

‘Where we are now, where we have come from’

**Visitor responses to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the
British Museum***

February 2009

'Where we are now, where we have come from' – Visitor responses to Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum

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The contemporary sculptures at the installation immediately provoked a **debate** among visitors, often forcing them to **think differently** about the role of the British Museum.

Although the sculptures were often unexpected, the concept of the display was extremely popular as visitors were able to make **connections** between the **past and the present**.

The *Statuephilia* leaflet, although popular, may have been more widely used if it had been more **immediately obvious** to visitors, many of whom both wanted and needed **more help** from the interpretation to fully appreciate the display.

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Contemporary art appeals to a younger audience

As was the case at *La Bouche du Roi* and *Word Into Art*, the contemporary art at *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* attracted a slightly younger audience than in the Museum as a whole. 56% of installation visitors were aged under 35, compared to 49% in this age group at the whole Museum.

1.2 A quarter of visitors were aware of the installation

Having looked at the particular sculpture where they were surveyed, 59% of visitors remained unaware that the piece was part of a specific display. The marketing budget was considerably less than at other recent contemporary art displays like *Word Into Art* and *La Bouche du Roi*, and also the request of the sculptors to not place interpretation and branded material near the sculptures ultimately adversely affected awareness of the intervention.

1.3 The *Statuephilia* leaflet provoked a very positive response

Visitors who used the *Statuephilia* leaflet were extremely enthusiastic both in its interpretive content and as a map to find the sculptures. Some visitors preferred to use the leaflet after having seen the sculpture, so they could form their own opinions on the piece first.

However, the majority of visitors to the display did not use the *Statuephilia* leaflet, with many unaware that any form of interpretation had been provided. Visitors also struggled to find the object labels, and so felt confused by the lack of immediate interpretation at the sculptures.

As the majority of museum visitors were unaware of the installation, this perceived lack of interpretation proved to be a problem. Visitors come to the Museum expecting to see (often ancient) objects, read the interpretation and subsequently learn about them. At *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* they were suddenly confronted by a piece of modern sculpture, with apparently little explanation as to what it was and why it was placed in the gallery.

Visitors therefore needed more obvious interpretation at each sculpture – and then it was up to them whether or not they chose to use it. The *Statuephilia* leaflet was therefore the ideal interpretation tool for this, but unfortunately they were often too discreetly positioned by the sculptures, and visitors subsequently missed them.

1.4 Contemporary art was an unexpected but pleasant surprise

Just over two thirds of visitors to the installation were making an incidental visit – i.e. they just stumbled across the sculpture while on a more general visit. As a result, for some the exhibits came as a surprise.

Visitors did not expect to see contemporary art displayed alongside the Museum's collection. Although they would tend to go to other venues such as the National Gallery or Tate to see contemporary art specifically, they were pleased that the Museum was willing to exhibit ancient pieces and contemporary art side by side.

Many visitors felt that contemporary art should be exhibited permanently within the British Museum, as it is within its remit as a learning institution to show objects from different time periods.

By exhibiting contemporary art alongside its permanent collections, visitors felt that the Museum was showing that it was more than just a static collection of antiquities. Visitors liked seeing the contemporary pieces mixed in, and this made them think differently about the Museum.

1.5 Visitors made connections between the modern and ancient sculptures

The contemporary sculptures within a gallery helped visitors to break up their visit, as often the sculptures appeared very different to anything else in the room. This contrast immediately encouraged them to think about the object and question why it was in that particular room. Often visitors were able to make the connections between the modern sculptures and the ancient exhibits – for example the theme of mummification at the Noble and Webster piece.

This shows that visitors are happy to see contemporary art within the Museum, but some could do with more help through the interpretation. Asking people to change their mindset from looking at Museum objects with plenty of interpretation, to suddenly looking at a contemporary piece with apparently very little interpretation was a big ask for some. However, by making the *Statuephilia* leaflet more obvious this situation is easily rectified, and visitors can enjoy both the ancient sculptures with their modern counterparts.

1.6 Visitors experienced strong emotional and spiritual outcomes

Whether visitors liked the individual sculptures or not, the sculptures often provoked debate – sometimes among visitors in the same group. Visitors were happy to have this debate however, and welcomed this sort of conversation within the Museum.

Visitors expressed a range of emotions at the individual sculptures, from a strong auto-aesthetic response to *Siren* and *Mask II*, to a sense of awe and fascination at *Dark Stuff*. All the sculptures in their own right encouraged visitors to think about what they were looking at and how it compared to the other objects in the room.

2 *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum*



Featuring works contributed by five of the world's leading artists, *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* brought together the themes of sculpture and contemporary art in a unique display.

Whereas previous exhibitions at the Museum had been confined to one exhibition space, *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* subtly interspersed these modern works with the Museum's permanent collections, encouraging visitors to explore the relationship between the old and the new.

The free display was guest curated by Waldemar Januszczak and James Fox, and ran from 4 October 2008 – 25 January 2009.

Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum was sponsored by Linklaters, The Henry Moore Foundation and Channel 4.

Featured artists and sculptures:

- Antony Gormley: *Case for an Angel I* (Entrance foyer)
- Damien Hirst: *Cornucopia* (Room 1: Enlightenment)
- Ron Mueck: *Mask II* (Room 24: Living & Dying)
- Tim Noble & Sue Webster: *Dark Stuff* (Room 4: Egyptian Sculpture)
- Marc Quinn: *Siren* (Room 17: Nereid Monument)

3 Research methodology

3.1 Aims & Objectives

The aim of this research is to provide an independent evaluation of the *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* installation, benchmarking the findings against other non-paying art-based exhibitions at the Museum such as *Word Into Art* and *La Bouche du Roi*.

Specific areas to be covered in the evaluation were:

- Visitor profile
- Motivations
- Marketing and communications
- Accompanying programme
- Website
- Sponsor
- General Museum audiences
- Interpretation and design

3.2 Our approach

Exit survey

Surveys were conducted with visitors at each of the contemporary sculptures to ascertain a basic visitor profile, awareness of the display, marketing usage and motivations for visiting.

The survey also gathered detailed information about how visitors had behaved and how they expected to behave through the rest of the intervention.

Approximately 30 surveys were conducted at each sculpture to ensure a representative sample of installation visitors throughout the Museum. In order to ensure that we captured display visitors, interviews were only conducted with visitors who actively looked at the relevant sculpture.

146 surveys were conducted across weekdays, weekends and evenings

British Museum rolling research

Several questions were added to the British Museum's rolling research exit survey to ascertain awareness and attendance at the display among general Museum visitors.

Vox pop interviews

Vox pop interviews were carried out at each of the sculptures to find out visitors' reactions both to the object itself, but also to the concept of contemporary art in the Museum as a whole. These vox pops also enabled us to understand whether visitors had made the connection between the sculpture and the other pieces in the room.

4 Visitor profile

Visitor profile

	<i>Statuephilia</i>	<i>La Bouche du Roi</i>	<i>Word Into Art</i>	BM Oct 08 – Jan 09	BM Year 3
Base	146	176	142	798	3,409
Intentional visiting					
Intentional visit to BM	84%	86%	87%	91%	90%
Incidental visit to BM	16%	14%	13%	9%	10%
Knowledge of subject (BM)					
Specialist	8%	11%	15%	10%	10%
General	71%	53%	45%	76%	68%
Little / No	21%	36%	40%	14%	22%
Origin					
London	25%	29%	39%	17%	13%
Elsewhere in UK	22%	14%	15%	25%	24%
Overseas	52%	57%	45%	59%	64%

Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum attracted a similar profile to visitors at *La Bouche du Roi* and at the Museum generally over the same period. However, there was a higher proportion of incidental, London-based visits to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* than at the whole Museum during the display period.

Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum appealed to a younger audience than at the Museum as a whole over the display period.

56% of visitors to the installation were aged under 35, compared to 49% of this age group at the whole Museum. This is a similar trend to the other contemporary art exhibitions which have been held at the Museum in the past.

Intentional visiting

84% of visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* were making an intentional visit to the Museum that day, with 16% saying they were in the area and decided to visit spontaneously.

Just under a quarter of visitors were aware of the display before their visit to the Museum. This is comparable to the 26% of pre-aware visitors at *La Bouche du Roi*, but less than the 49% pre-awareness at *Word Into Art*.

For 10% of installation visitors, seeing the sculptures was one of the reasons or the main reason behind their visit, with a further 14% saying they had heard of the intervention but would have come to the Museum anyway.

76% of visitors to the display had not heard anything about it before their visit to the Museum that day.

3% of visitors said that the display was the main reasons or one of the reasons for making their first ever visit to the Museum. We call this group *New Intenders*.

Knowledge base

8% of visitors described themselves as having a specialist knowledge of the subjects covered by the Museum, a figure which rose slightly to 10% when thinking about the subject areas covered specifically by the installation.

However, while only 21% of visitors said they had little or no knowledge of the subject areas covered in the Museum, 31% of visitors claimed relatively little knowledge of the subjects covered by the installation.

Segmentation

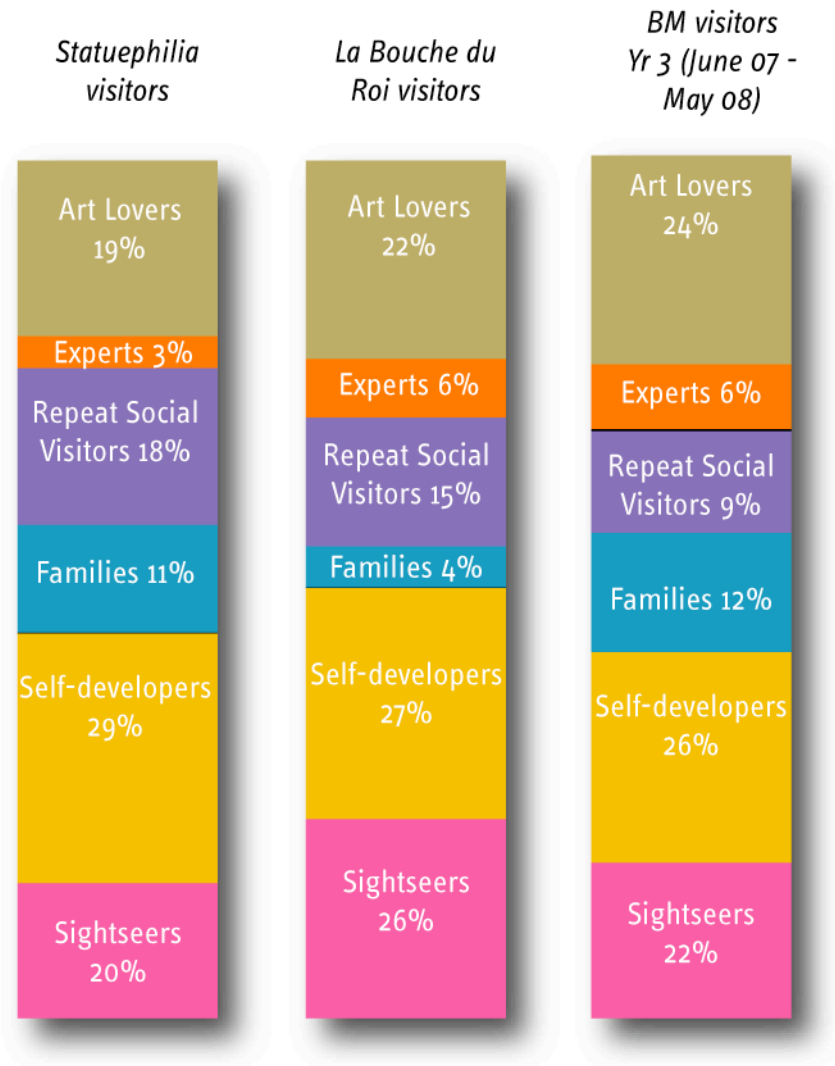
The table below describes the MHM-devised segments into which the British Museum audience is currently divided for annual reporting purposes.

Segment table

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

The diagram below compares the proportion of visitors that fell into each segment at *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* with the audiences at *La Bouche du Roi* and the British Museum annual audience for Year 3 of the rolling research (June 07 – May 08).

Visitor segments



The segment profile for visitors at *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* was very similar to that found at the *La Bouche du Roi* installation, and fairly similar to the Museum audience as a whole.

The majority of visitors first found out about the display during the course of a normal visit, hence the similarity with the general Museum profile.

Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum attracted a higher proportion of Repeat Social Visitors than at *La Bouche du Roi* and the Museum as a whole, suggesting that the installation was appealing to repeat visitors who just wanted to pop in and see something new, perhaps on a lunch break.

4.1 London cross-over

58% of visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* said they had visited Tate Modern in the past 2 years, a considerably higher proportion than the 35% who said this in Year 3 of the rolling research.

28% of *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* visitors had visited Tate Britain in the past 2 years.

Although the sample sizes for the individual segments are very small and therefore must be treated with caution, 69% of Repeat Social Visitors had visited Tate Modern and 55% had visited Tate Britain in the past 2 years, suggesting that this group is happy to drop in to both museums and art galleries.

5 Motivations for visiting

5.1 Motivations

We have identified four key drivers for visiting museums:

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

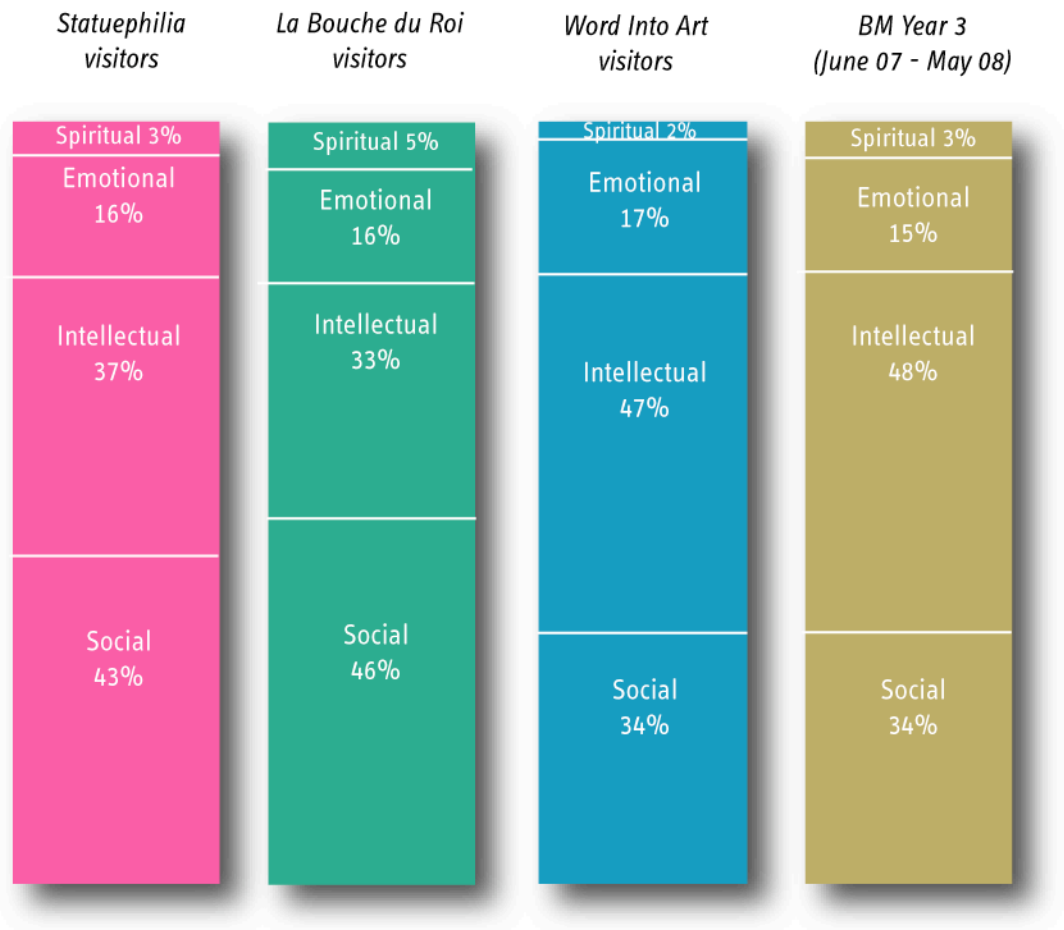
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At each level visitors have different needs. The suggestion is that visitors get the opportunity to engage at the deepest level they wish to.

5.2 Main motivation

Using a series of statements on the exit survey we asked visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* to identify the main motivation for their visit to the British Museum that day. The diagram below shows the main motivation of visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* compared to visitors at *La Bouche du Roi*, *Word Into Art* and at the British Museum in the third year of the rolling research.

Main motivation



Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum attracted a very similar motivational profile as *La Bouche du Roi* – reflecting the high proportion of socially and intellectually motivated general Museum visitors who first became aware of the display while on-site.

6 Visitor behaviour

6.1 On-site awareness

Before looking at on-site awareness of the exhibition it is important to note that the sculptors participating in this installation requested that the labelling and other interpretation should not be placed too close to the sculptures, to let visitors make up their own minds about the pieces first.

In reality, this caused some problems as visitors were often unaware the sculpture was part of a specific intervention, or could not find the relevant interpretation.

Surveys were conducted with visitors who had spent some time looking at an object, rather than people who just glanced at it as they walked past. However, 59% of these visitors were unaware that the sculpture was part of an intervention, even after having spent some time engaging with the piece.

This suggests that the publicity, interpretation material and branding for the display might have been too subtle to make some visitors aware of the intervention as a whole, and therefore encourage them to see all the sculptures.

29% of installation visitors said they became aware the sculptures were part of an installation during their visit.

I didn't know about the exhibition until I came across the first one

Visitors who became aware of the display while in the Museum did so through the following forms of marketing material:

- *Statuephilia* leaflet: 17%
- Museum staff: 14%
- *Statuephilia* signage and posters: 8%

Data tables showing the full response to the publicity, main source of information and on-site awareness questions can be found in the appendices to this report.

British sculptors' drawings: Moore to Gormley

15% of installation visitors were aware of the *British sculptors' drawings: Moore to Gormley* display in Room 90, with 9% of visitors already having visited the display.

A further 11% of *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* visitors said they intended to visit this display later in their visit, suggesting there was some crossover between the two displays.

6.2 Popularity of sculptures

Already visited

Visitors were briefly interrupted within their visit to complete the survey, before continuing with their visit. At the time of interview, visitors had seen the following sculptures:

- Antony Gormley - *Case for an Angel 1*: 46%
- Ron Mueck - *Mask II*: 44%
- Marc Quinn - *Siren*: 44%
- Noble & Webster - *Dark Stuff*: 36%
- Damien Hirst - *Cornucopia*: 20%

Unsurprisingly, considering its prominent position in the entrance foyer, Antony Gormley's *Case for an Angel I* had been visited by the highest proportion of Museum visitors at the time of interview. The other prominently positioned sculptures – *Siren* and *Mask II* were the second most widely visited, while the more subtly positioned *Dark Stuff* and *Cornucopia* had received fewer visits.

Intend to visit

Visitors were also asked which sculptures they intended to see during the rest of their Museum visit:

- Damien Hirst - *Cornucopia*: 44%
- Noble & Webster - *Dark Stuff*: 40%

- Marc Quinn – *Siren*: 38%
- Antony Gormley – *Case for an Angel I*: 31%
- Ron Mueck – *Mask II*: 30%

Once visitors have become aware of the display during their visit through seeing one of the more prominent statues, they are keen to find the other statues which they have either walked past and missed, or are yet to come across.

However, only 18% of visitors said that they intended to follow the trail of the intervention, moving from one to the next, with the vast majority of visitors (67%) preferring to continue with their normal Museum visit, and then appreciating the sculptures as and when they come across them.

This highlights that a large proportion of *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* visits – just over two thirds – were incidental visits made by people who came across the sculptures while on a more general visit to the Museum.

6.3 Locating the sculptures

Visitors described no real difficulty finding the sculptures, especially when using the *Statuephilia* leaflet. 32% of visitors said they were very easy to locate, with a further 23% saying it was quite easy.

Only 9% of visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* said they had some trouble locating the individual sculptures. The remaining visitors either said locating the statues was neither difficult nor easy, or they were not actively searching out the sculptures during their visit.

6.4 Interpretation

The artists asked that the interpretation should not be placed directly next to the individual sculptures – this was their decision rather than that of the Museum.

39% of visitors were aware of the *Statuephilia* leaflet and 32% of visitors used it during their Museum visit, meaning that there was a significant proportion of visitors who remained unaware of the main form of interpretation for this display.

This posed a problem for visitors who were used to seeing detailed interpretation at the other objects in the Museum.

6.5 **Statuephilia leaflet**

39% of visitors were aware of the free *Statuephilia* leaflet accompanying *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum*, with 82% of these visitors using it on their visit.

For these visitors, the *Statuephilia* leaflet was a crucial part of their visit experience. When visitors come to the British Museum they have certain expectations as to how they will behave and what the Museum will provide. On a visit to the Museum they expect to be offered more interpretation than they would expect to receive at an art gallery.

The majority of visitors to the display did not know about it prior to their visit and most would therefore be expecting to learn about different objects by reading the interpretation available. Therefore, when they came across an object in a gallery which appeared unusual, they wanted to know what it was and what its significance was. Many of those visitors who were not aware of the interpretation subsequently felt abandoned.

Had visitors to *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* been aware of the *Statuephilia* leaflet, many would have been encouraged to engage more deeply, both with that particular exhibit and across the installation as a whole.

[We would have used it] if we could have found one. We have been looking for them. We asked at the front desk ... and they just pointed us in the direction but didn't say anything

Reaction to the leaflet's content was very positive

Visitors responded extremely enthusiastically to the *Statuephilia* leaflet, and for the 32% of visitors who used the *Statuephilia* leaflet during their visit, the content and tone helped give them the necessary insight to engage deeply with the sculptures.

I was particularly interested in the bits where the artists were talking about how they had been to the British Museum or its collections and I think that was a really nice connection

It helped me to make sense of how those artists had connected with the historical collection

I thought it was very informative

It is good that you have this booklet because too much written things disturb the visual experience

Visitors also liked having a map to direct them to the individual sculptures.

I was using it at first to find my way round [the exhibition] which was extremely efficient

The map was good – we have literally pretty much done the five bits

The leaflets by the sculptures were not sufficiently obvious to many visitors

61% of visitors who used the *Statuephilia* leaflet picked up a copy at one of the information desks within the Museum, while just over a quarter of visitors picked up the leaflet by one of the sculptures.

As there was a relatively low awareness of the display among visitors, many will have been browsing through the Museum and would not necessarily have visited the information desks. These visitors therefore needed the information leaflets by the sculptures to be immediately obvious, and some visitors felt that they were placed too subtly.

We have only just found the leaflet and we have been in the Museum for about 3 hours

I didn't see any on display

I had to actively search for it – I think they need to make it a little bit more obvious

I picked up this leaflet which tells me what I need to know but someone who doesn't pick it up ... I don't think there is enough information at the site

Maybe you should emphasise to visitors even more to take one otherwise it can be a surprise of ... 'what is this doing here?'

Visitors will return to the *Statuephilia* leaflet after their visit

22% of visitors said that they intended to look at the *Statuephilia* leaflet after their visit.

I haven't read the leaflet – I will read it on the train going home. I don't read it beforehand because I want to look at it afresh

I have used it to find my way around and I will read it afterwards

I picked up this brochure to read later

I am taking it back to Australia. I am interested in going and reading further.

Some visitors failed to see any object labels or other interpretation

Some visitors struggled to find the object labels next to the statues, and as a result were left with very little information regarding the sculpture they were looking at.

I was just looking for something near to tell me something about it and I couldn't see anything so I don't think there is very much information about it

To be honest I haven't noticed any on the sculptures at all. I don't even know if there's an artist's name

I don't think there is enough information because immediately I came in and had a look all the way round and I didn't find any

It would be nice to know when it was made and who made it and a bit of background

When it was made, how it was made, who made it and what is it supposed to represent. It doesn't mean that people can't think otherwise but at least you would give them something to kick them off

Some 'less confident' installation visitors wanted a comparable amount of information, and in a similar format, to the interpretation at other objects in the Museum.

More information akin to what else is on all the other pieces in the Museum so you can understand what it is, what it is called, who did it and when they did it and then a brief explanation of its history and its purpose

When you look at other objects in the Museum there is quite a considerable amount of information on a lot of them

Others appreciated the more subtle interpretive technique

Some visitors liked the fact that they were able to form their own opinions of the sculptures, rather than being told through the object labels what to think. This allowed them the choice of whether or not to read the interpretation available in the *Statuephilia* leaflet.

I think it is better to leave the images to do their own work

I quite like the fact that there is not much information about it because sometimes when there is too much information it distracts and you are focused on reading the information rather than focused on the piece of work

There should always be a mystery about art; there should always be a freedom around art

It is like artwork and not just a historical piece so I guess you can just make up your own mind about it and you really don't need so much background

It shouldn't be packaged like any old product, art is different, strange, potentially unsettling and it definitely shouldn't be like buying something from a supermarket

7 Antony Gormley: *Case for an Angel I*

Antony Gormley's *Case for an Angel I* was created more than a decade before his 200 tonne *Angel of the North*, and for the *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* display found a home within the entrance foyer of the Museum. Echoing many other objects and exhibits within the Museum, the angel acts as a metaphor for humanity's capacity to imagine and create.

7.1 The sculpture made an immediate impact

Many visitors liked the immediate impact of placing such an impressive sculpture in the entrance foyer, as it is the first object with which they can engage. They felt that it set the tone for the rest of the Museum, and began their visit on an extremely positive note.

I walked through the doors and I saw that statue and the hairs on the back of my neck went up

I think it's fantastic, very impressive when you come in

I think it makes a statement because you can't help but notice it when you walk in

You are seeing a very British sculpture in the British Museum as soon as you come in

I think it is brilliant, I like the symmetry of it and the way it sort of envelops the crowd

The size of the entrance foyer allowed the sculpture to be exhibited without appearing cramped, but all the while making the most of the space.

It is a perfect location for them where you need size – you can't put something like this in a small living room, it is just not going to happen. It's like keeping an Alsatian in a small bed-sit

It fills the space without totally dominating it

It is natural for the space – it wasn't very difficult to decide that this was the sculpture for here and it is almost as if it has been designed for this space

7.2 The sculpture welcomed visitors into the Museum

The outstretched wings of the angel appeared to be welcoming, while offering them a choice of directions to go within the Museum.

It is in the centre here, the wings point in the different directions within the Museum and it is almost inviting you to explore around it. It seems like a central life force

To me it almost says welcome in a way

It seems welcoming – arms are open and it also reminds me of a plane that you can travel to different places

The Angel of the North is a welcoming angel or something and it obviously has a welcoming feel to it in the entrance hall

7.3 The British Museum is home to other monumental sculptures

One visitor recognised the link between Antony Gormley's sculpture and the other monumental pieces near the entrance foyer to the Museum.

There are lots of monumental sculptures in here from ancient times and it is monumental so it could be a comparison between old and new monumental stuff

8 Ron Mueck: *Mask II*

Ron Mueck's *Mask II* is positioned in the Living & Dying Gallery, lying directly in front of Hoa Hakananai'a, a huge stone statue from Easter Island. A representation of his own face, *Mask II* explores man's desire to replicate our own image on a grand scale.

8.1 Visitors appreciated the quality of the work

Some visitors had already appreciated Ron Mueck's works elsewhere, and so were keen to see another of his sculptures, this time in the context of the British Museum. Others were surprised at how realistic the sculpture was, giving it strange lifelike qualities.

I like his work as an artist and because of the realness of it. I quite enjoyed how realistic it is ... and the fact that it is on its side as if it's sleeping and it is a different way of seeing it as most sculptures in here are upright

I like how lifelike it is. The Ron Mueck statue is fascinating to look at

It's very real but a little disturbing

I think the texture of the skin is absolutely amazing

8.2 Connection between two sculptures

The proximity of *Mask II* to Hoa Hakananai'a was immediately recognised as a key feature of the display, with visitors drawing parallels between the two huge sculptures.

I find it very much connected with the human sculptures and faces which are in this [room] and in the rooms around

They are both quite silent and mysterious

To draw a parallel with the sculpture behind it and see the facial features. I think it works really well with the stone behind it and the modern material in comparison

It is not that one is primitive and the other modern but that they have their own modernness at the same time

I am quite excited about the relationship between the two and the contrasts. There is quite an interesting conversation going on between old and new

8.3 Some visitors noted a similarity in what the artists were trying to achieve

From noting the initial aesthetic connections between the two sculptures, some visitors then went on to consider how they were linked in terms of what the artist was trying to portray.

Humans still want to make sense of living and dying and they are still using similar ideas

It is showing me a contemporary view of what people were trying to do a long time ago

I thought it had a relationship to the Living & Dying gallery largely because I suppose it is a mask of a person which has a relation to a death mask

The two different ways that we envisage the human figure and in modern times we have become more obsessed with making things look exactly like they are, whereas in ancient times perhaps that wasn't necessarily the consideration

8.4 Increases appreciation of Hoa Hakananai'a

However, some visitors were less enthusiastic about this particular sculpture, and felt that Hoa Hakananai'a outshone Mask II in this particular setting. For these visitors, Ron Mueck's work helped highlight the quality of the Easter Island statue.

In this particular case I would prefer to see the [Easter Island] statue alone

I think it's an interesting juxtaposition. I noticed how a lot of people were quite shocked when they saw the two of them together and I think in a way it just points up how good the older piece of art is

I think it is such a disappointing piece of sculpture compared to what else is in the room ... I wouldn't say it detracts from the other statues but the statues diminish it

9 Noble and Webster: *Dark Stuff*

Dark Stuff is a collection of mummified animals, carefully arranged to form a silhouette of the artists' faces. Inspired by the Egyptians' use of mummification and their beautiful sculptures, *Dark Stuff* was placed in the Egyptian Sculptures Gallery of the Museum.

9.1 Visitors understood the mummification theme

After giving it some thought, visitors understood the relationship between *Dark Stuff* and the other objects in the gallery, latching onto the themes of sculpture and mummification.

I didn't think at all about the placement of that until I read the leaflet – the mummification thing

They are all mummified animals and this is the Egyptian section and maybe it fits in that way

The mummified animals and the Egyptians – kind of a relationship

The Egyptians are all about rebirth and then it is using dead animals and reusing them

9.2 *Dark Stuff* inspired strong emotional outcomes

This sculpture, perhaps more than any other in the display, inspired feelings of awe and fascination among visitors. They were particularly enthused about the skill of the artist and the amount of work that must have gone into creating the piece.

I found that quite poignant

I can't imagine the labour that it took to create something like that

I was quite amazed; we were both of us really amazed about how he makes this taken from these animals

Make no mistake I wouldn't have that at home although I do find it fascinating

Feeling of excitement and horror seeing Noble and Webster

It is really amazing. We were trying to work out but it is very difficult to work out how he can make this in your mind and then put it all together and then come out with that it is very, very weird

I think it is brilliant. I think it is really clever, inspiring. It does bring out issues of mortality

9.3 The sculpture added a new element to the gallery

Some visitors liked the positioning of *Dark Stuff* in this gallery as in its composition it was completely different to anything else in the space. After looking at the surrounding statues, visitors liked having this piece to help break up their visit.

It has a visual impact simply because it is in the middle of a room of things that are seemingly totally unrelated and it is just in a little corner and there is a light and it draws your attention that way, but then the thought of why it is placed there would come much later

Going through a whole gallery of cases is overload and for having something like this in the middle is almost like a palette refresher and I think it is great

9.4 Some felt the statue didn't belong in this space

Although all visitors were quick to appreciate the skill and care that had gone into the work, some felt that the statue was just too dissimilar to the other pieces in the room to fit properly.

It was clever but given what was in the room, I mean the sculptures in that room are just mind blowing. It is so small and so to show it in a room with such huge statues seems just a mistake because the ancient works diminish it

I think it is really good but it doesn't belong here

We are looking at statues in granite and terracotta and then we see a different material and it is difficult to focus

10 Marc Quinn: *Siren*

Marc Quinn's solid gold sculpture of Kate Moss was positioned next to the Nereid Monument, described as 'a temple-like tomb adorned with sea-nymphs', and the nearby statue of Aphrodite, known as 'Lely's Venus'.

10.1 Marc Quinn divides public opinion

Some visitors had seen Marc Quinn's previous work, famously exhibited in Trafalgar Square, and had already formed both positive and negative opinions about the artist.

I happen to follow the work of this particular sculptor and the one he did of this lady in Trafalgar Square and I think he is one of the most outstanding sculptors in England today

It was really the Marc Quinn statue that was advertised in The Times and I came specifically out of curiosity to see that because I remember he was the sculptor ... of the slightly more controversial one in Trafalgar Square ... so I was more interested to see more of his work

10.2 Kate Moss is a controversial figure

The decision to use Kate Moss as the model for this piece provoked a response among visitors, some of whom felt she was not an appropriate inspiration for the sculpture.

It is a golden Kate Moss bending over backwards. I think that sums it up

Consumerism. She doesn't really have much of a voice. She just sort of stands there looking pretty

I didn't think anything of it at all – nothing, very trivial

Greece has stood the test of time and I am not sure that Kate Moss is going to be quite in that category. In 2000 years time are we going to be talking about Kate Moss? I'd like to think not

10.3 Many visitors were unsure why it had been positioned here

The positioning of the sculpture in this gallery confused some visitors, as they felt it did not fit with its surrounding pieces as well as some of the others in the installation. For these visitors the links between Kate Moss and the statue of Aphrodite were not sufficiently clear, often leading to a sense of confusion and frustration.

I suppose it is quite a striking centrepiece but apart from that I don't see how it fits in here at all really

It is a bit of a vulgar position as well. What is it doing in there? It would have been interesting if it was 5000 years old but it is not

It is misplaced; it shouldn't be in a museum it should be in an art gallery

I just think it is out of keeping in this section. Perhaps they haven't got anywhere else to put it

I can see the connections with the other statues who have been placed where they are but not particularly with this one

10.4 Others understood the connection, or attempted to make their own

Some visitors were able to make a connection between this sculpture and the surrounding pieces, and as a result felt they could engage more deeply with the artwork.

The Kate Moss statue has obviously been aligned with, is it Venus, there is an eye line thing going on in the doorway

I think it fits in quite well because some of the ancient ones are quite evocative in places as well

I guess because it is with all the beautiful Greek statues

The space of the room and the light and the gold colour and it gives you a clear view between Kate Moss' legs right through the door

Worship in the modern sense

10.5 A beautiful object

Some visitors received a strong auto-aesthetic response to this sculpture, commenting on its beauty.

It completely surprised and delighted – the form and the gold leaf – it was a real object of delight

The gold figure – amazing. Beautiful statue within the old mummies

11 Damien Hirst: *Cornucopia*

Cornucopia is a display of 200 brightly coloured skulls, subtly positioned in eight antique wall cases in the Enlightenment Gallery. Inspired by the famous Crystal Skull and other Museum objects, the display's content contrasts wildly with the Enlightenment objects that sit alongside.

11.1 Damien Hirst provokes debate

As with the Marc Quinn sculpture, it was often the artist himself who provoked the biggest reaction among visitors. Many had formed preconceptions about the artist based on his previous high profile work.

I think some of Damien Hirst's stuff is really interesting

Why they have put that rubbish in here I have got no idea. There is no talent in that. I always give Damien Hirst a fair chance but I am yet to find anything of his where I go 'Oh my god that is brilliant'

Interesting to see something from Damien Hirst in front of me. Just read about him until now

I think it would be a poorer world without him

11.2 The display was too subtle for many

Many visitors felt that the display of this sculpture was not suitably impressive to match the objects themselves, and as a result this often detracted from their enjoyment of the skulls.

It could be highlighted a lot more I think – the lighting isn't particularly impressive. I would be really trying to embrace those colours rather than trying to get it to blend in

I am not sure it is being shown to its particular best advantage actually

Some people failed to notice the skulls and had to ask where the sculpture was positioned. Upon finding the sculpture some subsequently felt it did not fit into the context of the room.

I have been in here three times but I just didn't notice it

It seems very random ... it doesn't really go with what is round about it

Maybe it has kind of been swallowed up by a lot of artefacts which are around it. It is quite busy around it

11.3 Other visitors responded more positively

Although the majority of visitors struggled to engage with this sculpture, some people appreciated why it had been placed in this room and reacted positively to its positioning.

I walked in and thought 'oh it is not here' and then I realised how they had placed it ... and it seemed to be presented as if it had been there as long as the room

Quite fitting with the character of the room

11.4 An aesthetically unusual piece

In many ways *Cornucopia* is very different to anything else that can be found in the Enlightenment Gallery, and in fact in the whole of the Museum. The sculpture provoked a strong immediate aesthetic response from visitors, as it had a visual 'wow' factor.

Never seen anything like this

Following on from this auto-aesthetic response, some visitors tried to interpret the piece for themselves, with one suggesting a Mexican connection as the inspiration for the sculpture.

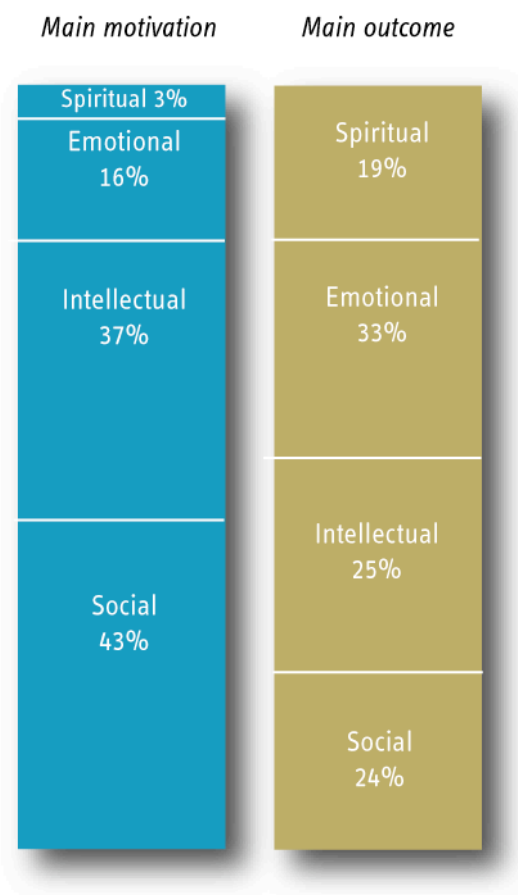
He actually has a house in Mexico so you see Mexicans are very obsessed with death and that is probably why he has done skulls

12 Outcomes and key messages

12.1 Impact

The chart below compares visitors' motivation for visiting the Museum against the main outcomes they got from the installation.

Overall impact



This shows that while visitors to the Museum came with largely social or intellectual motivations, the display provoked strong emotional and spiritual outcomes.

Only 7% of visitors described their main motivation for visiting as 'to experience awe-inspiring, fascinating or beautiful things or places', yet a fifth of visitors subsequently described this as the main outcome they received from the intervention.

Many visitors consider the Museum to be solely a learning institution, and so the introduction of beautiful contemporary art into the collection forced them to reconsider their views, and provoked these unexpected emotional and spiritual outcomes.

12.2 Meeting expectations

The vast majority of visitors who had seen some form of publicity about the installation before coming to the Museum said that the display had matched their expectations.

However, several people thought that the intervention would contain more sculptures.

I thought there would be more statues. I thought it would be better presented within the Museum – we have really struggled to find the statues in this exhibition

There are fewer sculptures than I expected

Thought there would be more

I just thought that possibly there could be more. I was quite disappointed to find there were only four or five pieces

Some also thought it would follow the more traditional technique of employing just one specific display space.

I expected them all to be in one room

12.3 Impact on future behaviour

Visitors were asked whether seeing the *Statuephilia: Contemporary Sculptors at the British Museum* installation would affect how they used the Museum in the future.

Visitors said they would be more likely to:

- Find out more about the British Museum 49%
- Look out for more contemporary art-related events at the British Museum 43%
- See or find out more about Statuephilia events and activities 39%
- Visit the British Museum in general 38%

- Visit British Museum special exhibitions 32%
- Use the British Museum website 29%

12.4 Contemporary art is an unexpected bonus

Visitors did not expect to see contemporary art at the British Museum, saying that they would expect to see this work at other venues such as Tate or the National Gallery.

Traditionally I think of antiquities and things like that. Contemporary art you find in Tate Modern

I don't really come here for the contemporary art – I go to Tate Modern. When I think of the British Museum I think of history

If I wanted to see modern art I suspect I would be more tempted to go to the National Gallery and Tate Modern but to have it here is certainly thought-provoking

Coming across contemporary art within the British Museum was therefore a surprise to many visitors who consider it to be solely the home of antiquities.

I wasn't aware about the fact that the contemporary one and the classic art were together in the same place

I was surprised with this because it is something new and I expected to see old things

Room after room after room of antiquities and so with that it is stimulating. I didn't expect to see that here

I guess the British Museum is known for its antiquities and more its sort of historical collection and so ... I was really surprised to see contemporary stuff here

However, this is not to say that the contemporary art in the British Museum was unpopular – in fact the opposite was often true. Visitors liked being surprised by the Museum as it added a new, unexpected element to their visit.

I am pleased, I am really, I didn't even know there was contemporary art at the British Museum

Came for history tour for daughter but we'll talk about modern art while going round and on way back home.

I came here to look at the Egyptian collection and so it is really refreshing and I wasn't aware that there was a contemporary collection

I think it's very good that they have something modern – it brings a new dimension. Anything that's a talking point is a good thing

12.5 Visitors like finding the sculptures interspersed with the Museum's permanent collection

Introducing the contemporary sculptures into the Museum's permanent collection provoked a positive response among most visitors, as it helped to break up their visit to a particular room or gallery.

It mixes it up a bit – it makes it more interesting

Whether you like the things or not, they make you think about it and that is partly why one comes to see things. I haven't seen anything I liked, nothing that remotely matches the quality of the other things in the room but that doesn't mean I am disappointed because it makes you refine your ideas about why you like it and what makes something awe-inspiring or not

It breaks up the mindset that people get into when they wander round. A lot of people come to museums to see ancient stuff in an education frame of mind ... but all they have got essentially is dead things to look at and so what they learn comes from reading about those objects as opposed to looking at them. Putting modern stuff in there just breaks it up visually and makes you think

By placing the objects side by side visitors were also encouraged to compare and contrast the contemporary and the ancient pieces, and make any connections for themselves.

Both ancient and modern works of art display well in harmony with each other. They should do this more

I am a big fan of seeing the modern pieces being set against the ancient pieces you have got here

Visitors also liked the idea of mixing the contemporary pieces in, rather than placing them all in a dedicated gallery.

I think it is good and very interesting to have them dropped in, in single chosen pieces rather than look at a gallery of contemporary stuff

Placing the sculptures in various rooms of the Museum encouraged some visitors to explore galleries they might not usually visit.

I really like the fact that they are spread out across the Museum and so it makes you walk around ... it is much more interesting and interactive when seen in the wider context

I like the location – you just come across them in all sorts of secret corners – it's unexpected

12.6 The Museum is not static, it is a constantly changing institution

The majority of visitors liked the inclusion of the sculptures in the permanent collection as it showed them that the British Museum was not just a static institution displaying antiquities. The fact that the Museum would consider showing contemporary art from some of the world's most renowned, and at times controversial artists, shows that the Museum is constantly evolving.

It has probably still got a bit of a stuffy image but I think that is changing. I think this will probably help a little bit

The Museum is not a static thing

It is prepared to adapt and accommodate all sorts of views

It is great to look at the past and see that it is also important to keep looking forward as well

We were here 20 years ago which was the last time we were here and this place has changed so remarkably in 20 years and that is good

This was especially important for repeat visitors, as they like to see something new every time they visit.

This tells me that the Museum is keeping up – it's current, it's changing and that means when I come back next time I will see new things and I appreciate that

I think it is fabulous and it really livens up the experience of going to the Museum which I have been in many times and so to me it is something that has lifted the experience for me

I have been in many times but I have got a friend visiting from abroad and he wanted to come in and I was like 'oh here we go again' but it was nice to see these placed here

12.7 Visitors could appreciate art in a museum setting

Although for many visitors seeing art and contemporary sculpture was an unexpected surprise, most were able to make the connection between the old and new pieces and subsequently appreciate the sculptures.

I think it is good because you walk in here and you see all these ancient things and sometimes you lose perspective

I was sort of shocked to see it but it makes you question the connections between ... what we are doing now, what was done

It is a great museum for sculpture and so having contemporary sculpture as well as ancient sculpture makes sense to me

I like those sorts of interventions in a collection – I think it makes it much more dynamic and relevant

I like the idea of Statuephilia – contemporary artists interacting with the collection

I think it works beautifully. It merges, it is sympathetic with the shapes and forms and all the sculptures around it

Maybe at the time the old stuff that's here was being made, maybe they thought it was weird what they were making at the time

The ugly and the grotesque can be beautiful plus it highlights other exhibits as art rather than artefacts

There's always something else to be considered. Reminds me that people have different interests – what works for one doesn't always work for another

12.8 Contemporary art should be a permanent fixture at the Museum

In addition, some felt it was the British Museum's prerogative as a learning institution to display sculptures such as this, rather than solely focussing on ancient work.

It's a good and impressive thing to do to connect the past with the present – I think that is part of the Museum's job

I think it is a journey, isn't it, history? Where we are now, where we have come from

Considering the British Museum in its historical role in other people's cultures ... it is interesting for the British Museum to start reflecting on itself

I think contemporary art can work anywhere

I think if there was a section like this I wouldn't mind having a look at it

However, some visitors were concerned that contemporary art would become the sole focus of the Museum, thereby detracting from their enjoyment of the wealth of objects already in its permanent collection.

I think you need to display the art in a way that respects the ancient art that is here and I have seen it done before, for example at the Sir John Soane's Museum and it just looked terrible because they obviously hadn't paid any attention to how it was going to fit with the other exhibits

It has got such ancient history in it and we want to keep that, we want to keep that as its centre

I wouldn't be opposed – I hope it doesn't take away from the more historical and archaeological things already available



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