More than a Name in History
A Study of Visitors to One Life: Ronald Reagan
National Portrait Gallery

September 2012

Abstract
This report is part of a series of studies on visitors’ experiences with temporary exhibitions at NPG that began in early 2011. In conducting the study, OP&A employed entrance and exit surveys (with random samples of n=269 and 301 and response rates of 84% and 74%, respectively) and semi-structured qualitative interviews (31 interviews with 42 visitors).

Three characteristics were strongly associated with high rating for the exhibition—age, familiarity with Reagan, and approval of his presidency. Notably, the three characteristics were highly correlated. At least for some visitors old enough to have well-formed memories of Reagan’s time in office, the survey results and qualitative interviews suggested a “nostalgia effect” where visitors’ experiences in the exhibition were buoyed by their personal memories of the Reagan years.