

MuseumsForward

International student perceptions of wellbeing during art museum visits

Polly Yorioka

Abstract

International student enrollment in the United States is increasing, but international students face barriers to emotional wellbeing due to high levels of stress resulting from academic pressure and isolation. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore international students' perceptions of their wellbeing during an art museum visit. Twenty-one international graduate students from the University of Washington visited the Henry Art Gallery or the Frye Art Museum and participated in semi-structured, pre- and post-experience interviews. Participants identified positive but modest shifts in feelings of wellbeing due to experiences of distraction and self-reflection. Those who experienced distraction felt that the impact was temporary, but those who were able to reframe current experiences felt the impact on their wellbeing may be longer-lasting. The aspects of the art museum visit that international students perceived as playing a role in their perceptions of wellbeing were the physical space, the content of the art, and the interpretation of the art. These findings highlight the importance of institutional interpretive strategies on the perceptions of wellbeing for international students.

Keywords

Art Museums; International Students; Wellbeing

Committee Chair

Jessica Luke

Committee Members

Rachel Hershberg; Diem Nguyen

Accepted: June 7, 2024

Published: June 7, 2024

Problem

In 2022-23, 5.6% of the 19 million college students in the United States were international (Buchholz, 2023). At particular schools, the numbers are even higher. For example, at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA, international students made up 14.6% of total enrollment in 2022-23 (International Student Statistics - International Student Services, 2024). Compared to domestic students, international students consistently face high levels of stress due to racism (Wei & Bunjun, 2021), academic pressure (Huang & Mussap, 2018), and isolation (Katsumoto & Bowman, 2021), all of which can negatively impact their wellbeing. One promising context for enhancing international student wellbeing is the art museum. Current research suggests that visits to art museums provide a variety of wellbeing benefits, from reduced stress (Ter- Kazarian & Luke, 2021) to increased life satisfaction (Cuypers et al., 2012) to longer life expectancy (Fancourt & Steptoe, 2019). While little research currently exists on the wellbeing impacts of museum visits on international students, given the positive effects of art museum visits on other demographics, such as older adults (Bennington et al., 2016) or teens and domestic undergraduate students (Conway & Cotton, 2021), art museums may be uniquely positioned to provide stress relief and other wellbeing benefits for international students. This article describes a phenomenological study designed to explore international students' perceptions of their wellbeing from visiting art museums.

International students and psychological wellbeing

Emotional or psychological wellbeing is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "a state in which an individual realizes [their] own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to [their] community" (2005). The rise in negative wellbeing in college students worldwide has been a growing concern and focus of research since the early 2000s. According to the American College Health Association's (2019) national sample of college students, 66% reported feeling overwhelming anxiety and 45% reported feeling so depressed that it was difficult to function over the course of the last year.

Risk of mental ill health may be greater for graduate international students, compared to undergraduates, due to additional layers of stress, such as increasing family expectations for financial independence, visa issues, and higher academic pressures. In a 2018 study of 2,300 graduate students around the world, 39% scored in the

moderate to severe depression range in contrast to 6% of the general population and 41% scored as having moderate to severe anxiety (Clarke, 2022; Evans, 2018). Unfortunately, there are few studies that compare international and domestic graduate students' mental health. One 2018 study that focused on international graduate students in the US with a sample of 89 students found their mental health scores to be significantly lower than the US population (Clarke, 2022).

For many international students, there is intense pressure to succeed academically. Moving overseas often comes at a high cost to the students' families and there is both internal and external pressure to be successful academically to secure a job and obtain legal working status in the United States post-graduation. Academic stress is connected to higher incidences of depression and anxiety in international students. For example, a recent study in the United States delved into the relationships between academic stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, and mindfulness constructs (Koppenborg et al., 2022). Sampling 190 international students with a questionnaire, multiple regression analyses indicated that depressive symptoms and anxiety were correlated with higher levels of perceived academic stress.

Another significant factor in international student wellbeing is tied to community and relationships. Isolation is a predictor of mental ill health. For international students transitioning into a new culture, it can be difficult to make close friends and to develop social networks, especially when they are far from family support systems. While living overseas, many international students do not feel connected to the communities in which they live, often due to microaggressions from the host population against the language and race of international students (Kusek, 2015). A recent study explored the relationship between first-year international students' interpersonal interactions and their psychological wellbeing which highlights the importance of peer relationships for international student wellbeing and found that many international students do not develop meaningful interpersonal relationships, negatively impacting psychological wellbeing (Katsumoto & Bowman, 2021).

Wellbeing and art museums

There is potential for art museums to serve as spaces facilitating wellbeing for international students. Viewing of art has a long history of eliciting powerful emotional and physiological responses. When neuroscientists scanned the brains of people viewing artwork in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) brain scanner, they

found that specific brain areas activated when participants looked at art that they described as highly moving; these brain areas were associated with self-reflection, looking inward, and thinking about oneself (Vessel et al., 2012). According to psychologist Winner's (2019) analysis of this study, art that moves us prompts us to reflect on ourselves.

The wellbeing benefits of viewing art in the museum context is a growing field of research and practice, as museums are increasingly providing wellbeing offerings such as meditation, mindfulness (Harrison & Clarke, 2016), art therapy (Bennington et al., 2016; Green & Luke, 2019; Loannides, 2016) and object handling sessions. A variety of recent studies all point to ways that the arts and visiting art museums can promote health and psychological wellbeing in diverse populations, including adolescents (Conway & Cotton, 2021), the elderly (Bennington et al., 2016; Harper & Hamblin, 2010; Thomson et al., 2018; Todd et al., 2017), people with dementia and their caregivers (Rosenberg, 2009), people with mental health issues (Ander et al., 2013), intergenerationally (Burke et al., 2021), and vulnerable individuals (Daykin et al., 2008). In turn, museums across the globe are developing programs to promote wellbeing in their communities. The Museum of Modern Art launched the first known art gallery-based program for people with dementia and their caregivers (Rosenberg, 2009). In the UK, the "arts on prescription" program brings together the medical and arts sectors at London's Dulwich Picture Gallery (Harper & Hamblin, 2010).

Beyond longer-term programmatic offerings, research indicates that unstructured visits to museums can have stress-relieving benefits. Art museum visits can reduce stress levels (Binnie, 2010). Ter-Kazarian and Luke (2020) measured changes in perceived levels of stress in art museum visitors visiting during a lunch break using pre and post testing. Participants reported a 72% drop in their perceived stress levels after their art museum visit. Such a large change in perceptions of stress suggests the potential benefits of even infrequent and unstructured museum visits.

The wellbeing impacts of a museum visit come not only from viewing art or participating in structured wellbeing programmatic offerings, but also from the restorative environment of the physical space. The comfort of the physical space is a key factor in visitor perceptions of their museum visits as restorative (Packer & Bond, 2010). For example, Packer and Bond found in a 2010 study of a variety of types of museums- a history museum, an art museum, an aquarium and a

botanical garden– that for some individuals visiting a museum is just as restorative as visiting a natural space.

The restorative impact of museum visits for young adults and college students is an area of research that is beginning to be explored. Conway and Cotton's (2021) study of 24 undergraduate students at the University of Washington found that students perceived their participation in art museum programs to positively impact their emotional wellbeing, due to a sense of escape from school and other outside stressors, development of personal interests, and enhanced their feelings of inclusion. In light of the breadth and depth of research on the positive wellbeing benefits of art museum visits to a variety of populations, art museum visits are a promising approach to address the rise in stress and mental ill health among international students.

Methodology

Study purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore international students' perceptions of wellbeing from visiting art museums. The study was guided by two central questions: 1) How do international students perceive that visiting the art museum impacts their emotional wellbeing? 2) What aspects of the art museum visit do international students identify as playing a role in their perceptions of wellbeing?

This study used a phenomenological design to understand international students' experiences of wellbeing during an art museum visit. Calrk Moustakas (1994) defines the phenomenological approach as involving "a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essence of the experience."

Sampling/recruitment

Participants were students at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA, recruited through departmental mailing lists, existing international student networks/social media, and word of mouth/snowball sampling as participants were encouraged to invite friends to join the study. Twenty-four responded to these recruitment efforts. Participation was incentivized with a \$10 gift card to Chipotle or the option to join an in-person participant lunch, give feedback on the initial findings of the study, and a group museum visit to the Burke Museum.

Participants

Twenty-one international graduate students from the University of Washington participated in this study. Participants claimed citizenship in a wide variety of regions: India (n=7), East Asia (n=5), Middle East (n=3), Africa (n=2), SE Asia (n=2), South America (n=1), Canada (n=1), and one participant who was a dual citizen of India and Germany (n=1). The citizenship of participants is consistent with the demographic range of international student enrollment at the University of Washington.

The sample was primarily Masters' students (n=18), with 3 Doctoral students. Over half had been in the United States for 6 months or less (n=11). The sample had 12 female identifying and 9 male identifying participants. The majority of the students (n=8) were enrolled in the Information School (n=5 Information Management, n=2 Museology, n=1 Information Science/Archives); the other 13 participants came from a wide variety of majors and departments. Just over half (n=12) had utilized on campus mental health resources in their time at UW.

Data collection procedures

Data were collected at the Henry Art Gallery (n=12), located on the University of Washington campus, and the Frye Art Museum (n=9), accessible to students via free public transit. Both museums had free admission. Semi-structured, pre- and post-experience interviews were conducted with participants, adapted from the University College London's Museum Wellbeing Measures Toolkit (Thomson & Chatterjee, 2014; 2013; Thomson, Ander, Menon, Lanceley & Chatterjee, 2011). Pre-experience interviews included a Wellbeing Questionnaire (adapted from the UCL Positive Wellbeing Umbrella), a list of 12 adjectives (6 positive, 6 negative) which participants used to indicate how they were feeling at that moment on a 5-point scale, as well as demographic questions about participants themselves. Participants were then instructed to visit the museum and explore freely, with the freedom to join any tours or interact with other people at the museum. Participants returned 30-40 minutes later for their post-experience interview, at which point they again completed the Wellbeing Questionnaire, indicating how that felt at that later moment. The two Wellbeing Questionnaires were placed side by side, and participants were asked to share what they noticed about any changes. Follow up questions were asked about any adjectives where there were changes as well as several open-ended questions about the participants'

understanding of their emotional wellbeing and stress levels in the museum (see Appendix A for the instrument). Pre-experience interviews typically lasted 3-5 minutes, and post-experience interviews lasted 5-10+ minutes. Both interviews were audio recorded, using otter.ai for live transcription.

Results

Data analysis procedures

This phenomenological study was designed to analyze specific and unique international student experiences in art museums; while patterns and themes emerged from the students' experiences, this study did not aim to generalize these experiences (Pritchard, 2017). Narrative analysis was used in order to identify key stories. Emergent coding was used to categorize the data from the post visit interviews. These codes were grouped by theme and analyzed through saliency analysis, a form of thematic analysis, to assess the frequency that the code appeared or the high importance of the code (Buetow, 2010).

How do international students perceive that visiting the art museum impacts their emotional wellbeing?

Wellbeing ratings

Participants self-reflected on their current emotional state when entering the museum using the 12 adjectives from the Wellbeing Questionnaire (where 1 was "not at all" and 5 was "completely."). This was compared to scores after their visit as a tool for discussion. On average, participants felt that their positive wellbeing increased and negative wellbeing decreased after visiting the art museum (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Participants' ratings of their positive wellbeing on a scale from 1-5 (N=21).

Positive Adjectives	Pre-Museum Visit Average	Post-Museum Visit Average
Active	3.33	3.95
Alert	3.29	3.52

Enthusiastic	3.52	4.00
Excited	3.71	3.62
Happy	3.38	3.81
Inspired	3.10	4.00

Table 2: Participants’ ratings of their negative wellbeing on a scale from 1-5 (N=21).

Negative Adjectives	Pre-Museum Visit Average	Post-Museum Visit Average
Distressed	2.52	2.05
Irritable	1.71	1.38
Nervous	2.52	1.57
Scared	1.76	1.19
Unhappy	1.62	1.38
Upset	1.67	1.57

In addition, participants were asked at the end of each interview, “Would you visit an art museum in the future for the purpose of stress relief?” Responses to this question were indicators of the degree to which participants perceived wellbeing impacts from visiting the museum. Most participants (n=15) said “yes,” that they would choose to visit museums in the future for stress relief. Only two participants had previously gone to art museums regularly for the purpose of stress relief; for the rest of the participants, after their experience participating in the research study, visiting museums would now be an option they would consider for stress relief. Barriers to future museum visits that were highlighted were the costs associated with museum admission and the desire to visit the museum with others rather than alone.

For the rest of the participants (n=6), there was a qualified “maybe.” For those who were uncertain, there was a sense that they would continue to visit museums for their content; while there might be some stress relief benefits, that would not be their primary reason for visiting. Three of the participants who said “maybe” indicated that they would go with others, if invited by friends, but that they would not go alone.

Wellbeing feelings

Participants described in rich detail how the museum visit impacted their feelings of wellbeing. Specifically, participants described the types of attitude shift they experienced and how they thought that it happened for them, including themes of distraction and self-reflection.

Distraction

While participants were not asked to give their own definitions of wellbeing, during the pre- and post- visit interviews participants frequently referred to “stress” as the primary indicator of how well they were feeling emotionally. The code of “stress” emerged as a salient, both in frequency and importance. Most participants said they came into the museum with high levels of pre-existing stress related to academics and isolation. In the words of one participant, “These emotions, when I came in, were already kind of running in my mind...These are related more to academic stress, a lot of pending assignments and lifestyle issues, time management, all of those things” (Participant 12).

For many, distraction from ordinary life provided temporary stress-relief through simultaneous “disconnection” and “connection” to one’s inner self:

“At the beginning, I was feeling so stressed. I had a tough morning, and then when I was in that gallery– it’s one of my favorites– I felt like I connected with my inner self, like I disconnected for a while. I enjoyed and concentrated. Now I feel more relief.” (Participant 17)

Participants entering the museum experiencing high levels of stress from life and academics frequently described the wellbeing benefit of the museum visit as a “break” from ordinary life:

“To be very honest, I was very stressed till yesterday regarding coursework in general. But just the idea of coming to a museum is very relaxing because it’s nowhere related to what I’m doing in life right now. And it’s such a break. It’s a recreation activity. It’s nothing related to this, it’s not going to help me academically.” (Participant 11)

This relaxation was perceived to be short-lived. As the following participant reflected, the distraction of the museum visit was positive, but temporary since “reality would kick in” soon:

“We need some sort of distractions. So, this was a good distraction, in that sense. It kind of helped. Now, again, you have to go back to reality and go to the grind, right? Now the moment I step out of this museum, again, reality will kick in. That switch will turn on, but I will say this past hour was a good distraction.” (Participant 12)

While many participants perceived momentary stress-relief benefits while visiting the museum because of distraction, there was not a general perception that the benefits would last beyond the visit itself.

Self-Reflection

In combination with– or separate from– distraction, many participants cited examples of the theme coded as “self-reflection” as key factors in changes to their sense of wellbeing from the museum visit. Self-reflection took many forms, but the categories coded as self-reflection in this study primarily took the form of feelings of nostalgia and descriptions of the ways participants perceived building new perspectives.

Participants who found connections to the content of the art frequently noted feelings of nostalgia, like this Middle Eastern student:

“Looking at the book about Sophia Al-Maria's experience from the Pacific Northwest to the Middle East as somebody who lived in North America when I was younger...It just made me think of some childhood nostalgia. Nostalgia with a little tinge of sadness. So overall I would say it's a positive feeling. It's a little bittersweet.” (Participant 15)

Perspective shifting was often sparked by taking the perspective of others when looking at the art:

“Before I walked in, I was nervous because I wasn't feeling so well. A lot of decisions to make. And then I was going through the one with the rocks,... it felt like seeing from someone's eyes in the past. It felt so nice to see that. I felt really happy. It just made me realize, ‘Oh, there's something different. There's no need to be

turned around, to be nervous. Just relax.” (Participant 13)

Some participants formed new perspectives as a result of their experiences. While the majority of these reframings were positive, a few had negative self-reflections:

“It came to my mind that...these people are immensely talented, right?... At times you just feel kind of inferior to these people. I think that feeling creeps in and this feeling is trapped” (Participant 12).

Unlike Participant 12 who felt inferior in comparison to the talent of the artists, many other participants felt that the artistic creativity displayed in the galleries inspired them to be free, express themselves, and combat impostor syndrome:

“I'm just seeing how people express themselves in art, and just seeing things that you probably didn't even think were art and seeing it in a gallery...I think that was very inspiring for me. I've been feeling not inspired because I have a lot of work. I think just seeing how...they're just being themselves...without having an apology for that, I think that was inspiring for me...I think that maybe this has to do with my mental space at the moment, just trying with school to catch up, trying to prove yourself at every point...I think I'm struggling with imposter syndrome in the sense that I'm doing so much...Maybe I can't even do this. Maybe I shouldn't be here. Maybe I shouldn't be the one doing this project, and all of that within. Seeing the arts and just seeing how people are themselves, it was beautiful to know that, 'Yeah, I'm here because I deserve to be here, like those paintings deserve to be there.’” (Participant 14)

This same participant believed that the impact of the museum visit would last throughout the day:

“No matter how small, there's still an improvement in feeling nervous. Like I said, I'm not feeling so nervous because... taking time off and just tossing it aside already took away the nervousness a little bit, or even scared or anxious of what's going to happen. I can't really say, but I think that it's gonna last for the whole day... I'm hopeful that, at least for today, I'm going to be

in a better mood and be inspired for the work that I'm going to have" (Participant 14).

These shifts in perspective resulting from participants making connections between their art museum visit and their everyday lives have the potential to give new perspective on life and relieve stress beyond the duration of the visit.

What aspects of the art museum visit do international students identify as playing a role in their perceptions of wellbeing?

Participants eagerly shared examples of aspects of the museum visit that impacted their perceptions of wellbeing. The three primary categories of responses were a) the physical space; b) the content of the art; and c) the interpretation of the art. Woven throughout, participants also reflected on themes of isolation and relationships.

Physical space

Participants attributed positive changes in feelings of wellbeing to the architectural design and the atmosphere of the museum, including multisensory experiences, feelings of peace and quiet, and the way that the space facilitated engagement for both individuals and groups.

1. Architecture

Participants frequently attributed feelings of wellbeing to experiences in architectural spaces that were designed to feel "meditative." In the Henry Art Gallery, the James Turrell Skyspace, *Light Reign*, is both a work of art as well as an interactive architectural space. Participants visiting the Henry Art Gallery frequently referenced this space: "The dome structure where you can go see the lights...there's something about the oval shape that just concentrates the mind and makes you want to just meditate, so I sat there for three minutes...It really made me calm down and feel centered" (Participant 13).

More generally, participants appreciated the spaciousness of the museum's architecture which promoted freedom to walk around:

"Just before I headed out to the Henry Gallery, I was doing my homework. It's not a very energetic thing, right?... I feel like the space there, it's spacious and there's not that many people, actually, and I just enjoy

being in that kind of space. I just walked around by myself.” (Participant 18)

2. Atmosphere

For many participants, multisensory experiences that bridged the physical space and the content of the art were self-identified as factors in their sense of wellbeing. One participant described a multi-faceted experience of sight, sound, and contemplation of art as a “rush of good hormones” in response to walking into a gallery:

“There was a huge area where there were artworks by Raúl de Nieves. I found that fascinating, the tinted windows. The designs on that were really beautiful. Then also the kind of the sounds that were playing there... When I walked into the area, I first felt a rush of good hormones, right? I felt goosebumps...Then I went to that small enclosure where he had the sound of water playing. That is good because I liked the sounds it delivered...I would have loved to spend more time there...I found it kind of relaxing.” (Participant 12)

3. Peace and quiet

Reflecting on the wellbeing benefits of the physical space, the quiet was frequently cited as impacting perceptions of wellbeing. For those who visited the museums during less crowded and quieter periods, participants shared that the quiet was calming: “I find it really calming because it's really peaceful and silent and everyone's doing their own thing. Because I spend so much time on campus and everyone's running around...or there are parties, there's hardly any space where you get to be alone with your thoughts” (Participant 11).

Another participant also described the museum as peaceful, and noted the benefit of having a space to sit quietly and not feel rushed:

“I think this museum was very peaceful. It was very quiet. There was not a lot of rush so that you could spend time by the monument by yourself. You can just sit there quietly, to ponder about it, think about it, and see what it is really about. So the museum setting matters a lot.” (Participant 6)

4. *Spaces for solitude or relationship*

The atmosphere of the art museum lent itself to both individual contemplative visits as well as a space for people to engage with one another. For some participants, there was a pre-existing belief that art museums are a place to visit with friends; for others, art museums were seen as a quiet place to go for solitude. Participants noted the complexities of this dichotomy, with some expressing feelings of freedom from visiting alone and with others finding a solo museum visit to be a lonely experience. One participant described visiting alone as an opportunity to “feel like yourself”:

“[Visiting the museum is good] especially if you want to be on your own for a while, be alone and just be with your thoughts so that you can feel like yourself. If something's bothering you, if you're nervous, stressed out, that will be a great option. Just to go to a museum. Look at the art. Clear your mind.” (Participant 20)

Others also cited the benefit of visiting alone and the feeling of independence that could emerge from a solo visit:

“Because I was on my own, I was just roaming... and I was not in a rush. Most of the days on weekdays I have somewhere to go... and I'm rushing and rushing everywhere. Here I was just free to go anywhere, so I was just figuring out where I should go next... I felt free. I did not feel stressed. Independent.” (Participant 8)

However, this same participant also noted that she would like to return and visit the museum again with friends.

Not all participants found the solo visit to the museum beneficial to their sense of wellbeing. One participant found the experience visiting the museum alone to be distressing, stirring up feelings of loneliness, which he recounted in a high level of detail:

“I felt like I should have come here with a friend. I really love the spaces. They're beautiful. I am an international student and I've been an international student also during my master's and I studied in Sydney. At the time, I had friends and we usually visited a lot of state galleries and state museums, and I remembered a lot of those moments. A lot of those are just us taking pictures with the art... So I took some pictures downstairs in the exhibit, but it just reminded me a lot

of those memories. I feel not super sad, but I'm like, 'Oh, I miss those times.'" (Participant 5)

The art

For all the participants, the experience of the atmosphere blended together with their experiences interacting with the art. The aesthetics and content of the art—as well as how well the participant felt that they could understand the art—impacted feelings of wellbeing. Art that was described as “beautiful” and colorful tended to lead to feelings of increased wellbeing. Art that had triggering or frightening content frequently led to feelings of decreased wellbeing. But in every scenario, there was a wide variety of interpretations of the art based on personal interest, cultural background, and past experiences.

1. Aesthetics

Aesthetics are subjective: what is beautiful to one person is repulsive to another. However, participants tied perceiving beauty to an increase in feeling excited or happy: “The room...had this really good energy about it. Just looking around made me happy. I think it was the beauty. I really liked the theme..., the way the room looked. And everything was really nice.” (Participant 20)

Participants frequently referenced colors, in particular bright colors, as a factor impacting their sense of wellbeing in the museum:

“I think the [exhibit] just below...has a lot of colors. A burst of colors. It was just so nice to see people. I actually even saw people just sit there and lie down or do anything and just look at the colors. I think that really brought a lot of spark to me.” (Participant 14)

Virtually all the participants from India noted the impact of the bright colors in increasing their sense of wellbeing. In reference to the same exhibit, one participant shared: “I felt amazing looking at it. So many bright colors out here. You don't see a lot of bright colors here. It's all gray. I'm from India so I was like, 'Wow,' looking at so many colors after so long!” (Participant 8).

For many participants, the bright colors had cultural significance, and contrasted with their experiences of muted colors in the Pacific Northwest. Beyond the immediate perceptions of artworks as beautiful

or colorful, the content of the art was described by participants as a significant factor in their feelings of wellbeing in the museum.

2. Content

Content that was perceived as frightening or triggering had a negative impact on participants' perceptions of wellbeing. For one participant whose wellbeing scores decreased from the visit, the content of a particular exhibit was described as "triggering," "creepy" or "disturbing":

"I think there is some content that's triggering. Not entirely traumatic, but especially for the three video ones with a lot of flashing lights..., there's some scenes that, to me, are a little bit like horror...The "Not My Bag" exhibition, it's right to my face creepy or disturbing because I think it's designed to be. It's by design. It should be disruptive, but I just don't know why. Because I don't understand it. And women and their bodies. Also, some of them seem to be violated. It's just a lot of things that make me feel really uncomfortable."
(Participant 7)

Other types of content that participants found unsettling were connected to gender and sexuality. One participant reflected feeling unsettled while viewing an exhibit in the Frye Art Museum:

"One exhibit is supposed to be with the goddess of death and wisdom. I think I found that to be initially unsettling because it made me feel something. There are genitalia on a white mask with cones on it. So I couldn't quite figure out what the message behind it was. Was it about human empowerment or was it about women being proud of their sexuality? Or are they talking about how they have to wear a mask all the time? I wasn't sure what aspects of empowerment it was talking about, but I did know it was something to do with feminist ideologies and that mask specifically was a little unsettling for me." (Participant 2)

For many students from non-Western cultures, seeing nudity in the museum was a moment of culture shock, as expressed by this participant from Indonesia:

“To be honest, because it is my first time going to a Western museum, I saw some paintings and people were naked. I was like, ‘Oh, okay. I’ve never seen it in Indonesia. So probably, it’s a different culture that we have, right?’ I still appreciate it, but I was a little bit shocked in that moment. I just went to other paintings.”
(Participant 3)

Interpretation of the art

Participants who felt that they could understand the meaning of the art or who felt at peace with not understanding and felt free to self-reflect felt a sense of increased wellbeing when viewing the art. One participant who had never been to an art museum initially felt distress at not knowing how to interpret the art, but found that he could understand a piece of art better than he expected:

“I was never really good at art. I’ve never gone to art museums. How should I look at a painting? How should I interpret it? Now I’m just enjoying it. There was this one painting that kind of cracked me up. It was the painting from the Trojan War. Paris was asked by three goddesses which was the most beautiful one. I felt like, ‘Okay, I do know about this.’ I could look at the painting and realize I do know something...I knew that it was supposed to be a golden apple, but in the painting it was red.” (Participant 1)

This experience of realizing he had tools to interpret the art helped him feel like he belonged in the museum. For others, lack of interpretation of the art led to a sense of frustration and alienation. Many participants cited labels– or lack of labels– as a hindrance to understanding the art, resulting in decreased perceptions of wellbeing.

Participant 7 felt increasingly frustrated reading a label that she felt lacked information and was written to be intentionally hard to understand:

“Before I came here, because I was teaching a section and I was interacting with students, I was very energetic and excited but this museum made me feel like I’m less curious, because I don’t think there’s enough information...Or [the] information that they put on there, I tried to read it the second time but I still

couldn't make sense of it. There is, in "My Bag," one sentence that contains four words that I don't know...So I guess I feel a little bit upset or frustrated after I spend maybe two minutes [reading]... I was wondering whether it is because my English was not enough or is it just intentionally they want to make people not understand it?... I think one thing particularly interesting is the irritability [score]. I feel that this goes up quite a bit from one to three. I feel irritated because I couldn't understand it. The introductions have so many hard words in it that I just don't know what they are trying to say. We have a word in Chinese, *zhuang bi*, which means to pretend to be something "higher" or "fancier."
(Participant 7)

While some participants critiqued the museum's interpretive strategies, other participants faulted their own lack of arts background for not being able to understand the art.

The museums' interpretation strategies through labels were a frequent source of frustration, however, all the participants who had conversations with museum staff or engaged with others in the galleries noted that these interactions positively impacted their wellbeing. One participant animatedly recounted her experience of moving from confused to growing interest in the art through talking with someone on staff in the galleries:

"I did feel alert when I was going through. I saw some sculptures and some art pieces and I was talking to someone there...She came and talked to me and asked me if I had any questions, so I asked her questions...because, looking at it, I was a little confused. And because it's my first time visiting an art gallery, I just wanted to get perspective of how the artists built it...When someone puts a story on it, it was way more interesting because she explained how certain elements of the art were linked with the life of the artist and that made it ten times more interesting than just watching the artwork...[When] I spoke to someone, I think that changed everything...It was a whole new experience when you talk to someone. Reading what was written, there wasn't enough because so much of it wasn't written there. And I love how she spoke with so much

enthusiasm about her interests in the artist, in the art, which got me interested too.” (Participant 11)

Similarly, another participant experienced a mental “shift” after talking to museum staff in an exhibit. This “change of mind” led to feeling less nervous and less upset:

“I’m definitely less upset. I’m not as nervous as I was feeling. I feel better. [Were there any moments or anything about your experience where you felt that shift?] That changed when I saw the exhibit at the bottom with the stained-glass windows, the expansive space, the light, and then there’s someone there who’s talking to me through the whole place. She explained to me the artist’s vision and what he was expecting. And I totally changed my mind, a shift, so I felt different.” (Participant 13)

With a more knowledgeable art expert as a guide, one participant was able to experience the art through the lens of someone from outside of the “tech” world who helped the participant interpret the art with nuance instead of “black and white”:

“The exhibition on top was about landscape photography. I was trying to figure out what’s going on, but there was this person who I thought was working for it. I asked her what’s going on. She explained the political state of the pictures... From tech, I see just black and white. Yes or no... I liked listening to her. It was fun. I like to listen to different perspectives of people from different backgrounds because I’m from tech and I don’t see that perspective.” (Participant 8)

The same participant also noted that, after this interaction, she felt free to interpret other pieces of art for herself:

“Then I went down[stairs]. There was nobody to guide or anything, so I was just trying to figure it out on my own. At first there, I didn’t know what it was when I was looking. Okay, that must be a frog. It’s whatever you interpret it is...Nobody was there to tell me, No, it’s not a frog. You can be right. I got two different experiences. Yes. I think I got the right experience. Maybe they planned it that way.” (Participant 8)

Discussion

While there was a distinction between the experience of understanding the themes of the exhibit and the freedom to interpret the art on her own, Participant 8's experience highlights the desire for both clear interpretation on the part of the museum to make the themes of the exhibit and the artist's intentions clear alongside the sense of freedom to interpret the art for oneself.

Another participant had the opportunity to join a tour which significantly impacted her sense of wellbeing and connectedness to community, which was particularly poignant due to her feelings of loneliness before entering the museum:

“Nowadays, and because actually being an international student—I have been here for nearly four months—from time to time, I feel disengaged and lonely. I woke up [feeling that way today]; sometimes during the weekends I feel it. But then I came across the tour. I felt a sense of belonging to our society, even though temporary. Because you're visiting a place together with a group of people and they're also there. Also, you're not listening to yourself at that time when you focus on something, especially in terms of stress. This is one of the reasons I like visiting museums. Focusing on the same thing at the same time, everyone forgets their problems at the same time. Not just me...The positive feelings increase, and the negative feelings decrease.”
(Participant 16)

The purpose of this study was to explore international students' perceptions of their wellbeing from visiting art museums. Twenty-one University of Washington international students were interviewed before and after their visit to either the Henry Art Gallery or the Frye Art Museum in Seattle. Four key findings emerged from the study.

One, international students perceived a moderate degree of improvement in positive and negative emotions because of their experiences in the physical space, with the art, and interpreting the art. For many, these experiences resulted in distraction from ordinary life which led to short term benefits in emotional wellbeing in the form of stress relief, which is in alignment with research on the benefits of unstructured museum visits (Binnie, 2010; Ter-Kazarian & Luke, 2020). For others who engaged in deeper self-reflection during their art

museum visits, there were experiences of attitude shift and reframing of everyday stressors and life.

Two, the atmosphere and architecture of the art museum positively impacted international students' perceptions of their wellbeing. The architectural space and quiet atmosphere of the art museum created a comfortable and restorative physical space for international students, as proposed by Packer and Bond (2010). Due to the nature of the physical space, the architecture, the atmosphere, and the art, international students identified all four of the "satisfying experiences" framework of object, cognitive, introspective, and social experiences (Pekarik et al., 1999). Both the space and the experiences offered in art museums can be leveraged to further promote feelings of wellbeing for international students.

Three, viewing art had an impact on international students' sense of wellbeing. Participants noted significant moments of introspection and self-reflection as proposed by Vessel et al. (2012) and Winner (2019). When there was sufficient interpretation, there was a positive impact on participants' sense of wellbeing. There was a stark contrast between the experiences of students who had a guided experience, discussing art with a staff member or joining a tour, from those who relied on written labels alone. The language of the written labels or lack of labels was cited by participants as decreasing their feelings of wellbeing.

Four, the art museum visit created a context in which international students could experience stress-relief, whether through a solo experience (building feelings of independence and freedom) or through interpersonal connections (developing a sense of belonging and relationship-building). Virtually all the participants described the high levels of stress that they are facing in their daily lives which is a key factor in depressive symptoms (Koppenborg et al., 2022). The art museum visit was a context that made space for both distraction from and deeper reflection on the participant's life.

This could be done alone or with others. While most of the participants visited solo for the study, interactions with staff or tour groups created not just opportunities for increasing understanding of the art but moments of interpersonal connection. Many participants shared feelings of isolation and lack of peer relationships which harmed their sense of wellbeing, in line with Katsumoto and Bowman's (2021) study. Those who came alone wanted to visit again in the future with friends. Due to the serious psychologically damaging effects of isolation for international students, visiting the art museum with friends or joining groups has the potential for deepening relationships and developing a

sense of belonging in the community, in line with Conway and Cotton's (2021) findings that museum programs could enhance feelings of inclusion for students. The desire for relationship-building from the participants was further illustrated by the substantial turnout for the post-study group lunch and museum visit.

The participants of this study all came from the University of Washington and results cannot be generalized to other universities or geographic locations. The majority of the participants were master's students, with very few doctoral students. While there was broad geographic representation, the sample had many students from Asia (particularly India, mainland China and Taiwan). While this study included two art museums, most of the participants visited both museums while major galleries were closed; as they were both small museums, this led to limited space in the museums during the interviews which may have impacted participant experiences.

Implications

For museums, this study highlights the importance of institutional interpretive strategies in the perceptions of wellbeing for international students. Participants stressed the importance of having clear labels in a language that they could understand. Likewise, participants frequently cited staff interactions as having a direct positive impact on their ability to understand the artwork they were viewing and, subsequently, their feelings of wellbeing. If a museum, particularly a university museum, desires to promote wellbeing for international students, clarity of labels and the availability of docents or staff to provide interpretation in the galleries should be prioritized. If museums seek to explicitly be spaces for wellbeing, museums could consider providing written or physical guides to the space that prioritize meditative or self-reflective experiences. Likewise, providing programmatic offerings, such as meditation, mindfulness, or art therapy, could be provided for international students, particularly at university art museums.

The results of this study raise several next steps for research on international students' wellbeing and museum visits. Due to the issue of isolation for international students and the frequency that participants raised the topic of being alone/ with others in the museum, there is an opportunity for further research into the potential benefits of group visits. Due to the high frequency and importance of participant responses discussing themes of loneliness or desiring to visit the museum with friends, this may be a particularly valuable line of enquiry. Further research could look at one-time group visits or study

the impacts of longer-term group activities or visits to the museum. Likewise, while this study focused on international student experiences in an art museum, there would be benefits to studying visits to other types of museums. Comparative studies to see if the impact of visiting the museum has a level of impact similar to going out into nature, exercise, or other methods of stress-relief could continue to measure the degree to which art museum visits can contribute to international student wellbeing.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and students of the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington for making this research possible. Thank you to my thesis committee, Dr. Jessica Luke (chair), Dr. Diem Nguyen, and Dr. Rachel Hershberg, for supporting me through this process and sharing your knowledge and insights. I am especially grateful for a Museology departmental scholarship which provided incentives for research participants and the use of the departmental lounge to host the participant lunch. Finally, I would like to thank all the international student participants who took their valuable time to participate in this study and for those who took the additional time and energy to give feedback on the initial findings. Your voices are what made this research possible.

References

- Ander, E., Thompson, L., Noble, G., Lanceley, A., Menon, U., and Chatterjee H. (2011). Generic well-being outcomes: towards a conceptual framework for wellbeing outcomes in museums. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 26(3) 237-259.
- All-Party Parliamentary Group. (2017). *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*. Retrieved From https://www.culturehealthandwellbeing.org.uk/appginquiry/Publications/Creative_Health_Inquiry_Report_2017_-_Second_Edition.pdf.
- American College Health Association. (2019). *American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment II: Reference Group Executive Summary Spring 2019*. Silver Spring, MD: American College Health Association.
- Bennington, R., Backos, A., Harrison, J., Etherington Reader, A., & Carolan, R. (2016). Art therapy in art museums: Promoting social connectedness and psychological well-being of older adults. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 49, 34-43.

- Binnie, J. (2010). Does Viewing Art in the Museum Reduce Anxiety and Improve Wellbeing? *Museums & Social Issues*, 5(2), 191-201.
- Buchholz, K. (2023) Where America's International Students Come From. <https://www.statista.com/chart/20010/international-enrollment-in-higher-education/>.
- Buetow, Stephen. "Thematic Analysis and Its Reconceptualization as 'Saliency Analysis.'" *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2010, pp. 23-25, <https://doi.org/10.1258/jhsrp.2009.009081>.
- Burke, G., Alfrey, L., Hall, C., & O'Connor, J. (2021). Drawing with Art-Well-Being: Intergenerational Co-Creation with Seniors, Children and the Living Museum. *The International Journal of Art & Design Education*, 40(3), 630-654. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12372>.
- Conway, J., & Cotton, E. (2021). Understanding students' emotional wellbeing within art museum experiences. *MuseumsForward* 1(1), University of Washington.
- Clarke, Kathleen. (2022). International Graduate Students' Mental Health Diagnoses, Challenges, and Support. *Journal of International Students*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v13i3.3148>.
- Cuyper, K., Krokstad S., Holmen T.L., Knudsten, M.S., Bygren, L.O., and Holmen, J. (2012) Patterns of Receptive and Creative Cultural Activities and their association with perceived health, anxiety, depression, and satisfaction with life among adults: The HUNT study, Norway. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 66(8), 698 - 703.
- Davies, C., Knuiman, M., & Rosenberg, M. (2016) The art of being mentally healthy: a study to quantify the relationship between recreational art engagement and mental well-being in the general population. *BMC Public Health*. 16(5), 1-10.
- Daykin, N., Byrne, E., Soteriou, T., & O'Connor, S. (2008). The impact of art, design and environment in mental healthcare: a systematic review of the literature. *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 128(2), 85-94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466424007087806>.
- Falk, J. H. (2022). The value of museums: enhancing societal well-being. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Fancourt, D., & Steptoe, A. (2019). The art of life and death: 14 year follow-up analyses of associations between arts engagement and

- mortality in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. *The British Medical Journal*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l6377>.
- Forbes-Mewett, H., & Sawyer, A.-M. (2016). International Students and Mental Health. *Journal of International Students*, 6(3), 661–677. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v6i3.348>.
- Green, J., & Luke, J. J. (2019). Cultivating emotional wellbeing: museums & art therapy. [University of Washington Libraries].
- Harper, S., & Hamblin, K. (2010). Oxford Institute of Ageing Report: This is living-good times, art for older people at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Retrieved from <http://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/system/files/This%20Is%20Living-Good%20Times%20Art%20for%20Older%20People-1.pdf>.
- Harrison N. R., Clark D. P. A. (2016). The observing facet of trait mindfulness predicts frequency of aesthetic experiences evoked by the arts. *Mindfulness* 7, 971–978. 10.1007/s12671-016-0536-6.
- Huang, S. L., & Mussap, A. J. (2018). Maladaptive Perfectionism, Acculturative Stress and Depression in Asian International University Students. *Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 28(2), 185–196. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jgc.2016.18>.
- International Student Statistics - International Student Services*. (2024). International Student Services. <https://iss.washington.edu/about-iss/statistics/>.
- Loannides, E. (2016). Museums as Therapeutic Environments and the Contribution of Art Therapy. *Museum International*, 68(3-4), 98-109.
- Kaplan, S., Bardwell, L.V., & Slakter, D. B. (1993). The museum as a restorative environment. *Environment and Behavior*, 25(6), 725. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1292658124?accountid=1478>
- Katsumoto, S., & Bowman, N. A. (2021). Changes in Psychological Well-Being Among International Students in the US: The Role of Interactions With Peers, Faculty, and Staff. *Journal of College Student Development*, 62(3), 345–350.
- Koppenborg, K. A., Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Ly, V. (2022). Academic stress, mindfulness-related skills and mental health in international university students. *Journal of American College Health*, ahead-of-print(ahead-of-print), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2057193>.

- Kusek. (2015). Evaluating the Struggles with International Students and Local Community Participation. *Journal of International Students.*, 5(2), 121–131. <https://doi.org/info:doi/>.
- Maleku, A., Kim, Y. K., Kirsch, J., Um, M. Y., Haran, H., Yu, M., & Moon, S. S. (2022). The hidden minority: Discrimination and mental health among international students in the US during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(5), e2419–e2432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13683>.
- Morse, N. (2021). *The museum as a space of social care*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315461403>.
- Moustakas, Clark. *Phenomenological Research Methods*. 1st ed., SAGE Publications, 1994, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412995658>.
- Packer, J., & Bond, N. (2010). Museums as Restorative Environments. *Curator (New York, N.Y.)*, 53(4), 421–436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2010.00044.x>.
- Pekarik, A. J., Doering, Z. D., & Karns, D. A. (1999). Exploring Satisfying Experiences in Museums. *Curator (New York, N.Y.)*, 42(2), 152–173. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2151-6952.1999.tb01137.x>.
- Pickard, Alison Jane. *Research Methods in Information*. Facet Publishing, 2017.
- Rosenberg, F. (2009). The MOMA Alzheimer's project: Programming and resources for making art accessible to people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers. *Arts & Health: An International Journal for Research, Policy and Practice*, 1, 93–97. doi:10.1080/1753301082528108.
- Ter-Kazarian, K., & Luke, J.J. (2021). Influence of an art museum visit on individuals' psychological and physiological indicators of stress. *Museums & Social Issues*, 14(1-2), 45-59.
- Thomson L. J., Lockyer B., Camic P. M., Chatterjee H. J. (2018). Effects of a museum-based social prescription intervention on quantitative measures of psychological wellbeing in older adults. *Perspect. Public Health* 138, 28–38. 10.1177/1757913917737563.
- Thomson, L., & Chatterjee, H. (2014). Assessing well-being outcomes for arts and heritage activities: Development of a museum well-being measures toolkit. *Journal of Applied Arts & Health*, 5(1), 29-50.
- Todd, C., Camic, P. M., Lockyer, B., Thomson, L. J. M., & Chatterjee, H. J. (2017). Museum-based programs for socially isolated older adults:

Understanding what works. *Health & Place*, 48, 47–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2017.08.005>.

Vessel, E. A., Starr, G. G., & Rubin, N. (2012). The brain on art: intense aesthetic experience activates the default mode network. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 6, 66–66.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00066>.

Wei, M., & Bunjun, B. (2021). “We Don’t Need Another One in Our Group”: Racism and Interventions to Promote the Mental Health and Well-Being of Racialized International Students in Business Schools. *Journal of Management Education*, 45(1), 65–85.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562920959391>.

Winner, E. (2018). Emotions in the Art Museum: Why Don’t We Feel Like Crying? In *How Art Works* (p. X-X). Oxford University Press.

World Health Organization. (2005). Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice: a report of the World Health Organization, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse in collaboration with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation and the University of Melbourne. World Health Organization.

Appendix A

Instrument

Interview Questions

Pre-Visit Survey and Interview Guide

Welcome. Thank you for participating in this research study. Today you will participate in three things: 1) a pre-visit survey (3-5 minutes); 2) a museum visit (45 minutes+); and 3) a post-visit interview (10 minutes). Please complete this survey before entering the museum. This survey is an opportunity to reflect on your feelings of emotional wellbeing coming into the museum today.

Wellbeing Questionnaire

For each word, circle a number from 1-5 to indicate how much you feel that, right now at this moment:

1 is not at all and 5 is completely. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses are anonymous.

Active

Alert

Enthusiastic

Excited

Happy

Inspired

Distressed

Irritable

Nervous

Scared

Unhappy

Upset

Demographic Questions

*Mandatory questions

What museum are you visiting today? Frye, Henry

Who did you visit the museum with? By myself, with one friend, with a group of friends, with family, other

Have you visited the museum that you are visiting today before? Yes/No

How frequently have you gone to museums in the last 12 months? Never, Occasionally: 1-2 times this year, Frequently: 3+ times this year

*I am 18 years old or older (Yes/No)

What year are you? Masters Student, Doctoral Student

What is your area of study/Department? Open ended

*What is your visa status? F-1, J-1, other (fill in blank)

How long have you lived in the US? Less than 6 months, 6 months-1 year, over 1 year-4 years, 5+ years, other (fill in blank)

What is your country of citizenship? Open ended

What is your ethnicity? Open ended

What is your gender? (Non-binary, Male, Female, or prefer to self-describe)

Have you ever utilized any university mental health resources (counseling center, crisis helpline, etc.)? Yes/No

*Full Name Open ended

*Email Address Open ended

Post-Visit Interview Guide

Thank you so much (participant name) for taking the time to take part in this study. I will be recording this in person interview/Zoom call for transcription purposes. I will be using AI to transcribe this interview and it will only be viewed by myself and possibly by my thesis chair Jessica Luke. This interview should last no more than 10 minutes. I will be asking a variety of questions about your museum visit experience. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary so, if at any point during the interview you would like me to stop recording or stop the interview, please let me know and we will stop. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do you consent to my recording this interview?

This is Polly Yorioka and I am interviewing (participant name) on (date) after their visit to the (Henry/Frye).

Now we're going to do the same thing we did an hour ago. I'm going to give you the same list of words. [Hand them a blank Wellbeing Questionnaire and a pencil.] For each word, I want you to circle a number from 1-5 to indicate how much you feel that right now, at this moment; 1 is not at all and 5 is completely. There are no right or wrong answers, and your responses are anonymous.

Active

Alert

Enthusiastic

Excited

Happy

Inspired

Distressed

Irritable

Nervous

Scared

Unhappy

Upset

Let's compare your two responses. [Put the two questionnaires side by side. Write BEFORE on the pre-visit and AFTER on the post-visit.]

Focusing on just the first 6 words, the positive emotions, what differences do you notice in your scores before and after your visit? [Follow up question: What do you think may have caused that?]

I'm particularly interested in this difference here. [Point to an instance where the POST visit is 1 or more points higher than the pre-score and ask them this question:] Can you describe a moment during your museum visit where you felt particularly [active, alert, enthusiastic, excited, happy, inspired]? What was it that made you feel that way?

What if we focus on just the last 6 words, the negative emotions? What differences do you notice between your scores before and after your visit? [Follow up question: What do you think may have caused that?]

I'm particularly interested in this difference here. [Point to an instance where the POST visit is 1 or more points higher than the pre score and ask them this question:] Can you describe a moment during your museum visit where you felt particularly [distressed, irritable, nervous, scared, unhappy, upset]? What was it that made you feel that way?

Qualitative Questions

In what ways do you think that your museum visit impacted how you were feeling emotionally or your levels of stress?

Did anything about your museum experience detract from your feeling of wellbeing? (FOLLOW UP: Any negative experiences?)

Do you think you would choose to go to a museum for stress relief in the future? (FOLLOW UP: Why? Why not?)

Are there any other final things you want to share about your museum visit and how it made you feel?

Thank you so much for taking your time to answer these questions and visit the museum today. Your feedback, along with other students, will be aggregated and used to better understand the role of art museums and international student wellbeing. The report should be finished by mid-spring quarter.

You will get an email at the end of the quarter with details about a group museum visit and lunch catered by Chipotle for all participants at the start of Spring quarter on Saturday, March 30, as a thank you for participating in this study. If you'd prefer to get a Chipotle gift card instead of joining the lunch, let me know and I will have that sent to you. You don't need to decide now. The group lunch will be an opportunity for me to share some initial findings and get your feedback- and to have a group meal and social outing to a museum.

Would you like to receive a copy of the final report when it is published? If yes, I will send you a PDF in the Spring.

*(If still recruiting) Also, we are still recruiting international students for this study, so if you have any friends that you think would be interested to participate, I'd love to connect with them.

Thank you!

*Turn off recording