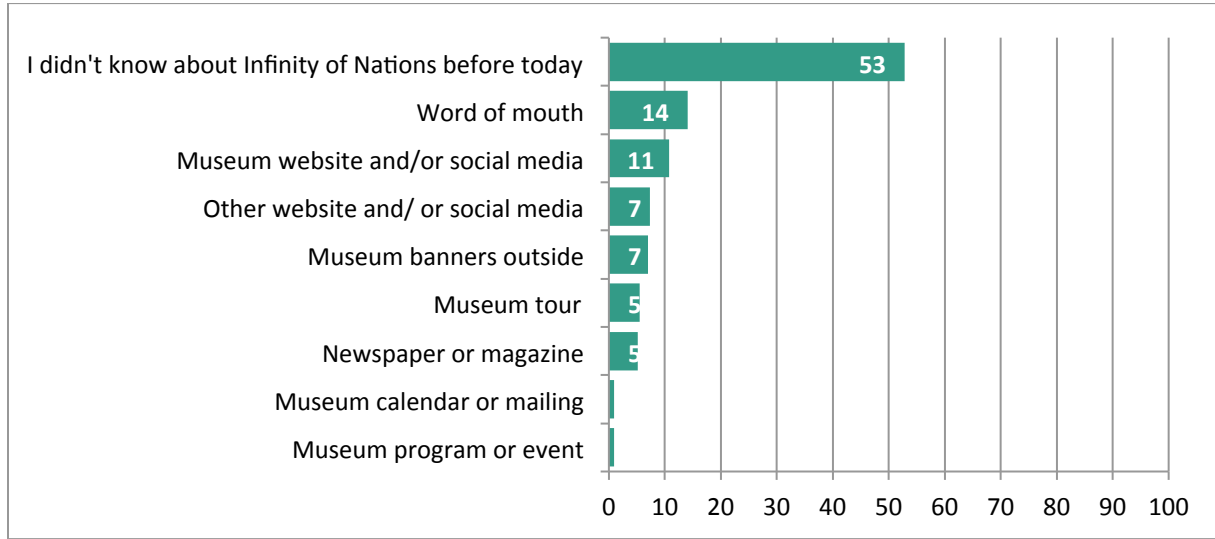
Activities and Rating

Whereas individual experiences were rather relevant for the visitors' rating, the concrete activities within the exhibition were less correlated. Similar to the finding above, US visitors who stopped at interactive stations tended to give IoN a better rating. Those who watched videos at interactive stations were more likely to rate IoN Superior (34% vs. 15% of those who didn't) and less likely to rate Good, Fair, or Poor (11% vs. 35%).

Information Sources

In the questionnaire, visitors were also asked how they knew about the exhibition. Although they could have marked as many of the listed items as applied to them, more than nine in ten visitors selected just one answer (91%). As can be seen in Figure 8, the majority didn't know about this exhibition before they came (53%): this figure was similar for both US and international visitors.

Figure 6: visitors' information sources Frequencies (in percent)



Information Source and First/ Visit Specific/ Visit with

People who came with others were less likely to mark I didn't know about IoN before today (49% vs. 68% of solo visitors).

Information Sources and Activities

Overall, the way visitors found out about IoN did not influence their activities in the exhibition. The only source of information which was associated with the visitors' activities is word of mouth: those who marked that they heard about IoN from others were twice as likely to have *Listened to personal stories at interactive station(s)* (24% vs. 12% of others) or *Took a personally guided tour* (25% vs. 12% of others).

Information Sources and Experiences

Visitors who found out about IoN through word of mouth were more likely to mark *Being moved by beauty* (61% vs. 45% of those who didn't).

Conclusions/Discussion

Respondents at *Infinity of Nations: Art and History in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian*, were pleased with the exhibition and rated it highly. The rating was essentially identical to that of *A Song for a Horse Nation* both for US residents and international visitors and it exceeded the two-year overall experience average for the museum measured in 2009-2011. Because visitors were interviewed only as they left IoN, we cannot assess the extent

to which visitor experiences compared with their prior expectations and experiences with Native American artifacts.

US visitors rated the exhibition considerably higher than did international visitors. This difference is found generally at the Smithsonian, not just at NMAI New York. The data in this report also makes it clear that the experiences of US residents and international visitors differed in some key ways – not only in the experiences they found especially satisfying but also in the association between those experiences and rating. It is possible that the experiences of international visitors in Smithsonian exhibitions differs in some fundamental – but as yet unidentified – ways from the experiences of US residents.

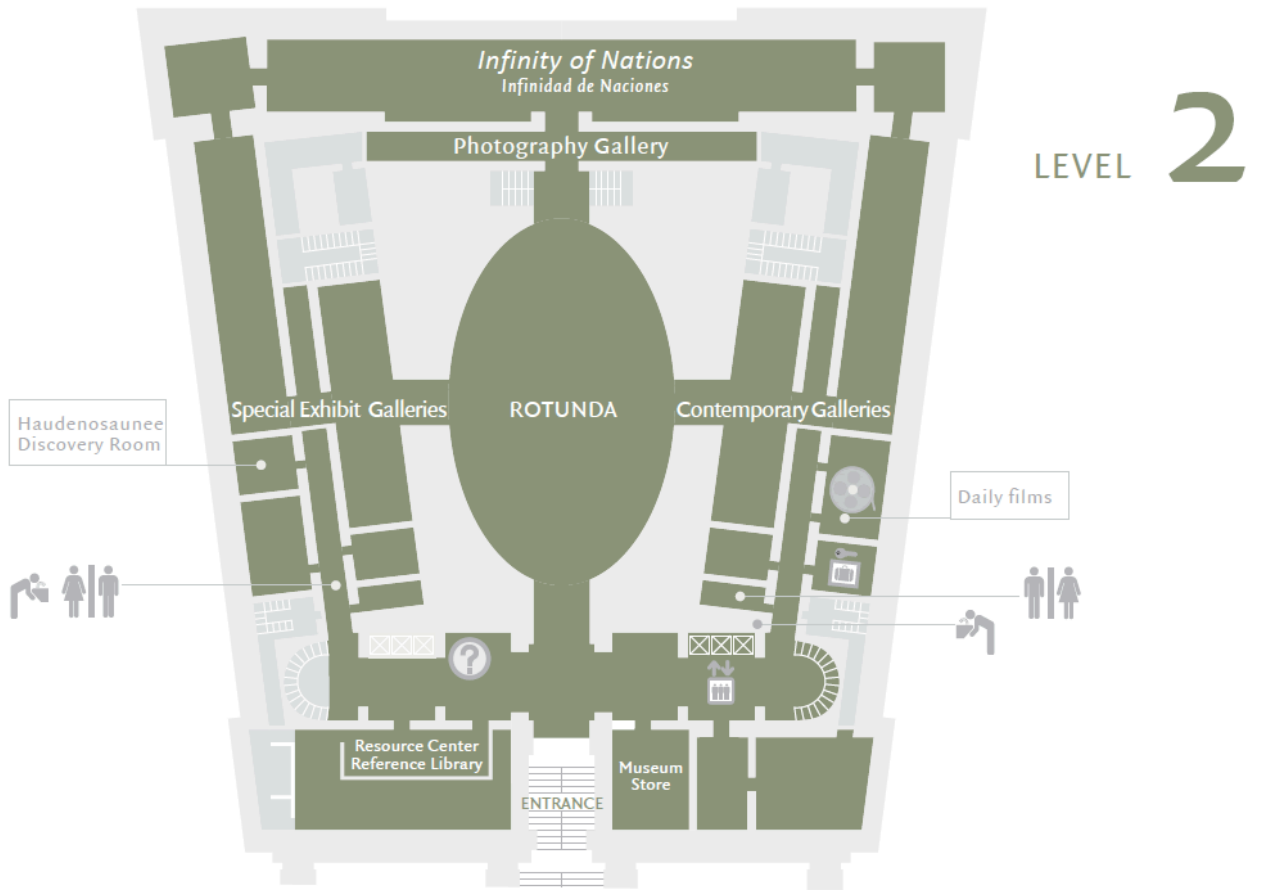
On the basis of the study at NMAI New York, *Infinity of Nations* contains some interpretive strategies that were especially successful with US residents and may be transferable to another NMAI exhibition environment. In particular, the videos and interactive kiosks were utilized by nearly half of visitors and had a positive impact on their experiences.

However, it should be noted that even when restricted to US residents, the rating of *Infinity of Nations* is nearly identical to the Smithsonian average. In any discussions of an ideal exhibition model that would be rated by visitors significantly above that average, NMAI museum staff needs to carefully consider its priorities with respect to visitors and then take into account the ways that these visitors approach and engage the museum and its exhibitions.

If we look at the exhibition closely, we find that the experiences that the curatorial team considered important were reported by substantial percentages of visitors. The top five experiences were *Gaining information* (58%), *Seeing rare, valuable, or uncommon things* (55%), *Enriching my understanding* (51%), *Being moved by beauty* (46%), and *Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others* (31%). Except for enriching understanding, these percentages were considerably higher than were recorded at NMAI New York during the 2009-2011 study.

Infinity of Nations will be at NMAI New York for the foreseeable future. OP&A recommends that some of the clues to what's at the core of visitors' experiences in the present study be pursued, along with an in-depth investigation of the experiences of international visitors. It would benefit NMAI New York (and NMAI more generally) to consider this study, and its qualitative predecessors a start towards a full understanding of this landmark exhibition.

Appendix A: Total Gallery Space on Second Floor of NMAI New York ¹¹



¹¹ Source: http://nmai.si.edu/visitor/files/NMAI_NEW_YORK_floorplan.pdf

Appendix B: Questionnaire for *Infinity of Nations*

National Museum of the American Indian
Heye Center Survey of Visitors Exiting Exhibitions

0350031989

Is this your first visit to the museum? Yes No

Which of the following exhibitions did you see today? [Mark one or more] Small Spirits (dolls) Carl Beam (artist show) Time Exposures (photography) Infinity of Nations (objects from the Americas)

The rest of this questionnaire is about your experiences with *Infinity of Nations*.

Did you come to visit today specifically to see *Infinity of Nations*? Yes No

Please rate your overall experience in this exhibition, *Infinity of Nations*. Poor Fair Good Excellent Superior

How did you know about the *Infinity of Nations* exhibition? [Mark one or more] Museum website and/or social media Other website and/or social media Newspaper or magazine Museum tour Museum banners outside Museum calendar or mailing Museum program or event Word of mouth I didn't know about *Infinity of Nations* before today

On your visit to *Infinity of Nations* today, which of these did you do? [Mark one or more] Started in the headdress room Took a personally guided tour Took an audio tour Attended lecture about exhibition Watched videos at interactive station(s) Listened to personal stories at interactive station(s) Examined an object in detail at interactive station(s) Downloaded exhibition app to my Smartphone

What experiences did you find especially satisfying in *Infinity of Nations*? [Mark one ore more] Being moved by beauty Connecting with the emotional experiences of others Enriching my understanding Gaining information Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others Recalling memories Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw Seeing rare, valuable, or uncommon things Talking with friends/family about the exhibition Talking with museum staff/strangers about the exhibition

With whom are you visiting? [Mark one or more] I am alone Adult(s) Youth age(s) 13-18 Youth 12 and under

Are you male or female? Male Female

What is your age?

Do you live in the United States or another country? United States, specify zip code: Another country, specify: _____

Do you identify as American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous American? Yes No

Are you a Charter Member of NMAI? Yes No

Ses C R L I Seg 1 2 3 ID

Appendix C: Response Frequencies for Infinity of Nations

Is this your first visit to the museum?

Yes	18
No	82
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Which of the following exhibitions did you see today? [Mark one or more]

	Marked
Small Spirits (dolls)	39
Carl Beam (artist show)	49
Time Exposures (photography)	49
Infinity of Nations (objects from the Americas)	100

Did you come to visit today specifically to see Infinity of Nations?

Yes	25
No	75
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Please rate your overall experience in this exhibition, Infinity of Nations.

Poor	0
Fair	4
Good	30
Excellent	50
Superior	16
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

How did you know about the Infinity of Nations exhibition? [Mark one or more]

	Marked
Museum website and/or social media	11
Other website and/or social media	7
Newspaper or magazine	5
Museum tour	5
Museum banners outside	7
Museum calendar or mailing	1
Museum program or event	1
Word of mouth	14
I didn't know about Infinity of Nations before today	53

On your visit to Infinity of Nations today, which of these did you do? [Mark one or more]

	Marked
Started in the headdress room	59
Took a personally guided tour	12
Took an audio tour	4
Attended lecture about exhibition	3
Watched videos at interactive station(s)	27
Listened to personal stories at interactive station(s)	13
Examined an object in detail at interactive station(s)	33
Downloaded exhibition app to my Smartphone	2

What experiences did you find especially satisfying in infinity of Nations? [Mark one or more]

	Marked
Being moved by beauty	46
Connecting with the emotional experiences of others	26
Enriching my understanding	51
Gaining information	58
Getting a sense of the everyday lives of others	31
Recalling memories	11
Reflecting on the meaning of what I saw	25
Seeing rare, valuable, or uncommon things	55
Talking with friends/family about the exhibition	22
Talking with museum staff/strangers about the exhibition	4

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

	Marked
I am alone	21
Adult(s)	73
Youth age(s) 13-18	11
Youth 12 and under	15

Are you male or female?

Male	47
Female	53
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

What is your age?

Average: 40 Median: 39

Postwar (Born 1925-1945)	4
Leading Edge Boomers (Born 1946-1955)	13
Trailing Edge Boomers (Born 1956-1964)	18
Generation X (Born 1965-1981)	26
Generation Y (Born 1982-2001)	39
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Do you live in the United States or another country?

United States	65
<i>New York locals</i>	<i>44</i>
Another country	35
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Do you identify as American Indian, Alaska Native or Indigenous American?

Yes	10
No	90
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Are you a Charter Member of NMAI?

Yes	1
No	99
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

Image Credits

- p. 1 *Maya portrait head* (Uxmal, Mexico; A.D. 300–900) Photo: Walter Larrimore
p. 2 *Kwakwaka'wakw* mechanical mask (Cape Mudge, Vancouver Island, British Columbia; ca. 1900) Photo: Ernest Amoroso
p. 4 *Yup'ik* mask (Good News Bay, Alaska; ca. 1910) Photo: Ernest Amoroso