Formative Evaluation: Go Mobile

Prepared for the
Baltimore Museum of Art
Baltimore, MD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) contracted Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) to evaluate Go Mobile, a mobile website designed to help visitors deepen their Museum experience through audio, video, and links to related works. The main objective of this study was to explore the quality of visitors' experiences with Go Mobile to inform future development of Go Mobile.

> **The findings presented here are among the most salient. Please read the body of the report for a more comprehensive presentation of findings.**

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following summary is organized by the objectives of the study, which are reframed as questions.

HOW SMOOTHLY WERE VISITORS ABLE TO ACCESS CONTENT?

Most visitors were able to access Go Mobile content relatively easily—acclimating themselves to Go Mobile and exploring the many content options. However, some visitors wanted greater orientation on how to use Go Mobile with the galleries because they could not find the map on Go Mobile, did not see the gallery numbers in the physical space that connect to the numbers on Go Mobile, or encountered some other issue pairing the Go Mobile experience with their gallery experience. Additionally, some visitors encountered barriers to using Go Mobile in its fullest capacity. For instance, a few visitors did not realize that there was more content that could be viewed below the audio. Otherwise, there were internet connection issues that prohibited some visitors from using Go Mobile smoothly, but the BMA is already aware of and exploring these issues.

HOW THOROUGHLY ARE VISITORS USING GO MOBILE?

Because visitors were invited to participate and knowingly engaged in testing, the thoroughness of use was high. For testing purposes, there was a 30-minute limit on the amount of time visitors could spend with Go Mobile. Most visitors spent the entire time allotted to using Go Mobile, with the one visitor who finished early because she hoped to explore Go Mobile outside the Contemporary Wing. A few mentioned that they might not have used Go Mobile quite as thoroughly under normal circumstances as they would prefer to spend more time looking at art and less time on Go Mobile (these visitors thought it was a great resource to know about though). Use of audio and video was also frequent, with visitors using audio more often than video. Additionally, at least once during their visit, all visitors accessed the Galleries section, many accessed the Connections section, and one-quarter used the Search section. Again, some of the thoroughness is likely do to testing conditions.

However, one particular question the BMA had about thoroughness was whether visitors might access audio plus additional audio and video for a particular work of art. This happened for works of art that the visitor considered particularly compelling, such as Alison Saar's *Strange Fruit* and Andy Warhol's *Oxidation Painting* and *The Last Supper*.

HOW DO VISITORS PREFER TO USE GO MOBILE?

Visitors preferred using Go Mobile content, and particularly content accessed through the Galleries and Search sections, while standing in front of a work of art. Potentially, this is because their expectations for Go Mobile were akin to that of an audio tour that explored individual works of art. Furthermore, many also noted that the audio in particular revealed insight for engaging with the individual works of art, so listening to the audio close to the work allowed them to partake in the suggested engagement (e.g., walk over Carl Andre's *Zinc Magnesium Plain*, sit on Franz West's sculptures).

For videos, however, preferences varied. Some visitors stood near the work of art they were exploring to watch the other videos available through the Galleries section of Go Mobile (like for the video for Andy Warhol's *The Last Supper*). By comparison, visitors' preference for watching the Connections videos was unclear. Visitors tended to watch them in the gallery—either sitting or standing but disconnected from their art viewing experience. A few said they might watch the Connections videos at home before or after a visit, and one person mentioned potentially watching all of them at the BMA but at the very end of their visit.

WHAT DO THE "THEMES" COMMUNICATE TO USERS?

It is noteworthy that visitors' expectations for Go Mobile were for a tour of the collection, like what they might experience through an audio guide. Therefore, when approaching the "themes" of Galleries, Connections, and Search, it was through the lens of a tour. The Galleries section was the section visitors were most clear on how to use. In part, it may be because the name of this section was concrete, but also, the presentation was most akin to what they might expect from an audio tour. The Search section also communicated its theme fairly well, with visitors who used it saying they went there to look for an artist or specific work. However, a few visitors were also pleasantly surprised by the layout of this section because they felt that it presented the Galleries section in a user-friendly manner. For instance, whereas the Galleries section just showed a list of the gallery numbers and their names, the Search section also provided a list of galleries but with the name of the artist and works of art immediately visible on the first screen (versus having to click on the gallery number and name). The Connections section was the most difficult for visitors to figure out and elicited many conflicting responses. For example, a few visitors said the word "connections" is vague so they were not sure what to expect from this section; by contrast, a few said that "connections" most adequately described what this section provides—connections among works of art. Some of this confusion may be the result of the name "connections," but also the design of the page. Many visitors did not understand that the video provided a connection to all of the works of art shown below the connection in thumbnail or did not persist in using the section. Going back to expectations, some approached this section as they would an audio tour, that is, they bounced around from work of art to work of art across the various galleries. Others were expecting to find new content specific to the work of art and the connection when they clicked on the thumbnail image (versus being directed to the information they access through Galleries).
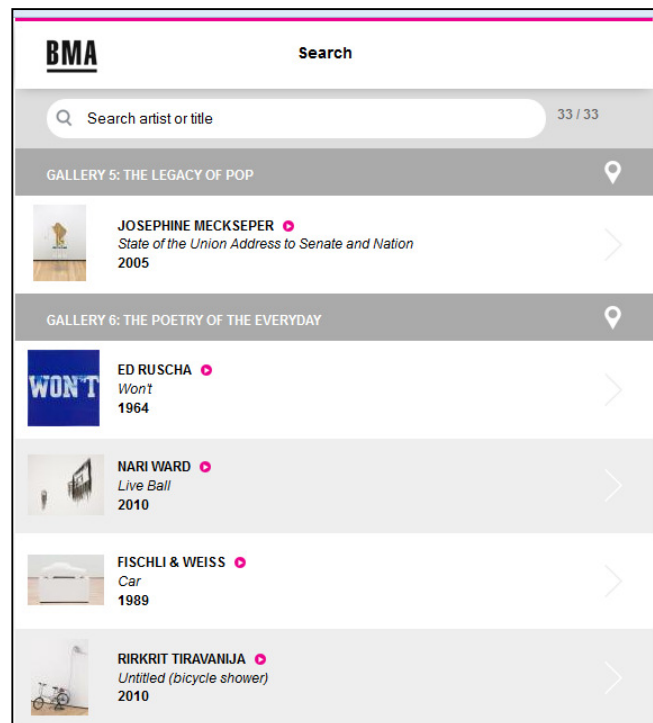
WAS THE INFORMATION ON GO MOBILE PERSONALLY MEANINGFUL?

Visitors refrained from saying that the Go Mobile experience helped them find personal relevance in the works of art. However, in response to this question, many described Go Mobile deepening their experience with the works of art, which they said had the potential to help them find relevance. For instance, one visitor described looking at the Thomas Hirschhorn's *Chandelier with Hands*, which he often passes by, and coming to an appreciation for the work of art through hearing about the artist's process; this visitor said he thought about the parallels between how the artist and his students approach mixed-media pieces. This example suggests that visitors were making personal connections but not necessarily finding deep, personal relevance.

DID GO MOBILE DEEPEN VISITORS UNDERSTANDING OF THE MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTIONS?

Unquestionably, visitors' experience with Go Mobile deepened their understanding of the works of art. Even regular visitors said they learned something new about the works of art or stopped to find out about a work of art that they normally ignored. Along with that, the Go Mobile experience removed some barriers or hesitations with art viewing by providing visitors with specific ways to look at a work of art (e.g., look closely at brushstrokes on Philip Guston's *The Oracle*, look underneath Olafur Eliasson's *Flower Observatory*).

DOES GO MOBILE PROVIDE A DIFFERENT PERSONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE?

Most visitors did not describe their experience with Go Mobile as particularly unique or different from what visitors typically experience in an art museum—should the visitor choose to use an audio device or app to enhance their visit. However, visitors perceived Go Mobile as a terrific resource for learning about the collection and thought the content was interesting and high quality. Furthermore, since the content available during the testing was from the Contemporary Wing, visitors particularly valued hearing from the artist—something that a few named as a unique opportunity.

WHAT ASPECTS OF GO MOBILE ENHANCE VISITORS' EXPERIENCE?

Many aspects of Go Mobile enhanced individual visitors' experiences, but the audio clips were the most referenced as they provided visitors with unique insights not already presented on the wall label. While the ideas are not necessarily new or revolutionary, the fact that visitors could hear from the artist or learn about how to look at or engage with a work of art should not be undermined. Interviews were filled with comments saying how much they appreciate having these insights.

HOW DO GO MOBILE EXPERIENCES DIFFER BASED ON USE OF CONNECTIONS OR GALLERIES?

Go Mobile experiences varied greatly depending on whether visitors were using the Connections or Galleries section, particularly in regard to visitor behavior. Visitors who started by using Connections often bounced around from gallery to gallery erratically, and they spent a lot of time looking at their device versus the works of art. By comparison, visitors who used the Galleries section moved though the galleries methodically, often starting in Gallery 5 to Gallery 6 and so on. Visitors' recounting of their experiences with each mirrored their behaviors. Visitors who used Connections said it was difficult for them to understand what they should do in the gallery space, even if they liked the concept of connecting various works of art by a theme. Visitors who used Galleries, however, found a rhythm to using Go Mobile. While visitors took away content from Connections and Galleries, Galleries seemed to have more impactful since visitors were able to acclimate themselves to the section quickly and navigate as they desired (they were able to access more content).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue exploring options to ensure a reliable Wi-Fi signal.

- Consider adding an orientation

- Consider presenting the Galleries section more like the Search section, with the images of the works of art in the gallery visible on the first page.

- If the BMA wants visitors to use Connections during their visit, consider using audio as the primary form of conveying connections as audio was used more frequently than videos. Videos could be saved as extra materials for deeper exploration of the connection.

- Also, if the BMA wants visitors to use Connections during their visit, consider whether it is possible to provide unique object text or audio related to individual objects that highlight why this work of art is part of the connection.

- Consider whether Connections could be an introductory experience. For instance, the themes and thumbnail images alone could provide an overview of the variety of works in the collections across the BMA's collections. The primary form of navigation for Go Mobile would be the Galleries or Search sections with Connections still embedded and accessible through the individual works of art

REFLECTION

Upon the completion of the report, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) had a call to reflect on the evaluation results and their implications. This addendum presents questions posed by the BMA (listed below in bold) and the related recommendations made by RK&A (in plain text), which guided the reflection.

AUDIO VERSUS VIDEO

♦ **Can we assume that participants used audio more than video because it was at the top of the page?**

Yes, but there was also a preference for audio because you could listen and look (see continued discussion in bullet below).

♦ **Did participants prefer audio over video? If so, were they comparing the video on the object page or the connections video?**

As noted above, there was a general preference for audio because you can listen and look. Also, it seemed that visitors preferred object videos versus connections videos because they focused on specific works of art. Generally, visitors were not comparing the two—findings are based on our interpretation of how various visitors described their experiences with each.

TEXT

♦ **Participants appreciated content that they couldn't get on the label. Does this mean that if we keep the label copy on Go Mobile it should be different that what's on the wall?**

See response below.

♦ **Is the label copy worth keeping? Did it add considerable value to participants' experiences?**

We recommend removing the label copy because most did not read it on their device. And even though a few made positive comments about its presence (e.g., liked knowing it was there and could be accessed at home), it seems unnecessary and some of these positive comments were likely courtesy bias.

VOICES

♦ **Do we know if participants liked hearing outside/non-expert voices?**

Two interviewees talked about "non-expert" or "outsider" voices, with one commenting that she liked listening to the perspective of "non-art people." However, most conversations in the Contemporary Wing suggest a preference for the expert voice. Visitors liked hearing from the artist in particular, thinking the artist could provide the most authentic interpretation of the work (although they recognized that this wasn't always possible), and a few specifically said they liked hearing from the curators, too, which also helped them understand the art in an authentic way (without abstract prose and theories about the works of art). The curatorial perspective is

particularly important in the Contemporary Wing, as there are often questions like, "Why is this art?" or comments like, "My kid could do this" (and we heard some of these sentiments in the interviews). Therefore, having an "expert" voice in the Contemporary Wing helps visitors gain an understanding of the works. Also see the next bullet.

♦ **Participants liked hearing from the artist. How do we replicate that experience with non-Contemporary works?**

Yes, participants did, but underlying this preference is that they want information / a voice that can provide direct connections to the work of art (e.g., anyone who can talk about the artist's state of mind, where was the artist when he/she made something, what was going on in his / her life, what materials were used and what about them is interesting, etc.).

♦ **Was there an indication that users mistrusted the information they were getting from the "outside" speakers? Did visitors find tracks that they found more/less trustworthy?**

Again, there was little discussion about the "non-experts." Visitors want authentic and trustworthy information—but it does not need to come from the typical "expert" as in the artist or curator, as long as the person can present information that builds context for the work of art. For instance, maybe there is a geologist who talks about Carl Andre's work because he can talk about the materials.

MAPS

♦ **More on how they were used. Were the maps easy to navigate?**

No. Many liked the idea of the map but had difficulty using them. Even people familiar with the BMA had trouble using the map. Some had trouble orienting spatially to the map, and some had trouble because they didn't realize there were gallery numbers in the physical galleries that were on the map.

THEMES/POINTS OF ENTRY

♦ **Do we need SEARCH as a theme? It seems like it's not frequently used.**

Keep in mind that the evaluators did not ask visitors to use Search (whereas we prompted visitors to use Galleries and Connections). Participants who found Search liked the layout (in that it was like Galleries but with the thumbnails below the gallery number and name). Definitely maintain this layout through Search or in the Galleries section. As for the actual Search function (e.g., typing in the name of something they are looking for), we believe the BMA should maintain that as well. It is a familiar and expected option that will likely be more utilized as Go Mobile expands. Going forward though, clarify what is searchable. For instance, will the search produce only works of art with rich Go Mobile content, or will it provide results for every work of art on display in the Museum?

♦ **More on how they access the gallery section.**

See bullet below.

♦ **How are people navigating to content in the device and in the physical gallery space? Are they prompted first by something they see on Go Mobile or by something they see in the gallery? Which one is better supported by Go Mobile?**

Two-thirds of participants indicated that first they saw artwork in the Museum that was of interest to them, and then they checked to see if Go Mobile content was available (Museum-directed experience). Several other participants said their experience was directed both by seeing artwork of interest in the Museum and finding interesting content on Go Mobile (Museum-directed AND Go Mobile-directed). In contrast, a few participants based their decision on what to look at in the Museum on what works of art had Go Mobile content or what images on Go Mobile looked interesting (Go-Mobile-directed). Outside of testing, the BMA is likely to continue to see a variety of approaches to using Go Mobile in the galleries. All ways of using Go Mobile is supported to some extent in the galleries, but know that visitors were generally unaware that were icons on the label to indicate Go Mobile content was available.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

♦ **Under MEANING MAKING AROUND THE COLLECTION (p. 12) it says that many people suggested the mobile site increased the personal relevance of the site. This seems to contradict the statement on p. v of the summary.**

Yes, there is an apparent contradiction. As we discussed, the term personal relevance is a loaded term that can be interpreted in many ways. When we asked the question about personal relevance, there were a lot of "no, but…" responses. Often times, the "but…" part of the response suggested that the experience may not have been personally relevant. For instance, some said that their deepened understanding provides personal relevance or the opportunity for it. As we discussed, you were looking more for information on whether visitors had an "a-ha moment" in the galleries. The majority did, although these moments ranged in depth and quality of experience from being an affirmation of the perceived meaning of a work of art, to revelations that they could sit on the West sculptures, to appreciation for a previously overlooked work of art.

♦ **If Go Mobile deepened participants' experience with works of art but didn't support personal connections should we focus our energy on deepening experiences with works of art.**

Yes, focus on deepening experiences with works of art. There isn't a recipe for helping visitors have personal connections since personal connections are individualized; yet deepening experiences with works of art can provide opportunities for personal connections.

♦ **What activities/elements supported "deepening experiences": language, walk over, sit on, look closely anything else?**

There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach, but as discussed earlier, provide authentic information about the work of art.

♦ **Should one of our goals be helping visitors look at art? This seems to be an unexpressed outcome.**

YES! Looking at art will help deepen experiences.

♦ **Visitor also expressed that Go Mobile made them more comfortable to engage with art. What helped them feel more comfortable? The content?**

Art museums send a lot of mixed messages—since there are not universal signs indicating appropriate behavior. Some museums put stations in front of works of art that they want you to stay back from, but other museums just have an alarm that may be triggered if you lean close. For that reason, many just decide to stay back and avoid rebuke. The BMA could clarify what it

means by acceptable behaviors, even if it is just close looking; visitors will appreciate knowing the rules. So the simple directives that let visitors know they could touch something or should look closely is paramount.

♦ **Did they use the icons on the labels to find works of art that had content?**

Some did, but some were unaware.

♦ **Do we think Favorite or Share are valuable? Any more data that would help in decision-making?**

There was some interest, but neither option seems worth keeping since the process and instructions around both needs to be significantly clarified to make it worthwhile. For instance, with "favorite," visitors weren't sure where favorites were saved or how to access them, so that info would need to be easily available. And, for the "share" feature, it may be unnecessary as people can take pictures of most of the artwork in the Museum on their phone and share that way (it would be more personalized in this way which is likely more desirable to individuals who want to share).

♦ **Do we need Object Type or Date Groupings? Any more data that would help in decision-making?**

No. They are underutilized, and it doesn't accommodate how visitors will be using Go Mobile in the galleries—they are unlikely to open all sculptures and then move from one sculpture to the next.

♦ **What kind of content/functionality were people anticipating or expecting to see on Go Mobile but not finding.**

None. Some were hoping for information on other collections or for more works of art, but participants were pleased with what they experienced.

INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) contracted Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) to conduct formative evaluation for Go Mobile, a mobile website launched in November 2012 along with the opening of the Museum's Contemporary Wing. The mobile website was designed to help visitors deepen their Museum experience through audio, video, and links to related works.

The objectives of the evaluation are to explore:

- How smoothly visitors were able to access content;

- How thoroughly are they using Go Mobile (e.g., for how long do they use it, do they use audio and video, etc.);

- How visitors prefer to use Go Mobile (e.g., standing in front of a work of art, in the lobby, at home);

- What the "themes" communicate to users (i.e., what visitors expected to experience from Connections and Galleries);

- Whether and to what extent the information that emerged from visitors' Go Mobile experience was personally meaningful;

- Whether and to what extent visitors' experience with Go Mobile deepens their understanding of the work of art, the Museum, and its collections;

- Whether Go Mobile provides a personal learning experience different from what they typically experience with works of art in a museum setting, and if so, in what ways;

- Aspects of Go Mobile that enhance visitors' experience (Connections, objects for context, video, etc.); and

- How visitors' experience with Go Mobile differs based on whether they used the Connections or the Galleries themes.

METHODOLOGY

The BMA recruited volunteers through for the evaluation their social media platforms. Participants were scheduled for a one-hour time slot during which they spent up to 30 minutes in the Museum's Contemporary Wing using Go Mobile and up to 30 minutes talking with an RK&A evaluator about their experience. Participants could use their own mobile device in the Museum or borrow one of the iPod Touch's available at the BMA. All participants received a $10 gift card to the BMA store as a token of appreciation.

When participants arrived, an RK&A evaluator instructed them on how to access the BMA's Wifi and Go Mobile. RK&A told participants that they could use Go Mobile as they would like for up to 30 minutes. However, depending on the interview group they were designated to (e.g., Galleries or Connections), participants were asked to spend at least a few minutes using either the Galleries or Connections section of Go Mobile. RK&A informed participants that they would be observed as they used Go Mobile in the Museum.

OBSERVATIONS

Observations are useful because they are an objective account of how visitors use Go Mobile. The RK&A evaluator used an observation guide to take notes (see Appendix A) and looked at how participants used Go Mobile in five-minute increments. In particular, RK&A noted which object participants stopped at and what Go Mobile content was accessed. Additionally, RK&A looked at behaviors such as close looking (e.g., leaning in to see the newspaper at the Meckseper) and engagement with the works of art (e.g. sitting on one of the West sculptures).

INTERVIEWS

Interviews complement observations in that they the evaluator is able to ask questions about visitors' behavior so she can understand visitors' behavioral decisions. Participants were either interviewed about the Galleries or Connections section of Go Mobile specifically, along with some general questions about their experience as a whole (see Appendix B and C). During the interviews, the evaluator sought clarity during the interview and sometimes asked participants to show them specifically what they had been looking at on Go Mobile. RK&A took detailed notes and audio recorded the interviews.

DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING METHOD

In this study, the observations and interviews produced descriptive data that were analyzed qualitatively, meaning that the evaluator studied the data for meaningful patterns and, as patterns and trends emerge, grouped similar responses. Where possible, participants' verbatim language (edited for clarity) is included to exemplify trends.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

During three week days and one weekend day in January, 2014, RK&A observed and interviewed 26 visitors who had volunteered to participate in the formative evaluation for Go Mobile. Among these participants, 12 took part in a Connections-related interview and 14 took part in a Galleries-related interview.

Of the individual participants:

- About two-thirds are female, and one-third is male.
- Participants range in age from 19 to 65 years, and the median age is 33.5 years.
- Some participants have a special affiliation with the Museum; several are Museum staff and interns, a few are relatives of Museum staff, and a few are current or lapsed members of the Museum.

MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

Nearly one-half said they learned about the opportunity through the Museum's Facebook posts. Several other participants were recruited by Museum staff members and two were referred by friends. One each heard about the study through Reddit or Twitter.

Several participants said they were motivated to participate because they had never been to the Museum or had not visited recently. A few participants said they love coming to the Museum, and a few others were teachers who are curious about possible applications for the project. A few others mentioned the gift card as a motivating factor, and a couple participants enjoyed the opportunity to volunteer.

GENERAL USAGE OF GO MOBILE

To access Go Mobile, participants were invited to use their own mobile devices or borrow an iPod Touch from the BMA. About two-thirds of participants accessed Go Mobile on a personal Smartphone (primarily iPhones), while nearly one-third used a Museum iPod Touch, and one participant brought a tablet. Many participants wore headphones when using Go Mobile in the galleries, and at least two participants described feeling uncomfortable listening to audio content in the galleries without headphones.

DEVICE USED

BMA iTouch

Personal Smartphone

Personal Tablet

ORIENTATION

It often took a few minutes for participants to become acclimated to Go Mobile, regardless of which device a participant used. However, within the first five minutes of their experience, nearly two-thirds of participants successfully accessed rich media content. Among the remaining participants, several experienced technical problems in the first five minutes (see description below), and a few selected
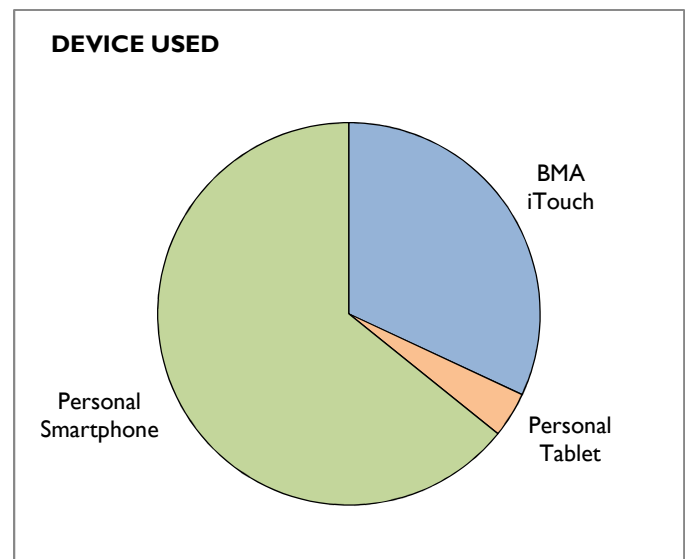
galleries on Go Mobile that do not have rich content (e.g., Gallery 1: Front Room or Gallery 4: Black Box).

NAVIGATION

There are three options for navigating Go Mobile: Galleries, Connections, and Search. At least once during their visit, all participants accessed the Galleries section, many accessed the Connections section, and one-quarter used the Search section. Similarly, regarding the frequency of use during their Go Mobile experience, participants were observed using the Galleries section twice as often as the Connections section; the Search section was used least frequently.

GO MOBILE AND THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

When asked to describe how they used Go Mobile, about two-thirds of participants indicated that first they saw artwork in the Museum that was of interest to them, and then they checked to see if Go Mobile content was available (Museum-directed experience) (see the first quotation below). Several other participants said their experience was directed both by seeing artwork of interest in the Museum and finding interesting content on Go Mobile (Museum-directed AND Go Mobile-directed). In contrast, a few participants based their decision on what to look at in the Museum on what works of art had Go Mobile content or what images on Go Mobile looked interesting (Go-Mobile-directed) (see the second quotation).

GO MOBILE & THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Go Mobile-directed

Museum-directed

Museum-directed and Go Mobile-directed
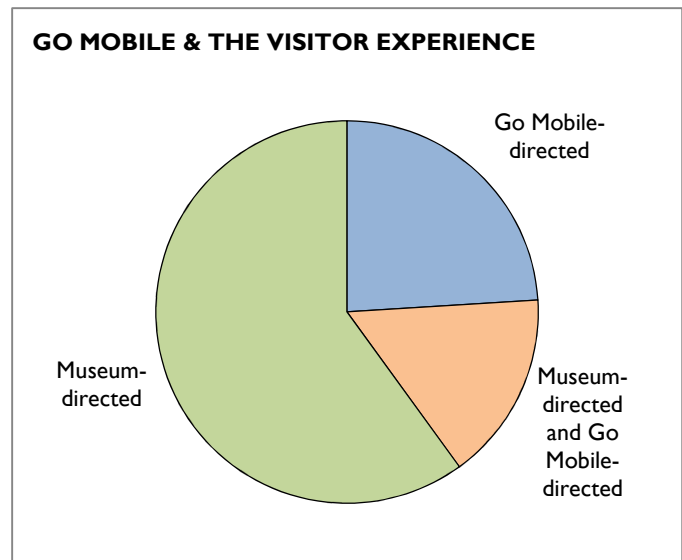
> I started basing my choice of what room to go in next by sort of catching it [an artwork] out of the corner of my eye, finding something interesting, and then seeing if there were entries in Go Mobile. [male, 25]

> I used [Go Mobile] to see which sculptures and which paintings the Museum thought should be presented and should be talked about. I noticed that not all [works of art] that are in each gallery were on Go Mobile, so I said to myself, 'Oh, what do they think the consumer should look at and hear about?' [male, 31]

## TECHNICAL AND DESIGN ISSUES

Technical problems occasionally interfered with participants' experiences using Go Mobile. About one-half mentioned that poor internet connection caused audio and video clips to load slowly or cut-out abruptly. A few participants also had Go Mobile shut down on their device and had to reopen it (and were sometimes prompted to log onto the internet again).

Participants also remarked about design-based problems that limited their experience. A few noted that Go Mobile would reset to the homepage if not used for a few minutes, which caused participants to lose their place within the website. The design of the object page was also problematic to a few participants, who were unaware they could scroll past the audio clip for additional information. A few others disliked how the audio cut out if they clicked on other content on the object page. In the Connections section, a few other participants said they could not click directly on the works of art to access object pages; these

participants found it unintuitive to have to open the video drop-down area first and then select the Go button to access the object pages.

USAGE OF GALLERIES SECTION

The Galleries section of Go Mobile displays a list of the contemporary galleries by gallery number and name (e.g., Gallery 8: Andy Warhol).[1] By selecting a gallery, visitors can access a list of artworks on display in the gallery that have Go Mobile content (see image on the right). Visitors are also able to click on individual works of art to access an object page with more information about the piece, including but not limited to: an image of the work, a related audio segment, and tombstone text.
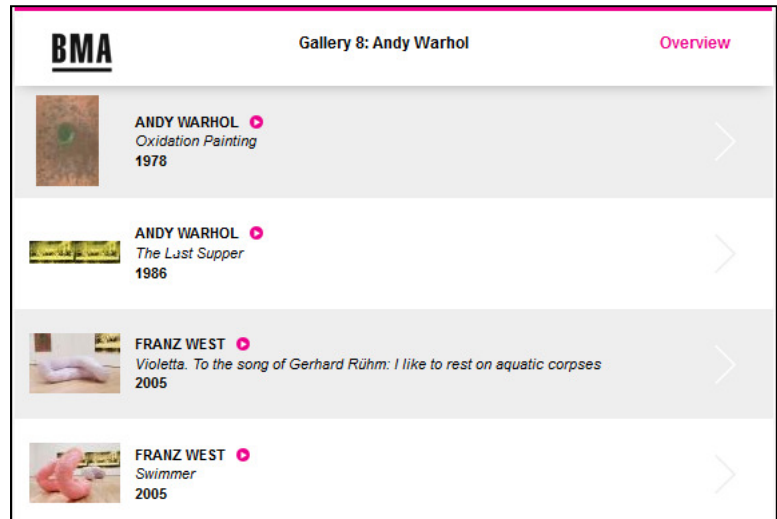
ORIENTATION

All participants used the Galleries section of Go Mobile at least once during their experience. Most participants, including those who were cued to use the Connections section, explored the Galleries section within the first five minutes of using Go Mobile and were able to access content for individual works of art. However, a few participants did not immediately select galleries from the Galleries section that contained rich media content.

NAVIGATION

When utilizing the Galleries section, participants generally determined which gallery space they were physically in, and then selected the corresponding content from the Galleries section list. This was sometimes difficult for participants who were unaware that the galleries were arranged by number and themes (see the first quotation below). Some said the list-view default layout of the Galleries section did not provide participants with the navigational assistance they required, and a few reported using the map-view instead of list-view to navigate, but others were unaware this option existed.

> When I was looking at these galleries, I was like, 'I don't know which one I'm in.' I wish I would have figured out the numbers or figured out where [the numbers] were written. [female, 32]

USE OF ABOUT

The About section includes audio clips, tombstone text, see on map, share, and favorite.

AUDIO CLIPS

All participants were observed listening to an audio clip, and most listened to between six and ten audio clips. Most listened to audio while standing in front of the relevant work of art, while a few started the audio in front of the work of art but then wandered away from it. Typically, participants listened to the

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[1] The Galleries section can also be navigated by a map view, which displays a map of the galleries and the gallery number associated with each space; however, the default setting for the Galleries section is currently list view.

entire audio clip; however, in some cases, the audio cut out due to problems with the internet connection or because the participant selected a different content area of Go Mobile, which ended the audio clip unexpectedly (as described in the technical and design issues section above). The most popular audio clips, which about one-half of participants listened to, are:

- Nari Ward's *Live Ball*
- Josephine Meckseper's *State of the Union Address to Senate and Nation*
- Felix Gonzalez-Torres's *Untitled* (Water)
- Alison Saar's *Strange Fruits*
- Andy Warhol's *The Last Supper*
- Carl Andre's *Zinc-Magnesium Plain*

In general, participants spoke positively of their audio clip experience, with about three-quarters saying they liked the additional context and background information they gained from the audio clips (see more information in overall opinion section below). By contrast, a few described negative features. Two participants had audio clips cut out abruptly (described previously), and another said the clips were a "little long." One other participant described the clips as "mediocre," saying she preferred content directly related to the work of art rather than about the artist (it is unclear which clips she is basing this comment on).
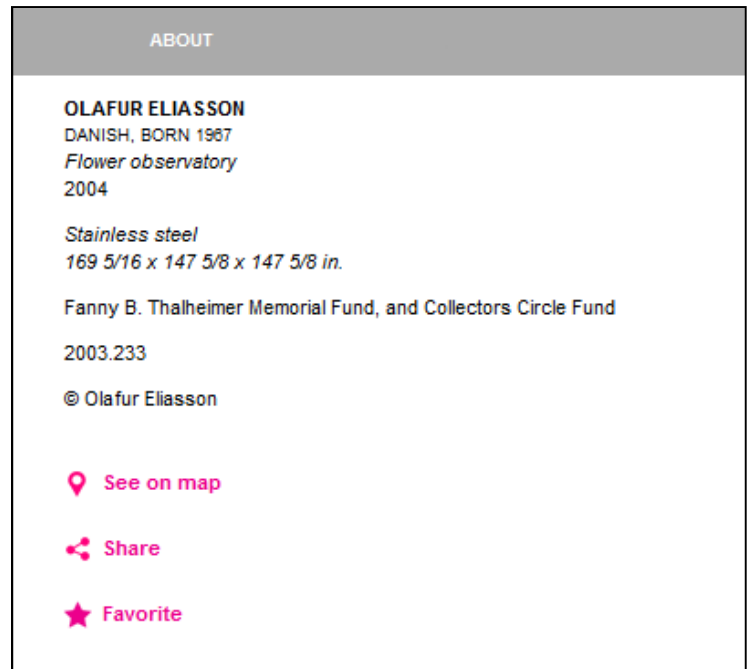
SEE ON MAP
Several participants used the see on map option; these participants found the feature useful for locating works of art as well as orienting themselves within the gallery space.

SHARE
Two participants used the share option to post their favorite works on social media; by contrast, a few other participants said they felt uncomfortable logging in to a social media site on a borrowed device. In addition, one participant recommended adding Pinterest to the list of options.

FAVORITE
A few participants utilized the favorite option. However, these participants were generally unsure of what happened when you favorite something or how to later access a list of their favorite works.

ABOUT

OLAFUR ELIASSON
DANISH, BORN 1967
Flower observatory
2004

Stainless steel
169 5/16 x 147 5/8 x 147 5/8 in.

Fanny B. Thalheimer Memorial Fund, and Collectors Circle Fund

2003.233

© Olafur Eliasson

📍 See on map

🔗 Share

⭐ Favorite

USE OF MORE

In the More section, visitors can read wall label text, watch a video, listen to audio related to the work of art, or find objects of similar type or date (see the image on the next page).

READ

Several participants read wall label text; these participants liked that they were able to take their time reading the wall label without blocking the view of others. On the other hand, those who opted not to use the wall label text option preferred reading directly from the wall label.
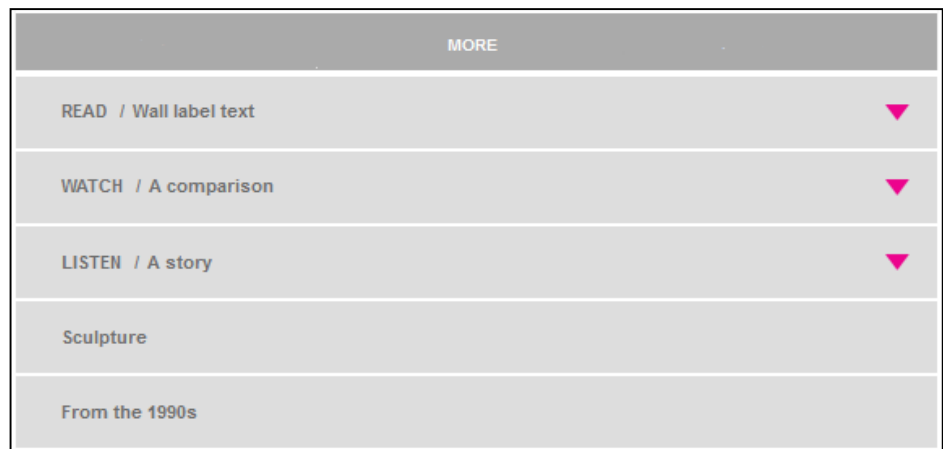
WATCH OR LISTEN

Some participants accessed an additional video or audio clip related to a work of art. Participants who selected this option said they were curious to learn more about the work or artist; participants used this feature most often with Alison Saar's *Strange Fruit*, Andy Warhol's *Oxidation Painting*, and Andy Warhol's *The Last Supper*.

OBJECT TYPE OR DATE GROUPINGS

A few participants explored groupings related to the works of art, such as by object type (e.g., sculpture) or date (e.g., from the 1990s). One of these participants liked the idea of curating a tour based on the groupings. Another was initially confused, thinking the option would show related works of art from other museums. Participants who used the groupings did so infrequently and said, if they chose the sculpture grouping at one work of art, they would not revisit the grouping when viewing another sculpture.

USE OF CONNECTIONS VIA THE BOTTOM OF THE OBJECT PAGES

Several participants used the Connections option, which allowed them to explore thematically-related works of art (see the image on the right). Participants said they did so because they were interested in seeing how the Museum might group different works of art (see the quotation below). Participants accessed Connections most often at: Andy Warhol's *Oxidation Painting,* Josephine Meckseper's *State of the Union Address to Senate and Nation,* Olafur Eliasson's *Flower Observatory,* and Franz West's *Violetta* and *Swimmer.* A few participants who used the Connections links read the description of the connection or watched the related video. A few other participants did not open Connections content after clicking on the link and described the Connections section as "confusing" and "overwhelming."

> For me it seemed like there were a lot of artworks that connected. I felt like, 'this seems like a very important theme here, what do they want me to know about it?' so that I wasn't just wandering around with my own ideas. I wanted to see what the intent was, because it's a museum, so they're not choosing willy-nilly pieces to go in here [the Connections section]. They have some sort of intention that they want people to take away. [female, 19]

There were several comments and suggestions related to technical or design issues. Several participants suggested adding a back button to the object pages that would allow users to go directly from an object page to the Galleries section homepage, without clicking multiple times on the web browser's back button (see the first quotation on the following page). A few participants were unaware that the Galleries section contained more than the audio clip because the design of the object page did not suggest an ability to scroll down for more information, while a few others came to this realization upon use (see the second quotation). In a few other cases, participants said they could not determine which galleries in the Galleries sections had rich content; as such, one of the participants ended his experience unaware that he could access object pages through the Galleries section.

> I wish there had been a quick back button to go back to the list of Galleries, rather than having to go to the BMA main page and then go to the Galleries page again. It's a minor quibble but it's an extra click. [male, 25]

> It's kind of like the front fold of a newspaper, you're only seeing this right now [the image and audio], and it's not until you move [the screen that you can see the other options]. It's kind of covered by the tool bar down there. [female, 26]

OVERALL OPINION OF EXPERIENCE WITH GALLERIES

When reflecting on their experience with the Galleries section in particular, most participants had a positive experience, which was often characterized by their experience with the audio clips. Many of these participants further specified a preference for the artist-narrated audio clips, as the clips provided insight into the artist's perspective and intentions (see the first quotation below). Listening to the audio clips encouraged some to engage with works of art in a deep way. For example, participants were observed looking closely (e.g., stepping forward to examine the Yayoi Kusama's *No. Green No. 1*) and from different angles (e.g., crouching to see the newspaper reflection at Josephine Meckseper's *State of the Union Address to Senate and Nation*) as they listened to the audio clips. Moreover, some participants commented that they were unaware they could touch certain works of art before they had listened to the related audio clip (see the second quotation).

> I really like when they had the artist talking about their work, because, for me, that's what is missing from the museum is what the artist actually has to say about it . . . hearing the artist talk about it gives you more insight into why they chose the materials they used, what the theme means to them, what it is about, like what their life experiences were that influenced them. [female, 39]

> I really liked the little one-minute blubs. It helped me be more comfortable with the artwork. I think a lot of people, when they come into museums, they don't know that they can run their fingers up and make a whole bunch of noise through the plastic beads [at *Untitled* (Water)]. I think it's nice, having that little guide there. [female, 32]
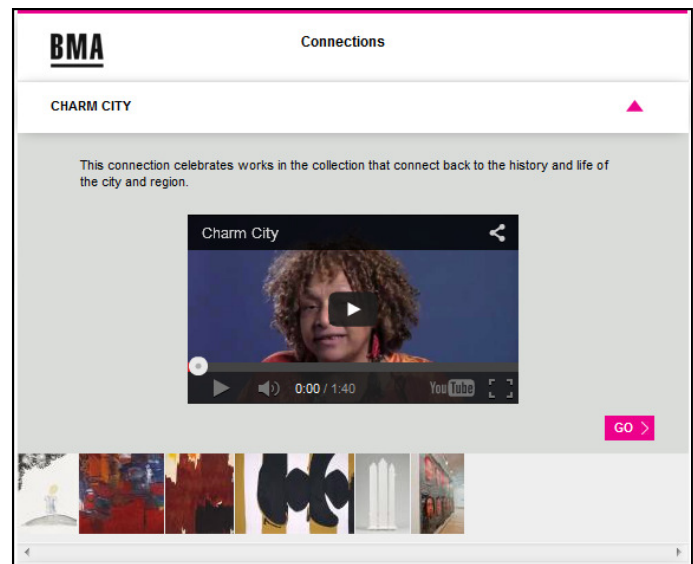
USAGE OF CONNECTIONS SECTION

The Go Mobile Connections section contains text and video content for nine thematic connections that link together various works of art from the Contemporary galleries. For example, the Charm City connection relates works to the history of Baltimore and life in the city and region. Each connection includes a video, images of the artwork, and a link to object pages for related artworks.

ORIENTATION

Many participants used the Connections section when navigating Go Mobile. Generally, participants looked at informational text or video content for between one to four connections, though two participants reported looking at all nine connections. During the first five minutes of their overall use, about one-third of participants opened the Connections section, and a few played the video content. Of these participants, all were cued to use the Connections section.

NAVIGATION

Among those who were cued to use the Connections section, many participants navigated this section by matching Connections themes with works of art around them in the galleries (see the first quotation below). Several others selected Connections themes based on which theme title or image in the Connections section appealed to them. A few others searched the galleries for works of art that had Go Mobile icons on their wall labels and then found the related Connections theme.

> It took me a little bit to get oriented to where I was and where the pictures and the art was, but I started matching up some of the photos in the Connections to what I saw around me. [male, 35]

When using the Connections section, participants generally played the video associated with the Connections theme. Nearly all of the Connections-cued participants were initially surprised that the Connections section was not organized by gallery space (see the first quotation). Participants were divided in their opinions on this set-up (see the second quotation). Several had trouble locating the works of art across the gallery spaces, and a few opted to switch to a Galleries- or Search-based navigation method instead. However, several others liked the thematic nature of the Connections section as it prompted them to look at other works in the gallery.

> At first, I guess I just assumed [the Connections section] was by room so you can enter the room and see all the pieces they are talking about on the video, but then I realized it was by themes. [female, 27]

> It was cool but the hard part is, because it's not just showing stuff in one room, you kind of have to walk around to find different ones. But, also, it prompts you to find a piece that you thought was cool [on Go Mobile] and to look around more to find that piece [in the gallery]. [female, 27]

CONNECTIONS VIDEOS

About one-half of all participants watched Connections videos, with participants viewing between one to all nine videos during their experience. Moreover, participants who were cued to use the Connections section clicked on more videos than their un-cued counterparts. Participants often switched between watching the video on the device screen and viewing works of art in the galleries. In several cases, participants did not watch the video at all and instead listened to it while looking around the gallery. As the video clips discuss multiple works of art in various locations in the Contemporary galleries, it was unusual for a participant to watch the entire video while standing in front of the related

works of art; however, most participants did watch or listen to the full length of the video clip. The video clips ranged in popularity:

- ♦ Media and Society – about one-quarter viewed
- ♦ Charm City – about one-quarter viewed
- ♦ Light and Space – several viewed
- ♦ ROY G. BIV – several viewed
- ♦ Re-visioning the Body – a few viewed
- ♦ Gesture and Performance – two viewed
- ♦ The Other Senses – two viewed
- ♦ Materials and Making – two viewed
- ♦ Repetition – two viewed

USE OF CONNECTIONS FOR OBJECT EXPLORATION

About one-quarter of participants used the Connections section to access object pages for individual works of art. Participants used this method infrequently, accessing one to two works through the Connections section. A few participants indicated that the method of accessing the object pages— selecting the Go button beneath the video screen—was unintuitive. Rather, these participants attempted to click on the images of the artworks below the video to access an object page.

EXPECTATION FOR CONNECTIONS

Some participants said they had anticipated the section to show the relationships between works or works that had something in common. Some other participants said they had no expectations of what the term "connections" might mean, and one other expected it to provide more information about the work of art. Another participant thought the section would be more like a Pandora channel that creates a diagram of works he might like based on his initial selection of artworks. After using the Connections section, most understood that the section ties together works thematically and shows the connections between the artworks; one such participant noted that the Connections themes provide another method for visitors to engage in works of art. Several others were less certain as to the section's purpose, saying that it was "unclear" or that they were "uncertain."

TECHNICAL AND DESIGN ISSUES

Most participants described initial confusion about how the Connections section worked, in particular grasping that a Connections theme would feature works of art from across the Contemporary galleries, not within a single gallery. Participants also had difficulty locating the featured works of art within the Contemporary Wing and sometimes found themselves listening to a video about one work of art while standing in front of a completely different work (see the quotation below). In addition, a few participants noted that the design of the Connections section implies that they should click on the images of the art to access additional content about the work, while in fact they need to select the Go arrow near the video clip.

> It seemed like [in Connections], you were trying to direct me to something, but at that point I wasn't ready to hear someone talk to me about [the work] because I wasn't in that gallery space. [male, 46]

Several participants described their experience as positive. Two participants liked how the section prompted them to flow from one gallery to the next and see works they may not have seen otherwise (see the quotation below). Two others appreciated hearing the different perspectives of narrators in the videos, especially because the narrators were from the Baltimore community and not necessarily "art people." One other participant said the Connections section engaged her with the works in ways she would not have done otherwise; for example, seeing an image of a visitor sitting on Franz West's *Violetta* in the Roy G. Biv Connections video prompted her to do so).

> I think it helped me understand some of the pieces more and see how some pieces, with the connections, how [the works] relate to others and how they might have similar themes. And if you see something you like in Go Mobile that you might not have seen by just walking around, it prompts you to keep looking through the museum to find something. [female, 27]

USAGE OF SEARCH

About one-quarter of participants were observed using the Search option (see the image on the right). Participants tended to use this feature either at the beginning of their experience as they explored the different navigational options or at the end of their experience. When using the Search option, participants generally scrolled through the list of works, though in a few cases, participants typed in names of artists or artworks into the search bar. Nearly all who selected the Search option did so infrequently, using it once or twice during their experience. However, one participant used the Search option as her primary method for navigating Go Mobile content, as it listed all works of art with Go Mobile content.
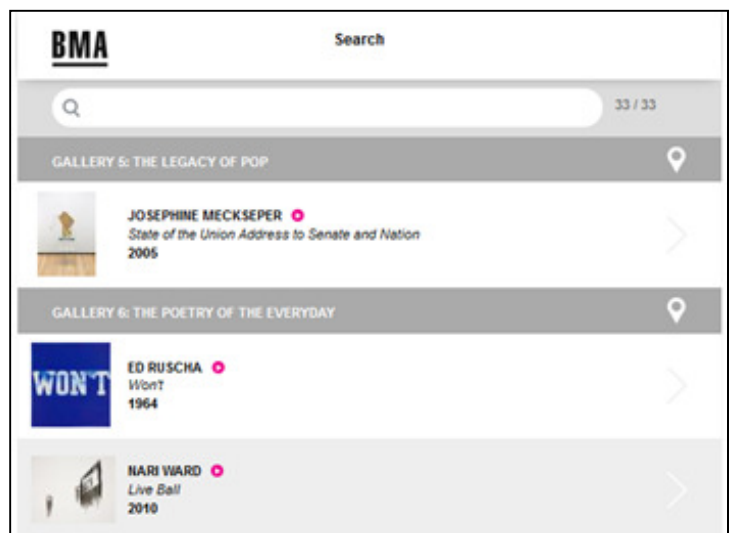
OVERALL OPINION OF GO MOBILE

Go Mobile met or exceeded the majority of participants' expectations. Participants liked the mobile site's clean design and ease of use. Participants also liked how Go Mobile featured additional content about the works and artists and did not solely present content from existing wall labels in an audio format. Among the remaining participants, several said they came to the experience without any expectations. A few others commented that the website did not meet their expectations because it was difficult to navigate.

LIKE MOST

All participants liked using Go Mobile to get more information about artists and works of art featured in the Contemporary galleries. Specifically, some participants liked the multiple levels of information presented as this enabled them to more deeply engage with works of art (see the first quotation below). Some other participants enjoyed listening to the artist-narrated audio clips and hearing the artists' perspective on the work. A few others more generally liked hearing different perspectives about the art, such as an audio clip featuring a curator or a Connections video featuring local community members. A

few participants liked the personalized nature of using Go Mobile and suggested it was akin to a "personal docent" or "private tour" (see the third quotation). A few others liked the flexibility of the Go Mobile site, in that it could be accessed at home or on your own device.

> With the pinkish painting in the one room [*The Oracle*], it [the audio clip] said get up close, see the brushstrokes. You always feel like you can't get too close in a museum, so to hear that reinforcement was nice. It helps you connect a little bit more. [female, 26]

> It's like my own guided tour, where I could set my own pace, and I don't have to worry about being with a group of people or anything. So, if I don't want to listen to this [audio clip], I could just skip over it. [male, 35]

PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS

When asked about problematic aspects of their Go Mobile experience, participants generally commented on technical, navigational, or design issues. These issues have been described earlier in the related section, but to summarize:

- About one-third of participants experienced one or more internet-related problems (audio clips cut out abruptly, long download times for audio and video content, etc.)

- Another one-third experienced navigational problems (e.g., locating the gallery number for the space they were in, and , therefore, being unable to determine which Galleries content to select on Go Mobile).

- The remaining one-third described problems related to Go Mobile's design (e.g., having to use the back button on their browser window, object page view).

MEANING MAKING AROUND THE COLLECTION

All participants indicated that Go Mobile enhanced their experience in the collections and their understanding of the artwork; many also suggested their use of the mobile site increased the personal relevance of the works. Some participants commented that using Go Mobile made them spend more time with works of art, including those they might have otherwise passed by. Further, Go Mobile content caused participants to look at familiar works of art in new ways. About-one half of participants said that using Go Mobile gave them more insight into the artist's intentions, which further developed their own understanding of and appreciation for the work. Moreover, a few participants said they were able to affirm their own interpretations of the works by using Go Mobile.

Go Mobile also made participants more comfortable to engage with works, and over one-half of participants described ways the site had changed their interactions with art that day. Participants got up close to Philip Guston's *The Oracle* to examine brushstrokes and bent over to see the newspaper clipping in Josephine Meckseper's *State of the Union Address to Senate and Nation*. Some participants said it was their first time taking a seat on one of West's sculptures or the first time they contemplated the feel and movement of the beads that make up Felix Gonzalez-Torres' *Untitled* (Water) (see the quotation below).

> I would have just walked through the beads. I've always noticed when I walked through them that they're nice and heavy but I've never really paid as much attention to them as I did today. [female, 37]

FUTURE USE

Participants were asked how, if at all, they might use Go Mobile in the future and many participants said they would likely use Go Mobile again when exploring the galleries. Several of these participants

described how they might use the mobile website to learn about works of interest, curate their own tour, or create a scavenger hunt. Another one-third of participants said they might use Go Mobile at home to plan a trip to the museum, share what they saw, or look at works they may have missed. A few such participants perceived the Connections videos, in particular, as resources to use at home, rather than during their visit (see the quotation below). Several participants mentioned how they might use Go Mobile differently the next time; for instance, two participants said they would primarily use the Galleries section. One other participant each mentioned watching a video, using the map, or using the Connections section. Two other participants said their use of Go Mobile might depend on the size of their group, in that Go Mobile would be good to use for a solo experience but might not be a group activity.

> The Connections, I mean it is cool, but I feel like that's the kind of thing you watch while you're sitting on your computer versus walking around the gallery. I would watch that before I went to the museum and use it as a preview of what's in there. [female, 27]

SUGGESTIONS

Many participants had suggestions for improving Go Mobile, which were often related to improving visitors' awareness of how to use the mobile website and navigate the galleries. For instance, several recommended making the map features more apparent so that it was easier for visitors to determine where they are in the galleries. Several other participants were eager to see content for other galleries, like the Cone Collection, made available. A few participants recommended adding an introduction or tutorial page to the website to make visitors aware of the various features (e.g., scroll option on the object pages) and to clarify what these options did (e.g., the difference between the Connections section and the Galleries section). A few participants requested that the Museum fix the internet connection to improve speed and prevent audio clips from cutting out. A couple had ideas for improving the design of Go Mobile, such as adding closed-caption text to the videos and enabling audio clips to keep playing when visitors click on other Go Mobile content. In addition, two participants suggested it might be easier to use Go Mobile if it was an app, and one participant requested a Spanish language version.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Removed for proprietary purposes

APPENDIX B: GALLERIES INTERVIEW GUIDE

Removed for proprietary purposes

APPENDIX C: CONNECTIONS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Removed for proprietary purposes