

**Actionable Inspiration:**  
**Visitor Experiences of Creative Impulse in Art Museums**

**Amanda Rodgers & Shylee Wheeler**

**University of Washington**

**Class of 2025**

**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an art museum experience on an adults' creative impulse through an analysis of two key questions: 1) To what extent and in what ways do people feel an art museum exhibit inspires them in general? And 2) To what extent and in what ways do people feel an art museum exhibit inspires them to create specifically? Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 182 participants at Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), Detroit, MI; The Walters Art Museum (The Walters), Baltimore, MD; and the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), Cleveland, OH. Results show that participants did feel a sense of general inspiration, as well as inspiration/motivation to create or make something specifically.

Explanations of participants' feelings of inspiration fell into several categories including a) their interest in creating something themselves, b) their interest in the artistic process, c) inspiration that was unrelated to creativity, and in some cases, d) their barriers to transforming inspiration into creative outputs. We believe that this study could benefit other researchers who are trying to solidify the link between inspiration, creativity, and self-actualization in museum settings.

## Introduction

Art making and/or creativity have a wide range of benefits, including feelings of self-actualization and living a fulfilled life (Maslow, 1971; Rogers, 1961; Survoka, 2012). Although distinct from one another, creativity is linked to inspiration (Piirto, 2004; Pope, 2005), largely falling into two categories: *inspired by* and *inspired to* (Thrash and Elliott, 2004; Desai, 2024). Most research on inspiration in museums generally focuses on the former, whereas *inspired to* is relatively understudied (Ishiguro and Okada, 2021). This article describes results from a study that sought to examine the impact of an art museum experience on adults' feelings of being *inspired to*, or their creative impulse. *Creative impulse*, for this article, is defined as “creative ideas [which] can seem to emerge spontaneously from some inscrutable origin and push our minds and makings in unforeseen directions” (Stefano, p.167).

### Defining Creativity in Action

Rothenberg and Hausman (1976) qualified creativity as simply bringing something into being, echoed by Götz (1981) who defined it as a process of “making or concretization” (p. 300). Brandt (2021) suggests that creativity involves imagination and agency and that a definition should be all-inclusive; arguing definitions of “novel and appropriate” are too reliant on the influence of rigid, rule-based “high consensus fields,” such as “physics or chemistry” (p. 81). Mikkelsen (2020) argues that in all cases of defining creativity, the psyche comes into play; meaning the physiological mechanisms of creativity, such as the creative impulse, are required to understand creativity holistically (p. 4).

Scholars now agree that creativity is not simply defined by novelty (Brandt, 2021). Cropley (2018) posits that novelty may be, at times, more closely related to characteristics *other than* creativity. Freedman (2010) argues that creativity is self-reflective, social, and requires

reproduction. A study on individuals' motives for everyday creativity conducted by Benedek, Bruckdorfer, and Jauk (2019) obtained strong evidence to support the notion that creative activity is influenced by intrinsic needs like enjoyment, self-expression, and personal development. Götz (1981) described creativity as “the process or activity of deliberately concretizing insight” (p. 300). Researchers have also developed theories around the creative process dividing it into stages, such as Balkin's (1990) “preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification” (p. 31) or Piirto's (2004) “inspiration, imagery, imagination, intuition, incubation, insight, and improvisation” (p. 79).

Dewey (1934) and Emerson (1883–93) each describe creative impulsion/impulse as innate to the human condition. Sawyer (2021) concluded that the creative process is a zig-zagging line; “iterative, improvisational, and nonlinear” (p. 1). Barrett, Creech, and Zhukov (2021) “argue that social interaction, communication, and collaboration are key elements in creativity” (p. 14). Further, Ghiselin (1985) describes a key element of the creative process as a spontaneous and involuntary production in a state of heightened awareness through observant attendance, encouraging an appreciation of knowing the “means to an end” (p. 7). He also notes that creation is an organic need rather than a will (p. 17), a sentiment shared by Dewey (1934).

While definitions vary, our overall understanding for this study is that “creativity [is] a process of making” (Götz, 1981, p. 299). Creativity and the creative process happen at an intersectional level, therefore, and represent a growing field with many layers and affecting nearly every profession (Cropley, 2018). We understand creative impulse and creativity to be related as described by Stefano (2019): that “creativity is often set to work in the directions our instincts or impulses draw us” (p.169).

### **Creativity's Connections to Self-Actualization**

Creativity in action often overlaps with theories of self-actualization. For instance, Maslow (1962) studied human motivation and fundamental needs, culminating in the *Hierarchy of Needs* theory where creativity is at the top under “self-actualization.” After all basic needs are met, an individual still finds themselves seeking purpose, or “the desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for [one] to become actualized in what [they are] potentially” (p. 382). To fulfill one’s own needs is to live what Maslow describes as a “full life.” Kaufman (2020) reframed the pyramid as a boat that “requires both stability of goal pursuit in the face of distraction and disruption as well as the capacity for flexibility to adapt and explore an environment” (p. xxxi).

Götz’ (1981) understanding of self-actualization through the aforementioned “concretization,” theorizes that by providing individuals with moments to contemplate accumulated interests, a moment of solidification occurs where creative visions can become creative reality through a new understanding of the world. “Actualization is [this] potency in action,” says Götz (1981, p. 298), suggesting that thinking of creating is in and of itself the very act of making something exist. Rothman’s (2014) lay observation that “...if you’re really creative, really imaginative, you don’t have to make things, [you] just have to live, observe, think, and feel,” (para. 11) reflects wider social consciousness around creativity. Rogers (1954) believes that self-actualization through creative outlets is how people find happiness and fulfillment, connecting to Dissanayake (2003) who believes that, “Art, or more accurately, the desire to make some things special, is a biologically endowed need” (p. 31).

### **Museums & the Creative Impulse**

We know that museum visitors are aware of the creative process. For example, participants in Fisher’s (2018) study on creativity in art museums stated that they were

“...curious about an individual artist’s specific artistic process” (p. 58), and indicating that museums are creatively-charged environments with visitors self-reporting “high degrees of personal value around their own creative thinking” during their art museum visits (p. 93). Additionally, participants interviewed for Jarvis’ (2019) study on inspiration in art museums self-reported feeling inspiration, stating that “the art on view represents the final stage of someone else’s creative process—a process that they respect, value, or want to emulate” (p. 42). Therefore, there is compelling reason to believe that art museums may contribute to visitors’ creative impulse, and see the creative process as something they themselves could engage in.

Traditionally, museums intersect with creativity in action as described by Adams and Moussouri (2002)—through engagement in workshops, maker-spaces, or technological interfaces with words like: “immersive”, “interactive”, and “participatory”. However, little research explores this relationship between art-viewing and art-making such as that described by Emerson where it is: “not a decisive moment in which creative thought flashes into view but a gestational process, indeed a creative labor of thinking that works by chances and hints” (Stefano, 2019, p. 168). Dewey (1934) describes this phenomenon as the aforementioned creative impulses where the first stages of a complete experience, derived in need, and satiated through interactions with the environment. Emerson remarks that the creative impulse is a need where creative action becomes innate and necessary to function within one's natural environment (Stefano, 2019).

Current research lacks a well-defined understanding of how these *impulsions* or being *inspired to* manifest in museums. This has “also misled educationists, who then think they are cultivating creativity when in fact they are cultivating (or trying to cultivate) only insight.” (Götz, 1981, p. 300). Museums have the potential to encourage creativity in action—a powerful

possibility, since “through engaging with a craft activity, an individual realizes their ability to manipulate a medium: their power to shape the world around them” (Kettle and Koumis, 2022, p. 78).

### **Study Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of an art museum experience on an adults’ creative impulse through analysis of two key questions: 1) To what extent and in what ways do people feel an art museum exhibit inspires them in general? And 2) To what extent and in what ways do people feel an art museum exhibit inspires them to create specifically?

### **Methods**

The study was designed as a descriptive survey, with data collected through semi-structured interviews with adult art museum visitors. Data were collected in three medium to large art museums with temporary exhibits that touched on elements of the creative process on the first three weekends of March 2025 within the hours of 11am to 4pm. Visitors were invited to sit, describe their feelings on creative impulse (refer to Interview Guide in Appendix A), and offered incentives of postcards, mugs, and magnets from the museums’ gift shops following their interview. Interviews lasted between 4 and 22 minutes, were recorded using otter.ai, and then transcribed and sorted into excel sheets for analysis. In general, themes of personal connection, clear interest in artistic process, and personal associations with materials and techniques were present.

### **Sampling**

Study participants were recruited at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), Detroit, MI; The Walters Art Museum (The Walters), Baltimore, MD; and the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), Cleveland, OH. Adult visitors over the age of 21 were approached at random as they exited the

exhibition. Researchers introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the study, and asked if adults were willing to participate.

The DIA is located in central city Detroit, Michigan. Opening in 1888, the DIA collection includes 65,000 works and is the fourth largest art museum in the country. In 2023, the DIA received an average of 600,000 visitors and was voted USA Today's best art museum in America. The special exhibit on display was *Painted with Silk: The Art of Early American Embroidery* which was free with an entry ticket of \$23.50 for non-member adults. The exhibit featured 69 embroideries and one painting.

The Walters Art Museum opened in 1934 in Baltimore's Mount Vernon neighborhood. The collection holds over 36,000 objects and admission is free. The special exhibit on display was *Art and Process: Drawings, Paintings, and Sculptures from the 19th-Century Collection*. The exhibit featured 30 works on paper (pastel, graphite, charcoal, and watercolor), 23 oil paintings, and several works in bronze, porcelain, and terracotta, all in various stages of completion.

The CMA, founded in 1913, is located in the University Circle neighborhood of Cleveland and houses 63,000 objects. Entry to CMA is free, except for special exhibitions such as the one in this study, *Picasso and Paper*, which cost \$30 for non-member adults. *Picasso and Paper* showcased nearly 300 of Picasso's works in chronological order, focusing primarily on his material relationship to paper. The exhibit included collages, paper sculptures, manipulated photographs, drawings, and several print techniques.

## **Participants**

Across the three institutions, a total of 182 participants were interviewed. Thirty-nine percent (n=70) of participants were interviewed at the CMA; 32% (n=59) of participants were interviewed at The Walters; and 29% (n=53) of participants were interviewed at the DIA.

Of the 182 participants, 27% (n=49) were between the ages of 25 and 34; 20% (n=36) were between the ages of 34 and 44; 17% (n=30) were between the ages of 55 and 64; 11% (n=19) were between the ages of 45 and 54; 9% (n=16) were between the ages of 65 and 74; 9% (n=16) were between the ages of 21 and 24; 6% (n=10) were between the ages of 74 and 83; 3% (n=5) were between the ages of 85 and 95. One participant chose to not disclose their age.

Thirty percent of participants (n=55) identified as actively working a job in a creative field, and 25% (n=45) said they hold a degree in a creative field. Seventy percent of participants (n=127) stated that they do not work a job in a creative field, and 75% (n=136) said they do not hold a degree in a creative field. When asked how often they engage in creative making, 41% (n=74) stated that they engage several times a week, 33% (n=60) stated they engage several times a month, 18% (n=33) stated that they engage several times a year, and 8% (n=15) stated that they do not engage in creative making at all.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed through emergent coding. Three coding rubrics were developed for analyzing the open-ended questions about feelings of inspiration against the same open-ended questions about feelings of inspiration to create. To avoid having one researcher code all responses for a single museum, responses were split into even and odd numbers; one researcher coded even-numbered responses, the other coded odd-numbered responses. Inter-rater reliability was calculated at 83%. Disagreements were rectified through clarification and consensus, and the remaining data were confirmed by both researchers.

## Results

### 1) To what extent and in what ways do people feel that an art museum exhibit inspires them in general?

#### a) The extent to which participants felt inspired in general

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt inspired during their exhibit experience, on a scale between one and seven, where 1 was not at all and 7 was fully. The median rating was 6.0.

#### b) Participants' descriptions of their general inspiration

Participants were then asked to describe their feelings of inspiration. Responses were coded into six categories (see Table 1): i) desire to create; ii) non-creative inspiration; iii) barrier to creation; iv) social proximity to making; v) interest in process; and vi) general disinterest.

Table 1: Participants' descriptions of their feelings of inspiration (N=182).

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>General inspiration</i>	Being mentally stimulated to feel something in response to an art-viewing experience.	32% (n=57)
<i>Interest in process</i>	Expressing a curiosity or desire to know more about how an artwork is made.	25% (n=45)
<i>Desire to create</i>	The expressed motivation to engage in a creative or artistic activity or, mention of a creative or artistic activity that they have engaged with in the past.	24% (n=42)
<i>General disinterest</i>	Any response that encapsulates a 'nothing' or 'indescribable' feeling.	9% (n=17)
<i>Barrier to creation</i>	An expressed desire to create but acknowledging a physical, mental, or exterior barrier to engaging in a creative activity.	6% (n=11)

<i>Social proximity to making</i>	The feeling of having a relationship with an object, theme, or technique based on second-hand knowledge of a pre-established or reoccurring connection to it through a person in someone's immediate social circle; such as friends, family, and romantic partners.	4% (n=7)
-----------------------------------	---	----------

Participant responses coded as *general inspiration* included the following perspectives:

a) "I'm not necessarily one who is going to go out and create but I do enjoy thinking about the art" and b) "I come to these because I'm wanting to look at people that are good at it. Kind of like a professional sporting event, right? Like I can't do it so I'm going to watch someone else do it."

Participant responses coded as *interest in process* included the following perspectives:

a) "It was also interesting that they would mix [the embroidery] with watercolor and have the faces painted instead of embroidering the faces." and b) "[...] You do get to see that this is like the thought process they go through and normally you only just get to see the final result, but getting to see how everything gets made is interesting."

Participant responses coded as *desire to create* included the following perspectives: a)

"I felt like I would also want to learn how to do that type of needlework one day" and b) "I'm going to go to the art store after this and go get some new art supplies." (These responses were given prior to being explicitly asked about their feelings of desire to create.)

Participant responses coded as *general disinterest* included the following perspective:

"Mostly this is just not my style so there's just not much to be inspired about."

Participant responses coded as *barrier to creation* included the following perspectives:

a) "I wish I could go home and paint, but I've got this tremor" and b) "I feel like towards the beginning I was like, 'What if I got into embroidery?' and then I was like, 'I have ADHD,' so

I pick up crafts and then put them down. So I don't know, I'd say that I was pretty inspired but then like my being realistic sort of self said no.”

Participant responses coded as *social proximity to making* included the following perspectives: a) “Quite a few of my friends are embroiderers and although I'm not, I appreciated seeing this compared to what they do” and b) “[The paintings' subjects] made me think of a friend of mine who kind of gets inspiration for writing stories about people.”

c) Participants’ comparisons of their feelings of inspiration in the exhibit to their feelings of inspiration at other times

Participants were asked next to compare their feelings of general inspiration in the exhibit to other times they have felt inspired. Responses were coded into five categories (see Table 2): i) similar/high in feeling; ii) similar/neutral in feeling; iii) different/low in feeling; iv) inspiration as personal story; and v) undefinable.

Table 2: Participants’ comparisons of feeling inspired in the exhibit to feeling inspired at other times (N=182)

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>Similar/neutral in feeling</i>	Simple statements of ‘similar’ with slight downplay of feelings or expression of neutrality.	27% (n=43)
<i>Similar/high in feeling</i>	Relating to other common feelings of inspiration or high in inspiration, statements of ‘similar’ with ‘high’ level ratings.	25% (n=40)
<i>Inspiration as personal story</i>	An immediate response to tell a long story of a moment of personal inspiration as it relates to their current lives.	22% (n=36)
<i>Different/low in feeling</i>	Complete downplay of feelings or expressing a differing opinion to inspiration, statements of “different” or “low” level ratings.	17% (n=28)

<i>Undefinable</i>	'I don't know' or any type of response that portrays <i>inspiration</i> as undefinable to that individual.	9% (n=15)
--------------------	--	-----------

Participant responses coded as *similar/neutral* included the following perspectives: a) "I guess I wasn't overly inspired? I didn't totally connect, but it was cool" and b) "I think it was a pretty similar feeling to how I normally feel when it comes to inspiration."

Participant responses coded as *similar/high* in feeling included the following perspectives: a) "Probably right up there with awe-inspiring" and b) "It's definitely one more [...] definitely more intense than other exhibits."

Participant responses coded as *inspiration as personal story* included the following perspectives: a) "I feel that inspiration when I take art classes [in] high school when I just got to kind of explore" b) "I get inspired by other things as well. Like, I see something pretty outside, you know, like, a pretty scene, a pretty picture" and c) "A few months ago, I was in Santa Fe with my sister on a trip, and we went to the Georgia O'Keefe museum there. [...] There was a picture that she made when she was a student [...] I wanted to have it so I could look at it more. I bought a postcard [and] it could have been any other thing in that museum that made me just want to have it like that tight connection all of a sudden with this one thing."

Participant responses coded as *different/low in feeling* included the following perspectives: a) "Well, there are things that I can do that I might feel inspired by, for example, like a cooking demonstration, I like to cook so I might be inspired to try that." b) "I didn't find those particular works of art, to me, very emotionally evocative."

Participant responses coded as *undefinable* included the following perspectives: a) "Compared to other shows? I'm not sure..." and b) "I don't know if I can answer that question because [...] I don't get inspired all that often."

d) What was it about the exhibit that inspired participants

Participants were asked what it was about the exhibit that inspired them. Responses were coded into six categories (see Table 3): i) mention of personal interest in the exhibit; ii) mention of personal disinterest in the exhibit; iii) exhibit design; iv) immersion; v) mentioning creation; and vi) nothing.

Table 3: What is was about the exhibit that inspired people in general (N=182)

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>Mention of personal interest in the exhibit</i>	Naming or describing one specific art piece or theme in the exhibition that stood out as it relates to them as a person.	33% (n=53)
<i>Immersion</i>	A mention of critically thinking about a topic, theme, or process while in the exhibit.	30% (n=48)
<i>Exhibit design</i>	Mentioning an aspect of exhibit construction that added to feelings of inspiration.	9% (n=15)
<i>Mention of personal disinterest in the exhibit</i>	Describing something about the exhibition that took away from feelings of inspiration.	9% (n=15)
<i>Nothing</i>	Responding with ‘I don’t know ‘ or ‘Nothing’ in relation to the exhibit specifically as it brought about feelings of inspiration.	9% (n=15)
<i>Mentioning creation</i>	Personally connecting or describing an interest in any art practice or mentioning a friend/family’s art practice. Any connection made to art creation that exists in their lives.	8% (n=13)

Participant responses coded as a *mention of personal interest* included the following perspectives: a) “I liked the one with the ancestry tree [...] because I've done a lot [of] ancestry [digging]” b) “In the exhibition there was a female artist that I really liked so I felt like that was really inspiring hearing her story” and c) “I liked [Picasso’s] drawings. [Luncheon on the Grass]

was a drawing that was really beautifully illustrated and it really stood out to me and felt similar to my drawings.”

Participant responses coded as *immersion*, included the following perspectives: a) “I learned! I was looking up words during the whole show. I was educated by him. He kind of talked to me” and b) “Just getting into the mindset of these people was inspiring. It made me realize that [...] you can see something beautiful, but to [...] understand their processes and how they created something. That's inspiring.”

Participant responses coded as *exhibit design* included the following perspectives: a) “I felt appreciative of the Walters curators [...] It's a kind of thing I wouldn't have thought of on my own, and juxtaposing the sketches with the finished paintings, and explaining that this was a very deliberate staging process in the development of the final work was important to me” and b) “I think I enjoyed the way it was broken up to certain times in [Picasso's] life.”

Participant responses coded as a *mention of personal disinterest in the exhibit* included the following perspectives: a) “Just wasn't fully speaking to me in the way that other things have I guess” and b) “[It's] very gender specific. I think a woman would probably have much more of a reaction to it.”

Participant responses coded as *nothing* included the following perspective: “I don't know that I have a rationale behind mine. I think similarly like the headspace that I'm in today. I just kind of came to browse and not really think about anything.”

Participant responses coded as *mentioning creation* included the following perspectives: (a) “You're just seeing the process of being like, ‘Oh, I could do this,’” and b) “My mom used to do rug-hooking, so [it] just brought back some memories.”

**2) To what extent and in what ways do people feel that an art museum exhibit inspires them to create specifically?**

a) The extent to which participants felt inspired to create

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt inspired to create or make something during their exhibit experience on a scale between one and seven, where 1 was not at all and 7 was fully. The median rating for feelings of desire to create or make something was 5.0.

b) Participants' descriptions of their feelings of being inspired to create

The same three follow-up questions were asked of participants regarding their feelings of desire to create or make something. Their responses were coded into the same six categories as the inspiration question (see Table 4): i) desire to create; ii) non-creative inspiration; iii) barrier to creation; iv) social proximity to making; v) interest in process; and vi) general disinterest.

Table 4: Participants' descriptions of their feelings of being inspired to create specifically (N=182)

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>Desire to create</i>	The expressed motivation to engage in a creative or artistic activity or, mention of a creative or artistic activity that they have engaged with in the past.	45% (n=82)
<i>Interest in process</i>	Expressing a curiosity or desire to know more about how an artwork is made.	17% (n=29)
<i>General inspiration</i>	Being mentally stimulated to feel something in response to an art-viewing experience.	14% (n=25)
<i>Barrier to creation</i>	An expressed desire to create but	11% (n=20)

	acknowledging a physical, mental, or exterior barrier to engaging in a creative activity.	
<i>General disinterest</i>	Any response that encapsulates a ‘nothing’ or ‘indescribable’ feeling.	9% (n=17)
<i>Social proximity to making</i>	“The feeling of having a relationship with an object, theme, or technique based on second-hand knowledge of a pre-established or reoccurring connection to it through a person in someone’s immediate social circle; such as friends, family, and romantic partners.”	4% (n=7)

Participant responses coded as *desire to create* included the following perspectives: a) “We did the kids activity, so I took it because I was like, I'm gonna take it home and finish it” b) “I might take up an art class. There are... I know that there are museums around where I live that offer free art classes” and c) “I’m a quilter, and there were some of the paintings or drawings in which there were a lot of straight lines. [It’s] like, ‘oh, I could maybe make that into a quilt.’ Use fabric instead of drawing, maybe.”

Participant responses coded as *interest in process* included the following perspectives: a) “We both do a lot of sketching so it was cool to see inside someone else's mind like that as someone that also does it” and b) “I think because you see some process and it just makes you think about all the possibilities open to making something.”

Participant responses coded as *general inspiration* included the following perspectives: a) “I’m not very artistic, but studying the art is something I'm interested in” and b) “I was inspired, but not so much where I would want to go out and buy the stuff to do it like that.”

Participant responses coded as *barrier to creation* included the following perspectives: a) “Oh, I wish I could go back to cross-stitching. Arthritis in my hand, and [I have bad] vision, [so] it wouldn't happen” and b) “I mean, I'm a new mom so I just don't have the time. As much

as I'd love to, I just know that I'm not going to right now.”

Participant responses coded as *general disinterest* included the following perspective:

“I'm just not very creative like that. It's just not for me.”

Participant responses coded as *social proximity to making* included the following perspective: “My daughter is very artistic so I was thinking of her, but I'm not very artistic. If it's myself, like, no.”

c) Feelings of desire to create in the exhibit compared to past feelings of desire to create

Participants were next asked to compare their feelings of desire to create or make something to other times they have had that desire in the past. Responses were coded into five categories (see Table 5): i) similar/high in feeling; ii) similar/neutral in feeling; iii) different/low in feeling; iv) inspiration as personal story; and v) undefinable.

Table 5: Participants’ feelings of being inspired to create in the exhibit as compared to their past feelings of being inspired to create (N=182)

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>Similar/high in feeling</i>	Relating to other common feelings of inspiration or high in inspiration, statements of ‘similar’ with ‘high’ level ratings.	27% (n=33)
<i>Inspiration as personal story</i>	An immediate response to tell a long story of a moment of personal inspiration as it relates to their current lives.	26% (n=32)
<i>Similar/neutral in feeling</i>	Simple statements of ‘similar’ with slight downplay of feelings or expression of neutrality.	21% (n=26)
<i>Different/low in feeling</i>	Complete downplay of feelings or expressing a differing opinion to inspiration, statements of “different” or “low” level ratings.	16% (n=20)

<i>Undefinable</i>	‘I don’t know’ or any type of response that portrays <i>inspiration</i> as undefinable to that individual.	8% (n=10)
--------------------	--	-----------

Participant responses coded as *similar/high in feeling* included the following perspectives: a) “I would compare it favorably to other times that I've wanted to create something, whether it would be even just a new recipe or a project in the yard” and b) “This was actually more intense. Like a lot of times when I see something that I like, I do want to recreate it. I guess that is just the artist in me. But I was really inspired by this.”

Participant responses coded as *inspiration as personal story* included perspectives such as: a) “I think almost similar [...] like if I'm watching a video or like an animation or a movie or something that's really well done and I like kind of want to go home and create, like actually let me do that now, but I'm just thinking, 'wow, this is so beautiful, I want to do something like that” and b) “My daughters are both very artistic. [...] I think I had some skills, but I think they go way beyond me. They kind of inspire me.”

Participant responses coded as *similar/neutral in feeling* included the following perspective: “It didn't inspire me to create it, but it definitely was beautiful and pleasing to see. Maybe I'll start knitting again? I don't know.”

Participant responses coded as *different/low in feeling* included the following perspective: “This is not intense for me... this is like a one. Less so.”

Participant responses coded as *undefinable* included perspectives such as: “I guess I can't think of anything off the top of my head right now.”

#### d) What about the exhibits inspired feelings of desire to create

Finally, participants were asked what about the exhibit inspired their feelings of desire to create or make something. Responses were coded into six categories (see Table 6): i) mention of

personal interest in the exhibit; ii) mention of personal disinterest in the exhibit; iii) exhibit design; iv) immersion; v) mentioning creation; and vi) nothing.

Table 6: What it was about the exhibits that inspired people's feelings of desire to create (N=182)

<b>Emergent code</b>	<b>Definition of emergent code</b>	<b>Percentage of participant responses</b>
<i>Mention of personal interest in the exhibit</i>	Naming or describing one specific art piece or theme in the exhibition that stood out as it relates to them as a person.	26% (n=26)
<i>Immersion</i>	A mention of critically thinking about a topic, theme, or process while in the exhibit.	19% (n=19)
<i>Mentioning creation</i>	Personally connecting or describing an interest in any art practice or mentioning a friend/family's art practice. Any connection made to art creation that exists in their lives.	17% (n=17)
<i>Nothing</i>	Responding with 'I don't know ' or 'Nothing' in relation to the exhibit specifically as it brought about feelings of inspiration.	15% (n=15)
<i>Mention of personal disinterest in the exhibit</i>	Describing something about the exhibition that took away from feelings of inspiration.	14% (n=14)
<i>Exhibit design</i>	Mentioning an aspect of exhibit construction that added to feelings of inspiration.	7% (n=7)

Participant responses coded as *personal interest* included the following perspectives: a) “*The Moby-Dick* piece of art [from DIA]. That just really hit home out of all the pieces” and b) “*The Weeping Woman* [by Picasso] I think. That was definitely one that I saw across the way and I was like, ‘I have to go look at that right now.’”

Participant responses coded as *immersion* included the following perspective: “It was interesting to see that not many black little girls could do [embroidery] until like the early 1900s and it was just a couple because they weren't either accepted into the schools or they weren't

really taught it and that was interesting too, just to see like it was something they wanted to do and was taught to most girls, but not to them. So [as a black woman] it's inspiring to possibly be part of [adding to this story] if I were to create something like this.”

Participant responses coded as *mentioning creation* included the following perspectives:

a) “Seeing the art itself. It just naturally makes me want to do something. And [...] seeing the different steps and stages of one piece of art, which actually has multiple pieces to it. That makes me want to make something” and b) “I work at a greeting card company so [...] I have to create illustrations and quick little drawings daily and I liked that his style was similar to mine.”

Participant responses coded as *nothing* included the following perspective: “Nothing specific about the exhibition.”

Participant responses coded as *personal disinterest* included the following perspective: “I'm more of a paint person. So I can see sculptures and I can try to appreciate what I'm looking at, but [they] don't speak to me the way a painting does.”

Participant responses coded as *exhibit design* included the following perspective: “Just the last painting and the lighting.”

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of art museum experience on an adults' creative impulse. Museum visitors were asked to discuss their feelings of inspiration in general, and their feelings of being inspired to create more specifically. This separation occurred in order to distinguish the two as separate ideas. This approach employed the accessible terms “inspiration” and “inspiration to create or make something” to encourage visitors to think about inspiration as multifaceted.

### **How do art museum visitors feel inspiration in general?**

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt inspired during their exhibit experience, on a scale between one and seven, where 1 was not at all and 7 was fully. The median rating was 6.0, indicating high levels of general inspiration in this environment. Responses reflected findings from past studies: Jarvis (2019) found that visitors generally leave art museum experiences feeling inspiration, Luke (2021) observed that museums evoke feelings of inspiration and awe, and Fisher (2018) found that museums are creatively charged environments. Our findings reinforced the idea that visitors generally feel inspired in art museums as a form of feeling *inspired by*. Responses coded as both *non-creative inspiration* and *desire to create* could be qualified as “reactive and proactive processes” (Desai, p. 37); for example, some participants described their inspiration to view more art, but not necessarily to make more art

Others described a desire to create prior to being asked explicitly about this facet of inspiration. We observed that many visitors’ immediate response to inspiration was to talk about a personal creative outlet such as a visitor who mentioned the intention to go buy art supplies or another visitor that brought up wanting to write short stories following the exhibit, for example. This indicates that visitors were considering inspiration as something actionable and individualized, reflecting Maslow's (1943) observation that “The specific form that [creative] needs will take will of course vary greatly from person to person. In one individual it may take the form of the desire to be an ideal mother, in another it may be expressed athletically, and in still another it may be expressed in painting pictures or in inventions” (p. 383).

Visitors’ definition of creativity further included activities such as traveling, collecting art, crafting, journaling, collaging, designing tech programs, developing websites, writing children’s books, designing greeting cards, making fashion choices, designing their own

clothing, etc. Looking at this topic holistically allows for an individual to attain “the tendency for [one] to become actualized in what [they are] potentially” (Maslow, 1943, p. 382).

### **How do art museum visitors feel inspiration to create or make specifically?**

While Jarvis’ (2019), Luke’s (2021) and Fisher’s (2018) studies measured inspiration as an emotion, our study measured a form of intended action, and suggests that like Stefano (2019), people do feel *inspired to create* after an art-viewing experience. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt inspired during their exhibit experience, on a scale between one and seven, where 1 was not at all and 7 was fully. The median rating was 5.0, indicating high feelings of inspiration to create, although lower than general inspiration. Desai’s (2024) definition of evocation as stimulation by an external source rather than something unwilled and evoked was reflected in visitors who noted that general inspiration was an expected outcome of their museum experience, but not all noted an expectation to feel desires to create. This could describe why visitors rated a 6.0 for general inspiration and a 5.0 for inspiration to create.

Findings on inspiration to create aligned with Thrash and Elliott’s (2004) observation that *inspired by* and *inspired to* are distinct experiences of inspiration: twenty four percent of visitor responses were coded as *desire to create* when asked about general feelings of inspiration and rose to forty five percent when asked specifically about their inspiration to create, indicating that visitors indeed distinguish between the two. We believe emotion and action are connected, but change when applied to how the visitors’ imagine this manifesting in their lives, which may explain the difference in median responses to the two questions. Visitor explanations of these ratings fell into several categories including a) their interest in creating something themselves, b) their interest in the artistic process, c) inspiration that was unrelated to creativity, and in some cases, d) their barriers to transforming inspiration into creative outputs. Understanding visitor

feelings of *inspiration* to create or make could be particularly beneficial to museum professionals working in public programming, and curators who intend to prompt visitors to engage physically with exhibits.

### **Discoveries and Limitations**

While this study measured visitors' feelings of inspiration in relation to their desire to create, we believe that implications extend beyond inspiration and creativity research, and relate to self-actualization and fulfillment. Feelings of creative impulse appear to be heavily reliant on the way in which people can connect to an artistic process. When participants connect personal feelings or memories to creative impulse, they appeared to be more likely to express thoughts of "I could create" or "I want to create" regardless of their self-reported regularity of engagement with creative practices. Götz (1981) theorizes that by providing individuals with moments to contemplate accumulated interests, a moment of solidification occurs where creative visions can become creative reality through a new understanding of the world.

An emerging discovery to be further explored are the mental and physical barriers that prevented some participants from engaging in art making, oftentimes thinking fondly on art making but expressing a disconnection from the act itself (ex: arthritis, eyesight ADHD, depression, parenthood, politics, time, environmental space, etc.). So, while "art, or more accurately, the desire to make some things special, is a biologically endowed need" (Dissanayake, 2003, p. 31), there's been little discussion on how that need is managing itself in the world of today as the mental health crisis grows larger, climate change becomes more paramount, and access to things like healthcare and affordable housing becomes smaller. This finding could be particularly relevant to museum professionals working on accessibility.

Limitations to this study include visitors who frequently struggled to think about engaging in creativity outside of the exhibited mediums. For example, following the embroidery exhibit, participants often felt that they needed to discuss embroidery. Visitors continued this tendency until given explicit instruction that their responses could reflect other forms of making. Additionally, visitors referred to “inspiration,” “creativity,” “aesthetics,” “motivation,” and “creative impulse” somewhat interchangeably. Despite providing definitions, visitors viewed them synonymously, making them difficult to analyze individually. Finally, visitors were also asked to reflect on their feelings immediately following the exhibit, meaning there was a lack of time to self-reflect following their art-viewing experience.

### **Conclusion**

While participants express their desires and needs towards creation, the discussion we as researchers want to come back to is Rothman (2014) who addressed the wider social consciousness stating: “...if you’re really creative, really imaginative, you don’t have to make things. You just have to live, observe, think, and feel” (para. 11). Or further, “positive resonance” noted by Barbara Fredrickson in Scott Barry Kaufman’s book (2020) that “micro-moments of connection are tiny engines that can set off upward spirals in your life, helping you to grow and become a better version of yourself” (p. 43) through only the mere proximity of sharing moments of joy or calm in tune with another human being. Accessibility is a small but important part of this study, and museum professionals should consider the dual realities of desire to create and the inability to do so.

Future studies might focus on addressing the distinction between feeling *inspired by* and *inspired to* with visitors directly. Other studies could focus on exhibit factors that encourage creativity and inspiration, barriers to creation due to accessibility issues, or even ethnographic

visitor participation in creative activities. Studies could also examine actionable inspiration in museum programming, makerspaces, or exhibits with non-professional artists. Due to the relationship between art-viewing and art-making being under researched, replication of this study could also result in deeper understanding.

Overall, these findings have implications for decisions made in art museum curation, exhibit development, public programming, accessibility, and interpretation strategies. Key beneficiaries include curators who would want to 1) engage visitors through personal connection with the art on display or 2) invite guests to physically interact with exhibit spaces. Museum programmers who engage guests in making/workshop activities could also benefit by understanding the creative mindsets that guests are bringing to their museum experiences. Further, interpreters may consider the overarching interest in the artistic process as a way to connect guests with objects and actionable inspiration.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the University of Washington Museology Graduate Program for a scholarship that made travel to the three research sites possible. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the teams who welcomed us at Detroit Institute of Arts, the Walters Art Museum, and Cleveland Museum of Art, specifically Kenneth Morris, Megan DiRienzo, Robin Groesbeck, Kenneth Myers, Roslyn Esperon, Jo Briggs, and Hannah Ridenour LaFrance. We were grateful for their incredible support, hospitality, and kindness. Finally, we are indebted to Jessica Luke, our thesis chair, as well as our thesis committee members Jeanine Ancelet and Daniela Rosner for their thoughtful and valuable feedback. The work we were able to accomplish would not have been possible without their input and guidance.

## References

- Adams, M., & Moussouri, T. (2002). Interactive learning in museums of art and design. *Institute for Learning Innovation*.
- Balkin, A. (1990). What Is Creativity? What Is It Not? *Music Educators Journal*, 76(9), 29–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/3401074>
- Barrett, M. S., Creech, A., & Zhukov, K. (2021). Creative collaboration and collaborative creativity: A systematic literature review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 713445.  
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.713445>
- Benedek, M., Bruckdorfer, R., & Juak, E. (2019) Motives for creativity: Exploring the what and why of everyday creativity. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, Vol. 54, Iss. 3, p. 610–625.  
 DOI: 10.1002/jocb.396
- Brandt, A. (2021). Defining Creativity: A View from the Arts. *Creativity Research Journal*, 33(2), 81–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2020.1855905>
- Cropley, A. (2018). Bringing creativity down to earth: A long labor lost? R. J. Sternberg & J. C. Kaufman (Eds.), *The nature of human creativity*. Cambridge University Press. p. 47–62.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108185936.006>
- Desai, M. (2024). The psychology of inspiration: Its impact on creative processes. *Shodh Sagar Journal of Inspiration and Psychology*, 1(2), 36–41.  
<https://doi.org/10.36676/ssjip.v1.i2.14>
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art as experience*. Minton, Balch & Company. <https://doi.org/10.4000/12frn>
- Dissanayake, E. (2003) The core of art: making special. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies* 1, no. 2, 26. <https://neilgreenberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Dissanayake-on-Art-16856-16986-1-PB.pdf>

- Emerson, R. (1883–93). Emerson's complete works. *Edited by James Elliot Cabot*, Rev. ed. 12 vols. Boston.
- Fisher, J. (2018). Cultivating creativity: Understanding visitor perceptions of creativity in art museum exhibits. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. DOI:10827014.
- Freedman, K. (2010). Rethinking creativity: A definition to support contemporary practice. *Art Education*, Vol. 63, No. 2 pp. 8-15. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20694819>
- Foucault, M. (1984). What is Enlightenment? *P. Rabinow (Ed.)*, *The foucault reader*. New York: *Pantheon Books*.
- Ghiselin, B. (Ed.). (1952). The creative process. *New York: The New American Library*.
- Ghiselin, B. (Ed.). (1985). The creative process: Reflections on the invention in the arts and sciences. *Univ of California Press*.
- Gnezda, N. M. (2011). Cognition and Emotions in the Creative Process. *Art Education*, 64(1), 47–52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23033952>
- Götz, I. (1981). On defining creativity. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 39, No. 3 p. 297-301. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/430164>
- Ishiguro, C., & Okada, T. (2021). How Does Art Viewing Inspires Creativity? *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 55(2), 489–500. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jocb.469>
- Jarvis, N. (2019). Chasing the muses: Visitor experiences with inspiration in art museums. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2006). The International Handbook of Creativity. *Cambridge University Press*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818240>
- Kaufman, S. B. (2020). Transcend: the new science of self-actualization. *TarcherPerigee*.

- Kettle, A., & Koumis, T. (2022). Creativity. *J. Burns & D. Duncan (Eds.), Transnational Modern Languages: A Handbook*, p. 77–86. *Liverpool University Press*.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2fjwpw7.12>
- Luke, J. (2021). “The Bloody Hell and Holy Cow Moment:” Feeling Awe in the Art Museum. *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 64(1), 41-55.
- MacKinnon, D. (1966). What makes a person creative? *Theory Into Practice*, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 152-156. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1475125>
- Maslow, H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
- Maslow, H. (1962). Creativity in self-actualizing people. *Toward a Psychology of Being*, p. 127–137. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10793-010>
- Maslow, A. H. (1971). The farther reaches of human nature. *Viking Press*.
- Mikkelsen, T. (2020). Coaching the Creative Impulse: Psychological Dynamics and Professional Creativity (1st edition.). *Routledge*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429280368>
- Minj, A. (2019) Freedom in Postmodernity: A Foucauldian Understanding. *PenAcclaims*. ISSN 2581-5504
- National Endowment for the Arts (2015). How Creativity Works in the Brain. *Insights from a Santa Fe Institute Working Group, Cosponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts*.
- Piirto, J. (2004). Understanding creativity. *Great Potential Press*.
- Pope, R. (2005). Creativity: theory, history, practice. *Routledge*.
- Rogers, C. (1954). Toward a theory of creativity. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics II*, no. 4: 249– 60.
- Rogers, C. R. (1961). On becoming a person: a therapist’s view of psychotherapy. *Houghton Mifflin Company*.

- Rothman, J. (2014). Creativity creep. *The New Yorker*.
- Rothenberg, A., & Hausman, C. R. (Eds.). (1976). *The Creativity question*. Duke University Press.
- Sawyer, R. K. (2021). The iterative and improvisational nature of the creative process. *Journal of Creativity*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.yjoc.2021.100002>
- Stefano, J. (2019). The birth of creativity: Emerson's creative impulse. *Modern Language Quarterly*, 80:2. DOI:10.1215/00267929-7368209
- Survoka, I. (2012). Towards a Creativity Framework. *Society and Economy*, 34(1), 115–138. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41472190>
- Thrash, T. M., & Elliot, A. J. (2004). Inspiration: Core Characteristics, Component Processes, Antecedents, and Function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87(6), 957–973. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.87.6.957>



## Interview Guide

Adult visitors will be approached at random as they are leaving the exhibit, using the following script:

“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_ and I’m a Masters student at the University of Washington conducting research about art museum exhibits like the one you were just in. If you’re willing to answer some quick questions, I’d love to hear your opinion on the exhibit.”

- A) If no: No worries, have a great day!
- B) If yes: Great! Do you have any questions about the study before we get started?

Wonderful! Keep in mind that at any time you can choose not to answer a question or stop the interview. Can I have your permission to record the interview, so I don’t have to take notes while we talk? No one else will hear it other than us.

### Section A

1. What are three words you would use to describe the exhibition to someone who has never seen it?
2. What did you think about when you were in the exhibition? I’m going to read you 4 possible responses. For each one, tell me yes or no.
  1. The art style
  2. The wide range of work
  3. How the artist made it
  4. Exhibit interactives

Was there anything else that you thought about in the exhibition that I haven’t asked about?

3. We’re interested in whether people feel inspired in an exhibition like this one. We define inspiration as the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative.

On a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all and 7 is completely, to what extent did you feel inspired while you were in the exhibition?

- A) [For ratings of 1, ask...] Why do you think you didn’t feel inspired? (Skip to Section A, Q.4.)
- B) [For ratings of 2 or higher, ask...]
  - i) How would you describe your feeling of inspiration? What did it feel like?
  - ii) How intense was it?
  - iii) How did it compare to other times you’ve felt inspired?
  - iv) What was it about the exhibition that made you feel that way?

4. We're also interested, more specifically, in whether the exhibition made people feel inspired to create or make something.

On the same scale from 1 to 7, where 1 is not at all and 7 is completely, to what extent did you feel inspired to create or make something while viewing the exhibition?

- A) [For ratings of 1, ask...] Why do you think you didn't feel inspired to create or make something? (Skip to Section A, Q.4.)
- B) [For ratings of 2 or higher, ask...]
- i) How would you describe your feeling of being inspired to create or make something? What did it feel like?
  - ii) How intense was it?
  - iii) How did it compare to other times you've felt inspired to create or make something?
  - iv) What was it about the exhibition that made you feel that way?

### **Section B**

Thank you for answering these questions about the exhibition. Before you go, I just want to get a general sense of your background...

1. How often do you engage in creative making? (Refer to creating/making definition in Section A, Q.4)
  1. Several times a week
  2. Several times a month
  3. Several times a year
  4. Not at all
2. What kinds of making or creating activities do you engage in (if any) over the last year?
3. Do you hold a degree in a creative field, such as music, art, design, photography, etc.?
  1. Yes, would you be willing to disclose what that degree is?
  2. Yes, but choose not to disclose
  3. No
4. Do you work a job in a creative field where you frequently (daily or weekly) create something artistic? (Refer to creative activities in Section B, Q.3)
  1. Yes, would you be willing to disclose your job title?
  2. Yes, but choose not to disclose
  3. No
5. Why did you decide to visit [name of museum] today?
6. Who did you come to [name of museum] with today?

7. Was seeing [name of exhibition] one of the reasons you visited [name of museum] today?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  
8. Finally, in what year were you born?

That was all the questions I had for you today!

Thank you so much for your responses and your participation. If you're looking for further information about the study feel free to reach me at [insert UW email].

Have a wonderful day!

**Coding Rubric for Questions 3B i) & 4B i):**

How would you describe your feeling of inspiration? What did it feel like? / How would you describe your feeling of being inspired to create or make something? What did it feel like?

Dimension	Definition	Study Examples
Desire to create	The expressed motivation to engage in a creative or artistic activity or has engaged with in the past	Ex: "I've been thinking about painting and stitching and so this is like showing how it was done historically so it kind of validates my desires as well as inspires." Ex: "[I felt] excited to try something, you know, based off of different pieces I was looking at" Ex: "Eager to get started. I already bought the floss, but I haven't started."
Non-creative inspiration	Being mentally stimulated to feel something <i>other than the motivation to create</i> in response to an art-viewing experience	Ex: "I think I really just liked the way of seeing it and feeling it in the moment, but maybe not bringing it into my routine life." Ex: "I don't create in life necessarily, but some kind of connection [happens]." Ex: "I'm not an artist, but it was mentally stimulating."
Barrier to creation	Expression of the desire to create but acknowledging a physical, mental, or exterior barrier to engaging in a creative activity	Ex: "I have ADHD so I pick up crafts and then put them down" Ex: "Oh well I wish I could go home and paint, I've got this tremor" Ex: "I was inspired and would love to... cross stitch or something, although I can't with my vision anymore" Ex: "I'm a new mom so I just don't have the time [to create]."
Social proximity to making	The feeling of having a relationship with an object, theme, or technique based on second-hand knowledge of a pre-established or reoccurring connection to it through a person in someone's immediate social circle, such as friends, family, and romantic partners.	Ex: "My grandmother did needlepoint, so I have some of her work. It's pretty much similar to that." Ex: "Quite a few of my friends are embroiderers and although I'm not, I appreciated seeing this compared to what they do." Ex: "They all sort of made me think of a friend of mine who kind of gets inspiration for writing stories about people."

Interest in process	Expressing a curiosity or desire to know more about how an artwork is made	<p>Ex: "I like to see how the artists work and the process of the art making."</p> <p>Ex: "Seeing how his process worked and how that came to be for him made me think"</p> <p>Ex: "I think it was inspiring to envision how something is actually made"</p>
General Disinterest	Any response that encapsulates a "nothing" or "indescribable" feeling	<p>Ex: "because the medium doesn't interest me."</p> <p>Ex: "I don't know, like, time is definitely different."</p> <p>Ex: "It's just not my particular art style"</p>

**Coding Rubric for Questions: 3B iii) & 4B iii):**  
How did it compare to other times you've felt inspired?

Dimension	Definition	Study Examples
Similar / High in feeling	Relating to other common feelings of inspiration or high in inspiration, statements of "similar" with "high" level ratings	Ex: "Ummm, yeah, just more of the wow." Ex: "It was, it was pretty up there. It was, it was up there." Ex: "Probably right up there with awe-inspiring"
Similar / Neutral in feeling	Simple statements of "similar" with slight downplay of feelings or expression of neutrality	Ex: "Pretty similar in my field of work." Ex: "Pretty normal, similar." Ex: "About the same if I were to go to a quilt show or something."
Different / Low in feeling	Complete downplay of feelings or expressing a differing opinion to inspiration, statements of "different" or "low" level ratings	Ex: "I guess I wasn't overly inspired? I didn't totally connect, but it was cool." Ex: "Just different. Different from inspiration I get from other mediums." Ex: "Not much different"
Inspiration as Personal Story	Immediate response is to tell a long story of a moment of personal inspiration as it relates to their current lives	Ex: "Like, I see something pretty outside, you know, like, a pretty scene, a pretty picture." Ex: "like I was in DC yesterday and I was fascinated when I was in the National Museum of African American History" Ex: "Oh, I'm always inspired. I just came from the library and I left with 10 books"
Undefinable	"I don't know" or any type of response that portrays <i>inspiration</i> as undefinable to that individual	Ex: "I don't know" Ex: "I'm not sure." Ex: "I can't particularly describe it at this moment"

### Coding Rubric for Questions 3B iv) & 4B iv):

What was it about the exhibition that made you feel that way?

Dimension	Definition	Study Examples
Mention of Personal Interest in Exhibit	Naming or describing one specific art piece or theme in the exhibition that stood out as it relates to them as a person	Ex: "It was the one with the arrows, that one was really good and the angel one in the water, I liked" Ex: "I liked the Mortimer" Ex: "I really liked the cattle piece and the outdoor stuff" Ex: "Especially his different studies on guitar"
Mention of Personal Disinterest in Exhibit	Describing something about the exhibition that took away from feelings of inspiration	Ex: "Yeah, just the 2D format is not the way my brain processes inspiration" Ex: "It just didn't really speak to me that much." Ex: "I guess I would've liked to have seen more drawings just given my particular interest"
Exhibit Design	Mentioning an aspect of exhibit construction that added to feelings of inspiration	Ex: "I really like the presentation of the exhibit and the flow of it." Ex: "Museums sometimes will have a bigger label to lay out who he was, where he was from" Ex: "Yeah, again, the depth of breadth of everything."
Immersion	Mention of critically thinking about a topic, theme, or process while in the exhibit	Ex: "I wanted to read and look at each and every piece." Ex: "I don't know, like, time is definitely different. We wouldn't have time back like today to sit there and do all that." Ex: "A desire to try and be in the moment to replicate such a thing on my own" Ex: "I saw things here that I haven't seen before"
Mentioning Creation	Personally connecting or describing an interest in any art practice or mentioning a friend/family's art practice (any connection made to art creation that exists in their	Ex: "Yeah I mean I was inspired and would love to... cross stitch or something" Ex: "I've been thinking about painting and stitching" Ex: "I mean, I'm a writer"

	lives)	
Nothing	Responding with “I don’t know” or “Nothing” in relation to the exhibit specifically as it brought about feelings of inspiration	Ex: “No, not really.” Ex: “No, uhh not enough data on that” Ex: “I honestly don't know.”