

Summary Report

Informal Study of *Unearthing Arabia*

Visitors leaving *Unearthing Arabia* were asked to complete a one-page paper survey on two weekend days and one weekday in May (May 2, 10, 13). Altogether 205 visitors completed the survey.

The aims of this simple study were to get a sense of visitors' response to the exhibition overall and, in particular, to the wall-sized narrative video.

Findings

Compared to the median percentages in previous Sackler studies, this group of people included more first-time visitors than is typical for the Sackler (63% vs. 50%). more Millennials (27% vs. 13%) and more visitors ages 65 and over (23% vs. 12%). See Appendix A.

The Overall Experience Rating was:

- 13% Superior;
- 43% Excellent;
- 39% Good;
- 4% Fair;
- 1% Poor.

This rating is below the median, because Superior ratings were lower (13% vs. 23%) and less-than-Excellent ratings were higher (39% vs. 21%). This OER is nearly identical to that of *Yoga* (13% Superior; 40% less than Excellent), and close to that of *Situ Panchen* (15% Superior; 40% less than Excellent).

The wall-sized narrative video was well-noticed. Three out of five respondents (62%) reported that they watched it. Nearly half of these people watched all or mostly all of its 15 and half minutes. In other words 30% of all the respondents watched all or nearly all of the video.

Across all who watched it, the overall experience rating of the video was about the same as for the exhibition overall (16% Superior; 40% less-than-Excellent), but those who watched most or all of the video rated their experience with it much more favorably (25% Superior; 21% less than Excellent) than those who watched "some" or "a fair amount" of it (7% Superior; 59% less than Excellent).

Compared to the medians for other Sackler exhibitions the especially satisfying experience of imagining other times or places was more common (61% vs. 49%), while being moved by beauty and seeing rare things were less common (25% vs. 57%, and 42% vs. 64%, respectively). Ratings of texts, design, and thematic

organization were similar (10%-14% Superior; 40%-48% less than Excellent), and rating of the quality of art was higher (23% Superior; 38% less than Excellent).

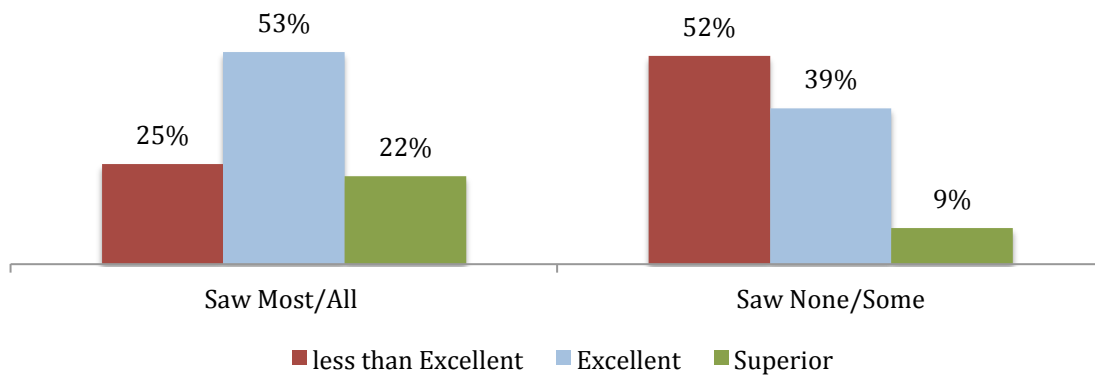
Respondents who watched any of the video were asked to mark whether it was too fast, too slow, hard to read, or did not have enough seating. Few marked any of these, and only “too slow” was significantly associated with seeing less than all of the video. Perhaps some felt that it was too long.

Analysis

The overall experience rating for the exhibition as a whole was notably different for those who saw the whole video in comparison to everyone else. The 30% of who watched all of the video rated their experience in the exhibition higher than other visitors (22% Superior; 25% less than Excellent vs. 9% Superior; 52% less than Excellent). See Figure 1. Those who did not watch the video at all gave their overall experience in the exhibition nearly the same rating as did those who saw a little, some, or a fair amount of the video.

Figure 1
Overall Experience Rating by Seeing All/Most of Narrative Video

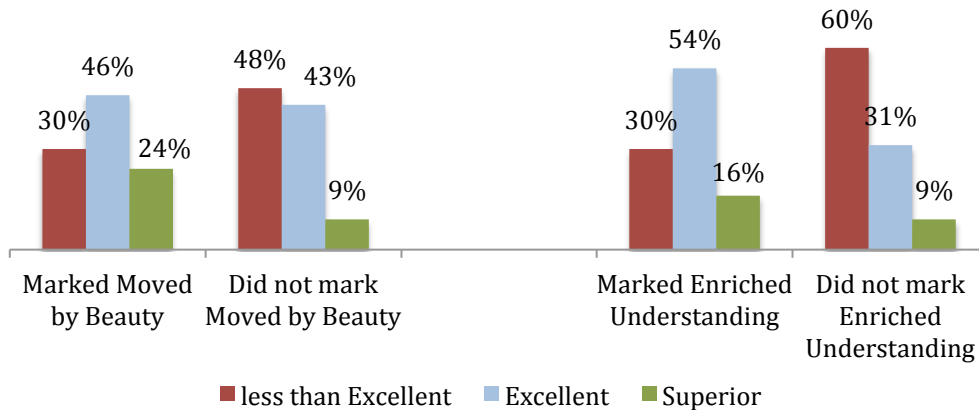
Those who saw all the video rated their exhibition experience close to the Sackler median. The others were mostly less than satisfied.



Repeat visitors were more likely to have watched all of the video than first-time visitors (46% vs. 19%).

Those who marked the experiences of being moved by beauty or enriching understanding as especially satisfying were also more likely to give higher overall experience ratings for the exhibition. See Figure 2.

Figure 2
Overall Experience Rating by Beauty and Understanding Experiences

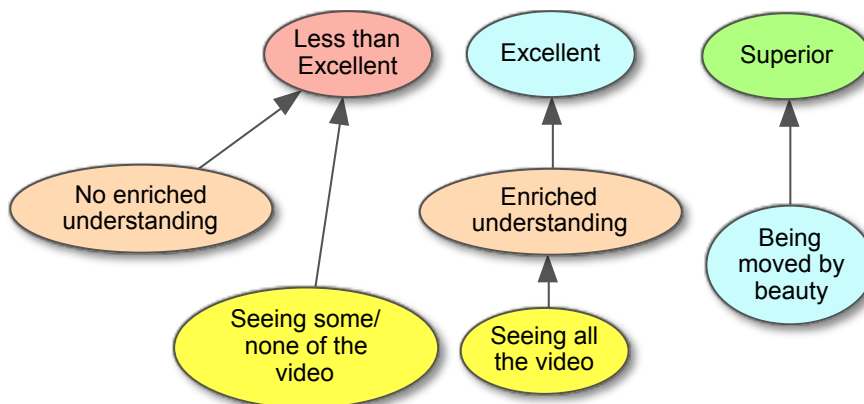


Although it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from this relatively limited data, a more detailed analysis suggests that seeing all or most of the video, being moved by beauty, and enriching understanding were key elements in the overall quality of experience:

- Being moved by beauty was a driver of Superior ratings
- Reporting enriched understanding was a driver of Excellent ratings
- Seeing all of the video was a driver of enriched understanding
- Not seeing all of the video or not having enriched understanding was a driver of less than Excellent ratings

These relationships are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3
Relationship of Overall Experience Rating, Especially Satisfying Experiences of Beauty or Understanding, and Seeing the Video



Conclusion

Unearthing Arabia was not as well-received by these respondents as most other Sackler exhibitions that have been studied. Although it stimulated more satisfying imaginative experiences than usual, it provided fewer aesthetic ones. Nonetheless, those who were moved by beauty were more likely to rate their experience Superior.

The narrative video appears to have made a significant difference to the one in three respondents who watched most or all of it. They rated their experience with the video itself at an average level (i.e., the median for Sackler exhibitions), but they were more likely to report enriched understanding. This enriched understanding, in turn, led to more Excellent ratings for the exhibition and fewer less-than-Excellent ratings.

We can reasonably assume from this that the experience of the exhibition would have been rated considerably lower without the video, but that the video was not enough by itself to raise the visitor experience to customary levels. At the same time, the study does not clearly point to any one problem with the video, although length is one possibility.

Appendix A: Frequencies

Number of completed surveys		205	
		<i>Unearthing Arabia</i>	<i>Sackler Median</i>
Is this your first visit to this building?			
	Yes	63%	50%
	No	37%	50%
Please rate your overall experience at this exhibition, <i>Unearthing Arabia</i>, today			
	Poor	1%	0%
	Fair	4%	2%
	Good	39%	21%
	Excellent	43%	51%
	Superior	13%	23%
Which of the following experiences were especially satisfying to you in this exhibition? [Mark one or more]			Sackler median
	Being moved by beauty	25%	57%
	Connecting with the emotional experience of others	16%	12%
	Enriching my understanding	55%	55%
	Imagining other times or places	61%	49%
	Reflecting on meaning	17%	25%
	Seeing rare/uncommon/valuable things	42%	64%
	None of these	2%	
Please rate your experience with the following aspects of the exhibition:			
Content of texts	No opinion	9%	
Design/layout	No opinion	1%	
Quality of the Art	No opinion	3%	
Thematic organization	No opinion	6%	
Video (among those who saw)	No opinion	3%	

Ratings of those who had an opinion:

Content of texts

Less than Excellent	48%
Excellent	34%
Superior	10%

Design/layout

Less than Excellent	48%
Excellent	37%
Superior	13%

Quality of the Art

Less than Excellent	38%
Excellent	37%
Superior	23%

Thematic organization

Less than Excellent	40%
Excellent	42%
Superior	14%

Did you watch the video in this exhibition?

No	38%
Yes	62%

If Yes, please rate your overall experience with it:

Less than Excellent	40%
Excellent	41%
Superior	16%

**How much of the video did you watch?
(Among those who watched)**

Very little	8%
Some	22%
A fair amount	21%
All of nearly all	48%

**Were any of the following true for you?
(Among those who watched)**

Too fast	9%
Too slow	5%
Hard to read	5%
Not enough seating	11%

Did you come to the museum today specifically to see this exhibition?

No	82%
Yes	11%

What is your age?

Mean age	46.5	44
Median age	46.0	45

Age in generations

Silent (Born 1925-1945)	13%	15%
Leading Boomers (Born 1946-1955)	18%	22%
Trailing Boomers (Born 1956-1964)	14%	15%
Gen X (Born 1965-1981)	23%	29%
Millennials (Born 1982-1995)	27%	13%
Digital Natives (Born after 1995)	5%	5%

Age in five-year segments

Ages 18-19	2%	5%
Ages 20-24	14%	8%
Ages 25-29	10%	10%
Ages 30-34	10%	8%
Ages 35-39	6%	7%
Ages 40-44	5%	8%
Ages 45-49	7%	9%
Ages 50-54	7%	10%
Ages 55-59	10%	10%
Ages 60-64	8%	10%
Ages 65-69	10%	6%
Ages 70 & over	13%	6%

Age in ten-year segments

Ages under 20	2%	5%
Ages 20-24	14%	8%
Ages 25-34	20%	18%
Ages 35-44	11%	15%
Ages 45-54	14%	19%
Ages 55-64	18%	20%
65 or older	23%	12%

Are you male or female?

Male	46%	44%
Female	55%	56%

Help us to understand your interests....

Mean Idea Score	0.21
Mean People Score	0.01
Mean Object Score	0.02
Mean Physical Score	-0.05