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Community Consultation Report

SEATTLE ART MUSEUM
AUDIENCE RESEARCH



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November 5, 2001

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1. Introduction

The Seattle Art Museum has been awarded a major grant from the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds over 4 years to conduct audience research, organize major exhibitions, expand opportunities for involvement with the Museum, and expand marketing and communication efforts to diversify its audience so that it more closely reflects local demographics. The Museum's goal is to improve relationships with visitors and to sustain and enhance its efforts to promote ethnic diversity in all aspects of the Museum.

SAM engaged LORD Cultural Resources Planning and Management, with PRR, a Seattle-based market research firm, to carry out a multiyear program of audience research that will lead to the development of targeted strategies to deepen, broaden and diversify participation at the Seattle Art Museum. The Research Strategy developed for SAM uses multiple methods, which are both quantitative and qualitative, to conduct primary research.

This Community Consultation Report is the first of a series of reports on the primary research that is being conducted by the consultants.

1.1 Purpose and Methodology of the Community Consultation

The Community Consultation focused on those organizations that were involved in providing cultural or community services to diverse audiences. In undertaking this research the objectives were to learn:

1. the characteristics of diverse audiences, their needs and interests as experienced by a range of organizations serving different audiences;
2. what strategies are effective in attracting diverse audiences;
3. perceptions of SAM and its relationships with diverse organizations.

To carry out the Community Consultation the following work elements were completed:

- Task Team and Consultants reviewed the Audience Research Needs Assessment Report¹;
- Task Team and Consultants reviewed the goals of the Community Consultation established objectives for the workshops and interviews and identified a long list of organizations and individuals to be involved;
- SAM invited individuals to participate in either workshops or the interviews;

¹ Audience Research Needs Assessment Report, July 31, 2001. First report of the Audience Research study.

- Task Team reviewed workshop and interview protocols prepared by LORD Cultural Resources;²
- LORD Cultural Resources consultants facilitated five workshops held at SAM October 3-5, 2001, and interviewed 10 individuals, and PRR interviewed two individuals;
- LORD Cultural Resources prepared this report.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report presents the results of the workshops and individual interviews, as well as our conclusions regarding strategic issues that are facing SAM in attracting audiences, increasing participation and developing more effective relationships with potential partners.

The report is submitted to the Task Team for review and discussion. This is the first report of the primary research phase. Findings will be used to inform the areas of inquiry for the focus groups that will be held in December, 2001.

Upon completion of the Visitor and Member Surveys, and the Focus Groups, we will prepare a report summarizing all the research and conclusions for discussion by the Task Team and Community Advisory Committee, and more broadly among SAM staff.

2. Community Consultation Findings

This chapter presents the results of the discussions with participants in the workshops and interviews held with representatives of organizations. Please see Appendix A: Acknowledgements for a complete listing of everyone who participated in either the workshops or individual interviews.

2.1 Workshop Findings

Five workshops were conducted October 2-3, 2001 at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) with 16 individuals participating. While the groups were not large, participants were enthusiastic and shared their perceptions, knowledge and experience freely. As a result the workshops produced valuable information and perspectives from the participants. Areas of inquiry varied depending on the composition of the workshop and the particular perspective and experience(s) that individuals bring to the discussion.

² Survey and Protocol Report, September, 2001. Interim report presenting the draft visitors and members surveys and questions to be used in the community consultation workshops and interviews.

Each workshop began with an introduction to the *Deepening the Dialogue* project and its goals, the role of the consultants in the process, and the purpose for conducting the workshops. Introductions were made around the table in order to establish a level of comfort within each group. Each workshop was conducted based on a protocol developed by the consultants and reviewed by the Task Team.

This report presents the findings of the each of the workshops. Although individual workshops were held with community arts organizations, community centers and professional and ethnic business organizations, the findings are presented in a single section. There are workshop reports for Teachers and Docents, both of which are groups with distinctive relationships with SAM. Within each workshop report the findings are organized according to themes or issues that emerged from the discussions.

Direct quotes from the workshop participants are used throughout. These are marked by the use of *“italics”*, whether for one word or an entire phrase.

The majority of the participants were female. Almost one-third of all participants were between the ages of 45 – 54 years, and the balance being either younger or older. Over two-thirds of those who participated identified their culture as being other than Caucasian.

References to SAM specifically refer to the downtown museum, not the entire institution. References to SAM/SAAM indicate discussion of the entire institution.

2.1.1 Community Arts Organization, Community Centers, and Professional and Ethnic Business Organizations

These groups were composed of representatives of organizations involved in the delivery of programs and services to Seattle residents. Some of the groups had a mandate to serve a broad audience, while others served specific ethnic communities. Each of these three groups was asked the same questions and the findings are reported in this section. The clearest, most appropriate quote or series of quotes are presented to express the opinions shared by a number of participants. A striking feature of all of these discussion groups was the extent of agreement among participants.

2.1.2 SAM/SAAM Experience

All of the participants had visited/used both SAM and/or SAAM for personal reasons. This discussion was based on their personal experiences with SAM/SAAM, although these experiences may influence *“business”* use of the Museums. As one participant said, *“My impressions or what I learned sometimes comes out at work.”* SAM is seen as *“a good size for Seattle”* and *“better than not having such a museum at all,”* but it could learn from other museums:

- “The Henry has contemporary art”
- “The Frye has better permanent exhibits”
- “Baltimore is smaller, but always has fabulous exhibits”

Deleted: ¶

- “The SAAM is less overwhelming”

When asked to describe SAM/SAAM with the first words that came to mind, the participants all focused on SAM, rather than both Museums:

- quiet
- air conditioning
- vast space
- confusing entrance
- compartmentalized
- hierarchy
- academic machine
- elegantly stark
- no bustling crowds
- cathedralesque, otherworldly

Participants initially described their experience at SAM in terms of the building, rather than its collections, exhibits or programs. Some individuals elaborated on their comments, including:

- *missing link – no deeper understanding of self* (This participant felt that looking at the art/exhibits at SAM did not stimulate an “*internal discussion or challenge*” nor lead to any “*revelations*” about her life.
- *a place to explore if warmer; and*
- *evolving, exciting*

After sharing these first impressions, some of the participants explained their choices.

“At first all I could think of was the building and space, but when I thought about this project and what it means I knew that SAM was going to change —for the better — so it’s evolving.” Another participant felt that she thought of the building first because she does not *“find much in the permanent collections to stimulate [her].”* Yet another participant said, *“I wish SAM could be like the Met — elegant, quality exhibits but you want to hang out, [because] it’s inviting and warm.”*

In fact, although all but one of the participants said they recommend SAM (the downtown museum) to first-time visitors, they themselves do not find many reasons to visit regularly *“except for a special or temporary exhibit.”* On the other hand, many of the participants repeatedly visit SAAM because *“it is intimate and architecturally interesting”* or *“it’s just a wonderful place to go even though I’ve seen the collections over and over.”* *“SAAM has better parking and comfortable chairs!”* The only negative comment about SAAM was the lack of a Filipino exhibit. A member and her daughter visited the “Asian Museum” and the daughter asked, *“I thought this was the Asian Museum. Where are the Philippines?”*

Several of the participants were not members and would not consider becoming a member at this time because *“I don’t visit much anyway...what’s in it for me?”* Most of the non-members felt they would change their minds if they *“saw the Museum in the community more.”*

One person commented: *“An effective strategy for SAM to make my experience better would be to heighten my awareness of the Museum by doing more outreach. Assuming that an exhibit will appeal to me because of a perceived attraction to an ethnicity is not very ‘today’.”* When asked what approaches to diversifying audiences are appropriate today comments included:

- Interests go beyond ethnicity – *“Asian playwrights are not writing about being Asian anymore.” “Children are our future; my children are my focus.” “Appeal to lots of people and you appeal to my individuality.”*
- Cause a reaction — *“SAM is lukewarm, it doesn’t get a rise out of anybody.” “People either love or hate my gallery, but strong reactions mean engagement and discussion.” “MTV is provocative and sucks people in — SAM could be more urban and challenging.”*
- Showcase what is new — *“The new artists, children’s art, and ‘crafts’ are relegated to the Rental Gallery. It’s insulting because it’s not advertised, it’s hard to find, the space is usually dirty — SAM thinks new art less significant?”*
- Make “risky” alliances — *“Organizations have reached non-traditional audiences by partnering with radio stations giving away Mariner’s tickets.” “We make appearances at community churches and bar-be-ques talking up our programs one-to-one.”*

2.1.3 SAM’s Role and “Lessons To Be Learned”

When asked what role SAM should have in the community, participants in all of the workshop expressed that the role of SAM/SAAM was to *“make objects accessible and to provide a first-person experience”* and to be a *“resource not just a receptacle.”* The majority of the participants believed that SAM’s *“strong education program creates access to the works”* but could be improved by:

- *“appealing to youth”*
- *“use real voices – everyday people’s comments and stories”*
- *“doing more exhibits like the special/temporary exhibits...in which the collections are presented in a more interesting manner.”*
- *“Having more modern and contemporary collections.”*

Outreach, exhibits, and support materials were specifically referred to as part of the discussion of education programs. Several of the participants stated that they did not visit SAM regularly, and had not recently, and so were not sure *“what was showing now.”*

One example of the education programs making the difference in the museum experience was the Leonardo DaVinci exhibit. *“The show was all these hard to read manuscripts, valuable and significant but not interesting. It was the partnerships and programs supporting the exhibit that worked.”*

The African, Asian and Native American collections are considered to be *“great, but could go farther if compared to contemporary art and artists.”*

The participants also felt that SAM’s role in the community and region should include *“providing a sense of the distinct identity of the area.”* The encyclopedic collections are *“good for school curriculum”* but the Museum *“should take advantage of the local art... like the Burke’s ‘Pacific Voices’ which had Native Tribe advisory boards and showed works from 22 communities and at least 10 tribes.”*

2.1.4 Strategies for Building A Diverse Audience at SAM/SAAM

Several people commented on the importance of an institution’s reputation: *It is an organization’s biggest asset and biggest challenge.”* Others agreed that reputation provides a foundation for drawing visitors — word of mouth about an exhibit can increase or decrease attendance, for example — but can also be perceived as *“baggage.”* For instance, the Society for Chinese Engineers has a supportive, but diminishing membership of first- and second-generation immigrants. These generations may laud the organization for its sponsorship and excellent contacts, but the *“kids, those born or mostly raised here, and now in their 20s,”* see the organization as a place for *“old people, their grandfathers and therefore not useful.”* This organization’s challenge is to recruit new members in order to sustain it.

The majority of the respondents drew parallels between SAM and the above (or a similar) situation. One quote captures the thoughts expressed by several participations: *“Many people, especially those of color and inexperienced with museums or even the arts, see the Museum as a big, white, and mostly old institution.”*

Suggestions for SAM to counteract these perceptions were:

- **Outreach** — *“build relationships with schools,” “build an audience,” and “build trust”*
- **Marketing** — *“Let all kinds of people know about all types of shows. Don’t send African Americans information on just the Black oriented exhibits.”*
- **Make it Personal** — *“Reward staff and volunteers for bringing people into the museum, to programs and show, and memberships.”*

- **Be relevant but Challenging** — *“Young people need to see themselves at SAM — in the art, artists and building. Exhibits and programs need to expose their issues.”* *“Controversy intrigues and makes people talk. Certain pieces/exhibits might alienate a few individuals, but most people will come in droves to see challenging works.”*

“Outreach means being seen in the community,” said one participant. This person’s position as coordinator of youth programs includes responsibility for being present at community functions, in addition to those of his organization. At these events, he makes personal connections with people *“who later often become professional contacts or send someone to [him].”* In this way trust and mutual interest encourage youth to use his organization’s services. He recommends this method to SAM *“because that’s how successful relationships are formed.”*

Another participant suggested that her theater arts organization’s policy of *“rewarding staff and volunteers for bringing someone in... rewards our best marketing tools — word of mouth and personal connection”* could be added to SAM’s *“toolbox.”* Two participants shared that in their cultural arts organizations the director’s contacts *“made it possible to do the exhibit”* or that she *“brought all her artistic contacts with her, springing the program possibilities up quite a few notches.”*

Several other participants, representing arts organizations, expressed an understanding of the *“direct mail dilemma.”* Without an inexhaustible postage fund, how does one determine who receives what notices and information? Their organizations try to avoid offending a specific group by *“targeting without being exclusive.”* *“For those diverse groups we are trying to reach specifically, we just make sure they are on the primary lists to receive everything rather than only some things.”*³

A few of the participants shared that *“language ability”* and *“self-segregation”* were issues in building a diverse audience for their organizations. Self-segregation means that people judge the organization’s services to be *“for that neighborhood or those people, not me”* because they do not live there or see people like themselves there. A representative of a social service organization has this problem because the organization is in a predominantly East African neighborhood and so is considered to be only for East Africans. She believes that SAM may have a similar problem because *“only white people are staff and there are only a few ethnic volunteers.”* Another participant agreed, *“SAM is in a professional, affluent area.”*

Almost all of the workshop participants expressed that serving and attracting multiple age groups is of the greatest concern. The majority of them agreed that SAM is considered a place for adults — *“there is nothing [at SAM] to draw youth or young adults and if they come once with school or family, there’s nothing to bring them back on their own.”* One suggestion was for SAM to develop more programs and exhibits in

³ For these service organizations, attracting a diverse audience was important, but ethnicity was not the primary characteristic for defining diversity. Rather, diversifying audiences meant attracting those from ages groups or socioeconomic levels not currently participating or being served.

which youth are “*an advisory group,*” “*curators,*” or “*tour guides of their own works or themes.*”

Another means of diversifying audiences is for organizations to collaborate with each other. “*By sharing resources and creating complementary parts of a ‘show,’ we can effectively swap or mesh audiences and make more contacts.*” “*Sharing audiences through programming is better than trading databases which can annoy members.*” Another way is for organizations to provide time for staff and volunteers to “*swap organizations*” and work some hours at the partner organization. Although some organization representatives were “*hard-pressed to think of ways to partner,*” all of the workshops participants expressed an interest in future collaborations.

A few of the participants from social service organizations strongly suggested that partnerships or projects not add more work to schedules already at capacity. One participant’s statement made the point clear, “I don’t say ‘I’ve got a program, add it to everything else you’re doing,’ I ask, ‘How can my resources help you forward your existing goals/programs?’” (Other group members responded to this with a round of applause.) SAM is perceived as having significant resources — collections, staff and volunteers — which could be best used to enhance what teachers, community arts projects, and youth projects are already attempting to do. According to most participants, SAM needs to “show that it wants to contribute”. Of equal importance is the need for SAM to “tell potential partners how they might contribute to the Museum’s programs.”

2.2 Teachers Workshop

2.2.1 Diversity in the Classroom

The four educators in this group taught in an independent school, a middle school, a high school, and a multi-aged cultural day school. Despite the differences in age/grades or subject taught, all of these educators face similar challenges in the classroom including:

- Limited resources — “*Qualified teachers or at least those comfortable with the pay scale are hard to find and keep.*” “*Time and money are always issues.*” The group agreed that funding and the shortage of qualified and enthusiastic teachers would most likely always be an issue for schools.
- Diversity — Referring to her school one teacher said, “*In development-based classes your age group, and thus abilities, is quite varied.*” “*Attempting to draw different age groups and individuals is difficult.*” “*We try not to seem elitist because of our tuition requirements.*” “*We are a gifted-kids program in a low-income neighborhood.*”

Each member of this workshop identified his/her top priority to be “*responding to diversity.*” However, their definitions of diversity were not based on ethnicity or race,

but rather age, individualism and economic status.⁴ As one teacher explained, “*I am more concerned about how to reach these little individuals than anything else.*” Or another teacher, “*Second generation youth adopt Western ways...how do I motivate them to learn ‘old culture?’*” Or, “*We’re a gifted program. We get mostly upper-middle class kids, but we also are the school for homeless children. Our priorities are set.*” However, despite priorities these participants felt that a neighborhood’s perceptions could “*drastically affect*” an institution’s reputation negatively and thus affect its ability to serve its constituency.

2.2.2 SAM, Schools and Building Audiences

All of these teachers have used/visited both SAM and SAAM. Both institutions — particularly the Asian and African galleries — have been used in social studies programs, and special or extra credit projects. Most of the teachers felt that SAM is perceived by the students as more “*intimidating*” than SAAM. These teachers remarked similarly that the challenge of a visit to SAM/SAAM, irrespective of the ethnicity of students, was “*engaging the students...in art that was ‘so different’.*” “*It is hard for my students to see the association between themselves and the ‘art’ on the walls,*” one teacher explained. Although a few students may “*express a sense of familiarity with the look of a certain piece, he/she rarely appreciates the piece*”, stated one teacher.

All the teachers agreed that special exhibits comparing/contrasting the Museum collections to “*student or other personal art of today*” would help. Two of the teachers felt that their students do not have a “*basic art language or vocabulary and so their appreciation of art is low...they don’t ‘get’ it.*” Another teacher expanded on this need for an art language by pointing out that “*many teachers are limited in their understanding of cultural art.*” One teacher suggested SAM create “*Cliff Notes to Cultures and Their Art*” as a resource for teachers and students.

These teachers believed that SAM’s role is “*to make connections and build relationships where the tradition of [supporting the arts, visiting museums] isn’t.*” SAM can build these relationships by:

- Making the Museum more relevant — “*Ensure that programs or materials support the social studies curriculum.*”

The Museum’s weak point is curriculum materials for the lower grades. All of these teachers shared that many teachers they know desire curriculum materials from the Museum that apply to younger children and high school aged youth to adults. They urged the Museum to “*work with teachers to design useful curricula — you know the art, we know the students.*” A couple of the teachers mentioned the “*Growing Up*

⁴ Indirect questions about diversity or even questions defined by phrases such as “diverse ethnic groups” did not elicit responses about groups defined by cultural identity. On further inquiry it was apparent that teachers don’t perceive their students in terms of cultural identity, and could only guess as to what percentage of their students were of color.

With Art” project as an example of programs of which they would like to see more. All of these teachers would like to have materials for temporary/special exhibits in advance so that they could incorporate the exhibits into their classes; *“often the special exhibits are of more interest to our class but we don’t know in advance so the chance passes us by.”*

- Give students and families a reason to come back — *“Many students have already seen the Museum and perceive it as static...why would they beg their families to take them back?”*

Programs such as Growing Up With Art provide an opportunity to *“work with artists that interest and engage kids because the program is hands-on and makes the museum seem more user friendly.”* One teacher suggested that another way to attract youth, regardless of ethnicity or background, might be to *“show work and tell about new, young artists and art.”* All of these teachers stressed that by engaging students, the Museum can begin to build relationships with their families and communities even if they do not regularly visit.

- Strengthen the website programming — *“Teachers (and parents) browse the site to plan ahead...an intro from the curator or more developed materials for more grade levels would be great.”*

Three of the teachers felt that the website could become *“a place to visit”* that could possibly expand SAM’s audience. *“It’s a way for people to feel comfortable before they visit the actual Museum.”*

2.2.3 Experiences with SAM

This group of teachers has used/visited SAM many times as educators and personally. They agreed that most of the materials provided by SAM —for special or temporary exhibits — are helpful, but not consistent or complete. The suggestion for SAM Cliff Notes appealed to each of these teachers because it would be a *“convenient”* general resource. However this and other materials need to include:

- *“Grade level appropriate information” and “points of connection to standard curriculum or suggested activities”*
- *“Convenient hours for pick up”*

One of the key factors for use by the teachers is *“awareness.”* These teachers shared similar experiences in which he/she found out about information, an exhibit or curriculum materials after they were needed or too late to plan into schedules. One teacher mentioned the Calligraphy show specifically. He was *“disappointed because it would have been a wonderful match for [his] school”* but he was not able to inform his teachers or students in time to see it.

One of the teachers expressed a concern about paying admission to view an exhibit before bringing a class. Another teacher responded that she used the “*teachers’ nights*” or her personal membership. None of the other teachers were aware of the teachers’ nights programs for special exhibits. They also expressed a desire for a teacher’s membership that could be transferable to other teachers by grade level or school.

All of these teachers would recommend a visit to SAM/SAAM to their families or friends. However they had the following suggestions for “*improvements for the experience*”:

- Exhibit more “*local and regional art and artists...give visitors the flavor of this area, the art forms highlighted in this area.*”
- Exhibit more “*contemporary art in the Museums and On-line.*”

2.3 Docents and Volunteers

This group was underrepresented with only one attendee. However, this person is a long-standing Docent (approximately ten years of volunteer service). She is African American.

2.3.1 Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers

According to this Docent, the top two reasons why people choose to volunteer at SAM are:

- Personal interest and research – “*I am an artist, so of course I come to this Museum and other art oriented institutions for my own research.*”
- Continuing education – “*The opportunities [at SAM] are amazing. People pay for this kind of university level, world-renowned lectures and training...it appeals to the life-long learner.*”

In 1987 SAM received an NEA grant to train interested African Americans to be Docents for the African collection. This Docent became “*an official part*” of the Museum through this grant.

The Docent stated that in order to recruit and retain docents and volunteers, the perks — such as lectures and other training — should be “*much more actively promoted to new people and lapsed docents.*” This kind of promotion would “*offset the hassle of having to pay for parking and pay to volunteer!*”

Barriers to recruitment are:

- Cost - *“It is a joke to want a variety [by ethnicity or age] of docents, but ask them to pay for parking and volunteering.”*
- Time - *“Some of us are working people so training needs to be in the evening or on weekends.”*
- Comfort - *“I wouldn’t want to volunteer in a place where I did not see anyone who looked like me, either on staff or as a volunteer.”*

This Docent’s perception was that SAM did not understand that some people who may wish to volunteer do not necessarily have a lot of disposable income. She suggested that the Museum have a graduated dues scale in order to accommodate more people from different economic backgrounds. Alternative training schedules would also reflect a *“greater understanding and appreciation”* of the atypical docent.

Creating a *“comfort zone”* for those of all backgrounds is an issue with ramifications for SAM beyond docents/volunteers. This docent believes that *“seeing faces of color in the security force, other volunteers and, of course, staff would invite people of color and help them to feel a welcome part of the Museum.”* She stated further that, *“The security guards need to treat everyone the same regardless of hair, skin or dress —I don’t have problems but my sister and some friends have felt watched.”*

2.3.2 Audience — Encouraging Diverse Participation

The ‘comfort zone’ principle applies to more than people of color. Said one participant: *“In cities like New York and Philadelphia the ‘thing to do’ is to support the arts. It’s expected and so a part of the school system (field trips throughout elementary grades and even into middle school... [the arts] grow their audience by encouraging familiarity with the places at a young age.”* In this way the potential intimidation of an art museum, the theater, the symphony, due to lack of familiarity, is decreased. This participant thought that one way to encourage diverse visitation to SAM would be:

- *“To have free admission, free admission days or to stress the ‘what-you-can-pay’ policy.”*
- *“To train the security staff to be more friendly, less judging and maybe even to be able to answer basic art or gallery questions.”*
- *“To appeal more to youth through contemporary art or non-traditional style of exhibits — i.e., the after-hours fashion show, but based on examples from the collections but designed by youth or NEW artists.”*
- *“To showcase artists other than the ‘Masters’ ...show the undiscovered art of old and highlight the undiscovered artists of today.”*
- *“To juxtapose the Museum’s collections with contemporary art/artists — i.e., set the African collection against similar types of African American work.”*

“Challenge your visitors, get people talking and new people will come,” said the Docent based on what she hears during her tours and through more personal connections and experience. *“Young people aren’t drawn to SAM because there is nothing from their time or their peers to capture their interest.”*

According to this Docent, the temporary exhibits and resulting programs and activities are the occasions that she recommends SAM to friends and family. During these shows, *“things tend to be less static and generalized, your eye and attention is grabbed.”* She went on to say that if her visiting friends are from a city with its own encyclopedic art museum she *“definitely [doesn’t] recommend going to SAM because they have already seen that type of art.”* Instead she will take them to the Henry or the Frye Art Museum or possibly SAAM.

2.4 Interview Findings

Twelve individuals, representing diverse organizations involved in the delivery of cultural, community or business services to Seattle residents accepted the Museum’s invitation to participate in this consultation. For the purpose of this report the consultation findings are presented in relation to specific topics or issues that emerged from the discussions. Direct quotes, shown as *“italics”*, are used throughout for emphasis.

This section is organized under the following headings:

- Audiences
- Qualities of Successful Programs
- Perceptions of the Seattle Art Museum
- Recommended Strategies
- Challenges

2.4.1 Audiences

Representatives of different community-specific organizations were invited by SAM to participate in this consultation; those interviewed came from organizations whose core audiences or membership were not ethnic specific, or were either primarily Asian Pacific/Asian American or African American. Those interviewed shared their understanding and perspectives of the communities or audiences they worked with and the challenges they encountered.

2.4.1.1 Perspectives on African American Audiences

It was observed by respondents that African Americans reside throughout the city. While the Central District has historically been African American (as well as Japanese and Jewish) there has been a migration to other areas of the City. While this historical identification of the African American community with the Central District as the core neighborhood is diminishing, there are organizations both inside and outside the District, such as Garfield Park Community Center, Mount Zion Baptist Church, Langston Hughes, Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas, Urban League, Jack & Jill, Augustus Ashberry, Black Box Theater, African American Academy, to name just a few, that are part of the fabric of the African American community. While the neighborhoods around some of these organizations are becoming more diverse⁵, African Americans come from all over the city to participate in programs that are relevant to them. Vivian Phillips of Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas, commented that “*culture is a holistic point of view*”, so what is considered relevant is broadly defined. Many organizations achieve their goals through historical and cultural programming. Arts and culture are not only the territory of cultural institutions. One person commented that a challenge for SAM will be “*to simply come onto the radar screen*” of African Americans.

It was pointed out that the African American community⁶ is complex and there is no single voice that can be construed as speaking on behalf of “the community”. A challenge for SAM will be to recognize this inherent diversity: if SAM expects to be part of the dialogue different voices and perspectives will need to be presented.

One person commented that African Americans don’t have to go downtown to the Seattle Art Museum to participate in the arts. Several people interviewed specifically commented that they were interested in the visual arts, went to museums as children with their families, and even collect art, but had no particular interest or need to go to the Seattle Art Museum. The Urban League has lead responsibility for the proposed Coleman Center, a new facility that will also offer programming in the arts and culture. While the Center is not without controversy, it does demonstrate that African American communities will establish their own museums⁷ on their own terms. Several people commented there is a need for SAM to be seen in the community. Not only does this mean that SAM needs to take programming into communities “*to come off the corner at First and University*”, it needs to collaborate within communities. A challenge for the Seattle Art Museum in its goal to broaden participation will be its own readiness to support or partner on arts initiatives created by African Americans.

⁵ There is a shift in the demographics of the Central District as lower income residents are being displaced, due to rising housing prices and an influx of more affluent home owners.

⁶ East Africans comprise about 9% of the black population of Seattle. Language, religion and tribal relationships lead to quite separate identifies. The East African community is developing its own service organizations to address needs that are quite different from those of the African American community.

⁷ The growth in “first voice” museums is an emerging trend, pointing to the difficulty traditional institutions have had in meeting the needs of diverse communities.

Steve Snead, who is responsible for Festal programming at the Seattle Center, observed that Festival Sundiata was initiated by organizations within the African American community to address what was perceived as a lack of access to a civic facility. The Festival features cultural programming, but its success is as much about being an opportunity to gather as a community, with families, to share a good time – “*people like to come together and to see each other*”.

Several of those interviewed commented that African Americans today do not necessarily relate to African art, history and cultural expression as an essential part of their identity. While not long ago one generation focused on connecting with their African roots, today that has changed. One person commented:

“Keep in mind African Americans have been in this country for many generations. Our knowledge is American. Rather than focusing on African artifacts, SAM needs to focus on how American culture has been shaped by African descendants.”

Another observed that African American youth are in a process of creating their own unique American identity. Young musicians will learn traditional music, and artists will learn visual motifs, and then create their own, contemporary cultural expressions. Hip hop and rap are musical expressions unique to urban African American youth. It was observed that for SAM to be seen as relevant to African American youth it will be essential to acknowledge contemporary expression in a diversity of media, and not restrict itself to the presentation of traditional African culture.

A great deal of the energy of the leadership within the African American community is focused on addressing the social, educational and economic issues. James Kelly, Executive Director of the Urban League, commented that with 40% of African Americans below the poverty level resources are focused on youth and economic development. He commented that community organizations and businesses are working hard to cope with the demand and the need. One person expressed a concern that as larger institutions seek the involvement of African American leaders on their boards, this may lead to a loss of leadership for core needs within the community.

The League and others are actively seeking new partnerships. All those interviewed concurred with the idea that SAM will be perceived as “*relevant if it works through existing educational, religions, and cultural organizations in the community.*” One person added, “*The question is, what does SAM want to do to help the community?*”

2.4.1.2 Perspectives on Asian Pacific/ Asian American Audiences

The challenges of describing Asian Pacific/Asian American communities are immense. Not only are there the obvious differences of language, religion, politics, reasons for migration/immigration, and historical experience in the United States among communities originating in Asia Pacific, there are differences within “communities” that

are very much related to individual identity and the tensions between traditional and contemporary lifestyles. Mae Won, President of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, said it is the Chamber's role to facilitate interaction among these diverse communities on issues of common interest. One of the keys to the Chamber's success is being involved and present in the activities of each of the communities in order to establish trust and neutrality.

Asian Pacific/Asian American communities are located throughout King County. There is a tendency for first waves of immigrants to be segregated in older neighborhoods, such as within the International District, but with each generation there is more integration throughout the region.

Ron Chew, Executive Director of the Wing Luke Asian Museum, observed that older generations are more interested in retention of traditional culture, while younger Asian Americans are interested in the "*values created in this culture*". Another person commented that in their experience parents try to provide their children with experiences of community, language and culture, to counter the impact of American culture in their everyday lives. One suggestion was the key to attracting the support of Asian Americans is to demonstrate how the museum will benefit the parents' goals for their children. It was observed that among the 3rd generation there is an identity crisis: they see themselves as American, but society imposes the "*Asian label*". Ron Chew stated that for those reasons, "*exhibitions of expressions of Asian countries are not particularly relevant to Asian American youth (who are a significant proportion of the population). ... Young people don't see museums traditionally – as art, history, or children's museums. Museums are being challenged to change because of these external expectations.*"

The Wing Luke Asian Museum presents the art, history and culture of Asian communities, with a focus on the Chinese, Japanese, and South-East Asians, specifically Filipinos and Vietnamese. The Asian Museum's experience is that it is easier to attract people from the older communities with a longer experience in America. Communities of newer immigrants, such as the Vietnamese, are focused on the day-to-day issues of resettlement. The Museum's approach is to develop exhibitions and programming that is multigenerational and on pan Asian themes that cross cultural boundaries.

It was observed that the cultural interests of those within the Chinese community are very broad and are by no means restricted to Chinese arts -- it is a mistake to think otherwise. Furthermore, the museum is not necessarily regarded as the place where one would go to study Chinese art and culture in more depth. It was pointed out that "*one cannot articulate a Chinese thought in English*" so there is a tendency to undertake cultural studies within the community or uses other resources, such as the public library, which

has a good collection. The role of the Seattle Art Museum is “to introduce Asian arts to mainstream society, not to Asians⁸”.

2.4.1.3 Perspectives on Economically- or Socially Disadvantaged Youth

Several of the organizations participating in this consultation focused their service delivery on youth, particularly those that are economically or socially disadvantaged. While overall the African Americans tended to be a significant proportion of those participating in these programs, the intention is to provide to youth positive, and supported creative experiences in the arts that will enrich and empower participants.

Artscorps is a not-for-profit organization offering after school programs in the performing and visual arts to disadvantaged and minority youth⁹. The program goes to where the kids are (partnering with a host facility) and trains and supports high quality artists to work with youth. Lisa Fitzhugh, Director of artscorps, stated there are three cornerstones to their success: (1) partner with organizations for delivery of programs; (2) develop relationships with parents and treat them really well, and (3) excellence in teaching artists who love kids first and art second. The youth they are working with are not exposed to the arts but many have exhibited incredible raw talent. The arts experience is totally connected to where they are at, as they develop their creativity and technical skills. The youth participants very much enjoy access to places they have never been. However, it takes tremendous effort to involve parents, but once they see the benefits to their children they begin to see the arts as relevant to them. In the experience of artscorps, the lack of experience as a visitor or audience member, lack of familiarity with specific art forms, cost, and time are the major barriers to participation in the arts.

Youth in Focus is a photography program that requires an incredible commitment from those youth selected to participate. Students take classes, spend time with mentors, and field time just shooting pictures. At the end of the program there is an exhibition, in different venues, of the work. SAM has hosted the exhibition and currently students are at the Museum shooting portraits of visitors as part of the programming on Thursday evenings. This program is quite successful due in part to the immediacy of the results, and strong mentor support given to individual students.

Walter Bodle, Executive Director, spoke of the impact on students of showing their work in exhibition facilities. The year SAM hosted the exhibition of student work, a student who had spoken very little throughout the program, was overcome with emotion when she and her family saw her photograph hanging at SAM. While it is not known how many of the Youth in Focus students or their families returned to SAM (other other

⁸ While conducting community consultation in San Francisco it was the experience of the consultant that for many migrants from Asian Pacific the arts are a living part of their cultural experience; they don't need to be “taught” about them or go to a museum to see or experience them. Since this community consultation did not include those from all of the Asian-Pacific populations resident in Seattle it is not possible to comment on the applicability of this observation to this community.

⁹ 77% of participants are African American, 10% Hispanic, 5% other.

venues) on their own, this is a first step in creating a sense that SAM is a place for everyone.

2.4.1.4 Perspectives on Neighborhood Audiences

Seattle's Park and Recreation Department is responsible for delivering a wide variety of recreational programming at the community/neighborhood level. Programs in arts and culture include visual arts, multimedia, theater, music and dance, for adults and children/youth, who are reached through summer, after school and introductory courses. Maureen O'Neill, N.E. Parks and Recreation Manager, reported that each community center/neighborhood has a Citizens Advisory Committee that coordinates and contracts instructional services for the programs at each center. In this respect the programming is very much related to community needs and varies from neighborhood to neighborhood. For instance, in the north end, which is a more diverse, middle class neighborhood programming is more organized and structured, while in the Central District, programs at Garfield are more drop-in and "celebratory" but supported with really good pre-planning, and at Jefferson Community Center, which serves a primarily Asian community of older and new immigrants, the programs are focused on pre-schoolers and seniors. It was noted that 2nd and 3rd generation Asian Americans are attracted by the opportunity to get together – make connections and chat – particularly over food.

In its role in the delivery of after school programs that are intended to address specific needs among children and youth (ages 0-17 years) the department of Parks and Recreation is in the process of adopting a planning model that looks developmental assets and needs in relation to service providers to identify where the Department should focus its programs and service providers with whom to partner. The Department expects to be a catalyst for services and provider only where there are none others.

The Department's experience with Citizen Advisory Committees provide some insight into deepening participation of residents as active stewards. Although referred to as Advisory Committees these groups have a significant role and influence. They do decide on the types of programs that are going to be offered and they are responsible for contracting the instructional services to deliver programs. Potential recruits want to know that their participation will have an impact and make a difference to their community; given that the committees have real responsibilities and their role is more than advisory, participants truly feel involved. Also, volunteers value the opportunity to network and develop skills that can then be applied to their own business interests or serve as a stepping stone to other organizations or civic involvement. Overall it was the experience in the Parks and Recreation Department that volunteers tend to stay involved for about 3-4 years (unless they have a very keen interest in a specific activity) and then move on. Maureen O'Neill felt that there was a tremendous opportunity for SAM to tap into this source of community leadership through mentorship and program partnerships that would expose volunteers to the Museum and its potential opportunities.

2.4.1.5 Perspectives on the Visual Arts Community

The Pratt Art Institute offers instruction to adults with an interest in the visual arts, but is also provides resources to working artists through intermediate and advanced programs as well as the provision of studio space and contract services. There is a substantial arts community in the region, which is diverse, working in all media, although tends to be somewhat traditional in painting and sculpture. There are a number of galleries, museums, schools and other organizations that are involved with Northwest artists. Greg Robinson, Director of the Pratt, indicated that the number of collectors is growing, particularly given the relatively strong economic situation in the region. The primary needs among artists are opportunities for exhibition, and recognition by inclusion in museum collections. It was observed that while the Seattle Art Museum has made some promising initiatives in exhibitions and its support of the Betty Bone award, it is not the only art museum in the region, some of which are defining their identity and image more explicitly in relation to Northwest art.

2.4.2 Qualities of Successful Programs

Those interviewed referred to the qualities of programs that they found themselves or observed to be particularly successful in reaching diverse audiences. When asked to describe programs that are successful in reaching underserved audiences or lead to participation those interviewed offered the following.

Successful programs are those that have included the following elements....

- Go to the audience that the institution is trying to reach, either physically into the community or by inviting people to come and supporting their participation in all respects.
- Are family-centered, offering an experience for the extended family grandparents, parents and children to do together. The event is not defined as either for adults or for children.
- A special event for the invited group, such a pre- or post-show talk with artists following a theatrical or musical performance.
- Make people feel comfortable, taking into account that people may be unfamiliar with the art form or are concerned about what the expectations are for behavior. Many organizations do this by creating a social experience by which people from within a community/neighborhood come together. It also means supporting people through the course of the event from the arrival to departure. This means partnering with an organization in the community and may even involve providing transportation, although this practice tends to decline as programs evolve.

- Serve food, a practice that is considered a fundamental expression of hospitality and welcome. Individuals commented on the importance of food to both African Americans and Asian Americans as part of a social experience. One person commented that even the presentation of the food – whether on paper plates or china -- is seen as a statement on how much the institution values its audience.
- Provide discounted admission or reduced tickets to those with less disposable income, or for those who do not have the same perception of value for money spent as regular museum-goers.
- Define and communicate to parents how their children benefit in some tangible way by their participation. These motivations and expectations will of course vary. For some this may be related to better performance in school, learning skills or behaviors that could translate into employment, keeping children and youth out of trouble and off the street, or contributing to values that parents want their children to acquire.
- For children or youth, take into account where they are at or start with what is immediately familiar and relevant to them in their daily lives. Once that respect is established then they are very open to what is new and unfamiliar to them.
- Are not one-time only events, but are based on an institutional commitment for the long-term. This could mean that there are a series of events over time – e.g., tickets to several plays over a season, or sustained follow-up with individuals who have participated in first one program, then a second, etc. One example given were ongoing invitations to families to a wide variety of programs, following participation of a child in a single program.
- Do not make assumptions about the kind of content in which people are interested. This is regarded as condescending and presumptuous, and ultimately does not serve the organization in diversifying an audience when it cannot sustain content specific programming.
- Are age appropriate and engage the participant. *Soundbridge*, the Seattle Symphony's Music Discovery Center is an example of a program designed for people of all ages and levels of musical experience. Through interactive interpretive devices visitors explore the making of symphonic music from the different perspectives of the people who create it – the musician, composer and conductor and the unique qualities and contributions of musical instruments. The content is related to school curriculum but its presentation is intimate and the experience is personal.
- Focus on the delivery – the total experience.

2.4.3 Perception of the Seattle Art Museum

All of those who were interviewed have had their own experiences with the Seattle Art Museum on a professional level, directly or indirectly. Some, but not all, had visited either SAM or SAAM, and only a couple volunteered that they visited on a regular basis. At least two people commented that when it came to make decisions about how they spent both their money and their leisure-time visiting SAM wasn't high on their list.

When asked their perceptions of the Seattle Art Museum the following comments were made:

- *“The [downtown] building is not a hang out place.” “It doesn’t feel warm, it feels isolating.” “The SAM building is a bust, it doesn’t demonstrate the right priorities.” “The lobby seems to be good at processing people.” “There is no experience of art until you get to the galleries. It doesn’t express what is unique about the Northwest.” “The way finding is difficult and the spaces are hard to understand.”*
- *“SAAM on the other hand is a great building, especially the garden court. The experience is all about space and art.” “SAAM is homier, not formidable, although the exhibits are not great.”*
- *“The question is ‘When is the next big exhibit?’” “Seems to be interested in the big shows.”*
- *“Not enough pizzazz – those activities that connect directly with kids. Kids need to feel that SAM isn’t a strange environment.” “SAM family festivals are good – the music and dance programs are very inviting.”*
- *“The galleries are not very approachable or accessible, “don’t touch” is pretty strong and it could be put in a more positive way.” ” “Quiet, withdrawn” “The last exhibition was very intellectual, very academic, sterile, stale, a pure form of experience.”*
- *“It is for a different class of people [not me]. I haven’t been – there are so many questions – do I have to buy a ticket? Will it be clear what I do next.*
- *“I personally haven’t been to the museum since I was a kid. I won’t go to look at Eurocentric art.”*
- *“Doesn’t seem interested in Northwest artists – some exhibition initiatives are interesting and sponsoring the Betty Bone Award is a good step, but not backed up with collections program. Other institutions, such as the Tacoma Art Museum are. Exhibits are culturally based, but artists and collectors are often media based. Seattle Rental Sales Gallery – name is uninspiring, SAM doesn’t showcase its relationship to this program.”*

- *“SAM is a building -- not a program and not an organization. The Seattle Art Museum, the Seattle Asian Art Museum, the Seattle Art Rental Gallery --- it is all confusing and now they are going to add a fourth entity the Olympic Park Sculpture Garden with no apparent connection. The organization needs more clarity.”*

2.4.4 Recommended Strategies

All participants volunteered their ideas as to what the Seattle Art Museum needed to do to develop relationships with specific communities and attract more diverse audiences to the Museum. Recommendations and comments have been organized with reference to the participation model presented in the Needs Assessment Report:

2.4.4.1 Motivating Participation

It was pretty clear from the consultation that it is not a lack of interest in art or culture that were barriers to participation of diverse audiences at SAM, but rather the apparent lack of congruence between the experience SAM offers and the interests or priorities among specific audiences. Furthermore, the lack of familiarity with specific form of public participation in the arts does not mean that people were not inclined to participate at a personal or peer level. Suggestions were varied and touched on the relevance of the content of programs.

- Connect with youth through their interests in mixing music and visual expression
- Break open the walls – explore a wide variety of contemporary art forms and media.
- Expose African American youth to what success looks like. Make the “it” relevant to their lives. Show them the connections to who they are and what success can look like.
- Develop a more diverse presentation within the museum. “Consider doing a program on the religious culture and art of the Arab and Islamic communities. We need to learn from each other.”
- African Americans are interested in seeing their contribution represented in the presentation of what is American.
- Nurture deeper participation in the institution by working volunteer leadership active in neighborhood organizations.

2.4.4.2 Expectations for the Experience

Many of those interviewed stated that there needs to be more diversity in the experience offered to visitors as it related to the desire for education/interpretation, social interaction and entertainment.

- Both Africa Americans and Asian Americans suggested that the programming needed to be festive and incorporate more performance and demonstrations.
- Provide more hands-on and interactive experiences for children.
- Make the programs and exhibits more of an experience for the whole family, together.
- While some recommended that the programming needed to be controversial, one person commented that among those Chinese following Confucian philosophy, they are expecting a more moderate experience that incorporates entertainment, relaxation and beauty.

2.4.4.3 Address Perceptual Barriers

Different audiences have different perceptions of SAM, which are the result of a combination of complex factors, history and assumptions, indeed even lack of information. Those interviewed focused on the need to address the overall image and identity of SAM. The most concrete suggestions focused on being welcoming and the role of staff.

- Communicate that SAM is for everyone, for people of all ages. *“It would be great if SAM’s tagline would make it obvious that they want to celebrate the art of all people.”*
- Invite people into a place they might feel excluded from. Make them feel welcome.
- *“Get folks of color on staff.”*
- SAM staff, individuals need to be seen in the community and participate at the community’s events in a way that shows what are SAM’s strengths as a resource for about history and culture as expressed in the visual arts.
- Show people that the institution cares about them, even if this means doing something that seems stupid or extravagant.
- Be part of identity of the city and that means be part of the Northwest.

2.4.4.4 Address Practical Barriers

Participants mentioned strategies to address two practical barriers -- cost and information.

- Provide for access for those with less disposable income or to those who do not necessarily equate the value of the arts experience with the cost of admission by providing admission discounts, e.g., coupons, or providing the option of “pay what you can”.
- Promote the museum or advertise programs in community publications or local television.
- Don't rely on the internet as there are access challenges within the African American community and concerns about privacy.
- Direct mail or distribute materials through churches and community organizations.
- Develop a calendar
- It is a mistake to market specific experiences to target audiences.

2.4.4.5 Lifestyle Qualities and Values

Many of the suggestions focused on how the Seattle Art Museum could become part of the existing lifestyle and rhythm of communities themselves:

- Connect to events perceived to be of importance to the community – King Day, Black History Month, Juneteenth, district or neighborhood festivals and events
- Initiate partnerships with existing organizations (e.g., Langston Hughes, Central District, 411 Arts, Parks and Recreation Community Centers, Urban League, African American Academy) and co-sponsor events and programs in the community. SAM needs to be proactive, and go to and into the community.
- Contribute to the success of community-based initiatives.
- Develop relationships with individuals and organizations at the program level -- this is where the action is. Board representation is fine but the action needs to happen at the staff level.
- Be rooted in the community – support local artists. Falling back on artistic excellence is a way of shutting out those you don't want in.

- Provide places for the community activity. *“Just be a place where people can assemble and engage in a way they want.”*

2.4.5 Challenges

Many of those interviewed welcomed the opportunity to participate in the consultation and felt that this larger initiative of Deepening the Dialogue did portend a willingness to consider a change in how SAM relates to and interacts with segments of the larger community. On the other hand, several people did remark that they have been consulted by the Museum on other occasions and expressed a wait and see attitude as to what might happen next.

- Several people cautioned SAM that embarking on this initiative will take a long-term commitment, which must be based on a mission to be more inclusive, not on the expectation of immediate, quantifiable results. *“SAM needs to understand that it will take longer than they might expect to see results. Don’t be frustrated for years. Be persistent and be sincere.”*
- Two people commented that there will be a need for substantial change throughout the organization. *“There needs to be leadership from the top down, and someone has to be ready to be tough, take the pressure and meet the resistance that will occur.”*
- One person expressed concern about the willingness within the Museum to create the change that is needed. *“What they were doing is only token, as a way to legitimize what they were doing. At present the programming mirrors the collection, which means there are gaps in culturally specific content, e.g., Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino. SAM needs to look at making programmatic commitments that aren’t driven by the collection.”*
- Another questioned SAM’s agenda. *“Who is this really for? I initially contacted them and couldn’t get anyone’s attention for a year. Then someone else told them our program was something they should be involved in. Now they are very responsive. SAM has not been outreach oriented. I don’t need SAM. There are other places I can go to deliver my program. SAM needs us.”*

3. Conclusions

The findings that emerged from the community consultation reflect some core issues that are facing the Seattle Art Museum as it looks to diversify its audience and deepen participation in the Museum. Those who did participate welcomed the opportunity, and overall perceived it as a very positive indication that the Seattle Art Museum was seriously looking at its relationship with the community, and that it recognizes the need for change if it is to accomplish its goals.

3.1 Summary of Key Findings

- For many organizations, diversifying audiences means addressing issues that emerge from disparities in socio-economic status, not cultural differences defined by ethnicity.
- The Seattle Art Museum is not the only opportunity to experience the visual arts. Other institutions have established strong identities and relationships with audiences.
- There are widely different perceptions of the experiences offered at SAM downtown and the Seattle Asian Art Museum. Many people clearly favored the comfortable atmosphere and scale of SAAM, and the direct relationship with the art, without expressing any particular interest in Asian Art per se.
- SAM downtown is defined by the building, which dominates the visitor's experience. It is described as awkward, difficult, confusing, intimidating and cold.
- The perception is that the permanent collections and their presentation do not strongly resonate or engage. The issue is not that people of different backgrounds or circumstances are not interested in art, but that the meanings are not presented in ways that are considered relevant. Some advocated more controversy in the presentation, while others suggested topics of more relevance to communities, indeed that are part of the dialogue of the city.
- It was observed that SAM's programming is driven by the exhibitions, and thus its collection. To broaden its appeal programming needs to be less driven by the collections.
- Many people commented that contemporary art, particularly Northwest art, should be much stronger in the collection and exhibition program. Several stated that the inclusion of more contemporary art and multimedia in the exhibition program would appeal to youth and young adults, as well as those who are currently or potentially collectors of Northwest art. It was noted that unless SAM takes a stronger position in relation to contemporary Northwest art it was missing an opportunity to define its role as part of the City's identity.
- SAM is perceived as pre-occupied by and/or defined by the large scale special exhibitions.
- For many African Americans it is more important that the Museum present the role of African Americans in American culture and not be so focused on historical relationships to traditional African culture. This sentiment was reiterated with respect to appealing to young Asian American audiences who are engaged in creating and defining contemporary values in American culture and not in preserving or venerating traditional arts and culture.

- There is a strong sense among participants that SAM is underestimating audiences by focusing on the assumptions about the interests of specific communities. While specific communities expect that art from their culture or which presents their role in the development of the arts in America should be in the Museum's permanent collection, there is a rejection of the idea that ethnicity or cultural identification defines or circumscribes interests in the visual arts.

3.2 Issues and Strategies

In considering the findings of this community consultation a number of fundamental issues and strategies can be identified for the consideration of the Seattle Art Museum.

- **Clarify the identity and image of the Seattle Art Museum as Seattle's art museum** in a way that creates a coherent brand that connects the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle Asian Art Museum, and the Seattle Art Sales and Rental Gallery, and the forthcoming Olympic Park Sculpture Garden and that communicates its inclusiveness to all Seattle residents.
- **Address real issues in the visitor's experience at the downtown building**, which is awkward, confusing, cold, and formidable.
- **Focus on the visitor's experience:** SAM will need to take into account the lifestyle of specific communities to develop exhibitions and programming that resonate with audiences' desires for experiences that are inclusive of the extended family, provide opportunities for social interaction and diverse modes of presentations incorporate performance, demonstrations and interactive learning.
- **Develop the collection to reflect SAM's mandate** to present the arts of the world, strengthen its American collection to reflect the work of artists of diverse cultures who have contributed to defining American culture, and be seen to invest in the arts of the Northwest.
- **Make a long-term commitment to achieve audience development goals by adopting a leadership-driven approach that aligns departmental activities.** The expectation is that SAM will be present in the community through collaboration, partnerships, co-sponsorship, and be seen to contributing to meeting needs defined by communities and neighborhoods. It must come off the corner. Staff must be invested in the community. It will take time to develop relationships and trust. Partnerships hips and commitment will be required. Concerted and sustained efforts to invite people of diverse backgrounds to programs, and creation of the comfort zone for people who have limited experiences in art museums will be required
- **Diversify staff/volunteers:** A perceptual barrier to the Museum is the homogeneity of the both staff and volunteers. Programming is the work of staff, who bring their own

knowledge, perspectives, experiences, relationships and networks to bear. The more diverse staff, the more diverse the foundation for programming.

Appendix A. Acknowledgements

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