Inside the minds of Masters

An evaluation of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings at the British Museum*

August 2010

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Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* at the British Museum
The exhibition attracted a highly motivated audience of both Art Lovers and the more traditional museums audience, new visitors as well as regular exhibition goers.

Visitors worked hard with the exhibition to reach deep levels of engagement and experience a variety of unexpected emotional and spiritual outcomes.

The Museum’s scientific approach revealing the drawings’ hidden stories and the different techniques employed gave visitors a unique perspective inside the minds of the Renaissance Masters.
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Executive Summary

A highly appealing proposition

The actual concept of mounting an exhibition based on drawings was highly appealing to visitors – it was a rare opportunity and provided a ‘behind the scenes’ view into famous works of art. The exhibition attracted a significant proportion of highly motivated visitors; just under two-thirds were visiting the Museum specifically to see it.

Audience profile

A slightly lower proportion of overseas visitors attended than at previous comparable exhibitions, whilst a relatively high proportion of the audience was local to London.

The vast majority of visitors claimed general knowledge of the subjects covered, higher than previous exhibitions, and a result that demonstrates the appeal of the exhibition’s subject matter.

The audience had an older than average age profile, with only 9% aged 24 or under compared to 17% aged 65 or over, a higher proportion than any other comparable exhibition.

A new audience

One-quarter of the audience was new to the Museum, a finding similar to other temporary exhibitions. For just under 3 in 10 of these new visitors the exhibition was one of the main reasons or the main reason for their visit. The Museum’s Art Lover segment was particularly prominent in the exhibition’s segment breakdown, and visitors from this group were more likely than the other segments to be on their first ever visit; the Museum has successfully tapped into the gallery-going market.

Nevertheless, the Self-developer segment, as with other exhibitions, continues to be the most significant one. This indicates that the proposition resonated with both visitors craving an aesthetical experience, and the more intellectually-focused, traditional museums market. Considering the focus of the exhibition was on visual art, the prominence of Self-developers is testament to the growing reputation of the Museum’s exhibitions brand; visitors are reassured that the exhibition will provide multi-layered curation catering for a broad range of interests and backgrounds.
Satisfying the ‘regulars’

Three-quarters of visitors were on a repeat visit and the majority were regular visitors having last visited within the past 12 months. 88% of this regular audience were coming specifically to see the exhibition, highlighting the exhibition’s success in delivering to this core group of loyal visitors, offering them a reason to return.

An intense experience

The look and feel to the exhibition worked to convey both a sense of occasion and immersion. As soon as visitors stepped into the space they felt that they were witnessing something special that deserved their close attention and which had been mounted with suitable care and prestige. The exhibition design in terms of object display, typeface, usage of colour and interpretation all worked to achieve this feeling.

Visitors arrived at the exhibition highly motivated and a relatively long average dwell time was recorded of over 1.5 hours. The levels of engagement, usage of interpretation and dwell time per object did, however, appear to wane as the exhibition progressed and visitors’ energy appeared to lessen. Despite the obvious dedication shown by the audience, some were surprised by the effort that they had to put in, it was more demanding than many other exhibition experiences with artefacts requiring close attention and visitors being encouraged to apply the knowledge that they were building up throughout the exhibition.

The sheer number of exhibits was overwhelming for some and visitors were surprised by the size of the exhibition. Whilst the extent of the exhibition collection was viewed as a one off, unique opportunity not to be missed, some visitors felt there were too many works crammed into the space, and that their appreciation was ‘diluted’ somewhat.

A minority, but significant, proportion of visitors reported difficulties in navigating the space, with some expecting a more directed and chronological approach. Increased orientation was particularly sought after by those with less background knowledge, however even those more confident visitors worried that they had missed out artefacts. There were certain tactics that could have made the visitors’ experience slightly ‘easier’, such as a greater number of more strategically placed benches to rest and contemplate, a more varied approach to object display, more ‘room’ in between the images and more direction on how to navigate the space.
**Extremely high levels of satisfaction with the interpretation**

The British Museum’s approach to exhibition design and the artefacts themselves were found to be deeply aesthetically satisfying whilst the interpretation also offered an informative and educative experience; there is clearly a growing appreciation for this style of curating amongst visitors. Visitors praised the range of angles taken within the interpretation, the tone of the language and the concise nature of the information that all worked to provide access points for a range of backgrounds and knowledge levels. The technical narrative and information behind the process of drawing was particularly successful in terms of visitor engagement, offering visitors a new dimension of understanding and enriching them with tools to deepen their engagement throughout the course of the exhibition.

Whilst some visitors had their interest stimulated and would have liked slightly more information on various topics, for example the interpersonal relationships of the artists or more of an insight into how Renaissance art progressed, overall the content was exceedingly well-received and left visitors highly satisfied.

**Unexpected emotional and spiritual responses**

Visitors experienced a variety of unexpected outcomes such as a feeling of going back in time, having an emotionally moving experience or feeling reflective and creatively inspired. In particular visitors articulated an emotional response centred on the personal connection and insight gained into each artist and their work. Understanding the artists’ working conditions, motivations behind their technique and personal information intensified these reactions.

**Consolidating a legacy**

The exhibition has clearly boosted the Museum’s temporary exhibition legacy, with 42% of visitors stating that they are now more encouraged to visit special exhibitions as a result of their experience, a figure that rises to 56% amongst new visitors.

The overall experience was such that many visitors were inspired to carry out future activity, be that researching things they had seen in further detail, investigating the Prints and Drawings room at the Museum or even trying out drawing themselves.
Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings

Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings was a unique collaboration between the Uffizi in Florence and the British Museum, displaying the drawings of 15th-century Italian artists. The exhibition provided a unique opportunity to discover the evolution of drawing which laid the foundations of the High Renaissance style of Michelangelo and Raphael. Drawing on a body of conservation research, the Museum used infrared technology to provide fresh insight into how drawing allowed painters to experiment and explore with a freedom not always reflected in their finished works.

Running from 22 April – 25 July 2010 the exhibition was held in the Museum’s Reading Room and was sponsored by BP.

The exhibition coincided with another temporary exhibition Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa (3 March – 4 July) held in Room 35. The two exhibitions were cross-promoted as they provided visitors with an opportunity to understand cultural output from different regions during a similar time period. A separate evaluation report of Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa is available: ‘Turning heads’ (July 2010).
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*Schematic diagram of the* *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* *exhibition*
3 Research methodology

3.1 Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this research were to provide an objective evaluation of the exhibition, comparative data across other British Museum special exhibitions – in particular the previous major exhibitions to have taken place within the Reading Room, the coinciding exhibition *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa* and *Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master* - and specific findings relating to the Museum’s high level research agenda of Attract -> Engage -> Outcome.

Specific areas to be covered in the evaluation were:

- Visitor profile
- Motivations and outcomes
- Marketing and communications
- Sponsor awareness
- Understanding the dual proposition of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* and *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*
- Visitor spend
- Interpretation
- Multimedia guide
- Visitor experience

3.2 Our approach

In order to carry out the evaluation of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* we used the following research techniques:

**Audience focus groups**

Exhibition attenders were invited to the British Museum to take part in a focus group. All of the attenders had previously visited *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* and they were divided into three...
groups according to whether or not they had previously been to a paid-for exhibition at the Museum and whether they had also visited *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*. Participants took part in an accompanied visit to the *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* exhibition to refresh their memories, before taking part in an in-depth group discussion. The discussions explored their expectations of the exhibition, aspects of the exhibition design and overall visitor experience.

In total 21 visitors participated in the focus group discussions and the table below shows how the group breaks down into the three sub-categories. Please note that comments throughout this report from those attenders who also visited the *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa* refer only to the *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* exhibition unless specifically stated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Referred to in report as:</th>
<th>Number of attenders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attenders had visited previous paid-for special exhibitions at the Museum, (but not <em>Kingdom of Ife: Sculptures of West Africa</em>)</td>
<td>Repeat exhibition attender</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attenders had visited previous paid-for special exhibitions at the Museum, (including <em>Kingdom of Ife: Sculptures of West Africa</em>)</td>
<td>Exhibition attender including <em>Kingdom of Ife</em></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings</em> was the first paid-for exhibition attended at the Museum</td>
<td>First-time visitor to paid-for exhibition</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exit survey

Surveys were conducted with visitors who had just finished their visit to the exhibition to ascertain a basic visitor profile, awareness of marketing and publicity, motivation for visiting the exhibition, behaviour within the room and the impacts and outcomes of the exhibition. The exit survey also gathered detailed information about visitor spend, in order to assess the economic impact of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*.

171 exit surveys were conducted during shifts from 18th May 2010 to 24th July 2010.

Rolling research

Questions were added to the ongoing rolling research at the Museum to ascertain awareness and attendance of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* amongst general Museum visitors.
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Observations

Using observation techniques, visitors’ levels of engagement were recorded at six selected areas of the exhibition. Firstly it was recorded whether visitors embarked on any level of engagement within the area or whether they appeared to miss the area out. We also recorded dwell time within each area for those visitors who successfully engaged, type of interpretation used and depth of engagement. These techniques were used to identify which elements of display and interpretation were most successful at engaging visitors and how that level of engagement was achieved.

1,453 visitors were observed within the observations research.

Vox pop interviews

Vox pop interviews were carried out at various points throughout the exhibition in order to test visitors’ responses to different elements including the multimedia guides and the overall exhibition design and interpretation.

80 visitor vox pops were carried out.
Key findings

The table below shows the key findings from the *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* exhibition, and compares them with 6 other major charging exhibitions at the British Museum that have been evaluated by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Italian Renaissance Drawings</th>
<th>Kingdom of Ife</th>
<th>Moctezuma</th>
<th>Shah ‘Abbas</th>
<th>Hadrian</th>
<th>The First Emperor</th>
<th>Michelangelo Drawings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exhibition dates</strong></td>
<td>22/04/10 – 25/07/10</td>
<td>04/03/10 – 04/07/10</td>
<td>24/09/09 – 24/01/10</td>
<td>19/02/09 – 14/06/09</td>
<td>24/07/08 – 26/10/08</td>
<td>13/09/07 – 06/04/08</td>
<td>23/03/06 – 25/06/06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrance charge?</strong></td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
<td>Charging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room</strong></td>
<td>R.Room</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>R.Room</td>
<td>R.Room</td>
<td>R.Room</td>
<td>R. Room</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average length of visit</strong></td>
<td>91 mins</td>
<td>59 mins</td>
<td>79 mins</td>
<td>75 mins</td>
<td>100 mins</td>
<td>75 mins</td>
<td>86 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 Visitor profile

Segmentation

The table below describes the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre-devised segmentation system into which the British Museum audience is currently divided for annual reporting purposes.

Segment table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Broad needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sightseers</td>
<td>First time visitors making a general visit. Mainly tourists who want to ‘do’ the museum</td>
<td>Ease of access, comfort, orientation, good facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self developers</td>
<td>Non-specialists wanting to informally improve their general knowledge about subjects covered in the museum</td>
<td>Journey of discovery, layered information, finding out new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families1</td>
<td>Mixed age groups, wanting fun and educational trip for children</td>
<td>Ease of access and movement, child friendly facilities and activities, different levels of service to meet diverse age needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat Social Visitors</td>
<td>Repeat visitors, meeting up with others at the museum. Use the museum as a sociable space and want to feel a sense of ownership in their surroundings</td>
<td>Ease of access, comfort, orientation, good facilities, warm welcome, accessible exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Specialists wanting to deepen their knowledge further by engaging deeply with the collection</td>
<td>High quality access to collections, critical engagement, access to expert staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Lovers</td>
<td>Spiritually and emotionally motivated visitors who want to commune with objects in the collection, and use their existing knowledge as a base to go deeper</td>
<td>Ambience, deep sensory engagement, space for contemplation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The diagram below compares the proportion of visitors that fell into each segment across the Great Rulers series, *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa* and the Museum overall.

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1 Please note that families are defined as an independent adult visitor visiting with a child aged under 16
The two most prominent segments within the *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* audience were Art Lovers and Self-developers, representing over three-quarters of the audience. This is a consistent finding across the temporary exhibitions referred to, and contrasts the profile of the Museum’s overall audience.

The segment breakdown for *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* is relatively similar to *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa, Moctezuma: Aztec ruler and Shah ‘Abbas: the remaking of Iran* and contrasts those for *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict* – where there was notably a larger proportion of Self-developers – and *The First Emperor: China’s Terracotta Army* where the proportion of Families was significantly larger and the proportion of Experts significantly smaller.

The dual prominence of Art Lovers and Self-developers at an art exhibition centred on visual art is an interesting finding and reflects *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*’s ability to not only attract the more traditional art exhibition audience, but also the more intellectually motivated, traditional museums audience.
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Hosting an art exhibition certainly attracted a new audience; 29% of Art Lovers were on their first ever visit to the Museum, compared to an average of 25% of all visitors and they were one of the segments most likely to be new to the Museum:

‘This is the first time I’ve come to the British Museum... I’d done A-Level art at school years ago. I’ve always had a passion for art so I thought now’s the time I should go’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘I like looking at beautiful things or things like drawings. That is why I don’t normally come to the British Museum. I go to the V & A a lot more often. Things like the diamond exhibition appeal to me’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘It’s the first time I have ever been to an art exhibition here... of course I have been to the British Museum but it’s not a place I come to. I go to the Royal Academy’ Visitor vox pop

‘If the aim was to draw people into the British Museum then well done because I’d never have come [otherwise]’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition
6 Dual proposition: cross-promoting *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* with *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*

6.1 *Awareness of and propensity to visit* *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*

Over half of visitors (53%) were aware of the coinciding *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa* exhibition. Just under half of those aware were not interested in attending (26%) whilst just over half had either already attended (17%) or would be interested in doing so (11%).

Those visitors who had already visited were asked whether their experience had made them more likely to come to see *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings*, or whether it made no difference in their decision to visit. For the vast majority (93%), it made no difference, however 7% were encouraged to attend due to their experience at *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*.

In terms of propensity to visit, 13% of all visitors felt that their experience at *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* had made them more likely to visit *Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa*, 1% felt that it had made them less likely, whilst the vast majority of 85% felt that it made no difference in their likelihood to attend.
6.2 What connections did visitors see between the two exhibitions?

Some visitors who had visited both exhibitions were unaware of the connections – through the similar time period of the different art – that linked them:

‘[Linking the exhibitions together] I didn’t actually draw anything at the time, and because I saw them with ... two different people it didn’t necessarily sort of link up too much. It was just something to do’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘Not really thought about it/ never saw the connection’ Survey respondent

‘I didn’t think of any connection... [I went] because it’s an exhibition and it’s a part of history I know nothing about but I wanted to expand my understanding of periods of history and parts of the world that I am not familiar about’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Of the 35 survey respondents who responded to the open-ended question asking what they thought linked them, just over one-third were unable to say or did not see any connection.

The qualitative research revealed that some attenders felt that the connection between the time periods was not in fact strong enough to be necessarily highlighted / cross-promoted or felt that the Museum needed to draw more attention to the links enabling visitors to be actively aware:

‘I would say the link; I find it fairly spurious, and they are both very interesting, but they tell very sort of different historical stories and the art is used for very different purposes’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I think the links that I made were all to do with politics and the politics that surrounds them. But I don’t think they are explicitly made... I didn’t see them in unison whatsoever’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

These views, however, were not shared amongst all visitors. Some appreciated the fact that the links were subtle, leaving the visitor to follow their interests rather than feel coerced into exploring another angle:

‘I think [the link] is what makes [Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa] interesting but I think if it was laboured I think it would be less interesting, it’s the fact that it was subtlety done’ Repeat exhibition attender
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Whilst for many other visitors, exploring the links between the two different cultures was appealing on a variety of levels. Some saw the artistic value in seeing both exhibitions since the collections both featured the human form:

‘Both schools of art are trying to achieve a lifelike representation of the human form using the available technology at the time’ Survey respondent

‘Contrasts the aspirations of each culture to represent the human form face in a life-like manner’ Survey respondent

‘Different methods used but both cultures trying to achieve a lifelike representation of the human features’ Survey respondent

‘Of a similar period, both about detailed portraiture studies’ Survey respondent

Others simply saw artistic beauty and skill in both exhibitions:

‘A desire to capture beauty’ Survey respondent

‘There’s a classical beauty in both exhibitions’ Survey respondent

‘Both sets of artists are trying to achieve a ‘classical’ beauty and style even though coming from very different backgrounds’ Survey respondent

Others valued the dual proposition for the opportunity to witness the stark differences between the two cultures or for overcoming a form of eurocentrism:

‘That it was happening around the same time it wasn’t only the Europeans that produced high quality art and sculptures’ Survey respondent

‘It was acknowledged in the Ife that Europeans when they discovered that art were quite patronising of it as if they were incapable of making that art, whereas on the other hand we all know how highly praised the Italian Renaissance is, and so there was a link in the sense that they were just as good as each other, but the politics of it were interesting’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘Kingdom of Ife showed that Africans could do what we normally associate with the Renaissance’ Survey respondent

‘Astonishing that they are roughly the same period’ Survey respondent

Some visitors were fascinated by the fact that much was known about the exhibits contained within the Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings exhibition, whilst comparatively little was known about the
exhibits contained in the Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa exhibition:

‘I was... struck by the differences... between the Renaissance one where almost every sort of pen stroke is understood and the whole discussion of the manufacture of the paper was gone into in such detail, and then you go to the Ife one and there is so little information about how they are made, why... you have these beautiful works of art, nobody knows how they got there’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘There was a lot of ‘probablies’ in Ife and a lot of ‘definites’ in the Renaissance’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

6.3 Practicalities of visiting both exhibitions

Many visitors to Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings found the exhibition demanding in time and attention (explored further in sections 9.3 and 11.1), and it would be perhaps too much to expect visitors to tackle both exhibitions during the same visit:

‘By the time I got here and I’d been around there just wasn’t enough time [to see the Kingdom of Ife on the same visit]’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

As well as time, cost may also be a barrier preventing visitors from visiting the two exhibitions, and some may expect a discount incentive if seeing the two shows:

‘A lot of museums do this thing where if you have two big shows... let’s say this twelve pounds and the other one is twelve pounds as well, make it eighteen pounds and you can go to two shows’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition
7 Motivations for visiting

7.1 Hierarchy of motivation

We have identified four key drivers for visiting museums:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitors who:</th>
<th>Have this driver...</th>
<th>And they seek this from a visit.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See museum as a...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH</td>
<td>SPIRITUAL</td>
<td>Creative stimulation and quiet contemplation, they see museums as an opportunity to escape and recharge their batteries, food for the soul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>EMOTIONAL</td>
<td>May have a personal connection to the subject matter, want to see fascinating objects in an inspiring setting, seek ambience, deep sensory and intellectual experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCHIVE</td>
<td>INTELLECTUAL</td>
<td>Keen to encourage their children’s or their own interest and knowledge, may have professional interest in the subject, seek a journey of discovery, to find out new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTRACTION</td>
<td>SOCIAL</td>
<td>See museums as an enjoyable place to spend time with friends and family, seek ease of access and orientation, good facilities and services, welcoming staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At each level of the hierarchy visitors have different needs. The suggestion is not that visitors are forced or even led up this hierarchy, but that they get the opportunity to engage at the deepest level they wish to.

7.2 Main motivation

Using a series of statements on the exit survey we asked visitors to *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* to identify the main motivation for their visit to the British Museum that day. The diagram below shows the main motivation of visitors to *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* compared to comparable exhibitions as well as results for the Museum as a whole taken from the rolling research.
We can see from the graph above that intellectual main motivations are most prominent amongst the audience for Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings, followed by emotional motivations – a largely consistent finding across the exhibitions to varying degrees. Interestingly comparison of the motivational profile highlights how similar the audiences to Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings and Kingdom of Life: sculptures from West Africa were, whilst there are clear differences compared to the audience to Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master which is arguably the closet exhibition in term of content. In this case the Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings audience appear significantly more emotionally and spiritually driven and less intellectually and socially driven.

**Specific motivations**

In addition to identifying visitors’ main motivation for visiting the exhibition, we were also able to look at the proportion of visitors driven by specific motivators. Visitors were asked to choose all the reasons that motivated their visit – therefore visitors can be motivated to gain a deeper insight, but also to visit the shop or restaurant on the same visit.

**Specific motivators**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% of visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>To stimulate my own creativity</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To reflect and contemplate</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>To escape or recharge my batteries</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To gain a deeper insight into the subject</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To experience awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things or places</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be moved emotionally</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel a strong sense of personal connection</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To travel back in time</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>To improve my own knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have a personal / academic / professional interest in the subject</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>To encourage children’s interest in history</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To visit one of the major attractions in the region</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To spend time with other people in a nice place</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To use facilities such as shop / café / toilet / restaurant</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two most selected options were to ‘improve their knowledge and understanding’, and ‘to gain a deeper insight into the subject’.
Meaning making

Through our qualitative work into how visitors select and engage with objects in the museum environment, we have identified four modes of visitor behaviour. These modes classify how the visitor selects objects to explore and what kind of interpretation they need to make meaning from objects.

**Hierarchy of Meaning making**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Object selection</th>
<th>Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCHER</td>
<td>Specific objects/collections</td>
<td>Focused, specialist museum visitors, select objects themselves based on their in-depth knowledge of the subject area, want access to expert information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEARCHER</td>
<td>Classification/collection</td>
<td>Have good general understanding of the topic, consume all the information available in the museum on that subject, want museum to select and present objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOLLOWER</td>
<td>Narrative theme</td>
<td>Require a narrative explanation, want the museum to select and present objects which illustrate themes to follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BROWSER</td>
<td>Random objects</td>
<td>Select objects by browsing the exhibition, will wander until they find a 'gateway' object that catches their attention, require explanation of their selected objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four modes form a hierarchy, with each level of the hierarchy representing an increased level of engagement with objects. It is possible for visitors to move upwards through the modes of behaviour – the modes can be seen as stages in the development of a visitor’s meaning making skills.

Visitors who are continually browsing an exhibition can only be making fleeting connections with a limited number of objects. If the Museum is committed to developing visitors’ levels of engagement it should seek to encourage visitors to develop their meaning making skills by selecting objects and offering interpretation that propels visitors up the hierarchy and engages them pro-actively.

Visitors were asked a question on the exit survey to identify their ‘entry mode’; how they behaved on entry to the exhibition. The results are shown below alongside those for the Great Rulers series.
Entry meaning making mode

Visitors to *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* were most likely to enter in ‘searching’ mode – with a good general understanding of the topic and appetite for higher levels of information – although this mode features less prominently than results for the Great Ruler exhibitions. Interestingly, in comparison there is a slightly larger proportion of visitors at the two extreme ends of the scale, with a greater proportion entering in the ‘browsing’ mode, and a great proportion entering in ‘researching’ mode compared to previous exhibitions.
The visit experience

8.1 Pre-show

Booking process and ticket collection

Visitors had a highly satisfactory experience with booking their tickets for the exhibition, with 56% saying it neither enhanced nor detracted from their experience, while 41% felt that it ‘slightly’ or ‘strongly’ enhanced the experience in some way. Only 3% felt that the booking process ‘slightly’ detracted from their overall experience.

Similarly, the ticket collection area was problem-free, with the majority (57%) stating it neither enhanced nor detracted from their experience whilst the remaining 43% felt that the area ‘slightly’ or ‘strongly’ enhanced their experience.

Queueing

Queueing was not an issue for Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings with visitors waiting on average less than one minute to enter the exhibition. 39% of visitors felt that the queuing space had enhanced their exhibition visit in some way; only 2% felt that this element detracted from their visit.

8.2 Dwell time

The average dwell time for visitors was 91 minutes. This is a relatively long dwell time and, apart from Hadrian: Empire and Conflict (where dwell time was 100 minutes), exceeds all of the comparable exhibitions which had a dwell time ranging from 59 minutes at Kingdom of Ife: sculptures from West Africa through to 86 minutes for Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master.
8.3 **Behaviour**

Visitors were observed in the following 6 sections of the exhibition, identified in the map below:

1. The Purpose of Drawing and Drawing Materials introductory section (59 visitors observed in total)
2. Lorenzo Monaco, Gothic Master ‘chapel’ section (320 observed)
3. The Florence of Verrocchio and Leonardo introductory section (356 observed)
4. Leonardo da Vinci section (182 observed)
5. Santa Maria Novella ‘chapel’ section (203 observed)
6. Michelangelo section (333 observed)
Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings at the British Museum

The following information was recorded within each section:

- Whether visitors stopped within the area and engaged on any level or not
- Visitor dwell time within each area
- Type of interpretation, if any, used
- Which exhibits were engaged with in each area
- For those visitors who engaged, the level of engagement reached within the area overall based on the following observed behaviours:

**Levels of engagement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Static exhibits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Successful interactions</td>
<td>Immersion</td>
<td>Spending an extended period looking at exhibit in depth, studying it closely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discovery</td>
<td>Spend time looking at the exhibit in some depth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful interactions</td>
<td>Exploration</td>
<td>Briefly consider the exhibit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Acknowledge the exhibit, but quickly moving on</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The opening section of the exhibition was the largest of all observed, with interactions at 10 objects recorded compared to between 3 and 7 in other areas of the exhibition. Logically, the dwell time within this area is higher than in other areas, yet it averages at higher than any other area per object, with visitors spending on average 1.03 minutes at each of the ten objects compared to between 0.4 and 0.91 minutes elsewhere.
The most visited object in this area, and indeed of all the objects observed during the observations research, was the film with 96% of visitors looking at this.

Motivation to engage appeared very high in this initial area and the content of the interpretation was highly received, as explored further in section 11.3. We can see that 95% of visitors stopped to use this area, a proportion only surpassed by the Leonardo da Vinci section. Depth of engagement was noticeably higher here than elsewhere, with 89% of visitors having a successful interaction and 59% reaching the highest engagement level of immersion. This result compares to between 23% and 40% elsewhere. Tellingly all visitors used at least one form of interpretation, either textual, human, using the multi-media guide or touching the vellum and paper whereas in other areas of the exhibition between 4% and 11% used no form of interpretation. Visitors were more likely to discuss what they were seeing with others than in any other area, with two-thirds doing so.

The ‘hands on’ aspect of this area was particularly appreciated, offering a one-off opportunity that really helped visitors visualise the tools used:

‘Great breadth to the exhibition. And some nice details- being able to feel and touch the vellum and paper’ Art lover literal response

‘I knew what vellum was but it’s hard to imagine someone drawing on it... [touching the vellum] it’s so smooth. It’s a unique experience and I don’t know where else you could get to do that’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition
This section had the lowest dwell time per object of all the areas observed. This was the first ‘chapel’ area of the exhibition, with exhibits contained within a smaller room to the side. It seems that some visitors only engaged with the print on the outside of the chapel, which 87% of visitors looked at, but did not go inside to look at the other exhibits where the highest level of attraction was 77%. In terms of successful interactions, levels plummeted between this area and the first area observed, however well over half of visitors still had a successful interaction.
This section was one of the most likely to be missed by visitors, with 30% missing it out completely. It also achieved one of the lowest proportions of successful engagement, however just over half of those visitors who used this area did go on to have a successful interaction. It must be noted, that this area did not contain any original drawings. Despite comparatively lower levels of engagement, visitors stopping at this area were more likely to use the text panel than in any other area. The section had a relatively high dwell time per object, but the bench within this area will have affected results, which one-quarter of visitors used.
This area of the exhibition was the most visited of all the areas observed, used by 96% of visitors. Levels of successful interactions rose significantly here, reaching the second highest of the areas observed overall. Undoubtedly this is in part due to the content in itself, with Leonardo da Vinci being one of the more well-known artists of the Renaissance:

‘The Leonardo section... I find him fascinating... this person who is so creative but at the same time just so academic’ Repeat exhibition attender

The first three images that visitors came to – if following in a systematic order – were particularly well used. Visitors were also more likely to use their multi-media guide in this area than any other.
This was the section most likely to be missed out by visitors of all those observed and this is potentially related to the ‘chapel’ design, with visitors not stepping out of the main flow of the exhibition. The film was the most well used object in this area, and the qualitative research reveals that this element was highly positively received (explored in further detail in section 11.4).
6. Michelangelo section

Overall depth of engagement

- 24% Unsuccessful interactions
- 25% Orientation
- 28% Exploration
- 23% Immersion
- 26% Successful interactions

Average dwell time in this area: 1.69 minutes

Interpretation used:
- Multimedia guide: 11%
- Discussed with others: 29%
- Test: 91%
- None used: 7%

% of visitors who visited object
- 50 - 60: 8%
- 60 - 80: 15%
- 80 - 90: 22%
- 90 - 99: 36%
- 99 - 100: 36%

Artistic Legacy
- Nude men & virgin & child: 84%
- Studies of women & children: 12%

Figure studies & a capital: 100%
Test panel: 56%
Michelangelo is undoubtedly one of the most well-known artists featured in the exhibition – it is thus surprising that this area achieved one of the lowest proportions of successful interactions, with only just over half reaching the discovery or immersion levels. In fact, this area achieved the smallest proportion of visitors reaching the deepest level of engagement of immersion (23%). It would seem that by this point in the exhibition, visitors were beginning to tire. Levels of engagement began at their highest in the Purpose of Drawing and Drawing Materials section and have generally fallen throughout, with the exception of the Leonardo da Vinci area where engagement rose again.

Another indication of visitors tiring is attention paid to text panels; only just over half of visitors looked at the panels in the last 2 sections compared to between 64% and 87% elsewhere. In addition, this area achieved one of the lowest dwell times of 0.42 minutes per object – this may, again, be another sign of visitors tiring.

These explanations are supported by the qualitative research where visitors described themselves being overwhelmed by the amount of exhibits and feeling drained by the end, as detailed below:

‘The friend that I brought down was really geared up to see some Leonardo da Vinci stuff, the real main player, the famous one... the route that we took... it was right at the end and we were both knackered by then, so I think he was a bit disappointed’ Exhibition attendant including Kingdom of Ife

Another factor to consider, however, is ‘bottlenecks’ in the latter half of the exhibition, with crowding potentially preventing successful engagement. Whilst the exhibition rarely neared full capacity in terms of visitor numbers, towards the end of its running, levels began to approach capacity and this may have affected results.

‘It was just too busy and there were like 100 people in the last section and I just couldn’t wait to get out’ Visitor vox pop

‘It was too crowded for me especially at the end. The feeling of serenity with a lot of the work it was a bit spoiled’ Visitor vox pop

8.4 Size of the exhibition space

A large proportion of visitors were surprised by the size of the exhibition. Whilst just over half (54%) felt that the size of the space was as they expected, for 44% the exhibition was actually larger than they anticipated. Only 2% felt that it was smaller than their expectations.
9 Layout & display

This chapter details visitors’ reactions to the exhibition design in terms of ambience and atmosphere created, layout of the space and display of objects.

9.1 Exhibition design

Visitors reacted positively to the exhibition design with nearly three-quarters stating that the ambience of the space enhanced their experience.

To what extent did the ambience of the exhibition space (lights, colours etc) enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?

- 48% Strongly enhanced
- 26% Slightly enhanced
- 18% Neither
- 7% Slightly detracted
- 1% Strongly detracted

The way in which visitors enter the space builds up a sense of anticipation. The setting itself – under the Reading Room dome – and the look and feel of the exhibition design work to convey both a sense of occasion and immersion:

“What I really liked about it... the atmosphere’s there, you walk through the corridor and it’s there, you haven’t got any expectations other than you know there’s going to be some great artists so you get a sort of excitement before you get in there. And you get lost in there, before you know it you’ve spent a lot of time in there” First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

“I do like the space. You know you have got really high ceilings. The dome and even though it was really busy when I went and it was quite crowded it didn’t feel quite so” Repeat exhibition attender

“I think it was slightly more atmospheric [than an art gallery] and you really felt like you were going in something a bit special really... it made you feel... they were putting quite a lot of effort into it” Visitor vox pop

“I got here earlier so I went round the Egyptian rooms because they were near, and it was like the British Museum’s always been. But when you got into this exhibition it blew all that sort of museumology away. And it was
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exciting because it was like Italy and you were there’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Lighting the space

The ambient lighting greatly contributed to the sense of immersion, creating a calm and reflective atmosphere whilst also helping to guide visitors round through illuminating certain areas:

‘Lack of light and this atmosphere... it gave more reflection’ Visitor vox pop

‘I like how the lighting definitely made me feel a bit more sombre and slightly more relaxed and I like how you sort of lit certain bits up so it attracted you to those areas’ Visitor vox pop

‘I think the dark lighting does help you to look more carefully at everything and to make you feel you are in a special place’ Visitor vox pop

The low lighting levels did, however, mean that visitors had to get up close to the artefacts to successfully interact:

‘It is very atmospheric, but you know looking at notes or even looking at the text on the panels you have to get up close to it’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

The usage of colour within the exhibition design

Not all visitors found the space easy to navigate, as explored below, thus as well as adding to the ambience, visitors looked to the colour scheme of the exhibition to help them orientate themselves:

‘Very well presented- good use of colour in backdrop’ Art lover literal response

‘The colour coded layout and also the gallery display was very clear’ Art lover literal response

‘I thought there must be some significance whether we are in a red room or a green room. I thought about that the first time and the second time... But I was looking for pointers when you realise it’s not chronological’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

However, in some instances, using colour as an aid for navigation added to the confusion, with some visitors thinking they had been mistaken in assuming the colours wrapped around themed sections, and others thinking that visitors were supposed to visit one colour in order, followed by the other:
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‘When I was walking around I was looking for the colour code and I thought ‘I haven’t got enough information to hand so maybe this colour code is telling me when I move to this area it’s going to be that colour or this colour’, and thought it was the colour coding and I was totally wrong’

First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘The colour scheme... they kind of overlapped... we had one section on engraving and that one was green, and you went round the corner and you’ve got another green wall and a red wall [on Florence]... it was nothing to do with any engravings’

First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘There were like two walls... I followed the red wall, which I thought was the main wall and then I came back to the green wall and the [The Purpose of Drawing section]... I went there after I saw everything’

Visitor vox pop

9.2 Layout and flow of the exhibition space

The majority of visitors (57%) felt that the layout and flow enhanced their exhibition experience, however just over 1 in 5 felt that this aspect detracted from their visit.

To what extent did the layout / flow of the exhibition enhance or detract from your overall visit experience?

- 28% Strongly enhanced
- 29% Slightly enhanced
- 23% Neither
- 17% Slightly detracted
- 4% Strongly detracted

The qualitative research suggests that not all visitors found the space intuitive to navigate - this is, in part, an interpretative issue relating to a thematic approach, with some visitors expecting to follow a more directed, chronological journey around the exhibition:

‘I thought I’d stick with colours and if I stay in this little bit... Am I supposed to go from this wall to that wall and I was thinking maybe they’re in chronological order going clockwise, because I like it all in chronological order because I like to see the developments, how the artist was influenced by this or that artist and like I say, the progression of it’

First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

In particular visitors found moving across the main flow from side to side difficult and were unsure if they were indeed supposed to be navigating in this way:
‘It did get a little bit confusing sometimes. I felt that I didn’t know which side of the room that I should go to’ Visitor vox pop

‘I don’t know if it is just me. It didn’t really feel like it flowed properly because there was one thing on one side, one thing on the other. It is really busy on one side so you go to the other side and then you just miss out what you hadn’t seen’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘If the exhibition had been directed, numbered, or something [that would have been an improvement], because you kind of went from one wall to another wall to another, and you kind of thought ‘hang on, I’ve seen that – where do I go now?’ I think of all the exhibitions I’ve been to, that was one of the worst for directions’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Following a structure may not be important to all visitors – particularly those with more background knowledge, however visitors with less confidence may be looking for more guidance from the layout and interpretation:

‘[The layout] worked like a painting, you know so rather than going smack into the middle you are working your way round the canvas as it were’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘You’re looking at the pictures and you lose track of sections. And you’re perhaps not terribly interested in the sections. But then you want to kind of pull it together know where to see something’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘I think there was no clear direction and like you should follow this, because we are not quite familiar with the Renaissance theme... So I guess for first timers like us it is quite difficult to understand’ Visitor vox pop

Even those more confident visitors may have been worried that – given the lack of obvious direction – they might miss out exhibits by mistake:

‘Confusing layout with the ante-rooms. I often backtracked and wasn’t sure if I’d missed stuff’ Expert literal response

Some visitors felt that it would have been useful if they had been provided with a suggested route through the exhibition, or if the map within the exhibition leaflet had been more prominent:

‘I was around the exhibition for about two hours there’s so much to see, but I kept getting lost... I think what would be a good idea is if... the person who’s taking your ticket could give you one of these [exhibition guide]... it’s got a map in and I didn’t realise that’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition
‘[An improvement would be] a suggested path through... if you follow this round and pieces x y and z that will be a little journey’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Display of objects

The choice of typography and prominence of titles above each drawing was praised for being clear and easy to read from a distance. Visitors were also satisfied with the display height of artefacts:

‘It’s also brilliantly lit so you could see, and the fact that I’ve been to a lot of art galleries where you can’t get close, it was up close and open... they were right on my eye line which was brilliant’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘The title of the painting was above each one and that was rather helpful’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I did feel that the typographic design and the layout of the exhibition was really, really good. You know it was clear. I could read stuff from quite far’ Repeat exhibition attender

However, given the intricate nature of the exhibits, visitors were required to get up close in order to successfully interact and appreciate their level of detail, and when areas were crowded this forced visitors to either wait or miss areas out completely:

‘I think it’s really clear and you can see quite far away but because it’s drawings you do want to get up close don’t you and if you can’t be bothered to wait you just go’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘The first time we were here we were jammed, and so you couldn’t get up quite close and then the type was so small that at least for me it was really hard to peer over and read it’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

A suggested way to overcome this problem would be to project large-scale images of certain drawings so that several visitors could appreciate their detail at a time:

‘I am one of those annoying people that tend to hog the pictures or the paintings to see how it’s put together. So for me to see something blown up like... the chalice that would have been amazing blown up... that would have been incredible’ Repeat exhibition attender

Some visitors felt that the drawings warranted more variety in their display and that more three-dimensional objects should have been included to add colour and compliment the dominance of the two-dimensional artefacts:
‘More varied display? Support the sketches somehow’ Art lover literal response

‘I thought too many of the images were too faint to really see very well and too small, and you know I kind of looked around and where were the sculptures, where were the colours?’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I think a bit of variation on how they were displayed... you did have a couple in cabinets and you did have other interactive... your videos and stuff, but as you were going round you found like you were doing the same thing as you were going round and just kind of looking. You know I would have liked a little bit of change of height’ Repeat exhibition attender

9.3 Issues of crowding

Despite visitor levels being lower than many previous exhibitions mounted within the same space, 37% of visitors felt that the volume of visitors within the room detracted from their overall visit experience. The qualitative research would suggest that this finding relates to the small nature of the exhibits meaning that visitors had to get up close to each drawing in order to successfully engage:

‘I find these huge exhibitions get very crowded... and I am very short as well and you can’t get near the pictures’ Visitor vox pop

Nevertheless, generally visitors were satisfied with the ‘crowd control’ measures put in place by the Museum, such as the staggered entry times of which 40% of visitors felt enhanced their overall experience. Some focus group attenders commented that the Museum’s crowd control has improved over recent exhibitions:

‘I think the exhibition quality regarding crowds and letting people in has improved at the British Museum because I remember going to see the Chinese Terracotta Warriors and it was so crowded and I couldn’t read anything, and yet I’ve been to the Aztec one and that was better and even the Renaissance one I didn’t feel crushed when I was there and I went during the weekend... it was much better’ Repeat exhibition attender

9.4 Accessibility

The sheer size of the exhibition and length of time spent within the space meant that seating areas were very welcome. Some visitors, however, commented that there were not enough opportunities to sit down and that the benches that were in the exhibition should have been more strategically placed allowing for engagement with objects whilst in use:
‘I can’t see why there weren’t some seats in there... I was exhausted by the time I got out of here, and the seats, these big wooden benches, seemed to be put in the most random of places. Because they weren’t in front of a picture. Two of them were in front of walls with no writing on, or no pictures. Because I have to sit down regularly, you know, and I just think “why were there not more seats where it was appropriate?” Not everybody’s fit’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘If you looked at any of the places where somebody who was older who walked through a few rooms and had to sit down. Sat, there is no way they’d sit on that wooden bench and be able to see a thing... on the walls. It was way too far away from them’ Exhibition attendant including Kingdom of Ife

‘There [was] a lack of seats and everyone was fighting for a seat and I am quite tired in my heels’ Visitor vox pop

‘More seating generally, especially in front of films’ Art lover literal response

A couple of visitors also commented that the exhibition and staff could have been more considerate to visitors with disabilities:

‘More seating and more consideration for visitors with disabilities - not all disabilities are obvious’ Self developer literal response

‘Why are there not attendants at the lifts when you get there? Either coming out or going in there was no one to help me. And you know those lovely stools? I only learnt about those halfway through the exhibition. And no curator would go and get me one ... if you have problems, there isn’t a lot of help here. And that’s appalling’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition
Content

10

10.1 Amount and quality of information

Just under three-quarters of visitors stated that they were ‘very’ satisfied with the amount of information available and no visitors were dissatisfied with this element of the content.

Visitors were particularly impressed by the concise way in which information was conveyed and the balance between technique, historical context and the motivations of the artist. Several visitors commented on how thought-provoking the information accompanying each drawing was:

‘The balance between the information and context and the objects... it was exactly right... The small amounts that there were to read next to each picture were so beautifully written, it needs congratulating. It was just a small amount, but they really made you think’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘... it is very tempting obviously for the art historians to give you a great lecture about Saint whoever it is, and I think that can be really tough to follow... I thought that they got the balance right, and they told you just enough about which Saint it was’ Repeat exhibition attender
‘You can get lost in it because when you start looking at the pictures... you’ve got your interpretation and you look at the caption next to it you can understand what the artist was thinking and what you’re thinking as well. It’s a nice contrast’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Whilst being concise, the range of information provided was also found to be comprehensive, meeting the needs of the largely intellectually motivated audience:

‘They had videos and colour pictures, and sort of X rays and everything, they seem to have covered every possible angle’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘Some explanations were excellent and they give me details I didn’t know about’ Self developer literal response

‘Very memorable, also provided a very good historical insight into the period the artists were working in’ Self developer literal response

Quantity of information

In terms of quantity of information – and relating back to visitors’ reactions to the size of the exhibition and numbers of exhibits included – generally visitors found the amount to be just at the right level; as much as they could process:

‘It was exactly the right amount of input that one can really take ... it was comfortable to walk through, and I felt in a way like I could give my full attention to it. Had it been longer... I would have been distracted’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘I liked how extensive it was. It was much, much larger than I expected’ Visitor vox pop

‘I have been to a lot of exhibitions over the years but what struck me there was there was just so much that I couldn’t possibly look at every single drawing and so you could have been in there all day’ Visitor vox pop

There was also a common appreciation of the rare opportunity presented by the exhibition to see such a vast collection of paintings together:

‘It’s a unique experience to get all those wonderful drawings in one place - normally if you got 5 of them you’d be lucky’ Art lover literal response

‘Seeing them in front of my real eyes and being able to be so close to all of them and such a big collection that is what I think I can only do in London’ Visitor vox pop
‘There are individual favourite drawings and some really great surprises because as well as the ones that are very well known in the British Museum collection it was seeing things from the Uffizi that I would never get to see for instance the last Titian drawing’ Visitor vox pop

However, some visitors actually found the information to be too extensive. Visitors described not wanting the scope of topics covered to be reduced, but some would have preferred fewer drawings to have been included. In this way the works would have been less ‘diluted’ and each appreciated more in its own right (also explored in section 10.3):

‘I would have slimmed it down a bit... it is almost like you can have too much of a good thing and you reach saturation point. I think probably a little less of every section rather than leave one section out’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I think it was very well represented, very memorable, but... actually maybe it should be edited a little bit if there is not enough space. Edited out and leave certain works in to have more of a connection to them and an appreciation of the craftsmanship’ Visitor vox pop

As it was some visitors found they reached ‘saturation point’ and could not take any more in and some described having to work a lot harder than their usual exhibition experiences:

‘It is a very demanding exhibition... there is all this detail and it’s quite academic actually a lot of it’ Visitor vox pop

‘By the time I got to the end I felt like I’d really expended a lot of effort, which I don’t usually feel after a museum visit’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘Very hard work because of the concentration needed but absolutely wonderful’ Visitor vox pop

For these reasons, some visitors would have appreciated the opportunity to re-visit for a second viewing:

‘It was just a little bit too much to see in one go and was quite exhausting really’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘Maybe have a ticket that allows you to come back twice you know something like that because it was a lot’ Visitor vox pop
10.2 The tone of the information and language used

Visitors were extremely satisfied with the tone and language employed, with nearly 8 in 10 describing themselves as ‘very’ satisfied with this aspect of the interpretation.

The tone and language were found to be appropriately intellectual yet, for the most part, highly accessible for novices and specialists alike:

‘I think the language they use... it is quite simple. My boyfriend doesn’t know anything about it and it did make sense... the bits that it did give you were interesting enough to grab your attention’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘I only came because I was bought tickets... because it was art and I do go to art galleries... I do tend to go to the far more modern things... But it was it’s very accessible and so I did take some things away from it’ Repeat exhibition attender

There is clearly a growing appreciation amongst visitors for the Museum’s ‘style’ of curating – a style that is multilayered and both successfully informs and engages:

‘What I like about the British Museum is that they manage to bring things to the layman’s sort of perspective without dumbing it down because they make it interesting but they don’t treat you like an idiot, or like a child, they make it sort of academic enough to be interesting, but simple enough to be understandable. They’ve got the balance right’ Repeat exhibition attender
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‘I have been so familiar with the British Museum over so many years that what I do think is notable is that it has got very much better in the presentation in being explanatory rather than very specialist art historically... You are getting much better balance in actually bringing the art to life and relating it not just to the ideas of art history... but with... more of a view of what the life, society, art and culture was at the time and I thought that was well done here’ Visitor vox pop

Quotations

The concept of including large-scale quotations from the featured artists at the beginning of each section added colour to the tone of the interpretation, a personal voice that enabled visitors to feel closer to the artists:

‘I thought that was quite a sweet gesture, for this exhibition, to get some sort of flavour, some sort of mood for it, so if you read that quote you get an idea of the life of the artist and it sort of triggers some of your senses’

First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘[The quotes added] a bit of human character and reflecting on the character of the artist’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘You had the words from the Masters themselves’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

They also helped to divide the exhibition into distinct sections:

‘I found the chapters at the beginning of each section of the exhibition, I don’t know if that is what you call them you know the... big panels, and the introductions are really brilliant. You know I loved the quotes. I thought the quotes were very thought provoking’ Repeat exhibition attender
10.3 Narrative and theme

Again, the majority of visitors were ‘very’ satisfied with this aspect of the interpretation.

The actual concept of mounting an exhibition based on drawings was highly appealing to visitors – it was a rare opportunity and provided a ‘behind the scenes’ view into famous works of art:

‘Personally I think it’s more interesting to see the drawings, the working drawings. The paintings end up being quite stiff and stodgy, but the working drawings are the lively front end of the process... I expected to see that and it did not disappoint me’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘It’s passed my expectations... the sheer volume of drawings... this process of every drawing was a work of art in itself. I know they’re supposed to be sketches or drawings but they’re not, they’re complete works of art’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘Now going to experiment with white chalk. The drawings are much more exciting than the paintings’ Art lover literal response

Technical narrative

The way in which the exhibition explored artistic techniques and presented scientific research that has been used to explore the different artefacts added a new dimension to visitors’ understanding. This narrative also provided
another avenue for engagement, something that was particularly appreciated by those visitors less familiar with the art:

‘My finance who is a scientist and studied at Cambridge... he actually really enjoyed it because it actually went into the science behind drawing, because a lot of people assume it is just a scribble and it’s not, and so for him he found it brilliant because he was able to actually really engage with it which normally he is not’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘Because I am not as artistic I liked having the technical stuff there as a sort of access point for me, and to a certain extent I could have done with a little bit more just to get me going’ Repeat exhibition attender

The first section introducing the purpose of drawing and the materials employed was particularly successful in increasing engagement, with visitors learning to identify techniques within the art and applying this new knowledge to the rest of the exhibition:

‘[The Purpose of Drawing section definitely informed the rest of my visit] I sort of looked at the paintings and I then began noticing things I hadn’t been looking for before. Like how the sort of strokes of the white paint, I always presumed it was just chalk but when I looked really close it was lead white paint and also I could see the chalk medium and then how they drew over it with pencil, and then drew over it with pens, layer upon layer’ Visitor vox pop

‘I loved the bit about the paper and showing you the different pens and the silver things and I found that absolutely fascinating and I love then going on and seeing where they had highlighted and you thought back to how they’d shown you... what tools they’d used to create those’ Exhibition attender

This section also added an extra layer of contextual information, with visitors gaining a firm understanding of the working conditions of the artists and the impact of these on their work:

‘You can just go to the shop and paper’s there, and if you make a mistake throw it away or get your rubber out... to see how they worked... it was nice that they made mistakes. Because you never imagine that they would... it gives you more of an understanding of the time, like what we’ve got and what they’ve got... You think things must have been so much harder for them but still you can produce this beautiful work of art’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘Context really helps. Something as simple as the fact that paper became manufactured meant that suddenly artists were drawing more. Great.'
Really informative and gives it a foundation’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘... how precious the paper was, because I think these days it’s very easy to kind of go oh this sketch is rubbish and chucking it in the bin and starting again, but to see the way they recycled the paper and everything it was brilliant’ Repeat exhibition attender

Visitors learnt to interpret the art as a process, and through revealing the artists’ mistakes and places where they had changed their mind, they understood the journey that the artists went on:

‘It hadn’t just emerged; he had to work at it’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘For me it made the difference between drawing the noun and drawing the verb, rather than drawing as a static object that you’re looking at, made you look at the act of drawing’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘Sometimes the mistakes were as much as the finished drawing... it showed the thought processes’ Repeat exhibition attender

The comparison of the paintings with the final versions of the work was implicit in understanding this process where visitors were able to apply their new technical knowledge:

‘I did look up when I saw the Raphael sketch and the actual painting next to each other because it almost makes you part of the process’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘There was a Raphael, St. George’s the cartoon and the painting next to it, and I found that so helpful that they’d pointed out the ways in which the drawing was slightly different from the finished, and it told me who commissioned the painting and you were kind of able, well I made some sort of deductions why the face of the St. George had to be changed... why the horse had been changed slightly and for me that was... one of the best bits of the exhibition’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Visitors thus found the inclusion of the final versions of the art within the text labels very helpful in interpreting the drawings. Some visitors, however, would have liked these to have been reproduced on a larger scale:

‘It would have been nice... if they were a little bit larger... the colour images next to a drawing... if they’d been maybe a bit under A4 size you could have actually compared them properly’ Visitor vox pop
Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings at the British Museum

‘[The main message I will come away with is] the techniques they used, because you look at the finished picture and it’s awesome and you look at the sketches and it’s how any artist would work – humbling to see it’ Art lover literal response

‘Pictures of the finished oil paintings that were riveting and very nice to see. Okay we didn’t see the big paintings, but we saw a little picture of them and that to put the two together. It was a life study for a well known masterpiece and it was very interesting to see it’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

A small number of visitors were disappointed that there were not more of the final versions included within the exhibition:

‘I had a real frustration with the Renaissance. Not real frustration, but I longed to see the finished works of art. At least one, really beautiful Renaissance painting at the end would have helped me, like a real kind of treat, like a reward almost for going through, and I was a little bit disappointed that there wasn’t more... it only needed to be one beautiful Raphael or something just too sort of bring it to life I think’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘The drawings would also inspire sculpture, not just paintings... but there was only one sculpture’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Chronological and geographical approach

As identified in the previous chapter, some visitors did not find the space intuitive to navigate and were expecting more of a clear chronological direction within the narrative. For some visitors the way in which the technical narrative was overlain with a geographical approach created confusion:

‘I got about a third of the way through and then at the point where they divided it up in to Venice, Milan, Florence, I felt I got lost suddenly. I thought I was on a sort of chronological journey, and suddenly I didn’t know what journey I was on... it was my confusion on what I was being offered at that moment that made it difficult for me’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘There wasn’t a natural progression to my mind from one room to the next in terms of direction’ Visitor vox pop

‘A bit confused between technique and then the regional stuff’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife
Other visitors, however, appreciated this sophisticated approach that allowed for more flexibility in understanding the progression of the Renaissance movement:

‘It is chronological and geographical, but it is not sort of slavishly geographical and chronological. Sometimes you’ve got little deviations like when you’ve got the comparisons between an artist at the beginning of the Renaissance and at the end of the Renaissance and so I liked the comparisons’ Repeat exhibition attender

Exploring narratives further

The range of information and angles covered within the exhibition was praised by visitors, yet some had their interests piqued in specific areas and would have liked the exhibition to explore these further. For example the human side to the narrative where visitors could understand the artists’ day-to-day conditions, their personalities and motivations was particularly engaging:

‘I like the mix of humour alongside the more serious studies. So you’ve got studies of paintings, you’ve got sort of religious, humorous, day to day. You’ve got a very good mix of narrative amongst the different drawings’ Visitor vox pop

‘With the art, I was reading the captions and stuff because I want to know about the artist, like what was he thinking or what’s the expression? ... And that’s what draws you into it’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

But some visitors wanted this narrative to be expanded, detailing, for example, the relationships between the various artists and their subjects:

‘Family trees... you don’t know how these people interacted and you know in a kind of diagrammatic form I think would have been really helpful’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘There were a couple of things about Michelangelo being jealous of someone below him. I thought they could have expanded that. How do they know that?’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I think that there could be more contextualisation... the relations between artists and artists’ working life and ideas... I think that was coming through here, and it is something that I think can go further’ Visitor vox pop

Some visitors would also have liked more information on the socio-political and economic context of the art:
‘One of the things I’d like to know more about is not just the religious significance which is obviously very important, but also the fact that this is business and sort of other things that were happening’ Visitor vox pop

‘I’d have been interested in more of the politics of the time and where the artist fitted into the politics’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Whilst others would have welcomed more historical context introducing the founding concepts of the Renaissance and plotting how artistic developments from this era progressed:

‘I don’t think it was that well balanced... the fascinating thing about Renaissance is how it developed over... two centuries and you didn’t really get a sense of that development. You know they mentioned that perspective came in at one point but actually it made a huge difference when perspective came in, you didn’t really kind of grasp the idea of the Renaissance as well’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘I was quite surprised there was no mention of how the Renaissance started. What spurred it on? What were the influences on the Renaissance?’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘It would have been nice to have some information on what happened post Renaissance art, how it developed after that’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘The final panel in a very romantic kind of tone it goes on about this is what it led on to... I was actually a bit disappointed to end up in the shop because I was kind of hoping that there would be something... later on. Some Van Gogh or something. Maybe something from the Pre-Raphaelites and just showing that we are all a bit rubbish at drawing now’ Repeat exhibition attender
10.4 Films

Of those elements of the interpretation rated by survey respondents, the films had the smallest proportion of ‘very’ satisfied visitors, although still the majority. No visitors were, however, dissatisfied with this element.

The Venice and Santa Maria Novella films demonstrated the drawings’ transformation into the finished version and this proved particularly popular, allowing visitors to both be transported to magnificent buildings whilst also conveying the size of the final version:

‘That was good... just to see it come to life, and to see the artistic, the sketches sort of turning into the painting’  Repeat exhibition attender

‘Those two rooms... Brilliantly filmed... Well they panned all round the building. Then you went into the picture, then they superimposed the drawing on the picture... the size of the Santa Maria Novella, I don’t know how they filmed it, but if you’d been there it kind of blew you away. It was great!’  First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘I enjoyed the films more than anything and I enjoyed seeing how the drawings were translated into the film’  Art lover literal response

Visitors felt that the balance of audio-visual material was appropriate – it was available at various intervals throughout providing a colourful contrast to the dominant forms of interpretation and the small-scale black and white drawings:
Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings at the British Museum

'I thought that the location of the videos was good because you were just getting to a bit where you were tiring of seeing stuff on walls, and then you have a video section and that was good, so you have a break from it and you were freshened up to see some more' **First-time visitor to paid for exhibition**

'I kind of thought I am seeing enough drawings here and the screens were a nice break from the same thing... I like it when it is doing something different' **Repeat exhibition attender**

The audio-visual material did not feel intrusive, it was something that visitors could take or leave depending on their preferences, and the relatively short duration of the films meant that they were seen as highly accessible:

'They use multimedia when you want to see something you can't see in any other way, and that’s a proper use of multimedia' **First-time visitor to paid for exhibition**

'Judicious use, you know you don’t want to overdo it because you are not there to see videos; you just want a little bit of background, so nothing too laboured or lengthy' **Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife**

'They didn’t take up too much time and they added to one’s understanding of the drawings... Very much, or one’s appreciation of the drawings... They were rather clever in their like dedicated little rooms' **Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife**

Whilst it seemed the purely visual approach to the films was welcomed by the majority, some visitors thought the films should have contained more contextual information through sub-titles or narration:

‘That building, I think it’s too beautiful not to have a narration with it. Okay there was an explanation on the wall but you’ve got to see the video and I would have liked narration over that’ **First-time visitor to paid for exhibition**

‘I think maybe the films with caption or more people talking instead of just flashing images might be better and keep me watching’ **Visitor vox pop**

The footage contained within the Drawing Materials section brought the information to life, clearly demonstrating the methods employed by the artists:

‘To see the techniques, just to see it being done. You know it is like being in a workshop. It is better than just seeing a diagram step by step which can be a bit dry and it doesn’t really explain much, but to see it actually being done’ **Repeat exhibition attender**
The audiovisuals showing different images from albums were less commented on by visitors:

‘It wasn’t that memorable’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘I thought it was good because it did give you some close ups’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Whilst this element was appreciated for drawing attention to the detail of the drawings through close-ups, visitors seemed more interested in seeing the albums themselves. The physical object of the album was actually important to some visitors who may have appreciated a more ‘hands on’ approach via, for example, being able to handle replica albums:

‘What I would have liked is... the big old albums... if you would be able to do... a kind of replica print out or something where you flick through the pages’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘I like the idea that they were actually carried around and actually this was someone’s portfolio. This is what they carried with them to show but they were actually holding it in their hands’ Repeat exhibition attender

### 10.5 Free exhibition guide

The exhibition guide was used by just over half of visitors (53%). Some found that they did not actually refer to the guide within the exhibition as there was so much information to take in once inside. Instead many will have referred to the guide afterwards and for this reason some visitors may have appreciated a more comprehensive guide to the exhibition to remind them of their experience:

‘Because of the low lighting you can’t really read it very well and you give up because you’ve got all the text on the wall anyway... it’s a shame because it’s very good’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘It’s twelve pounds to get in and you observe it as much as you can. But it would be nice when you finish and when you go back you have a slightly more informative pamphlet than this. I compare it to when you go to Tate Modern, and they charge you around the same amount of money but they give you a slightly more informative booklet. So for me I’d have appreciated more information’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Given the reported difficulties experienced in navigating the space the map within the guide was found to be very useful and, as stated above, could have benefitted from being more prominent:
Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings at the British Museum

'I found the exhibition plan really helpful, only because I have a tendency to get lost in exhibitions you know and I am not quite sure where I am supposed to go next, but I found that really helpful.' Repeat exhibition attender
11 Outcomes

11.1 Impact

The chart below compares visitors’ main motivation for visiting against the main outcome they got from the exhibition experience.

Overall impact

The results indicate that there has been a small but relatively significant shift up the hierarchy, away from mainly social and intellectual motivations and towards mainly emotional and spiritual motivations.
**Ranked impact on specific motivations**

The results below demonstrate that rather than fulfilling a personal, academic or professional interest, the exhibition instead invoked stronger emotional and spiritual responses with visitors experiencing a variety of unexpected outcomes such as a feeling of going back in time, having an emotionally moving experience or feeling reflective and creatively inspired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Pre-visit</th>
<th>Post-visit</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>To stimulate my own creativity</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>+10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To reflect and contemplate</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>+12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To escape or recharge my batteries</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To gain a deeper insight into the subject</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To experience awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things or places</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be moved emotionally</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>+8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To feel a strong sense of personal connection</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To travel back in time</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>+11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To improve my own knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have a personal / academic / professional interest in the subject</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>To encourage children’s interest in history</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>To visit one of the major attractions in the region</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To spend time with other people in a nice place</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To use facilities such as shop / café / toilet / restaurant</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the results are presented in a chart, the shift up the hierarchy towards unexpected emotional and spiritual outcomes becomes clear:
Impact on future behaviour

Visitors were asked whether visiting Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings would affect the way they used the British Museum in the future. The table below shows the proportion of exhibition visitors who said they would alter their behaviour, and the actual number of visitors this translates to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More likely to...</th>
<th>% of exhib visitors</th>
<th>No. of people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visit British Museum special exhibitions</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>47,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the British Museum website</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the Prints and Drawing gallery (Room 90)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See or find out more about Fra Angelico events and activities</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>41,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the British Museum in general</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out more about the British Museum</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the Kingdom of Ife exhibition</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen the Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings exhibition has clearly boosted the Museum’s temporary exhibition legacy, with 42% of visitors stating that they are now more encouraged to visit special exhibitions at the British Museum as a result of their visit. For first-time visitors this figure rises to 56%:

‘It’s really opened my eyes because there’s a lot of exhibitions that I really should be going to and seeing’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

Visitors were also notably encouraged to visit the British Museum’s website, to find out more about the related events programme and the Museum’s Prints and Drawings department. The exhibition certainly served to raise the profile of the Museum’s Prints and Drawings department:

‘What did surprise me was that so many of those do actually belong to the British Museum’ Visitor vox pop

The profile could, however, have been raised further through, for example, sign-posting visitors to the Michelangelo painting held in Room 90:

‘Upstairs they have got a huge Michelangelo [painting] that is very big, and there wasn’t any reference to it... It seems strange that there is this like huge drawing... you kind of have to find out yourself’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife
Meaning making impact

The chart below compares how visitors expected to behave in the exhibition alongside what they actually did during their visit.

Meaning making impact

As can been seen from the chart, there was only a relatively small shift in visitors' intended behaviour and what they actually ended up doing. As the Museum’s reputation for exhibitions grows and the loyal base of repeat exhibition attenders continues to come back, visitors are increasingly knowledgeable of what to expect in terms of information levels within the exhibition, and are accurately anticipating the way in which they will absorb this information.

The most common exit mode during *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* was ‘searching’ in which visitors immerse themselves in the exhibition - 38% of respondents stated that they followed this behaviour during the exhibition.

11.2 Intellectual outcomes

Just under half of visitors (46%) arrived at the exhibition seeking mainly intellectual motivations and a slightly smaller proportion (39%) experienced intellectual outcomes as their main outcome from their visit.
Improved knowledge and understanding

The most frequently cited outcome was ‘improved my knowledge and understanding’ which 61% of visitors felt they gained from their experience. Visitors were impressed by the breadth of artists included and the overview of the Renaissance style that this created:

‘Being able to contrast different work of artists together and obviously drawings that you see from different collections [was what I liked best]... Verrocchio against Leonardo and seeing the obvious influence’ Visitor vox pop

‘It was a good education, it really was, there were so many artists that I’d never heard of’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘My view wasn’t that broad on Renaissance Art even though I love it, but this has definitely broadened it and so I came in here knowing nearly nothing and came out knowing a lot more’ Visitor vox pop

As detailed above, the technical narrative and information behind the process of drawing was very popular amongst visitors, offering a new dimension to their understanding and enriching them with tools to deepen their engagement with Renaissance art:

‘It just gives you a nice rounded perspective... behind the scenes to a certain extent and gives you a greater appreciation... going forward in looking at art like this you feel like you’ve got a bit more of the history and understand how it came forth instead of just seeing the finished whole piece’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

‘I liked how it explained just how a sketch wasn’t just a sketch it was layer upon layer of work... time, precious and real thought went into it’ Visitor vox pop

The intellectual stimulation from the exhibition was such that many visitors intended to carry out further research independently:

‘All the ones I didn’t know about I’ve got to read up on. So I might still get the catalogue’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘Because of the nature of this show, it might benefit from a reference room or a reading room at the end before the gift shop’ First-time visitor to paid for exhibition

‘They mentioned the Medici family and the sort of connection between art, money and power and so what gets done by when and who and how that influences it. And I did kind of think when I first came out I will go away and learn about that’ Repeat exhibition attender
11.3 Emotional outcomes

The exhibition attracted a highly emotionally driven audience with over one-third (36%) seeking a mainly emotional experience. In terms of visitor outcomes 44% felt that their overall experience had mainly been emotional.

Insight and awe-inspiring exhibits

The most frequently cited emotional outcomes were visitors gaining insight into the subjects (53%) and experiencing awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things (47%). Many visitors described being amazed by the beauty of the drawings and the level of skill that went into their creation:

‘[The main message I will take away with me is] simply the beauty of the work and the working of the genius minds’ [Expert literal response]

‘I was expecting it to be very well done and I was not disappointed. I was very pleased. Sometimes I just look at the painting and just try to imagine the artist sort of leaving his little pen strokes on the page. That is my imagination at work though’ [Repeat exhibition attender]

‘I think for me the two things that stood out the most was the Adoration of the Magi and the Mantegna’s, Man on a stone slab. Just drop dead gorgeous. Absolutely. They could have been drawn yesterday; they were just fabulous’ [Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife]

Personal connections and emotional reactions

Visitors also articulated an emotional response centred on the personal connection and insight gained into each artist and their work. Understanding the artists’ working conditions, motivations behind their technique and personal information intensified these reactions:

‘Looking at sketches and thinking about the people that did them. Thinking about them as real people and not just these iconic figures of art’ [Art lover literal response]

‘I just absolutely love drawings ... I much prefer it to paintings. I think you have a much more direct connection to the artist, you feel the energy, you see a mark they’ve made, and it’s so much more immediate’ [Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife]

‘Something that I have not fully appreciated before was the absolute wit brilliance and delight of Leonardo in his sketching of people with the children, the child in the cap. I mean I haven’t sort of clocked that bit of Leonardo because I find Leonardo’s great machines really boring... very
impressive but boring and to see that sort of drawing up close and personal… it’s great to see artists thinking it’s the most intimate and personal expression and it’s great to see that and be reminded of it’ Visitor vox pop

‘I think with the cartoon and the sort of immediacy and your relationship with them and suddenly feeling almost you can reach out and touch this artist and there you are seeing how he has got it wrong, and I just thought that was really excited actually, the fact that he was so human, so real’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife

Visitors were also able to gain a sense of travelling back in time, imagining what life was like for the artists in the Renaissance era:

‘It has brought the whole thing that whole 100 years from 500/600 years ago it has just brought it to life… in context. I loved it’ Visitor vox pop

‘One of the things that was very interesting about the exhibition was the fact that because it was sketches it did have more of a documentary realism as say paintings tend to be really crafted, and so it gave you a sort of more spontaneous sense of what it might have been like to be back then, something a bit more realistic than say paintings which are very formed and structured and we are more used to seeing’ Exhibition attender including Kingdom of Ife
11.4 Spiritual outcomes

A relatively small but significant proportion (8%) of visitors arrived at the exhibition seeking a mainly spiritual experience. In terms of what visitors actually got out of their visit, 11% of attenders felt that they had mainly experienced spiritual outcomes.

Creative stimulation

The most frequently cited spiritual outcome was creative stimulation which 40% of visitors felt that they gained from their experience. Many visitors felt inspired to try drawing themselves or put into practice some of the techniques they had learnt about:

‘I wanted to get back to drawing again. I haven’t been drawing for ages and it just makes me want to go and do drawing’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘I actually went on a hike the next day and you know I felt really inspired because I do a bit of bird watching and hiking and you know I actually felt really, I wanted to try some of the techniques and materials the next day when I was doing studies of birds and stuff... for me it was very inspirational’ Repeat exhibition attender

‘I am an artist myself and I really wanted to see this and it’s made me very inspired to carry on’ Visitor vox pop

‘Drawings it inspires you to pick up a pen and pencil and do what they can do... it is just that visual thing of the drawings. I think I prefer them to some of the paintings... You can see the inception ... The thought process that starts the whole thing off’ Visitor vox pop
Inside the minds of Masters: an evaluation of *Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings* at the British Museum

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