

INVESTIGATING MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT AT CASCADIA ART MUSEUM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The purpose of this study was to help Cascadia Art Museum (CAM) better understand the composition of their current audience and gain insight into the attitudes, motivations, and habits of the Millennial (25-44 years old) audience they seek to develop.

In 2024, CAM submitted a project proposal to the University of Washington Master of Arts in Museology Program, in which they identified that their institution is facing a problem with attracting and retaining a younger demographic as visitors, volunteers, and donors. Initial conversations revealed that there is an institution-wide perception that the audience base skews heavily towards the 65+ demographic, and the museum is interested in engaging with new, younger audiences. Subsequently, Museology graduate student Lauren Krieger began this study in September 2024 and implemented it over nine months, culminating with this report in June 2025.

The following questions guided the study:

- What are Millennials' attitudes towards art museums, and what are their general museum visiting behaviors?
- What are the needs of Millennials in museum spaces? What are the main motivations or barriers that drive their attendance at art museums?
- How are Millennials deciding how to spend their leisure time? Where do they find out about leisure activities and events?

Methodology

Visitor Survey ([Appendix A](#))

- The visitor survey collected a total of 165 responses.
- The goal of the visitor survey was to gather a baseline understanding of who visits CAM, the degree of their relationship to the museum, what motivates attendance, what barriers may affect potential visits, and their general impressions of the museum.

Non-visitor Survey ([Appendix B](#))

- The non-visitor survey collected a total of 47 responses.
- The goal of this survey was to gather an understanding of the community's awareness of CAM, their museum visiting behaviors, including motivations and barriers, and factors that impact how leisure time is spent.

Focus Group ([Appendix C](#))

- One 60-minute focus group was conducted with three Millennials on-site at CAM.

- The goal of the focus group was to gather rich qualitative data on the themes of millennial attitudes towards art museums, museum visiting motivations and barriers, and general leisure habits.

Key Takeaways

Relationship to CAM

- The vast majority of CAM's current visitor base is 65 and older.
- Visitors have positive impressions of CAM and are very likely to recommend it to friends or family.
- Millennials who are aware of CAM have either never visited or are not visiting regularly.

Museum Visiting Behaviors

- The majority of Millennials are going to museums, and art museums are the most visited type of museum among this sample, but they are not coming to CAM.
- Some Millennials find art museums unapproachable and feel uncertain about navigating those spaces and engaging with art.

Motivations and Barriers

- Millennials are primarily motivated to visit art museums because of personal fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.).
- Cost is by far the most common barrier for Millennials.
- Millennials are interested in creative workshops, after-hours events, and gallery tours.

Leisure Habits

- Facebook is the most common way Millennials find ways to spend leisure time, and social media and emails are their preferred methods of staying up to date with museums.
- The majority of Millennials are not actively following CAM or other museums on social media.

Recommendations

- Consider implementing flexible or extended hours and experiment with events outside of traditional hours. Examples include:
 - Seattle Art Museum's SAM Remix: This is a unique 21+ after-hours art experience where guests remix the museum, meet artists, get creative, and become part of Seattle's creative community.
 - Frye Nouveau After Hours: These 21+ events offer Seattle's emerging artists, young professionals, and art lovers alike the perfect way to connect with kindred spirits after hours. They spotlight contemporary voices, have local artists give talks about their work, have art making

workshops, all while the galleries and museum store are open for exploration.

- Explore embedding more interactivity in its gallery spaces. Interactive exhibits and immersive art experiences resonate well with younger visitors.
 - The [Indianapolis Museum of Art](#) (now Newfields) shared several successful examples of this approach, including tactile exhibit elements like touching samples of materials, a still life drawing station, and printmaking workshops inside an exhibit.
 - The [Nordic's Faux Flora exhibition](#) was an immersive experience of scent, sound, and visual art. This exhibition explored the relationship between scent and memory by combining scent, sound, sculpture, 3D-graphics, and photography in an immersive and other-worldly experience.
- Experiment with including Millennials in the exhibit development process.
 - This [American Alliance of Museums article](#) explores how the Cleveland Art Museum utilizes front-end evaluation as a critical tool for bringing new voices and perspectives into their museum for exhibit design and marketing campaigns.
- Consider moving towards a more community-based, visitor-centered approach.
 - Nina Simon's book, [The Participatory Museum](#), is a practical guide for how museums can work with their communities and visitors to make their institutions more dynamic, relevant, and essential places.
 - Nina Simon's book, [The Art of Relevance](#), further explores how museums can matter more to people, and become more vital to their communities with case studies and practical advice.
- Continue making the most of social media. Prioritize storytelling while implementing a tone that blends humor, art education, and behind-the-scenes content.
 - Museums Galleries Scotland has a comprehensive [Social Media Toolkit](#) that walks museums through the building blocks of social media including content ideas, planning and scheduling, and measuring impact.
 - [The British Museum \(UK\)](#): Known for its creative use of Instagram, the British Museum delivers bite-sized, informative content often highlighting unique artifacts, sharing historical anecdotes, and providing interactive calls-to-action, driving high levels of audience engagement.

- Examine assumptions about the effectiveness of CAM’s existing communication methods, and consider making changes to engage with new audiences.
 - Utilize the Wallace Foundation’s report, [In Search of the Magic Bullet: Results from the Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#) and the Museum Creative’s blog [7 Effective Content Marketing Tactics to Attract Young Visitors](#).

- Consider exploring ways to lower the cost of admission by expanding the types of discounts offered, implementing free days, or through special initiatives.
 - Access initiatives could include:
 - Registering for [Museums for All](#), an access initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) that allows museums to offer deeply discounted admission to individuals receiving government assistance.
 - Explore the possibility of partnering with library systems in the Puget Sound area to develop a system for library card holders to reserve free passes to CAM.
 - Discount initiatives could include:
 - Consider implementing [pay-what-you-wish tickets](#). This pricing strategy allows people to pick the price they feel is fair to pay based on their own perceptions of value and circumstances. [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) has held this tradition for nearly five decades and is a key way the museum is inclusive and accessible for its community.
 - Consider experimenting with [dynamic pricing](#). Dynamic ticket pricing involves adjusting museum admission prices based on real-time factors such as demand, time of purchase, seasonality, and even weather conditions. The Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP) has utilized dynamic pricing—what they call [Plan Ahead Pricing](#)—since 2013, citing that it both allows the guest to choose the best day and time for their budget and schedule, and allows the museum to provide a positive experience for every guest and keep the flow of visitors more consistent.

- Identify *why* Millennials should come to CAM.
 - Consider using Jaclyn Spainhour’s [Museums and Millennials Worksheet: Starting Points to Improve Engagement](#). This sheet is designed to help museums to start a dialogue about millennial engagement in their institutions, covering concepts like affordability, uniqueness, relevance, and accessibility.

STUDY BACKGROUND

In 2024, Cascadia Art Museum (CAM) submitted a project proposal to the University of Washington Master of Arts in Museology Program, in which they identified that their institution is facing a problem with attracting and retaining a younger demographic as visitors, volunteers, and donors. Museology graduate student, Lauren Krieger, subsequently began the study in September 2024 and implemented it over nine months, culminating with this report in June 2025. Ms. Krieger was trained in evaluation methodologies and certified in June 2025.

Initial conversations revealed that there is an institution-wide perception that since the founding of the museum in 2015, the visitors, donors, and board have skewed heavily towards the 65+ audience, and the museum is interested in engaging with new, younger audiences. In this context, the younger demographic refers to Millennials and young families. For the purposes of this study, Millennials are defined as individuals between the ages of 25 and 44. Over the 2024-2025 academic year, this study investigated the museum visiting behaviors and leisure habits of CAM's current audience and Millennials in the greater Edmonds community.

RELEVANT LITERATURE

Broad Context

The National Endowment for the Arts has conducted a survey of public participation in the arts roughly every five years since 1982. In their 2022 report, they found that the overall rate of arts attendance dropped nearly six percentage points between 2017 and 2022 (National Endowment for the Arts). This troubling trend reflects the continued steady decline in attendance that art museums and galleries have been facing since the turn of the 21st century.

Who Are Millennials and Why Do They Matter?

Millennials have surpassed Baby Boomers as the nation's largest living adult generation. As such, they are stepping into the role of being the primary audience for cultural institutions (e.g. museums, zoos, aquariums, symphonies, theaters, botanic gardens, orchestras, etc) in the United States (Sommer, 2018). Although museums have faced generational shifts before, there is no way to know if Millennials will fulfill the same role as their predecessors. As museums prepare for the eventual passing of the baton from the Baby Boom generation, they need to understand that Millennials have unique identities with a different set of priorities

and expectations from previous generations. Understanding this new audience is pivotal for institutions to ensure their longevity and continued relevance in the face of steadily declining public arts participation.

Interestingly, data shows that Millennials are the most frequent attendees to cultural organizations, and they are far more likely to revisit within a year than other generations (Dilenschneider, 2016a). However, considering their large representative proportion of the U.S. population, Millennials are not even attending at the minimum expected rates. This reflects the overall decline in public arts attendance among the general population, and it also means cultural organizations are not adequately serving their most frequent and most loyal customers, who make up the majority of the country's population, which ultimately poses a risk to their livelihood. The need to reach millennial audiences is thus urgent and more complex than it may appear.

Millennials' low visitation may exist for multiple reasons. For one, nontraditional audiences historically tend to feel unwelcome in museum spaces. Considering the millennial generation is the most racially and ethnically diverse in recorded history, this is a significant indicator of decline in visitation (Sommer, 2018). Additionally, Millennials have demonstrated that arts and culture are not as high of a priority as previous generations, and data suggest that it is unlikely that they are going to “age into” greater interest in arts and culture simply as a function of getting older (Dilenschneider, 2017). This means that, rather than relying on the assumption that as Millennials age, they will become increasingly interested in the arts, cultural organizations should take the opportunity to engage with them now or else risk long-term irrelevance.

The low prioritization of arts and culture reflects the increasing draw of social, rather than artistic causes, with Millennials choosing to donate their time and money to causes they feel have a measurable impact, such as the environment or international aid (Gelles, 2014). In addition, this age group is not a primary, targeted audience for museums that have been able to consistently rely on older generations as their lifeblood of visitation, financial giving, and boardroom leadership.

Thus, museums must now integrate new strategies for engaging Millennial audiences. While simply adding new programming can be effective in cultivating new audiences and increasing engagement, it is not an effective long-term solution as there will be no crossover of the new audience into traditional programs (Ostrower, 2024; Dilenschneider, 2016b). Instead, organizations should begin by integrating changes into their overall strategy and organizational culture before relying on one-off programs. These changes may require the organization to

look inward, assessing its content and approach according to Millennial trends, and embed them as cornerstones moving forward.

Museums need steady, lifelong relationships with supporters, and if they seek to navigate the generational transition with ease, they should be proactive in adapting their institutional mindset and developing relationships with Millennials before it is too late.

PURPOSE STATEMENT AND GUIDING QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study was to help Cascadia Art Museum better understand the composition of their current audience and gain insight into the attitudes, motivations, and habits of the Millennial audience they seek to develop.

These questions guided the development of the data collection instruments and interpretation of the results:

- What are Millennials' attitudes towards art museums, and what are their general museum visiting behaviors?
- What are the needs of Millennials in museum spaces? What are the main motivations or barriers that drive their attendance at art museums?
- How do Millennials decide how to spend their leisure time? Where do they find out about leisure activities and events?

AUDIENCE

Although primarily focused on Millennials, this study collected data from adults of any age 18+ in the greater Puget Sound area, including King, Snohomish, Kitsap, Pierce, Thurston, Island, and Whatcom counties. These participants were both people who were visiting CAM and non-visitors from the broader Edmonds community.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized two main methods for data collection: surveys and a focus group. In addition to pulling from existing research, the design of the surveys was informed by initial Zoom-based interviews with 4 staff members of CAM: Director of Operations Nate Hegerberg, Marketing Manager Kathryn Hackney, Store Manager and Social Media Coordinator Sydney Kaemmerlen, and Director of Education Julie Olson Anna. These conversations provided a more complete understanding of the internal perspective of the issue and gave staff the opportunity to highlight specific areas of knowledge that would be helpful for them to learn from this study. Getting

the staff's perspective was important to ensure the goals of the study aligned with the institution's goals. Additionally, Executive Director Sally Ralston served as the main point of contact through the duration of this study, providing clarity around the problem space and regularly giving feedback and guidance as the study evolved.

The surveys and focus group produced both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed using basic descriptive statistics. Qualitative data was analyzed using emergent coding and focused on exploring themes and patterns. Across all methods, data were collected from 215 participants between January 28th and April 12th, 2025.

Visitor Survey

The Visitor Survey ([Appendix A](#)) collected a total of 165 responses. Participants were recruited using convenience sampling. Flyers with a QR code link to the digital survey were posted at the museum and promoted by the Admissions team to visitors as they were entering or exiting the galleries. Paper surveys were available as well, but no respondents chose to utilize this format. Additionally, the QR code link was posted on the museum's social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) and was sent out in their email newsletter. All who completed the survey were eligible to receive one guest pass for a future visit to the museum. In addition to demographics, the goal of the visitor survey was to gather a baseline understanding of who visits CAM, the degree of their relationship to the museum, what motivates attendance, what barriers may affect potential visits, and their general impressions of the museum.

Non-Visitor Survey

The Non-visitor survey ([Appendix B](#)) collected a total of 47 responses. Participants were recruited through both convenience sampling and simple random sampling. A QR code link to the digital survey was posted in the “My Edmonds Neighbors” Facebook Group, which has over twelve thousand members. Additionally, flyers with the QR code link were posted at 12 local businesses in the vicinity of CAM. All who completed the survey were eligible to receive one guest pass for a future visit to the museum. In addition to demographics, the goal of this survey was to gather an understanding of the community's awareness of CAM, their museum visiting behaviors, including motivations and barriers, and factors that impact how leisure time is spent.

Focus Group

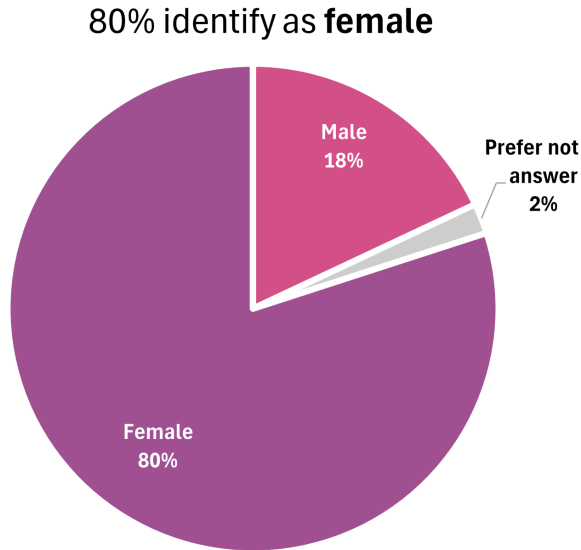
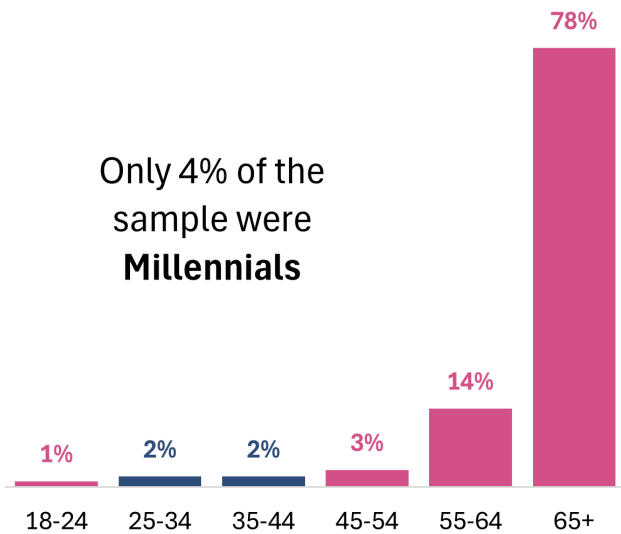
One 60-minute focus group ([Appendix C](#)) was conducted with three Millennials on-site at CAM. Participants were recruited through quota sampling, as they were specifically required to be within the Millennial age bracket (25-44). A digital interest form to sign up for the focus group was posted in the “My Edmonds Neighbors” Facebook Group and circulated to faculty and students of the Art Department at Edmonds College. Participants received one guest pass for a future visit to the museum and a 20% off coupon for the museum store. The goal of the focus group was to gather rich qualitative data on the themes of millennial attitudes towards art museums, museum visiting motivations and barriers, and general leisure habits.

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE

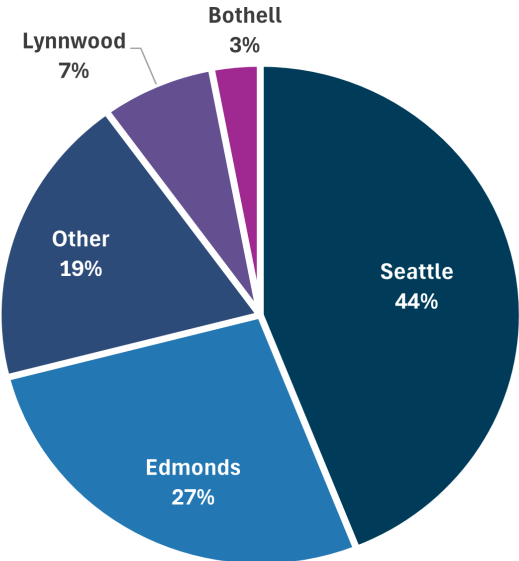
Visitor Survey

n= 167

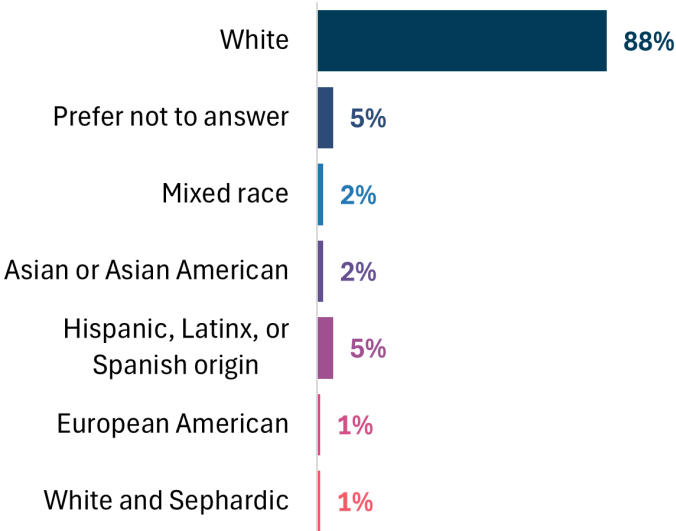
Only 4% of respondents identified as Millennials (25-44 years old). 95% of respondents were 45 and older. The majority of the sample identified as White and female. 44% of visitors were from Seattle, 27% from Edmonds, 7% from Lynnwood, 3% from Bothell, and all other cities that were represented each comprised 2% or less of the responses.



Most visitors live in **Seattle and Edmonds**



88% of the sample was **White**

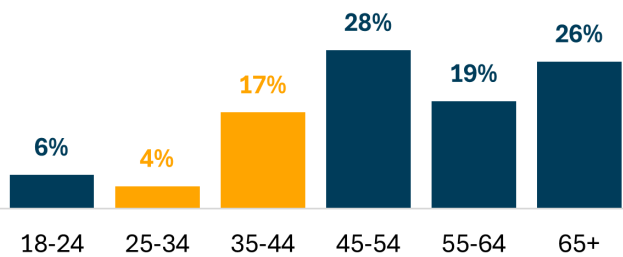


Non-Visitor Survey

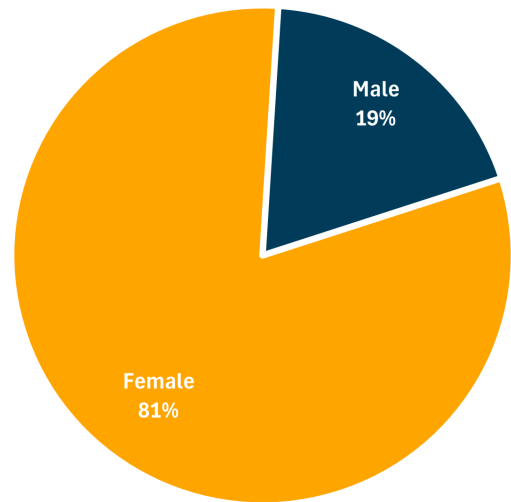
n= 47

21% identified as Millennials. 6% were younger than Millennials (18-24), and 73% were 45 years and older. The majority of the sample identified as White and female. 85% of respondents reside in Edmonds. 6% in Seattle, 4% in Everett, 2% in Lynnwood, and 2% in Bothell.

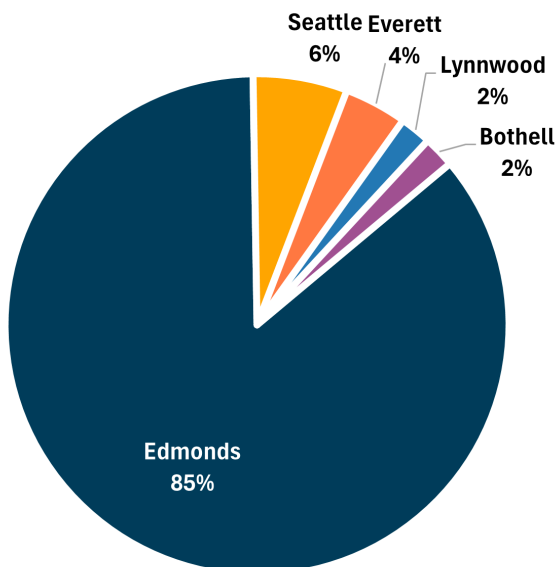
21% of the sample were Millennials



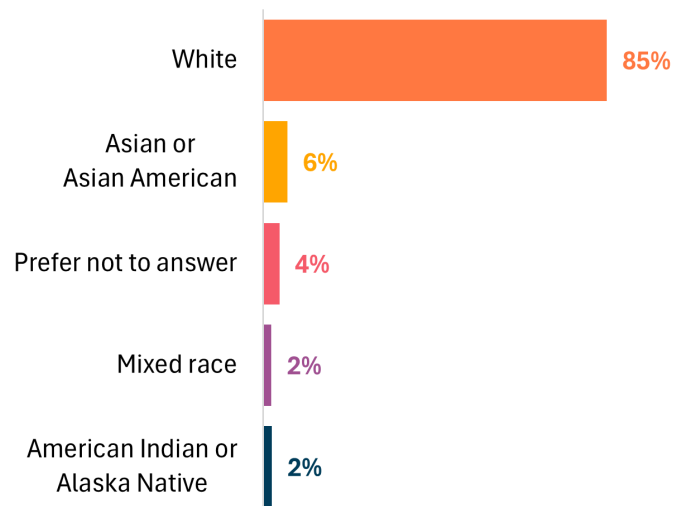
81% identify as female



Most of the sample lives in Edmonds



85% of the sample was White



Focus Group

All three focus group participants identified themselves as being white, female, and within the Millennial age range (25-44). Two participants were residents of Edmonds, while the third was a resident of Lynnwood. All had previous awareness of CAM but had never visited prior to the focus group.

LIMITATIONS

Several limitations exist for this study. First, although the non-visitor survey was intended to reach those who had not previously visited CAM, or whose involvement with CAM had been limited, the majority of respondents had visited CAM more than once. This may have skewed the data by capturing the perspective of regular CAM visitors rather than the intended non-visiting audience. Additionally, although this study set out to collect data from Millennials, their responses composed only a small fraction of the total. As such, this study did not collect a large enough sample to make generalizable claims about trends or patterns that emerge for that particular demographic. However, the trends that did emerge from this sample tend to echo the preferences of Millennials identified in existing large-scale studies. Additionally, the dates of data collection occurred during the winter season, in which museum visitorship is especially low. This may have affected the sample of visitors the survey was able to pull from. Lastly, the possibility exists that participants were influenced by social desirability bias and responded to questions in a way they thought researchers hoped they would, rather than giving authentic answers.

FINDINGS: VISITOR SURVEY

Relationship to CAM

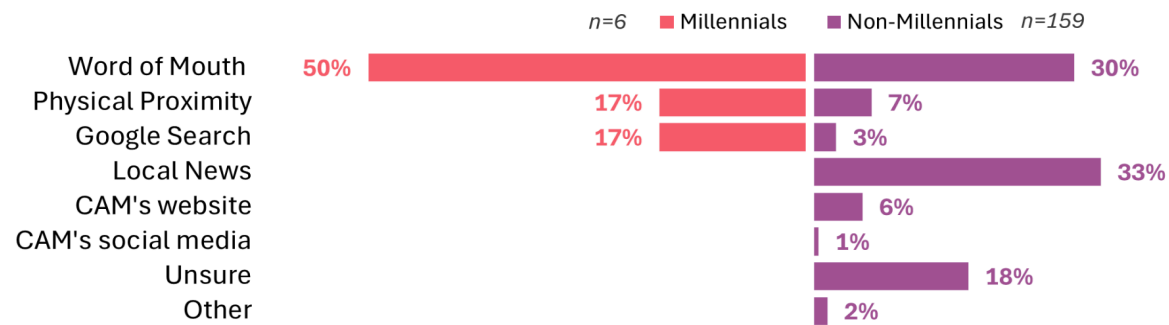
Of the 165 total responses to this survey, Millennials were only 4% (6) of the total responses, while Non-Millennials were the remaining 96% (159). One-third of Millennials were first-time visitors to CAM. The remaining two-thirds had visited previously, and half of those visits had been within the last year. 96% of Non-Millennial visitors had been to CAM previously, and only 4% were first-time visitors. Of Non-Millennials who had been to CAM previously, 81% had visited within the last 6 months. This confirms CAM's perception that Non-Millennials comprise the majority of their visitor base. It also suggests that Millennial visitors are coming less frequently than Non-Millennials.

The majority of Millennials first became aware of CAM through word of mouth. Physical proximity, such as walking by the museum or living in the area, and Google

searches were the other methods by which they first heard about CAM. For Non-Millennials, CAM's website was the most common way they found out about CAM (33%), followed by word of mouth (30%).

Word of Mouth is a powerful tool for spreading awareness of CAM for visitors of all ages

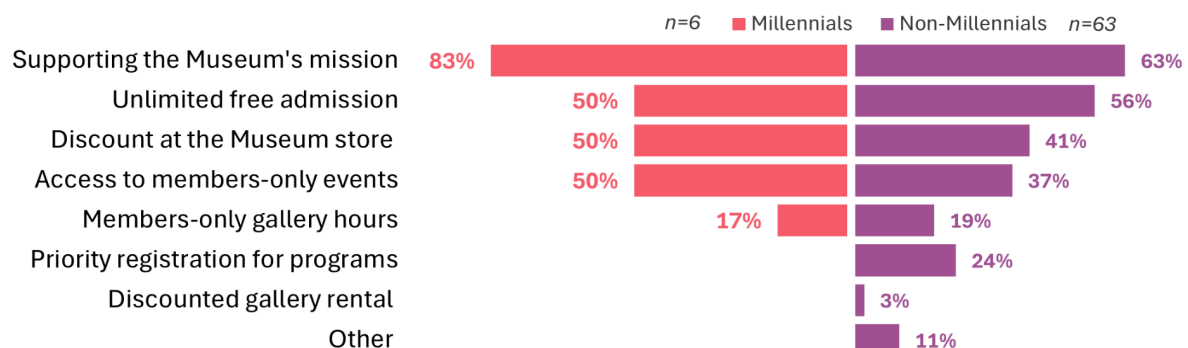
How did you first find out about CAM?



None of the Millennial visitors were museum members. 50% said they would consider becoming members of CAM in the future. 60% of Non-Millennial visitors were members of the museum. 90% of these members indicated that supporting the museum's mission was the most important factor that motivated their decision to become a member. Less important factors in their decision were unlimited free admission (58%), discount at the museum store (33%), and access to members-only events (32%). The duration of the memberships ranged anywhere from 1 month to the opening of the museum 10 years ago. A little over half (52%) of the Non-Millennials who were not currently members said they would consider becoming members in the future. Both demographic groups said that supporting the museum's mission would be the most important factor in their decision to become a member in the future, echoing the values of the existing member base.

Supporting the Museum's mission is the most important factor to people deciding to become members.

What factors would be important to your decision to become a member of CAM? (select all that apply)



Only one Millennial had previously attended a program or event at CAM, which was a collage workshop. They were motivated to attend because they said they “love making art and it was free.” 32% of Non-Millennials had attended a program or event at CAM. The most visited program was Music in the Museum, and the most common motivation for attending was an interest in music. Other visitors also highlighted that they were coming to spend time with friends, because they enjoyed the venue, because they felt it was a good price, or because it was at a good time. The second most attended programs fall broadly under the category of “Talks” which includes Coffee with the Curator, author talks, and other unspecified talks. Again, the number one reason for attending was an interest in the subject matter. Curator David Martin was also specifically mentioned as being the reason people choose to attend these programs. New exhibit receptions were the third most mentioned program, with attendees being slightly more motivated by spending time with friends than by interest in the exhibit itself. Across almost all programs and events, interest in the subject matter is a primary motivator for attending.

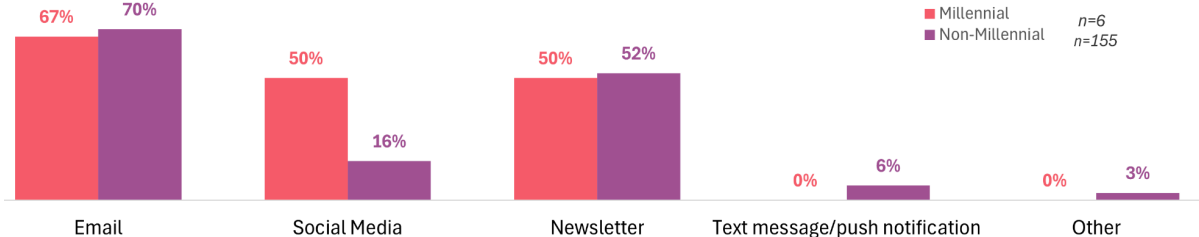
CAM has low levels of social media following among both Millennial and Non-Millennial visitors. Only 33% of Millennials and 21% of Non-Millennials indicated that they follow CAM on Instagram or Facebook. Half of Millennials who are not currently following CAM said they would be open to following in the future to learn more about their exhibits, programs, and events. Only 20% of Non-Millennials who are not following CAM currently indicated they would consider following them in the future.

33% of Millennials follow CAM on social media

When asked how they would prefer to find out about what is happening at CAM, 67% of Millennials said email, 50% said social media, and 50% said newsletter. Non-Millennials had a similar preference for email (70%), followed by newsletter (52%), social media (16%), text message/push notification (6%), and other forms, including local news sources (3%).

Millennials prefer to use Email, Social Media, and Newsletters to stay in touch with CAM.

How would you prefer to learn about what's happening at CAM?



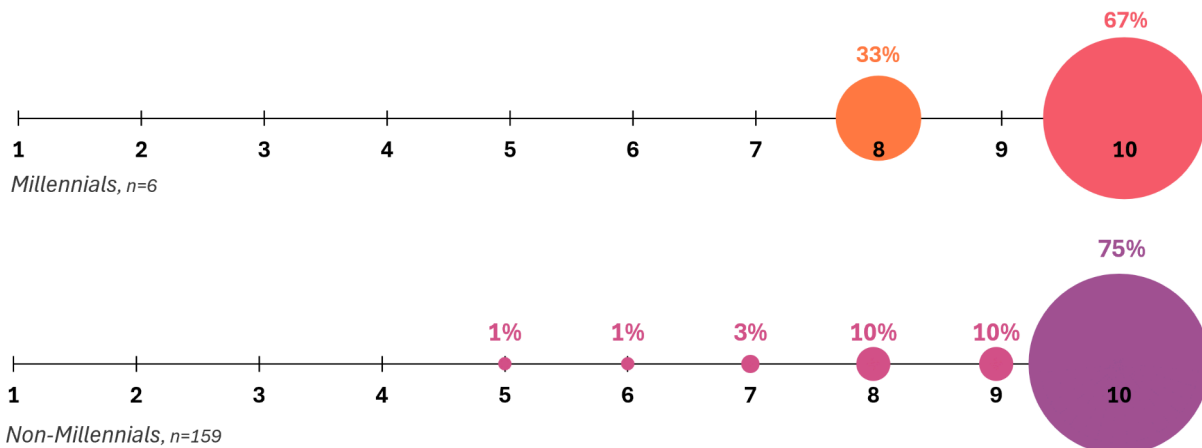
Visit Experience

Millennials' visiting style was equally divided between visiting alone, with a friend(s), and with a member(s) of their family. Non-Millennial visitors responded similarly, with 34% visiting with a friend(s), 31% with a partner, 23% alone, 11% with a member(s) of their family, and 1% in a social or community group. This suggests there is a social component to most visitors' experiences at CAM.

Both Millennials and Non-Millennials rated their likelihood to recommend CAM very highly, with Millennials giving an average of 9.3 out of 10 and Non-Millennials giving a slightly higher average of 9.5 out of 10 on a scale of 1(Not Likely at All) to 10(Very Likely). These positive ratings could explain why word of mouth was such a common method by which people became aware of CAM; people feel compelled to share their experiences after visiting.

Millennials and Non-Millennials are very likely to recommend CAM.

On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend CAM to a friend or family?, scale 1(Not Likely at All) - 10(Very Likely)



When asked how they would describe their visit to CAM to a friend, Millennials spoke positively of their experience, highlighting the informative and educational quality of their visit. One person said, "Cascadia is my favorite art museum in this region! It's so well curated and has thoughtfully done exhibits. They also have a great gift shop."

When asked to describe their experiences at the museum, Non-Millennials gave similarly positive responses. 5 main themes arose from these comments: the small size of the museum, the friendliness of the staff, the quality of the exhibits, the quality of the store, and frequently recommending CAM to others. Visitors spoke

fondly of the size of the museum, describing it as intimate and right-sized, and easy to see all of the exhibits in a single visit. They appreciated that it did not feel overwhelming, and felt that the size lent itself to having a high-quality, focused experience. The staff was a highlight for several people who found them friendly, helpful, engaging, and welcoming. Several people mentioned curator David Martin specifically as enriching their experience. The curation of the exhibits was a focal point of many comments, crediting them for being thoughtful, well-organized, and beautifully displayed. Visitors appreciate the strong connection to the art of the Northwest, allowing them to see unique art they don't see elsewhere and discover art and artists they didn't know before. The museum store was also mentioned as a nice complement to a visit to the museum, with visitors calling it excellent, wonderful, interesting, and tantalizing, with lots of unique finds and gorgeous gift options. A common thread through the comments was that numerous visitors feel compelled to share their love of CAM with their friends and family, and recruit them to visit the museum. Some comments include: "I really really love this museum. I tell people I think it is the best museum of NW art in Washington state!" and "I boast about the museum all the time. One of my favorites." and "I always tell people that Cascadia is my favorite museum because of how well curated all the shows are, the uniqueness of the artists, connection to the NW, good size of the museum - small and personable, intimate. I've gotten several friends to join!"

What kind of words are being used to describe experiences at CAM?

learn new things
a gem wonderful surprising
enriching informative a jewel
pleasant satisfying serenity excellent
quiet fun interesting enjoyable
terrific enlightening delightful great
fantastic unique fascinating relaxing
lovely easy parking positive
invigorating

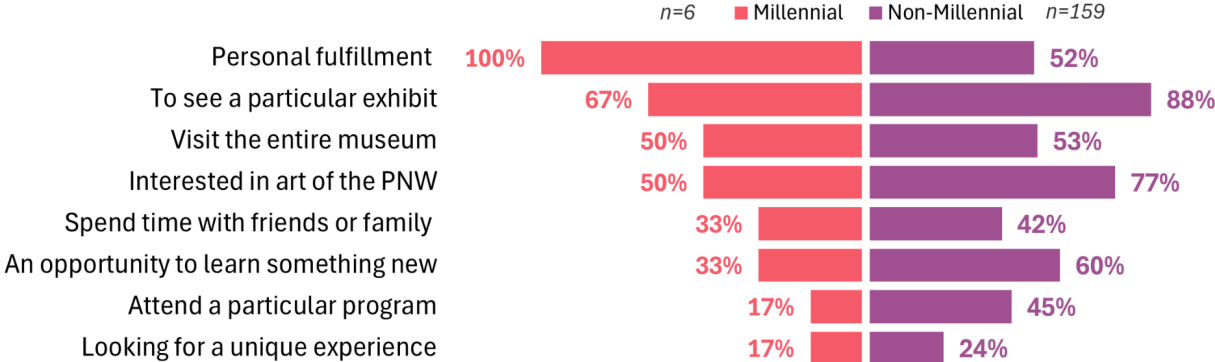
Motivations and Barriers

Each demographic group had a unique combination of motivations for visiting CAM. By far the most common motivation for Millennials was personal fulfillment

(to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.) (100%), followed by seeing a particular exhibit (67%), visiting the entire museum (50%), and being interested in art of the Pacific Northwest (50%). Non-Millennial motivations were somewhat different, with the most common motivation being seeing a particular exhibit (88%), followed by interest in art of the Pacific Northwest (77%) and seeking an opportunity to learn something new (60%). Notably, personal fulfillment was only half as common a motivation for Non-Millennials. Additionally, learning something new was twice as common a motivation among Non-Millennials than among Millennials.

Millennials typically visit CAM for personal fulfillment.
Non-Millennials typically visit CAM to see a particular exhibit.

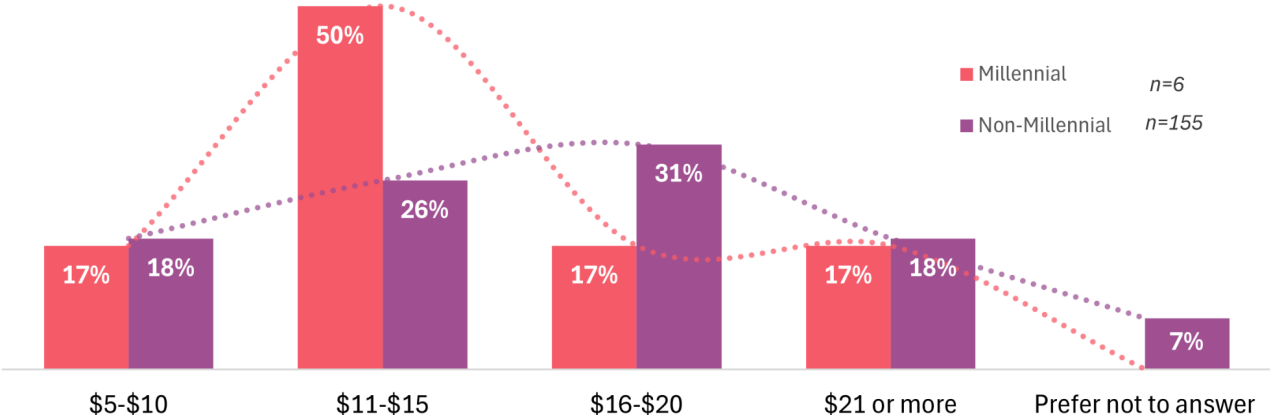
What typically brings you in to the Museum? (select all that apply)



Non-Millennials are generally willing to spend more on the price of admission to an art museum than Millennials.

Non-Millennials are willing to spend more on admission to an art museum than Millennials.

Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to an art museum?



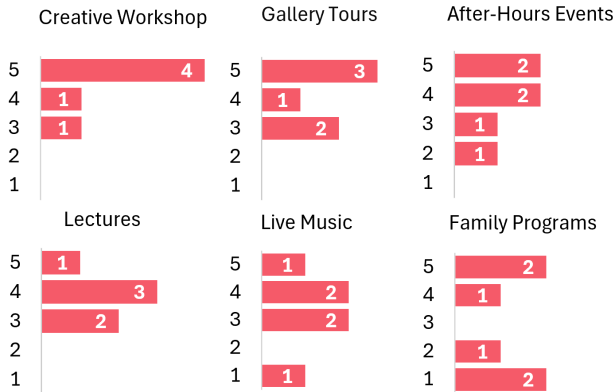
Preferences in Art Museums

Millennials and Non-Millennials have unique needs and preferences when visiting CAM and at art museums in general. When asked if visitors had a preference for a specific style of programming, Millennials slightly preferred educational programming (50%) compared to entertainment (33%), while 17% had no preference. Non-Millennials had a similar preference for educational programming (52%), but a much higher proportion had no preference (31%) than Millennials.

These preferences were reflected in the rating of specific programs based on the level of interest. Millennials rated creative workshops an average of 4.5 out of 5, the highest rating of all the experiences, echoing their interest in entertainment programming. Non-Millennials rated Lectures an average of 3.7 out of 5, the highest rating of all experiences. Both demographic groups ranked gallery tours highly within their age groups, with Millennials giving tours an average of 4.2 out of 5 and Non-Millennials a 3.6 out of 5. Both groups ranked family programs significantly lower than all other experiences.

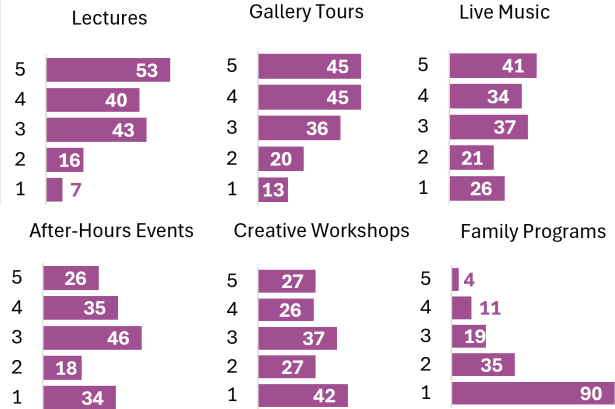
Millennials rated Creative Workshops and Gallery Tours as being of the highest interest.

Please rank these experiences based on how interested you are in them. (1 being not interested at all, 5 being very interested)
n=6



Non-Millennials rated Lectures and Gallery Tours as being of the highest interest.

Please rank these experiences based on how interested you are in them. (1 being not interested at all, 5 being very interested)
n=159



Millennials expressed desires for a variety of future content and programming from the museum, including programming for elementary-aged students, classes/workshops, behind-the-scenes gallery tours, and after-hours events. Non-Millennial visitors were generally pleased with the current variety of offerings at the museum, especially the focus on lesser-known art of the Northwest and the

Music in the Museum program. Visitors were interested in having more gallery tours and more talks/lectures (with the curator, with experts, and with artists). In terms of new ideas, several people indicated a preference for daytime events due to being unable to drive at night or it being a long drive for people who don't live nearby. One comment also suggested more programs that are for people in their 30s-50s, stating that "CAM's programs seem like they're for kids or seniors based on the content I've seen." Another interesting theme that arose from these comments was the idea that visiting the museum was not typically a stand-alone event, but rather just a piece of a day full of other activities in downtown Edmonds.

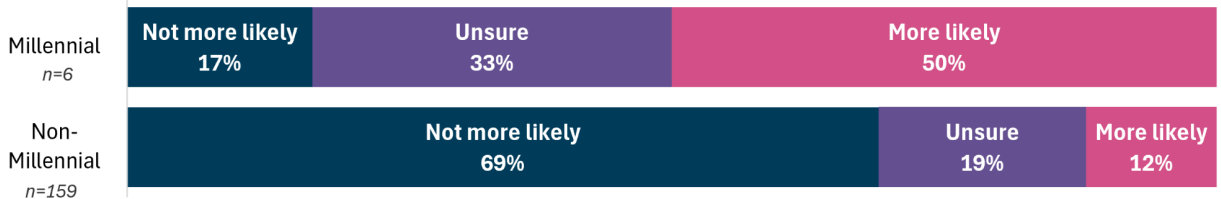
The two demographic groups also responded notably differently when it came to the presence of food or alcohol, making them more likely to attend an event at CAM. The majority of Millennials indicated that the presence of both food and alcohol would make them more likely to attend, while the majority of Non-Millennials indicated that the presence of food or alcohol was not likely to influence their decision to attend.

Millennials are more likely to attend a CAM event if food or alcohol is present. Non-Millennials are not.

Would you be more likely to attend a CAM event if food is present?



Would you be more likely to attend a CAM event if alcohol is present?



FINDINGS: NON-VISITOR SURVEY

Relationship to CAM

Millennials and Non-Millennials had similar levels of awareness of CAM before taking this survey, 90% and 89%, respectively. Of the Millennials who were previously aware of CAM, only 33% had actually visited. Two-thirds of those visits occurred more than 3 years ago. Of the Non-Millennials who were previously aware of CAM, almost twice as many (62%) had visited compared to Millennials. The majority (56%) of those who had visited previously had been to CAM within the last year. Despite there being similar levels of awareness of CAM between the two demographic groups, Millennials had significantly lower levels of visitorship at CAM.

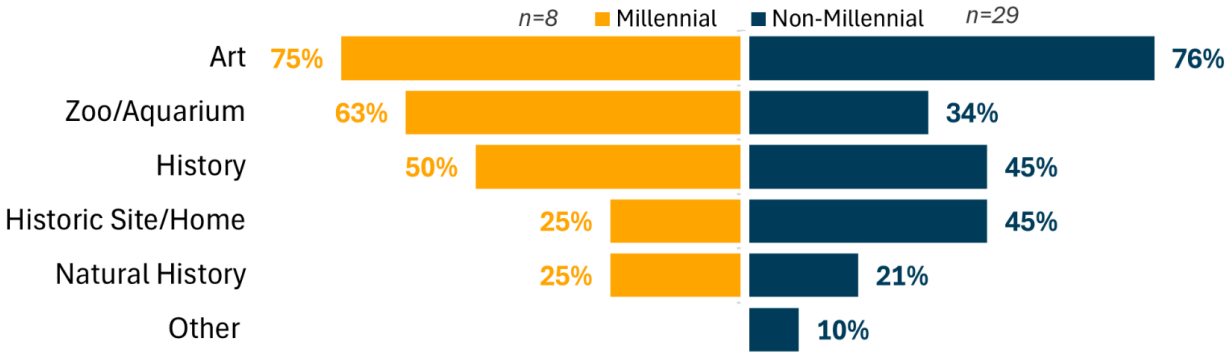
General Museum Behaviors

80% of Millennials had visited a museum of some kind in the past year, with an average of 1-2 museum visits in total. 71% of Millennials who had never been to CAM had visited another museum within the past year. Among all Millennials who visited a museum in the past year, art museums were the most visited type of museum (75%). Similarly, 76% of Non-Millennials had been to a museum within the past year, and art museums were also the most visited type of museum among this demographic. Over a quarter (27%) of Non-Millennials who had never visited CAM had been to another museum within the past year.

Even though the majority of Millennials have not visited CAM, they are still visiting other museums, specifically art museums, at high rates. This indicates that there is an established interest in art museums within this demographic, and CAM has the opportunity to convert these Millennials into visitors.

Art Museums were the most visited type of museum among both Millennials and Non-Millennials

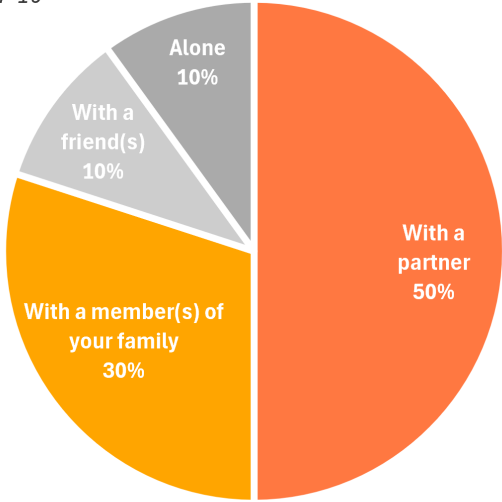
What types of museums have you visited in the past year? (select all that apply.)



The majority of Millennials typically visit a museum with their partner (50%) or with a member(s) of their family (30%). Only 10% of Millennials typically visit with friends, and 10% visit alone. In contrast, 43% of Non-Millennials typically visit with a friend(s) while only 22% visit with a partner. 22% visit with member(s) of their family, and 14% visit alone.

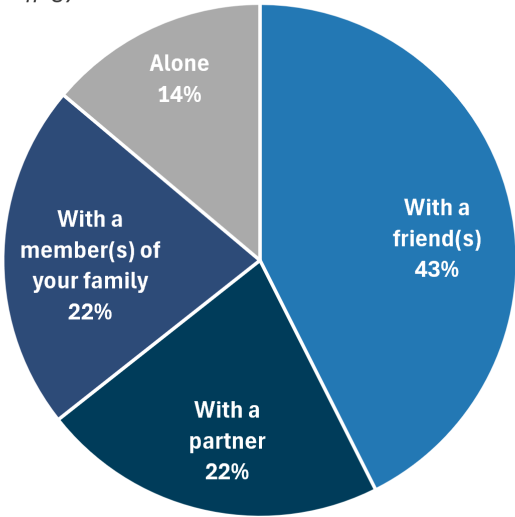
Millennials typically visit museums with a partner or with family.

n=10



Non-Millennials typically visit museums with a friend.

n=37



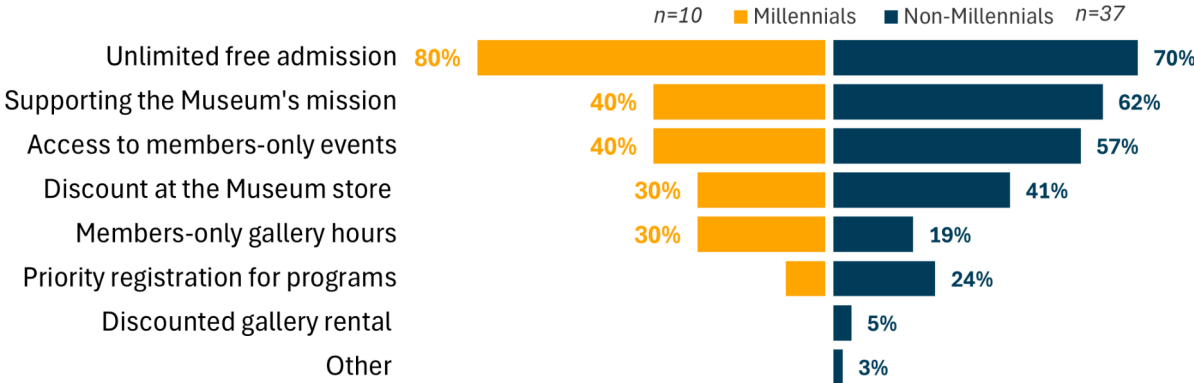
Half of Millennials said they attend events or programs at art museums. Of those that attend, the majority noted that they are motivated to attend because of a topic or exhibit that they find particularly interesting. Slightly more Non-Millennials (57%) said they attend events at art museums, and the majority (71%) were similarly motivated by their interest in the subject of the event. The type of program also impacted motivation, with concerts, lectures, authors, and special exhibits being mentioned specifically by Non-Millennials. These levels of event and program attendance are higher than those reported by CAM visitors at CAM events.

Millennials and Non-Millennials indicated similar behaviors in donating to art museums. For both groups, about half had previously donated to an art museum and half had not. Those who had donated were motivated to do so because they were supporting the museum's mission, the museum's values aligned with their own, they valued supporting the arts, or because they had a particular experience at the museum that they enjoyed. Those who had never donated to an art museum most commonly cited a limited income and a preference to donate elsewhere as reasons for not donating to art museums.

60% of Millennials had never been a member of an art museum. The majority (83%) of those who had never been members were not interested or unsure if they would be interested in being a member of an art museum in the future. 54% of Non-Millennials had never been a member of an art museum, and 40% of those people said they would consider being a member in the future. The most important factor for people of all ages considering becoming a member of an art museum is unlimited free admission, followed by supporting the museum’s mission. This is the opposite of how potential CAM members ranked their priorities. This could indicate that people who have visited CAM feel strongly about the mission of the museum and want to support it, and people who have not visited are more concerned about the potential cost of admission at art museums.

Unlimited free admission is the most important factor to people deciding to become members of an art museum.

What factors would be important to your decision to become a member of an art museum? (select all that apply)

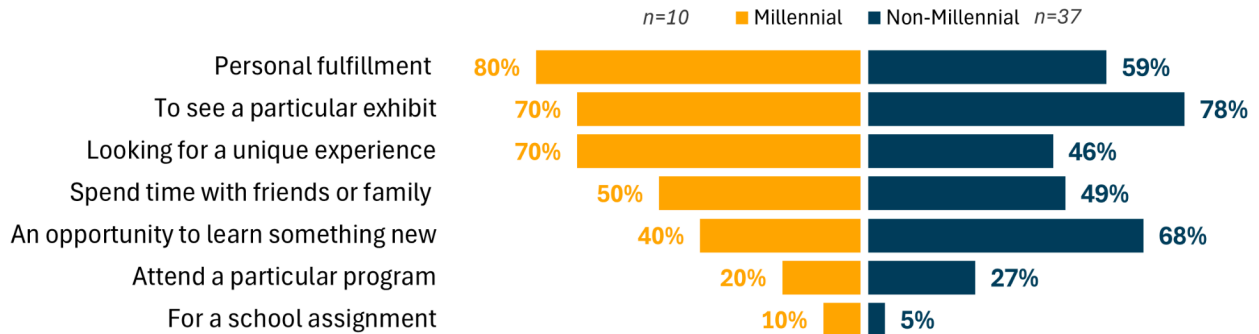


Motivations and Barriers

Among the non-visitors, the motivations to visit art museums mirror the motivations of CAM visitors. Millennials are still most commonly motivated by personal fulfillment, and Non-Millennials are most commonly motivated by seeing a particular exhibit and opportunities to learn something new. Among this group of Millennials, looking for a unique experience was much more common. The consistency between these two samples may suggest that these motivations could be representative of the broader population.

Millennials typically visit art museums for personal fulfillment.
Non-Millennials typically visit art museums to see a particular exhibit.

What typically motivates your decision to visit an art museum? (select all that apply)

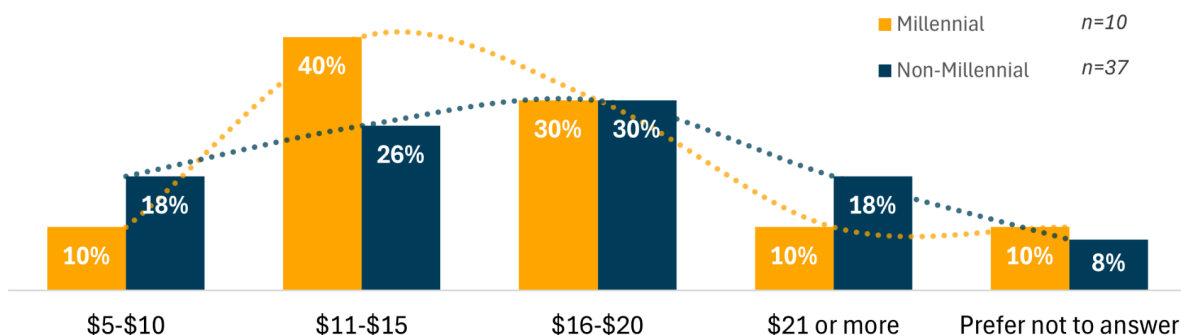


The most common barrier that might prevent people from visiting art museums is cost. 70% of Millennials and 54% of Non-Millennials said it was too expensive. The second most common barrier that was mentioned was a lack of interest in the content or limited offerings. One Millennial also expressed concerns about the atmosphere of art museums, stating she was worried about “it being too stuffy, I want to teach my son about art and to love art without feeling like I walked into a 'members only' club.” 32% of Non-Millennials said they would rather spend time elsewhere or that museums were not relevant in their lives.

Concerns about the cost of visiting art museums were also reflected in the price that people were willing to spend on admission, with Non-Millennials generally willing to more on admission than Millennials, mirroring the responses of the visitor sample.

Non-Millennials are willing to spend more on admission to an art museum than Millennials.

Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to an art museum?



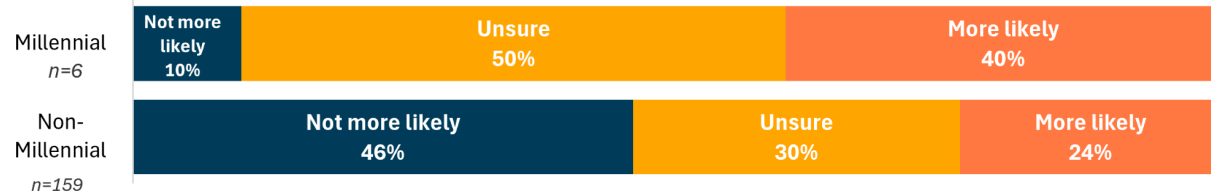
Preferences in Art Museums

Compared to the sample of CAM visitors, Millennials in this sample indicated a stronger preference for entertainment-based programs rather than educational ones. 40% of Millennials said they prefer entertainment programs, 30% had no preference, and 20% said hybrid. Non-Millennials had opposite results with 35% preferring educational programs, 32% having no preference, 19% preferring a hybrid program, and only 14% preferring entertainment. The preferences of Non-Millennials in this sample were more evenly divided amongst the options than Non-Millennial CAM visitors, but still showed a preference towards educational programming.

Unlike CAM’s Millennial visitors, Millennials in this sample were not more likely to attend a museum-related event if food or alcohol was present. Preferences among both samples of Non-Millennials were relatively similar, with the majority of both samples stating that food and alcohol would not make them more likely to attend museum-related events.

Neither Millennials nor Non-Millennials are more likely to attend a museum-related event if food or alcohol is present.

Would you be more likely to attend a museum-related event if food is present?



Would you be more likely to attend a museum-related event if alcohol is present?



When asked to describe the types of content or experiences they would like to see from an art museum, 30% of Millennials mentioned a specific interest in after-hours events. Others mentioned receptions for new exhibits, youth-friendly times, and well-advertised rotating exhibits. Non-Millennials echoed the interest in after-hours events and exhibit receptions. In addition to those interests, programming and events for teens, family programming, local art, and opportunities for learning were

commonly mentioned. The desire for these experiences contradicts those of the CAM visitors, who all rated family programming and after-hours events lowly. This suggests that there could be opportunities for CAM to meet the needs of those who are not visiting with new types of programming, especially after-hours events and programming aimed at teens and families.

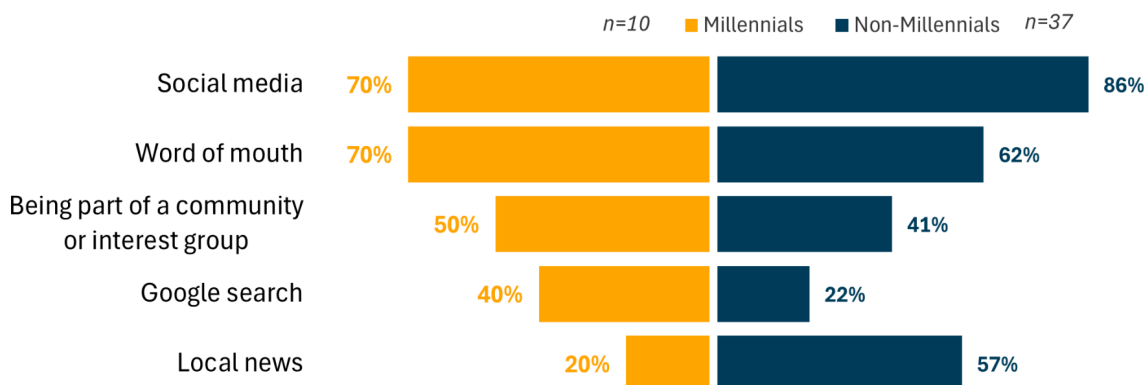
Leisure Habits

Facebook was by far the most preferred social media used by both age groups, with Instagram being the second most preferred. However, like the Millennials in the visitor sample, the majority of non-visitor Millennials do not follow any museums on social media. Paradoxically, 70% of Millennials said they would prefer to learn about events and programs at museums via social media. This may suggest they prefer to learn about these events through their personal social media networks, rather than following a museum directly. Unlike Millennials, 47% of Non-Millennials indicated they were following museums on social media, and 60% of those who were not said they would be open to following a museum on social media to learn more about their programs and events.

When discovering leisure time activities and events, Millennials and Non-Millennials are finding them most commonly through social media and word of mouth. This demonstrates that there is a gap in Millennials' preference for using social media and the level they are currently engaging with museums on social media. This could indicate that they do not enjoy the content museums are posting, they are unaware of museums' social media presence, or they don't view museums as attractions/leisure time activities.

Millennials and Non-Millennials most commonly find out about leisure time activities via social media.

How do you typically find out about leisure time activities or events?



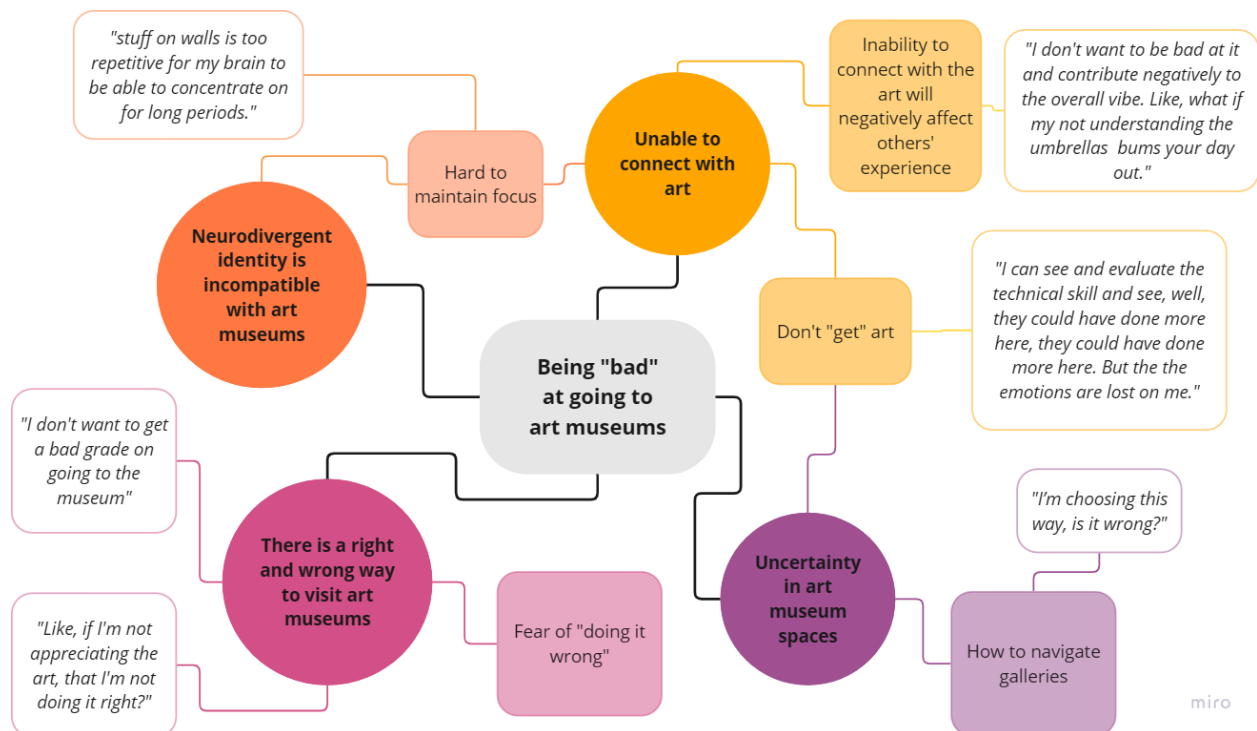
When researching a museum before visiting, 80% of Millennials said they search Google, 80% said they check the museum’s website, and 60% said they utilize word of mouth. Only 20% indicated that they look up museums on social media. Non-Millennials responded similarly, with checking the museum’s website and doing a Google search being the most common methods of research before visiting a museum.

FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP

What are Millennials’ attitudes towards art museums, and what are their general museum visiting behaviors?

It should be noted here that while the small sample size of the focus group is suitable for qualitative insights, it offers little statistically significant weight or the ability to generalize findings to broader populations.

Of the three participants, two described themselves as being “museum people” who typically visit museums several times a year. However, art museums were the least visited type of museum for both individuals who said that they primarily visit history and science museums. Participants went on to describe their impressions of and feelings about art museums as being “old, but in a good way,” “feels a little bit unapproachable,” and also “I don’t get art. I don’t understand it.”



miro

Throughout the discussion, the theme of art museums being unapproachable arose several times, with participants reflecting on previous experiences where they felt they were “bad” at going to art museums. These feelings were connected to multiple facets, including being unable to connect with art, feeling uncertain of how to navigate or engage in art museum spaces, and feeling that their neurodivergent identity prevented them from being able to engage in the same way as others were. These relationships are explored in more detail in the preceding figure.

In addition to this theme, several positive themes revolving around the idea of connection came out of participants' descriptions of what they enjoyed during their visit to CAM and to other art museums. Two participants highlighted how seeing art objects made them feel connected to the making process and enjoyed seeing crafts they do personally reflected in the collections of the museum.

"It's really fun to see other things that it's like, you understand how someone made that, you're like, I know how they did that, I know the process and that's cool."

The art objects also made participants feel connected to history, thinking about how processes change over time, but also the ways that they stay the same. This connection to history was also found through engaging with the wall labels that one participant appreciated for telling stories about what history was like and where the objects came from. The final theme of connection that arose from the discussion was the idea of connection to others, both other visitors they were sharing the space with, and others they typically like to go to museums with. One participant appreciated how excited another visitor was to see the art, which in turn made her more enthusiastic about her own visit. Another participant described how bringing someone along to visit art museums enhanced their experience by having someone who could help explain the meanings of the artwork and keep them engaged for longer.

What are the needs of Millennials in museum spaces? What are the main motivations or barriers that drive their attendance at art museums?

Similar to what was seen in the survey results, focus group participants cited the cost of museum visits as one of the largest barriers to their attendance. Additional barriers included limited energy, lack of downtime, and the general logistics of

coordinating a museum visit while balancing other life responsibilities. For example, one participant stated, “For me, the issue is getting the family out of the house...And then find something that's gonna interest both of them, my husband and my son...”

In the context of CAM, there were additional barriers specific to Edmonds that may prevent young people from visiting. All of the participants highlighted that the area surrounding the museum was expensive and unaffordable for young people to live in. Because of this, younger people have to live further away and are less likely to drop by the museum on a whim, because the time it takes to travel to the museum would outweigh the time spent visiting the museum. In this instance, the exhibits, programs, or events would need to be of specific interest to draw them in, or a visit to the museum would need to be part of a larger itinerary.

When it came to the experiences that participants desired when visiting an art museum, they all expressed an interest in having an experience that was different from their everyday lives. They weren't seeking a specifically educational experience, but they weren't opposed to it either.

**"Entertainment.
Something different.
Just kind of get out of
the house. Do
something different.
Break the routine."**

**"If I learn something new,
that's cool, if I see
something new and
interesting. Mostly, I just
need to **get out of my house**
and look at things for
enrichment."**

Participants also made suggestions for programming at CAM that would entice them to visit in the future. These ideas included a pop-up, makers fair-type event, or a workshop where you make something based on an object in the museum's collection. There was also a significant interest in providing more opportunities for kids to be included at the museum, like a “worksheet or activity sheet” for kids, or a space that played short videos for kids with a coinciding activity kit. None of the participants were particularly interested in the idea of attending live music events.

How are Millennials deciding how to spend their leisure time? Where do they find out about leisure activities and events?

Similar to what was found in the survey results, focus group participants indicated that they were primarily finding out about leisure time activities through social media. Facebook Events and a Facebook community were cited as two specific sources, and the local KOMO news was another.

When deciding how to spend their leisure time, Millennials, like most people, had a myriad of factors to consider. Their decision-making process was generally to use cost as the initial filtering criteria, then the logistics of transportation and parking, then the duration of the activity, and finally, if there were other places or things to do nearby, since they were already out of the house. Within this process, each individual had additional factors to consider, such as disability accommodations, accessibility concerns, health precautions, whether they could bring their dog, or if their whole family would be interested.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

When considering all the data in the specific context of CAM, a clearer picture emerges to explain the lack of a Millennial audience at CAM, and possible ways to remedy that. It is important to note that making museums more accessible for millennials is not a way of making museums less accessible to other audiences. Rather, creating a welcoming environment for millennials also serves to enhance the experience for all visitors. In addition to resources linked throughout this section, supplemental resources are linked at the end of the report.

Cost is the number one barrier

Across all samples, Millennials were willing to pay less for the cost of admission. Lack of disposable income is their main barrier, and the first criterion they use to decide how to spend their time. CAM should consider exploring ways to lower the cost of admission by expanding the types of discounts offered, implementing free days, or through special initiatives. Critically, it should be noted that being free is not the same as being welcoming and having a lower admission fee does not necessarily correlate with welcoming lower-income audiences. The answer is not a lower admission fee for everyone, but rather, targeted affordable access programs

Access Initiatives

- CAM could consider registering for [Museums for All](#), an access initiative of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) that aims to ensure that every family and child has access to a high quality museum experience. Participating museums offer deeply discounted admission to any individual or group of four individuals participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by presenting an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. This is a way to broaden the museum's visitor base, and an effective strategy for mitigating one barrier to accessing museums. CAM could also consider creating a reduced price level of membership using this same criteria, similar to the Museum of Flight's [Reduced Price Aviator Membership](#), which has all of the benefits of a standard membership at a significantly lower cost.
- CAM could explore the possibility of partnering with library systems in the Puget Sound area to develop a system for library card holders to reserve free passes to CAM. [King County Library System](#), [Pierce County Library System](#), and [The Seattle Public Library](#), have existing museum pass programs that could be used as models.

Discount Initiatives

- Explore offering discounts on memberships. Seattle Art Museum offers a [wide range of discounts on memberships](#) from students, educators, and military members to alumni from select universities. Similarly, [The Tate Collective](#) is a free membership scheme for young people aged 16-25.
- Consider implementing [pay-what-you-wish tickets](#). This pricing strategy allows people to pick the price they feel is fair to pay based on their own perceptions of value and circumstances. Therefore, those members of your audience who want to support you have the opportunity to do so, and those for whom price may be a barrier still have the opportunity to participate. [The Metropolitan Museum of Art](#) has held this tradition for New York State residents and New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut students for nearly five decades and is a key way the museum is inclusive and accessible for its community.
- CAM could consider experimenting with [dynamic pricing](#). Dynamic ticket pricing involves adjusting museum admission prices based on real-time factors such as demand, time of purchase, seasonality, and even weather conditions. One of the primary benefits of this approach is revenue optimization, however public perception can be a significant hurdle. If visitors perceive price fluctuations as unfair or exploitative, it may damage the museum's reputation. Therefore, transparent communication about

pricing strategies is vital. Additionally, implementing dynamic pricing systems can involve substantial technological investments, which may be a barrier for CAM. The Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP) has utilized dynamic pricing—what they call [Plan Ahead Pricing](#)—since 2013, citing that it both allows the guest to choose the best day and time for their budget and schedule, and allows the museum to provide a positive experience for every guest and keep the flow of visitors more consistent.

Additional Considerations

- Consider clarifying the language on CAM's website concerning free admission to students. Emphasize that this includes high school and college students.
- Consider expanding free admission to Edmonds School District students *and* their families.
- Consider offering a discount for tickets purchased in advance online. However, this would require the development and maintenance of an online ticketing platform, which does not currently exist

Mission matters

The data shows that a museum's mission is an integral factor in both Millennial and Non-Millennials' decision to become a member of an art museum. Research in the field has found that the importance of an organization's mission goes beyond membership decisions, also affecting decision making around visitation and donations. Thus, considering the significance of the mission, CAM should consider reimagining, refining, and promoting their mission statement on their website and in membership and other marketing materials.

Reimagine and Refine the Message

According to the 2023 Annual Impact Report, CAM's mission was stated as being “celebrating the rich cultural history of Northwest art.” While this statement succinctly summarizes the focus area of the museum, it could be expanded to address CAM's audience and impact. A mission statement should not only demonstrate a museum's focus and purpose, but also its responsibilities to the public and to its collections. Beyond simply explaining the museum's operations, a good mission statement emphasizes the social impact of an institution. By centering *who* the museum is for, rather than *what* the museum is about, a museum's mission statement can highlight the social impacts that visitors of all ages are motivated to support.

The American Alliance of Museums has [a guide](#) on developing a mission statement that could serve as a helpful framework for reimagining CAM's mission. Looking to

the mission statements of other museums can also be a helpful starting point. For example:

- Tacoma Art Museum
“Tacoma Art Museum transforms our communities by sharing art that inspires broader perspectives and cultivates a compassionate future.”
- Bainbridge Island Museum of Art
“BIMA inspires curiosity, wonder and understanding by connecting people with the contemporary art and craft of the Puget Sound region.”
- Bellevue Arts Museum
“Engaging people in the power of art, craft, and design.”
- The Walters Art Museum
“The mission of the Walters Art Museum is to bring art and people together for enjoyment, discovery, and learning.”

Make the Mission Widely Available

While the general sentiment of celebrating art of the Northwest is expressed throughout the museum's website, the mission, vision, and values of the museum are not readily available anywhere for visitors to find. By not explicitly stating its mission, CAM is missing out on the opportunity to give visitors a clear reason to support their institution. Additionally, CAM should consider highlighting support of the mission as a perk of purchasing a membership, so that potential members will know their support is directly contributing to the museum's mission. By promoting the museum's mission, CAM can clearly communicate its core purpose and vision, making it easy for the public to understand why they should care about their organization.

Millennials are going to museums

Millennials in Edmonds have demonstrated that they are interested in visiting museums, including art museums. CAM has the opportunity to capitalize on this audience of established museum-goers. CAM should be proactive in developing relationships with this audience, giving them opportunities to engage with the museum at a variety of levels. Research from the field suggests several strategies for Millennial engagement:

Implement Flexible or Extended Hours

Consider implementing flexible or extended hours and experiment with events outside of traditional hours. Common threads through all of the examples below

are that the events are social, have hands-on components, and are unique experiences that can't be found elsewhere, all things that Millennials highly value.

- [Seattle Art Museum's SAM Remix](#): This is a unique 21+ after-hours art experience where guests remix the museum, meet artists, get creative, and become part of Seattle's creative community.
- [Frye Nouveau After Hours](#): These 21+ events offer Seattle's emerging artists, young professionals, and art lovers alike the perfect way to connect with kindred spirits after hours. They spotlight contemporary voices, have local artists give talks about their work, have art making workshops, all while the galleries and museum store are open for exploration.
- [Baltimore Museum of Art: Art After Hours](#): This is a longstanding recurring 21+ event for BMA that typically coincides with the theme of a new exhibition. This event is a combination of live music, art making workshops, artist talks, and specialty cocktails and hors d'oeuvres
- [Denver Museum of Art: Untitled: Artist Takeover](#): An after-hours quarterly event full of dynamic and one-of-a-kind experiences.
- [The National Gallery of Art: National Gallery Nights](#): Themed evenings with music, live performances, artmaking, pop-up talks, and more.

Embed Interactivity in Gallery Spaces

CAM could explore embedding more interactivity in its gallery spaces. Interactive exhibits and immersive art experiences resonate well with younger visitors. Engaging installations that encourage participation can create memorable experiences, fostering a deeper connection to the art. These interactives should be thoughtfully designed to enhance a visitor's experience, fostering meaningful engagement with artworks and creating opportunities for exploration.

- In-gallery experiences that include active participation, multi-sensory experiences, and social interaction would be attractive to younger audiences. In a MuseumsNext presentation, the [Indianapolis Museum of Art](#) (now Newfields) highlighted several successful examples of this approach, including tactile exhibit elements like touching samples of materials, a still life drawing station, and printmaking workshops inside an exhibit.
- The Met has previously experimented with [multisensory museum experiences](#). These experiments included a material booklet that allowed visitors to interact with the materials used in the artwork they were viewing, scratch-and-sniff paintings that used user-activated fragrance to bring images to life, and multisensory sculptures visitors could handle that mimic the materials and smells of artifacts. These creative ways of approaching interactivity are low tech, and potentially accessible for a museum like CAM to experiment with, or be inspired by.

- [The Nordic's Faux Flora exhibition](#) was an immersive experience of scent, sound, and visual art. This exhibition explored the relationship between scent and memory by combining scent, sound, sculpture, 3D-graphics, and photography in an immersive and other-worldly experience.
- Additional ideas for enhancing interactivity include: providing hands-on replicas and artifacts, interactive boards and flip panels, question and reflection prompts, clue-based scavenger hunts, feedback walls or comment books, and activity stations.

Engage Millennials in the Exhibit Development Process

CAM could experiment with engaging Millennials in the exhibit development process. Instead of guessing or assuming what Millennials want to see, invite them into the exhibit design process by utilizing simple front-end evaluation to understand what they know about a topic, what questions and misconceptions they have, and what content resonates with them personally. This could include anything from interviews, to personal meaning mapping, to online surveys. Not only would this better align the content of the museum with their interests, but it would also present an opportunity to build authentic relationships with Millennials by demonstrating genuine interest and value in their ideas. This [American Alliance of Museums article](#) explores how the Cleveland Art Museum utilizes front-end evaluation as a critical tool for bringing new voices and perspectives into their museum for exhibit design and marketing campaigns.

Try a Community-based, Visitor-centered Approach

CAM could try to move towards a more community-based, visitor-centered approach. Museums are more than repositories of artifacts; they are community spaces where people gather, collaborate, and share experiences. Creating a welcoming environment that encourages community engagement is important, and strengthening community ties can be helpful in attracting and staying relevant with younger audiences.

- Nina Simon's book, [The Participatory Museum](#), is a practical guide for how museums can work with their communities and visitors to make their institutions more dynamic, relevant, and essential places. It explores four models of participation: contributory projects, collaborative projects, co-creative projects, and hosted projects. As an institution that already includes volunteers in its processes, CAM could explore these other models of participation and find ways to broaden its processes to include visitors as well as volunteers. Actively engaging with and soliciting contributions from the community can make a significant impact on the health and vitality of a museum, particularly for institutions that are perceived as irrelevant to community life. Nina Simon's book, [The Art of Relevance](#), further explores

how museums can matter more to people, and become more vital to their communities with case studies and practical advice.

- For those visitors who may be unfamiliar or uncertain about visiting art museums, CAM could consider designing a “How to Look at Art” crash-course tour. The idea is that this tour would introduce visitors to strategies for looking at and engaging with art, thereby breaking down the social and mental barriers that may cause discomfort for visitors. [The Tate](#), the [Museum of Fine Arts, Houston](#), and [NPR](#) all have insightful guides for art viewing that could easily be translated into a facilitated tour. Not only would visitors leave with new tools to engage with art, they would also leave with the feeling that art museums are safe spaces for them to explore unfamiliar ways of being.
- Similarly, CAM could include a “How to visit art museums FAQ” on their website for visitors to peruse before coming in. These questions may include things like: What do I do first when looking at a work of art? Is there a right or wrong place to start when you’re looking at an exhibition? What if I just don’t like the artwork? [This article](#) from the National Endowment for the Arts answers these and more. Providing resources like these for prospective visitors can help cultivate a sense of belonging for those who are less comfortable in art museums by acknowledging that not everyone is an art-viewing expert, and they will still be welcome in that space.

Convert awareness into attendance

There is not a significant lack of awareness about CAM among local Millennials but getting them there is the hard part. Once people come to CAM, they have a very positive experience, and they tend to be vocal supporters of the museum. Getting Millennials into the museum, even just one time, has the potential to convert them into regular visitors. It is also possible that Millennials' awareness is surface level, knowing that CAM exists, but nothing further. Several non-visitors expressed interest in some of the types of programming CAM already offers but had not attended them. Clearer messaging around specific programs or events and more widespread marketing campaigns may help entice them to visit.

Examine Current Communication Methods

The Wallace Foundation’s report, [In Search of the Magic Bullet: Results from the Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative](#), found that successful audience-building strategies met audiences where they were. For example, using more welcoming and informative communication styles and expanding the use of digital and multimedia platforms usually worked. They found that organizations were communicating in ways that reflected their values and using language that may have been meaningful to those in the arts—but that did not resonate with

audiences they wished to reach. Recognizing this and changing communication strategies based on external input allowed organizations to better engage with new audiences. Examples included: sending targeted emails about price discounts for younger audiences directly to younger audiences, updating a website to be more mobile-friendly, using Facebook marketing to attract people to the organizations website, and making preview trailers so guests know what to expect from new programming. Assumptions about existing communication methods should be examined and addressed otherwise organizations risk missing out on the opportunity to speak to those they actually want to reach.

The Museum Creative blog provides [7 Effective Content Marketing Tactics to Attract Young Visitors](#). They emphasize the importance of building authentic connections with audiences, relying on high-value content that tells a compelling story and gives audiences an opportunity to connect with your institution.

Make the most of word of mouth

As a primary driver of attendance for all age groups, CAM should capitalize on word of mouth marketing when possible. Broadly understood as instances where audiences organically share the word about brands or companies, word of mouth can take many forms. It is a powerful marketing tool that has strong persuasive power because it is built on personal endorsements, and feels more authentic than other forms of marketing. A few areas where CAM has room to grow are explored below.

Face-to-Face Marketing

CAM should make its presence in the community more widely known. Consider going out into the community and participating in local festivals and events, hosting a pop-up museum that can serve as both a fun interactive activity and an advertising opportunity. Having a physical presence outside of the confines of the museum could help CAM meet new audiences where they are, lowering the barriers to engage with the museum, and serving as an opportunity to start building authentic connections with community members. This is a simple, cost-effective way to have direct contact with target audiences, who may then feel compelled to share their connection with the museum.

Continue Prioritizing Social Media

Social media marketing is a valuable way to reach Millennial and Gen Z audiences. Not only does social media offer a way to increase exposure brand awareness, it also provides a platform to build a community. Having an effective digital marketing strategy can help CAM attract first-time visitors, encourage repeat visits, and stand out among the numerous leisure and educational options in their area.

CAM should continue making the most of social media. Consider prioritizing storytelling while implementing a tone that blends humor, art education, and behind-the-scenes content. Museums Galleries Scotland has a comprehensive [Social Media Toolkit](#) that walks museums through the building blocks of social media including content ideas, planning and scheduling, and measuring impact, with examples linked throughout. MuseumsNext also tackled the topic of [Building a Robust Museum Digital Content Strategy](#), offering an outline for designing an effective plan. Looking to other institutions social media presence can also be a helpful resource:

- [The British Museum \(UK\)](#): Known for its creative use of Instagram, the British Museum delivers bite-sized, informative content often highlighting unique artifacts, sharing historical anecdotes, and providing interactive calls-to-action, driving high levels of audience engagement. The example museums below take a similar approach that is highly effective:
 - [Los Angeles County Museum of Art \(LACMA\)](#)
 - [The Museum of Modern Art \(MoMA\)](#)
 - [Louisiana Museum of Modern Art](#)
 - [Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum](#)
 - [Guggenheim New York](#)
- [The National Gallery \(UK\)](#) hired social media influencers to create a series of videos about the museum designed to rid itself of its “stuffy” image and promote its collections to audiences it has previously struggled to reach.

It is also important to remember that social media is a conversation, not just a broadcast. This MuseumNext article, [How Museums Can Use Social Media](#), emphasizes that while composing informative and entertaining social media posts is essential, it’s important to recognise that these platforms offer the opportunity to speak with your audiences not just at them. Consider asking questions in social media content to encourage your followers to leave comments and engage with your institution.

Other ways to leverage social media include:

- Feature an “Ask a Curator” or “Ask a Museum” post or live Q&A series where the public can directly interact with the experts at CAM.
- Host a giveaway or contest for your followers to participate in in exchange for something valuable and free (an item, special discount, membership, etc).

- Celebrate “quirky” holidays like National Hat Day or Caturday, using art from the museum’s collection to show the playful side of the museum and create a stronger brand voice. Use hashtags to encourage your audience to participate with images from their lives.
- Use quizzes and polls related to the collection as a fun, quick way to gauge people’s opinions and interests and make learning about art fun.
- Themed content series, such as "Artifact of the Week" or "Artist Spotlight," helps in regularly engaging followers, ensuring that there is always something new being shared and keeping the audience coming
- Encourage visitors to share their experiences and content of the museum on social media. By featuring user-generated content on their own channels, CAM can foster sense of community.

The size of the CAM is both a blessing and a curse

The intimate, cozy size of its footprint is one of the unique features that people love most about CAM. However, the inherently short duration of a visit makes it challenging for prospective guests to justify visiting. Beyond the museum's unique content area, CAM should consider what it is about their museum that makes it unique and worthwhile to visitors. Why should Millennials come to CAM? To help tackle this question, consider using Jaclyn Spainhour’s [Museums and Millennials Worksheet: Starting Points to Improve Engagement](#). This sheet is designed to help museums to start a dialogue about millennial engagement in their institutions, covering concepts like affordability, uniqueness, relevance, and accessibility.

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SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

Marketing

- MuseumsNext- [Museum Marketing](#)
- Museums Galleries Scotland - [Marketing Toolkit](#)

Social Media

- Facebook Group for Museum Social Media Managers - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/musesocial/about/>
- Sprout Social - [How to set \(and achieve\) meaningful social media goals](#)
- Hootsuite - [9 Social Media Goals to Help Keep Your Strategy on Track](#)
- Liana Tech - [10 Tips for Creating a Content Calendar](#)
- Museum Learning Hub - [Digital Media & Technology Toolkits for Small Museums](#)

Community Engagement

- Urban Institute - [Community-Engaged and Participatory Methods Toolkits](#)

APPENDIX A. VISITOR SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Cascadia Art Museum Visitor Survey

Thank you for visiting Cascadia Art Museum (CAM)! In partnership with the UW Museology program, we are conducting a short survey to learn about our visitors in order to continue to improve the museum and its services for future visitors. This information will remain anonymous and confidential. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required. Upon completion of the survey you will be eligible to receive one guest pass for a future visit as a thank you for your participation! If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please email Lauren Krieger at lkrieger@uw.edu. Thank you!

What is your age?

- Under 18 [not eligible to participate]
- 18 – 24 years old
- 25 – 34 years old
- 35 – 44 years old
- 45 - 54 years old
- Over 55
- Prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes you?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer

I identify as: (Select all that apply)

- African American or Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Not listed here or prefer to self-describe:

- Prefer not to answer

What is your home ZIP code? _____

How many times have you been to CAM?

- This is my first time
- 2-3 times
- 4-5 times
- More than 5 times
- Prefer not to answer

If you have visited more than once, when was the last time you visited?

- Within the last 6 months
- Within the last year
- 1-3 years ago
- More than 3 years ago

Are you a member of CAM?

- Yes
 - **How long have you been a member?** _____
 - **What factors motivated your decision to become a member?** (Select all that apply)
 - Unlimited free admission
 - Access to Members-Only events
 - 10% discount at the Museum Store
 - Supporting the museum's mission
 - Other (please specify): _____
- No
 - **Would you ever consider becoming a member of CAM?**
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
 - Prefer not to answer
 - **What factors would be important to your decision to become a member of CAM?** (select all that apply)
 - Supporting the museum's mission
 - Unlimited free admission
 - Access to Members-Only events
 - Discount at the Museum Store
 - Special members-only gallery hours
 - Priority registration for programs
 - Discounted gallery rental
 - Other (please specify): _____
 - Prefer not to answer

Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to a museum?

- \$0
- \$5 - \$10
- \$11 - \$15
- \$16 - \$20
- \$21 or more

What brought you into the museum today? (select all that apply.)

- To see a particular exhibit
 - **If so, which one?** _____
 - **How did you find out about this exhibit?**
 - Google search
 - CAM's website
 - CAM's social media
 - Word of mouth
 - CAM's newsletter
 - Other: _____
 - Prefer not to answer
- Attend a particular program
 - **If so, which one?** _____
 - **How did you find out about this program?**
 - Google search
 - CAM's website
 - CAM's social media
 - Word of mouth
 - CAM's newsletter
 - Other: _____
 - Prefer not to answer
- Visit the entire museum
- School assignment
- Personal fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.)
- Spend time with friends or family
- An opportunity to learn something new
- Interested in art of the PNW
- Looking for a unique experience
- Other (please specify): _____

Are you visiting the Museum:

- Alone
- With a partner
- With member(s) of your family
- With a friend(s)
- In a social or community group
- In a school group
- Prefer not to answer

Have you ever attended events or programs at CAM?

- Yes
 - **If so, please share which ones:** _____
 - **What motivated you to attend?:** _____
- No
- Unsure

Would you be more likely to attend a CAM event if food is present?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Would you be more likely to attend a CAM event if alcohol is present?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Do you prefer museum programs that are focused on education or entertainment?

- Educational (e.g. lectures, tours)
- Entertainment (e.g. wine and cheese events/cocktails, creative workshops)
- Hybrid (e.g. movie viewing + panel discussion)
- No preference
- Prefer not to answer

On a scale from 1 to 5, please rank these experiences based on how interested you are in them. (1 being not interested at all, 5 being very interested)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lectures: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Programs: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallery Tours: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Live music: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> After-Hours Events: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Workshops: _____ |

What types of content or experiences would you like to see from the Museum? Feel free to draw on experiences from other museums.(For example: After hours events, exhibits about a certain topic, programming for teens, etc.)

How did you first find out about CAM?

- Google search
- CAM's website
- CAM's social media
- Word of mouth
- Local News
- Newsletter
- Other: _____
- Prefer not to answer

Do you follow CAM on social media? (Facebook or Instagram)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Would you consider following a CAM on social media to learn more about their exhibits, programs, and events?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

How would you prefer to learn about what's happening at CAM?

- Social media
- Email
- Text message/ Push notifications
- Newsletter
- Other: _____

How would you describe your experience today to a friend?

On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely are you to recommend CAM to a friend or family? (1 being not likely at all, and 10 being very likely)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
not likely at all									very likely

Thank you for completing this survey! Your feedback is greatly appreciated. If you would like to receive a complimentary guest pass for a future visit, please enter your email below. If you are not interested, please continue to submit the survey.

Email: _____

APPENDIX B. NON-VISITOR SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Museum Visiting Behaviors

In partnership with the UW Museology program, Cascadia Art Museum is conducting a short survey to learn about the museum visiting behaviors and leisure habits of their local Edmonds community. This information will remain anonymous and confidential. This survey will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are required. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please email Lauren Krieger at lkrieger@uw.edu. Thank you!

What is your age?

- Under 18 [not eligible to participate, survey ends]
- 18 – 24 years old
- 25 – 34 years old
- 35 – 44 years old
- 45 - 54 years old
- Over 55
- Prefer not to answer

How did you find this survey: _____

Which of the following best describes you?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer

I identify as: (Select all that apply)

- African American or Black
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Not listed here or prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to answer

What is your home ZIP code? _____

Have you ever visited Cascadia Art Museum (CAM)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

How many times have you visited CAM?

- This is my first time
- 2-3 times
- 4-5 times
- More than 5 times
- Prefer not to answer

When was the last time you visited CAM?

- Within the last 6 months
- Within the last year
- 1-3 years ago
- More than 3 years ago

Have you visited a museum sometime in the past year?

- Yes
 - **How many museums have you visited in the past year?**
 - None
 - 1-2
 - 3-4
 - 4 or more
 - Unsure
 - **What type of museums have you visited in the past year? (select all that apply.)**
 - Art Museum
 - Natural History Museum
 - History Museum
 - Zoo/Aquarium
 - Historic Site/Historic Home
 - None of the Above
- No
- Unsure

Before this survey, were you aware of Cascadia Art Museum?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Approximately how much money are you willing to spend on admission to a museum?

- \$0
- \$5 - \$10
- \$11 - \$15
- \$16 - \$20
- \$21 or more

What typically motivates your decision to visit an art museum? (select all that apply.)

- To see a particular exhibit
- To attend a particular program
- For a school assignment
- Personal fulfillment (to learn, relax, pass time, for fun, etc.)
- Spending time with friends or family
- An opportunity to learn something new
- Looking for a unique experience
- Other: _____

What are factors that may prevent you from visiting an art museum? (select all that apply.)

- Too expensive
- Can't get to museum/lack of transportation
- Museums are not relevant in your life
- Unaware of museums in your area
- Would rather spend time elsewhere
- Other: _____

Do you research museums before visiting them? If so, which of the following do you use to aid your research? (Select all that apply.)

- Google search
- Museum website
- Social media
- Museum marketing material
- Word of mouth
- I do not research museums before visiting
- Other: _____

Do you typically visit museums:

- Alone
- With a partner
- With member(s) of your family
- With a friend(s)
- In a social or community group
- In a school group
- Prefer not to answer

Do you ever attend events or programs at art museums?

- Yes
 - **What typically motivates you to attend?**

-
- No
 - Unsure

Do you prefer art museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

- Educational (e.g. lectures, tours)
- Entertainment (e.g. drinking-related events, creative workshops)
- Hybrid (e.g. movie viewing + panel discussion)
- No preference
- Prefer not to answer

Would you be more likely to attend a museum-related event if food is present?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

Would you be more likely to attend a museum-related event if alcohol is present?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Prefer not to answer

What types of content or experiences would you like to see from an art museum? Feel free to draw on experiences from other museums (e.g. after hours events, exhibits about a certain topic, programming for teens, etc.)

How do you typically find out about leisure time activities or events?

- Social Media
- Local News
- Word of Mouth
- Google search
- Being part of a community or interest group
- Other: _____

What social media platforms do you prefer to use in your life? (select all that apply.)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter (X)
- Snapchat
- Pinterest
- None of the above
- Other: _____

Do you follow any museums on social media?

Yes

○ **What social media platforms do you use to follow museums? (Select all that apply.)**

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter (X)

Snapchat

Pinterest

None of the above

Other: _____

No

Unsure

Would you ever consider following a museum on social media to learn more about their programs and events?

Yes

No

Unsure

How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum? (select all that apply)

Social media

Email

Text message/ Push notifications

Newsletter

Other:

Have you ever been a member of an art museum?

Yes

No

Unsure

Would you ever consider becoming a member of an art museum?

Yes

No

Unsure

What factors would be important to your decision to become a member of an art museum? (select all that apply)

- Supporting the museum's mission
- Free admission
- Museum store discount
- Access to members-only events
- Special members-only gallery hours
- Priority registration for programs
- Discounted gallery rental
- Other: _____

Have you ever donated to a museum?

- Yes
 - **If yes, why?:** _____
- No
 - **If no, why not?:** _____
- Unsure

Thank you for completing this survey! Your feedback is greatly appreciated. If you would like to receive your complimentary guest pass for a future visit to Cascadia Art Museum, please enter your email below. If you are not interested, please continue to submit the survey.

Email: _____

APPENDIX C. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

CAM Focus Group: Saturday, April 12th, 2025

Before beginning

- Check for audio recording consent, for transcribing purposes only
 - Your name will not be associated with anything you say. Please feel free to speak openly.
- Start the Laptop and Phone audio recording
- Go over the discussion norms
 - Participation is voluntary, if you wish to end your participation, you are free to leave at any time
 - There are no right answers; everyone's opinion is important
 - There's no expectation of consensus -- people can disagree, respectfully
 - Everyone is encouraged to participate, but no one is required to speak, contribute as much as you feel comfortable
 - I'm acting as facilitator/moderator, not an interviewer. I have a couple of overarching themes and specific questions to ask, but other than guidance, I am open to following the conversation wherever it takes us

Introduce the topics

- Not so much about your experience here today, but more about your general attitudes, motivations, and habits when it comes to museums and leisure

Topic 1: Millennial attitudes towards art museums

- What words, phrases, or feelings come to mind when you think of art museums?
- How often do you visit museums in general and art museums in particular?
- What other museum experiences have you had that you really enjoyed?

Topic 2: Visiting motivations and barriers

- What would motivate you to visit a museum? Would it be particular exhibits, programs, or events? Is it more related to content/subject matter?
 - Are you looking for a specific experience when visiting museums?
- What would prevent you from being a regular museum visitor?
 - What kind of barriers do you consider when deciding whether to visit?
- How would you like to engage with an art museum?
 - Particular activities? In a group?

Topic 3: Millennial leisure habits

- How do you typically spend your leisure time?
 - How do you find out about things to do?
 - What kind of factors do you consider when deciding how to spend your leisure time?