

An Analysis of Visitor Comment Books from Six Exhibitions at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Office of Policy and Analysis
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Introduction

This companion report to the Office of Policy and Analysis (OP&A) report, *An Analysis of Existing Data on Visitors to the Freer and Sackler Galleries* (November 2007), contains additional analysis of visitor comment books from six special exhibitions on display in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery between April 2004 and September 2007:

- 1. *Perspectives: Mei-ling Hom (9/27/05 to 3/5/06)***
- 2. *Dream Worlds: Modern Japanese Prints and Paintings from the Robert O. Muller Collection (11/6/04 to 1/2/05)***
- 3. *Cai Guo-Qiang: “Traveller: Reflection” (10/30/04 to 4/24/05)***
- 4. *Iraq and China: Ceramics, Trade and Innovation (4/4/04 to 7/17/05)***
- 5. *Perspectives: Simryn Gill (9/2/06 to 4/29/07)***
- 6. *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries (6/24/07 to 9/16/07)***

Samples of substantive comments from the six sets of visitor comment books were coded by themes and sub-themes according to their chief focus – what was at the forefront of visitors’ minds when they wrote in the comment books? The overarching thematic categories and sub-categories indicate patterns of use and how visitors are relating to and interpreting the exhibitions – in other words, “making meaning” – as well as highlight areas that visitors felt needed improvement. The thematic coding of the six exhibitions is found in Appendices 1 through 6.

Additional analysis of the six sets of exhibition comment books included looking at relative tone of comments, i.e., positive, negative, positive and negative, and neutral; relative length of comments; and the distribution of the three overarching exhibition experiences across the six exhibitions (see Table 1).¹

Table 1: Six Core Museum Experiences

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| <i>cognitive</i> | Gaining information/knowledge (Information) |
| | Enriching my understanding (Understanding) |
| <i>aesthetic</i> | Being moved by beauty (Beauty) |
| | Seeing rare/valuable/uncommon things (See rare things) |
| <i>reflective</i> | Imagining other times/places (Imagine) |
| | Reflecting on the meaning of what I'm looking at (Reflect) |

A cautionary note was reiterated throughout Volume I against drawing any conclusions based on frequencies observed in visitor comments, due to the fact that those who choose to write in comment books are not representative of the population of visitors in an exhibition. So, in looking at these data, it is important to know that **it is an analysis of comments, not an analysis of visitors**. Further, it is important to keep in mind that coding visitor comments according to perceived themes, relative tone, and types of exhibition experiences is inherently a subjective process and categorization can vary somewhat depending on the coder. Therefore, **numbers and percentages should be viewed as approximate, not precise figures**.

¹ It should be noted here that the data entry and extensive coding and analysis of the six sets of exhibition comment books, comprising a total of over 2,500 comments, could not have been accomplished without the excellent work of three Office of Policy and Analysis interns: Erin Hoppe, Yuko Ichikawa, and Bianca Yip.

Tone of Visitor Comments

Visitor comments were coded according to their tone as positive, negative, a combination of positive and negative and “zero” – comments that were neutral in tone, non-relevant graffiti-type comments, or foreign language not translated. (See Figure 1 and Table 2). The results show clearly that comments are more likely to be positive. This could be attributed in part to the “guest book effect” described in the literature (see Part III of companion report on FSG visitor data), where visitors view comment books in much the same way as guest books, and that the model of “a polite guest paying a visit” shapes the entries.

Figure 1: Tone of Visitor Comments

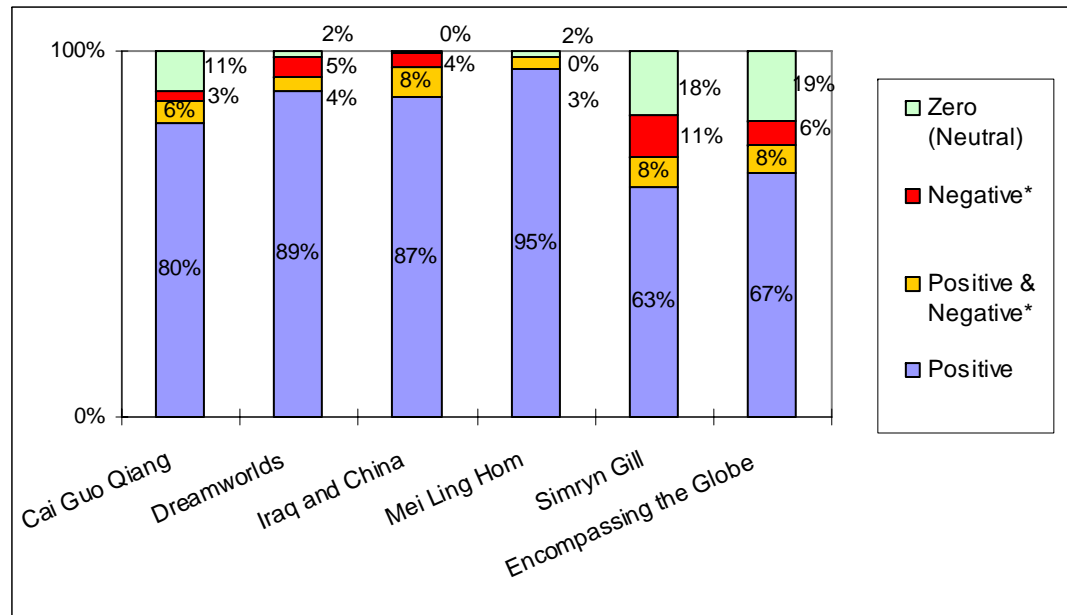


Table 2: Relative Tone and Three Exhibition Experiences

| | Cai Guo Qiang | | Dreamworlds | | Iraq and China | | Mei Ling Hom | | Simryn Gill | | Encompassing the Globe | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|--|-------|--|------|---|------|--|------|--|------|
| Number of comments | 497 | | 56 | | 206 | | 295 | | 132 | | 1,468 | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| Positive | 398 | 80% | 50 | 89% | 180 | 87% | 281 | 95% | 82 | 63% | 980 | 67% |
| Positive & Negative* | 30 | 6% | 2 | 4% | 17 | 8% | 9 | 3% | 11 | 8% | 113 | 8% |
| Negative* | 15 | 3% | 3 | 5% | 8 | 4% | 0 | 0% | 15 | 11% | 93 | 6% |
| Zero (Neutral) | 54 | 11% | 1 | 2% | 1 | 0% | 5 | 2% | 23 | 18% | 282 | 19% |
| Total | 497 | 100% | 56 | 100% | 206 | 100% | 295 | 100% | 131 | 100% | 1,468 | |
| Cognitive | 12 | 5% | 4 | 11% | 36 | 27% | 2 | 1% | 2 | 2% | 260 | 50% |
| Aesthetic | 114 | 47% | 17 | 47% | 34 | 26% | 154 | 77% | 36 | 29% | 81 | 16% |
| Reflective | 67 | 27% | 8 | 22% | 28 | 21% | 27 | 14% | 56 | 45% | 117 | 23% |
| Not coded | 51 | 21% | 7 | 19.4% | 34 | 26% | 17 | 9% | 30 | 24% | 59 | 11% |
| Total ** | 244 | 100% | 36 | 100% | 132 | 100% | 200 | 100% | 124 | 100% | 517 | 100% |
| Summary Notes | More questions about the meanings of the artworks, context. | | More positive comments (***) | | More positive comments, but some people mentioned exhibit was boring; needed more colors | | More positive comments, but a few people were disappointed about the noise which interrupted their experience | | More neutral and negative comments which pointed out the destruction of books | | More neutral comments due to foreign language not transcribed and "student graffiti" | |
| | More aesthetic and reflective experiences; reminded commenters of history, time (past and present), etc | | More aesthetic and reflective experiences, the art spoke of Japanese culture | | More cognitive experiences; commenters appreciated learning about different cultures | | More aesthetic experiences; commenters felt like they were floating with the artworks and relaxed, calm. | | More reflective experiences; commenters related to recycled materials, the cycle of nature, etc. | | More cognitive experiences; "history came alive" | |

* negative includes questions/requests for more information

** excludes short comments with length less than 10 words

*** should consider small sample size

Dominant Exhibition Experience Types

A sample of visitor comments from each of the six exhibitions that were more substantive and longer in length (i.e., 10 words or more) were coded according to the three overarching exhibition experience types – *aesthetic experiences*, where visitors indicated they were moved by the beauty of the objects or captured by their rarity or uniqueness; *reflective experiences*, where visitors recalled memories evoked by the exhibition or inferred how what they were seeing related to something else; and *cognitive experiences*, where visitors said they learned something new, had prior knowledge reinforced, or enriched their understanding. Key words occurring in the comments were used to assist in experience coding, for example:

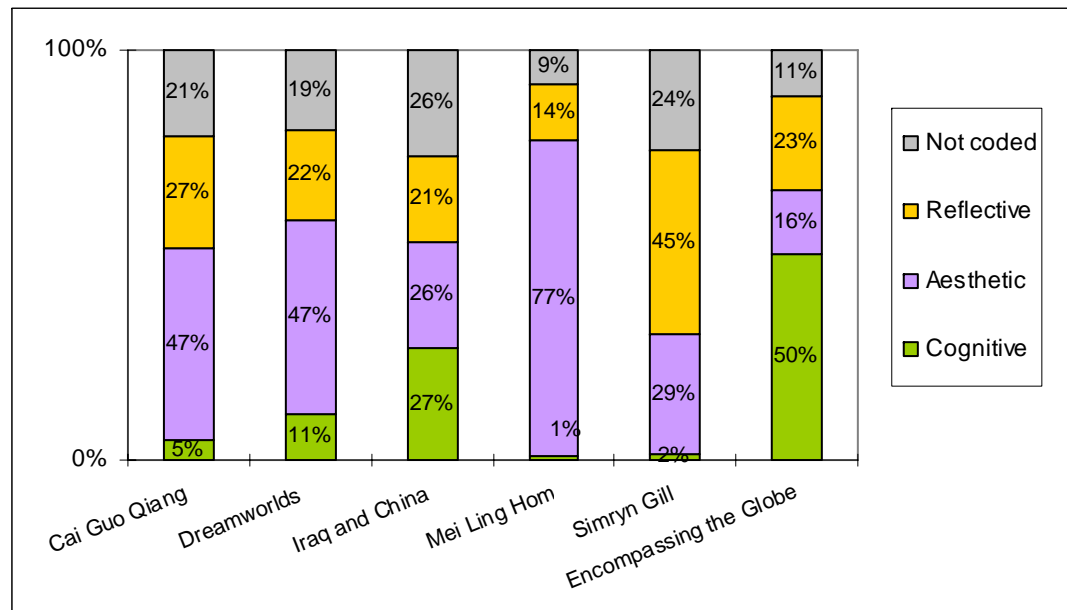
- *Cognitive*: information, history, understand, knowledge, intelligent, learn, description, study
- *Aesthetic*: beauty, beautiful, pretty, gorgeous, poetic, value (and reference to specific object, e.g., ship, glass)
- *Reflective*: remind, country, cultural, different, inspired, imagine

For some of the comments selected for the samples it was not possible to decipher any of the experience types and these were not coded. On the other hand, a number of comments indicated that visitors were having two or all of the overarching experiences – these were coded according to the perceived dominant experience type. (See Table 2 and Figure 2).

As noted previously, the analysis shows the distribution of *comments* by experience category and may or may not be related to the distribution of such experiences/judgments among the visitors. Unfortunately, none of the six exhibitions in the comment book study also have reliable data on experience distributions obtained from a survey, where a comparison could be made to see the extent to which the comment books represent or misrepresent the opinions of all visitors. Such a comparison may be possible with future exhibitions.

The results show that in three exhibitions – *Cai Guo Qiang*, *Dreamworlds*, and *Mei Ling Hom* – the main topic is aesthetics. The greater number of cognitive comments in *Iraq and China* and *Encompassing the Globe (ETG)* suggest that those exhibitions are different in some way, though the exact nature of that difference is not clear. One can surmise that it is related to the content – that *Iraq and China* and *ETG* were more traditional exhibitions in the galleries with wall panels and other text, while the other three were installation artworks in the upstairs pavilion. It is interesting that perhaps the most purposefully thought-provoking pavilion installation, *Simryn Gill*, did elicit a majority of reflective comments.

Figure 2: Exhibition Experience Types



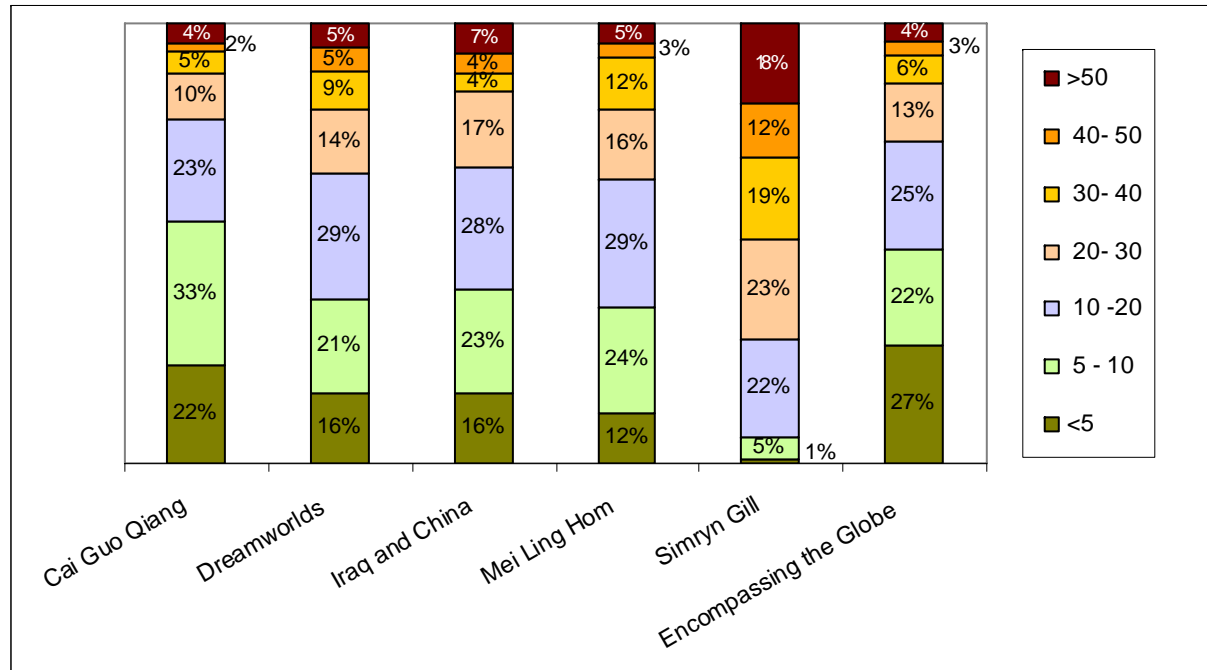
Length of Visitor Comments

Microsoft Excel will “count” words in text by numbers of spaces between text. The average length (number of words) of individual comments was recorded using this program. It was thought that if people were making significantly longer comments in one exhibition rather than another, it might reflect a different level of engagement. It is interesting to note that, on average, the length of visitor comments do *not* vary significantly across exhibitions, except for Simryn Gill. The higher average for Simryn Gill is somewhat deceptive – while the exhibition *did* have some of the longest comments, the dataset did not include many of the short “guest book” and “graffiti” type comments, thus skewing the percentage toward longer comments. (See Table 3 and Figure 3).

Table 3: Comment text length (number of words)

| | Cai Guo Qiang | | Dreamworlds | | Iraq and China | | Mei Ling Hom | | Simryn Gill | | Encompassing the Globe | |
|---------|---------------|------|-------------|------|----------------|------|--------------|------|-------------|------|------------------------|------|
| average | 15 | | 19 | | 20 | | 19 | | 34 | | 16 | |
| | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| <5 | 110 | 22% | 9 | 16% | 33 | 16% | 34 | 12% | 1 | 1% | 395 | 27% |
| 5 - 10 | 164 | 33% | 12 | 21% | 48 | 23% | 70 | 24% | 7 | 5% | 318 | 22% |
| 10 -20 | 115 | 23% | 16 | 29% | 58 | 28% | 87 | 29% | 29 | 22% | 362 | 25% |
| 20- 30 | 51 | 10% | 8 | 14% | 35 | 17% | 46 | 16% | 30 | 23% | 193 | 13% |
| 30- 40 | 25 | 5% | 5 | 9% | 9 | 4% | 35 | 12% | 25 | 19% | 94 | 6% |
| 40- 50 | 10 | 2% | 3 | 5% | 9 | 4% | 9 | 3% | 16 | 12% | 47 | 3% |
| >50 | 22 | 4% | 3 | 5% | 14 | 7% | 14 | 5% | 24 | 18% | 59 | 4% |
| total | 497 | 100% | 56 | 100% | 206 | 100% | 295 | 100% | 132 | 100% | 1,468 | 100% |

Figure 3: Comment text length (number of words)



Appendix 1: Perspectives: Mei-ling Hom

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Books

Magical and ethereal quality

- *Magical - marvelous and somewhat mystical. Very beautiful and peaceful. Love the music.*
- *It's breath-taking - I am deeply touched by your installation. The clouds hover, float, weightless, creatures speak of light.*
- *Beautiful and magical clouds. What an imagination the artist has, modern and simplistic.*
- *Mei-ling Hom, your clouds are simply amazing. Almost as if I could grasp them. Thanks.*
- *I enjoyed gazing into "Floating Mountains and Singing Clouds." It's my favorite room throughout the whole building. You've truly captured the free spirits in the sky. I admire you.*
- *My 19 month old daughter said "Wow" She loved looking up.*
- *Magical! My handicapped daughter just loved sitting under the sparkling clouds and listening to the serene music. I mentioned I was in Chao Canyon, NM keep being creative! The rest of us depend on you.*
- *The combination of cloud, flute, and Cheyenne's flowers is exquisite.*
- *As wonderful as the ceramic dolls I remember you made, these clouds and the museum are fantastic.*
- *I stopped in my tracks! I approached from the elevator after viewing the fabulous Style and Status exhibit. The contrast between the opulence and material/ political and artistic expression of power and aesthetics and the ethereal "clouds" and transcending music was breath-taking.*
- *The clouds are magical, ethereal, barely present, intangible, and peaceful.*
- *Ethereal. Transcendent. Beautiful.*
- *Very ethereal. Would love to see them with colored lights.*
- *Mysterious, ethereal, marine, heavenly.*
- *How wonderfully ethereal. I came up the back elevator and happened upon your clouds by accident - an unexpected treat - and an exquisite way to end the day here.*
- *Who knew chicken wire could be ethereal. Surprisingly lovely.*
- *The clouds are ethereal. They are full of color and movement. I love them.*
- *So ethereal, so ephemeral. Such a poem. It looks like it would evaporate and yet it remains carrying you ever upward. Many thanks.*
- *Thank you for sharing your soul. Ephemeral though the outside noise interrupted the experience. It is still easy to understand the concept as an everyday, routine person.*

Added effect of the music

- *Love the clouds, mountains, music.*
- *Eli Marshall's beautiful music brings Mei Ling Hom's clouds gently alive.*
- *Hey, good choice on using the xiao music to accompany the clouds, you know? These floating objects seem to cry out: "Motion!" And yet they are forever still... How do you reconcile their immobility? Perhaps it's better left to the viewer's imagination? "Now" - we want it to all stop for our own satisfaction...*
- *Artist has produced a most wonderful experience for the rest of us... whether floating in clouds or undersea. It is a quite worthy experience. Music adds nicely to the feeling of being elsewhere. Thank you.*
- *Mei Ling's Floating Mountains Singing Clouds is an exquisite installation and is an absolutely perfect site specific work of art. My hope is that it is a permanent installation. Eli Marshall's composition transports one with the real of the transcendent. It is rare that one finds such a perfect marriage of ideas. Thank you for the sublime experience.*
- *Didn't realize music was playing for a long time. People are just walking thru, oblivious. If there were some way to make one pause before entering this experience would be so different.*
- *Lovely - music most effective, need bench at empty end wall. Brochures excellent - might consider scattering some on benches - Music louder due to conversations which detract. Is netting sprayed to protect shine covering of central archway most effective? Most inspiring.*
- *This sneaks up on you... There is a nice duality with the transformative music.*
- *The music helps move the clouds along in your mind.*
- *I really liked your exhibit. I think it is very beautiful and unique and I like staring at it. I really also like the music that goes along with it. I think it's fitting because I think it sounds kind of eerie. The clouds remind me of spirits because I can see and imagine different figures in them.*
- *This space does not do justice to this art. Fortunately, both the forms and the music hold their own. Lovely, Lovely.*

Music – negative

- *I like the clouds and the squishy chairs, but the weird woodwind music is scaring the heck out of me. Where did you get the chairs? I want some...*
- *I loved the clouds and their installation - but I did not like the flute. I'll tell you why - it narrows the scope of the art. It says "take them very seriously!" The clouds/shapes are wonderful in their variety and meaning from "high" seriousness to humor. Had all the sounds of the room - people coming in, chattering, clothing rustling, steps, - would be a less conventional accompaniment.*

Peaceful and calming

- *I enjoyed the feeling of serenity. If you close your eyes, you can actually picture yourself on a mountaintop.*
- *I loved the flute. So relaxing. I feel high atop a mountain seeing clouds over top of me.*
- *This is my favorite room in the whole Smithsonian - The clouds/flute and (inadvertent?) the cricket song is amazing - peaceful, pure, and restorative. After last week - Katrina - how marvelous to spend time in this healing space! Thank you.*
- *It is so tranquil and relaxing. So needed in today's stressful world. Thank you for your vision.*
- *This is the most amazing, magical, and most peaceful spot in the whole museum. Whoever did this, I want to thank for making me feel like I have no worries in the world.*
- *Very calming music - the art is incredible*
- *I enjoyed the gallery very much, peaceful and quiet.*
- *I love the clouds and the museum! They're awesome! They're both peaceful.*
- *"Clouds" Best in Show, Impressive, Evocative, soothing*
- *Inspires a feeling of peace and harmony.*
- *A serene calm has been created by the clouds, mountains, and austerity of the entrance hall. The variety of shapes holds ones interest. I, for one, miss a bit of greenery in the setting and feel that it would add to and not detract from the scene as the architecture is not nature.*

Artist's technique, materials used, artistic qualities

- *What an amazing job of holding still the ever moving/changing clouds. They look so soft, how have you managed to make chicken wire soft? Wonderful technique. Well done.*
- *I love these cloud shapes, use of this simple material; the see-through quality evokes the ephemerally of clouds, how they dissolve.*
- *Creative, spiritual, innovative - Composition enhances the "Perspective" it is eerie and thought provoking and meditative.*
- *It's so easy to see past the wire and see something soft and amazing. Beautiful and easy to fall asleep under.*
- *Each hexagram had to be touched in order to make these Brille [sic] Clouds - I love the way the seams were done and the bending of each into the light fog.*
- *What a magnificent way to work with chicken wire. Thank you for creating a peaceful angelic atmosphere. My mind, body and soul were really fed in a beautiful and positive sense. Please continue your journey into creativity.*
- *The museum has beautiful art and a wonderful collection. As I sit here at the clouds, I think of how talented the artist is to make the "clouds" look fluffy and realistic using such a difficult material to work with. It's the first I've seen like it.*

- *Thanks Mei-ling for the space. It is nice to see work with simple material. Keep up the good work!*
- *I was looking for ceramics but I recognized the clouds as yours as soon as I walked into the room. I love how the clouds look different against the variety of surfaces in the room.*
- *I love the forms, the lines, the sparkle; they all seem to have their own personalities.*
- *Delicate and ephemeral, illusory, and out of grasp - like clouds. I like the gauze netting too.*
- *Your work takes me to the peaks of aesthetic rapture... No actually I love your use of form... those must have been difficult to construct.*
- *What a fabulous contribution to public space art! Thank you for this delightful, exquisite experience. I also work with chicken wire.*
- *I am a student of art in North Carolina. I did huge Cloud Paintings that are meant to be hung on the ceiling and ask the viewer to relax, lie down, and enjoy the view. It's always nice to see the way other artists use clouds and for what reasons.*
- *What a fascinating concept. It is hard to imagine the commitment of the artist to an installation of this magnitude. Wonderful. As an artist I visualize an ethereally, gently painted, billowing silk above as a sky. Lovely, lovely, installation.*
- *Ms. Hom's clouds are very evocative. They seem at odds with the granite and grey walls. A nice idea.*

Inspiration to create; poetry and drawings

- *Your work is fantastic. Your clouds are romantic. Music transporting, taking us to the mountaintops so far away - Thank you for your beauty. As a designer, I am inspired.*
- *Really lovely exhibit, I sat here waiting for the docent tour and so enjoyed contemplating the beautiful silver shapes. I'm inspired to go home and pull out my stash of chicken wire and give it a try.*
- *Steel clouds, flute music; Washington Marathon day; Calm amid the noise.*
- *As easy as/we miss/the clouds in the sky/as subtle as/ the winds/ carry them in melody unheard/ as much as/ all the wonder/ that we miss/ as easy as/ that/ the floating clouds/ come along and go*
- *Floating with the current/ riding the wind/ swimming upstream/ diving/ swooping/ resting. Without thought/ fractals/ ancient and new/ DNA and mist*
- *A new page/ A new beginning/ again, again, again/ flute cuts like a knife/ through the mist*
- *Mirroring the thoughts of night to bring the touch of day and looking so bright now forever until the brilliant end with more dancing and mirth divine in texture this dearth.*
- *Listen with me as the sky soars to music of love with heights the silver song of lights that swell within and down low giving a sweet memory today lasting thru tomorrow and always with simple heart songs of love.*

- *There is a longing for water. The wind is asking for water. They speak in whispers with the air. Through space the clouds become heavy. Those clouds and time. Send a different song.*
- *In the very origin of our existence; hearing comes before light, before sight; at the very end, light will face before voices and music; so I sit with my eyes closed, I listen then slowly open my eyes; then slowly close my eyes; the stuff dreams are made of, the stuff life is made of; "Que toda la vida es sueno, y lost suenos suenos son" This is a great and moving exhibit.*
- *Empty clouds, full heart, empty mind.*
- *Stretched, bent, pulled into new and wonderful shapes; High caught between breaths of a flute; not enough wind to move, change, or vanish.*
- *I feel like I'm in the clouds when I'm with you....*
- *(Set of drawings, made by a woman's three year old daughter of the "Perspectives" installation.)*
- *[a few lines drawn on the page] Our 2 yr old's way of saying she is inspired by your exhibition!*

Suggestions for improvement: design and presentation

- *The clouds are beautiful, but the ceiling and walls do not add to the beauty of these amazing clouds. Perhaps your work can be displayed at a location where the background resembles a sky.*
- *Yes! What about draping the ceiling or walls with a neutral or sky-like fabric?*
- *The cloud shapes are beautiful - but the background of large square blocks of the wall is intrusive - all the walls should have been covered in the gray fabric of the end wall. Therefore, the installation is incomplete.*
- *Lovely fascinating shapes - would be very interested to see them exhibited against plain walls, ceilings - without distracting lines and sharp architectural elements.*
- *I agree completely with [arrow pointing up] However, it would be even better if the walls were not a dull grey. Maybe a sky blue? With sky blue cube chairs?*
- *I think the clouds would be interesting if placed in a dark room with no background patterns (In this room the grey wall has white lines).*
- *It would be interesting to see what the piece would look like with the entire space screened off. The solid screening might serve as a second major element for clouds to bottle against. This could add an exciting interchange and might strengthen the impact.*
- *Clouds should be lower, architecture distracts from exhibit, music fits well.*
- *We think maybe the cloud netting could be used over water to simulate froth.*
- *A rock garden below with a few carefully placed bonsai would create an interesting juxtaposition of forms.*
- *Anyway you could make them drift a little?*
- *Put fish in the fish traps...*

- *Put some wire down for an example so the kids can feel it.*

Suggestions for improvement: minimize background noise

- *The work is beautiful - and so is the music. A few comments on the venue: 1) the room should be isolated from the "chit-chat" of the entry-way and the clatter of passers-by! 2) the lighting is very ineffective. 3) Because of these features the goal of the exhibition - peace and tranquility - is not achieved. 4) No fault of the artist - but of the Smithsonian (or is this "The American Way.")*
- *I like the space and the exhibit, but I wonder if the noise from the elevator and the information desk take away the contemplative nature of the work.*
- *The shapes intersect many mind-views. Unfortunately, I feel that this space with its ambient noises and distractions works against the concept - it seems more that the clouds are in a prison. A totally dark setting - or completely neutral - would work better for me. Imagine a quiet room where the viewer could lie back and gaze at the clouds and listen to the music, perhaps subtle changes occurring in the lighting over a period of time would bring more "life" to the clouds - just like the constantly changing natural light. Most distracting are the elevator chimes and the constant chatter at the information desk.*
- *The music is a nice addition, but other noises distracting. Beautiful, organic shapes, look like floating animals and sea creatures. I would have liked to see them move or sway. Clouds aren't static!*

Comparison with other art or artists

- *Very Dali-esque and that's not the Lama either or maybe it is - "In the spirit of the circle of life!"*
- *These clouds are beautiful! They remind me of a Warhol exhibit I saw in London in 1989. I am amazed at how you've managed to take metal and make it floaty.*
- *Reminds me of the fanciful animal shapes created by an artist - sorry, I don't recall his name - for a gallery at the Retretti Museum in Finland.*
- *Have you seen the "floating pillows" at the Andy Warhol museum? Similar!*
- *The chicken-wire clouds are much more interesting than the boat wreck with broken dishes. That was the stupidest thing I've seen in a long time. Keep up the good work.*
- *Much better art than the Buddha in a box.*

Memories of other times, places

- *I grew up in the mountains of Vermont and the Adirondacks and now that I call Washington home, I miss those low cloud days. Seeing your sculptures takes me back and also captures such a lovely sentiment. Thank you.*
- *Here from New Mexico where we also have ridges with clouds sitting on them, but no beautiful rooms with such as there. Thank you for the show.*

- *I too liked "the cloud art thing" I'm planning a trip to the late winter Rockies and the exhibit puts me in mind of same.*
- *A wonderful transition into a wonderful museum. The clouds touch a distant memory of a much happier life in US. Thank you.*
- *When I was a small girl, my grandmother said: It's so sad; some people look at clouds and see only clouds.*
- *Years ago I was given the name "Blue Clouds Woman" by my Native American Sisters. My favorite understandings/learnings about my name have come through children's art. One child drew and colored blue clouds - "clouds with rain in them." Another child's drawn clouds were so thick the blue sky could be seen through them. Thank you for this lovely exhibit of "see-through clouds!"*

Seeing forms in clouds; watching clouds

- *Often, as I wander outside, I see many objects in the clouds - so, here I do also, fish especially! How restful to sit and observe them.*
- *I saw my child running through the clouds as if she were an angel trapped here on Earth.*
- *See through luminous metal clouds. I always wanted to jump from cloud to cloud as a child. I know these were extremely labor intensive to create. Thanks.*
- *I find myself looking for shapes in your clouds just like I do when I look in the sky.*
- *They look like floating abstract birds. The chicken wire makes them sparkle - looks very ethereal.*
- *To me they look like human cells of life. They also look like clouds.*
- *I like these biomorphic shapes very much - could be anything from tadpoles to whales. This great hall is a good "underwater" place to show them.*
- *The cloud looks funny and it smells weird is that usual? I think the clouds are amazing because they look sort of like tadpoles and fish.*
- *They look like fishing nets in the sky trying to find flying fish... they are beautiful...*
- *They are all puzzle pieces put together. They look like ghosts.*
- *They look like beehives.*
- *I like this cloud because it look's like a fish. I even like this one because it look's like a dolphin.*
- *I saw a cloud that looked like a jet fighter.*
- *They look like sea creatures, but floating in the sky.*
- *I love the form of the clouds. One cloud looks like a fish, one looks like a bird, and one looks like a rabbit.*
- *I thought that the 'clouds' were really interesting shapes. I thought one looked like a ghost and that one looked like a whale.*
- *Reminds me of a big group of dolphins or whales.*

- *Your clouds to me look like great floating sea creatures - whales or jellyfish or huge amoebae - as seen from the bottom of the ocean.*
- *It's totally free looking and airish (if that's a word) There is one that looks kinda like a tadpole, I liked it. I could stand here for hours looking at it. How did you make it?*
- *The music and the forms remind me of the whales underwater singing their wonderful songs. Very beautiful.*
- *I like to look at clouds from airplane windows.*
- *The clouds are so beautiful and interesting. If I ever own a big house, I would love to put some of these up in the main room. Thank you for showing these.*
- *I loved it, though one of the clouds looked like a sperm. The monkeys and the pool beneath them rocked though. Snazzy.*
- *Fluffy... yet pokie/pointy/staby... They remind me of computer generated models of Sickle Cell Anemia in Red Blood Cells. Neat-o.*
- *But... where's the bunny shaped cloud?*
- *My two year old exclaims: "Clouds" "The Bubbles"*
- *Loved it. They look like flying seals!*
- *The clouds are really great, but they mostly look like sea animals not clouds.*
- *These are amazing. I think they kind of look like manatees. This is my new favorite room. They remind me of effervescent bubbles.*
- *Amazing. Like guessing what forms actual clouds take, it is fun to see what kinds of things you can see out of these. A girl says one looks like a pig.*
- *It's cold outside, but it's warm in here, and looking at the clouds makes me smile.*

Other interpretations

- *Clouds represent the endless possibilities that exist beyond reality, so many realities.*
- *The proximity of the clouds is maddening, like reality, where they look close enough to reach out and touch but always manage to elude my grasp. Perhaps if I had a stepladder I could finally touch the sky, here.*
- *Your art represents freedom, individuality, purity, constant change and light.*
- *These wired clouds evoke memories of red blood cells that are in the process of being transformed, much like the characters of "Fantastic Voyage." It's a flexible, tilting, snapshot of life as it moves toward "becoming" something in a state of dynamic transition. The shapes are beautiful. It might be interesting to add a blue sky background, or blurred background palettes that suggest wind or movement.*
- *This is a very serene and peaceful outlook on Americans with different ethnicities.*
- *The clouds are signs of giving from above. They shower us with rain to try to ease the pain the clouds a full and holds a lot of weight, wait they are beautiful from above, the clouds are 3 symbols of love.*

- *It isn't that they look like clouds: they represent clouds because I don't see the figure, I see what it represents. Shapes and figures in the mist, do you see them?*
- *No doubt your shapes are alive with the music. They are giant mystical creatures that move slowly and thoughtfully. They are perfect. Balanced. Harmonic. Peaceful.*
- *Your installation looked like spirits to me. Color forms with a definite source of movement. I found the music distracting at times.*
- *Perhaps you have trapped these clouds eternally in a tomb of granite? Yet they are happy clouds, not having to worry about their own destruction. But the price they have paid, to never feel the wind on themselves...*
- *I feel as though the clouds are garments of our own mental notes. Delightful. Thank you for sharing.*
- *I am glad people cannot sit on clouds; perhaps that is one of their beauties - that we can look, dream, and long but not touch except through our spirit. To make a cloud, as you did, must have been a wonderful sensation and gift. Thank you.*
- *The clouds are something that seem so... out of your imagination, but it's intriguing to see them face to face.*
- *It's reality in an illusion.*
- *Not evocative of clouds, too heavy for that.*

Imagine floating

- *Makes me want to float and dance! Wonderful concept! Thank you.*
- *Clouds are free. They float on the shoulders of the wind. I'd love to relax on one. So soft and comforting.*
- *They look like they want to be set free to fly over the wall into the blue beyond.*
- *We feel like floating in the clouds. These look like movement - is there a wind?*
- *Awesome works, I feel like I'm floating on clouds or I'm top of mountain in China.*
- *I feel like I would float on air. Just entering for the 1st time. The many shapes and potential shapes and beings in the clouds.*
- *It would be so fine to live in the clouds. Just like the cloud-gods in Fantasia. What fun if they all hid away when planes come through, and then flood back out again when it's safe.*
- *Like good dreams of beautiful landscapes.*
- *These clouds are still and yet my eye moves among them so the clouds now move as well.*
- *It's raining outside, but cloud forms float above me - dry inside, calm mind. Thank you.*
- *The exhibit felt light and airy. Like floating clouds leading the way. Awesome.*
- *We are floating with joy after seeing the Ottoman robes and now these clouds! Wondrous!*
- *I can float among your work... Thank you.*

- *This exhibit is very interesting the clouds are so cute I wish they were real and I was floating with them. Very nice.*

Beautiful

- *Beauty that touches the soul cannot be expressed by words; that is why there are those like yourself that touch the soul with beautiful artwork, such as your clouds.*
- *Very exotic and beautiful. And the music fits the act perfectly.*
- *These are so beautiful and peaceful, fleeting, but present. Thank you so much.*
- *Beautiful and so relaxing.*
- *The clouds were beautiful! The perfect installation for that space. Very relaxing and peaceful with the accompanying flute. People can be so creative when not waging war. Thank you.*
- *Incredibly beautiful. Thank you for making this.*
- *Beautifully crafted, transcends specificity, a gift to all of us. Thank you.*
- *Such a clever concept. Beautiful.*
- *What a beautiful piece here! Breathless! Works so well with the space.*
- *How lovely - weightless beauty.*
- *Beautiful and thought provoking.*
- *Beautiful, airy, light, imaginative.*
- *What a beautiful exhibit.*
- *Beautiful! I really feel like I'm in the clouds. Almost heavenly.*
- *Beautiful! I could stay here forever.*
- *Beautiful precious work.*
- *Beautiful, magical.*
- *Thank you for beautiful clouds.*
- *A beautiful exhibit of silver sheets.*
- *Beautiful work. We came here to see your installation. I saw your review on Washington Post yesterday. I was very happy to see more people know your art work now.*
- *Very beautiful, refreshing, crisp, clear, driving me into stillness, the spirit, strength.*
- *I don't know why, but it makes me weep. Beautiful. I loved it.*
- *My 80th Birthday, beautiful - lifted my spirits - wish the whole world was so lovely.*
- *Nice commitment - beautiful results. Very serene. Think about shadows more.*

Appendix 2: Dream Worlds: Modern Japanese Prints and Paintings from the Robert O. Muller Collection

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Books

Interest in the story of the collector, Muller

- The personal descriptions of the collector are fascinating. I hope there will be future exhibits with others of Muller's gifts for visitors to enjoy. It is true this is a sweet and exquisite gift to the nation.
- How generous of Mr. Muller to share not only his collection but also his inner most thoughts and history. Of all the gifts I've received for the holiday, this is by far the most memorable.
- I love the story of this collector, as a context for showing these beautiful prints that show a sense of elegance and balance. I'm so impressed with the skill and designs. Thank you for this. Wish it was up longer.
- Marvelous. Very interesting to learn about the collector too.
- Wonderful exhibit and so interesting to read about Muller. I hope you show many more of his prints in the years to come.
- Many thanks to Muller for his foresight and generosity. It is a spiritual expression to give up his collected works.
- Muller Collection - Wonder. Beauty. A gift. Thank you.
- Wonderful exhibit, please continue to display prints from the Muller collection for future exhibits.
- This is a magnificent show. Hopefully you make a permanent gallery showcasing the Muller collection.

Thoughts on Japan and Japanese art

- History played a huge role: Mr. Mueller bought the NY print gallery and company just a few months before Pearl Harbor. Japanese art - indeed anything Japanese - was considered unpatriotic at the time when Americans and Japanese were trying to blow each other's brains out! Yet the wonderful talents displayed here survived the war and are now highly prized! As well, the former enemies are now close allies.
- Very nice. It inspired me to expand my art from Anime to other Japanese styles. New pages in my sketchbook are filled. Go Japan.
- I am glad to see a style of Japanese art that is not anime.

Beauty, detail, and modernity of the art

- This is my 2nd visit to an exceptional show - both in its visually modern (to me) context and the exemplary [?] of the show. I would not have known about the show except for a friend (a volunteer here) who told me about it. Bravo.
- Great show! Wonderful to see more modern prints and get a chance to see a favorite art form of mine in transition.

- This work is exquisite and detailed. I can hardly dream of the level of concentration required to create such masterpieces. I also enjoy the incredibly evolved form of drawing that people have been left in this book. Madison, 13.
- Intriguingly and strongly beautiful
- I was expecting a totally different collection but I found it to be (both) technical and creative [?]. Very beautiful.
- The officers in this beautiful gallery were just as beautiful as the artwork.

Interest in the artists' techniques

- It's interesting how there are so many steps to one picture.
- I like the exhibition a lot. It was very interesting how you make the prints. I especially like the one of the bridge and how each time you add something to it there is more detail. I really liked the pictures of Japan when Robert O. Muller was on his honeymoon. The captions on them were nice and it gave lots of information on Robert. Over all I really liked the exhibition. Oh! I almost forgot. I noticed that most of the prints were of women!?!

Specific artworks

- The Japanese prints are amazingly beautiful. I especially like the ones of the woman turning into a serpent and the other fantastical prints. Simply amazing. Such rich colors.
- The soft pink-peach walls are gorgeous - a splendid idea for the background of the exhibit. Congratulations. The "Bridge" is stunning too.
- These 6 paintings amazed me, especially "The Ghost of Okiku."
- This bench is awesome! P.S. the cloth layers look cool.
- The bridge picture is good but I don't like the others.
- I like to look at the bridge.
- I like the ones with snow.

Inspired to create/write

- Delicate steel/ Pale beauties traversing time/ Embossed, lemon skin, vermilion eyes/ Gaze upon lives unexpected, resigned,/ or hopeful
- This exhibition was amazing. It has inspired me to try wood block prints myself.
- Thanks for another great art exhibit! It will help me write my paper on Japanese prints.
- This exhibit is fantastic. The prints are amazing. The prints are really inspiring. It will make a great quarterly project for my Art and Ideas class.

Evocation of personal memories

- The intricacies in the prints remind me of the intricacies of our lives. Thank you.
- I was also lucky to discover these prints in NYC at a gallery in the Explorers Club called Ronin Gallery 1975. I didn't have the money as a student then to buy any. I regret it but now we have these treasures in Washington DC. Thanks for such a

sweet gift to the Nation. I hope we will be seeing lots more Japanese Block Prints.

Suggestions for improvement

- This exhibit is quite stunning. However, a catalogue should have been written for it. Hopefully, book about Muller's bequest will be forthcoming.
- The exhibition is a profound delight and discovery. The catalogue is a grave disappointment.
- Really cool pictures! Needs more horses, though.

Thanks

- Feeling fortunate to have seen this wonderful exhibit. Many thanks.
- My sister wrote all of the text for this exhibition... Victoria Rocks.
- This place rocks!!! If this is still around, I'll bring my children here. Sam (VA - 17)
- Wonderful show, but "up" far too short a time.
- This should be a permanent gallery - thanks.
- The walls are prettier than the art work.
- Thank you for this exhibition.
- Interesting, pretty exhibit.

Appendix 3: Cai Guo-Qiang: “Traveller: Reflection”

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Books

Learning about Chinese culture/history

- *Best way to understand another culture = through contemporary art.*
- *This gallery made me think of something thousands over years. I like it! Learn a lot.*
- *An absolutely stunning and unforgettable image which in one vision sums up so much of China’s history. And the beauty of the contrast between the gleaming white porcelain and the weathered wood suggests how art accompanies time. Wonderful. Worth coming from across an ocean to see it.*
- *Beautiful display, thanks for the continued dedication of the Smithsonian to art, history, and science.*
- *I loved the ship and your museum. I think that it is neat looking at all the ancient art and learning about it. It is a great museum.*
- *Wonderful learning experience.*
- *The Asia arts museum is very impressive! This was our 1st stop among many. The ship is an impressive piece of art and history.*
- *I think the broken plates symbolize a broken past...*
- *Expressive and explorative to bring the past into the present.*
- *It was very interesting how they brought the boat up and preserved it so well. I say this is a wonderful exhibit.*

Beauty and artistic quality

- *So much power and beauty from the old, broken, rotten... reborn and honored, here.*
- *This is so beautiful. I'm not really a china lover, but this is awesome.*
- *This is one of the most extraordinary pieces I have ever seen. I love the Sackler because of the extreme care with which the shows are curated. But this piece is so moving. The broken porcelain is very moving.*
- *The fine art culture has done it again... it has turned it’s gaze to craft and has finally made Art out of it. I thought it would never happen. Thank god. Craft has been rescued from the aesthetic back water (no pun intended).*
- *Beautiful exhibit. It is always a thrill visiting the Sackler and Freer.*
- *This is astonishing - incredible! The kuan yins – wow – just beautiful.*

- *I wish I had done this. That's how I feel about artworks that touch my heart and at the same time I am glad it was possible for someone to make it. I like that it is not entirely artifact - it has another aspect which is hopeful not nostalgic loss.*
- *Can help to feel a sensation/ catharsis and overwhelming reaction towards this wonderful installation. Very poetic and filled with iconological meaning. Just like life. Thanks.*
- *This was incredible. It must have taken a very long time! You're a genius to come up with such a brilliant idea! Where did you get all that glass?!*
- *What a beautiful, mystical piece. Keep up the work of cross culture communication through art.*
- *Loved it so intense. I love it. It's so simple yet so complex.*
- *Beautiful and touching... it brought tears to my eyes and touched my soul.*
- *Intense and beautiful. Thank you.*
- *Beautiful piece of art. Especially the white against rotted brown. Astounding!*

Uniqueness and rarity

- *I really enjoyed this piece; it was very different than the other pieces in the museum.*
- *It is very rare for me to like modern art. Your art is wonderful. Great art transcends.*
- *Most interesting complement to Cai's exhibit at the Hirshhorn museum. Very unusual!*
- *Unique style unlike anything I've ever seen. I enjoyed it immensely.*
- *Wow, nothing like this in Alaska.*
- *After viewing the ancient art this is a great surprise! It is a complete change to viewing sculpture. Great piece.*
- *Very nice! This is a very interesting sculpture. It is a masterpiece for all mankind.*
- *I must say that this sculpture was very interesting.*
- *Very interesting sculpture. I've never seen anything like it*
- *So unique. The sculpture is awesome...*

Destruction and rebirth

- *Interesting juxtaposition - the destruction and then re-creation of art. Good use of recycling materials. Loved the gunpowder artwork too. Making beauty out of destructive media.*
- *I love the mixture of brokenness and wholeness - how moving that Kuan Yin has survived in at least one "incarnation."*
- *Destruction and brokenness is the beginning of rebirth.*
- *The contrast of color, texture, shape is interesting. Also, the balance of horizontal versus vertical, straight versus curved; glossy versus rough. This is contrast. Yet, the common feeling of destruction.*
- *This is awesome. However it reminds me of the destruction of culture by oppressors.*
- *The work is extremely powerful - conceptually and visually - very inspiring. Creativity out of commonly perceived "destruction" element is beautiful.*
- *In regard to comment above about resources used in "disturbing exhibit," I find this a very cheap shot where billions and billions are wasted every day on war and preparations for war.*
- *Serene and thought-provoking. The relicts of the ancient past demonstrate how little we have changed - although our powers of destruction have multiplied exponentially. The modern ceramics at the base of the monkey chain are worth the whole trip to Washington, DC.*
- *I wasn't disturbed by the broken pieces of ceramic. They were shards of an ancient Eastern civilization that under the broken boat make sense. The West (we in the US) has destroyed so much more than plates and boats. We killed children and grandmothers in Vietnam. We trampled Cambodia and Thailand. Nowadays we eat their food and feel stylish sipping chai at 'Starbucks' eating sushi like its going out of style. But we haven't a clue about respecting our elders or acting gracefully in adversity.*
- *It is inevitable to endow the ship with narrative - to tell the story of a culture in which its icons 'event[?] dawn with the ship of the cultural revolution - both are shards of a once-broken, but now renewed civilization. In this season of spring and renewal, hurry!*

Like specific object (boat)

- *I love boats, I love old boats, I love wrecked boats, so poignant art - all the hands that created it, the time that chiseled it, the dashed dreams mingling with the work of so many, what could be more human without being human? How could anyone improve on an old wreck? By adding smashed crockery, religious statues. I can't put in words into ceramics and in turn broken and discarded as has the boat? It*

is very affecting, whatever rationale. Beautiful. One question. Did the artist carefully arrange the crockery or dump it in by the bushel?

- *I love art like the boat. I do the same thing - see massive things and am determined to move them, capture them, and turn them into my art. I understand this passion.*
- *Cai - Wonderful exhibit. Love the boat - the concept, the meaning of it all.*
- *The ship was a great installation along with the video.*
- *Georgii and Vonstantin were here. They loved the ship.*
- *Nice boat, nice porcelain, nice film, nice gift.*
- *It's a great boat, we like the museum.*
- *I love the boat piece - fantastic.*
- *I've been to the majority of major museums in this country and never seen anything like your boat filled with broken dishes and statues - wonderful captivating installation.*
- *Nice exhibits. I liked the boat. It was awesome! But what is up with all the broken porcelain. The boat takes up lots of space.*
- *The big boat is really cool. The China dishes are a nice affect. I just love the boat. It's a Japanese fishing boat.*
- *The boat is very interesting. Where do you find all these artifacts and who from? There very interesting.*
- *Hi everybody, your boat is awesome. I watched the tape and saw how you got it right on.*
- *Hello! The boat is so cool man. I like the video, but I wish there was more basketball and baseball.*
- *Dude! This place is awesome! Especially the ship! It's unbelievable how they made it!*
- *I liked the boat with all the plates and statues. How many did you need to make that?*
- *Such an antique boat Great idea with the broken plates and "Kuan Yin" god statue around the book. Merry.*
- *I am not really into Asian Art, but the boat was nice. I like the broken plates.*
- *I really like the boat. I think it's the neatest part of the museum. Thank you.*
- *It makes me think of a boat you row into sea. And now it has come into the land.*
- *The boat was very cool and the porcelain is amazing. I like ImagineAsia! The Asian games are fantastic. I love the monkeys.*
- *I like the way the boat contracts with the white porcelain. It is very creative.*

- *Your ship was great. I think it is huge and has a lot of glass.*
- *Your ship was cool and I bet you had fun breaking everything.*
- *Loved the boat! Wish I could have helped break the plates.*
- *Amy and Kate love the fishing boat. Very cool exhibit.*
- *It's very nice to see the boat very nice art work.*
- *I think the boat is too old to go back in the sea.*
- *Wow I really like this boat and the china dish.*
- *I like the broken dish boat! It's awesome.*
- *They did a good job. The boat is great.*
- *The boat looks real and it got broke.*
- *Abby loves the boat from the beach.*
- *Very nice place. Beautiful boat.*
- *Beautiful - Wow. Love the boat.*
- *This is the picture of the boat.*
- *The sunken ship is really cool.*
- *Shaw liked the boat very much.*
- *Thank you for fixing the boat.*
- *I want to live on this boat.*
- *Cool boat. Good stuff here.*
- *Wow, the boat is great.*
- *Your boat is beautiful*

Like specific object (broken glass)

- *I like the shattered porcelain; it really looks like a sculpture garden. I love it!*
- *I think that this piece of art is incredible. How did this idea come up with using broken glass pieces? Just the glass itself was so beautiful. But I have to say even though this fishing boat sunk down, it still looks beautiful when it came back up.*
- *I was tempted to break the glasses into smaller pieces. Amazing creation. Peace on Earth.*
- *Kayla likes all the plates you smashed.*
- *I like the broken glass. It's cool.*
- *All of the broken glass is great.*

- *I am astonished by the display of broken dishes and statues. It's incredibly weird. Excellent.*

Like specific object (video)

- *The video is awesome - food, friends, and art! The gun powder drawings seem incredible. Thank you.*
- *I loved the video almost this was made. Excellent fun.*
- *Fascinating indeed. The video is so warm.*
- *This is a beautiful piece conceptually and visually. And the interpretive video is great. Thanks to all who worked to make this possible. A wonderful project so worth your effort and labor. Thank you.*
- *What a fantastic piece!! Love the video.*
- *The Traveler installation is impressive and thought-provoking. I would have appreciated some narration of the film. Marvelous museum.*
- *I think that this exhibition was really interesting. It was cool how it has lots of broken porcelain in it and around it. The movie on how it was found and how they had to cut it up to transport it to DC and then they put it back together. I really enjoyed it.*
- *This is an interesting gallery. The movie about the boat is great! It was fun coming here.*
- *Hello manager, I saw your video and it was really cool.*
- *It's so interesting seeing the process of the piece. I wish we could see this type of film more often.*
- *The porcelain is beautiful.*

Focus on the artist, Cai Guo-Qiang

- *I believe Cai deserves to be the artist to design the Fire of Olympic in Beijing 2008.*
- *Dear Cai Guo-Qiang - We haven't seen each other for many years - but I have been following your career and this is the most poetic collection I have seen.*
- *Great. I wanted to meet him in 1993 in Japan.*
- *Gorgeous display. I love his work and this was simply breathtaking. Guo-Qiang is so talented and unique and never fails to continually impress me.*
- *Happy to learn something about the background of Cai's work... looking forward to the next part of the saga.*

Personal interpretations relating to life and nature

- *The shipwreck brought to life what most of us can't see underwater. Thanks for all of the wonderful exhibits. Washington DC is awesome.*
- *No words are able to encompass the part of our lives, only pieces of art, layers of sand, and the feelings of our souls.*
- *Your thoughtful metaphor gives pause to thoughtful consideration of life's cycles.*
- *This is my second visit. I am still impressed with the ability of an idea to come to fruition. An idea that bonds to [count...?] in an artistic manner and one that tells a story.*
- *Noah's Art sails the China Sea, with Buddha's blessing.*
- *I appreciated being reminded of how arbitrary the things we term as 'art' or 'important' etc. really are. How do we learn about what is really permanent, important, worth honoring etc. Thank you.*
- *A thought provoking piece of art, my interpretation is (shipwreck) shell of someone's life and (china pieces) memories some broken some intact.*
- *Art is the universal language.*
- *Whatever is cracked makes room for more, so if you have a broken heart it only means you have more room to give and receive more love.*
- *Very pretty glass. It's a sunken ship and the glass seems to represent water kind of ironic and strange. They are like broken treasures or dreams that died out from the sea that stopped travelers from getting to their destination.*
- *A very interesting work (and from previous comments it appears that few people are indifferent to it - either very positive or very negative). I like the juxtaposition of the pristine white (though broken) man-made porcelain with the ancient, gnarled man-made object, the boat. In some ways it made me feel as if human effort and ingenuity in conceiving and manufacturing both the ceramics and the boat can come to naught in the face of the fury of Nature. The ceramics taken overseas to trade and the ship wrecked in a storm. Thank you for the exhibit and the museum in general, most enjoyable.*
- *What does the mass production of religious figures say about deity? It says more about the culture nothing about the deity.*

Relate piece to poetry/ literature

- *"Artifact" A artifact is the product of a successful attempt to make a purposeless, useless, beautiful thing art of a past-tensed fact. It can never be art, and never be fact." Everything is Illuminated Jonathan Safron Foes*

- *"The Vandals thoroughly destroyed all the cheap merchandise in Han's China Shop, Han exclaimed upon the discovery of the massive Avin 'What am I going to do with all this broken china...'" (Sell it to the Sackler exhibit)*
- *"Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds." Einstein.*

Relate to the ocean

- *Fabulous installation! Really is lovely and smells of the sea. I also really enjoyed the wider association with it.*
- *How very touching! Quan Yin - goddess of mercy and compassion, quenching the thirst of the dragon, the ship sailing upon her seas. Thank you.*
- *The porcelain reminds me of the white water that caps a vigorous ocean. Lot of movement - wish I had a better understanding of the symbolism.*
- *It's the ocean of a broken memory.*

Relate to people of China and Japan

- *Rural people in both China and Japan are incredibly generous to those who take an interest in their way of life. This is such an impressive project and satisfying for everyone involved. My congratulations to Mr. Cai.*
- *Very provocative work. I can see why the artist uses the word "subversive." It feels almost naughty to see broken china in an art museum. The work is a brilliant illustration of the Silk Road sea routes of antiquity. Thanks, Cai Guo-Qiang and the people of Iwaki.*
- *I'm not quite sure what the artist means. But the broken porcelain and boat to me shows the end of China/Asia's particular part in this, it evokes "carelessness", stunning.*
- *Japan was the great Asian entry into the world economy but the [... visitor trails off and doesn't finish]*
- *Very interesting piece - the Japanese crews certainly enjoyed their meals together.*
- *I enjoyed everything very much, the "gift from Iwaki" is huge! Breathtaking even!*

Relate to personal experiences/ memories

- *I'm an actor currently performing in Anna Chiz[?] at [?] Stage here in DC. The play is a metaphor on certain levels about shipwrecked lives and how uncontrollable currents sweep us into places we did not intend to travel. Your*

installation has inspired me and [?] all great art will be with me forever. Thank you.

- *This piece of art speaks to me. It helped me to realize and accept my background that helped to shape me into the person I am today. I come from a broken home, and the broken glass plates have helped me come to terms with myself. I come to see this exhibit every Wednesday because it fulfills my need for understanding thank you for this remarkable work of art.*
- *Breath-taking; Awesome; Inspirational; Eye-catching, [?] and mostly this exhibit is grabbing me by the neck to look and observe. In the end, it is the spirit that remains. This exhibit speaks to my spirit. Thanks all the artists, workmen and all those who made it possible.*
- *A unique and creative gift and quite thought-provoking. My mother was unhappy when I broke anything when I was a little girl. But art takes liberties we enjoyed the display. Great as an entrance to the Asian Collection.*
- *The broken porcelain echoes my broken soul/ The sunken ship represents my passage through life/ The fig wires buried in the wreck are the hope lost forever in the seas of time/ Run, Cai-Guo Qiang, run.*
- *Only in the US can one's personal insight be expressed without penalty of shallow minds. I was inspired and so was my five year old.*
- *The exhibit is fantastic. I immediately thought of the Holocaust though when I saw the broken glass. Don't know why.*
- *I feel as if I could leave my body behind and, as a spirit, sail this ghost ship back to its port of call.*
- *I saw a boat like this on a night dive. As the sun set the new light of the many red eyes took over.*
- *I'm a Chinese girl and I enjoy such an excellent exhibition. Thanks.*
- *I am very proud of your work as a Chinese.*
- *Is China all that cracked and broken? When next this exhibition relocates I hope it sails and is reconstructed in my town (San Diego). Local folks would admire and love it, as I do.*
- *If this is "art" I don't get it. But I enjoyed time to sit down for the video. I have a boat in my backyard that's rotten. Not art.*
- *Spectacular piece. Reminds me of my ancestors who traveled by junk to Malaysia 100 years ago.*

Imagining the story of the boat

- *Maybe the water was so high the boat couldn't reach there and it sank.*
- *Maybe the boat sank because the white stuff was too big and it sank.*

- *I think the boat sank because it was old and the people got off.*
- *Maybe they went in the ocean and they got back up with the boat.*
- *I think the ship was attacked by a terrible storm.*
- *Maybe the boat sank and they brought it here...*
- *The ship could have been attacked by pirates.*
- *I think the boat got sunk down into the sea.*
- *I think the boat was so old that it sank.*
- *I think the artist made the boat explode.*
- *A shark came along and made it sink and got broken. They brought it here because it was broken and people can look at it.*

Questions about the making of the artwork and its meaning

- *Very nice artwork. What is it's meaning? You should tell us what it is and about. We really love your artwork.*
- *Nice boat, however, what happened to the glasses? I mean what's the message? I did not get it.*
- *Very different but I don't know if it is art.*
- *Why is all that glass on the boat broken?*
- *Why did you put broken porcelain in your boat?*
- *Why are there broken pieces of glass in the boat?*
- *What is the meaning of all the broken porcelain?*
- *Why are the guanyin on the floor?*
- *Cool museum; movie about Cai-Guo-Qiang is a little confusing, where did the porcelain come from?*
- *I love the exhibition - one question... why the broken statues of the Lady of Mercy?*
- *This is a really cool museum. I like the ship but where did you get all of that china? Why did you break it all up? Otherwise what is the point of it. I think it is amazing how you did that exhibit.*
- *I like it a lot but how do the broken pieces connect to the story?*
- *Nice boat, but what's with the broken crockery? This stuff belongs at the Hirshhorn nut gallery.*
- *This was a well done exhibit... don't understand the shattered ceramic statues and plates though...*

- *Why did they cut the boat into pieces! I didn't think conservation allowed that sort of retrieval process?*
- *What is the meaning of breaking the plates, but a wonderful exhibit!*
- *The exhibit was good and the place is bigger than it seems. Why are all the plates broken and why are they all white?*
- *I really liked how the boat was put on a bed of porcelain. It was very creative. I don't quite understand why a boat from this particular fishing community was chosen. It is a very impressive exhibit to see when walking in.*
- *The excavated fishing boat was a unique idea, but may be misunderstood. For example, why exactly the Quan Yin's heads are detached. But overall, it was very breath-taking.*
- *I do not understand the titles of the pieces.*
- *What's the date of the boat?*
- *How long did it take to find the boat?*
- *How old is the boat?*
- *How many hours did it take to break the dishes?*
- *Where did you get all this glass?*

Negative reaction to artwork

- *This exhibit is very lame - why can't you at least explain the point of the broken dishware?*
- *Very disturbing exhibit, the money, manpower, time and resources it took to bring this here, leaves me very uncomfortable. In a starving world, I'm sure you could've utilized your resources a little more efficiently. How does this relate to true Asian culture? What does the broken religious figures say about the respect for deity.*
- *The image of Kuan Yin, the bodhisattva of compassion, is held in veneration by the Buddhists of the world. Why was it thought necessary to smash these images and strew them upon the floor? I am surprised that this museum does not have more respect for religious art. This installation reinforces the notion of Americans having little respect for the sensibilities of minority faiths. How sad.*
- *Impressive, but all the broken statues was, well I didn't like. I like the rest of the museum though! Maybe you all should get another/different display?*
- *We like the Sackler very much, but this Japanese fishing boat with broken porcelain is awful.*
- *A waste of taxpayers' money.*

Additional requests/ suggestions

- *This is a unique exhibit. I'm sure museum lovers would like to learn more so I recommend the following: 1) Have a map showing where Iwaki is located in Japan. You never know - tourists would be interested. 2) Have a brief explanation of the plates and other broken dishes. 3) Have a brief bio on Qiang - why did he visit Japan. What's his nationality? 4) Have a panel discussion with the Iwaki committee. Hope this helps.*
- *I would love to be able to view the boat from all angles. Perhaps it can be placed on a glass slab next time to view the underside. People love to touch things, perhaps a sample of the wood from the boat and porcelain figurine. Thanks, this was great.*
- *Need to tell more about the dishes in the boat.*
- *How old is this boat? Not enough information.*
- *Very great. Lighting could be a bit more evenly distributed, with cool blue gels over spots and floods to whiten up the ceramics.*

Museum/ facility related

- *Awesome Artwork. Disappointed we could not take any pictures.*
- *This was a great museum! But every time I got close to something the alarm went off! Still awesome though. Love the boat.*
- *This piece of art is really amazing. It's so amazing that I can't say. But maybe you should put a glass cage around it. Younger kids might hurt themselves. I live in Ct, so I don't get to see these things very much.*
- *I got shut out in a very rude way by a female security officer, though there are 20 minutes left, which is bad because it's my last day in the US.*

Appendix 4: Iraq and China: Ceramics, Trade and Innovation

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Books

Learning about different cultures and cultural exchange

- *This is an intelligent exhibition, imaginatively conceived and lucidly executed. It shows not only the breathtaking cosmopolitanism of early Abbasid Basra but also charts a key moment in material culture when Chinese and Iraqi craftsmen exerted considerable (initial) influence on manufacturing technique and aesthetic language. One complaint - a catalogue would have been wonderful.*
- *As a student of both Art History and Islam, your exhibit is a delight and an exciting learning discovery. It is truly awe-inspiring to see these elements of ancient civilizations "up close and personal." Wonderful. Thank you.*
- *I really appreciated the bowls and such in these exhibits. It was nice to learn about this distant country. I don't know very much about Iraq so it was neat to see the things they used probably everyday. Thanks.*
- *Very nice. Interesting to see how the Chinese have influenced others in their crafts. The Sackler has never been a disappointment once in all my years coming here.*
- *This is great exhibit which tells us today's world is really shaped from interaction of different cultures. But a highly cultural show is really for educated audience, I am surprised to see many nonsense, un-related comments in this book. Why people waste their time to see a museum if they are not interested to learn what they don't know.*
- *Beautiful and informative exhibit, wonderful example of global cross fertilization in art; was not aware of the extensive contribution of Iraqi potteries to the development of color, patterns and technique. Agree that a catalogue would have been nice. No electronic displays necessary.*
- *Curators, the Iraq + China exhibit is an interesting historical niche that fascinates me, we appreciate your continued exploration of such detailed, eccentric portions of history.*
- *This is my second time being at the Museum. And it seems to me that this exhibit outweighs the first. I loved the pieces on Japan and Iran. I hadn't known all the beautiful culture Iran had to offer. And being a second year Japanese student, I really appreciated the art pieces from Japan. In all, the exhibit was amazing. The Smithsonian has always been something for me to look forward to. Thank so much.*
- *I am from California and I found this exhibit fascinating. The Arabs are a truly fine people with a very interesting culture.*
- *Great and amazing to see how many very different cultures connected and influenced each others' art, customs, and dress.*

- *Thank you and continue sharing the incredible cultural aspects of one nation to another.*
- *Marvelous! Shows how Europe and earlier Iran and China, learned from each other.*
- *This place is cool. I think it is good to know about China and Iraq.*
- *Wonderful job! Kudos on the exhibit to an underrepresented culture.*
- *I learned many things about China and Iraq that I didn't know.*
- *The Islamic world has had a lot to offer to this whole world.*
- *I never knew this much about Asia, but it looks interesting.*
- *Very interesting... 2 cultures collide. I liked it.*
- *To be Asian, it's hot, very informational.*
- *Wow, I never knew that other countries have such wonderful art. I guess I am very naïve.*
- *Many still think Marco Polo discovered China! The Western world should learn more about other cultures and be more tolerant of differences. How many treasures are being destroyed in these days? For what?*
- *There's a lot of culture here.*

Art as bridge for political and cultural differences

- *An important exhibition reminding us all that art can bridge political and cultural differences especially in today's environment.*
- *Makes me want to cry that today these Iraqi city names mean attacks on innocent lives, terrorism, and controversy, suffering. Basra - place of lovely pottery, Chinese influences, striving for beauty - thanks for introducing a new perspective on these sad troubled places.*
- *Thank you for putting this exhibition on. Such exhibitions are the gateway to knowledge and understanding and the greatest tool we have to destroy, Ignorance.*
- *Wonderful. Sad that Baghdad is no longer "city of peace."*
- *Thank you for showing how much comes from Iraq, Iran, Baghdad. We owe so much to this region. Too easy to forget that as we occupy Iraq.*
- *Excellent juxtaposition. The international trade routes are so full of history, dynamism, art and cultural exchange - a timely reminder that we're all in this together.*
- *Such beautiful pieces and such a peaceful contemplative space. This little nook for reading and meditation (and thank you for the children's book How the*

Fisherman Tricked the Genie) is a thoughtful inclusion. It saddens me to think how many such artworks were destroyed in the bombing of Baghdad, Basra, and the other ancient cities of the region in recent years. Thank you for this exhibit, and for the fine, informative texts describing how Baghdad was conceived, as a hub, a nexus, a link to all the world.

- *I hugged the map. You and I are different people, but we are all linked in human history. This place makes the connection. Take that connection home.*
- *Seriously though, very interesting. It's good to see anti-Iraq prejudice isn't involved in art history - or at least not here. Keep up the good work.*
- *During this period of time, we really do need more exhibits on Iraq. Bravo.*
- *The Smithsonian Institute is actually giving the American population a chance to learn a little bit about the country they have invaded. Pleasantly surprising.*
- *Such a beautiful, thoughtful, interesting exhibit - at a time our country needs it most. Thank you for showing me a new piece of world history.*
- *Finally Iraq is recognized in History.*
- *What does Iraq have to do with China?*

Positive reaction to exhibition design and layout

- *I was completely taken by this deceptively small, modest exhibit. From the early description of Baghdad as "the city of peace" I was drawn in to the beautiful fullness of this exhibit - The way it captured a small world of clay and glaze and fit it into the big picture of trade and exchange of ideas between two cultures. I loved the quotes from poets, the map of the market place, things that further drew more into that far away time. There wasn't any thing big and flashy in the display cases but each piece radiated beautiful strength. I agree with the comments in this notebook, the page that begins "a really extraordinary presentation of innovative work..." I had my faith restored at this exhibit - and my spirit cleansed - After that horrifying hodgepodge clutter and mess of the Native American Museum.*
- *Nicely organized. The flow is the nexus of the various Arabic and Chinese traditions and technique are well illustrated in this compact but rich exhibition.*
- *A wonderful, well-organized exhibit. Not too long and not too dense. Bravo.*
- *Intelligent, well organized, beautiful show. But why no catalogue.*
- *A really extraordinary presentation of innovative work! The exhibition works intellectually and visually, a very rare combination. It also combines archaeology, scientific analysis, and history - and makes them all interesting. The Sackler and its curators are to be congratulated for their [?] taking on a difficult subject matter and making it work spectacularly.*

- *Your exhibit is wonderful - of special value are the maps that lay out everything so clearly for those of us who are less knowledgeable. Keep up the great work!*
- *The thoughtful texts and artistic arrangement of the displays are invitational to the "beholder." Insights into history, culture, art, and change in these areas are rich and varied. The aesthetic experience of viewing products of artisans who lived and created centuries ago is a rare gift. With appreciation and thanks to each person who worked to make this exhibit possible and available.*
- *A wonderful use of space and a truly magical trip through the world of Asian Art - A must see for all in Washington.*
- *Congratulations on such an informative and beautiful museum. Great use of color and light - really augments the tranquility.*
- *Great exhibit. Narratives went a long way to give context to the pieces. I enjoyed sitting and reading a bit.*
- *I love all the information you provide on the (informative) plaques.*
- *A beautiful exhibit with excellent descriptions.*
- *Really nice. Lots of color. Interesting. Need Pencils/Pens to write with. Beautiful artwork. Great descriptions.*
- *Keep it up! However is should be more books relating to the exhibition. Although the 3 books that you have here are interesting.*
- *Thank you! This is a very impressive collection and well-curated.*
- *Totally cool man. Nice stuff musta took a long time to collect.*

Beauty of Middle Eastern art

- *May these artifacts serve to remind us of the beauty of Islam today.*
- *Show more Islamic Art please! Everything here is absolutely beautiful.*
- *I am just another admirer that was left speechless by the beauty of art.*
- *The artifacts were extremely pleasing to my eyes, thanks.*
- *Your collections are a refreshing change from the usual, and really opened my eyes to the vibrant artworks and sculptures of especially the Middle East and South Asia. Fantastic job.*
- *The treasures of Iraq are wonderful. Too bad we have lost so many! And continue to lose!!*
- *I really enjoyed this exhibit. It is one of the best I've seen on Islamic artifacts.*
- *Beautiful! Worth a visit from Toronto, Canada. Thank you. May there be plenty of opportunities to return and appreciate your effort in showing the beauty of past.*

- *Woohoo for Ancient art and the impact of trade! Beautiful...*

Fascination with the objects

- *I loved it! I loved looking at all the different kinds of bottles, bowls, and other things from different cultures. It was amazing.*
- *It was a good museum! I liked the different bowls! I will definitely recommend.*
- *Hello! Lovely Exhibit. Beautiful pottery.*
- *I loved these beautiful pottery pots. Keep up the good work.*
- *Thank you for this beautiful exhibit on Iraq and China. I loved the pottery. There is one bowl that I especially enjoyed. The bowl was made by Alan Caiger-Smith, in England, 20th Century. It is red, white, and gold. It got my attention because of its vivid color, and the way the brushes were used. I also enjoyed the large maps that showed the empires and trade routes. Thank you so much providing such a wonderful exhibit. I learned a lot.*
- *Fabulous follow up to the V&A show last year (2004) across the mall! Glad I had a magnifier to see the chain stitch in the embroidery. Some pieces had interesting designs on the underside/outerside. Did not know about the Chinese technique of the convex mold. Looked for an explanation about figures in Islam and Islamic art and about Persian influence then. Kept confusing in my mind the blue "scallop" edge bowls to the apple [?] sold by L. L. Bean and the rings on lusterware to the 20th Century yellow ware. Nice ending with the English artist and the Yuan work. Keep up the wonderful comparative/cross cultural exhibits.*
- *The ceramic plates and bowls from Iraq were wonderful to see. I wish there had been a catalogue of these stunning objects to take home with me.*
- *I love the connection between Iraq and China. Also the Izhill plate from Turkey. Especially I appreciate the poetic works of the 20th Century artist Alan Caiger-Smith on "Luster." When I see "Luster," I will remember his words. Thank you for a beautiful exhibition*
- *Good exhibit. Very beautiful vases.*
- *Red glaze is fantastic. Amazing that the glass and ceramics have survived so long.*
- *Wonderful job of interpreting the artifacts - it was great to see the Chinese pieces next to the Iraqi ones, and the glass next to the ceramics. To understand the influences at work. The maps and signs really contributed to my understanding of how trade influenced the development of ceramics in different regions. The Sackler does such a good job with its exhibits, and this is another great one.*
- *Beautiful exhibit. And a gorgeous map mural up front. Loved the SOLID GOLD ewer!! Am doubtful about some of your translations... The earthenware bowl in the first display window (S1997.109) could be bearing the proverb "Amd ma la*

hawl" which means "What's going to happen...does." Also one of the supposedly signed "work" looked more like "ghibtah" to me (ELS2004.9.45a). Great art. Love it. Translate more inscriptions. But be careful!

- *Very nice, but needs a bit more pieces. I really like the map.*
- *Loved the polychrome from Basra so inspirational! Many thanks.*
- *Very awesome. The dishes and fragments are pretty. I want to come again.*
- *Ammi from London, Ontario, Canada. I liked the ship with the broken dishes and vases because it is a kind of mystery for me.*
- *I love everything here especially the dishes.*
- *I love the plates and the vases. Never change this exhibit.*

Condition/ conservation of objects

- *What a beautiful exhibit, there are so many pieces here that are in such excellent condition.*
- *It's amazing how you are able to keep artifacts intact. These artifacts can last forever. Or at least that's what it looks like.*
- *Oh that you might save the rest in this ancient nation of Iraq.*
- *These artifacts are amazing keep them intact they are beautiful.*

Concerns about looted art

- *Beautiful exhibit. I just hope that the items on display are not from what your soldiers have plundered from Iraqi Museums. It is such a shame that I have to travel through oceans and continents to learn about my culture and my ancestors' art from foreign western countries instead of having my rich cultural artifacts right in my backyard for me and future Arab or Islamic generation to see and learn from. What a pity. Maybe you can fund traveling exhibits of such content to the regions it came from so their rightful owners could at least have a glimpse. That is if you really call yourselves curators of Art and protectors of heritage.*
- *Most things here are from private collections. They are looted antiquities. In Iraq and China today, thousands of antiquities are being illegally excavated and sold to these private collectors in the US and elsewhere. This exhibit is encouraging the plunder! A Mesopotamian archaeologist.*
- *How did America acquire some of this beautiful collection of History from other regions of the globe. Has America ever thought of returning it?*

Personal connections/ reflections

- *What a Lovely place. Makes you feel proud to be an African-American that is also a part of so much history and art.*
- *What a wonderful exhibit. As a student of ceramics I truly enjoyed the displays.*
- *I'm from Iran, living in Sweden. I really enjoyed my visit of these fantastic collection of Art. I loved it.*
- *Actually, I am proud of Korean culture. But, I couldn't see many things in museums. So, I hope more Korean exhibits are in museums.*

Need more information

- *Need more info on everything. More in-depth pamphlets and printed material discussions – not just the pieces but also techniques and culture in each region discussed. Also if these items and techniques are still in use today.*
- *Nice brochure, but why don't you put a list of books (history as well as art) at the end of it?*
- *This is a wonderful and very important exhibit (Iraq and China) - I only wish there would be also a catalogue. I am thrilled that I could see it. Thank you.*
- *Wonderful show. Wish there was a catalogue.*

Suggestions for improvement

- *I think everything was great, but I agree with someone else in the notebook. It does need more things to attract a younger audience.*
- *It was very nice to see these exhibits. I was appalled at some of the things in this book. It might be helpful to have more interactive things. Thanks.*

Music

- *Your exhibit has blessed us with the chance to explore beautiful art from other cultures! Too bad these people cannot be here to see us appreciate their beautiful work! You should play native music it would make the experience GREAT!*
- *Dude I so agree with the music thing. It is so quiet in here. Yet peaceful. Awesome museum though.*
- *I believe that the exhibition is really great. Even though I haven't been to them all, from what I have seen has been great so far. So I personally believe music that goes with the specific exhibition would be delightful.*

Color

- *Needs more electronic things to get younger people's attention, and add more color, it looks drab.*

- *Nice, needs more pieces, looks blank add some color.*
- *It's great, the color of the pieces are Fantastic but could you add more pictures on the wall, you know, to add more color? Too Green! Everything's cool.*

Negative or confused reactions to exhibition

- *I think that this museum is pretty and everything, but I do not understand how Iraq's culture ties in or connects to China's culture!*
- *Seriously, is the Middle East a part of Africa or Asia? We are so confused.*
- *That is because a lot of it was religious pagan and which is really boring.*
- *Interesting but too long for my taste, and I hated all of the naked women!*
- *Kind of a weak collection if you ask me.*
- *The vases are nice, but this is boring.*

Museum/ facility related

- *Marvelous - old people (myself) could use more benches - particularly in front of large wonderful objects. The magnifying glasses were great. Thanks.*
- *Wow! This exhibit is awesome, so is the architecture of the building.*
- *It is wonderful to have the opportunity to see such beautiful objects - thank you for providing these exhibits, and for free admission.*
- *The art is amazing. I am happy I am in DC and able to experience this environment! I love Presidential Classroom for giving me this experience.*
- *Came here to learn and enjoy the exhibition. My son has a project about this extraordinary event. Was unable to read or to concentrate because someone read too loud and animated in a public place. I am working with children but also respect other's space. Thank you for this opportunity.*

Appendix 5: Perspectives: Simryn Gill

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Book

Beauty, artistic qualities

- *Exquisite. Just what I want to see- the blend of thought, art, and creative energy*
- *The spoons and peppers brought a big smile to my face for their beauty and innovation*
- *Beautiful, but the issue of light damage to these prints is silly. These are contemporary prints and can be easily reprinted if indeed they would be damaged by the exhibition*
- *Finally, an artist who convincingly and lovingly bridges the gap between concept and form in a way that retains integrity and does not stay away from aesthetics. Bravo! For not abandoning the viewer!*
- *Her 'pearls' are truly a meticulous labor of exquisite beauty. The idea to make these pearls while very laborious is pure creativity which also preserving the idea of the books themselves and the author's meaning behind them. What are you working on next?*
- *Definitely work that classifies as art - modern enough to make us raise an eyebrow and think, classic enough to take our breath away with beauty.*
- *A symphony of nature's elegance! Each picture comprises a large part of nature's sublime orchestration.*
- *Breathtaking and thought provoking juxtaposition of natural and manmade materials. Which books adorn which photos?*
- *I thought that it was a piece like I could just sit there and look at it for hours.*
- *I am currently studying your work as part of my art class at Ithaca College, NY. I am so glad I've seen the works in person as they are AMAZING. The size of "pearls" was surprising. The inclusion of significant text is very personal yet accessible to all viewers - something I loved. This was a fantastic exhibition. It was nice to view a fellow Australian's work here in the US. I look forward to seeing more when I get home to AUS!*
- *I found the exhibition exhilarating. Thought provoking and stimulating. My first thought is why don't I have one of these exquisite photographs in my house. It is so refreshing to see an artist merge a conceptual idea with meticulous execution - the photographs are authentically pleasing even before you see the text.*
- *Saw the beads at the end of the hall and was drawn to them. How amazing as I got closer. Especially enjoyed the symbolism behind the books, works as art*

Originality, innovativeness

- *No they don't - just odd words mean nothing deeper - just decorative, but intriguing in its destructiveness.*
- *It's very interesting idea to create art in nature by replacing the newspaper where it originated.*
- *How amazing to see ordinary materials to create such extraordinary visuals*
- *Surely an unusual way of 'using' books. Perhaps when Google has put all the books from the world's greatest libraries online, Ms. Gill can teach others how to reach the pages of the author - human's intellectual creativity.*
- *For jaded spirits, how refreshing. What a joy, unique and truly talented*
- *She takes 'art' and its meaning to a whole new level. I hope this exhibit inspires many struggling artists to pursue their dream - continue to be creative and think out of box with their imagination!*
- *I love the fact that the text, the literal was combined into a visual and installation aspect of art. Gill is a modern artist that plays with words and text in her work and the difference that has as a visual center, and since as an artist myself that is also interested in that play, I loved what I saw.*
- *Didn't think you could use paper to make stuff like this ~*

Use of recycled materials

- *This work points out the fact that any material can be used after its life - recycled into art depending on the artist. We need more recycled art exhibits to educate the public.*
- *In the age of 'green friendly' you have recycled in one of the most creative ways I have ever seen. The 'beads' is truly inspirational. Thanks for your expression and sharing with the rest of us*
- *I like the beads better than the photos because you get a better sense of the paperiness. The photographs are a step removed from the making of each collage and have less power.*

Personal reflections and interpretations

- *In her photography Gill seamlessly merges humanity and nature, remind us once again that nature will not accommodate us, but rather, we must accommodate nature.*
- *Beads made me think along new lines. Made me smile, and I wonder how many chili peppers or how many tables have sat before me, friends and family*

- *Forks and peppers, peppers and forks. The endless round of the spearer and the speared*
- *Putting words and meanings into nature scares me.*
- *Wow. What time you must have... I envy the thought, as an African American woman... time is always an issue. Not enough of it to do the things we love, we care about, we desire. I appreciate your love and time and yet envy it.*
- *She is very creative. The 'pearls' are patience. I can relate to why she does this. It has a beauty of smallness that some people cannot have patience to find in themselves. Maybe kids still see the world humbly like this. What is she working on next?*
- *The tree trunk with ribbons of writing strips reminds me of the ubiquitous levels of life we all must experience before we reach new heights of consciousness- spiraling away to a higher level!*
- *This is fascinating. It invokes, for me, a future where the inventions of people and the inventions of nature blend. Not, as often predicted, with nature becoming mechanized and rationalized, but rather with the mechanical and electronic becoming botanical and irrational*
- *I am really inspired by your work - by the colonialist text vs. nature, the wearing of the words we are informed by and having them weigh us down or hold them close as beauty and décor for mind and body. I also love the spiral and forked tongue-language/food/diaspora colonial cutlery and the spot fire peppers in resistance and harmony at the same time.*
- *I found Pearls and forest exciting because these artistic works marry words from books with other aspects of our human experience - nature and decorative ornaments. In our modern visual world, the role of long books seems questionable - for me both the exhibits bring out the power of words - even in small fragments and phrases. But of course the artist was also engaged with those words in the full text context. Bravo! I'm inspired.*
- *Art is not about the immortality of the artist. It is all right for the object to be organic as the artist. To convey a message and then dissolve.*
- *This room takes me back into a serene place of innocence. Truly captivating! Its amazing how beautiful nature is! I love the hidden connotations with the pages of literature mixed with the image.*
- *The forest series look like the remnants of a lost, literate civilization whose existence is now present only in the natural world. It has meaning not in itself, or in the lost civilization, but only in the mute presentations of the plants which are eternal.*
- *I love how you captured the leaves and natural materials. Often one wishes the artist would let nature express itself and not meddle with its majesty and eloquence.*

- *The wearer must feel so imbued, the forest imbued with a deeply felt awareness. For them who encounter it, even in the photos the feelings are so fresh and sharpen our wits!*
- *We animate words with our mind, breath and hands. This exhibit brings this experience to the fore in a way I had never imagined. Clever, thought provoking and oh so tactile!*
- *I loved the silverware and the chilies - connected with the concept of 'bite'? The pearls are amazing and hold weight - spiritual significance perhaps?*

Inspired to create, write poetry, and make art

- *Recycle words, reclaim fiber, language becomes nature, thought becomes things, things become art, art becomes words. Recycle words*
- *Thank you for the inspiration. I've wanted to make art from the Meese report and the Warren commission report for a few years now and was blocked - thanks for the push forward. Also as a gardener and landscape designer I really LOVE the leaves with text on them*
- *Tempered are the sounds, chaos is its chalice. Embraced tendencies of malice, we all start to become what we can never be. Enlightened!*
- *...I spotted your exhibit in a corner and stopped for a minute. It made me want to write. It made me want to create words that are beautiful enough that someday someone will rip it up and make beads of pearls. Thanks. It is inspiring. I'm interested to see how you made the beads of Che's book. The forest series was a little too literal I thought. Planting words to see how they would grow...*
- *I'm a book artist - I make handmade books that structurally and materially communicate the themes of the poems I've written. I'm very much related to altered books, of which your work seems so related but taken to an extreme. It's very important to me that people engage directly with books in a tactile way. Seeing this exhibit takes that to such a profound level. Your work is incredibly inspiring to me. I can't even begin to know what kind of effect it will have creatively.*
- *The beads - the necklaces make me want to go home and try it myself - perhaps with colored picture books! Of course I wouldn't even try to imitate Gills' art - I'm sure they would come out very different. It just looks like fun.*
- *I found it inspiring. The works are poetic and philosophical and lead to reflection and introspection. Thank you*
- *The book is a tree, but sun shines through the leaves, the rain feeds the tree and melts the book*
- *To wrap the world in words. What a wonderful whim*

- *And the word is life. To see it in nature stirs one's mind to live more both in words and in among growing things.*
- *I absolutely loved the book Pearls - I'll do that one with my 6th grade Students!*
- *Seeing Simryn Gill's work reminds me to try to look at the world around me with fresh eyes. What a gift!*

Resonance and communication with the artist

- *I want to know more about the artist. I am fascinated with her work. Gallery talk (?) with her work sometime. Meet the artist? I'll be following your work*
- *The print room evokes a peaceful state in me. When I went up close to read the words, I was hoping for something spiritual. Feel I'm in the presence of another culture - the artist beckons me in. The room has been a memorable part of my day.*
- *A poet speaks with the language of words*
- *The pearls touched me deeply - one can feel the reverence with which you handled each page and the honor you afford each word.*
- *Ms. Gill, your exquisite taste, your profound thoughts, and analytical approach are magnificent. Taking me through a never ending trip of arts. Thanks!*
- *She must be a patient woman!*
- *The artist should consider producing pearls from this book.*
- *Words, minds and people wander and now you integrate for our eyes to see - please continue - our species needs to grasp this.*
- *Books are printed on paper. Paper is made from wood. For those books printed/written on paper made from other materials (rice, papyrus), there could be a new extension of your photographic work. This is a lonely beginning; from reading some of the other comments I feel many are looking for the next step.*

Transformation, metamorphosis

- *Ancient words of wisdom work their way into the foliage of dense forests, descended from the blushing pine and plum trees just above the floor, and modern tidbits of turbulent thoughts right on a collision course between Chinese paintings and Dada drawings but instead of crashing, they simply melt into each other, transforming east and west into something new entirely*
- *Simryn is so original! Cultural pieces have so much meaning to us - and transforming the meaning with something else is a lovely example of metamorphosis. I would love her to do pearls of wisdom (quotes and ideas she holds dear)*

- *I love it! I love the beads. But I can't help feeling sorry for the books. Just a little. I know they're mass produced but a loss of books still seems like a tragedy. A small one perhaps when they find such new life*
- *I just love the concept of turning books into beads and 'planting books' to see what happens - process levels - trees make papers makes books*
- *The original way to preserve books and the printed word. How would she transition this concept to e-books? So much to think about especially on TRANSFORMATION bring us more...*
- *I noticed after a time, even commentary on art can itself be an art form. After months of praise, interpretations, and oddly irrelevant comments, even the views on Gill's art were able to create new art all on their own. What struck me about the Pearls portion of the exhibit was the alteration of atypical act of destruction into an act of creation... in a way it reminded me of some of the ripples of religious deism. I thought primarily about the martyrs of Shiva and how this was a transformation from one 'face' into another. I just hope Gill read all the books before she defiled them! Thank you for a fascinating exhibit. I wonder if one day this book could become a beautiful strand of pearls!*
- *Thoughtful connections the two-dimensional printed word transformed into three-dimensional objects beads; Books are printed marks on paper used to communicate ideas, placed in the natural environment, to meld with leaves, branches dirt and sand, a celebration of line, pattern, form, primal, and feminine. Thank you.*
- *Wonderful book works - words transform themselves into objects- like the early Gospels upstairs*
- *It's cool how you have taken words on paper and created something real with them. We often read words and create things with our imagination but you have made it practical.*
- *I was beginning to think she has transformed one art into another, but I realize she has destroyed one art form to make hers. Can you tire of seeing a picture as easy as you tire from reading?*

Layers of meaning

- *Words have never felt more natural. What an exhibit! Not only do I appreciate aesthetic creativity, but I thoroughly praise her layers of meaning - much like the glosses of STC's "Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner" you almost don't know where the layers end in the words? In the object? In the display? In the photograph? In the audience? The Questions are more important than the answers - and then there's the dialogue of this book...*
- *But the beads give books even deeper meanings and connections. Way to go!*

- *Every picture tells a story, quite literally. Meaning hidden in each fragment. Beautiful.*
- *This is one of the most incredible things I have ever seen. The lucid and contemplative necklaces speak of form and content. I thought to the extreme, but the prints from the forest scenes are still mind blowing. What transcendence to return to earth, with our craft ideas... gorgeous, inventive, amazing!*
- *I've always held great respect for the artist able to take our world and encapsulate its beauty and dynamism in something so abstract as words on a page. Taking those pages and reverting their power into the manifestations as this artist does serves the double force of the works, especially with the pairing of such universally understood stories chosen by Ms. Gill.*
- *The interplay between the text we know and the physical objects she creates from the physical book is a startling parallel out of rediscovery*

Interconnection of nature and culture

- *What a unique way to combine one of man's most natural forms of expression: speech, words and writing with nature itself*
- *Our words are part of the natural landscape, spoken or written. What a wonderful way to portray that mixture. How moving.*
- *The creation and emergence of text with the physical world is a fascinating background to explore deeper concepts and feelings of the world. Your art has really transcended our artistry to see the deeper meanings of life*
- *We discovered it's weird yet intriguing. We didn't feel anything - it was just photography yet the combination of words with nature compels us to believe there is a message in nature about our lives. We are still curious about what Gill is trying to say but on the other hand if we thought we were right about knowing what she is saying we want to know more about how the earth (forest) tells us our history.*
- *Who would have thought of this - yet now, staring in wonder and bemusement it is so obvious - the juxtaposition that was always alluded to, now mocks me with its clarity.*
- *I appreciated the marriage of human text with nature's text.*
- *Art masquerading as nature*
- *Transfiguration - all is connected in nature at its basic core - words merely echo the love the heart feels when it encounters beauty naturally. I could get lost in the Forest prints. Fusing words with plant life pulls into a fantasy world of sorts. Stories flow through the branches of trees and vines hanging from buildings. These were fantastic!*

- *Very inspiring work; cannot begin to express how powerful - for the first time I see how much text can add to a work of art instead of taking away from it. The irony of putting paper with text on it back into nature, plants is intense.*
- *An original and extremely meaningful exhibition. I can think of no other artist who so creatively works with (and apart from) nature and culture and interweaves between them*
- *This is just wonderful- the simplicity of expression, the juxtaposition with the natural world. Genius.*
- *In addition to the conceptual marriage between nature and culture, I was also struck by Gill's idea of returning paper to nature from which it originated, in the 'forest' series. Fascinating. Thank you for a most thought provoking exhibition*
- *The word and paper return from where they came except touched and arranged by the human influence, a common and here a fair exchange from how many times nature inspires us.*
- *Great, creative, multi-faceted, talented woman whose works of art almost 'blow my mind' for their diverse uniqueness and beauty. The displays helped me 'open my eyes' and observe the beauty not only in nature as I daily walk hither yon down streets, or in my forests - but equally important the everyday 'stuff used by necessity in my kitchen, etc*
- *If art is a reflection of nature, does the art transcend when it's reflected back into nature? Words fail to express... just amazing*
- *As an avid museum-goer type, I usually save the architecture and design floors of modern art museums for last. My favorite thing to see is the art we interact with all the time and 'usual' objects made 'beautiful'. This exhibit of Simryn Gill's work really exemplified that for me - art as something IN and ABOUT the world, not sequestered from it.*

Cultural exchange; cross-fertilization

- *I thought the 'forest' photographs were stunning - an elegant and profound way of reminding us how ideas - ones transported by people or books, can plant seeds, grow, and germinate in other places, organically becoming one with a place or people. Particularly interesting when considering how different Asian cultures have influenced each other through choice of texts for the 'forest' prints.*

Presentation layout and design

- *The display in this room seems very well thought out; it seems planned for the different views/perspectives that yield correlating insights to the artist's statement. Get up close. Read. Go away now. Look. Feel. Very nice*

- *What fun! The spiral with silverware and peppers is terrific. Like it flowing into the center with small butter knives. Great sense of design. The beads are an old idea with important new element - theme. Very effective.*

Comparison, juxtaposition with other art, literature, culture

- *Simryn - your work resonates with spirituality and natural order v. chaos-tension between construction and destruction - incredible attention reminds me of Ana Mendieta's "Earth Series"*
- *My first thought when walking up to the silverware peppers was that it reminded me of aboriginal art being recreated in Australia - then I read she was living there. A beautiful contemporary rendering, also reminded in some ways of Mandala.*
- *The photos reminded me of the Central American idea that there is a spirit in the plants and if you eat it, the spirit will touch you. Also, how much is discovered by looking closer.*
- *It was ironic that the Forest series was displayed just a few zigs and zags from art depicting the life of the Buddha. Buddha transcended the cycle of rebirth, while Simryn Gills' prints of printed paper on plants and trees seem to point to the futility of it.*
- *How to make beads, no seriously, now that word/books are so available, their value takes on new dimension. That this exhibit was up while samples of earliest samples of texts were displayed is a beautiful juxtaposition.*
- *Thank you for the 'forking tongues' though the resonance with 'speaking with forked tongue' is irrelevant to the piece - and since I presume it is not known in Malaysia, no wonder - but I couldn't avoid thinking that a disjunction with such an ethical but also seasonal spiral*
- *The branches remind me of Cervantes' Sancha Panza quotes*

Focus on political aspects

- *Inspiring, politically motivating, amazing to see the books she chose to exhibit as beads. Che, Ghandi, remarkable people and awesome to their impact on her art. As a South African woman and former photographer, I'm inspired to see this exhibit!*
- *Ms. Gill's work is refreshing and innovating, but I have trouble reconciling the freedom and honesty that her work evokes with her choice of including Castro in her work' scope. Fidel Castro, a dictator that has taken away freedom from so many...*
- *Che and Fidel are evil. Beware communist devils. Seek the good, the light, truth, and freedom.*

Suggestions for improvement

- *Show something that relates to kids. If you did that it would seem more interesting*
- *Original art - well done! Excellent photographs, but a little text with each other, even a little would have helped. Good exhibit, nonetheless.*
- *A lot of work indeed. I miss the collection from Sackler's own. Leave this type of work to small galleries*
- *Books are printed on paper. Paper is made from wood. For those books printed/written on paper made from other materials (rice, papyrus), there could be a new extension of your photographic work. This is a lonely beginning from reading some of the other comments I feel many are looking for the next step*
- *Innovative, distinctive, and creative, but please take off the thumb tacks. It's distracting.*
- *I would like to know more about the books/newspapers the artist tore up, about the specific stories in them and why the artist chose them.*

Issues with conceptual art

- *The problem with conceptual art is that once the viewer understands the concept the work becomes irrelevant. This problem applies to your creations as well. I was intrigued by your items but once I understood them, I moved on to other things.*
- *I don't get it. How did the trees grow with words? Trees can't read.*

Dismay with destruction of books

- *Are the necklaces meant to be worn or just displayed on the wall? I don't like the idea of destroying books to make beads; books are art too.*
- *I don't like the idea of destroying books to make paper beads. Books are sacred.*
- *Would the art lose any meaning if you created it out of old newspaper as opposed to books that were significant to their owner?*
- *I do not like the fact that she is destroying books for these 'pearls.' If you are going to buy the book and read it, don't waste it by putting it back with photos. Do something else like donate the books if you are just going to waste them like that. I am sure there are plenty of people who would gladly take these books and read them.*
- *As amazing as your pearls are, I'd rather read the book than wear it. Excellent work though.*
- *The 'pearls' as an artform are beautiful and add themselves, yet the technique, I'm not so sure of. In reading one of the descriptions of how you 'cut' across the biographical work of Gandhi, I was a bit shocked and confused as your tearing*

his book apart. Your art is beautiful and extremely detailed yet in creating it you are destroying someone else's work sadly.

- *I would like to take each of the 'beads' and restore it to its flat state, in order to reassemble the pages of the books that were used to fashion the beads. Then I would like to collate the pages and bind them back into a book so that the beads and necklaces are transformed into a readable volume*
- *Did you contemplate the meaning underlying the destruction of books? YES!*

Negative reaction to artwork

- *She works hard and the results are impressive in a pretentious way, but ultimately the effect is precocious and dumb. It's amazing how if you make something big enough, and market it expensively, you can get away with the nonsense.*
- *No good! Nature is NOT black and white! All the photos are flat*
- *I found the Gill exhibit unfortunate. After exploring the intricately wrought cultural history of Asia with the exquisite metal and statuary, I couldn't help but be moved by the profound statements of benign faith and devotion that echo so elegantly across the centuries. The Gill exhibition, in contrast, is trite, immature and demonstrates quite clearly, that the exhibitors need to re-examine their understanding of placing exhibitions in a relevant context with each other*
- *I loved the elegance of the pearls and the hyper-realism of the photos, but words in books invite the imagination into other worlds. You have shut us out by creating words buried in beads or almost unreadable on torn strips of leaves. I would prefer the content and form to be one instead of merged and neither clear form or merger. Still, the concepts are beautiful and inventive.*
- *How nice of her. Nicely designed, well coiffed, expensive camera and printing, well displayed. But... Self indulgent. Redundant. Vain. Petty. Proud. It's nice to see she has a hobby; that keeps her from bothering other people. Self conscious. Is a photo a craft project really Art? Would a person wearing those paper beads be more enlightened or beautiful, than when wearing the product of oysters? Or just spoiled? Do ants care what kind of leaves they eat? Does Art for Arts sake, just leave the initiates secluded in their own navel?*
- *What a cute hobby - not art and unemotional waste of space. Wait, let me wrap some paper around a tree and take a snapshot! Oh!*
- *Perhaps you ought to simply sit beneath a tree, rather than write on them.*
- *The lady either liked to chop up books, or had WAY too much time on her hands (or both). Either way, now I can maybe get a necklace for my mum and she can wear her favorite novel!*

Appendix 6: *Encompassing the Globe: Portugal and the World in the 16th and 17th Centuries:*

Coding of Themes and Sub-themes in Visitor Comment Books

Education

- *Unbelievable! What an incredible exhibit. Possibly the most beautiful and educational one I've ever seen. Congratulations!*
- *Excellent exhibit! I enjoyed it very much. Thanks to the Smithsonian for the educational experience.*
- *I am learning SO much. Portugal has never been a country that I would associate with ALL of these explorations. Fascinating.*
- *I didn't know the Portuguese brought Christianity to Japan and [that] there were martyrs in the 1600s.*
- *Great exhibit – explains the influence of Christianity in the expeditions of the Portuguese very well.*
- *I didn't realize that Portugal's explorations had been so extensive and so early. Fascinating. Thank you! Fabulous tapestries!*
- *I hadn't realized that Portugal was competing with Venice over the spice trade. And that they contributed with visual knowledge of the world rather than just considering how they upped their own riches.*
- *I learned that the Portuguese traded with the Germans. And that they traded African artifacts.*
- *They were everywhere – Burma and Far East. Left marks and signs of their presence.*
- *Wonderful exhibit! Beautifully staged, well written text. Having just made a short visit to Lisbon, this greatly expanded what I recently learned.*
- *I enjoyed this exhibit very much. A great unique collection! Already having a degree in History and being Portuguese, this expanded my knowledge!*
- *Traveled to Portugal this year and learned much about the Portuguese explorations. This was just icing on the cake. Thanks!*
- *I thoroughly enjoyed the exhibit on Portugal's legacy. I thought that I had a good understanding of the Portuguese takeover of the seas. However, seeing the real legacy of pictures left behind was very informative. I was glad that there were pictures of Japanese samurai from the Tokugawa Shogunate as well as Chinese sculptures of the Madonna showing Portugal's influence. The exhibit's very creative.*

- *Great exhibit, wonderful objects! We are going to Portugal next week, but feel we have already seen some of its wonders. And yes, it does provide useful context.*
- *We learned a lot about Portugal's role in the world and were able to see just how far its influence spread. The artwork is also very original*
- *I did not realize the extent of Portugal's global reach and their influence on so many cultures. I never knew they were in Sierra Leone and Japan.*
- *It refreshed my memory of the prominence of Portugal in navigation and exploration, especially their function as the "trail blazer" of ocean exploration. Thank you!*
- *Portuguese influence went further than I know, across continents and centuries.*
- *This exhibit taught me a lot of different and unique things I didn't know and understand about Portugal's legacy! My reaction from this exhibit was all the time awesomeness. I loved it and keep up the job. A lot of people should know about the whole world instead of what around them. Thanks again.*
- *The exhibit was amazing. You get to really understand why Portugal was once the most powerful place. The exhibit has beautiful work and so much detail.*
- *I was taught in school about Portuguese explorers of geographic coasts and ocean voyages of discovery, but I had no idea how the rest of Romanxian Europe went so far with art and "exotica" or the role of religious missionizing that turned into crass commercial trade in the products, fauna, flora and slaves from Africa, Asia – or how the Dutch, Spanish and Brits duplicated the Portuguese colonial empire.*
- *I'm Brazilian and learned a lot in school, however, I learned a lot here today too! Thanks for such a fabulous and interesting exhibit.*
- *Such pretty and nice things to have in Portugal, Brazil, Indian Ocean, Africa etc. I work here and learning and reading things I never knew. Good exhibition!*
- *Thanks to all the lenders, curators, and other staff who enabled you to piece together a coherent narrative explaining previously disputed fragments of knowledge – at least to me!*
- *I loved it! This exhibition expanded my knowledge about the "new world"/Brazil/Portugal/Africa! Thanks!*
- *I agree with all the appreciative comments in previous pages. The maps and globes were fascinating – their accuracy surprised me. Also, now I know where Goa is.*
- *I've never seen FUMIE before in Japan so I'm surprise to learn that Tokyo National Museum has such FUMIE collections.*
- *A fine exhibition with many surprises for me, such as the Omani fortress. Thanks.*

- *Excellent exhibition. I teach a course on Europe - East Asian interaction in the 16th and 17th centuries and your exhibit has given me new insight and resources, Thanks.*
- *Fantastic! Thank you! We knew a lot but this expanded our understanding enormously! This is a once in a lifetime collection.*
- *First we learned about the British in the Americas. Then we found the Spanish and French were all over America before the British. Now it seems the Portuguese were far more traveled and influential than the rest. US School books lack so much of this history.*
- *It is easier to see that Portugal was just as important as Spain in re-directing the European view towards accepting new ideas.*
- *For the first time, I learned of the breadth of Portugal's legacy. The items are stunning!*
- *I have a better understanding of the advantages of having more land (Spain) vs. developing parts, trade, and strategic goals (Portugal).*
- *Very impressive exhibit – excellent explanations, good selection of religious, political, symbolic objects. I especially enjoyed learning about the cultural and scientific advances that Portugal helped spread around the world.*
- *Magnificent. I read the catalogue cover to cover before I came. It completely changed my perception of Portugal's contribution to global expansion. Thank you.*
- *Muito obrigado. I learned a lot about the challenges they faced building bridges to the mutual understanding of different cultures.*
- *The African Portuguese sculptures were a revelation - a total surprise. The whole exhibit was wonderful and changed by picture of the world, especially on the 17th century.*
- *This is a great exhibit. Very educational. I am a professor of Spanish and Portuguese. I am glad that you have done all of the research to present the Portuguese contribution to the world.*
- *Thank you for this important exhibit. It is instructional and presents aspects of Portugal's rich legacy in the world little understood in the U.S. Thank you.*
- *Greatly contributed to my knowledge of Portuguese exploration and raw materials, fantastic sophistication of the areas they conquered. Excellent collection of pieces! Thanks!*
- *Definitely yes!!! Much improved my knowledge of Portugal's place in the early modern world - rich culture, brave sailors and a world view leveler than others.*
- *I am assured Spain opened the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Was fascinated to learn it was Portugal. And in so many ways, from the sharing of geography, exotic animals and Christianity. This will be Portugal's legacy*

- *Beautiful exhibition! Although I knew of the Portuguese presence in Brazil, I had no idea of their influence in other parts of the world. Muita linda essa esposicao!*
- *The more I see, the more surprised I am at how I think of Spain, England, and Holland as the major imperial players and traders, with Portugal seeming to be the one losing to each of the other three. So this exhibit is very thought-provoking.*

History came alive

- *The Portugal exhibit helped me learn more about the history of the world.*
- *Dazzling exhibit – all the many things I have read, heard about history and culture of Portugal come together.*
- *I was in Portugal several times and had the impression of a great civilization in decay. The fruits of the legacy are here displayed. Thank you for a real taste and sense of history.*
- *The power and breadth of the Portuguese empire is awe inspiring. The objects tied to life and time of European luminaries add another layer to understanding the wonder of the times. Thank you.*
- *Interesting to see the world viewpoint in maps—so Euro Centric... also experienced an expansion of information in actually seeing things I've read of but not had a chance to actually see the physical manifestations. Such a gift!*
- *The exhibit really brought me to Portugal with the explorers and it was an awesome exhibit, thanks!*
- *I remember listening about this in some school 40 years ago. This exhibit brings it to life! Very well done. Enjoyed it. PS – it would be interesting to see pictures of what these places look like today!*
- *Excellent presentation of history. My understanding of how the western world globalized was much enhanced.*
- *An awesome compilation thoughtfully presented and as informative as a college history course. One disappointment: How come no art from the empire of Prester John aka the Akand of Swat?*
- *An amazingly exotic exhibit. It really awakens one's imagination regarding 15th and 16th maritime history, shipbuilders, adventurers, ideas...*
- *It was an enjoyable experience! I have studied the history of Portugal before with consideration and so, to come to this exhibit was like seeing part of history come alive again. A great pleasure.*
- *A lot of these names and artifacts I learned about in History, so it was cool seeing this stuff up close!!*
- *Why on earth is this amazing “teaching opportunity” only available during the summer months when students will never see it along with instruction? Too bad*

because it is perfect for everyone who must teach world history. Couldn't this be extended into the school year?

- *To comprehend what we have seen from our history books was an amazing experience here in this museum. Thank you for giving us such an opportunity!*
- *What a spectacular exhibit! As a Portuguese American it was worth the stop from Providence to see this Portuguese influence in so many exotic places. To think of such a small seafaring nation sending out explorers, missionaries and traders to such far off lands in trying caravels is amazing. Too bad the exhibit is not here during the school year so students could see history come alive in so many continents and far off places. What courage, stamina! And adventurous people these men were!*
- *Fantastic exhibit! We learned as schoolchildren about the great explorers and the continents they visited. But history came alive here! Thank you for assembling and displaying this wonderful collection.*
- *Truly outstanding collections. This brings to life the history of Portugal's legacy. I did not realize how they educated Europe.*
- *A very rich, colourful and important exhibition that opens the mind and makes you think about the part of a once vast and powerful nation. Thank you, looking forward to similar exhibition for nations such as France, Greece or Italy.*

Tribute to Portugal

- *Fantastic exhibit. I'm very happy to see Portugal contribution to world history and civilization finally put on display in the US. In such a well depicted manner.*
- *Finally Portugal is getting the attention it deserves in the history of world trade and exploration. Great job!*
- *Good job - I think that Portugal is often left out of our knowledge of the exploration of the New World chapter.*
- *One of the finest exhibitions in many years! A well merited tribute to Portugal in the age of Discovery. A sheer delight.*
- *Excellent. We enjoyed tremendously. What the Portuguese did was the most important step in knowing the world. They, even the NY Times said, invented the Internet!*
- *It takes an exhibit like this to appreciate the big picture. Portugal had such an immense influence in relation to its physical size. It was even interesting to the two 13 year old boys with me!! Thanks, obrigado. Domo*
- *Fantastico! Portugal and its discoverers gave the world to the world. Look now for the already known proof that Columbus/Colon was Portuguese. Look at www.colombo.bz and read the book by Manuel da Silva Rosa.*

- *Portugal and its contributions are often left out of our history classes, it was nice to learn more about that fascinating country and its impact.*
- *Portugal has contributed to our world in ways that I had not imagined. For such a small in size country it's large in influence and style.*
- *What a pleasure to see this expo dedicated to the Portuguese discoveries and their important contributions to the knowledge of the 15th and 16th centuries cultures.*
- *Wonderful! The exhibit offered a fresh- and too often overlooked- images of the scope of Portuguese exploration and its cultural impact. Thank you!*
- *No other country ever got near the intelligence and the courage of Portugal and its people. People in the United States think that everything started in Jamestown. No, no, no, they were here because of the Portuguese. Lets stop thinking that the United States and Great Britain have the answer to everything. It all started with Valent people that believed in GOD.*
- *For decades I have dreamed that someone would give Portugal its due as one of the primary contributors to the expansion of knowledge, and hence modernism and world progress. Yours' a spectacular contribution to that recognition.*
- *7 years indeed. Without taking merit from others, it is clear that the Portuguese were the 1st globalizers. It certainly took more than cannons to attain that, certainly political skills, but above any, capacity to trade. Great exhibition!*
- *Understanding of Portugal as a dynasty. The intricacies of the royal tapestries artifacts etc. is impressive. The attempt to make the globes of the earth. To embrace the world as Portugal knows it is a wonder.*
- *Well-designed exhibition detailing the Portuguese era of exploration, discovery and conquest, highlighted by maps and incomparable objects. Nice to see Portugal receive more recognition for fueling the age of discovery.*
- *The Portuguese did not place religion over science - that was their wisdom.*
- *Great to be reminded of Portugal's role in gathering treasures around the world that formed Kunstkammers. These Smithsonian museums owe much to that legacy.*
- *Viewing all of these artifacts, maps, paintings, etc. has allowed me to have a greater understanding of Portugal's influence on the world. Although I am of Portuguese decent and know that they were great navigators, I never knew their legacy was this phenomenal. Portugal should promote their history with more passion.*
- *About time someone showed that the Portuguese really did "Rule the Waves!" For a period of time!!! Very good.*
- *An excellent, comprehensive exhibit that has to be seen more than once. Portugal is almost a forgotten nation to Americans and this exhibit should change that for people fortunate enough to see it*

- *As a person who is very educated on Spain's legacy, it was nice to see Portugal's side.*
- *Extremely well done - a great view of the Portuguese contribution to a more global world!*
- *No surprise here - the surprise rests in the world's ignorance of Portugal's influence.*
- *Thank you for presenting this amazing exhibit about a county which is often overlooked in the US. Now I want to visit!*
- *The Portuguese exhibit was impressive, well presented on Portuguese culture and society. Much of Portuguese culture has been forgotten in past centuries. This exhibit brings new life. I wish this exhibit could travel all around America. Beautifully well done.*
- *The Portuguese were so adventurous, outward looking, and accomplished a new world (literally) with their explorations. Come back! We need more benches throughout exhibit.*

Cultural exchange and cross-fertilization; globalization

- *I have heard many wonderful things about the Freer and Sackler, and am very happy to finally get the opportunity to visit. The organization and ideas behind this exhibit are a wonderful, refreshing change from art museums which focus more on the art than on the cultures and history which the works represent. Portugal's contributions to global exploration and cultural exchange are often overlooked as Spain, England and others were greater colonial powers. It is fascinating to see an exhibit which pulls together Portuguese involvement in Asia, Africa, and the Americas into a single series of thematic displays. This exhibit truly shows the connections between different parts of the world in this period, and shows us that learning and cultural exchanges, very positive things, came along with the colonialism and mercantilism which are so stigmatized today. Thank you.*
- *The expo shows the immense contribution of the Portuguese to make the world less compartmentalized. A small country with very little help from military force was able to bring together parts of the world in many continents: America, Africa, Asia, amazing.*
- *Excellent exhibit. Especially enlightening in the era of global connectedness we currently experience – Portugal, so tiny a nation, had such a vast impact.*
- *Very good exhibition, illustrating the cultural exchanges that resulted from the first sustained exploration in our (all too) human history. Grew up in Java and in Brazil, have visited Belarus, Lisbon, and the Algarve, where the first fishing boats left off to explore the coast of Africa and established trade relationships in culture as well as in goods. Growing up, I sensed an underlying connection but couldn't tell what it was. This exhibit pulled my experiences closer together for me.*

- *To see all the cultural sharing from the ages is incredible. Amazing collection and range of people and materials. Loved it!*
- *The interconnections of culture and civilizations are in pristine glory in these artworks and artifacts!*
- *The creativity of cultures around the world to incorporate values and art forms of indigenous with invaders was astounding. Celebrate our diversity not our need for power!*
- *A spectacular exhibition. I learned that globalization started way back in the 16th century, not by the Internet and the U.S. economy in the 20th century.*
- *Because they established few permanent colonies, we tend to forget the influence of the Portuguese on European exploration that expanded European knowledge of the shape of the world and its cultures. I enjoyed seeing this evolution, especially in the maps. The legacy lives on in my Indian-American colleague, raised in Boa as a Christian.*
- *The exhibit, along with the outstanding seminar on Portugal and [?] Persia opened up a whole new vista for me on the way in which Islamic culture reached the Iberian Peninsula even after the expansion of the “Moors” in 1492. Remnants of that culture persist in Spain and Portugal up to the present day and it has been fascinating for me to see a wholly unexpected conduct which brought these diverse and exotic influences to Iberia at such a late period of history. Thank you!*
- *Seems to me it's not Portugal legacy; it's the legacy of the peoples of many parts of the world.*
- *The exhibit demonstrates the consolidation of many of the world's cultures through Portugal's explorations – beautifully done! Thank you.*
- *Beautiful exhibit; remarkably well done and selection of objects that highlighted well the culturally rich exchange. Job well done. Thank you.*
- *Having visited many of these places (Cava, Malacca, Indonesia, Portugal, etc.) it was lovely to have them connected all in one exhibit.*
- *Terrific! We've lived in Portugal, Angola and Brazil and loved seeing even more than had imagined the Portuguese being involved in! Thanks.*
- *A wonderful exhibition. I visited Portugal last year but this display gave it a real perspective. I never imagined the globalization and slave trade.*
- *This exhibit taught me how other people live different and the way they can be different. Too much walking but I liked a lot. Keep on doing what you're doing; it is a really great museum. Thank you.*
- *African art is exquisite! The exhibition is a global marvel*
- *Wonderful exhibition! I love how the curators encourage visitors to wander among the different lands where the Portuguese inhabited. Very creative and comprehensive. Parabens!*

- *A lovely exhibit. It's amazing how much knowledge was gathered and how vital Asia was to Europe.*
- *Fantastic intersection of the globe—great idea for an exhibition.*
- *I know that the Portuguese were formidable conquerors. The exhibit confirmed my knowledge and made me aware of the interconnectedness of Africa and Malia.*
- *I was fascinated by the Chinese style Madonna. It's interesting how similar Catholic and Oriental styles are.*
- *It is nice to see the cross pollination of culture between India and Portugal. Enjoyed very much. Good Show.*
- *The exhibit is excellent. It does a great job illustrating the changes in world view over time. Informative!*
- *The intermingling of the various cultures and interpretation of religious, indigenous, simple, and ornate is so impressive.*
- *There is so much to know about the world and various cultures. I appreciate this exhibit for giving me a bit more insight.*
- *Yes this exhibit was very helpful and pretty. I think it's really important that people learn about this amazing country which brought culture, religion, trade, and other to other cultures and countries.*
- *I found it very interesting particularly to see how other cultures interpreted and represented Europeans.*
- *A good example of globalization...cultures influence each other, though some got destroyed in the process.*
- *This is a magnificent exhibition which represents the golden age of Portugal. Charles Buxer would have been proud of this collection of artifacts. I was more impressed by the Chinese, Japanese, and Indian influence on the Portuguese.*
- *The use of materials in creative ways and the converging influences of Christianity, exotic imagery, and European utilitarian themes has created a robust collection of art. This exhibit was very educational!*
- *Last year I learned how African slaves and the people (natives) of Central and South America combined their music into Latin music. This time I'm learning about the influences all these countries had on each other. It's enlightening, fascinating, and just plain GREAT!! Great job everyone!!!*
- *A fascinating display of European interactions with other continents, including the reactions of non-Europeans. Too bad it does not include marvelous Japanese netsuke depicting Portuguese. (I have viewed these elsewhere.) The Mughal and African sections are especially rewarding. Well done!!*

Linkage of Trade and Art

- *Trade can easily promote foreign cultures and understanding of different ways of life on earth. Pace e bene.*
- *The exhibition beautifully illustrates the links between the practical nature of trade and the objects of art which it produces. I am continually being astounded by the craftsmanship as I walk through!*
- *I knew Portugal had a vast trade system, but I never imagined that it was so diverse. I really enjoyed seeing how culture changed with the arrival of materials/designs from different areas.*
- *A fascinating look at the interaction of cultures. Beautifully installed. Layout a little awkward, would have liked to have seen more (any?) influence on Portuguese and European art – incorporating other artistic styles, not just objects. How interesting to note the economic/trade influence as a driving force of cultural exchange. A lesson for us?*
- *The hunt for the riches of the exotic East has a long history in Europe which continues to the present day. Mining the East for its treasures is a thread throughout European politics/society.*
- *Wow – this exhibit reminds me that travel and knowledge always have been part of the human quest. I loved the painting of the marketplace in Lisbon with people of different races and social standing depicted.*
- *Very beautiful exhibit. Very interesting art pieces. I enjoyed seeing how artisans from different countries left their own touches, sometimes on the same piece.*
- *Amazing exhibit. Spectacular craftsmanship from so many lands. And what daring sailors and explorers!*
- *I never knew that Portugal was so ornate. It was very rich in its art, which showed Oriental influences. I didn't know they depicted angels with Roman gods! I loved the exhibit on globes. I am a map collector. Well done!*
- *It reminded me of our western bias – that this trade and these riches were well underway before Europeans “discovered” them. Also important as a reminder of the intellectual backdrop for Michelangelo, et al. and Renaissance thinking.*

Treatment of Colonialism and Slavery

- *This exhibit downplays what Portugal did in regards to slavery where it truly ruined people's lives. The religious sculptures are beautiful, but the exhibit doesn't truly show all of Portugal's past in the 16th-18th century. Nice exhibit overall!*
- *Beautifully planned, researched and executed. Unlike many exhibits that only display beautiful objects, this one made clear the cultural context. The exhibit did, however, slight the very dark side of Portugal's legacy, especially in Africa.*

- *A great exhibit with fascinating artifacts; also very well organized. However, it is very noticeable that there is absolutely no mention of the slave trade and the integral, leading role that Portugal played in the movement of humans from Africa to the New World.*
- *Beautiful artifacts, very rich and informative. But, no references to the ugly side of European expansion -- slavery, disease, death, colonization. The history's whitewashed.*
- *Portuguese conquest and rule were ruthless and brutal. There is no mention of the suffering it caused to people around the world. There is much Portugal needs to be ashamed of and apologize for.*
- *The exhibition highlighted the trade of goods and missionary work accomplished during this period, but negative impact of Portuguese colonization continues today, in particular in Africa – Mozambique, Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea Bissan, and Sao Tome. Let's not forget.*
- *Only shows good stuff about Portugal invasions. What about all the problems they caused, sufferings due to forced conversions to Christianity and the breakdown of culture in their colonies? Portuguese forced people out of their lands in Goa, desecrated temples and demolished holy sites to force Christianity. Please be more complete in your future exhibits.*
- *As a Brazilian, I am proud of what the Portuguese accomplished, but I regret the destruction of other cultures, and the holocaust of millions of Indians.*
- *Beautiful collection of objects and lovely presentation. I thought the interpretation was a little one-sided. What about the implications of a Portuguese presence all over the globe? And the collection of ethnographic objects by Europeans? How should we interpret these through a 21st century lens?*
- *China invented gunpowder, and used it for fireworks. When Europeans got gunpowder they used it for guns. Thus they conquered the world. The Portuguese enslaved Africans in Brazil, yet they were kinder and gentler than the Spaniards.*
- *Does not give enough attention to the brutal imperial deprivations caused by the Portuguese... But interesting too!*
- *Great exhibit but one suggestion. I would have liked to have seen more of an analysis of the legacy of the Portuguese. They didn't just arrive and leave peacefully! Just a thought...*
- *One sided and distorted, does not touch on the brutality, exploitation, forcible conversions, colonialism, destruction of Hindu temples and Jesuit collaboration with the colonialists.*
- *This is a great exhibit. Nice to see so many stolen goods on exhibit!! So much for the colonial power.*
- *Downplays/ignores Portuguese tactics and brutality – they did not want to join in trade – they wanted to blow everyone out of the Indian Ocean. A marvelous*

collection but a very incomplete story. Labels minimal—disappointing compared to the Met's Venice Show.

- *I am confused as to why so much emphasis is being placed on a colonizer renowned for its horrific treatment of African communities in the Museum of African Art.*
- *Wonderful show, beautiful objects, well installed. But addressing colonialism in the KunstKamer room would have been a welcome and important addition to the exhibition.*
- *Exhibition soft pedaled the vicious nature of the Vasco de Gama contact with India and Ceylon. The Europeans were brutal. The motivation was wealth. These voyages were not peace missions.*
- *The exhibit contributes greatly to an understanding of Portugal's role in the great age of exploration. However, the brutality and cruelty of their leading explorers is not really mentioned and that is a part of history as well.*
- *Interesting piece of history where Portugal is remembered as giving its contribution to the science and forgetting the territory power in the new regions. We always have been like that.*
- *I love Portugal and the exhibit is cool allowing people to learn about a place that was very influential in world history but today people often forget about. But the exhibition was very ethnocentric and didn't mention the barbarity that Portugal committed as they "explored" a world that already existed. They were the 1st to invade other people's countries and started the transatlantic slave trade. There needs to be a more balanced portrayal of Portuguese history and influence.*
- *I would have liked to have seen more about the navigation and sailing science developed by the Portuguese. As well, the exhibit glosses over the extent of Portuguese responsibility for the development of the slave trade. What was the result of colonialism on the nations Portugal invaded? I did appreciate the work that went into assembly of this collection.*

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- *I knew about Goa, India (as a Portuguese colony) but I had no idea about Macao. The arrogance of the church and missionaries is particularly striking; I like the Japanese paintings with the beheading – religious tolerance is what it's all about. Thank you.*
- *Every country has its story, or rather, stories. It's nice to know that people have always been curious about other people, animals, arts, that are unlike their own. Of course, rather often, they've been bent on dominating those things and peoples once found, but that's another story.*
- *It's amazing how much of the world the Portuguese bound together with their maritime tendrils. An empire of trade rather than land. They also seem to be the*

importers of slavery into the Americas, using slaves as workers on great plantations.

- *Tying together of the multiple collections (eastern, African, others) for a western perspective...interesting to see how we insinuated ourselves (or blatantly usurped) into the others.*
- *The exhibition is terrific, with the exceptions of the leaders contemporary sculpture in the Brazil room that is supposed to illustrate the evils of colonialism. Please spare the politically correct cataloging.*
- *Beautiful objects – but the exhibition completely “pulls its punches” about the social and political and economic impact of Portuguese colonization.*
- *It was nice to see the positive influence of Christianity. Usually all you get is a simplistic negative view. Overall the Catholic faith enhanced other cultures. That isn't a pc view, but it is true.*
- *Long and rich history. Thank you Portugal for showing humanity how to conquer the world in a ‘peaceful’ way.*
- *POSITIVE: This is perhaps the first exhibition by the Smithsonian in ca. 20 years which portrays the West (i.e. White, European, etc.) in a “positive” – albeit neutral, quasi-uninformed manner (and not in “evil, destructive, oppressor” light)... it's about time! Bravo! More!*

NEGATIVE: This collection leaves the viewer largely one of two impressions: either the Portuguese did little more than go on a large shopping spree, or the curators had so little knowledge/interest in the positive cultural impact of Portugal's activity that they did not or (perhaps were academically unable/unfit?) could not convey in words (more information boards please!) its significance.

Information: more on other countries or peoples

- *Not enough on the Azores Islands or Madeira Archipelago, none on South Africa, such as Mozambique, Angola, or Western African nations of Sao Tome or Principe, Cape Verde, Guinea, etc. Otherwise an excellent collaboration and display of the first European country to navigate the globe of the Portuguese diaspora.*
- *Great theme, but the interpretation of Afro-Portuguese in the Far East (many individuals present in the Namban screens depicting the “black ships” visiting Nagasaki) is non-existent in captions as well as the docents’ discussion. Some of the dark-skinned members of the Portuguese entourage may well have been Indian, but close examination of the Namban screens in Osaka and elsewhere clearly reveals the Japanese artists’ interest in the African visitors’ curious “peppercorn” hair texture, etc. and this might have been mentioned somewhere- viz in the dark (usually barefooted) “Portuguese” sailors, (esp. among those in the ships’ upper rigging) the various porters, umbrella bearers, etc. Though they*

apparently have not been depicted (in western art at all) blacks from Portuguese outposts in Africa also had a noteworthy presence in Macao over the years.

- *Obrigado! I was impressed by the beautiful and varied objects presented in the exhibition! However, like one of the visitor's comments on the previous page, I was disappointed by the fact that no mention was made of the contribution by Jews to the development of Portugal. Unfortunately, Portugal seems to give short shrift to this part of its history, just as it unfailingly avoids mention of the terrible chapter of the Inquisition. Perhaps now that Portugal is emerging from its lethargy and truly entering the "modern world" it will pay more attention to its complete history. It is difficult to move forward without including 100% of a nation's history. I have been to Portugal at least ten times from 1965 to the present and look forward to a non revisionist approval of all the chapters of its history!*
- *Excellent exhibit... would have liked to read more about the contributions of Jews, and the 1497 expulsion or forced conversion. Very tragic event which should not be overshadowed by beautiful objects!*
- *I wish there were more exhibits showing Portugal's activities in Kesala-India. Vasco da Gama's voyage to India was aimed at reaching Calcutta. More about his first voyage was expected by me and my group.*
- *Amore Portuguse ay! Baby ay ay! Portuguese love! Expanded my knowledge of my Portuguese ancestors. I would like to have seen more about the Azores and the current influence of these discoveries. Very pleased to see an exhibit of the positive accomplishments of the 'white' European.*
- *Uneven- need something on the computer about Indonesia. Nice and appropriate history of cartology.*
- *I wish there were more pieces of Portuguese art. There were so few and so many from other countries.*
- *I am amazed at the way you gave sections to Japan and China but bunched India with "Indian Ocean World" Given that Goa was the center of Portuguese Asia! Also look at the objects I the galleries, many are the work of skilled Indian craft people!!! Finally - what about the inquisition Portuguese brought and the shameful episode of Garcia Osta's bones? Stories must be told completely not just the glories! It was okay yet could be better.*
- *Beautiful exhibit, congratulations! I did think though that the part on Brazil was comparatively poor in scope considering the vastness of existing documents artwork, mapwork and artifacts from the colonization period. Anyhow, it's a great initiative. I hope this makes more people aware that, even today, there is more to the world than meets the eye.*
- *I am puzzled and disappointed that I can find no specific description of the Portuguese along the coast of East Africa (either in the 'Africa' or 'Indian Ocean' sections. The omission of Mozambique is especially baffling, as the occupation of Mombasa for over 100 years*

- *I am astonished at the low visibility and profile given to Portuguese India. This is topsided view of Portuguese colonies. Disappointing. That's what I as Bengali came to learn more about*
- *Nice exhibition but wish to see more of their trail/artifacts from being in Indonesia and Malaysia (Malacca). The Krts on display is not even from the right timeframe. Overall exhibit is nice. Doesn't talk much about the history of the Portuguese as a Maritime Super Power from late 1400s to mid 1600s. Would recommend to do a short film or narrated Flash on computer and have it on a screen somewhere.*
- *I would have liked to see a little more on Japan though. And a little less on Portugal*

Information: more context

- *A lot is like one big kunstkamer. Just items the Portuguese brought back. And you should explain why historians no longer credit Prince Henry the Navigator as responsible for the early exploration.*
- *Am I missing something? Where is the history of the objects related to Portugal? The objects are stunning BUT you get very little sense on how these tie to Portugal! This would have been such a richer exhibit if a HISTORY curator/scholar would have been a part of the team who put this together! When the handout does more to explain the background than exhibit labels do something is not right! A museum director from California.*
- *Oui I think the above is quite correct- there is something missing in how the history behind the artifacts is explained and then developed throughout the exhibit. In many ways, the artifacts feel divorced from history, even though, ostensibly the entire exhibit is designed to illuminate said history. Here's what I think would help - more thorough signage clearly placed; a timeline featuring major discoveries (in science, land, and humanities) and our explanation of the religious climate at the time; juxtapose the maps with more current maps of the world to give audience fuller sense of what has evolved- w/o this it's assumed what history the audience knows and that sets the tone for the exhibit; appreciated the use of color; something 'kid' friendly (tactile) would also be helpful. Appreciated the use of multimedia. Also I can understand the challenge in putting together an exhibit with that country's sponsorship. Could have done without the overt commercialism at the end; would have liked a connection between globalism then and now. Overall this is an exhibit for those who are already well aware of Portugal's legacy (from history) and not the slightly polished version (historical reclusionist in some ways) which is confused regarding attending to the violence. Glad however to see so many artifacts, the cooperation between museums; and the inferred global-ness of exhibit. I still remember and adore the "Seeds of Change" exhibit, and so might be a hard sell. Even with reservations, kudos on all the hard work to bring this exhibit together!*

- *This exhibit shows pretty things, but of this exhibit is intended to present a wider picture of Portugal in this period you have failed to present it.*
- *Lovely, but what have these luxury items made with Euro countries have much to do with Portugal?*
- *I would have liked to be taken through the Japanese screen – no text that I could find. The objects are gorgeous, as is the installation. The concept of Portugal in this museum is a little hazy for me...*
- *I don't understand why this is in an Asian museum... so much non-Asian art!*
- *Appreciation of aesthetic beauty in varied forms and cultures. Would have been helpful to have more explanations about how objects were actually used*
- *Why such painfully inadequate labeling? What, for example, is going on in the painting of Lisbon by Chafaring d'El Rey? Why does the man in the center of the painting have his head covered? What is signified by the varied and diverse demography of the people in the town?*
- *As an art exhibit museum, it's good, but it lacks a historical perspective, so I'll have to go to a history book for the context. Then, a lot of the art is European-centric; I wonder if there were pieces from Asia/Brazil/Africa in the mixture of mediums. And then, big question, where are the spices?*
- *An exceptional and exquisite exhibit. It is a legacy of geographical developments and cultural objects and the spread of religion. I would have enjoyed more information on almost everything! The Grecian kingdoms, the black ship, and especially the demise of Portuguese influence.*
- *Very nice objects but no sense of historical context. A. Not even an introductory map of the world showing where the places mentioned in the exhibit are. No maps of de Gama's route etc. B. No mention of how the era of discovery started or ended. C. No mention of what impact the new wealth of Portugal had on the country or Europe.*
- *Wonderful selection of objects, but I would have liked more explanation, context in the captions. Also diagrams to show voyages. Maybe all of this in the exhibition book; still, too bad not more in the exhibit. Nonetheless, I really enjoyed it!*
- *I wanted more explanation for the artworks specifically lacking Christian iconography- large tapestries with Atlas Jupiter and Juno- mix of mythology and Christianity has piqued my interest.*
- *This is a stunning collection of media and learning. I would have liked to know more about the painted early street scene- especially what does the man with the cylinder over the face signify? So curious!*
- *Great exhibit - nice collection. What happened to the spice trade? Would have been useful to address that!*
- *Wonderful exhibit but maps would have been helpful in providing orientation to places that some of us are not so familiar with.*

- *What an exhibit! Thank you for circling the world. Wish there were more textiles.*
- *Excellent job. Would like to see more on the role of Portuguese navigators in imposing the notion of a round globe!*
- *Great stuff but explanations are limited on origin and artists. Information is provided for some work but most interesting works leave me with many unanswered questions.*
- *I wish you had discussed more about the Anglos and the Portuguese landing at Dighton Rock in Mass.*
- *Please - more information on the works of art, background, context, next time I want to learn about them and see them - more info needed*
- *The above expresses the impression well. Might have been a little more explanation of why Portugal was ahead of the larger European countries?*
- *The exhibits need more exposition. Why the decorations were chosen, how the items were made, for whom the items were produced*
- *This exhibit is okay. Need more basic narrative to learn/appreciate more. A bit of an 'odds and ends' feel*
- *I was very disappointed. I wanted to learn more about da Gama the man, the countries explored, and Portugal's colonial legacy of the 17th and 18th centuries. The exhibit was poorly laid out - our guide had to backtrack to explain things properly. Overall a big disappointment.*
- *Beautifully executed, but could have benefited from additional exposition on the cultural context of the pieces, and perhaps a timeline describing the impact and evolution of the cultural cross-pollination. But well worth seeing nonetheless Parabens!*
- *Great exhibit!!! But more wall labels are needed! More explanation of the objects and their context would be helpful. Please consider including more info with objects of next exhibit otherwise -- spectacular! Great job!*
- *I love to see the people enjoying the Art... The only thing it needs is more specific info on the pieces. This is something I hear often throughout the exhibit. Officer Hendersen S Quad*
- *I'd like to know more about which workshop produced the luxury item in India. Were they imperial or private workshops? Did they only make export goods?*
- *Many wonderful objects, but so many are not accompanied by any explanatory text at all. So valuable objects were lent, but then with no explanation, this might as well not have been here. Don't your audiences deserve more?*
- *Some of the artifacts could use better explanation; we had to find the book to figure out what some of the things were. Otherwise, excellent collection*
- *Would like more context for the objects. For example, the gilt silver castle - what is it made for a wedding? Is the inscription in Greek letters?*

- *Fascinating exhibition and beautifully mounted. Very evocative of one central theme (exoticism of objects from different lands). You do a very good job of describing the crossover b/t cultures, but on occasion I found the text and explanations a bit highbrow. One text panel, for example, refers to Henry the Navigator as a somewhat obsolete figure in current understanding of Portugal's exploration. Yet nowhere else did I see this mentioned -- leading me to wonder why this shift in Henry's status had occurred. I also would have appreciated more text labels, particularly in the transitional galleries between the upstairs and downstairs. What is the point of hanging Ecco Homo, for example? I'm sure there is a tie-in, religion being so important in exploration at this time, but more text would have helped make the connection. Overall very interesting exhibit -- it's nice to have a show that demands more background knowledge and rewards deep interest in the subject.*
- *A wonderful exhibit! The achievements of Portugal in the 15th and 16th century are among the most remarkable chapters of European history. Thank you for mounting this show. You could improve the labeling of the items -- inter alia noting the locations of museums and collections. Does "National Maritime Museum" refer to museum in Greenwich, England, or to an institution of similar name elsewhere?*
- *Great exhibition. Missing information: trade w/Siam; Slavery; Language Vietnamese; Character by Portuguese; missionary*
- *Great pieces, great exhibition - ridiculously insufficient signs - most individual signs did not explain anything, to the point that one had no idea why some pieces were included at all - because of their decoration? What they were? Where were they made? Where were they collected? As examples for other items? etc. etc. etc.*
- *I agree. I wish there were more explanations connected with the large, detailed paintings such as the one of Lisbon and the harbor.*
- *Wonderful assembly of Portugal's influence during its age of exploration - In China - which one was Wu Li vs. Wang Hui - read right to left or left to right?*

Information: more maps

- *Great exhibit but MAP would have enhanced it greatly! I had no clue where Goa, Muscat or a lot of the other Portuguese ports in the Indian Ocean were. I finally stumbled over the fold out map in the catalog which was VERY HELPFUL. When this show goes to Europe put that map at the entrance to each gallery!*
- *Lovely and interesting but some good MAPS strategically placed throughout the exhibit would have helped a lot! (For example, where is Malacca compared to the Maduccas? Hermuz? Muscat? Relationship of Africa explorations to those in E. India?)*
- *Amazing artifacts! Would like to have seen a modern map marked with the locations discussed.*

- *Extraordinary breadth of material could use more maps, identify areas currently.*
- *Definite contribution—division by trading area very helpful. Would have liked blow-ups of the maps of each area (the co. 1502. E. 1548 ones) to give them more legibility (by enlarging them?) in the relevant areas. The messages are fabulous (both meanings, I guess) Loved the sipa stuff!*
- *It's surprising that such an elaborate presentation did not bother to provide a single wall map of the areas described. Of course I'm referencing a modern map.*

Information: corrections; questions of historical interpretation

- *Gorgeous! Beautifully curated. Only found one misspell though. It should be **KERIS***
- *Reference to astrolabe and azimuth omits saying that the Islamic scientists developed them before the Portuguese used them.*
- *Wonderful exhibit. One correction- Ceuta (along with Modilla) is now a Spanish enclave on the north coast of Africa (and not part of Morocco)*
- *You should have mentioned that India was part of Persian Empire so the arts in the books were written in Farsi and only Farsi. It is a Persian Empire thank you*
- *Spectacular exhibit. 2 questions: Shouldn't the figure of St Bernard be Sao Bernardo, not Santo Bernardo? And did Amerigo Vespucci really travel to the New World? I was taught he was a cartographer not an explorer.*
- *Very Eurocentric, what does it mean 'discovery' of India? Chinese/Indian explorers crossed the oceans throughout SE Asia long before the Portuguese who after used Chinese maps. World trade older than the entry of Portuguese travelers.*
- *Are the curators aware that Gavin Menzies book 1421: The Year the Chinese Discovered America? Menzies contends that the Chinese circumnavigation of the globe between 1421--1423, and that the Portuguese and Spanish used Chinese maps. He contends that Portuguese settled Puerto Rico before Columbus 'discovered' America...*
- *Are these scholars aware of the recent population treaties about the Chinese fleets of 1421?*
- *Why no edition of the Lugiadas for sale? Very little on the maritime or navigational accomplishments involved in the explorations. Nothing on Prince Henry's choice of experience (the actual discoveries) over authority (the out of date geography of the classical writers). Surely an important element of the proto Renaissance. Essentially a politically correct view that minimizes Western innovation or any heroism whatsoever. But a remarkable once in a lifetime collection.*

- *Fantastic exhibit, from all perspectives - natural, religious, and historical. I do wonder why you didn't address the questions raised in 1421: The year China discovered America, where the cartographic evidence suggests the Portuguese had possession of maps of the Americas which they got from the Chinese who began their exploration in 1405. I hadn't realized, regardless, of the extent of the colonization of Portugal, but knowing it preferred trade parts over civilization-building, it makes more sense. Wonderful-thanks!*
- *Don't forget why the Portuguese made a treaty with Colchin - to demand all Muslims leave Calicut - please no history by elimination of some unpleasant facts.*
- *Great display! The Chinese may challenge some of the map making claims!*
- *I took the highlight tour by a docent and was pretty disappointed at the inaccurate portrayal of history distorted to suit the demography of the [illegible]*
- *Very nice exhibit, but it presents Portugal's expansion as a harmless mission of trade and cultural exchange when it was really much more.*
- *Fabulous items but clearly looking representative of Spice Islands. No clear connection to art of native cultures over time.*
- *Surprisingly, many of the pieces seemed to lack any real bridge between native and Portuguese art... but more, rather, art that just happened to depict Christianity that was made in China, India, Japan, or elsewhere... C+ at best...*
- *First-rate obviously a lot of work went into locating and assembling such a vast array of art and cartography. Well-organized, needed more on Henry the Navigator- the dismissal of his achievements is unwarranted and not supported by preponderant scholarship*

Exhibition Presentation: Breadth of exhibition

- *Absolutely amazing display of objects, cultural history, and breadth of technical and artistic skill. I came especially from Chicago for this exhibit and was not disappointed!*
- *This is a wonderful exhibit that brings together a wealth of knowledge.*
- *This exhibition is so vast and encompassing – one visit is not enough. We wish the length of it could be extended significantly!*
- *The Portugal exhibit was great it showed lots of information and a lot of details also very interesting sculptures.*
- *Very broad in scope so it requires several visits to appreciate it. Broad appeal to many groups as well.*
- *Why didn't I come sooner and then again and again – splendid works – I shall return to enjoy once more.*

- *I found this a comprehensive overview, having visited some of the sites where Portugal touched down in Africa and India, notably the “first” trading post of Sao Jao Batista de Ajuda in African-Dahainey.*
- *Great exhibit; I started at the museum of African Art and worked my way through (including the Brazilian contemporary parts). Loved the tortoise shell, silver filigree, maps and globes. Very interested that the trade wasn’t just one-way (goods to Portugal); e.g. turkeys to India.*
- *One of the best exhibitions I have seen at an art history museum. It blended information on a fascinating period in history with stunning art objects – a pleasure to look at and learn about. Bravo!*
- *I have been reading extensively on this topic for the last 15 years. No great discovery by itself, but a gathering of top quality material which has never been put together ever -- congratulations!*

Variety of objects

- *This exhibit was delightful! Hard to believe you could pull together such a fantastic collection of exotic and historical items!! We especially liked the world maps and globes!!*
- *The mother of pearl, silver, excellent art at its finest! Never dreamed such creative beauty to see and love.*
- *The original knick-knack collections! Thanks so much for inclusion of the website—very helpful.*
- *My favorite part was the really detailed sculpture and really detailed crucifixes.*
- *I like the variety of items in the exhibit, particularly the Durer prints that showed how the Europeans viewed the “exotic” animals of the Far East. Very interesting perceptions of them.*
- *No exhibit can be all things to all people. The amount of work to bring together so many artifacts from so many sources is to be applauded!*
- *Absolutely amazing...exhibition is incredible, especially considering that nearly everything comes from different museums throughout the world.*
- *Awesome exhibit, very informative and a great selection of art and objects of various kinds. Thank you!*
- *I liked the astrolabes and artifacts. How did you get them? That incense burner must weigh a ton.*
- *Great maps! Beautiful tapestries – as usual for the Smithsonian, good descriptions, except not enough done to explain why certain objects are connected with Portugal.*

- *Fantastic! Used to seeing Asian objects in these galleries, the Euro-Asian “icons” work wonderfully. An F&G Friend who is totally impressed.*
- *I liked the blend of globes, cups, paintings, maps, books, and other interesting things. I never knew how cool a country could be! Thanks.*
- *Wonderful – full of grand things that make voyages worthwhile – to dream of treasures – these are true treasures – fit for the Gods.*
- *Wowas! The exhibits were really enjoyable. I especially liked all of the silver artifacts. Everything catches your eye, which is what a museum is for. The collection is amazing and I enjoyed it immensely. I hope to see it again. It's quite the phenomenon!!!*
- *We enjoyed the variety of the exhibit gleaned from all over the world. What a treat to bring them together for our enjoyment. Great history lesson told in the development of the maps of fourteenth, fifteenth centuries. Thanks.*
- *This was a great exhibit with such a diversity of objects by type and place of origin. I was really impressed!*
- *Wonderful to see your choices of the contemporary artists from not only Portugal but Brazil and Africa*
- *Quite an astonishing collection of such a variety of art forms from so long ago. Amazing that one little nation went to such distant corners of the globe.*

Variety of objects: “naturalia”

- *Yes, most interesting so far are the examples from the Chamber of Wonders – especially the “naturalia” turned “artificialia,” a genre created by the collectors’ demand? Would love more detail on how these colonial art markets were related to the Portuguese.*
- *The ewers were amazing! My favorite was the nautilus shell ewer. It was very intricate.*
- *The exhibit showed a great diversity of art that showed some classic things as well as abstract. I especially loved the mother of pearl stones. The museum is very simplistic, modernesque style which makes it enjoyable and helps to focus more on the art.*
- *I thought it was beautiful. I adore the mother of pearl casket, so shiny.*
- *Relics of animal pieces (rhinoceros horn, mother of pearl, ivory, nautilus) were particularly impressive*
- *I found this exhibit quite informing and I very much enjoyed the tapestries and the artwork made with animal parts.*
- *Mother of pearl is gorgeous! Had no IDEA of all the Portuguese influences.*

- *I'm a teacher from Boston and I learned a lot! The tortoise shell and mother of pearl were my favorites. Thanks!*

Variety of objects: maps

- *Excellent – didn't realize the maps were so accurate in the 1500s*
- *The maps and navigational instruments were most informative about the courage, greed? Intrepidity of these early explorers.*
- *The maps were fascinating... what a time of discovery and new and rediscovered knowledge.*
- *I so loved the maps, and the depictions of peoples encountered in the many travels of the Portuguese explorers. Also given the state of navigation at the time, and the huge dangers and risks they encountered, how brave and adventurous they were! And of course greedy, and sure they were spreading superior knowledge and religion and culture. Yet what riches they brought back and what a wealth of art and artifacts resulted from their encounters with the wider world. There's so much here – it merits another visit.*
- *I really liked the maps shown of the world. It's interesting to notice the accuracy of their maps almost 400 years ago. Also to see the influence the Portuguese had on many of the world cultures.*

Comparison to other museums/exhibitions

- *This is certainly the most wide ranging exhibition I've seen since the Circa 1492 exhibition at the National Gallery of Art back in '92.*
- *We've been so fortunate in Washington to have exhibitions of this breadth along with the National Gallery's Dresden exhibit, European Vision of America and c. 1492 to enlighten us and delight us!*
- *Awesome! Very educational. I remember the Durer woodcut on paper print of the Rhinoceros (the Met) from an NGA exhibition of 1492 and beyond. I'll be back. Many thanks.*
- *Great exhibition! Came here especially from the Netherlands to see it! Looks like TEFAF MAASTRICHT, Terrific display—top!*
- *Outstanding exhibit—enjoyed objects from Museo de Arte Antiqua and Tura where I had been on recent trip to Portugal. But so much more than can be seen there is displayed in this exhibit. Bravo!*

Design and Layout: Positive comments

- *A wonderful exhibition – everything was well displayed, lit and labeled. A thoughtful and thoughtfully displayed exhibition.*
- *Well organized with readable labels. Well placed (not always a given these days.) However, hallway tapestry needs a label at the top of the stairs where it can be viewed.*
- *Excellent exhibition, very well put together. Kiosks and educational information refreshing!*
- *Fascinating! Beautifully mounted, researched and described, and very educational.*
- *This is a wonderful collection of maps and artifacts. The division of the exhibit gave a brief yet comprehensive picture of the world “discovered” in the 14th and 15th centuries by the Portuguese explorers.*
- *I especially enjoyed the high-resolution satellite images paired with pictures of ancient Portuguese churches and other structures.*
- *The staging of the show is top rate. Don't know how you got as many loaned items as you did. A testament to your integrity, I reckon. Congratulations.*
- *Exquisite exhibition, elaborate layout, very delightful experience. Thank you for your work*
- *Incredible objects! And a manageable exhibition in this day often of exhausting, overly presented subject matter.*
- *Incredible exhibit! We loved Jay Levinson's work – it was great to see it in person. Especially loved the espresso cup favor in the gift shop!*
- *Yes! Was really looking forward to it and more than met expectations. The PC wells explanations added a lot. Thanks!*
- *Magnificent collection and exhibit. Nicely ties the many Portuguese expeditions and discoveries into an understanding whole. Makes one want to take the next flight to Lisbon!*
- *Lovely display; enjoyed the layout from the obelisk with compass points. Our guide had a slightly mocking and negative tone of the Europeans. But on my own I enjoyed the artifacts and the story they tell.*
- *Thank you again. Our 1st and last visit, sad it closes today. The effort to collect from all over – Lisbon, Kremlin, Desda, Vienna – much appreciated! Even more beautifully displayed than in these cities where we had seen some of these objects.*
- *It's interesting how the artifacts are displayed in a chronological order that corresponds with the development of atlases in the “Discovery Portugal” room; it enhanced my understanding of the gradual globalization.*

- *A perfect example of how to display artifacts of interest. Incredible maps! A delightful surprise during my stay in Washington from Paris! Merci Beaucoup.*

Lack of coherence

- *A lot of the texts were not very informative. There was little overall organization – or if there was any overall scheme it wasn't explained. The wall texts assumed a lot of knowledge. Many artifacts, e.g. tapestries hardly explained at all. I did like the exhibition, the collection was fascinating. But the presentation was not, apparently, well thought through. Other exhibitions I've seen here were much better presented. Mughal art from India, for example, or in the illuminated manuscripts about the Persian superhero of the 16th century...*
- *Great concept and beautiful objects but confusing layout. Would have been nice to have a bit more introduction at the beginning. It was also hard to find this exhibition since we came in the Freer gallery entrance. Need more signage at that end. Overall though, interesting show that was very beautiful.*
- *This exhibit contained many beautiful pieces but was set up in a VERY confusing manner – hard to follow the format and sequence of exhibits.*
- *It is a great overview of the influence of the Portuguese. It would have helped to indicate on the brochure where the starting point was, i.e., 1. Start here with Africa.*
- *The compass design of the entry was very nice with the galleries radiating outward. It helps emphasize the “global-ness” of Portugal’s exploration. However, if one goes to the lower part of Portugal gallery or started the exhibit from the Freer Gallery or Museum of African art entrances, it was difficult to find the rest of the exhibit.*
- *Exhibit is very interesting – objects are fascinating. However, the organization is confusing, and the signage is lacking and poor.*
- *Exhibition was fascinating; however it was somewhat confusing in the way it was exhibited. There did not seem to be a clean pattern from beginning to end. As I am not a curator, I do not know what to advise other than to take the guided tour.*
- *The exhibition is rare and unique although the scattered way it is organized did not make understanding easier and more information would have been useful.*
- *A very confusing exhibit - there is no logical route through.*
- *Great exhibit, but very bad signage for orientation (Start where? Go where?) The explanations of the exhibits themselves were good, but an audio version would have been great!*
- *I would have liked to see it organized by types of objects rather than countries.*
- *It was wonderful! But I needed an actual map (Americans today aren't good in geography)*

- *Not enough explanatory material. Way finding vague, I missed the main entrance to the exhibit, entered at China instead and therefore missing the exhibit.*
- *The set up of the exhibits was confusing. I couldn't tell where one country's art started and where it finished. It seemed like it was all meshed in together. I suggest more informative signs, and exhibits organized by time periods.*
- *We enjoyed the exhibit. However the sequencing (or lack thereof) was confusing. While there is certainly overlapping chronology, it would have been helpful to have a suggested start and flow at each of the possible entry points. We came in from the Sackler side and ended up beginning the exhibit with China. If we had known the start was in African art we would have headed there. Also, it would be good to have the "no photography" signage more prominently displayed. We saw several people taking pictures and videos. The guards did a great job relaying the message but they can't be everywhere*
- *An absolutely fascinating and gorgeous exhibit but I think more of an explanation as to how these wonderful objects come together to give a more descriptive view of Portugal would be nice.*

Design and layout: improvements

- *Needs a much better introduction. Take what is online here—put on placards at beginning of exhibition and in appropriate room. As I discovered, it's backwards. But exhibits are wonderful and a good experience. Why not audio guides in several languages?*
- *Why is there no signage for persons using elevators or at the "lobby" of the building? Annoyed DC resident.*
- *The cyber-exhibit is pathetic; one screen show and very short slide show. Another screen won't show the exhibits full-screen. The rhinoceros horn was used to counteract poison, as the exhibits don't say. The captions were to be on all four sides of the cases to avoid traffic jams. The signage lacks explanations on many items.*
- *Interesting exhibition – labels are poorly placed (e.g. tapestry explanation at bottom of stairs should be at top). Other explanations sometimes needed – e.g., large silver gilt [sensor] from Hapsburg – does it depict history?)*
- *I am American, but I believe you should have included plates in another language – Portuguese, perhaps? I was here for a class at Georgetown and I find it very useful.*
- *Great exhibit - needs audiotape. It's a shame to collect all this and provide so little commentary on the objects and paintings – who bought/owned them, what they show (painting of central Lisbon, for example) how they got to the museums. Labels inadequate to put it nicely. Where is the perspective of the Brazilians, Africans, Asian countries?*

- *The exhibit was great! As a teacher, I'd have to agree with several comments regarding availability at summer only. I'd love to see a video or teach a lesson with transparencies available.*
- *I've spend 'bout a week in DC and this place has just been so awesome, but I would love it even more if there were video or audiotape. Thanks*
- *There's a good deal more than this exhibit shows, in the superb catalogue. Am I missing something? It's hard to tell since it's so dark down here.*
- *This exhibition of Portugal's legacy was good and very interesting to see. Please put up some more lights because my eyes hurt of looking in the dark. It was interesting to see many things that the Portuguese people used. I hope I can come back.*

Docent Services

- *Thanks also for the last night late closure! I learned a lot with the helpful lecture guides.*
- *A big thank you to the docents and experts who gave tours and explained a lot. Huge exhibit and I would have missed a lot of things but the tours helped a lot.*

Portuguese national pride

- *Bon Trabalho! E para acabar hoje! As a Lusa-American, it made me prouder of my heritage! PS- Finally Portugal and Portuguese take its respective place.*
- *Amazing Exhibition! Even being of Portuguese Heritage, actually seeing the physical manifestations of history in the books is amazing. Thank you*
- *As a Portuguese American, I was impressed by the level of detail in this exhibit. As a culture that is often overlooked, I am pleased the Smithsonian chose to cover this important period of time.*
- *Born in Columbia, Portugal. This exhibit made me appreciate my own legacy. My mother forced me and my sister to come, but am grateful we did!*
- *Growing up in the US as a 1st generation Portuguese-American, I have always been very proud of my background. My mother is from Mozambique and my father is from Portugal. So I was raised understanding and continuously learning about how much influence Portugal has had on allof the world. Today, my boyfriend is with me and it excites me to see that he will leave today knowing the global impact a little country will forever have. PS. I hope this exhibit will continue to find a permanent home somewhere else*
- *Thank you for bringing the exhibit to Washington. I'm of Portuguese ancestry and greatly enjoyed it. Viva Azores!*

- *Thank you. Helped show my family their Portuguese heritage and to be proud of it.*
- *This was so memorable and enjoyable, especially to celebrate my Portuguese heritage.*
- *As a Portuguese descendent, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to see such a well put exhibit. It makes me think that "the human race is much more similar and has much more in common than differences."*
- *As Portuguese I feel flattered to see an exhibition of a glorious moment of our country and of the search for knowledge of human beings. Portuguese at that time were breaking the limits. This exhibition that wants the history of the world discoveries through objects and art is very well done. Most of the objects reflect the surprise generated by the shock of the new and also of collaborative work and aesthetical influences of several cultures (what is good!)*
- *Yes, born in Cantanhede, Portugal. I do want my daughter to appreciate their heritage and world history*
- *This exhibit is absolutely wonderful. It has contributed greatly to understanding the early years of exploration by the Portuguese. My grandparents were from Portugal, so this is especially meaningful with my Portuguese heritage!*
- *I'm Portuguese-American, second generation. Thank you for connecting me to my past... the exhibit was exceptionally well done.*
- *It connected me to my Portuguese roots of Duon, Portugal. We really are descendants of the great explorers. Seeking Portugal extraordinary 'out there'*
- *As a Portuguese, I feel very proud of our history and heritage. I hope with this marvelous exhibition visitors will know better how important was Portugal's contribution to the contemporary world. I hope, too, that everybody will be curious about the country and go there and visit museums, churches, monuments, the glorious landscapes from northern to southern Portugal and not only for sun, sea, food and fado. I hope also, that everybody is well aware that Portugal is the oldest nation/state of Europe (eight centuries!) and we are very special in making every people of the world our friends!*
- *Big things come in small packages. Portugal a small country with a great history needs to reclaim its place in the world as it has in my heart.*
- *Great exhibition! Very detailed, outstanding. For a small nation, they accomplished practically the whole world. WE are very proud of this feat.*
- *Great way to portray the Portuguese history and discoveries! We are from Portugal, and we truly enjoyed seeing this exhibit! Muito Bonito sim senhores!*
- *As a Brazilian living in Washington, I felt really privileged for being able to see this exhibition. It's beautifully displayed, and carefully organized. Congratulations.*

- *I will go write Portuguese because I am Portuguese: Gostei muito des esplosica. Nunca pensi encontrar Portugal aqui.*
- *thank you! Enjoyed the exhibit - we are of Portuguese descent and truly enjoyed learning more of our cultural heritage*
- *As a Portuguese American, it makes me proud of where my family and friends came from. A very good exposition representing the influence of a very small country. Overlooked today by many, not forgotten by the few. All that's left for us as a people, just getting that illusive World Cup. Go Portugal.*
- *Thank you so much for taking the time and effort to put together such a great exhibit that portrays Portugal so well!*
- *We are proud to be Portuguese, in the past and in the present. We think that all the people must go to Portugal and see how beautiful our country is.*
- *We are very proud to be Portuguese. Thank you for this great expedition. We are a small country, but very big in the world.*
- *The exhibit was very interesting. Seeing everything made us a proud 100% Portuguese family.*
- *I am very proud to share all the Portuguese history with the rest of the world. I hope that the world can realize how an amazing country we have! I just wish that this exhibition would go on a world round trip to reach every single person. What a great country we have!*
- *This exhibit was amazing, well shown. I am proud to be Portuguese and to have seen such wonderful displays of my country's history.*
- *It's wonderful to see the Portuguese heritage be showed here at the capital of the United States. I wish that this initiative could be repeated more often! Congratulations.*
- *Never so many treasures of the Portuguese Heritage have been reunited.*
- *Well we are already Portuguese, so we got to see some more treasures from there. I loved seeing the cross that the altar servers would use for church.*
- *I enjoyed the wonderful history about the Portuguese around the world. We that live outside Portugal are always very proud of the country!*
- *This is a wonderful little "drop" of our vast cultural ocean. We, Portuguese, appreciate seeing and learning all about the wonderful past, and amazing future ahead of our little country Thank you! Come visit Portugal. We'll take care of you.*
- *I'm from Portugal and this exhibit has gathered a unique collection that I've never seen before. It gives great knowledge and perspective of Portugal and the world both in those days. Thank you!*

- *It is a testimony to the rich heritage of faith, art, and scholarship that the Portuguese have contributed to World History. Portuguese-Americans have much of which to be proud. Obrigado!*
- *My grandmother's grandmother, as a young ceramic maker and goat cloth weaver would have been so proud to know that her great-great-granddaughter, a classical seamstress and Pompeian guitarist, was here to see this exhibit*
- *All four of my grandparents came from the Azores islands of Santa Maria in the early 1900's. Both my mother and I were crowned as queens of the Feast of the Holy Spirit (Spirito Sanco) in the Portuguese Americans Heritage procession held annually in the Catholic Church in Redlands, California sponsored by the Portuguese American Club. It was gratifying to observe these exquisite artifacts which you have displayed to learn a little of my heritage. Thank you so much!*
- *Thank you so much for brining my family history to life. My great grandfather was in the import export grade from Portugal and Brazil and my great grandmother was the dressmaker for the last Empress of Brazil. I am in your debt.*

Personal reflections

- *Excellent exhibition. I'm a Washingtonian and we take it for granted. It is indeed vast - wish I could go slowly and take it all in.*
- *How fortunate those of us who live in Washington are to have such treasures close to home!*
- *I find it very exciting. Being Jewish, the idea that Manuel I couldn't marry the Spanish princess unless he threw the Jews out or made them Christians is appalling as making blacks slaves. But I guess without that we wouldn't get Pernina Marisol or Thurgood Marshall.*
- *I am from South Africa - Portuguese colonization is large part of our history - fascinating exhibit! Thank you*
- *Having lived in Portugal and being originally from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) this exhibition has been very interesting to me. Thank you.*
- *We were fortunate to be able to live in Portugal for a year, and it brought us such pleasure to see this wonderful exhibit.*
- *I visited Portugal 5 years ago and saw an old cork factory. Brought back memories and make me aware at how far the Portuguese traveled by what they acquired in arts and knowledge. Great exhibition!*
- *This brought pleasant memories of my life in Lisbon and Terceirs, Cizo So, in the 1950s.*
- *Wonderful exhibit. A delight to see. Grew up knowing a Portuguese family, they were very proud of their heritage.*

- *Having recently returned from 3 weeks in Portugal I was awestruck at the power of this exhibition thank you for making it happen*
- *I've been to Portugal many times. It is the most beautiful place on earth. This exhibit makes me want to return more than ever. I would love to see more of Portugal's history displayed in the future.*

Relate to contemporary

- *I did not know how wide-ranging was the scope of Portuguese trade and settlement. The connection of precious materials with exotic objects sometimes shows that tasteless extravagance is not wholly a modern accomplishment.*
- *The docent was great! I learned much from her about how the Europeans of the time, at least the wealthy, embellished the natural items brought back with gold and silver to impress their neighbors. Kind of like how we buy cars! Thx.*
- *An extraordinary collection and comical people were trotting around the world for centuries. Not very different from today.*
- *The exhibition pays appropriate tribute to the pioneering spirit of the Portuguese explorers and leaders who broadened the western world's vision of the rest of the world; this version could justly be compared with space exploration today. It's a pleasure to view these rare objects, maps and works of art*
- *This exhibit is a great reminder of the impressive accomplishments of this small maritime nation. The legacy left behind reminds us of our greater history as explorers of the unknown, the NASA of its day! The courage and curiosity of these intrepid souls will live on forever as witnessed in this exquisite exhibition. With much admiration and pride...*
- *This is a monument to man's thirst for wealth! What a very interesting exhibit.*
- *Portugal was one of the first NATO nations in WWII. It is quite amazing that Portugal's dictator Salazar did not join the fascists - Hitler, Mussolini, (and to an extent, Spain's Franco). Portugal had a lot of animosity vs. Spain and had been a British ally since before the time the Spanish armada was destroyed at sea. Portugal maintained their neutrality during the war but there was a great deal of intrigue and espionage by the Nazi and Allied agents in Lisbon, Goa (in India) and other places. Boa Sorte.*

The Harry Potter connection

- *I never understood how important Portugal was to trade. The containers from India were amazing. So was the rhinoceros horn cups and the bezoar from Harry Potter!*
- *This exhibition made me find out that "bezoar" isn't a stone invented by J.K. Rowling in Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's stone! Thank you!*

- *I never knew so much about Portugal! My friend Joanna has told me a lot about it, but it was fascinating to see it up close. I know that J.K. Rowling married a Portuguese man and lived in Portugal, so now I understand all the connections. Thanks!*
- *All around me, I hear people talking about the bezoar and having Portugal's history connection with the Harry Potter illuminated. I certainly don't feel alone anymore. This exhibition was not only beautiful, but mind-expanding. Questions I had never asked about my heritage were answered, and meanwhile, new questions were born. Amazing work. The displays could impress the world. PS- Please give J.K. Rowling my regards.*
- *I'm actually Portuguese so it was really cool seeing how my culture was spread around the world. Also, I never knew bezoars existed! I thought it was only in Harry Potter (haha), and I didn't know that they were actually believed to cure poisons like they do in HP. So this exhibit is really cool*

Examples of comments for promotional materials

- *Wonderful - the 3 Gs of exploration, "god, gold, glory" all here!*
- *This museum really helped me to view and understand Portugal... it is really unique and interesting. Kim age 13*
- *This was really fabulous - a great world tour and historic review - much enjoyed!*
- *This is a marvelous collection with artifacts from many museums – another sign for peaceful cultural exchange.*

Conversations among comment book writers ...

- *(Joy) I have a question... who discovered Portugal?*
- *The Romans arrived in 218 BC and named the Iberian Peninsula Hispana. Then Portugal was named Lusitania after the Celtibeion tribe that inhabited the region. After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th C. AD, Iberia was conquered by Germanic tribes and then the Moors in 711. Then Christians reconquered it in the 11th Century.*