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HALEE SOMMER, MA
University of Florida

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Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces

HALEE SOMMER, MA

University of Florida

Keywords Millennials; Digital engagement; Hybrid programming; Museum audiences; Membership

Abstract Swift declines in visitation and funding are growing concerns among museums in the United States. Many institutions are asking themselves how to remain relevant in the 21st century, despite rapid changes in digital technologies and communication. One significant way may lie in the millennial generation. Millennials are the largest, most diverse, and highly educated generational cohort in recorded history, yet they remain an underserved audience among museums. This paper addresses the complex relationship between millennials and museums to understand how this generational cohort can be cultivated as an audience. The implementation of an original survey, titled “Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces,” makes visible the aspects of a museum experience that millennials value. From the results of this survey, major trends emerge and are applied to brief case studies, demonstrating feasible opportunities for museums of all types and sizes to make their space welcoming to the millennial generation.

About the Author Hallee Sommer is currently the assistant to the Deputy Director of Development at The Jewish Museum. A graduate of the master’s in Museology program at the University of Florida, her research interests include millennial behavioral trends, audience development in museum spaces, and art history through an intersectional feminist lens. She can be contacted at: haleesommer@gmail.com.

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The rise of the 21st-century museum as a participatory and interactive space to learn about the history of ourselves, the world that surrounds us, and the creative output of humanity has brought the audience to the forefront of the contemporary museum experience.¹ Correlating with this shift in mindset is the rise of the millennial generation as the dominant audience in museums. This generational cohort is projected to control a majority of United States purchasing power by 2018 in new and, occasionally, unanticipated ways.² This paper aims to identify critical needs of millennials as visitors of cultural institutions through the analysis of response data from an original survey titled “Assessing the Needs of Millennials in Museum Spaces.”

Who Are Millennials and Why Do They Matter?

The Pew Research Center’s 2010 report, “Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change,” identifies the millennial generation as the largest and most diverse in history.³ Typically defined by all individuals born between 1986 to 2000, millennials will soon step into the role of being a primary audience for cultural institutions in the United States for a majority of the 21st century.⁴

This generation is anticipated to be the most educated in history and control more of the United States economy than any cohort before, yet there is no way to know if millennials will

choose to support museums as they age. Silvia Filippini-Fantoni acknowledged this discouraging fact saying,

*We do not have any proof yet that the new generation of millennials is really going to fulfill the same role and be as engaged in our institution. We have a hard enough time getting them to come in the first place, so how do we know they will sustain us in the future.*⁵

Even more recently, Chief Market Engagement Officer at IMPACTS and museum trend researcher, Colleen Dilenschneider released data revealing millennials may not “age into” arts and culture and do not visit cultural institutions at the same rate as other generational cohorts during early adulthood.⁶ The low visitation rate may come about for multiple reasons. For one, nontraditional audiences historically tend to feel unwelcome in museum spaces.⁷ Considering the millennial generation is the most racially and ethnically diverse in recorded history, this is a significant indicator of decline in visitation. In addition, research within the museum field tends to reveal that this age group is not a primary, targeted audience for museums.⁸ These two elements combined may account for a decline in millennial visitation rates. Unpacking the way museums approach millennial audiences may help the field as a whole to understand what millennials seek from a museum experience.⁹

The survey was created and implemented from June 13 - June 18, 2017, in order to better assess the elements millennials seek from a museum experience. The survey was designed for a twofold purpose. The first is to allow millennials to examine their personal relationships with museums. Second, the response data aids in the understanding of what millennials within the United States seek from a museum experience. Exploring this relationship helps to expand the current demographic research on millennials and provide a relevant perspective to the museum field as a whole.¹⁰

To generate interest among millennial audiences, a social media strategic plan was developed. Creating a map to outline the most effective route to market the survey was essential to remain focused and organized. This strategic plan consisted of sample posts, images, hashtags, and a list of relevant groups to reach out to. This highly organized system suited the marketing needs for the survey to best grab the attention of technology-intuitive millennials. Facebook groups, in particular, became the most fruitful online spaces for locating participants. Mainly consisting of various student-based university organizations, the pool for potential participants reached well beyond the museum field, or other related cultural fields. Mathematics, engineering, business, and general STEM interest groups were highly targeted within the social media strategic plan. Reaching out to groups both within and apart from the museum field made for a more robust response pool, providing an encompassing scope of the general needs and desires of millennials in regard to museum experiences.

Working from a 95% confidence level, factoring in the average population of millennials in the United States being 83.1 million individuals, and using a ± 5 margin of error, the sample size needed to be at least 385 completed responses for the survey in order to cull a fully-encompassing perspective.¹¹ By the time the survey closed at midnight on June 18, 2017, the survey received 468 responses, nine coming from international participants. Since the parameters of the survey required only national responses, a 1.92% margin of error was

calculated to account for an unanticipated international interest. The survey reached young adults from forty-eight of all fifty states within the U.S. and the largest number of participants came from Florida, California, and New York.

Trends from Results

The most significant takeaway from the response data demonstrated millennials tend to feel museums are relevant to their lives. This major finding goes against the popular notion that millennials do not value cultural institutions and have no interest in supporting museums.¹² This is largely seen in question eight, “What factors prevent you from visiting a museum?” where only 3% of the response data suggests that museums are not relevant to participant’s lives.¹³ It can be implied from the responses that for 97% of those polled, museums could offer something meaningful and engaging. For museums, this positive statistic considers millennials may desire to spend more of their time in museums as they age. If cultivated properly, millennial visitors could easily transition into museum members, increasing the probability of acquiring major donors in the future (Figure 1).

Q8 - What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum? (Select all that apply.)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Too expensive	41.33%	279
2	Can't get to museum/ lack of transportation	21.63%	146
3	Museums are not relevant in your life	3.41%	23
4	Unaware of museums in your area	20.59%	139
5	Rather spend time elsewhere	13.04%	88
	Total	100%	675

Figure 1: What are the factors that prevent you from visiting a museum? (Select all that apply).

Beyond the finding that millennials are interested in supporting museums, three major trends in the data presented themselves. Each of these trends act as useful guiding points to determine what makes a successful museum experience from a millennial perspective. The following pages provide a breakdown of each major trend found from the results of the survey and includes one brief example of a museum currently taking action to embody the respective trend on an institution-wide scale. The examples demonstrate how these trends can be activated into useful resources for museums of varying sizes and types.

Trend One: Hybrid Programming

At their most fundamental and basic functions, programming within museums falls into one of two camps: educational or entertainment. Programming purely in the educational sense has largely revolved around object-centered opportunities, usually involving a docent-led gallery tour or lecture.¹⁴ While this type of traditional museum program holds great

educational potential, it is not necessarily the most successful way to engage younger audiences. As, “history’s first ‘always connected’ generation,” millennials as a whole tend to be more comfortable with smartphones and similar devices that provide a world of knowledge accessible to them.¹⁵ This, coupled with the rise of the experience economy, might typically render a purely educational program as less enticing.¹⁶

Special events that are more social in nature are typically designed to entertain rather than educate. While entertainment-centric programs do not inherently fit the mission of many museums, they resonate well with young adults. These events typically include food and alcohol, some sort of performance, and a lot of social interaction. While this perspective could be viewed as somewhat limited, it entices younger crowds to museums they might not have otherwise visited. As museums progress through the 21st century and needs shift as a result of social and political change, where does the compromise between learning and being entertained lie? Is it possible to create programs in a museum setting that are highly educational but also fun and engaging? The emergence of hybrid programming that combines elements of both educational and entertaining factors is growing in popularity in museums across the United States, changing the way museums embrace free-choice learning.

Hybrid programming continues to become more important considering visitation rates continue to decline in museums across the United States. A 2012 report published by the National Endowment for the Arts titled, “A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002 - 2012” demonstrates the somewhat dwindling numbers in terms of visitation to art spaces.¹⁷ In this report, attendance to United States art museums and galleries had fallen dramatically, moving from 26.5% in 2002 to 21% in 2012.¹⁸ In order to understand why attendance may continue to fall, the NEA released another report in 2012 titled, “When Going Gets Tough: Barrier and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance.”¹⁹ This report emphasizes that while most adults polled were socially motivated to attend arts-based events, a lack of time prevents many from attending.

In the survey “Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces,” participants answered questions about the factors impacting their decision to either visit or not visit a museum, and the results differed slightly from the NEA’s reports. For millennials who participated in the survey, the main motivation to visit was tied between having a unique experience (28%) and learning something new (28%), while the main barrier, as discussed earlier, was high cost of admission prices (41%) (Figure 2).²⁰ This suggests millennials seek opportunities to go to a museum motivated by a need to acquire new and unique knowledge, but high ticket prices may become a reason to decide against pursuing that experience.

Q7 - What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum? (Select all that apply.)

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Spending time with friends or family	21.82%	321
2	A peaceful place to "escape" to	17.74%	261
3	An opportunity to learn something new	28.35%	417
4	An opportunity to have a unique experience	28.14%	414
5	A school project	3.94%	58
	Total	100%	1471

Figure 2: What typically motivates your decision to visit a museum? (Select all that apply.)

The barriers reported by the NEA's reports coupled with the survey's findings illuminate factors behind why millennials might choose not to engage with a museum. First, many millennials are now entering the workforce, acquiring their first professional jobs, and earning a livable wage. Many do not have time to participate in museum programs, which tend to take place during traditional museum hours, i.e. Monday - Friday from 9 AM - 5 PM. Traditional gallery tours and museum hours normally do not take place at times when working adults can participate.

Second, traditional educational programs such as gallery lectures or tours typically do not appeal to millennial audiences. Many millennials grew up during a time when digital technology usage grew in daily importance, and as a result, now grasp an intuitive knowledge of both the hardware and software developed for our contemporary lives. Additionally, many own a smartphone that connects them to the world via the internet, allowing them access to knowledge through a simple Google search. To create a truly engaging tour, museums should first ask themselves: Why should someone spend money and time on a gallery tour to learn information they could just Google? Museums that are in tune with their audiences will be able to answer this question in a way that truly adapts to their changing needs.

As discussed earlier, millennial motivation to visit museums are linked to learning something new in a unique and original way. Developing new programming tactics that present educational content in a way that feels fresh, exciting, and entertaining may increase the connection millennials make with an institution. This idea, in particular, reveals itself in the survey. The response, when asked if participants preferred programming that was educational or entertaining in nature, was divided nearly in half. 51% of participants sought educational programs, while 49% sought entertainment-oriented programs (Figure 3).²¹ Museums that choose to focus on either purely educational content or purely entertaining content may isolate half of their visitor-base. Finding a balance between the two sides of the pendulum may help museums create programming that resonates with the largest amount of young adult visitors.

Q19 - Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Educational (eg lectures, tours)	51.33%	232
2	Entertainment (eg drinking-related events, creative workshops)	48.67%	220
	Total	100%	452

Figure 3: Do you prefer museum events that are focused on education or entertainment?

Finally, true to popular stereotype, millennials also tend to seek events and programs where alcohol and food is present. When asked if they were more likely to attend a museum event if alcohol was present, 51% answered “Yes.”²² Similarly, when asked if food influenced their decision to attend a museum event, 68% answered “Yes.”²³ Being “wined and dined” at museum events is a common practice and it appears millennials are eager to keep this tradition alive.

Putting Trend into Practice

The Augusta Museum of History in Augusta, Georgia, found a creative solution to tie the consumption of alcohol to their collection using history as a steady guide. Southern Suds is an annual historically themed party held at the museum that transforms its lobby into a pub for a one night only event focused on the art and craft of brewing.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, Southern Suds quickly generated a lot of interest among young adults, however, it is no typical beer that captivates ticket holders’ attention.

The museum collaborates with River Watch Brewery each year to create a special batch of historical beer.²⁵ Based on a recipe from a cookbook in the museum’s collection, dated to the 1870’s, only attendees can taste the Per Simma Down. Local experts on beer and the brewing industry are available throughout the evening for guests to speak with, and all ticket sales directly benefit the conservation of the collection and supporting Southern Suds. Millennials were in the forefront of the museum’s mind when creating this program. “That was the purpose,” said museum executive director, Nancy Glaser, “we wanted to draw a millennial crowd. It is a group that we have not had here.”²⁶ Southern Subs is in its third year and continues to grow, bringing a unique and delicious experience to young adults in Augusta.

While on the surface, this program seems to cater only to the notion that millennials are alcohol-motivated visitors, it brings together many elements this generation seeks in a unique experience. Creating an air of exclusivity, providing an experience that only ticket holders can achieve is attractive to many young adults. Millennials seek occasions they don’t believe they could have anywhere else, and Southern Suds provides environment that is one-of-a-kind while educating event-goers about a history of beer brewing while connecting people to the collection.

Trend Two: Social Media

In the survey, participants were asked about the role social media platforms played in their lives and whether they use social media to research exhibitions or events at museums. To no surprise, social media is a major influence in the lives of young adults. Facebook debuted in 2004, coincidentally at a time when many older millennials began college. This means a majority of millennials navigated through adolescence with the internet and social media. Not only are a majority of millennials comfortable with social media, many rely on it to be informed citizens in their communities. In the survey, when asked, “What source do you typically use to learn about community events and programs in your area?” an overwhelming 72% said social media.²⁷

This response data implies that most millennials use social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to learn about places they can visit in their free time. If a museum does not have an active online social presence, they could miss a major opportunity to engage with this audience.

This begs the question: what social media platform is best? The past few years have seen an influx of social media options, some more trendy than others. Some museums, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) found success using Snapchat, others gained a following with Instagram or Twitter.²⁸ For LACMA, social media coordinator Lucy Redoglia said, “Obviously, bringing people in the door is one [goal], but it is also about spreading awareness of the museum and its collection to people who might not be able to attend — to get people interested in art history.”²⁹

Whether the platform is tried and true such as Facebook, or trendy like Snapchat, the purpose of using social media is to help people connect to a museum’s collection and deconstruct the metaphorical walls someone might build that prevents them from entering a museum space. Maintaining an active, friendly, and engaging social media account shows the public that they are invited and encouraged to come into the physical space of the museum. Still, different platforms yield different responses. In the survey, when asked, “What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?” 61% responded with Facebook, followed by 27% who preferred Instagram (Figure 4).³⁰

Q11 - What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Facebook	60.77%	285
2	Instagram	27.08%	127
3	Twitter	7.25%	34
4	Snapchat	2.35%	11
5	Pinterest	1.49%	7
6	Tumblr	1.07%	5
	Total	100%	469

Figure 4: What social media platform do you prefer to use in your life?

Interestingly, 95% of participants consider following museums on social media as a means of staying informed about events,³¹ and 81% of all surveyed cited Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter as their preferred platforms to follow museums.³² It appears that Pinterest, Tumblr, and Snapchat are not as popular among this age group and museums may want to consider focusing their communication efforts on more useful platforms.³³ These numbers are significant, showing that young adults maintain an active presence on social media and will use these platforms to learn about cultural institutions. A majority of millennial audiences are already online and are more likely to form a relationship with a museum they follow on social media. Considering this is a free resource, it makes sense to capitalize on this opportunity to reach more people.

Putting Trend into Practice

The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) has gained a lot of national attention, starting in 2017, for its unique social strategies. At this moment, anyone in the world can send a text message to the number 572-51 and receive art from the collection of the SFMOMA. This is part of an institution-wide socially-engaged digital campaign called Send Me SFMOMA that aims to, “bring transparency to the collection while engendering further exploration and discussion among users.”³⁴

While not directly linked to a specific social media platform, the SFMOMA’s text message initiative highlights the importance of becoming actively social with the communities outside of a museum’s physical space through means of digital technologies. With the rise of social media and digital technologies as a primary means of communication, museums can now reach two target audiences, both physical and digital. Traditionally, the SFMOMA, like any other museum, has a responsibility to visitors that are involved in the physical bounds of the institution. In the 21st century, digital platforms like the Send Me SFMOMA campaign allows the museum to provide an interpretive experience for virtual visitors, expanding the museum’s ability to communicate on a global scale.

The Send Me SFMOMA campaign is a creative example of how a museum can reach people on a global scale by means of digital communication. While this campaign relies on adequate funding and a long-term investment in the creation of an API, it makes sense that it would go viral when considering the lifestyles of young adults. 77% of all Americans owned a smartphone in the year 2017, and 12% of American adults use their smartphones as a primary means of using the internet.³⁵ As millennials age and technology continues to integrate into our lives, smartphones will increase in importance in the United States. Maintaining a digital presence using social media is a crucial way to connect with communities on a global scale.

Millennials are becoming the dominant generational cohort in the country, and they consume and process information in a digital way that is different from previous generations. Museums that wish to communicate with potential visitors need to use social media to cast as wide a net as possible. In the survey, participants were asked, “How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?”³⁶ 76% of participants responded social media was their most preferred method to stay informed about museums in their area (Figure 5). More

traditional marketing techniques, such as paper brochures and email are not considered relevant methods of communication to younger generations, who are directly connected to the world through social media.

Q17 - How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Social media	75.64%	354
2	Email	16.67%	78
3	Text message/ Push notifications	2.14%	10
4	Mailed invite	3.42%	16
5	Other	2.14%	10
	Total	100%	468

Figure 5: How would you prefer to learn about events and programs at a museum?

Trend Three: Membership

What motivates someone to belong to a museum? For some, being a member means free admission and discounts, while for others membership means supporting the institution. Some people are driven by value while others by philanthropy. Regardless of motivation and intent, membership is crucial to museums, providing financial support while also working to cultivate a group of people who truly desire to grow alongside an institution.

Millennials are different consumers than previous generations. The economy today is experience driven, rather than based on the purchasing of products or services. Young adults tend to invest in products that elicit emotional response and support companies or organizations that they feel connected to. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore originated this concept of emotionally-oriented consumerism in their book *The Experience Economy*. Young consumers entering the market today want products that spark passion and provide a unique experience they would not get otherwise.³⁷

In a few years, millennials will control a majority of the wealth in United States. With this amount of control, millennials will hold the power to support museums. Traditionally, museums implement membership programs to support general operation costs as well as building strong relationships within their communities. Based on the needs of millennials already discussed in this article, the traditional membership model might not be the most effective way to involve millennials in an institution. Until the results of the survey, it was not clear if young adults could afford, or were willing to budget for, the cost of a membership at a museum.

In the survey, participants were asked if they currently held a membership at a museum and if not, would they consider purchasing a membership. Surprisingly, 58% of participants currently held a membership at a museum at the time of the survey, and 87% were interested by the concept of museum membership.³⁸ From this response data, it can be implied that

museums should find ways to market their membership programs using tools that attract millennial audiences, such as social media, and develop member benefits that suit their needs.

When asked about membership benefits, specifically the traditional benefits that appeal the most, the top-choice was clear: free admission at 59%. Additionally, participants were nearly tied between additional traditional benefits such as members-only events (13%) and access to reciprocal museum programs (12%) (Figure 6).³⁹

Q24 - What type of benefits would you look for in a museum membership?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Free admission	59.74%	279
2	Museum store discount	2.57%	12
3	Exclusive members-only events	13.28%	62
4	Museum restaurant discount	0.43%	2
5	Special members-only gallery hours	7.92%	37
6	Priority registration for classes	1.28%	6
7	Access to reciprocal museum programs (ex NARM, ROAM, CUAM)	12.21%	57
8	Discounted gallery rental	0.43%	2
9	Other	2.14%	10
	Total	100%	467

Figure 6: What type of benefits would you look for in a museum membership?

This data implies that millennials currently tend to seek membership from an economic point of view but are also drawn to the idea of exclusivity and being connected to like-minded people. Millennials may seek memberships from the perspective of economic value for now, but with careful cultivation and planning on the part of museums, young adults can continue to build this relationship based in philanthropy and driven by a deeper desire to grow with institutions.

Putting Trend into Practice

Many museums are reworking their membership system to suit the needs of 21st-century audiences. The Perez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) recently established a new membership tier to reflect the needs of Miami's young professionals. Called PAMM Contemporaries, this program functions as a networking group, allowing young adults to meet like-minded people and stay closely connected to the Miami art scene.⁴⁰ Being a PAMM Contemporary provides members with all basic membership benefits, such as free admission to the PAMM, store discounts, and access to reciprocal museum programs, but also allows unique additional perks. Being a member of this program also means access to private, PAMM Contemporary only events and programs such as a graffiti art bike tour and social mixers. Additionally,

members have the opportunity to serve on the museum's Young Collectors Council, working closely with the museum's higher administration to support the growth of the collection.

Becoming a PAMM Contemporary may not be accessible for a mass audience, at \$200 per annual membership. While this program is not in the price range for all young adults visiting the museum, it allows the PAMM to cultivate support from young people who may become the museum's major donors in the near future. On this program, Christopher Pastor, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations at PAMM, says,

At PAMM, we mark success by watching our young professionals mature with the museum, deepen their love of art, and become vested in the museum's future and success. Patrons who...join at that level have gone on to become involved with our corporate programming, serving as chairs for museum fundraisers, joining upper level membership groups, and even contributing to the museum's capital campaign.⁴¹

The PAMM Contemporaries program serves as an example of a museum that is successfully moving millennial donors up the philanthropic pipeline in support of their financial future. By understanding the unique needs of their millennial audiences, PAMM created a program connecting young professionals to the mission of the institution, securing a healthy donor base for time to come.

Concluding Remarks

Identifying the major trends uncovered through the response data from the survey are by no means the only factors to consider when thinking about building millennial audiences. Rather, these elements, hybrid programming, social media, and membership, serve to provide a close look at significant influencers holding the power to generate a successful museum experience. As is apparent through the use of current examples, each trend reveals themselves in museums of varying budgets and sizes. Many museums already take initiatives in each of these areas to communicate with their various communities and the examples demonstrate some of the most interesting expressions of each trend within the field.

Based on the findings in the response data, it is evident millennials hold an interest in museums and would consider deeper levels of engagement with institutions that adapt to their needs. Some adaptations this audience seeks manifest themselves in simple ways, such as a more direct line of communication through the use of social media, while others are more complex, such as reevaluating membership programs to establish benefits that better suit their audiences. Navigating these changing needs may present new long-term projects institution-wide. Museums that successfully pinpoint the areas of interest for millennials in their community are seizing opportunities to thrive in the future.

The general concept of cultivating new audiences requires a great deal of time, energy, and funding.⁴² This paper serves as a brief analysis of a selection of methodologies and tactics utilized within the museum field to better engage audiences through the use of various technologies. Millennials specifically are an audience with a unique set of needs, making them

a difficult group for museums to cultivate. Growing up in a time marked by an increased dependence on digital technologies, this audience expects to communicate in different ways than generations past. Adapting practices to better suit the values held by millennials may be one way to better serve all audiences, by integrating technologies that can potentially create a more positive experience.

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Notes

¹ The argument of the museum experience shifting from object-centered to visitor-centered perspectives is not new, however, it does bear importance to this paper as a point of departure from which to discuss future expectations of visitors. Steven Conn provides an historical account detailing the shift from museological practices focusing on the autonomy of objects to that of visitors in his book *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* In this book, Conn points to the early 20th century as the moment museum theory shifted to a visitor-centered approach. Source: Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Stephen Weil pushes this notion even further in the article, “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” advocating for museums to embrace their roles as agents of social change to truly benefit the public they serve. Source: Stephen Weil, “From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999): 229-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027573>.

² Standard and Poor’s report, “Millennials and the U.S. Economy: The Kids are All Right (Or Soon Will Be),” revealed that millennials spent just over 600 billion U.S. dollars in 2015 and are projected to increase their spending power to 1.4 trillion by 2020. Despite having less disposable income than previous dominant generations, millennials still have a powerful influence over the economy. They also tend to spend in ways that deviate from the past. If you Google “Millennials and Industry,” a return of overwhelmingly negative results will turn up. Millennials are accused of ruining many businesses ranging from the diamond industry, napkins, and corporate restaurant chains. This generation’s shifting value sets are influencing the economy and re-evaluating. Source:

https://www.globalcreditportal.com/ratingsdirect/renderArticle.do?articleId=1396100&SctArtId=313628&from=CM&nsi_code=LIME&sourceObjectId=9137528&sourceRevId=1&fee_ind=N&exp_date=20250428-14:01:43.

³ All generations differ from each other in significant ways. The term “generation” as applied to generational cohorts, is a nebulous word that can refer to a wide range of ages that differ among researchers. Defining generations are one way researchers track behaviors with the same group of people of a similar age over a given timeline, however, time limitations can differ across studies. For this reason, many age ranges for defining the millennial generation exist. For this paper, the term “millennial” is aligned with limitations established by Howe and Strauss. Millennial: as any individual born between the years 1986 to 2000. Pew Research Center, “Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change,” 2010, accessed July 17, 2017, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change.pdf>.

⁴ According to the United States Census Bureau, millennials consist of 30% of the population, and 44.2% of all millennials identify as belonging to a racial or ethnic minority. Source: United States Census, “Millennials Outnumber Baby Boomers and Are Far More Diverse,” June 25, 2015, accessed July 16, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>. This is the date range established by Neil Howe and William Strauss in the book *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*. Howe and Strauss

are generally accepted as the researchers who originally coined the term “millennial.” Source: Neil Howe and William Strauss, *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000).

⁵ Silvia Filippini-Fantoni, “To Charge or Not to Charge - Museums and the Admission Dilemma,” *MuseumNext! Dublin*, 2016, accessed July 11, 2017, <https://vimeo.com/165112246>.

⁶ This article also suggests that while millennials are visiting museums, it is not at a proportionate rate when considering the large size of this generational cohort. Dilenschneider argues that unless museums adapt to communication methods used by millennials, visitation will only continue to decrease. Although the blog Know Your Own Bone is operated by a for-profit company named IMPACTS, the data examined by Dilenschneider holds great merit within the museum field. Colleen Dilenschneider, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations,” *Know Your Own Bone*, accessed July 12, 2017, <https://www.colleendilen.com/2017/07/12/arts-culture-remain-less-important-younger-generations-data/>.

⁷ While this is a bold statement to make, it is not unfounded. In April 2015, at the dedication of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Michelle Obama acknowledged this saying, “I guarantee you that right now, there are kids living less than a mile from here who would never in a million years dream that they would be welcome in this museum...Growing up on the South Side of Chicago, I was one of those kids myself. So I know the feeling of not belonging in a place like this.” As an effort to generate a more inclusive environment for people of all backgrounds, the American Alliance of Museums published their Diversity and Inclusion Policy in 2014, addressing, “the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are.” It places emphasis on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment within museums as both a workplace and space for public benefit. Source: American Alliance of Museums, “Diversity and Inclusion Policy,” accessed November 28, 2017, 2014, <http://aam-us.org/about-us/strategic-plan/diversity-and-inclusion-policy>. In 2001, the Smithsonian released a report titled, “Increasing Museum Visitation by Under Represented Audiences: An Exploratory Study of Art Museum Practices,” that directly examines the issue of disproportionate museum audiences the institutions as a whole face. In this report, it is acknowledged that white visitors are, “over represented,” at 83% while African Americans are disproportionately represented at 4%. These numbers are alarming considering the Smithsonian Institution calculates visitation on a national level. The efforts of both the Smithsonian Institution and AAM to address issues of diversity, inclusion, and cultivating non-traditional audiences serves to benefit the field as a whole. Source: Smithsonian Institution, “Increasing Museum Visitation by Under Represented Audiences: An Exploratory Study of Art Museum Practices,” 3, accessed November 28, 2017, 2001, <https://www.si.edu/Content/opanda/docs/Rpts2001/01.06.UnderRepresentedAudience.Final.pdf>.

⁸ Primary audiences vary greatly at different museums. Typical audiences of interest are children, families, and seniors, as is reflected in the programming offered at many museums. According the report Demographic Transformations and the Future of Museums, released by AAM, the typical core museum audience are adults within the age range 45- 54. Source: American Association of Museums, “Demographic Transformations and the Future of Museums,” 2010, accessed November 28, 2017, <http://www.aam-us.org/docs/center-for-the-future-of-museums/demotransaam2010.pdf>.

⁹ In the museum field, visitation continues to decline every year. A 2012 National Endowment for the Arts report “When Going Gets Tough” examines the barriers and motivations for participating in cultural institutions. The report breaks down the myriad of potential reasons a person might choose against visiting a museum, the most common reasons being a lack of time, high cost, and difficulty getting to the museum, all of which lie within the realm of accessibility. Source: National Endowment for the Arts, “When Going Gets Tough: Barriers and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance,” January 2015, Accessed November 28, 2017, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/when-going-gets-tough-revised2.pdf>.

¹⁰ It became necessary to implement this survey to eliminate any bias on my part as a millennial while this research developed. Being a millennial makes it easy to assume social values concerning 21st-century life, however my values are not reflective of an entire generation. In order to prevent bias in the form of projecting my behaviors onto my generation, I needed to hear from as many millennials as possible, casting a wide net across the country. Gaining a nationally representative response pool is beneficial in allowing me to view specific trends drawn from the responses and examine how these trends relate to current practices in the field.

¹¹ This population size is pulled from a 2015 U.S. Census report, titled *A More Diverse Nation*. Source: United States Census Bureau, “A More Diverse Nation,” 2015, accessed June 7, 2018, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>.

¹² Colleen Dilenschneider, “Arts and Culture Remain Less Important to Younger Generations.”

¹³ Question eight, “What Factors Prevent You from Visiting a Museum?” “Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces.”

¹⁴ Steven Conn, *Do Museums Still Need Objects?* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Stephen Weil, "From being about Something to being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum," *Daedalus* 128, no. 3 (1999): 229-58, <http://www.istor.org/stable/20027573>.

¹⁵ Pew Research Center, "Millennials: Confident, Connected, Open to Change," 2010: 1, accessed October 6, 2017, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/02/24/millennials-confident-connected-open-to-change/>.

¹⁶ This concept was supported in a conversation with Julia Kennedy, Marketing + Audience Development Associate, on June 21, 2017. Please contact researcher via email for expanded notes.

¹⁷ National Endowment for the Arts, "A Decade of Arts Engagement: Findings from the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts, 2002 - 2012," 2012, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2012-sppa-feb2015.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ National Endowment for the Arts, "When Going Gets Tough: Barrier and Motivations Affecting Arts Attendance," 2012, <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/when-going-gets-tough-revised2.pdf>.

²⁰ Question eight, "What Factors Prevent You from Visiting a Museum?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

²¹ Question nineteen, "Do You Prefer Museum Events That Are focused on Education or Entertainment?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

²² A long-running stereotype of millennials concerning museums is that they just want to be entertained and only come to events for food and alcohol. At the 2016 MuseumNext! Conference in Dublin, Director of the Smithsonian Food History Programs, Susan McClure shared an email she received from a co-worker planning an event to bring in millennials. This email read, "Give them drinks. Put it on the internet. Millennials like parties." That was the extent to which this person felt a millennial-focused event should be planned. That might be a more common outlook that many museum professionals share. It also might not be an incorrect assumption. In order to get millennials in the doors of your institution, you have to plan something that revolves around a millennial's interest. Source: Susan Evans McClure, "The Mythical Millennial in Museums." Question twenty-one, "Are You More Likely to Attend a Museum-Related Event if Alcohol is Present?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

²³ Question twenty, "Are You More Likely to Attend a Museum-Related Event if Food is Present?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

²⁴ Augusta Museum of History, "Southern Suds: Come For the Beer, Stay for the History," accessed July 11, 2017, <http://www.augustamuseum.org/SouthernSuds>.

²⁵ This historical beer's name is derived from its main ingredient, the persimmon. Recipe 888 from Ms. A.P. Hill's late-1800's cookbook was given the 21st-century microbrewery treatment when the Augusta Museum of History sought to recreate it. According to local news station WSAW News, this beer was made as closely to the recipe as possible, with slight variations in order to make the beer more hygienic.

²⁶ Christie Ethridge "146-year-old Beer Recipe Draws Millennial Crowd at Museum," WSAW-TV News, accessed July 11, 2017, <http://www.wsaw.com/content/news/398683461.html>.

²⁷ Question sixteen, "What Source Do You Typically Use to Learn about Community Events and Programs in Your Area?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

²⁸ In 2016, LACMA won a Webby Award in the Social: Culture and Lifestyle category for their innovative use of Snapchat. <https://www.webbyawards.com/winners/2016/social/social-content-and-marketing/culture-lifestyle/los-angeles-county-museum-of-art-lacma-snapchat/>.

²⁹ Priscilla Frank, "An Art Museum in Los Angeles is Killing the Snapchat Game," *Huffington Post*, accessed June 28, 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/you-need-to-start-following-lacma-on-snapchat_us_55b136afe4b08f57d5d3fdf7.

³⁰ Question eleven, "What Social Media Platform Do You Prefer to Use in Your Life?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

³¹ Question thirteen, "Would You Ever consider Following A Museum on Social Media to Learn More About Their Programs and Events?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

³² Question fourteen, "What Social Media Platforms Do You Use to Follow Museums?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

³³ In a conversation with Molly Nuanes, Manager of Programs at the MCA Denver, Snapchat is incredibly popular among teens, more so than Instagram and especially more popular than Facebook. "It is really not cool," said Nuanes of Facebook, "Teens use it as a way to track events, but not to share personal content with," adding that cleaner, image-based platforms are preferred by this age group. This suggests a narrow age difference dictating what social media platform is most effective for communication. Millennials may find Facebook to be the most effective social media platform for their age group, but over time, as younger

generations age, there could be a shift in social media trends. In the coming years, the potential exists for Facebook to fall to the wayside in favor of image-based platforms.

³⁴ Jay Mollica, "Send Me SFMOMA," accessed March 3, 2018, <https://www.sfmoma.org/read/send-me-sfmoma/>.

³⁵ Aaron Smith, "Record Shares of Americans Now Own Smartphones, Have Home Broadband," *Pew Research Center*, January 12, 2017, accessed September 1, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/12/evolution-of-technology/>.

³⁶ Question seventeen, "How Would You Prefer to Learn about Events and Programs at a Museum?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

³⁷ Consider the recent rise of transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft. These companies offer the same product as taxis, meaning they move people from one place to another in exchange for money, however they provide a unique experience that passengers cannot get from a taxi. In a Lyft, you get to choose when, where, and how you want to get to a place from the comfort of your phone. You even have the option to see who is driving you and what car they own before you begin your ride. Once you inside the car, you can have a different experience every time. Some drivers keep comfort amenities in their car, so you can have the best possible ride. Others provide snacks or bottled water, all so you can enjoy your brief respite in their car. All of this is usually less money and much less hassle than a taxi ride. The Lyft system works because the company considered what young consumers like about traditional taxi experiences and enhanced those qualities while eliminating the qualities young consumers did not like.

³⁸ Question twenty-two and twenty-three, "Have You Ever Been a Member of a Museum?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

³⁹ Question twenty-four, "What Types of Benefits Would You Look For in a Museum Membership?" "Assessing Millennial Engagement in Museum Spaces."

⁴⁰ Pérez Art Museum Miami, "Join PAAM Contemporaries," accessed July 12, 2017, <http://www.pamm.org/contemporaries>.

⁴¹ Phil Chan, "Art Access for Millennials: Young Professional Programs," *Huffington Post*, accessed July 12, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/phil-chan/art-access-for-millennial_b_8918626.html.

⁴² Black, Graham. *The Engaging Museum: Developing Museums for Visitor Involvement*. London: Routledge, 2005.

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