

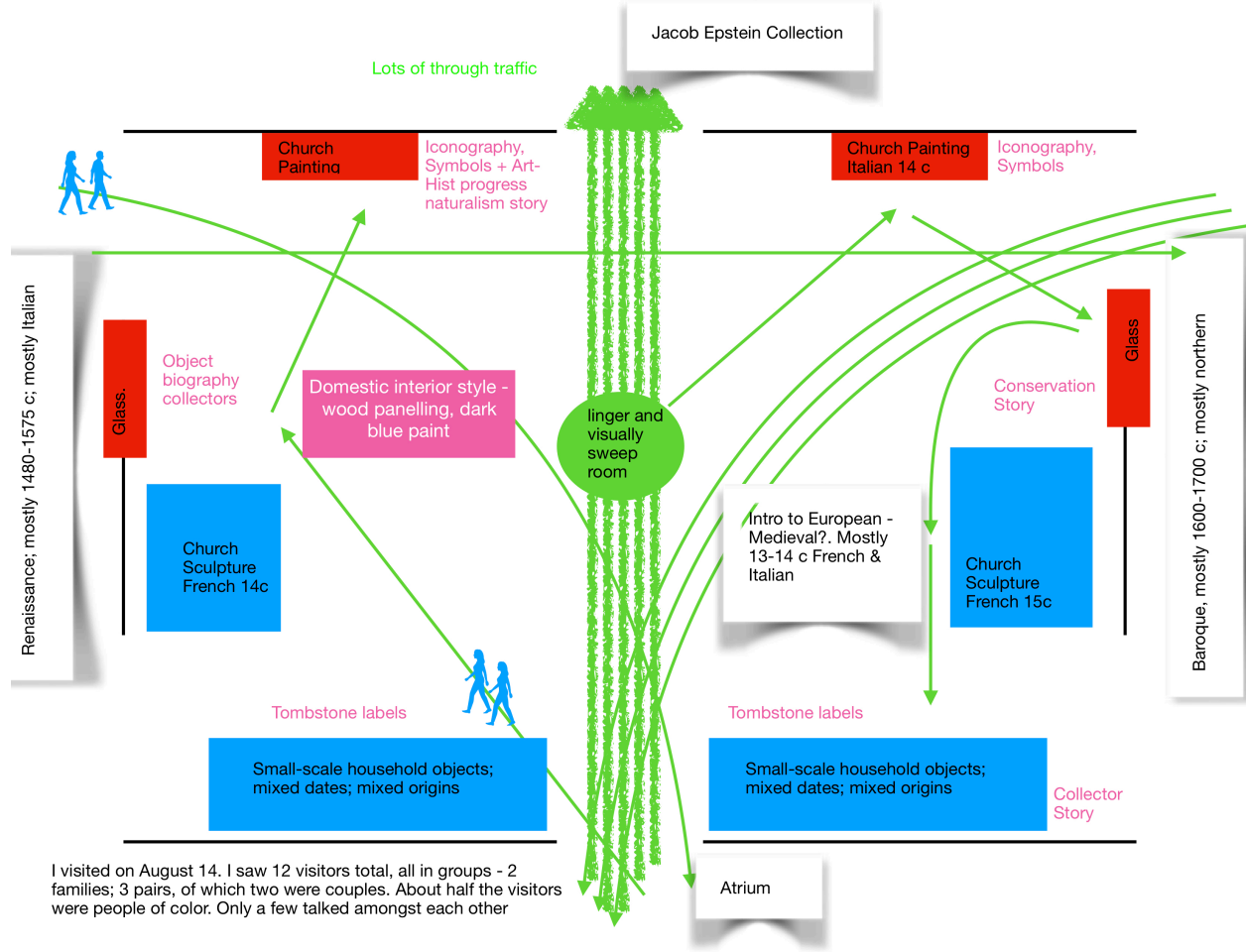
# Object Encounters at the Baltimore Museum of Art Fall 2018

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Assignment 1: Museum Map DUE 9/13

Submit on Blackboard in the appropriate area of "Assignments"

Sample map of the first room in the European Galleries at the BMA:



Plan to spend about 2 hours at the Baltimore Museum of Art during its operating hours (Wed-Sun 10am-5pm). Make note of the date and time of your visit.

This activity is an invitation to look closely at how the museum presents and interprets artworks and to think about how those choices affect visitors. You will walk through select areas of the museum (choose THREE from the list to visit, pick ONE to turn into a map).

You will consider physical layout and architecture, aspects of the museum's ambience: style, design, light, sound, and the behavior of visitors in the gallery. You are welcome to use any medium you like (physical, digital, multi-media) to express your findings. Your goal is to visually

express your observations of the site, the art interpretation and peoples' experiences – not to make an architecturally accurate plan of the museum.

Permanent or Long-Term installation Galleries (choose three).

American Art

Contemporary Art

Modern Art

European Art

African Art

Asian Art

Joseph Education Center Gallery

indicators to consider:

Size and design of the spaces // light, style, ambiance

Distribution of artworks, types of works in gallery, how they are grouped, style of installation (e.g. densely or sparsely hung?)

Organizing principles of the gallery (thematic? Chronological?)

Types of interpretation available (object labels, wall texts, other words, brochures, maps, other graphics) // key storylines

Number of visitors & time spent doing different things (maybe a bench leads people to spend more time in front of a work, or a sculpture interrupts the direct flow of visitors and forces people to stop for a minute...?)

How visitors are navigating the space (their pathway, where they spend time or don't)

How long they are spending in front of artworks and which ones. Are they reading labels?

Interacting with other people? Taking photos? Other observed behaviors?

Ultimately, the map is a visual expression of your findings at the "executive summary" level. It will help us compare choices made in different galleries of the museum and serve you as a mnemonic for what you observed.

Some advice:

Don't try to include every little detail. Focus on showing the big picture. Use words and images to your advantage – for example, you don't have to say the gallery is very sparsely hung if you space your marks for the artworks in a way that makes the point obvious.

## Visitor Survey

### References:

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill and Theano Moussouri, "Making Meaning in Art Museums 1: Visitors' Interpretive Strategies at Wolverhampton Art Gallery,"

[http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/52845/1/Making\\_meaning\\_1.pdf](http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/52845/1/Making_meaning_1.pdf)

Some questions visitors have been asking the Brooklyn Museum:

<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/ask>

Desai, P. and Thomas, A. *Cultural Diversity: Attitudes of Ethnic Minority Populations Towards Museums and Galleries*, Museums and Galleries Commission, London; and Harris Qualitative, (1998)

### Instructions

Your goal is to record 10 responses to your survey. It may take multiple tries at different times. The weekends are probably the days with the most traffic. You will need to record the responses with an audio recorder. You can check out an audio recorder from the Digital Media Center, or, with advance notice, I can reserve a recorder for you at the Center for Educational Resources. You can also use the recording app on your smartphone. Make sure to turn in all survey recordings to the instructor.

Position yourself in the gallery near the object you are researching. Approach every third person / group to enter the gallery.

### Survey (please follow this script consistently)

Hello, my name is .... and I'm a student at Johns Hopkins University. I'm doing research for a class and I'm interested in what your experience is like in this gallery of the museum. Would you mind if I ask you some questions? (Yes/No)

(If they don't mind)

I would like us to spend some time with this artwork and record your reactions to it. You can say anything you want about what you see and what you think about this artwork and this museum. There are no right or wrong answers. Anything you say will be useful for this research.

1. What comes to mind when you look at this artwork?
2. Can you explain what you mean? (and / or Can you tell me more about that? And / or Why do you think that? -> choose what feels more natural)
3. What else comes to mind when you look at this work?

4. Not everyone sees the same things in this artwork. What questions come to mind when you look at it?
5. What other things are you curious about when it comes to this artwork (or artworks more generally, or the museum)?

If they haven't read the label yet, please ask them to read it

1. What impressions of the artwork does the label give you?
2. What is it in the label that gives you those impressions?
3. What questions, if any, does the label answer for you?
4. What questions, if any, does the label raise in your mind?

"Thank you so much – to wrap up - I would like to ask you a few questions about yourself which will help me analyze my study."

Please record the responses to these in writing as well as with your audio recorder. It will make it easier to quantify your data.

1. Can I ask what year you were born?
2. Do you live in Baltimore? If yes, what neighborhood do you call home? If no, where do you live?
3. What brought you to the museum today?
4. Have you come to the Baltimore Museum of Art before? How many times? Do you have a favorite spot / gallery / artwork?
5. Did you ever study art? If yes, which art subject? How long?
6. Do you follow any publications or websites or social media on either art or museums (e.g. magazine, blog, Instagram etc...)? ....If yes, which ones? how often (e.g. regularly, occasionally)?
7. Do you watch any TV programs on art or listen to any radio shows on art? If yes, which one(s) and how often (e.g. regularly, occasionally)?
8. Have you ever worked or volunteered in a museum? If yes, which one?

## Mid-Term Oral Presentation

*The following are suggestions for how you might structure your presentation. They are not proscriptive as what you need to discuss will depend on your individual object. Remember*

- 1) You have ten minutes
  - 2) Your goal is to use this time in a way that is most useful to your project
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- A. Your object in the context of the BMA
    - a. How does the museum present it right now and what are the “friction points” in the presentation (based on: visitor survey data ; your own observations of the space / the collection context ie: other artworks that are around / design or style of the galleries / interpretive elements)
    - b. What are the potential issues in the presentation related to equity and inclusion // possible areas for thematic research
  - B. Your object in the context of academic scholarship
    - a. What are the present hot areas of research related to your artwork or related artworks – evaluate the usefulness of that work for your current thinking about the work your artwork needs to do at the BMA
  - C. Your questions / concerns

## Final Project Deliverables: Interpretive Proposal

due 12/19

**\*remember to document your sources!**

You have two choices for this interpretive plan - you may work solo or you may work in groups of between 2 and 4 students to produce a single proposal that encompasses several artworks.

You may also consult with me and any of our guests, or relevant experts at JHU at any time for help/advice. If you wish to meet with one of our guests or contact a faculty member you do not already know, please let me facilitate your contact.

Develop a plan for the BMA to interpret your work of art (or works of art) in a substantive, meaningful way that takes into account the BMA's commitment to become the most socially engaged museum in the country.

Your plan should include

1. **Rationale** - why this interpretive approach? What aspects of inclusion, equity, access and/or social justice does this approach address that is relevant for the Baltimore Museum of Art?
2. **Research and background information:**
  - a. on any historical significance or content which you are exploring
  - b. on your philosophical approach to the methods you propose
  - c. on your knowledge and study of BMA visitors
3. **Supporting case studies** that demonstrate the likely success of this approach (look to other museums or alternative art venues - you may also encounter "museum fails" that you want to include as cautionary tales)
4. **Outline of interpretive plan** that addresses **practical matters** so that there is a clear path to follow in order to make your idea a reality. Practical issues might include, for instance:
  - a. the format and medium of interpretation (reinstallation of the gallery? moving your artwork? a future exhibition? a publication whether print or web based? educational program or lecture? intervening in knowledge structures or media outside the museum like wikipedia, youtube, google cultural institute? a program? public art project? GoMobile? online catalog/emuseum? etc... etc...temporary signage? a future exhibition? a blog series or other publication of some kind?)
  - b. what interpretive elements does your idea require & what content / big idea lives in which interpretive element?
  - c. timeline, personnel required, likely effort & budgetary implications
5. Appendices with supporting data
  - a. list of works cited
  - b. relevant figures (charts, images etc..)