

Visual Art Explorers: What they love

UX Researcher: SB, January 2021

Executive Summary

Since our product is at a very early stage, our team is interested in exploring opportunities for a new type of product to engage with visual art. We interviewed 7 leisure learners to find out their needs, pain points, and how they use digital products to explore works of art.

Key Findings

Leisure art explorers enrich their learning experience by listening to diverse voices share their perspectives on a work of art. They do this by accessing video/audio content on their mobile devices outside of work hours.

Users have to use multiple digital products to find the depth of information they need. We identified opportunities to build a multi-faceted product with a focus on video/audio content by diverse voices.

What did we want to learn?

Our team wanted to learn about the experiences adult learners had while engaging with visual art via existing digital products. The objective was to identify what opportunities may exist for creating new products for exploring works of art.

Key Research Questions

- What is essential for exploring visual art? [Needs]
- How do art explorers currently engage with works of art? [Behaviors]

7 Participants

The participants we recruited are art museum members.

	Frequency of exploration	Digital products they currently use	Types of visual art they explore
Participant 2*	3-5 times a week	Instagram, Getty Foundation + MOMA websites	Painting, drawing, video/film
Participant 3	Once a week	Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, New York Times App	Painting, drawing, sculpture
Participant 4	3-5 times a week	Pinterest, Instagram, Artsy	Painting, photography, street art
Participant 5	Daily	MOMA + CMA websites, artist websites, YouTube	Video/Film, painting, sculpture
Participant 6	Once a week	CMA website, Piggyback App	Photography, painting
Participant 7	Once a week	SFMOMA website, Pinterest, New York Times App	Painting, drawing
Participant 8	Once a week	Artist websites, CMA + Smithsonian websites	Painting, video/film

*Note: Participant 1 was a test subject.

Key finding 1

Visual art explorers look for diverse points of view on artworks in video/audio content.

Finding

All participants said that listening to other people's perspectives is a way to bring art to life.

Hearing from the artist's own words—via an audio description—to learn about their artistic process.
Watching a video to hear a curator talk about their interpretation of a work of art.
Listening to a radio host interview an artist on a podcast.

"I follow El Prado on Instagram. They have 10-minute videos describing specific works of art. One of them was about history and they were highlighting several portraits from a gallery. I was interested in that period of history, so I stopped and watched that video."

Participant 3

Recomendation 1

Our new product could focus on using podcasts as the medium to communicate content by diverse voices.

Things to consider:

- Each podcast should be shorter than 10 minutes.
- The product should have a minimum of 2 podcasts per work of art.
- The podcasts should include a variety of voices: art experts and non-art experts.

Key finding 2

The excitement of discovering a personal connection with a work of art is the key motivation for art learners to explore further.

Finding

All participants said that they are happy to keep exploring when they connect with an artwork at a personal level.

Exploring a work of art is like trying to solve a mystery. You want to know what else is tied to it. It's not always clear where your interest is going to take you—could be artwork's history or artist's background. Users have fun connecting with art in unexpected ways.

“When I look at art it's more playful than serious. It's more like: Ooh, that's pretty! What makes that pretty? Let's look closer. Or: Oh, that's hideous! Why do I hate that so much?”

Participant 6

Next Steps

- Validate findings with surveys
- Conduct foundational studies on how adults use video/audio content to explore works of art.
- Run a design sprint for brainstorming

Appendix

Data collection and analysis

