



Museum Visitor Studies, Evaluation & Audience Research

Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.
118 East Del Ray Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22301

SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

COURBET AND THE MODERN LANDSCAPE

Prepared for

The Walters Art Museum

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of a summative evaluation of *Courbet and the Modern Landscape*, conducted by Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A), for the Walters Art Museum. The evaluation documents the scope of the exhibition's impact and effectiveness. This summary presents only a sketch of visitors and their experiences in the exhibition. Readers are urged to review the body of the report for more thorough coverage and details of the topics introduced here.

I. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: EXIT INTERVIEWS

RK&A conducted 40 in-depth interviews with visitors immediately after their visit to *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* to gather information about their perceptions, opinions, and understanding of the exhibition.

OVERALL OPINIONS

- ◆ Two-thirds of interviewees mentioned the exhibition lighting while expressing their opinion and the majority of these interviewees said the lighting enhanced their experience. A small portion said the lighting was garish.
- ◆ About one-half of interviewees talked about their opinion exclusively from the perspective of Courbet's paintings; these interviewees were amazed at Courbet's talent and skill.
- ◆ About one-third of interviewees were most impressed by the exhibition's seasonal organization.
- ◆ Less than one-third of interviewees talked about the exhibition music as they described their opinions; about one-half liked the music and found it innovative, while the other one-half disliked the music.

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

- ◆ The majority of interviewees said the exhibition made them think about Courbet and his paintings, especially the *way* the artist painted—using heavy brush strokes and impressionistic methods.
- ◆ Slightly less than one-half of interviewees said the exhibition made them feel calm and relaxed—as if they had been transported to one of the scenes in his paintings.

KNOWLEDGE OF COURBET

- ◆ About one-quarter of interviewees said they learned about his style and subjects.
- ◆ Another one-quarter of interviewees said they were surprised to learn that Courbet is considered an early impressionist painter and revolutionary for his time.
- ◆ One-quarter said that, based on his paintings, Courbet must have been a depressed, solitary person who liked nature more than people.
- ◆ The remaining interviewees said they did not learn anything new about Courbet.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO MUSIC AND LIGHTING

- ◆ About two-thirds of interviewees said they liked the music and, for the most part, said it enhanced their experience.
- ◆ About one-third of interviewees said they disliked the music or felt ambivalent about it. They did not agree that the paintings suggested music or sound.
- ◆ About two-thirds of interviewees said they liked the lighting affect and felt it had a great impact on how they looked at the paintings.
- ◆ The remaining interviewees disliked or were ambivalent about the lighting.

WALTERS AS AN INSTITUTION

- ◆ Nearly one-half of interviewees recognized that the organization, music, and lighting elements made *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* a departure from typical art museum exhibitions and commended the Walters for being innovative and taking a chance.
- ◆ One-third of interviewees, including those who noticed the music, lighting, and organization, said *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* did not differ from other art exhibitions.
- ◆ A few (3) interviewees expressed disappointment in the Walters for using music and lighting effects.

II. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: QUESTIONNAIRES

Using a systematic sampling procedure, specially trained data collectors administered surveys to adult visitors (18 years of age and older) exiting the exhibition. Of 558 visitors approached, 468 agreed to participate and 88 declined to participate, for a refusal rate of 16 percent, which is typical in a sample of this size.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Females outnumbered males.
- ◆ Ages ranged from 18 years to 93 years with a median age of 53 years. This is slightly higher than the median age of adults visiting art museums nationally, which is 45 years.
- ◆ Respondents were highly educated, with 83 percent having at least a college degree. This level of education is typical of art museum visitors.
- ◆ The majority of respondents attended the exhibition with one or more adults, 24 percent attended alone, and 11 percent attended with children.

VISIT CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Most respondents were repeat visitors to the Walters Art Museum.
- ◆ 18 percent of respondents were members of the Walters Art Museum.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

- ◆ 52 percent of respondents read some part of the exhibition brochure.
- ◆ Females were more likely to read the exhibition brochure than were males, and College graduates were more likely to read the exhibition brochure than were non-graduates.
- ◆ 31 percent of respondents read at least one published review of the exhibition, most often from the *New York Times*, *Baltimore Sun*, and/or *Washington Post*.
- ◆ Museum members, repeat visitors, older visitors, and college graduates were more likely to have read a published review of the exhibition than were non-members, first-time visitors, middle-aged or younger visitors, and non-graduates.

RATINGS OF THE COURBET EXHIBITION

- ◆ Respondents rated nine aspects of the exhibition using 7-point rating scales. All nine aspects of the exhibition received positive ratings:
 - “Not worth seeing” (1) to “Very worth seeing” (7) (mean = 6.0)
 - “Distracting” (1) to “Immersive” (7) (mean = 5.5)
 - “Ordinary” (1) to “Intriguing” (7) (mean = 5.3)
 - “Conducive to rushing through” (1) to “Conducive to lingering” (7) (mean = 5.2)
 - “Not educational” (1) to “Educational” (7) (mean = 5.1)
 - “Not enough information” (1) to “Just the right amount of information” (7) (mean = 5.1)
 - “Did not meet my expectations” (1) to “Surpassed my expectations” (7) (mean = 4.9)
 - “Emotionally flat” (1) “Emotionally elating” (7) (mean = 4.8)
 - “Conventional” (1) to “Innovative” (7) (mean = 4.8)
- ◆ The characteristic that occurs most often in models predicting higher exhibition ratings is being a repeat Walter’s Art Museum visitor.
- ◆ Visitors who read any part of the exhibition brochure rated the exhibition more favorably on three of the rating scales: “Ordinary” (1) to “Intriguing” (7); “Not educational” (1) to “Educational” (7); and “Not enough information” (1) to “Just the right amount of information” (7).

EXHIBITION MUSIC AND LIGHTING EFFECTS

- ◆ 79 percent of respondents were aware of the music in the exhibition and rated it favorably.
- ◆ 89 percent of respondents were aware that the exhibition lighting differed from lighting in other art exhibitions and rated it favorably.
- ◆ Gender is the only demographic or visit characteristic that predicts the ratings of the exhibition’s music and lighting effects. Females rated the exhibition music and lighting more favorably than did males.

RATINGS OF MUSIC AND LIGHTING EFFECTS BY READING BEHAVIORS

- ◆ Having read the exhibition brochure did not impact visitors’ ratings of the music or lighting effects.

- ◆ Having read a published review is associated with lower ratings of both music and lighting effects. Respondents who read a published review of the exhibition rated the music and lighting lower than did respondents who did not read a review.

III. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: TIMING AND TRACKING OBSERVATIONS

RK&A-trained data collectors observed 101 visitors, eighteen years and older, as they moved through the *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* exhibition. Data collection occurred on weekdays, weekends, and Friday evenings. The majority of observations took place under light to moderate crowding conditions.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ One-half of the observed visitors were female and one-half were male.
- ◆ 30 percent of the observed visitors were under 35 years old, 35 percent were 35 – 54 years old, and 36 percent were 55 years old or older.
- ◆ Most of the observed visitors were visiting in adult-only groups.
- ◆ 14 percent of observed visitors were in groups with children.

TOTAL TIME SPENT IN THE EXHIBITION

- ◆ Visitors' total time in the exhibition ranged from a low of 1 minute, 38 seconds to a high of 55 minutes, 23 seconds.
- ◆ The median time in the exhibition was 11 minutes, 30 seconds. When compared to Beverly Serrell's database of tracking studies in art museum exhibition, visitors to the Courbet exhibition moved more slowly.
- ◆ Groups of three or more adults spent the most time in the exhibition (mean = 18 minutes, 29 seconds) and groups with children spent the least time in the exhibition (mean = 7 minutes, 59 seconds).
- ◆ According to regression analysis, two characteristics predict visitors' time in the exhibition. Reading the exhibition catalogue and reading the exhibition brochure are associated with spending more time in the exhibition.

EXHIBITION SECTIONS

- ◆ 97 percent of visitors stopped in all five exhibition sections.
- ◆ Of the five sections, visitors spent the most time in the Fall section followed by Summer.
- ◆ Of the five sections, visitors spent the least time in the Introductory and the Winter areas, which were the smallest sections.

EXHIBITION BEHAVIORS

- ◆ 71 percent of visitors interacted socially with another visitor in at least one exhibition area.
- ◆ 39 percent of visitors read the brochure in at least one area.
- ◆ 38 percent of visitors sat on a bench in at least one area.
- ◆ 34 percent of visitors read the exhibition catalogue in at least one area.
- ◆ 12 percent of visitors interacted with staff in the exhibition.

Findings from the summative evaluation of the Walters Museum's *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* show that the experimental exhibition provided visitors with an immersive, aesthetic, and pleasurable experience. The Walters employed several unconventional techniques to facilitate an intense encounter between visitors and Courbet's paintings. First, in addition to an introduction, designers organized the exhibition by the four seasons—one section for each season. Second, the Walters commissioned students from the Peabody Conservatory to compose music reflective of Courbet's paintings, which was played in each of the four sections. In addition, the Walters used special lighting affects to convey a sense of being outdoors and to emphasize the natural play of light and dark in Courbet's landscapes. And finally, rather than using extensive wall labels, the curator wrote a handheld brochure and made it available for visitors who wanted additional information.

Notably, findings suggest that the exhibition facilitated an intense encounter between visitors and the paintings. Findings further suggest that the exhibition's unique use of lighting and, to a lesser extent, music, facilitated this encounter by serving as powerful interpretive aids. Consequently, even though the exhibition did not have information-based wall text, most visitors left the exhibition able to articulate the quality of their interaction with the works of art, which was substantial and meaningful.

In RK&A's experience, this type of outcome is unusual. Typically, visitors leave an art exhibition having intellectualized the art rather than having connected to it visually. Visitors most likely intellectualize after they read wall text and/or listen to audio guides that emphasize art historical information. By stripping the exhibition of these textual and cerebral aids, the Walters Museum left visitors free to experience the art without the crutch of "information." Thus, visitors became self-reliant and sensitive to the gallery environment, noticing elements that were permitted to shine. Whether visitors would have noticed the aesthetic qualities in the paintings in another installation is not known, but in the Walters installation, the visitor experience was rich and deep. Remarkably, only one visitor complained about the lack of an audio guide or wall text. Further, only one-half of visitors used the exhibition brochure and a small portion read the exhibition catalogues.

To reiterate, the Walters' intention with the Courbet exhibition was to facilitate an intense encounter between the visitor and the art. This aim is loose and open to interpretation. What exactly does an intense encounter look or sound like? In meetings with RK&A, while Walters staff did not formally articulate a message, they attempted to describe what form they hoped this intense encounter would take, speaking of long visits, arousal of emotions, and feelings of being transported to nature. For future exhibitions, the staff should clearly put into words what is meant by their objective for the visitor experience. Explicit, concrete objectives will help staff determine the best exhibition strategies and approaches for achieving their overall goals.

Though visitors may not have been consciously aware of the Walters' intent, they articulated the pleasure they experienced as well as the types of interactions they had with the paintings. For some of these visitors, finding the right words to describe what they felt was a new experience. Interestingly, conversations with staff at the Walters' had the same quality; finding the right words was a daunting task, requiring clarity and precision of thought. While most visitors may not have been accustomed to such conversations, their descriptions of their experiences were remarkably similar to what the Walters staff had described. Visitors' experiences with the paintings included close examinations of the brushstrokes; awareness of elements of early impressionism; feelings of calm, relaxation, and moodiness; and feelings of being in nature. Furthermore, compared to Beverly Serrells' database of tracking studies in art museum exhibitions, the tracking data show that visitors spent a more extended period of time in the Courbet exhibition; the installation prompted visitors to move slowly through the exhibition, taking notice and observing details.

Some visitors attributed their positive experiences to the seasonal organization, lighting, and/or music, while others said they felt they responded purely to the paintings. Most likely, a combination of all these elements resulted in visitors' intense encounters with the works of art. But, an examination of the data show that the lighting elevated visitors' experiences to a new level. The

lighting, which simulated the changing daylight of each season, enlivened the paintings and accentuated qualities in the paintings deserving of visitors' attention. The installation helped visitors *see* Courbet's paintings, his brushstrokes, and how he let dark and light tones react to each other. In retrospect, it is not surprising that the lighting had such an impact on how visitors experienced the paintings. Visual art, particularly drawings, paintings, and photographs, is created from the contrast between dark and light. The contrast allows us to see and decipher an image. The lighting affects simply enhanced these elements of Courbet's paintings and, in the process, sharpened visitors' observation skills. Most curators and educators share the ideal of empowering visitors to spend time observing works of art. Text is usually used to prompt such looking; *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* demonstrates that a strong installation idea can encourage deep looking.

The music had a more subtle affect of creating ambiance—at least in terms of visitors' being able to comment on the role the music played in their experience. Though most visitors could not articulate how the music affected them, it is possible that the music slowed visitors down and/or caused them to think harder about why the music was there, thus encouraging them to think more deeply about the paintings. Perhaps the balance among the music, lighting, and paintings was just right for the Walters—the paintings were the centerpiece—with the lighting and music playing supporting roles.

These findings, however, by no means suggest that the Walters should do away with text-based interpretation all together. Findings reveal that one-half of visitors used the exhibition brochure. Visitors who read the brochure spent longer in the exhibition and rated the exhibition as more “intriguing” than did visitors who did not read the brochure. Furthermore, it is likely that interviewees who talked about Courbet's place in art history (as an early impressionist) read at least part of the brochure unless they had prior knowledge about the artist. The Walters should continue to experiment with providing historical information in other forms than the typical wall label.

Most notably, these findings suggest that ways other than text and verbal audio guides facilitate meaningful interactions between visitors and art. In moving forward, just as the Walters let Courbet's paintings suggest an installation strategy using lighting and music, it should do the same with other collections. It is possible for visitors to have visually rich experiences in art museums—stemming from the works of art themselves—if museums carefully identify their intentions. The Walters should envision what it hopes to achieve and clarify what it means by “intense encounter” so it can design strategies to help visitors realize those experiences.

Notable Implications

- When appropriately tied to exhibition ideas and content, interpretative strategies other than typical wall text and audio guides can be used to facilitate powerful and deep interactions between visitors and works of art. And, when done well, visitors surprisingly do not miss the wall labels.
- Visitors to art museums, especially regular, repeat visitors, are open to new and innovative ways of exhibiting works of art.
- The clear and explicit articulation of intent and visitor experience objectives will guide staff toward the exhibition strategies and approaches that will best help them achieve their goals.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a summative evaluation of *Courbet and the Modern Landscape*, conducted by Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A), for the Walters Art Museum. The evaluation documents the scope of the exhibition's impact and effectiveness.

The objectives of this research are to examine:

- ◆ The overall meaning adults construct from their experience;
- ◆ Whether visitors can identify at least one quality of Courbet's painting style;
- ◆ What connection, if any, visitors constructed between Courbet's painted landscapes and the contemporary music and environmental lighting;
- ◆ The extent to which the exhibition inspires visitors to reflect on times when they have visited places reminiscent of Courbet's landscapes;
- ◆ The extent to which visitors recognize the exhibition as a departure from past Walters' exhibitions;
- ◆ The amount of time visitors spend in the exhibition and individual sections; and
- ◆ The impact of information about the exhibition (brochure, published reviews, etc) on the visitor experience.

METHODOLOGY

To accomplish the stated objectives, RK&A employed three methodologies: an exit interview, a questionnaire, and timing and tracking observations. Data were collected from November to December 2006.

EXIT INTERVIEWS

Open-ended interviews encourage and motivate visitors to describe their experiences, express their opinions and feelings, and share with the interviewer the meaning they constructed from an experience. Open-ended interviews produce data rich in information because interviewees talk about their personal experiences. One set of exit interviews was conducted with adults.

Specially trained data collectors used a systematic sampling procedure to intercept adult visitors (18 years of age or older) who were exiting the *Courbet* exhibition. In accordance with this method, the interviewer was stationed at the exit of the exhibition, and the first eligible visitor to exit was invited to participate in the interview (see Appendix A for the exit interview guide). Data collectors interviewed visitors who agreed to participate. Following the interview, data collectors thanked the participant and then selected the next eligible visitor.

The interview guide was intentionally open-ended to allow interviewees the freedom to discuss what they felt was meaningful. All interviews were tape-recorded with participants' permission and transcribed to facilitate analysis.

QUESTIONNAIRE

RK&A developed a standardized questionnaire for the survey because it is the most efficient method for gathering information from a large number of people. Moreover, the resulting data can be analyzed using a variety of statistical procedures. RK&A consulted extensively with Walters Art Museum staff to develop a two-page standardized questionnaire with a variety of question formats (see Appendix B for the survey).

Upon exiting the exhibition, adult visitors were selected (following a continuous random sampling method, as described above). Data collectors interviewed visitors who agreed to participate, and completed the questionnaire based on their responses. Participants completed the last page of the questionnaire regarding demographic information on their own. Following the survey interview, data collectors thanked the participant and then selected the next eligible visitor.

TIMING AND TRACKING OBSERVATIONS

Visitors are often observed to provide an objective and quantitative account of how they behave and react to exhibition components. Observational data indicate how much time visitors spend within an exhibition and suggest the range of visitor behaviors.

All adult visitors were eligible to be unobtrusively observed in the exhibition. The observed visitors were selected using a continuous random sampling method (as described above). The observer followed the selected visitor through the exhibition, recording the time in each exhibition section, select behaviors, and total time spent in the exhibition (see Appendices C for the observation form). When the visitor completed his visit to the exhibition, the observer returned to the entrance to await the next eligible visitor to enter the exhibition.

Data collectors trained by RK&A observed 101 visitors, 18 years and older, as they moved through the *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* exhibition. Data collection occurred on weekdays, weekends, and Friday evenings. The majority of observations took place under light to moderate crowding conditions.

DATA ANALYSIS

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The questionnaire and observation data were analyzed using SPSS 12.0.1, a statistical package for personal computers. Analysis included both descriptive and inferential statistics. All statistical analyses that were run for the questionnaire are listed in Appendix B and all statistical analysis run for the observation data are listed in Appendix C. The standard 0.05 level of significance was used for all inferential statistical tests, and only statistically significant results are presented in the body of the report.¹⁴

Frequency distributions were calculated for all categorical variables (such as, “gender” or whether or not a visitor “read the exhibition brochure”). To examine the relationship between two categorical variables (for instance, “read exhibition brochure” by “gender”), cross-tabulation tables were computed to show the joint frequency distribution of the variables, and the chi-square statistic (X^2) was used to test the significance of the relationship.

Summary statistics, including the mean (average), median (data point at which half the responses fall above and half fall below), and standard deviation (spread of scores: “±” in tables), were calculated for variables measured at an interval-level (such as, “rating of exhibition music”) or a ratio-level (such as, “observed time in the exhibition”). To test for differences in the means of interval-level or ratio-level variables, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed and the F-statistic was used to test the significance of the difference (for instance, whether “rating of exhibition music” differed by “gender”, or whether “observed time in the exhibition” differed by “gender”).

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between a dependent variable (such as “rating of exhibition music” or “observed time in the exhibition”) and a whole set of visitor characteristics (such as, “age,” “gender,” “education,” and “first-repeat visit.”) The stepwise multiple regression procedure determined which set of visitor characteristics, if any, comprise a model that predicts the dependent variable.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The interviews were qualitative, meaning that results are descriptive. In analyzing qualitative data, the evaluator studies the data for meaningful patterns and trends. Quotations in this report illustrate interviewees’ thoughts and ideas as fully as possible. The quotations give the reader the flavor of visitors’ experiences.

REPORTING METHOD

The data in this report are both quantitative and qualitative. For the quantitative data, information is displayed in tables and graphs. Percentages within tables may not always equal 100 owing to rounding. The findings within each topic are presented in descending order, starting with the most frequently occurring.

The interview data are presented in narrative. Interviewees’ verbatim quotations (edited for clarity) are included for the exit interviews. The interviewer’s remarks appear in parentheses. Trends and themes in the interview data are also presented from most to least frequently occurring.

FINDINGS ARE PRESENTED IN THREE MAIN SECTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

- I. Principal Findings: Exit Interviews
- II. Principal Findings: Questionnaire
- III. Principal Findings: Timing and Tracking

I. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: EXIT INTERVIEWS

In-depth interviews were conducted with visitors immediately after their visit to *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* to gather information about their perceptions, opinions, and understanding of the exhibition. In all, 40 interviews were conducted, including 21 males and 19 females. Ages ranged from 20 years to 81 years, with a median age of 54 years. Most interviewees were not members of the Walters (80 percent), and 20 percent were first-time visitors to the Museum.

Less than one-third of interviewees had read a published review of the exhibition. Of those who had, most cited the *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, and/or *Baltimore Sun*. Most of the interviewees said they spend much of their leisure time in museums, especially art museums and historic sites, but also the Baltimore Aquarium and other cultural institutions. Other leisure activities cited by interviewees included travel, live music (classical and contemporary), and outdoor activities, such as hiking and kayaking.

OVERALL OPINIONS

To uncover the element(s) of the exhibition that had the greatest impact on visitors, the evaluator asked for interviewees' "overall opinions" of the exhibition but did not probe about any one element in particular. Interviewees' opinions varied, but were overwhelmingly positive.

The **exhibition lighting** was the element brought up most often as having impacted interviewees' opinion of *Courbet and the Modern Landscape*. Two-thirds of interviewees mentioned the lighting while expressing their opinion. The majority of these interviewees said the lighting enhanced their experience. For instance, they said the lighting added depth to the paintings, emphasized the paintings' moodiness, and gave one the feeling of being transported to another place (see the quotation below). However, some of these interviewees had the opposite experience and said the lighting detracted from their enjoyment of the exhibition. These interviewees found the lighting garish and gimmicky.

I liked the way the winter paintings were lighted [sic]. [The lighting] gives [the painting] an entirely different effect. It brings out the white. I thought that was intriguing.

About one-half of interviewees talked about their opinion exclusively from the perspective of **Courbet's paintings** and did not comment on any other exhibition element. These interviewees were amazed at Courbet's talent and skill (see the quotation below). Some were Courbet fans and excited to see all his landscapes together.

What a talent. It isn't my personal taste in art, but I thought, 'Wow!' It was just amazing. (Okay. What did you like the most about it?) His technique of portraying something so accurately and so vividly, and yet not photographic. Just really interesting.

About one-third of interviewees were most impressed by the **exhibition's organization**, especially the arrangement of the paintings by seasons (see the quotation below). These interviewees said the

groupings by seasons had enhanced their experience. Others appreciated the exhibition's general flow and pacing.

It was beautifully staged. The paintings, of course, came from many places. But I liked the way they were grouped [into seasons]. It made sense.

Less than one-third of interviewees talked about the exhibition **music** as they described their opinion. Of those who mentioned it, about half liked the use of music and found it innovative, while the other half disliked the music and said it was distracting and unnecessary (see the quotation below).

Mostly I ignored [the music]. It seemed like elevator music. And it was needless and pointless and unnecessary.

A couple of interviewees mentioned **information** (or lack thereof) in expressing their opinion. One interviewee said she loved the brochure in place of wall text. She found it more intimate (see the quotation below). Another interviewee was disappointed in the lack of wall text and wanted more information about Courbet.

I liked reading in the brochure we had instead of having to look down at a plaque next to the painting; I could just read my brochure without having to read over someone's shoulders. I really liked that.

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

When asked what the exhibition made them think and feel, the majority of interviewees (slightly more than one-half) talked strictly in terms of Courbet and his paintings (see the quotation below). Some said they were struck by Courbet's heavy brush strokes, use of dark colors, his subjects, and his style. Others talked more about Courbet and his relationship to others in his time as well as his connection to his subject. A few said that based on his paintings, Courbet seemed to be an isolationist. A few said it seemed that Courbet must have had an intense connection to nature.

I enjoyed his painting and I was impressed with his ability to put splashes of color that really made you see what you were looking at, yet not finely done so that every detail was there. I had an impression this was the beginning of Impressionism.

Slightly less than one-half of interviewees said the exhibition made them feel as if they had been transported to one of the scenes in his paintings (see the first quotation below). They described this feeling as calming and relaxing. Some said they were most drawn to his depictions of the ocean, while others said they were most interested in his dark forest and grotto scenes (see the second quotation). A few of these interviewees attributed these feelings to the lighting and/or music.

It made me feel how many more places in France I need to get to because they're very moody pictures and it would be fun to go there and see whether the mood affected me the same way.

I thought it was sinister. Eerie. I felt lost in the woods. I thought 'Oh, we're never going to get home!' [Laugh]

A couple of interviewees said they felt and thought nothing as they visited the exhibition.

KNOWLEDGE OF COURBET

The evaluator asked interviewees what they had learned about Courbet in the exhibition. About one-quarter of interviewees said they had never seen Courbet paintings so they learned about his style and subjects (see the first quotation below). Another one-quarter of interviewees said they were surprised to learn that Courbet is thought of as an early Impressionist painter and was revolutionary for his time (see the second quotation). One-quarter said that, based on his paintings, Courbet must have been a depressed, solitary person who liked nature more than people. The remaining interviewees said they did not learn anything new about Courbet because they had known everything about him before.

He was a great landscape painter. Seeing this many landscapes put together was very impressive. What a really beautiful painter he was.

[I learned] he was a pretty early Impressionist. I had actually expected [the paintings] to be a little bit more realistic than Impressionistic. So I was a little taken aback by that, [considering] he's painting in 1865.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO MUSIC AND LIGHTING

As indicated earlier, not every interviewee mentioned the exhibition music or lighting unprompted so the evaluators asked about these elements directly.

All except for a few interviewees noticed the exhibition music. About two-thirds of interviewees said they liked the music and, for the most part, said it enhanced their experience (see the quotations below). Interviewees liked the music for a range of reasons: a few said the music was calming; a few said the music complemented the visual experience; a few said they commended the Walters for being innovative and for collaborating with another Baltimore institution; a couple said it added an informal, comfortable feeling to the experience; and one said the music made him want to linger. Several interviewees said they liked the music or at least the idea of the music, but felt their experience had not been impacted by it.

[The music] very much affects the way that you view the piece. I think it was an interesting experiment to try to get people to view [the art] in a different way.

Whoever the [introductory text] writer suggested that sound should accompany Courbet's art. I think the curator picked up on that and decided to do something different, and it worked.

[The music is] different in that you have a collaboration between Johns Hopkins and a collaboration between Peabody. And I thought that was interesting. [The use of music] is playing on the great strengths of Mount Vernon.

[The music] sets a mood. It's very relaxing in a way so I took more time looking at things.

About one-third of interviewees said they disliked the music or felt ambivalent about it. Though most of these interviewees understood the intention of the music, they did not agree that the paintings suggested music or sound (see the first and second quotations below). Some said the music

distracted them from enjoying the paintings or that they tuned it out, and a few said the music was so inaudible that it did not impact their experience or was more bothersome than enjoyable (see the third quotation). A couple of interviewees intensely disliked the music and the idea of the music—one described it as elevator music and the other said it was incomprehensible.

The Museum thinks that the paintings suggest music or sound. It didn't really [get] me that way. I would never have said that. But someone in the Museum thought that.

I thought the idea [of including music] was more interesting than the execution, to be honest with you. It didn't grab me as much as I thought it would.

[The music] really didn't affect my experience. I noticed it at first, but then it kind of tuned it out.

All but one interviewee noticed the lighting. About two-thirds of interviewees said they liked the lighting affect and felt it had a great impact on how they looked at the paintings. These interviewees expressed enthusiasm about the lighting and said it brought life to the paintings, made the colors and shadows pop out, and made them feel as if they were in the paintings (see the three quotations below). Many of them were most impressed by the lights in the winter section specifically.

[The lighting] contributes to [the experience]. In other words it enhances it because your eyes see one thing, and then your eyes see the floor. When you're in the woods you see shadows. And the shadows change. And the sun changes so quickly. Things could change relatively fast. You're a little bit more apprehensive on one level, but at the same time enjoying the beauty of it. It adds to the total effect.

The lighting made [the art] much more lifelike. You could definitely see an impression of light reflect on the snow. And it really brought it to life. I hadn't seen [art] displayed that way before. It's very interesting.

I've never seen an exhibition where they changed the lighting that much. And I should have thought about it because it's true! [Even though the paintings are] fairly dark, you'll notice [Courbet] always had sun or light coming through somewhere which will stand out much more. So like the sun came from behind the cloud, or something else.

The remaining interviewees disliked or were ambivalent about the lighting. Those who were ambivalent understood the intention of the lights, and some even appreciated that the Museum was trying to help novice viewers notice more in the paintings. However, these interviewees, who explained that they already know how to look at works of art, said that the lights had detracted from their own looking (see the quotation below). Several interviewees said they disliked the lighting intensely and described the affects on the paintings as tacky and garish.

[Courbet applied white paint] thickly with a knife on top of the darker surfaces, giving it a kind of interesting illumination. To then illuminate them with the rest of the room dark, with just the light on the painting certainly enhances that quality. I just found it distracting because I'm used to looking at that kind of thing in paintings.

WALTERS AS AN INSTITUTION

The evaluator asked interviewees questions to gauge how the music and lighting impacted their opinion of the Walters as an institution. Responses were mixed. Whatever their opinion of the

music, lighting, and organization by seasons, about one-half of interviewees noted that these elements made *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* a departure from typical art museum exhibitions. One-third of interviewees, including those who noticed the music, lighting, and organization, said *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* was no different than any other art exhibition. The remaining interviewees were visiting the Museum for the first time and had no opinion.

Of the one-half of interviewees who acknowledged that the exhibition had unique qualities, most of them said it had an impact on how they viewed the Walters. For the most part, these interviewees commended the Walters for being innovative and taking a chance, whether they thought the final execution was effective or ineffective (see the first quotation below). On the other hand, a couple of interviewees expressed disappointment in the Walters for trying to be innovative. These interviewees saw the exhibition as a desperate attempt to draw in new audiences (see the second quotation).

[The Walters] seems to be forward looking and trying to do new things. Some may succeed, and some won't. But if you keep doing the same thing, you get stuck in the backwater, then pretty soon you're going to have to close your doors. So [the Walters has] to try to appeal to a lot of different people to show art to different people.

I think there's a desperation. [Laugh] I can be blunt. It's the art that counts so I don't think all the extras make much difference in terms of enhancing the show or whatever. And I know museums always want to get more people in for whatever reasons, but they don't need to go to desperate measures. It's a very good museum. It has a great collection. They should just emphasize that and be happy.

OPINIONS OF THE COURBET GIFT SHOP

The Courbet gift shop was located at the end of the exhibition. To exit the exhibition, visitors had to walk through the gift shop. Evaluators asked interviewees whether this had impacted their visit. More than one-half expressed no opinion of the gift shop and said it did not affect what they thought of the exhibition. Of the remaining interviewees, one-half said they loved the gift shop, and the other one-half found its placement odd and wished the space had been used to display more Courbet paintings (see the quotation below).

It jumped too quickly from the exhibit to the gift shop. And then when I came to the gift shop, I was disappointed to see [the exhibition was over.]

II. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: QUESTIONNAIRES

Of 558 visitors approached and asked to participate in the survey, 468 visitors agreed to participate and 88 visitors declined, for a refusal rate of just 16 percent.

Survey interviews were conducted in October, November, and December 2006. One-quarter of the interviews were conducted Wednesdays through Thursdays (24 percent), 38 percent were conducted on Fridays, and 39 percent were conducted on Saturday or Sunday (see Table 1).

TABLE I

DAY OF VISIT (IN PERCENT)

DAY OF VISIT (n = 467)	%
Wednesday – Thursday	23
Friday	38
Saturday – Sunday	39

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents findings about demographic characteristics of survey respondents, including gender, age, education, and visit group.

GENDER, AGE, AND EDUCATION

Table 2 gives information about respondents' gender, age, and education. Females (55 percent) outnumbered males (45 percent). Respondents' ages ranged from 18 years to 93 years with a median age of 53 years; 24 percent were in younger age groups (<35 years), 29 percent were in middle age groups (35 – 54 years), and 47 percent were in older age groups (55+ years). Respondents were highly educated—83 percent held at least a Bachelor's degree and almost half (48 percent) had a graduate degree.

TABLE 2

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (IN PERCENT)

	%
GENDER (n = 463)	
Male	45
Female	55
AGE IN YEARS* (n = 458)	
18 – 24	10
25 – 34	14
35 – 44	10
45 – 54	19
55 – 64	24
65 or older	23
HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION (n = 466)	
Some high school	1
High school graduate	2
Some college	12
Technical certificate or Associate's degree	3
Bachelor's degree	23
Some graduate work	12
Graduate degree(s)	48

*Age range = 18 to 93 years; Median age = 53 years; Mean age = 50.3 years (±18)

VISIT GROUP COMPOSITION

Two-thirds of respondents attended the exhibition with one or more other adults (65 percent), and one-fourth attended alone (24 percent) (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

VISIT GROUP (IN PERCENT)

VISIT GROUP (n = 463)	%
Two or more adults	65
Alone	24
Adults and children	11

Only 11 percent of respondents attended with children. Most respondents visiting with children brought one child (63 percent) (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN VISIT GROUP (IN PERCENT)

NUMBER OF CHILDREN (n = 46)	%
1	63
2	24
3	11
4	2

The total number of people in each visit group ranged from one to 25 with a median of two people in each group (see Table 5).

TABLE 5

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH VISIT GROUP (IN PERCENT)

NUMBER OF VISITORS* (n = 456)	%
1	24
2	45
3 – 5	27
More than 5	4

*Range= 1 – 25; Median = 2; Mean = 2.5 (±1.7)

VISIT CHARACTERISTICS

This section presents findings about respondents' visits to the Walters Art Museum, including first or repeat visit, frequency of recent visits, and Walters Art Museum membership.

FIRST OR REPEAT WALTERS ART MUSEUM VISIT

Most respondents were repeat visitors to the Walters Art Museum (70 percent) (see Table 6). Of repeat visitors, two-fifths had visited the Museum at least one other time in the past two years (39 percent), 26 percent had visited three or four times, and 35 percent had visited five or more times (see Table 7).

TABLE 6

FIRST-TIME AND REPEAT VISITORS (IN PERCENT)

VISIT (n = 465)	%
First	30
Repeat	70

TABLE 7

**FREQUENCY OF VISITS IN LAST TWO YEARS
AMONG REPEAT VISITORS (IN PERCENT)**

VISITS IN LAST TWO YEARS (n = 310)	%
1 – 2 times	39
3 – 4 times	26
5 or more times	35

WALTERS ART MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

One-fifth of respondents were Walters Art Museum members (18 percent) (see Table 8).

TABLE 8

**WALTERS ART MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP
(IN PERCENT)**

MEMBER (n = 464)	%
No	82
Yes	18

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

This section explores whether or not respondents read the exhibition brochure or any published reviews of the exhibition, and if so, from what source. This section also identifies differences in respondents' brochure and review reading behaviors based on demographic and visit characteristics.

EXHIBITION BROCHURE

Just over half of respondents read some part of the exhibition brochure (52 percent) (see Table 9).

TABLE 9
READ ANY PART OF EXHIBITION BROCHURE
(IN PERCENT)

READ BROCHURE (<i>n</i> = 468)	%
No	48
Yes	52

Reading the exhibition brochure was tested against demographic and visit characteristics to identify differences based on gender, age, education, first or repeat visit, visiting-with-children, or Museum membership. Two factors, gender and education, are associated with reading the brochure.

Females were more likely than were males to read the exhibition brochure (57 percent vs. 47 percent) (see Table 10).

TABLE 10
READ EXHIBITION BROCHURE—BY GENDER

READ BROCHURE:	GENDER		TOTAL (<i>n</i> =463)
	MALE (<i>n</i> =208)	FEMALE (<i>n</i> =255)	
	%	%	%
No	53	43	48
Yes	47	57	52

$\chi^2=5.181$; $df=1$; $p=.025$

College graduates were more likely to read the brochure than were non-graduates (55 percent vs. 41 percent) (see Table 11).

TABLE 11
READ EXHIBITION BROCHURE—BY EDUCATION

READ BROCHURE:	COLLEGE GRADUATE		TOTAL (<i>n</i> =466)
	NO (<i>n</i> =79)	YES (<i>n</i> =387)	
	%	%	%
No	59	45	48
Yes	41	55	52

$\chi^2=5.557$; $df=1$; $p=.019$

PUBLISHED REVIEWS OF THE COURBET EXHIBITION

Nearly one-third of respondents read at least one published review of the exhibition (31 percent) (see Table 12). Of those who read one or more reviews ($n=146$), the *New York Times* (31percent), *Baltimore Sun* (24 percent), and *Washington Post* (21 percent) were the most often cited sources (see Table 13).

TABLE 12
**READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION
(IN PERCENT)**

READ PUBLISHED REVIEW (<i>n</i> = 468)	%
No	69
Yes	31

TABLE 13
EXHIBITION REVIEW-READERS' SOURCES (IN PERCENT)

SOURCES ¹ (<i>n</i> = 146)	%
<i>The New York Times</i>	31
<i>Baltimore Sun</i>	24
<i>Washington Post</i>	21
<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	7
Other ²	3
<i>Walters Bulletin</i>	2
Not specified/Not sure	25

¹Some readers listed more than one publication, so column total exceeds 100%.

²Other: *Art News*, *Baltimore Magazine*, *Harrisburg Patriot*, *New Yorker*, *Towson Times*

Reading a published review of the exhibition was tested against demographic and visit characteristics to identify differences based on gender, age, education, first or repeat visit, visiting-with-children or Museum membership. Four factors are associated with reading a review: Museum membership, first or repeat visit, age, and education.

Museum members were more likely to have read a published review than were non-members (54 percent vs. 27 percent) (see Table 14).

TABLE 14

READ PUBLISHED REVIEW—BY WALTERS ART MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

	MEMBER		TOTAL (<i>n</i> =464)
	NO (<i>n</i> =82)	YES (<i>n</i> =382)	
READ REVIEW:	%	%	%
No	73	46	69
Yes	27	54	31

$\chi^2=22.749$; $df=1$; $p=.000$

Repeat visitors were more likely to have read a published review than were first-time visitors (36 percent vs. 19 percent) (see Table 15).

TABLE 15

READ PUBLISHED REVIEW—BY FIRST OR REPEAT VISIT

	VISIT		TOTAL (<i>n</i> =465)
	FIRST (<i>n</i> =142)	REPEAT (<i>n</i> =343)	
READ REVIEW:	%	%	%
No	81	64	69
Yes	19	36	31

$\chi^2=14.106$; $df=1$; $p=.000$

Older visitors (55+ years) were most likely to have read a published review (39 percent), followed by middle-aged visitors (35-54 years) (28 percent), and younger visitors (<35 years) (21 percent).

TABLE 16

READ PUBLISHED REVIEW—BY AGE

	AGE IN YEARS			TOTAL (<i>n</i> =458)
	< 35 (<i>n</i> =111)	35-54 (<i>n</i> =124)	55+ (<i>n</i> =213)	
READ REVIEW:	%	%	%	%
No	79	72	61	69
Yes	21	28	39	31

$\chi^2=12.464$; $df=2$; $p=.002$

College graduates were more likely to have read a published review than were non-graduates (34 percent vs. 18 percent) (see Table 17).

TABLE 17
READ PUBLISHED REVIEW—BY COLLEGE EDUCATION

	COLLEGE GRADUATE		TOTAL (<i>n</i> =466)
	NO (<i>n</i> =79)	YES (<i>n</i> =387)	
READ REVIEW:	%	%	%
No	82	66	69
Yes	18	34	31

$\chi^2=7.962$; $df=1$; $p=.003$

EXHIBITION RATINGS

This section presents findings about respondents’ opinions of the Courbet exhibition and its music and lighting effects. This section also explores relationships between exhibition ratings and respondents’ demographic characteristics, visit characteristics, and reading behaviors.

VISITORS’ OPINIONS OF THE COURBET EXHIBITION

GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE EXHIBITION

Respondents rated nine general aspects of the exhibition using seven-point rating scales in which a score of one is least favorable and seven is most favorable. See Table 18 for the results for each rating scale, listed from highest to lowest mean score. Visitors rated all nine aspects of the exhibition positively.

The rating scale that measures the extent to which the exhibition was “worth seeing” received the highest score (mean = 6.0). Respondents also rated the exhibition as highly “immersive” (mean = 5.5) and “intriguing” (mean = 5.3). They found that the exhibition was “conducive to lingering” (mean = 5.2), “educational” (mean = 5.1), and provided “just the right amount of information” (mean = 5.1).

The scale that measures the extent to which the exhibition “surpassed expectations” received a mean rating score of 4.9, a slightly less positive score than the others, although this result might indicate that Walters Art Museum visitors begin their visits with high expectations. The two scales that received the lowest ratings, though still favorable, measured the extent to which the exhibition was “emotionally elating” (mean = 4.8) and “innovative” (mean = 4.8).

TABLE 18**RATINGS OF THE COURBET EXHIBITION**

7-POINT RATING SCALES: COURBET EXHIBITION WAS ...	n	RATING	
		MEAN	±
Not worth-seeing (1)/Very worth-seeing (7)	467	6.0	1.29
Distracting (1)/Immersive (7)	464	5.5	1.23
Ordinary (1)/Intriguing (7)	466	5.3	1.40
Conducive to rushing through (1)/ Conducive to lingering (7)	467	5.2	1.48
Not educational (1)/Educational (7)	466	5.1	1.57
Not enough information (1)/ Just the right amount of information (7)	468	5.1	1.70
Did not meet my expectations (1)/ Surpassed my expectations (7)	466	4.9	1.39
Emotionally flat (1)/Emotionally elating (7)	466	4.8	1.44
Conventional (1)/Innovative (7)	466	4.8	1.55

DEMOGRAPHIC AND VISIT CHARACTERISTICS THAT PREDICT COURBET EXHIBITION RATINGS

For each rating scale, a stepwise multiple regression analysis tested whether the rating scale score is predicted by any single demographic or visit characteristics, or any combination of characteristics. The characteristics (predictor variables) tested for the regression models were gender, age, education, first or repeat visit, visiting-with-children, and Walters Art Museum membership. Of the nine rating scales, six have models that predict the rating scale score (see Appendix C for a full description of all of the regression models). The characteristic that comes up most often as a significant predictor is first or repeat visit. Age, gender, and education also appear. Visiting-with-children and Museum membership are not significant predictors in any of the models.

First or repeat visit and age predict the rating score for the scale from one “Not Worth-Seeing” to seven “Very Worth-Seeing.” Repeat visitors found the exhibition more worth-seeing than did first-time visitors and older visitors found the exhibition more worth-seeing than did younger visitors. The mean scores for the scale according to first or repeat visit and age group are shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19
REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE
“NOT WORTH SEEING” (1)/“VERY WORTH SEEING” (7)

PREDICTORS:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
VISIT (<i>n</i>=464)		
First	5.7	1.37
Repeat	6.1	1.23
AGE IN YEARS* (<i>n</i>=457)		
<35	5.7	1.33
35–54	5.9	1.31
55+	6.1	1.25

Model $F=7.637$; $df=2, 443$; $p=.001$; $R^2=.033$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

* In the regression model, the predictor variable is age-in-years.

Gender is the only characteristic that predicts the rating score on a scale from one “Distracting” to seven “Immersive.” Females found the exhibition more immersive than did males. The mean scores for the scale by gender appear in Table 20.

TABLE 20
REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE
“DISTRACTING” (1)/“IMMERSIVE” (7)

PREDICTOR:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
GENDER (<i>n</i>=459)		
Male	5.3	1.29
Female	5.6	1.17

Model $F=5.272$; $df=1, 441$; $p=.022$; $R^2=.012$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

First or repeat visit is the only characteristic that predicts the rating score on a scale from one “Ordinary” to seven “Intriguing.” Repeat visitors found the exhibition more intriguing than did first-time visitors. The mean scores for the scale by first or repeat visit are shown in Table 21.

TABLE 21

**REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE
“ORDINARY” (1)“INTRIGUING” (7)**

PREDICTOR:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
VISIT (<i>n</i>=463)		
First	5.0	1.50
Repeat	5.4	1.33

Model $F=9.446$; $df=1, 443$; $p=.002$; $R^2=.021$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

Age is the only characteristic that predicts the rating score on a scale from one “Not Educational” to seven “Educational.” Older visitors found the exhibition more educational than did younger visitors. The mean scores for the scale by age group appear in Table 22.

TABLE 22

**REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE
“NOT EDUCATIONAL” (1)“EDUCATIONAL” (7)**

PREDICTOR:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
AGE IN YEARS* (<i>n</i>=456)		
<35	4.8	1.48
35–54	5.0	1.60
55+	5.2	1.60

Model $F=4.936$; $df=1, 443$; $p=.027$; $R^2=.011$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

* In the regression model, the predictor variable is age-in-years.

First or repeat visit is the only characteristic that predicts the rating score on the scale from one “Emotionally flat” to seven “Emotionally elating.” Repeat visitors found the exhibition more emotionally elating than did first-time visitors. The mean scores for the scale by first or repeat visit are shown in Table 23.

TABLE 23

REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “EMOTIONALLY FLAT” (1)/“EMOTIONALLY ELATING” (7)

PREDICTOR:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
VISIT (n=463)		
First	4.6	1.50
Repeat	4.9	1.41

Model $F=4.184$; $df=1, 443$; $p=.041$; $R^2=.009$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

First-repeat visit and education predict the rating score on a scale from one “Conventional” to seven “Innovative.” Repeat visitors found the exhibition more innovative than did first-time visitors and college graduates found the exhibition more innovative than did non-graduates. The mean scores for the scale according to first or repeat visit and college education appear in Table 24.

TABLE 24

REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “CONVENTIONAL” (1)/ “INNOVATIVE” (7)

PREDICTORS:	RATING	
	MEAN	±
VISIT (n=463)		
First	4.4	1.65
Repeat	4.9	1.48
COLLEGE GRADUATE (n=464)		
No	4.3	1.79
Yes	4.8	1.48

Model $F=10.237$; $df=2, 442$; $p=.000$; $R^2=.044$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

COURBET EXHIBITION RATINGS BY READING BEHAVIORS

The exhibition rating scales were also tested to determine whether there were differences based on having read the exhibition brochure or a published review of the exhibition. There were three significant results associated with having read the exhibition brochure and one associated with having read a published review.

On a scale from one “Ordinary” to seven “Intriguing,” visitors who read any part of the exhibition brochure found the exhibition more intriguing than did those who did not (mean = 5.5 vs. mean = 5.1) (see Table 25).

TABLE 25
COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “ORDINARY” (1) / “INTRIGUING” (7)
BY HAVING READ THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE

7-POINT RATING SCALE: ORDINARY (1) / INTRIGUING (7)	RATING	
	MEAN	±
READ ANY PART OF THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE (n=466)		
No	5.1	1.53
Yes	5.5	1.26

$F=6.541$; $df=1, 464$; $p=.011$

On a scale from one “Not enough information” to seven “Just the right amount of information,” visitors who read any part of the exhibition brochure were more satisfied with the amount of information in the exhibition than were those who did not read the brochure (mean = 5.3 vs. mean = 4.9) (see Table 26).

TABLE 26
COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION” (1) / “JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF INFORMATION” (7)
BY HAVING READ THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE

7-POINT RATING SCALE: NOT ENOUGH INFORMATION (1) / JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT (7)	RATING	
	MEAN	±
READ ANY PART OF THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE (n=468)		
No	4.9	1.77
Yes	5.3	1.61

$F=5.278$; $df=1, 466$; $p=.022$

On a scale from one “Not educational” to seven “Educational,” visitors who read any part of the exhibition brochure found the exhibition more educational than did those who did not read the brochure (mean = 5.2 vs. mean = 4.9) (see Table 27).

TABLE 27
COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “NOT EDUCATIONAL” (1)/
“EDUCATIONAL” (7) BY HAVING READ THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE

7-POINT RATING SCALE: NOT EDUCATIONAL (1) / EDUCATIONAL (7)	RATING	
	MEAN	±
READ ANY PART OF THE EXHIBITION BROCHURE (n=466)		
No	4.9	1.63
Yes	5.2	1.49

$F=6.790$; $df=1, 464$; $p=.009$

On a scale from one “Ordinary” to seven “Innovative,” visitors who read a published review of the exhibition said they felt the exhibition was more innovative than did those who did not read a review (mean = 5.0 vs. mean = 4.6) (see Table 28).

TABLE 28
COURBET EXHIBITION RATING SCALE “CONVENTIONAL” (1)/ “INNOVATIVE” (7)
BY HAVING READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION

7-POINT RATING SCALE: CONVENTIONAL (1) / INNOVATIVE (7)	RATING	
	MEAN	±
READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW (n=466)		
No	4.6	1.59
Yes	5.0	1.44

$F=4.225$; $df=1, 464$; $p=.040$

EXHIBITION MUSIC AND LIGHTING EFFECTS

Respondents indicated their awareness of the exhibition’s special music and lighting effects and rated the extent to which the lighting and music enhanced the exhibition experience.

Over three-fourths of respondents were aware of the exhibition’s music (79 percent) (see Table 29). Respondents who were aware of the music rated the extent to which it enhanced the exhibition on a scale from one “The music detracted from my experience” to seven “The music enhanced my experience.” The music received a favorable rating (mean = 5.1) (see Table 30).

TABLE 29
AWARE OF MUSIC IN THE COURBET EXHIBITION
(IN PERCENT)

NOTICED MUSIC (n = 466)	%
No	21
Yes	79

TABLE 30
RATING OF MUSIC IN THE COURBET EXHIBITION

EXHIBITION MUSIC ...	n	RATING*	
		MEAN	±
Detracted from my experience (1)/ Enhanced my experience (7)	366	5.1	1.57

*Only respondents who were aware of the music completed this scale.

Most respondents were aware that the exhibition lighting differed from lighting in other art exhibitions (89 percent) (see Table 31). Respondents who were aware of the exhibition lighting rated the extent to which the lighting effects enhanced the exhibition on a scale from one “The lighting effects detracted from my experience” to seven “The lighting effects enhanced my experience.” The lighting effects also received a favorable rating (mean = 5.3) (see Table 32).

TABLE 31
AWARE OF LIGHTING EFFECTS IN THE COURBET EXHIBITION
(IN PERCENT)

NOTICED THAT EXHIBITION LIGHTING WAS DIFFERENT FROM LIGHTING IN OTHER ART EXHIBITIONS (n = 465)	%
No	11
Yes	89

TABLE 32**RATING OF LIGHTING EFFECTS IN THE COURBET EXHIBITION**

EXHIBITION LIGHTING EFFECTS...	n	RATING*	
		MEAN	±
Detracted from my experience (1)/ Enhanced my experience (7)	414	5.3	1.84

*Only respondents who were aware of the lighting effects completed this scale.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND VISIT CHARACTERISTICS THAT PREDICT THE RATINGS FOR EXHIBITION MUSIC AND LIGHTING EFFECTS

For the music and lighting rating scales, a stepwise multiple regression analysis tested whether the rating scale scores are predicted by any single demographic or visit characteristics, or any combination of them. The characteristics (predictor variables) tested for the regression models were gender, age, education, first or repeat visit, visiting-with-children, and Walters Art Museum membership (see Appendix C for a full description of the regression models.) Gender is the only characteristic that comes up in the models predicting the music and lighting rating scales. Although first or repeat visit was a prominent characteristic in the models predicting the exhibition’s general rating scales, it was not a factor here.

On a scale from one “The music detracted from my experience” to seven “The music enhanced my experience,” females gave the music a more favorable rating than did males. The mean scores for the scale according to gender appear in Table 33.

TABLE 33**REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION MUSIC RATING SCALE “DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE” (1)“ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE” (7)**

PREDICTOR:	RATING*	
	MEAN	±
GENDER (n=363)		
Male	4.8	1.67
Female	5.4	1.46

Model $F=13.312$; $df=1, 346$; $p=.000$; $R^2=.037$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

*Only respondents who were aware of the music completed this scale.

On a scale from one “The lighting effects detracted from my experience” to seven “The lighting effects enhanced my experience,” females gave the exhibition lighting a more favorable rating than did males. The mean scores for the scale according to gender are shown in Table 34.

TABLE 34
REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS THE COURBET EXHIBITION LIGHTING EFFECTS RATING SCALE “DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE” (1)/“ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE” (7)

PREDICTOR	RATING*	
	MEAN	±
GENDER (n=410)		
Male	5.1	1.85
Female	5.5	1.81

Model $F=4.131$; $df=1, 394$; $p=.000$; $R^2=.010$; see Appendix C for full description of the regression model.

*Only respondents who were aware of the lighting completed this scale.

RATINGS OF MUSIC AND LIGHTING EFFECTS BY READING BEHAVIORS

The exhibition music and lighting rating scales were tested to determine whether differences existed based on having read the exhibition brochure. There were no differences in the ratings of music or lighting effects based on having read the exhibition brochure.

The exhibition music and lighting rating scales were also tested to determine whether there were differences based on having read a published review of the exhibition. Reading a published review was associated with lower ratings of both music and lighting effects.

On a scale from one “The music detracted from my experience” to seven “The music enhanced my experience,” respondents who read a published review of the exhibition gave the music a lower rating than did respondents who did not read a review (mean = 4.8 vs. mean = 5.3) (see Table 35).

TABLE 35
COURBET EXHIBITION MUSIC RATING SCALE “DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE” (1)/“ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE” (7)—BY HAVING READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION

7-POINT RATING SCALE: DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE (1) / ENHANCED EXPERIENCE (7)	RATING*	
	MEAN	±
READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW (n=366)		
No	5.3	1.46
Yes	4.8	1.73

$F=9.021$; $df=1, 364$; $p=.003$;

*Only respondents who were aware of the music completed this scale.

On a scale from one “The lighting effects detracted from my experience” to seven “The lighting effects enhanced my experience,” respondents who read a published review of the exhibition gave the lighting effects a lower rating than did respondents who did not read a review (mean = 4.8 vs. mean = 5.5) (see Table 36).

TABLE 36**COURBET EXHIBITION LIGHTING RATING SCALE “DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE” (1)/“ENHANCED MY EXPERIENCE” (7)—BY HAVING READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW OF THE EXHIBITION**

7-POINT RATING SCALE: DETRACTED FROM MY EXPERIENCE (1) / ENHANCED EXPERIENCE (7)	RATING*	
	MEAN	±
READ A PUBLISHED REVIEW (n=414)		
No	5.5	1.71
Yes	4.8	2.00

$F=13.46$; $df=1, 412$; $p=.000$;

*Only respondents who were aware of the lighting completed this scale.

III. PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: TIMING & TRACKING OBSERVATIONS

BACKGROUND

In December 2006, data collectors trained by RK&A observed 101 visitors, eighteen years and older, as they moved through the *Courbet and the Modern Landscape* exhibition. Data collection occurred on weekdays, weekends, and Friday evenings. The majority of observations took place during light to moderate crowding conditions (see Table 37).

TABLE 37
DATA COLLECTION CONDITIONS (IN PERCENT)

CONDITION (n = 101)	%
DAY OF THE WEEK	
Weekday	67
Weekend	33
CROWDING LEVEL	
Light	44
Moderate	36
Crowded	21

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 38 shows the subjects' gender—one-half were female one-half were male—and estimated ages. Thirty percent were under 35 years old, 35 percent were 35 to 54 years old, and 36 percent were 55 years old or older.

TABLE 38
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (IN PERCENT)

CHARACTERISTIC (n = 101)	%
GENDER	
Female	50
Male	50
AGE GROUP *	
18-24 years	15
25-34 years	15
35-44 years	15
45-54 years	20
55-64 years	18
65+	18

*Subjects' ages were estimated by the observer

As presented in Table 39, most subjects visited in adult-only groups: one adult (31 percent), two adults (33 percent), or a group of three or more adults (23 percent). Only 14 percent of groups included children.

TABLE 39
VISITING GROUP COMPOSITION (IN PERCENT)

COMPOSITION (n = 101)	%
One adult	31
Two adults	33
Three or more adults	23
Adults and children	14

TOTAL TIME SPENT IN THE EXHIBITION

Visitors' total time in the exhibition ranged from one minute and 38 seconds to 55 minutes and 23 seconds, with a median time of 11 minutes and 30 seconds (see Table 40). Two-fifths (40 percent) of visitors spent less than 10 minutes in the exhibition, 37 percent spent between 10 and 20 minutes in the exhibition, and 24 percent spent 20 minutes or more in the exhibition.

TABLE 40
TOTAL TIME SPENT IN THE EXHIBITION (IN PERCENT)

TOTAL TIME* (n = 101)	%
Less than 5 minutes	18
5 min. – 9 min., 59 sec.	22
10 min. – 14 min., 59 sec.	23
15 min. – 19 min., 59 sec.	14
20 min. – 24 min., 59 sec.	7
25 min. – 29 min., 59 sec.	9
30 min. or more	8

*Summary statistics: Range: 1 min., 38 sec. to 55 min., 23 sec.;
Mean = 14 min., 12 sec. (\pm 10 min., 6 sec.); Median = 11 min., 30 sec.

Total time in the exhibition was compared by gender, age category, group composition, level of crowding, and day of visit. There were no significant findings based on gender, age category, level of crowding or day of visit, however, total time in the exhibition differed by group composition.

On average, groups of three or more adults spent the most time in the exhibition (mean = 18 minutes, 29 seconds), and groups with children spent the least time in the exhibition (mean = 7 minutes, 59 seconds). Of adult groups, solo visitors spent less time in the exhibition (mean = 11 minutes, 59 seconds) than did groups of two adults (mean = 15 minutes, 31 seconds) or groups of three or more adults (mean = 18 minutes, 29 seconds) (see Table 41).

TABLE 41
AVERAGE TIME SPENT IN THE EXHIBITION—BY GROUP COMPOSITION

GROUP COMPOSITION	<i>n</i>	MEAN	±
Three or more adults	23	18 min., 29 sec.	10 min., 24 sec.
Two adults	33	15 min., 31 sec.	11 min., 16 sec.
One adult	31	11 min., 59 sec.	9 min., 01 sec.
Adults and children	14	7 min., 59 sec.	5 min., 07 sec.

$F=3.547$; $df=3, 97$; $p=.017$

See Table 42 for information on total exhibition time by group composition. Of groups with three or more adults, more than three-fourths spent 10 minutes or more in the exhibition (78 percent). Of groups with two adults, 70 percent spent 10 minutes or more in the exhibition. In contrast, the majority of solo adults and groups with children spent less than 10 minutes in the exhibition (55 percent and 57 percent respectively).

TABLE 42
TOTAL TIME SPENT IN THE EXHIBITION—BY GROUP COMPOSITION (IN PERCENT)

	VISITOR GROUP				TOTAL (<i>n</i> = 101)
	3 + ADULTS (<i>n</i> = 23)	2 ADULTS (<i>n</i> = 33)	1 ADULT (<i>n</i> = 31)	ADULTS- CHILDREN (<i>n</i> = 14)	
TOTAL TIME	%	%	%	%	%
Less than 10 min.	22	30	55	57	40
10 min. – 19 min., 59 sec.	30	46	29	43	37
20 min. or more	48	24	16	0	24

$\chi^2=16.753$; $df=6$; $p=.010$

EXHIBITION SECTIONS

Visitors were observed and timed in each section of the exhibition: Introductory, Spring, Fall, Winter, and Summer. As shown by Table 43, almost all visitors (97 percent) stopped in all five exhibition sections of the exhibition.

TABLE 43

EXHIBITION SECTIONS VISITED

SECTIONS VISITED (<i>n</i> = 101)	%
SECTION	
Introductory	99
Spring	100
Fall	98
Winter	98
Summer	98
TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTIONS VISITED (<i>n</i> = 101)	
One	0
Two	2
Three	0
Four	1
Five	97

Of the five sections, visitors spent the most time in Fall (median = 3 minutes, 6 seconds), followed by Summer (median = 2 minutes, 32 seconds) (see Table 44). Visitors spent the least time in the Introductory Area and in Winter (both medians = 1 minute, 38 seconds).

TABLE 44

TIME SPENT IN EACH EXHIBITION SECTION

SECTION	<i>n</i>	MEDIAN	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	MEAN	±
Introductory	100	1 min., 38 sec.	3 sec.	9 min., 27 sec.	2 min., 6 sec.	2 min., 3 sec.
Spring	101	1 min., 58 sec.	9 sec.	26 min., 42 sec.	2 min., 44 sec.	3 min., 27 sec.
Fall	99	3 min., 6 sec.	18 sec.	21 min., 55 sec.	4 min., 12 sec.	3 min., 39 sec.
Winter	99	1 min., 38 sec.	5 sec.	15 min., 56 sec.	2 min., 15 sec.	2 min., 11 sec.
Summer	99	2 min., 32 sec.	8 sec.	10 min., 8 sec.	3 min., 12 sec.	2 min., 33 sec.

In the Introductory Area, two-thirds of visitors read the wall text (67 percent), and more than one-half took the exhibition brochure (57 percent) (see Table 45). Less than one-half interacted socially in this section (41 percent).

TABLE 45
INTRODUCTORY AREA: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

BEHAVIORS (n = 100)	%
Read wall text	67
Took brochure	57
Social Interaction	41

In the Spring section (see Table 46), more than one-half of visitors interacted socially (56 percent), and about one-third read the brochure (30 percent). Only a few visitors read the exhibition catalogue (11 percent) or sat on the bench (8 percent).

TABLE 46
SPRING SECTION: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

BEHAVIORS (n = 101)	%
Social interaction	56
Read brochure	30
Read exhibition catalogue	11
Sat on bench	8

Visitor behaviors in the Fall section were similar to those in the Spring section. In the Fall section (see Table 47), more than one-half of visitors interacted socially (56 percent) and about one-third read the brochure (30 percent). Fewer than one-fifth of visitors sat on the bench (17 percent) or read the exhibition catalogue (14 percent).

TABLE 47
FALL SECTION: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

BEHAVIORS (n = 99)	%
Social interaction	56
Read brochure	30
Sit on bench	17
Read exhibition catalogue	14

In the Winter section (see Table 48), more than one-half of visitors interacted socially (57 percent), and one-fifth of visitors read the brochure (21 percent). Less than one-fifth of visitors sat on the bench (17 percent) and 3 percent read the exhibition catalogue.

TABLE 48

WINTER SECTION: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

BEHAVIORS (n = 99)	%
Social interaction	57
Read brochure	21
Sit on bench	15
Read exhibition catalogue	3

In the Summer section (see Table 49), more than one-half of visitors interacted socially (59 percent), and about one-fifth read the brochure (22 percent). Thirteen percent of visitors sat on the bench and 9 percent read the exhibition catalogue.

TABLE 49

SUMMER SECTION: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

BEHAVIORS (n = 99)	%
Social interaction	59
Read brochure	22
Sit on bench	13
Read exhibition catalogue	9

EXHIBITION BEHAVIORS

Looking at the exhibition as a whole, most visitors interacted socially in at least one exhibition area (71 percent). Two-fifths of visitors read the brochure in at least one area (39 percent), and two-fifths of visitors sat on a bench in at least one area (38 percent). One-third of visitors read the exhibition catalogue in at least one area (34 percent). Twelve percent of visitors interacted with staff in the exhibition.

TABLE 50

OVERALL EXHIBITION: VISITOR BEHAVIORS

OVERALL BEHAVIORS* (n = 101)	%
Social interaction	71
Read brochure	39
Sit on bench	38
Read exhibition catalogue	34
Interaction with staff	12

*Behavior occurred at least once in any of the five exhibition areas.

Visitors' exhibition behaviors (interact socially, read brochure, sit on bench, read exhibition catalogue, interact with staff) were compared by gender, age group, group composition, level of crowding, and day of visit. There were no differences in any of the exhibition behaviors based on gender, level of crowding, or day of visit. There were differences in social interaction based on age group and group composition.

As shown by Table 51, older visitors (55 years or older) were more likely to interact socially than were younger visitors (86 percent for older visitors vs. 63 percent for others).

TABLE 51
DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL INTERACTION—BY AGE GROUP

SOCIAL INTERACTION	AGE GROUP			TOTAL (n = 101)
	< 35 (n = 30)	35 – 54 (n = 35)	55 + (n = 36)	
No	37	37	14	29
Yes	63	63	86	71

$\chi^2=6.007$; $df=2$; $p=.050$

Not surprisingly, solo visitors were far less likely to interact socially than were other visitors (19 percent for solo visitors vs. 93 percent or higher for others) (see Table 52)

TABLE 52
DIFFERENCE IN SOCIAL INTERACTION—BY GROUP COMPOSITION

SOCIAL INTERACTION	VISITOR GROUP				TOTAL (n = 101)
	ADULTS-CHILDREN (n = 14)	3 + ADULTS (n = 23)	2 ADULTS (n = 33)	1 ADULT (n = 31)	
No	7	4	6	81	29
Yes	93	96	94	19	71

$\chi^2=58.97$; $df=3$; $p=.000$

CHARACTERISTICS THAT PREDICT VISITORS' TIME IN THE EXHIBITION

A stepwise multiple regression analysis tested whether visitors' total time in the exhibition is predicted by any of the following characteristics, alone or in combination: age, gender, visiting with children, interacting socially, reading the brochure, reading the exhibition catalogue, sitting on the bench.

The model that best predicts visitors' total exhibition time consists of the two reading behaviors: reading the exhibition catalogue and reading the exhibition brochure. See Table 53 for the average exhibition time for visitors who did not read either the exhibition catalogue or the brochure (mean =

9 minutes, 49 seconds), visitors who read only the brochure (mean = 13 minutes, 31 seconds), visitors who read only the exhibition catalogue (mean = 14 minutes, 53 seconds), and visitors who read both (mean = 24 minutes, 19 seconds).

TABLE 53

REGRESSION MODEL THAT PREDICTS TOTAL TIME IN THE EXHIBITION

READING BEHAVIORS:	<i>n</i>	TIME IN EXHIBITION	
		MEAN	±
Did not read brochure or book	50	9 min., 49 sec.	9 min., 00 sec.
Only read brochure	17	13 min., 31 sec.	9 min., 00 sec.
Only read book	12	14 min., 53 sec.	6 min., 24 sec.
Read both	22	24 min., 19 sec.	8 min., 31 sec.

Model $F=21.012$; $df=2, 98$; $p=.000$; $R^2=.300$; see Appendix X for full description of the regression model.

Removed for proprietary purposes