

## INTRODUCTION

Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A), surveyed 253 visitors and interviewed 22 visitors attending the SFMOMA exhibition *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint* to determine their responses to the exhibition and its interpretive offerings, particularly the audio tour. Data collectors used a quota sampling procedure to obtain a sample with an adequate number of audio tour users. The survey sample included 119 audio tour users (47 percent) (21 percent by audio guide headset, 19 percent by cell phone, and 7 percent by podcast) and 134 nonusers (53 percent). All interview participants used the audio tour—18 by cell phone, 3 by audio guide headset, and 1 by podcast.

The findings of the study demonstrate the immense value of having a broad range of interpretive offerings for exhibition visitors, particularly those who were unfamiliar with Barney's art.

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: SURVEY

### RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Females outnumbered males by a 3:2 margin. One-half of respondents were under 35 years of age, one-third (35 percent) were 35–54 years of age and 14 percent were 55+ years of age. Most (81 percent) reported having a college degree or higher and 42 percent reported living in the Bay Area. The majority (52 percent) attended the Barney exhibition with one other adult. The sample included almost equal numbers of first-time (51 percent) and repeat (49 percent) SFMOMA visitors, and almost one-half (45 percent) visited SFMOMA to see the Barney exhibition.

On the scale 1 (Not at all knowledgeable) to 7 (Very knowledgeable), respondents rated their knowledge of modern art a mean of 4.1. On the scale 1 (Not at all familiar) to 7 (Very familiar), respondents rated their familiarity with Barney's art a mean of 2.3. Most respondents (78 percent) rated themselves at 3 or below on the latter scale.

### RATING OF SATISFACTION WITH THE SFMOMA VISIT

On the scale 1 (Poor experience) to 7 (Excellent experience), respondents rated SFMOMA a mean of 5.8. On the scale 1 (Did not meet my expectations) to 7 (Surpassed my expectations), respondents rated SFMOMA a mean of 5.5. For both satisfaction scales, a higher rating is associated with two factors: greater familiarity with Barney's art and visiting SFMOMA to see the Barney exhibition.

### OPINIONS OF THE EXHIBITION

Respondents rated five aspects of the Barney exhibition using 7-point rating scales:

- 1 (Dull-Boring) to 7 (Interesting-Stimulating) mean = 5.0
- 1 (Waste of time) to 7 (Worthwhile experience) mean = 4.9
- 1 (Not an enjoyable experience) to 7 (A very enjoyable experience) mean = 4.8
- 1 (Not at all visually appealing) to 7 (Very visually appealing) mean = 4.8
- 1 (Not at all meaningful to me) to 7 (Very meaningful to me) mean = 4.1

A composite rating of the exhibition was obtained by totaling the scores for each of the five exhibition rating scales and dividing by five. The resulting 7-point scale from 1 (Unfavorable) to 7 (Very Favorable) had a mean rating of 4.7. Characteristics associated with a higher rating on the composite scale include younger age, Bay Area residence, greater knowledge of modern art, visiting to see the Barney exhibition, and greater familiarity with Barney's art.

## USE AND AWARENESS OF INTERPRETIVE OFFERINGS

Interpretive offerings with the highest use were: the introduction wall text (78 percent), exhibition brochure (55 percent), Learning Lounge (51 percent), and audio tour (47 percent). Respondents used a median of three interpretive offerings; however, the majority of respondents were unaware of the podcast audio tour and the exhibition Web site.

## PREFERENCE FOR AN AUDIO TOUR DEVICE

The majority of audio tour users said they heard five or more stops (72 percent). Users of all three audio tour devices rated the audio tour very high on the scale 1 (Did not help me appreciate Barney's art) to 7 (Helped me appreciate Barney's art): podcast mean = 6.2; cell phone mean = 6.0, audio guide headset mean = 5.6.

Cell phone and podcast users selected their devices for the same four reasons: being able to access information as needed, their familiarity and comfort with the device, being able to use their own device, and the low or free cost. Headset users selected the audio guide for three main reasons: familiarity and comfort with the device, ease of using the device, and being able to access information as needed.

Most respondents who did not use the audio guide headset were aware of it but chose not to use it. Most respondents who did not use the podcast were simply not aware of it as an option.

## USE OF INTERPRETIVE OFFERINGS BY DEMOGRAPHICS, ART BACKGROUND, AND VISIT CHARACTERISTICS

Younger respondents were most likely to visit the Web site. A stronger background in modern art was associated with attending the *Drawing Restraint 9* film. Respondents already familiar with Barney's art were more likely than respondents unfamiliar with Barney's art to use the audio tour, see the *Drawing Restraint 9* film, and visit the exhibition Web site.

## RATINGS OF INTERPRETIVE OFFERINGS

On the scale 1 (Did not help me appreciate Barney's art) to 7 (Helped me appreciate Barney's art), the most helpful interpretive offerings were the audio tours (podcast mean = 6.2; cell phone mean = 6.0, audio guide headset mean = 5.6.), Learning Lounge (mean = 5.5), exhibition brochure and Web site (mean = 5.2 for each) and *Drawing Restraint 9* film (mean = 5.1). The introduction wall text received the lowest rating (mean = 4.7).

## RATINGS OF THE EXHIBITION BY USE OF INTERPRETIVE OFFERINGS AND FAMILIARITY WITH BARNEY'S ART

Three interpretive offerings—the brochure, the audio tour, and the Learning Lounge—were associated with higher ratings of the exhibition on the scale 1 (Not very meaningful to me) to 7 (Very meaningful to me). Respondents who used any one of those offerings found more meaning in the exhibition than respondents who did not use the offerings. Respondents already familiar with Barney's art found more meaning in the exhibition than those unfamiliar with Barney's art, regardless of whether they used the offering. The highest ratings were given by respondents already familiar with Barney's art who used the offering; the lowest ratings were given by respondents unfamiliar with Barney's art who did not use the offering.

## RATINGS OF THE EXHIBITION AND SFMOMA VISIT BY THE NUMBER OF INTERPRETIVE OFFERINGS USED

Using a higher number of interpretive offerings was associated with a higher rating of the exhibition on the scale 1 (Not very meaningful to me) to 7 (Very meaningful to me); a higher composite rating of the exhibition on the scale 1 (Unfavorable) to 7 (Very favorable); a higher rating of the SFMOMA visit on the scale 1 (Did not meet my expectations) to 7 (Surpassed my expectations); and a higher rating of the SFMOMA visit on the scale 1 (Poor experience) to 7 (Excellent experience).

## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS: INTERVIEWS

All of the interviewees enjoyed the *Drawing Restraint* exhibition, using words such as “great,” “fantastic,” and “interesting” to describe their experiences. When asked to cite an overall message of the exhibition, the

majority of interviewees said the exhibition was about the creative process, including that it can result in an object that is temporary or can be destroyed, and that all art is created within constraints and tensions.

### USE AND OPINIONS OF THE AUDIO TOUR

Interviewees who used the cell phone audio tour did so because it was free, convenient, and somewhat of a novelty. Those who chose the traditional headset did so to learn more about the artist.

The majority of interviewees listened to 6 to 7 of the 10 stops on the audio tour, regardless of the device they used. All but one interviewee listened to all the information available for the stops they chose. Regardless of which device they used, all the interviewees said having three options available was a good idea.

Interviewees said the interpretative information helped them feel more comfortable looking at the art and helped them understand and make sense of the works of art. Some interviewees said the audio tour helped them organize their visit so that they felt in control and not overwhelmed.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Continue to provide interpretative offerings using a variety of media to meet as many visitor needs and learning styles as possible.
- ◆ Continue to provide interpretative offerings with clear, succinct, and understandable information.
- ◆ Continue to use the artist's voice as one interpretative approach whenever possible.
- ◆ To meet diverse visitor needs, continue to offer at least two audio device options, including the headset as one.
- ◆ If possible, allow visitors to download the audio tour onto their MP3 players at the Museum rather than at home.
- ◆ Publicize the variety of interpretive offerings, particularly the podcast and the Web site, through a range of media and at various locations at the Museum.