

THE NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART

Judaic Art Gallery Evaluation Results

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Audience Focus
May 2019



Purpose of Study

Examine the different ways in which visitors are using the current interpretation in order to inform a comprehensive plan to revise and enhance the Judaic Art Galleries.

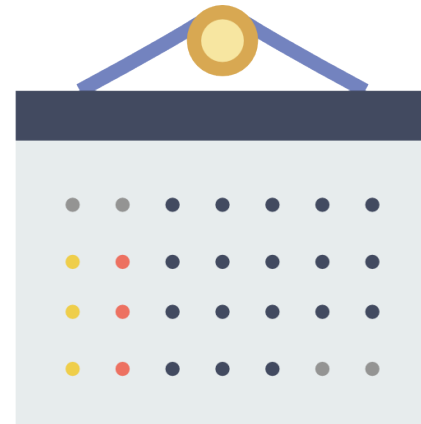
Evaluation Questions

1. Who is visiting the Judaic Art Gallery, and why?
2. Are visitors using the current interpretive tools?
3. Which objects are they most attracted to?
4. What do visitors take away from their experience? What are they curious to know more about?
5. What suggestions do they have for improving the space?

Methods

- Observations of visitors as they explored the Judaic Art Gallery
- In-depth interviews with visitors who were observed

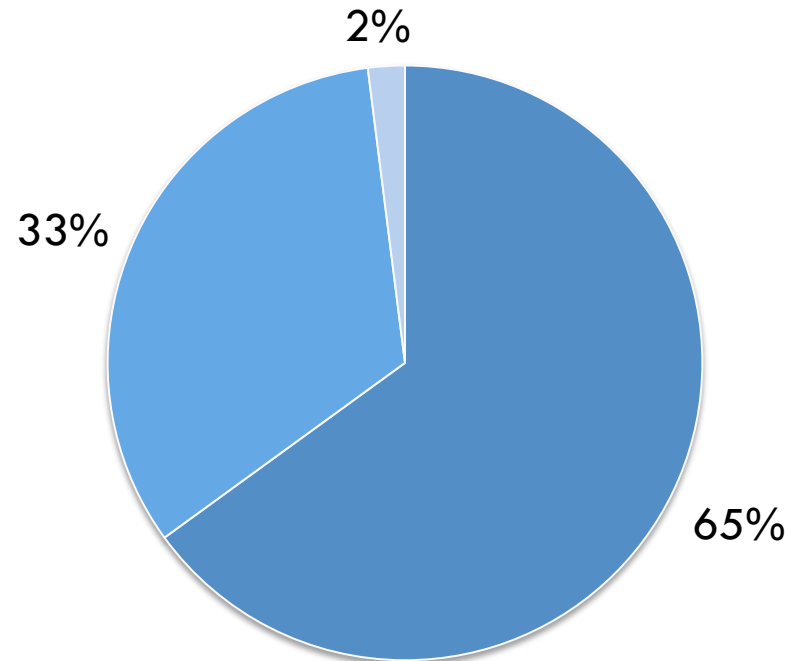
Data were collected
over a period of
2 months



Crowd Levels in Judaic Art Gallery

Crowd levels were mostly low, or moderately crowded during data collection

■ Low ■ Moderate ■ Busy/crowded



Low = just a few people, but could be mostly empty

Moderate = visitors in the galleries, but not so many it is hard to get by

Busy/crowded = gallery is very busy, noise levels high, some artworks or interactives might be blocked

A total of

104 people

participated in the study.

Of the 104, all of them were observed, and
65 participated in the interview.

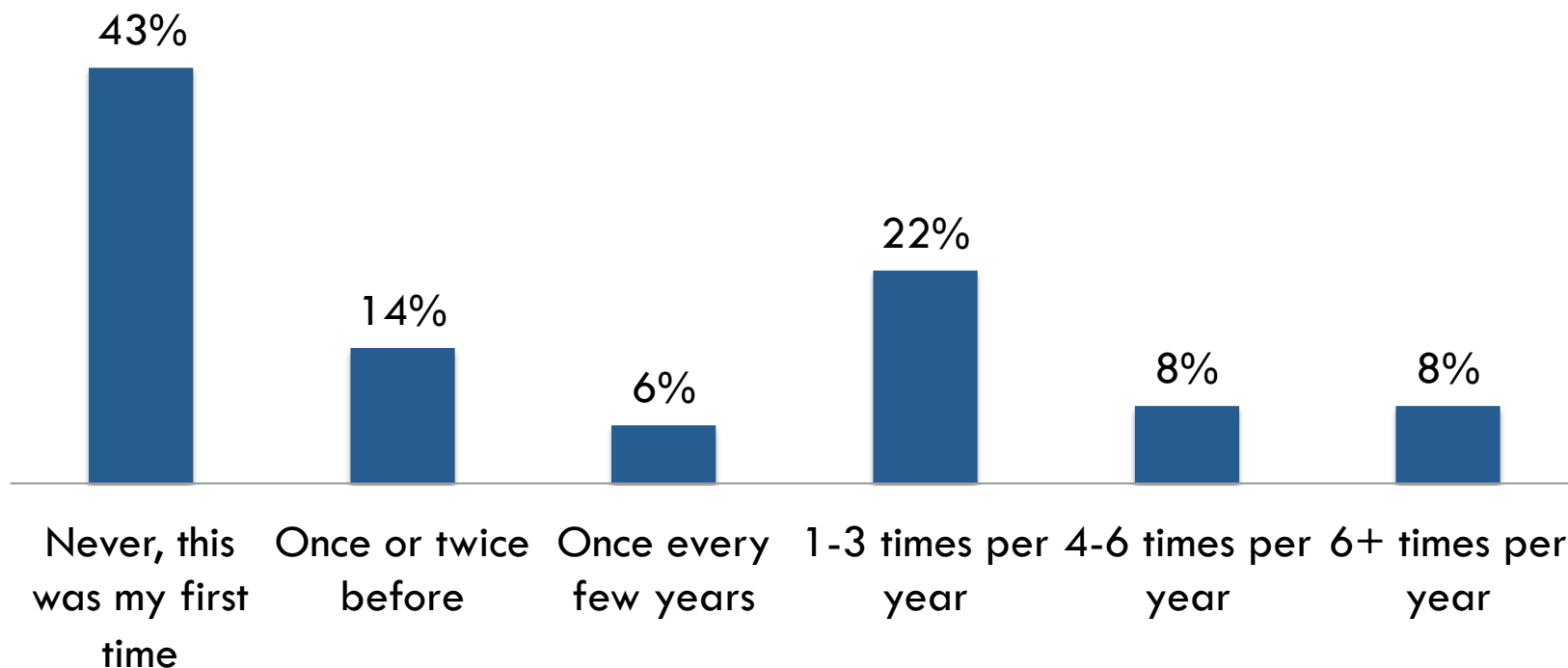


Who is visiting?

FREQUENCY OF VISITATION TO NCMA

63% of visitors were either first time or infrequent visitors and the remaining 37% were frequent visitors (or those who visit at least once per year).

How often do you visit NCMA?

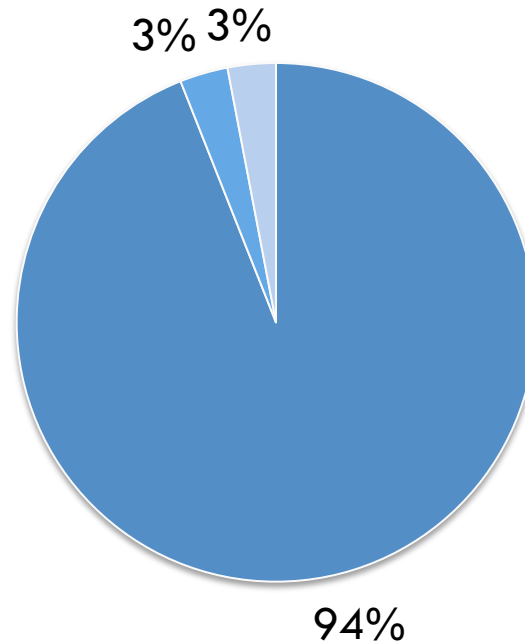


MEMBERSHIP AT NCMA

Only 3% were current members at NCMA

Are you currently a member of the NCMA?

■ Non-member ■ Current member ■ Lapsed member



RESIDENCE

77%

were North Carolina residents

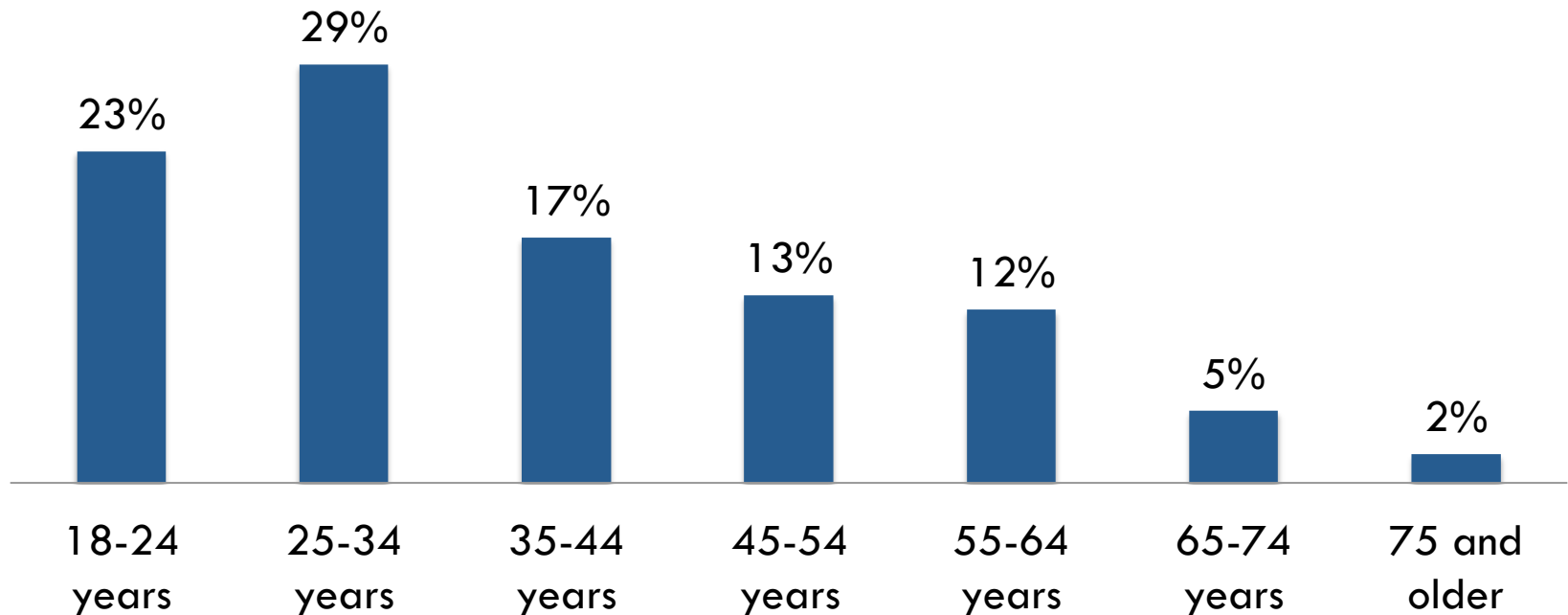


AGE

Over half of the visitors (52%) were between the ages of 18 and 34.

* This data might skew younger due to the fact that most data were collected during the weekends or on Friday nights, or as a result of data collectors feeling more comfortable speaking with younger visitors.

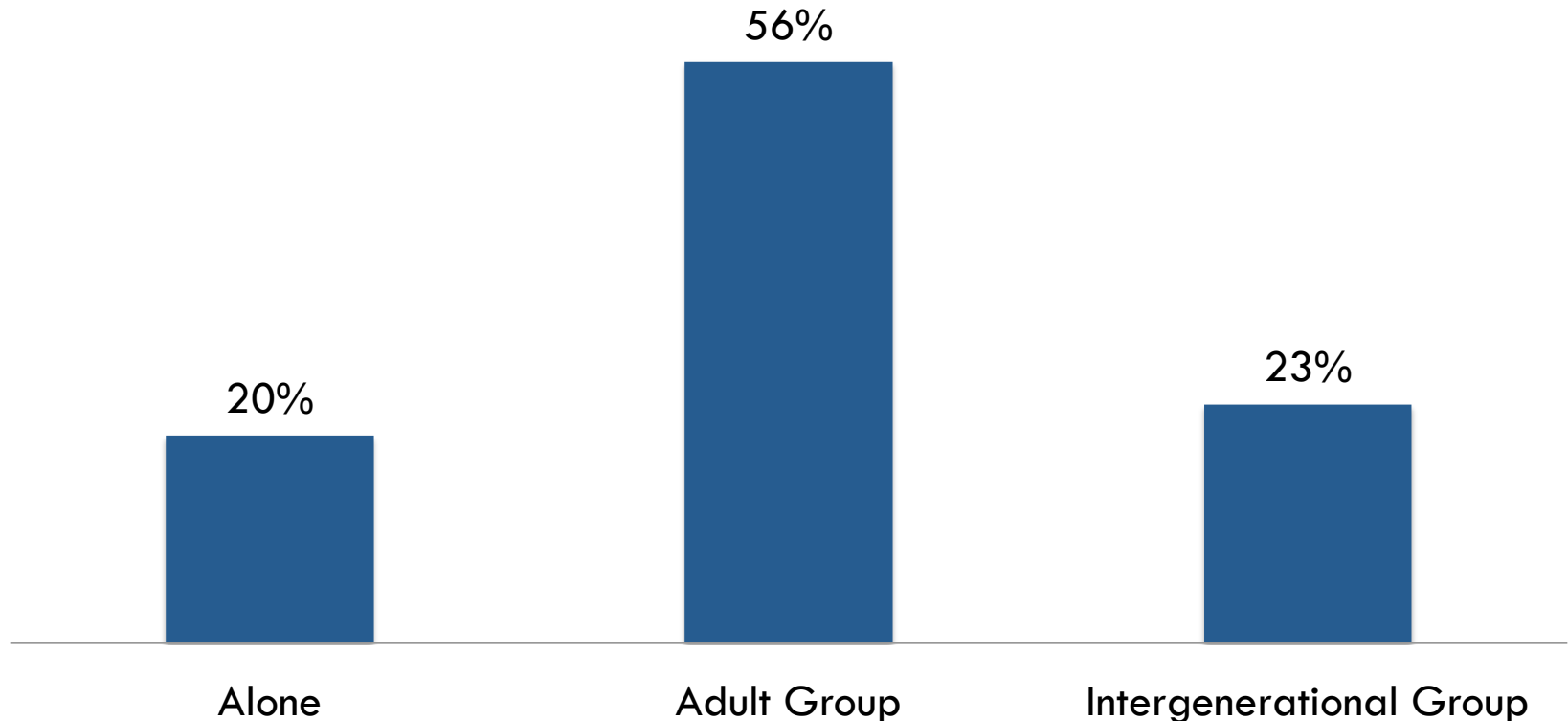
In what year were you born?



SOCIAL GROUP

Over half of the visitors (56%) visited the Judaic Art Gallery as part of an adult group.

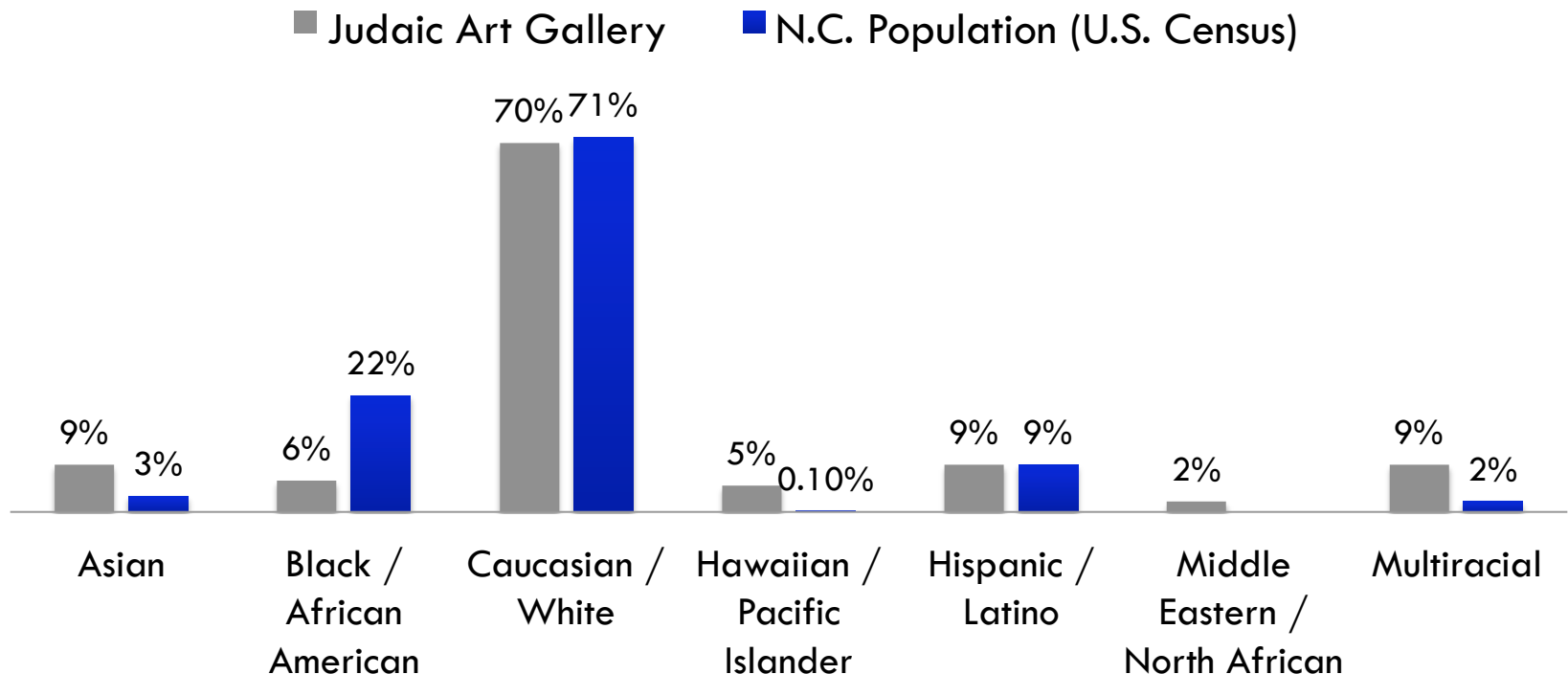
With whom did you visit NCMA today?



RACE / ETHNICITY

The race/ethnicity distribution looked similar to the North Carolina population, with some exceptions which might be related to differences in how the question was posed.

Which categories best describe you? (Select all that apply)



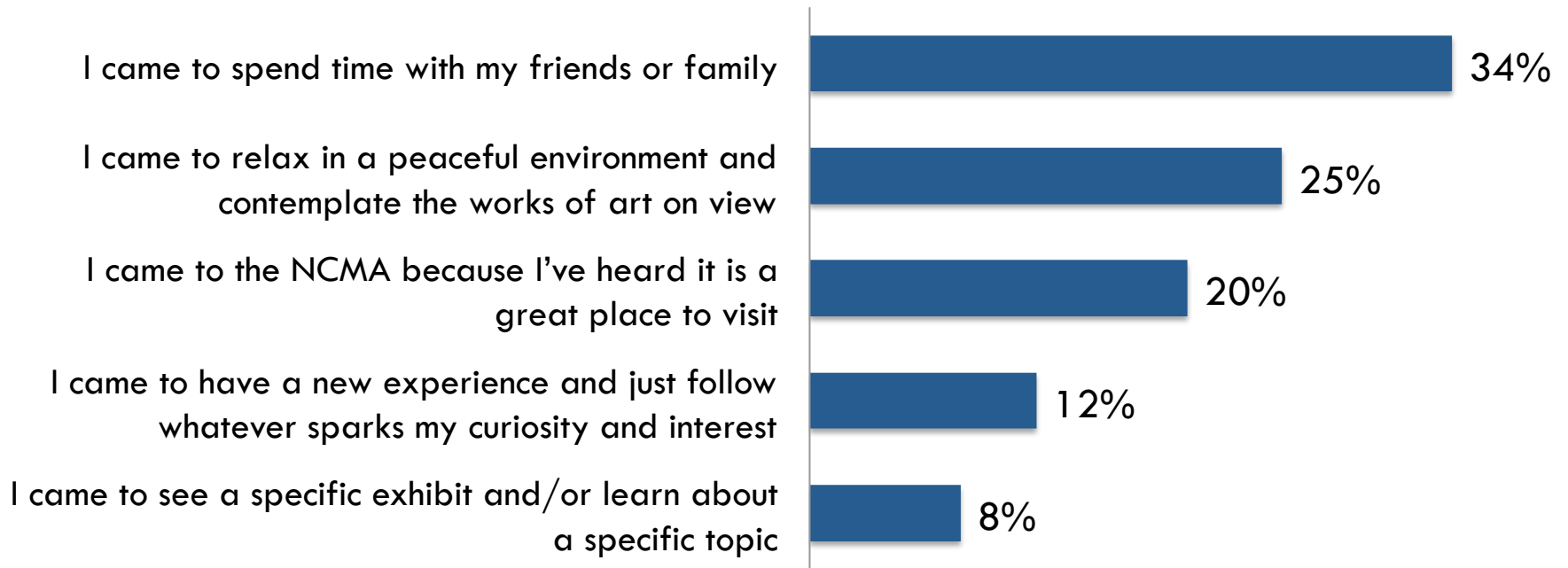


Why are they visiting?

REASON FOR VISITING NCMA

Visitors identified a range of motivations for visiting NCMA that day, with the highest percentage coming for social motivation, to rest and recharge, or because they heard NCMA is a good place to visit.

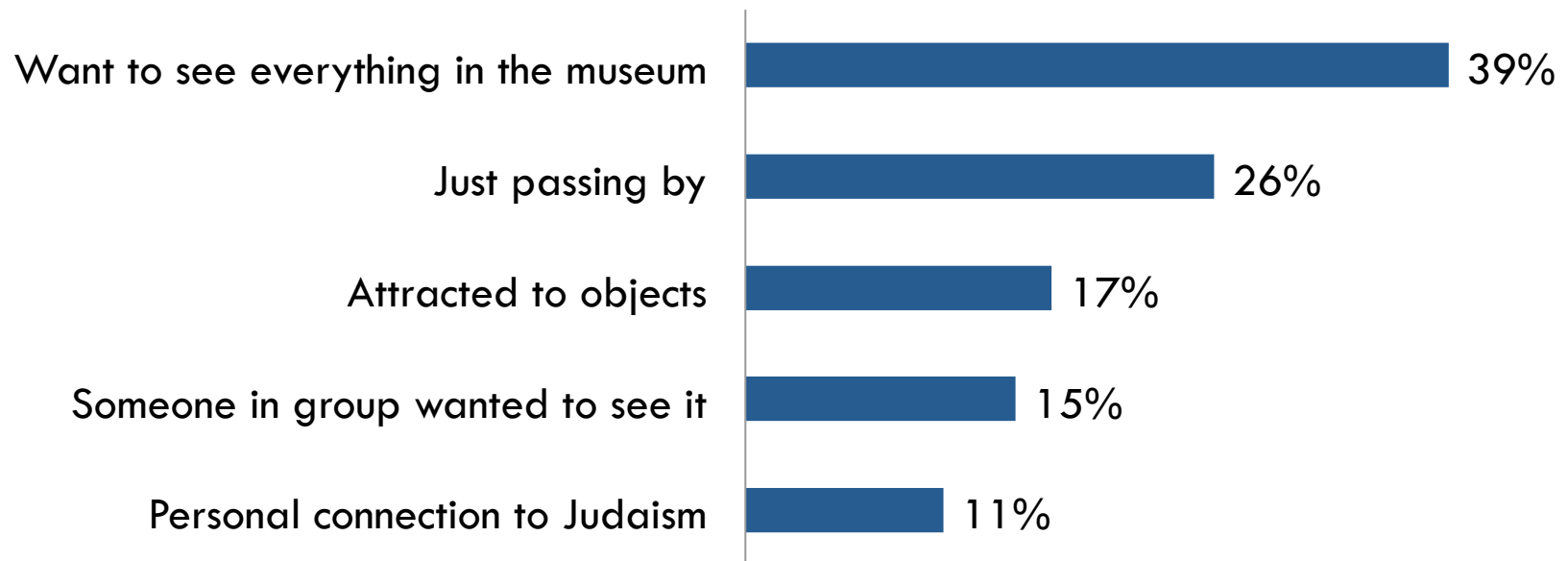
Which one of these motivations most closely aligns with the purpose of your visit to the NCMA today?



REASON FOR VISITING THE JUDAIC ART GALLERY

Most visitors did not have a specific motivation to visit the Judaic Art Gallery. They found it while passing by, and/or in an effort to experience everything in the Museum.

Why did you decide to visit the Judaic Art Gallery today?



14%

of visitors said seeing the Judaic Art Gallery was part of the reason why they decided to visit NCMA that day.



How are they using the current interpretation?

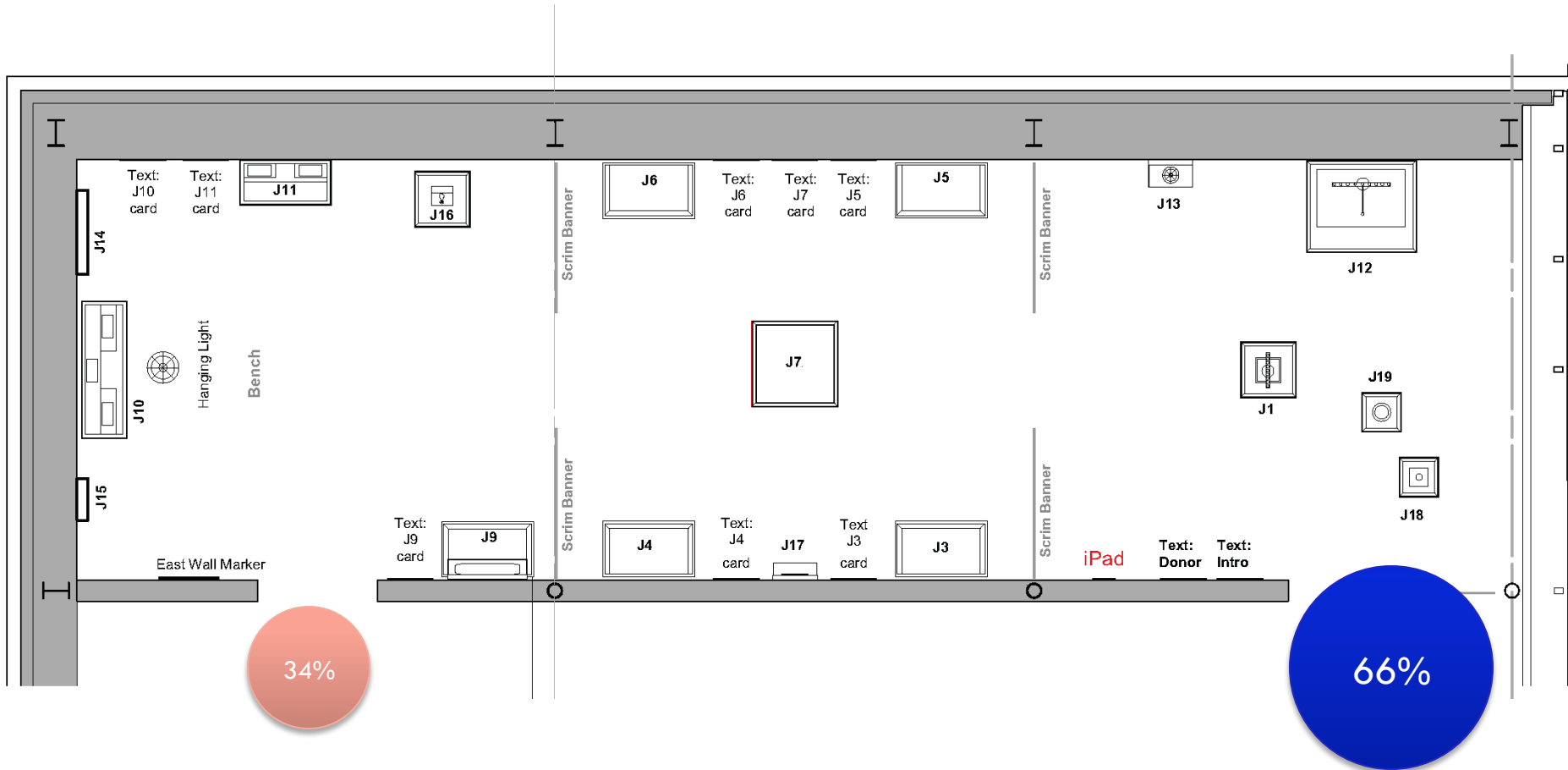
On average, visitors spent

5 minutes

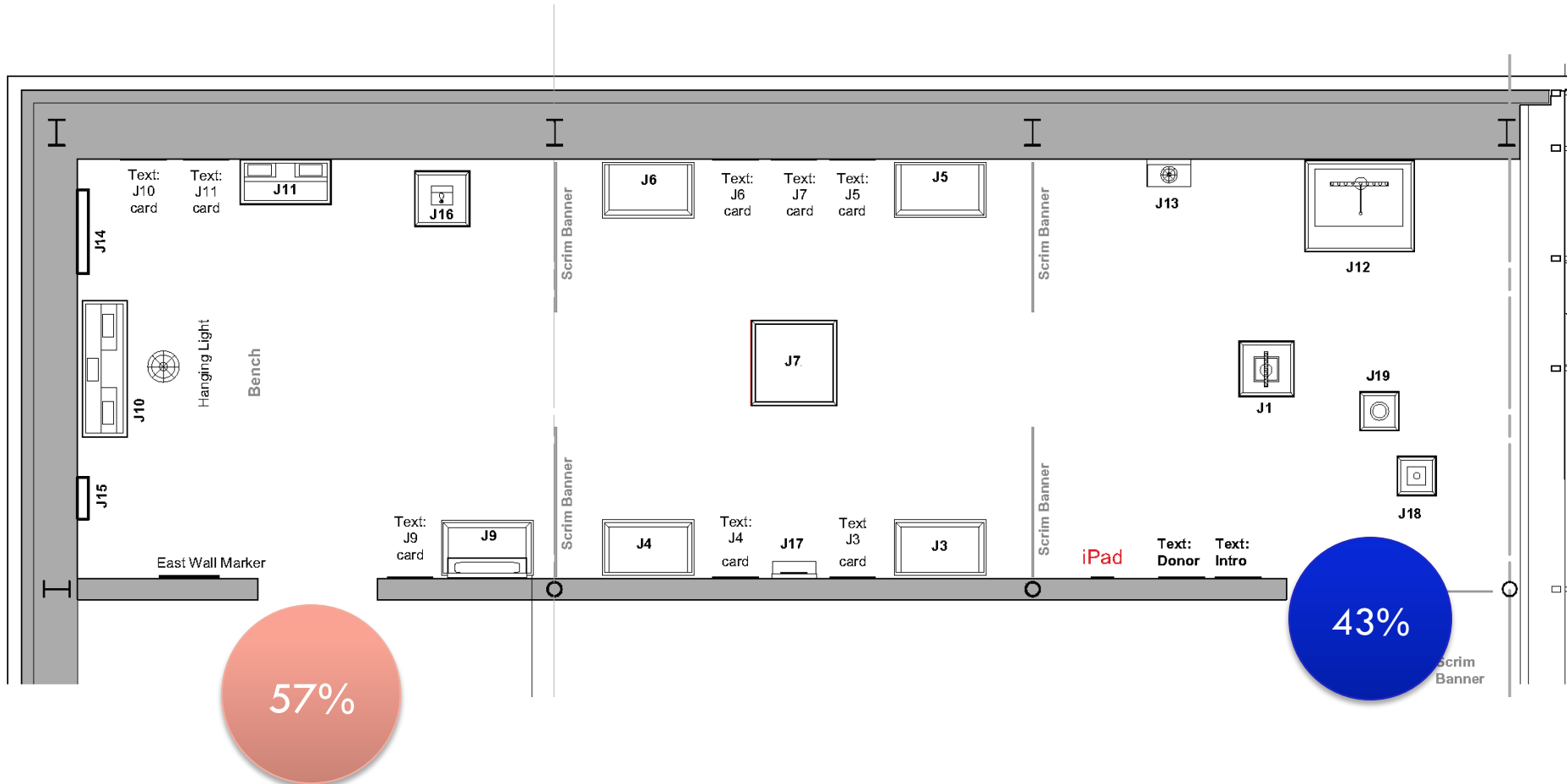
exploring the Judaic Art Gallery,
with a minimum of 1 minute and a
maximum of 19 minutes.



Where Do Visitors Enter?



Where Do Visitors Exit?





Of the 17 cases* on view
in the Judaic Art Gallery,
visitors viewed an
average of

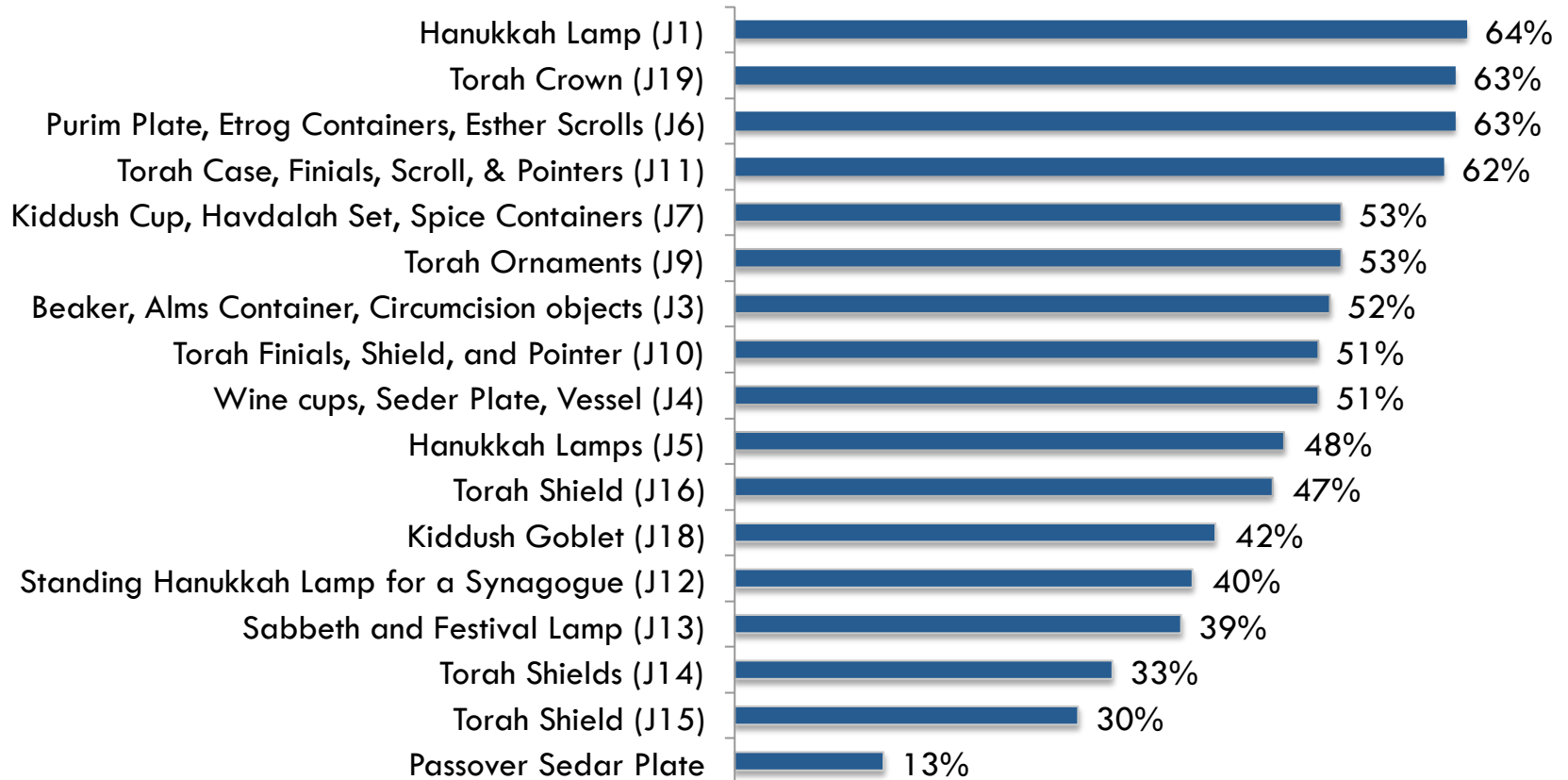
8 cases

with a minimum of 0
cases and a maximum of
all 17 cases.

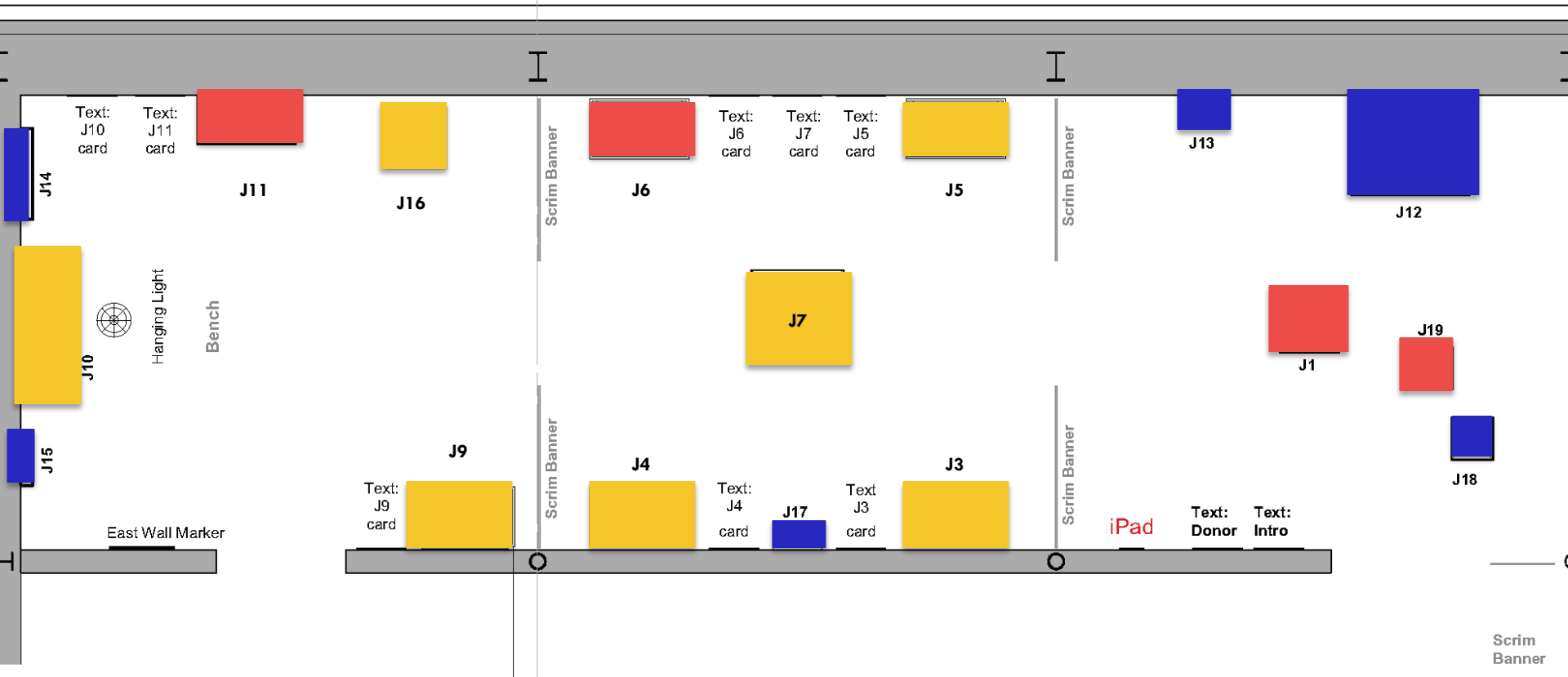
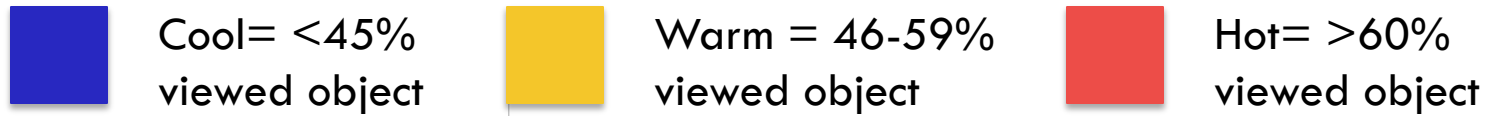
* 8 cases had multiple artworks

OBJECTS THAT ATTRACTED THE MOST VIEWS

% of Visitors Who Viewed Each Artwork



Heat Map Showing Which Objects Visitors Viewed Most / Least



Of the 20 interpretives* included in this study,
visitors engaged with an average of

3 interpretives

with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 19
interpretives.

*The 20 interpretives included: 11 thematic text panels, 8 gallery cards, and one iPad with videos.

Most visitors

(74%)

read at least one text panel during their visit to the Judaic Art Gallery.

Of the 11 thematic panels available, visitors read an average of

2 text panels

with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 10 text panels.

Hanukkah

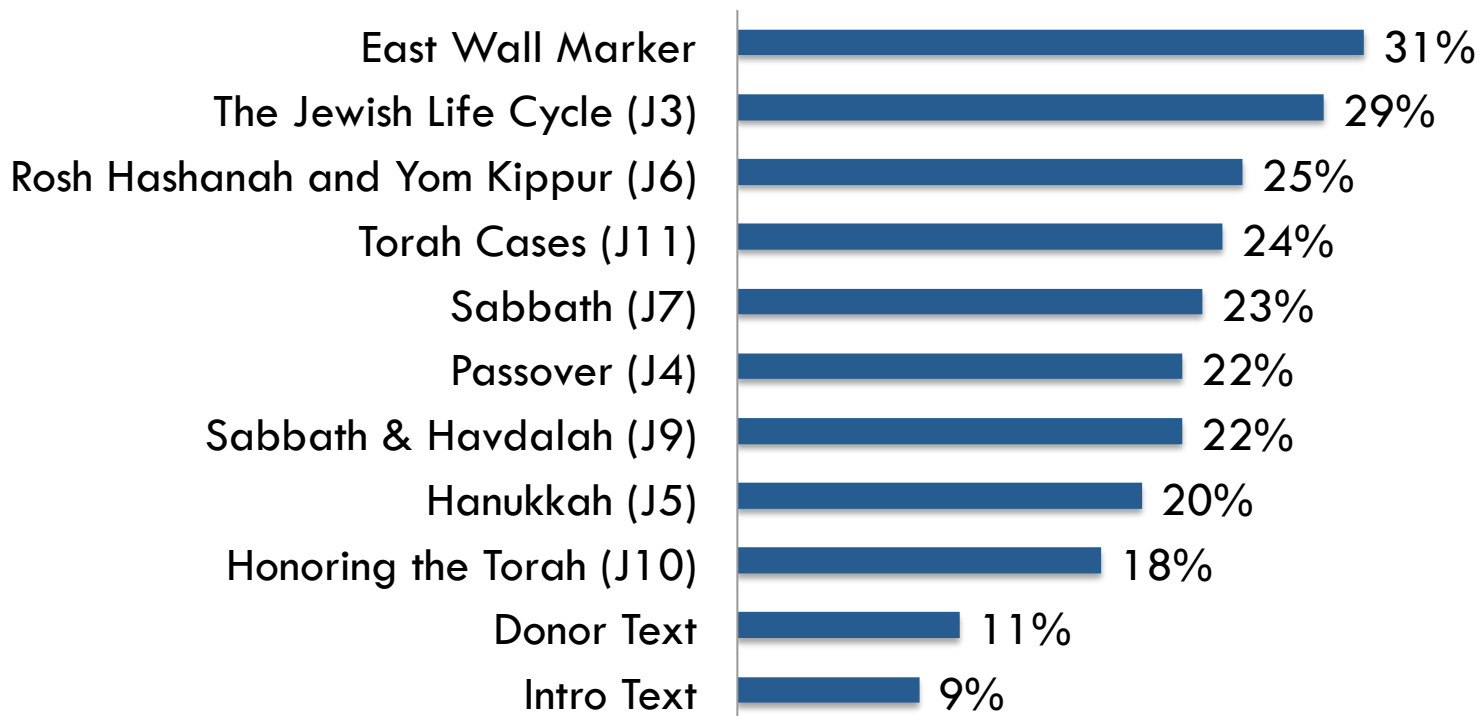
Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, commemorates a miracle associated with the Jewish victory over the Greeks in 164 B.C.E. When the plundered temple in Jerusalem was rededicated, there was found only enough consecrated oil to light the menorah for one day. However, the oil burned for eight days, allowing time for a fresh supply of consecrated oil to be prepared. During Hanukkah candles or oil lamps are lit, one for each of the eight days of the festival. The lights cannot be lit from each other, as the Hanukkah lights must have no other function than as symbols. Consequently, in many lamps an additional "servant light" (or shamash) is included to kindle the other lights.

Most Hanukkah lamps today use candles. However, in earlier centuries most lighting was provided by oil lamps. Even after the use of candles became widespread in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many Jewish communities preferred the old ways and continued to use oil lamps because of the association of oil with the miracle of Hanukkah.



THEMATIC PANEL USE

% of Visitors Who Read Each Thematic Panel



Hanukkah

1. Ukrainian

Hanukkah Lamp

circa 1830

Silver: filigree, cast, engraved, chased, partly gilded
Gift of Harold and Felicia Kadis, 2008 (2008.20)

Hanukkah lamps constructed of filigree—delicately twisted and soldered silver wires—used less metal and consequently were usually more affordable than lamps made of solid silver. Nevertheless, in the hands of a skilled artisan, filigree objects can possess astonishing intricacy of design and a welcome playfulness.

2. Ludwik Bernard Nast

Polish, Warsaw, active 19th century

Hanukkah Lamp

1854

Silver: repoussé, chased, engraved, cast
Gift of Zelda Bernard in memory of her beloved husband, Herman W. Bernard, 2005 (2005.21)

This lamp melds two seemingly incompatible styles: the restrained neoclassicism of the bench, with its row of eight oil lamps, and the rococo exuberance of the back plate, its basket brimming with nature's bounty.

3. Zelig Segal

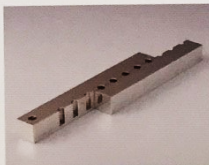
Israeli, 1933–2015

Hanukkah Lamp

circa 1986

Copper alloy: cast, machined, silver-plated; two parts
Gift of Stefanie and Douglas Kahn, 2017 (2017.18/a-b)

With disarming economy the artist reduces the Hanukkah lamp to its bare essentials: two sliding metal bars drilled with eight semicircular notches that, when aligned, form round sockets for candles. The bars can be shifted to create additional sockets for candles, one for each day of the Hanukkah festival.



4. Eastern European

Hanukkah Lamp

circa 1900

Copper alloy: cast, engraved
On extended loan from The Jewish Museum, New York, The Rose and Benjamin Mintz Collection, M446

Translation of the Hebrew: "These lights are holy."

This remarkable lamp, with its menagerie of real and imaginary animals, is clearly intended to delight. One can speculate that it was a special commission, reflecting the exotic imagination of its patron or maker—or both.

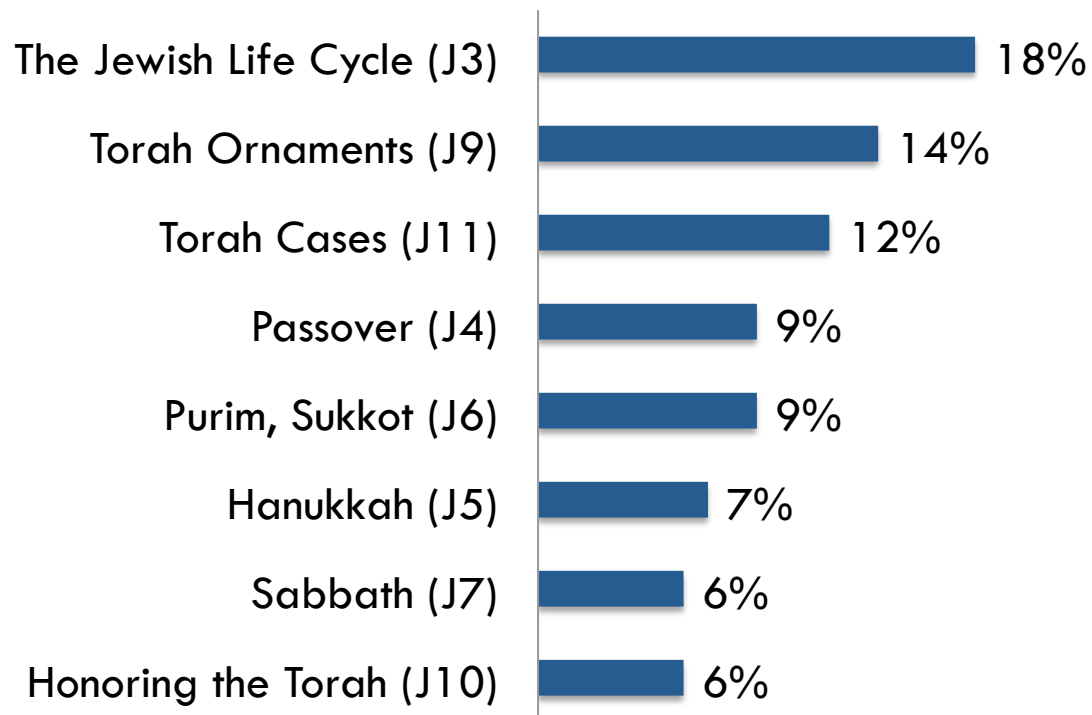
Just over a third of
visitors

(35%)

read a gallery card
during their visit to
the Judaic Art
Gallery. Of those,
the majority read
1-2 gallery cards.
Only a few visitors
read 3 or more
cards.

GALLERY CARD USE

% of Visitors Who Read Each Gallery Card



On the tablet below, you can access videos that provide context and deeper understanding about the objects in this gallery. The videos explore the history and craftsmanship of the objects as well as how they are used in different holiday celebrations.



Only

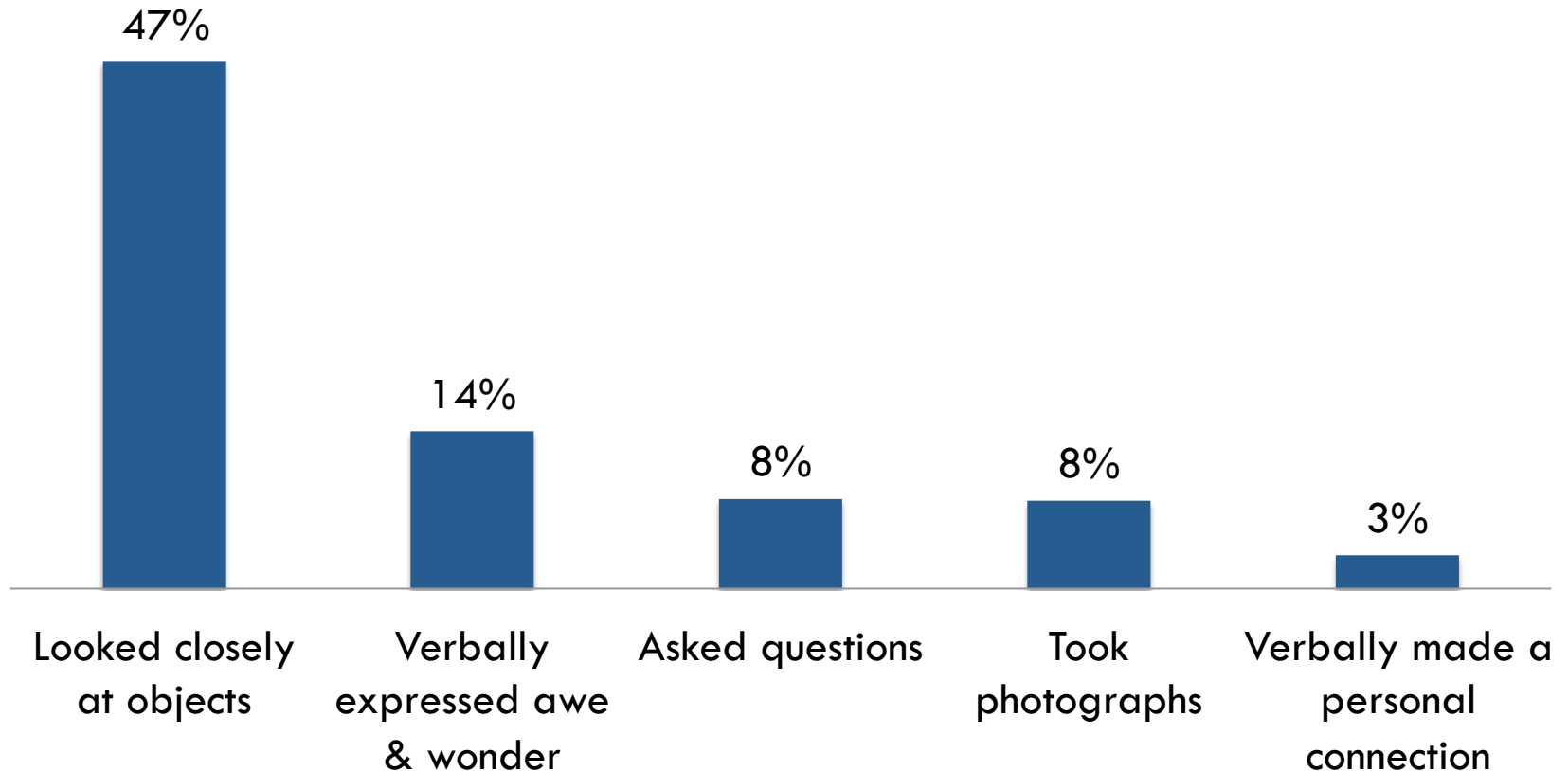
14%

of visitors looked at the iPad videos.

*However, most of those who did look at it said they enjoyed it during the interview, with some suggesting the videos be made more prominent

Other Observed Behaviors

% of Visitors Who Were Observed Engaging in the Following Behaviors



The objects visitors looked the most closely at included the *Standing Hanukkah Lamp, Torah Crown*, objects in the J6 Case (*Purim Plate, Esther Scroll & Case, etc*), and objects in the J7 Case (*Kiddush Cup, Sabbath and Festival Candlesticks, Spice Container, etc*). These are also the same objects that visitors viewed most often.

Visitors Expressing Awe & Wonder

*Look at that writing! Holy
Moly! (Torah Scroll)*

*That one is neat!
(Hanukkah Lamp)*

*Raw silver, but all of the bulls
are gold. (Torah Crown)*

*Wow, wow, wow! Look
at these things! Wow!
Look at that! (Torah
Shield)*

*Buried in a Jewish
cemetery before the
Nazis took over the
Netherlands! (Sabbath
and Festival Lamp)*

Types of Questions Posed by Visitors

*What is the difference
between a Bat and
Bar Mitzvah?*

What is this?

*Is this what they use for
reading?*

*Is that like the one
they bring down the
church swinging?*

*What is that?
Where is the
information?*



Suggestions for future improvements

32%

of visitors said there was something else they would have liked to have seen, done, or learned about in the Judaic Art Gallery that is not available in the current installation

Things visitors would like to learn:

- “Seeing **how it all ties together**, what the different sections mean and why objects are grouped together”
- “Learning more about **Judaism in general**. I have friends who are active practitioners.”
- “I didn’t see any impetus, purpose. **What was the catalyst?** Who is involved? Why here, why now? I haven’t seen anything like this before. I’ve been to the Holocaust museum, but it’s different to see art.”
- “A little more context. The **use of the objects** was not clear.”
- “What is the history of **how these objects were used?**”
- “Learn about more **day to day things and rituals**”

Things visitors would like to learn (cont.)

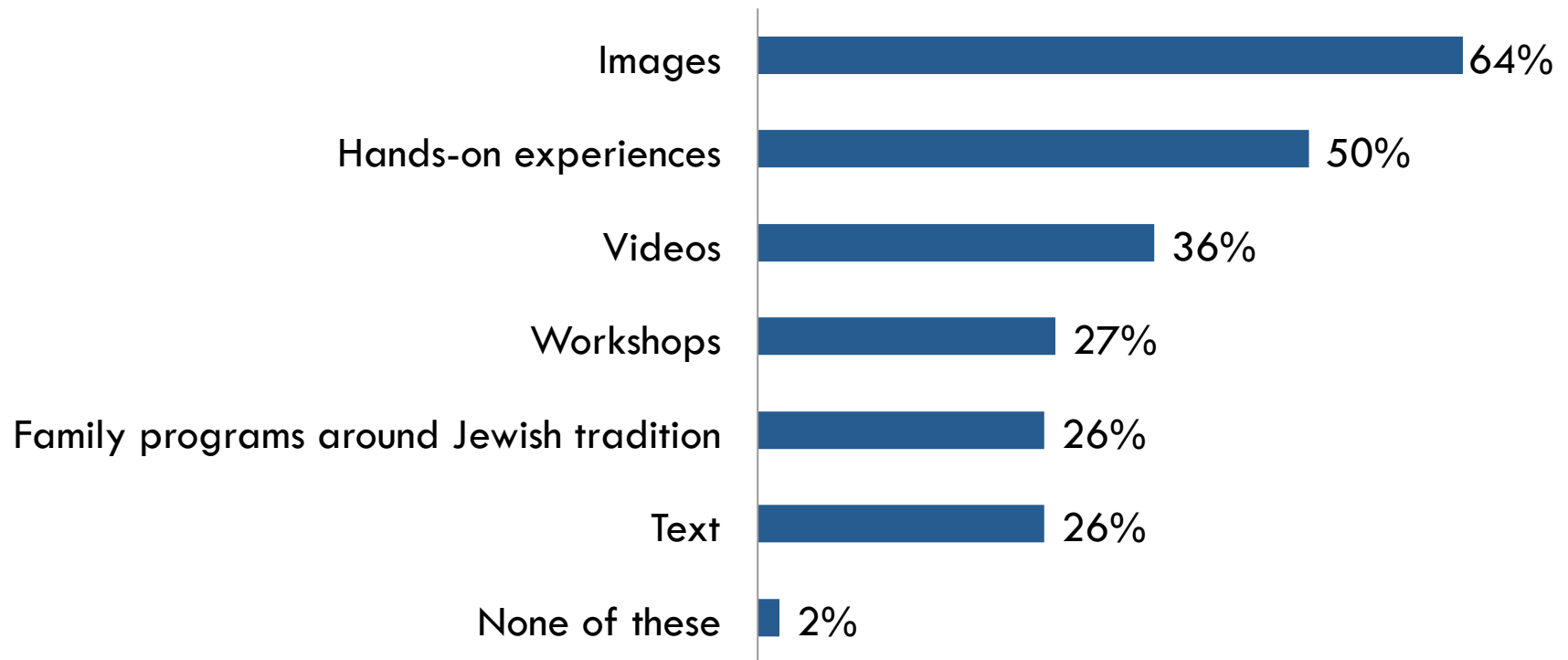
- “More about the **history** to go along with the art.”
- “More about the **history**, like more on the synagogues.”
- “More about the **culture that is not just religion**. I’m sure these people live lives outside of religion.”
- “Expand more on the **differences and who celebrates what**.”
- “How do they get the spices in and out of the **spice holders?**”
- “More info on the **spice holders**. Wanted to know more about the drapes on the Torah.”

Things visitors would like to see/do

- “Having **visuals** of the city or area from which these things were brought would be cool.”
- “**Images.**”
- “**More pictures.**”
- “**More than four videos.**”
- “I think it would be much nicer to have a **projected video** on the walls so you did not have to cram in one small space to watch a video.”
- “I **didn’t care to look at the cards** and some areas didn’t feel like they had any information on them.”
- “It would be cool to have something that would let people **interact with the culture in some way.**”

WHAT INTERPRETATION INTERESTS VISITORS MOST?

Which of the following would you most be interested in using and/or participating in?



*Pictures would help
with context*

*It would provide
context and a timeline
- something to follow*

*Showing objects in
context*

*Context and
timelines help us
know what separates
that piece from that
one*

Hands-on Experiences

*I would be able to
learn this way*

*I'm a hands-on
learner. Right now it's
a lot of reading*

*Writing your name in
Hebrew could help
you connect to it more*

*I like hands-on
learning to show
examples of how
they use them in the
ceremonies*

*If I see, I get to know
more*

*A lot of things in the
cases require a
demonstration. Like
the lantern and
lighting. It would be
cool to show how its lit*

*Especially videos
about how objects are
made*

*I feel like in the
museum you're
supposed to have a
personal experience
with art, rather than
being told*

*I'd get to explore
more*

*I have children. I like
when I can bring kids
and there are things
that will draw them in.*

*It would be interesting
to learn how things are
created*

*The more educated
you can become, the
better, especially about
people who are
different. Get a
greater representation*

*It would make it more
personal*

*We would be with
kids and we always
have them with us - so
something to keep
them interested.*

*Could learn about
traditions from other
cultures*

*This would provide a
deeper look into the
rituals and how
people interpret what
they see*

*I helps you know what
you are looking at.
You can go deeper
and stop and look*

*I would like the history
- understanding why
or how they came into
use is right up my
alley*

*Text allows me to look
and helps me go
deeper*

*I like how in the other
galleries there is a
numbered list on the
wall, not like in this
gallery on a brochure*

25%

of visitors said there was something they did not enjoy or thought NCMA should change about the Judaic Art Gallery.

Visitors suggested the following changes:

- **Make Information More Accessible** (couldn't find the cards easily - wanted information with the object, or someone to explain the objects to them)
- **Make Videos More Prominent** (not on the small iPad and have more of them)
- **Make Various Design Improvements** (e.g. better lighting, place gallery in more prominent location in museum, showcase fewer items, remove the scrims)
- **Include Different Types of Objects** (e.g. prints, paintings, everyday objects, non-ritual art)
- **Provide a Chronology or Extended Timeline** (“dating back 6,000 years”)

Examples of Proposed Changes

*There is a lot of
Jewish art that is not
ritual object*

*Have small
descriptions more
immediately visible*

*More videos or
iPad stations*

*Make the videos
more accessible
rather than have
them in one small
place*

*Have the items in a
bigger space or
place or space them
out so they can shine
on their own and not
be cramped with too
many things*

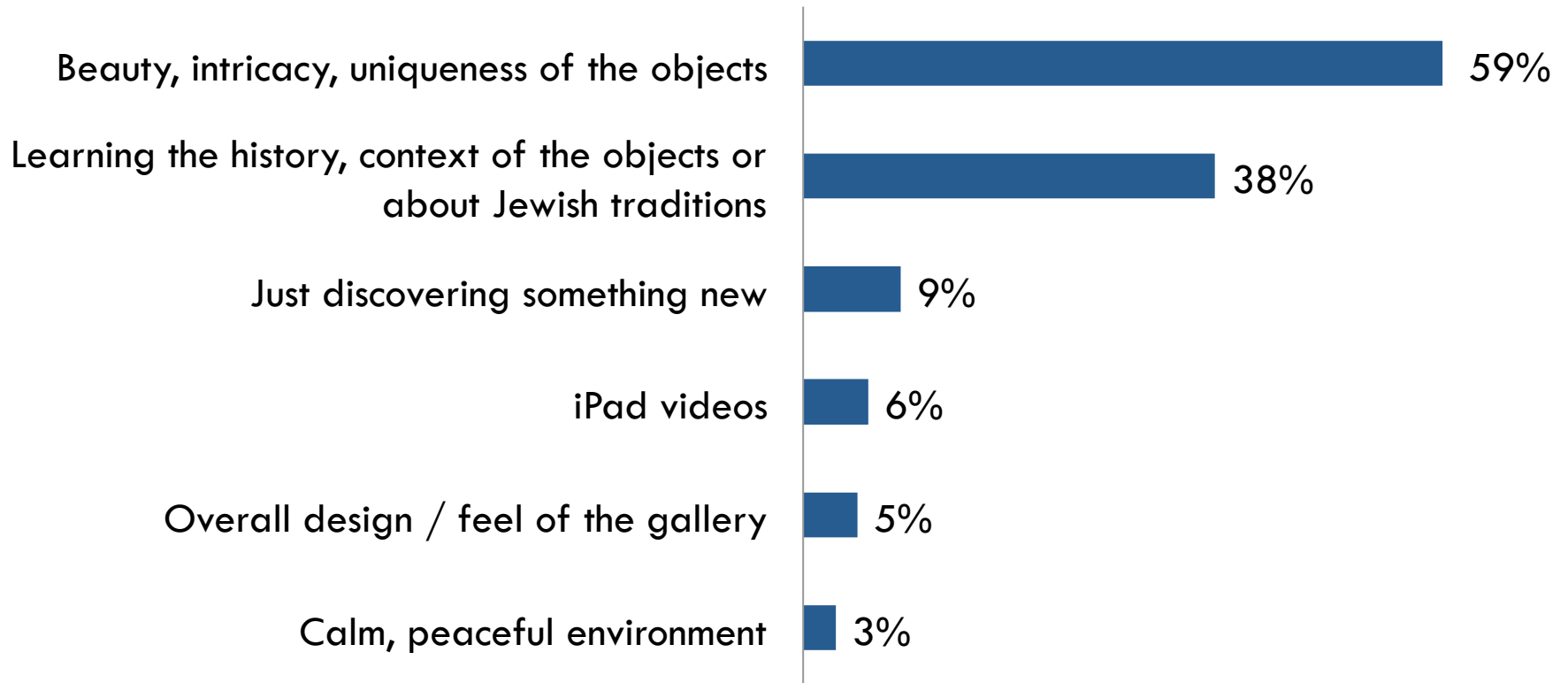
Perceived Relevance and Value



with the
people in
light the
in a mesh
lamps are
in form
symbolic
included
not lighting
and in the
red the old
the miracle

WHAT DID VISITORS ENJOY MOST?

What did you enjoy most about your experience in the Judaic Art Gallery, if anything?

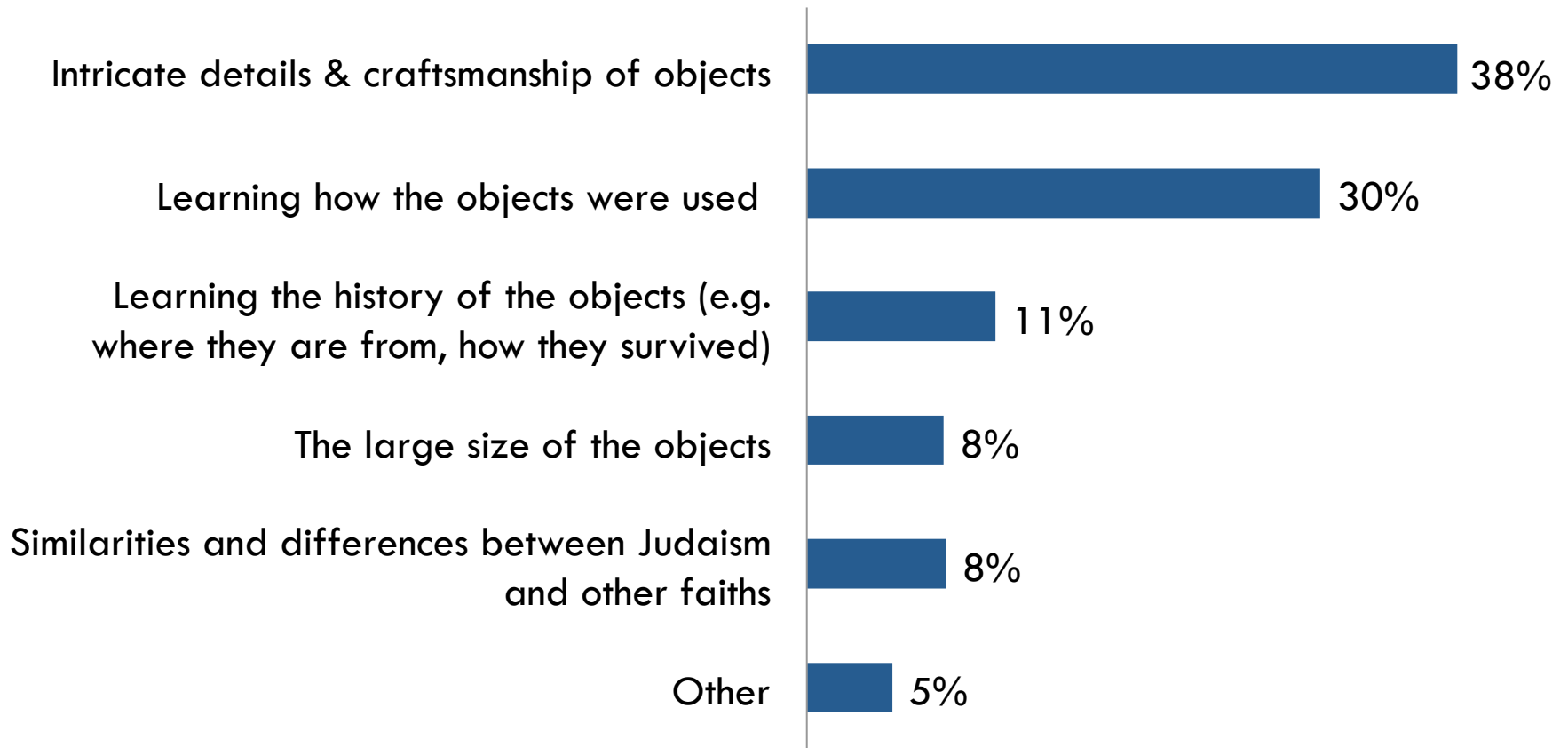


56%

of visitors said there was something they saw or learned in the Judaic Art Gallery that surprised them.

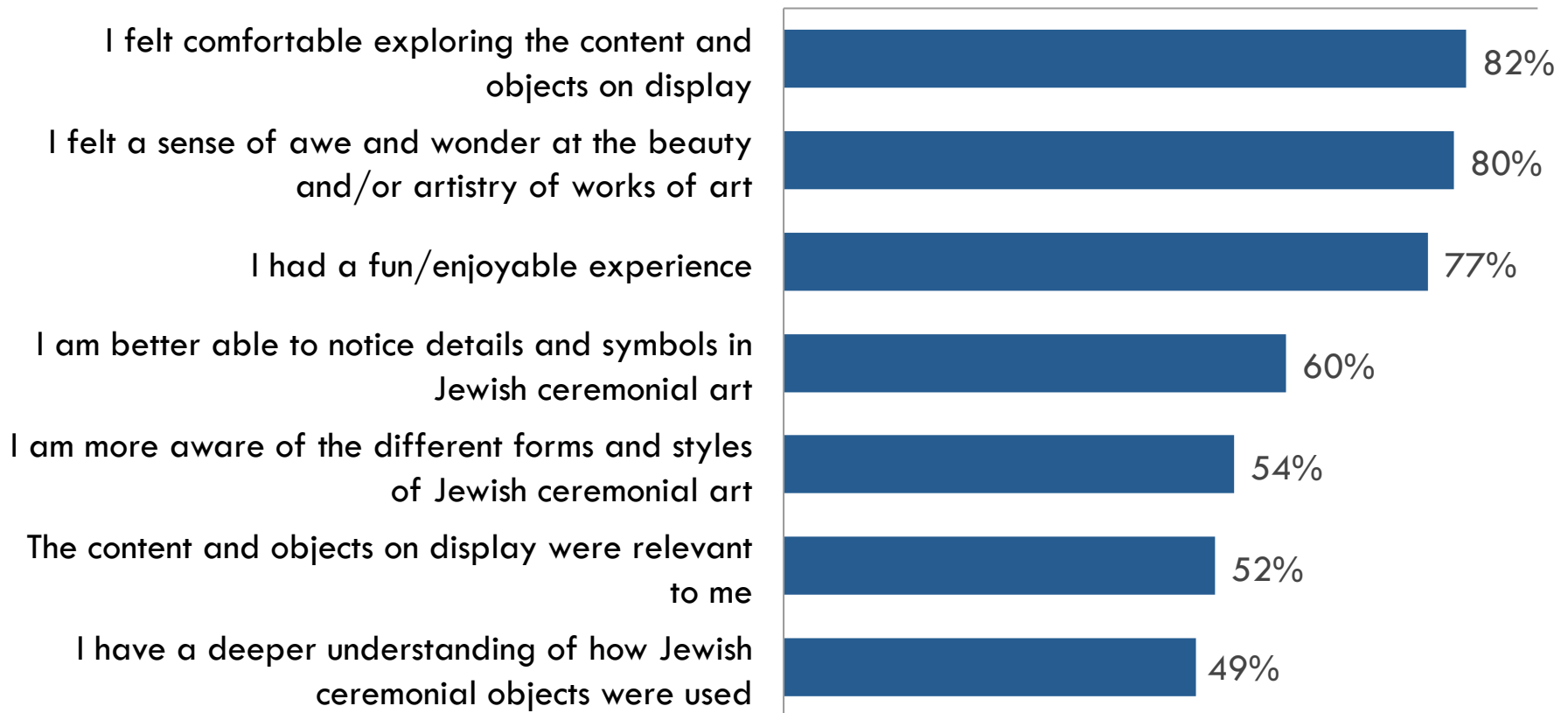
WHAT SURPRISED VISITORS?

What surprised you, and why?

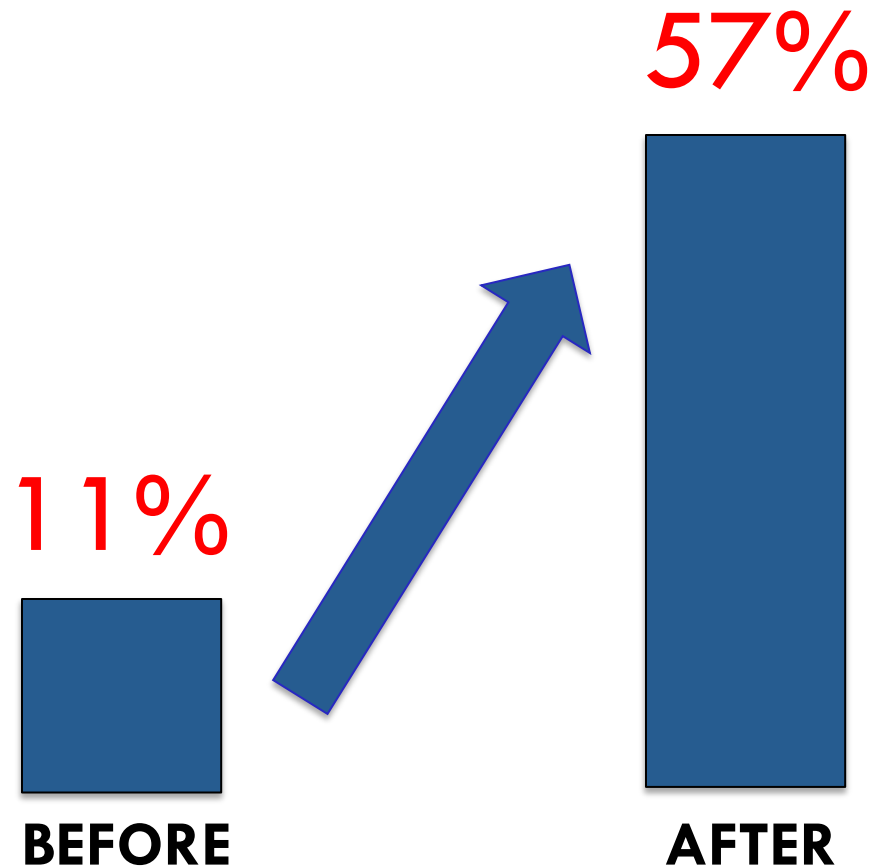


Visitors perceived they benefitted in the following ways from their experience in the Judaic Art Galley

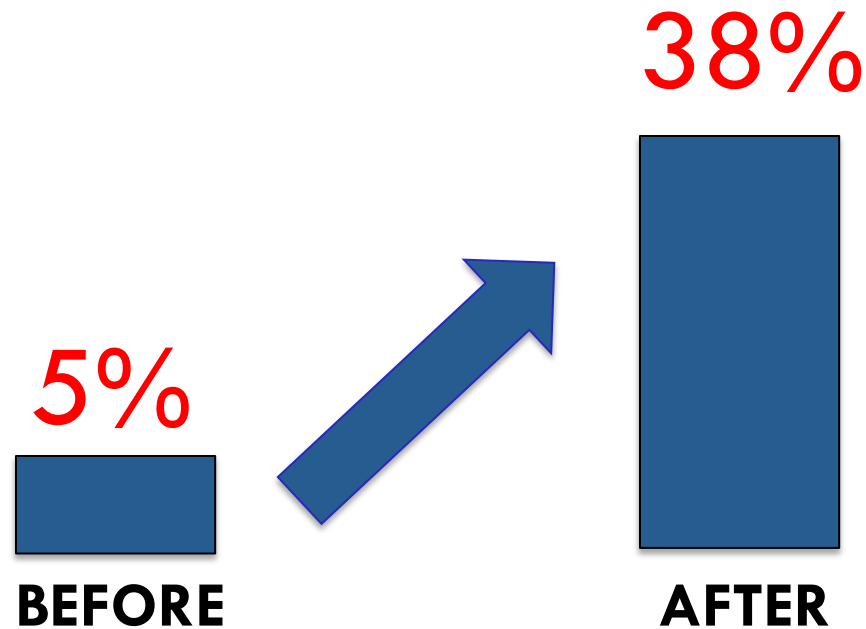
% of Visitors Who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” with the Statement



Interest in Jewish Ceremonial Art - Before and After Visiting the Judaic Art Gallery



Understanding of Jewish Ceremonial Art - Before and After Visiting the Judaic Art Gallery





Rosh Hashana

The traditional two days of the "Days of Repentance" conclude on the 23rd of Tishrei, these are the "Days of Awe" in need of the central tenet of the Days of Awe.

Purim

The festival of Purim commemorates the miraculous survival of the Jewish people in Persia during the reign of the Achaemenid King Ahasuerus (Xerxes I). The story is told in the Book of Esther, which describes how the Jewish people were saved from destruction by the intervention of Queen Esther. The festival is celebrated with a day of fasting and prayer, followed by a day of feasting and merrymaking. A central element of the celebration is the reading of the Book of Esther, which is done in a festive and noisy manner, with participants shouting and making noise with rattles and noisemakers.

Sukkot

Sukkot is both an ancient harvest festival and a commemoration of the Israelites' wandering in the desert. It is celebrated with a week of prayer and fasting, followed by a week of feasting and merrymaking. A central element of the celebration is the building of a sukkah, a temporary dwelling made of branches and palm fronds, in which Jews are required to eat and sleep during the festival. The sukkah is a symbol of the Israelites' vulnerability and dependence on God during their journey in the desert.

Conclusions

Most visitors to the Judaic Art Gallery were first-time visitors who live in North Carolina. Visitors' primary reasons for visiting NCMA were to socialize, rest and recharge, and experience the museum. Most visitors stated they visited the Judaic Art Gallery because they felt a need to see everything in the museum or they stumbled upon the gallery.

While in the Judaic Art Gallery, visitors viewed an average of half the object cases. The objects visitors viewed the most included the 1920's, Ze'ev Raban, Bezalel Workshop *Standing Hanukkah Lamp*, the 18th C. *Torah Crown* attributed to Zuane Cottini, the case that contained 9 objects related to Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur, and the case that contained two *Torah Cases with Finials and Pointers* and a *Torah Scroll*.

Some visitors wondered why other types of art (e.g. paintings, prints) were not on display in the Judaic Art Gallery. While NCMA might not have other forms of Judaic Art in its gallery, providing some information about where visitors might find more information and/or see other forms of Judaic Art would be helpful for visitors who are interested in the topic.

The majority of visitors were observed reading at least one text panel; however, less than a third read a gallery card. Only a very small percentage of visitors interacted with the iPad videos.

When asked about ways NCMA might improve the space in the future, many visitors mentioned making the information more accessible. Some visitors who used the iPads suggested making the videos larger and/or in a format that is more accessible than a single iPad. Several visitors suggested having information about the objects closer to the objects; these visitors did not want to search for information on gallery cards.

When asked what type of interpretation would interest them most, the majority of visitors selected images, saying images improve their understanding by showing objects in context. Half of visitors said they would like to have hands-on experiences, while a third said they would enjoy videos. Primarily visitors want different types of interpretation to help them understand the history of the objects and how they were used.

Visitors perceive that visiting the Judaic Art Gallery has a positive effect on their interest in and understanding of Jewish ceremonial art. The vast majority of visitors also say they feel comfortable exploring the content and/or feel a sense of awe and wonder for the objects on display. In particular, visitors say they are surprised by the intricate details in the works of art and are interested in learning the history of the objects and how they were used. Many visitors say they would like to learn even more about the history and use of objects when the gallery is reinstalled.
