

SMA ReDESIGN GOAL

To transform existing spaces with minimal structural alteration and fiscal cost by redirecting current resources and infusing new technological, conceptual, and programmatic approaches to art and visual culture.

SMA ReDESIGN

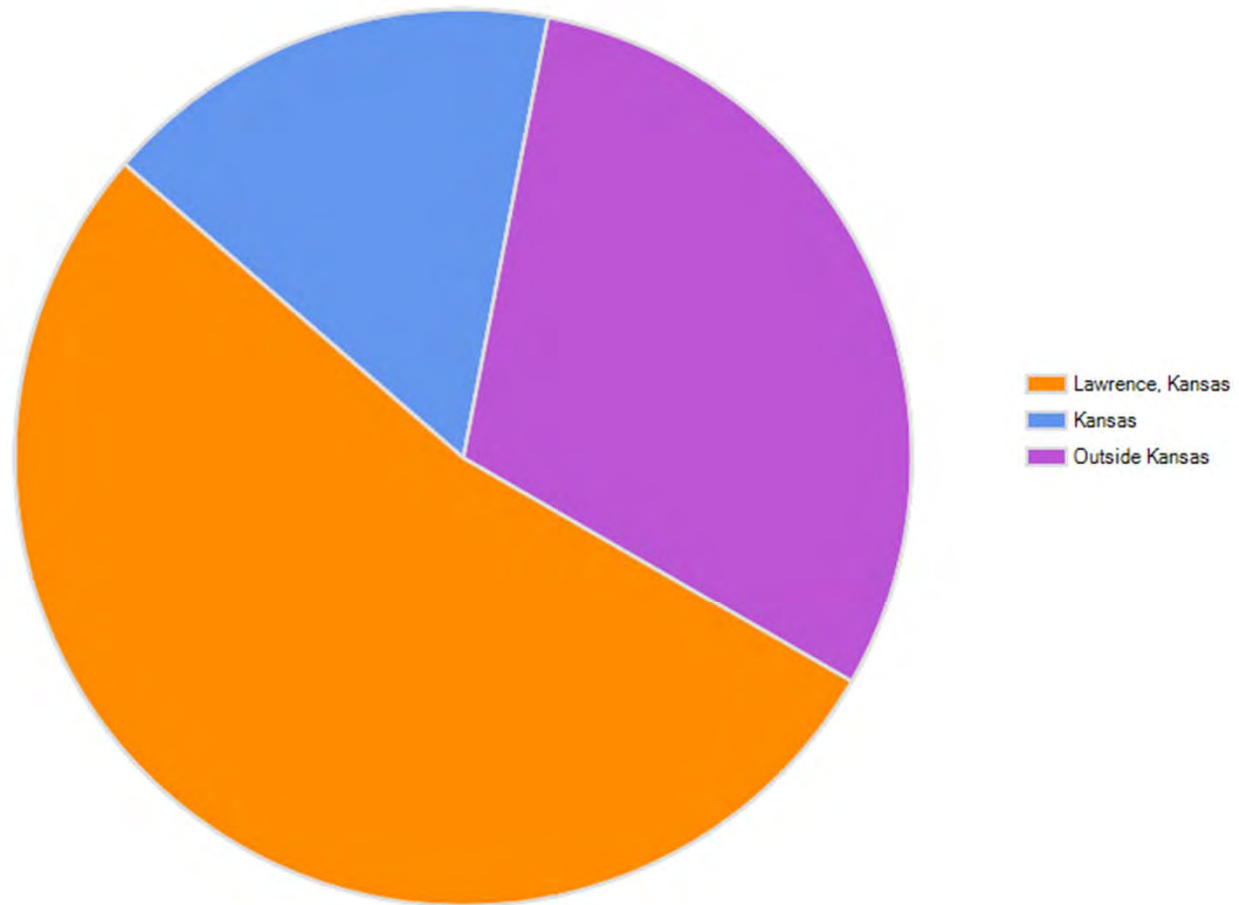
General Information

Focus Groups = 59 participants

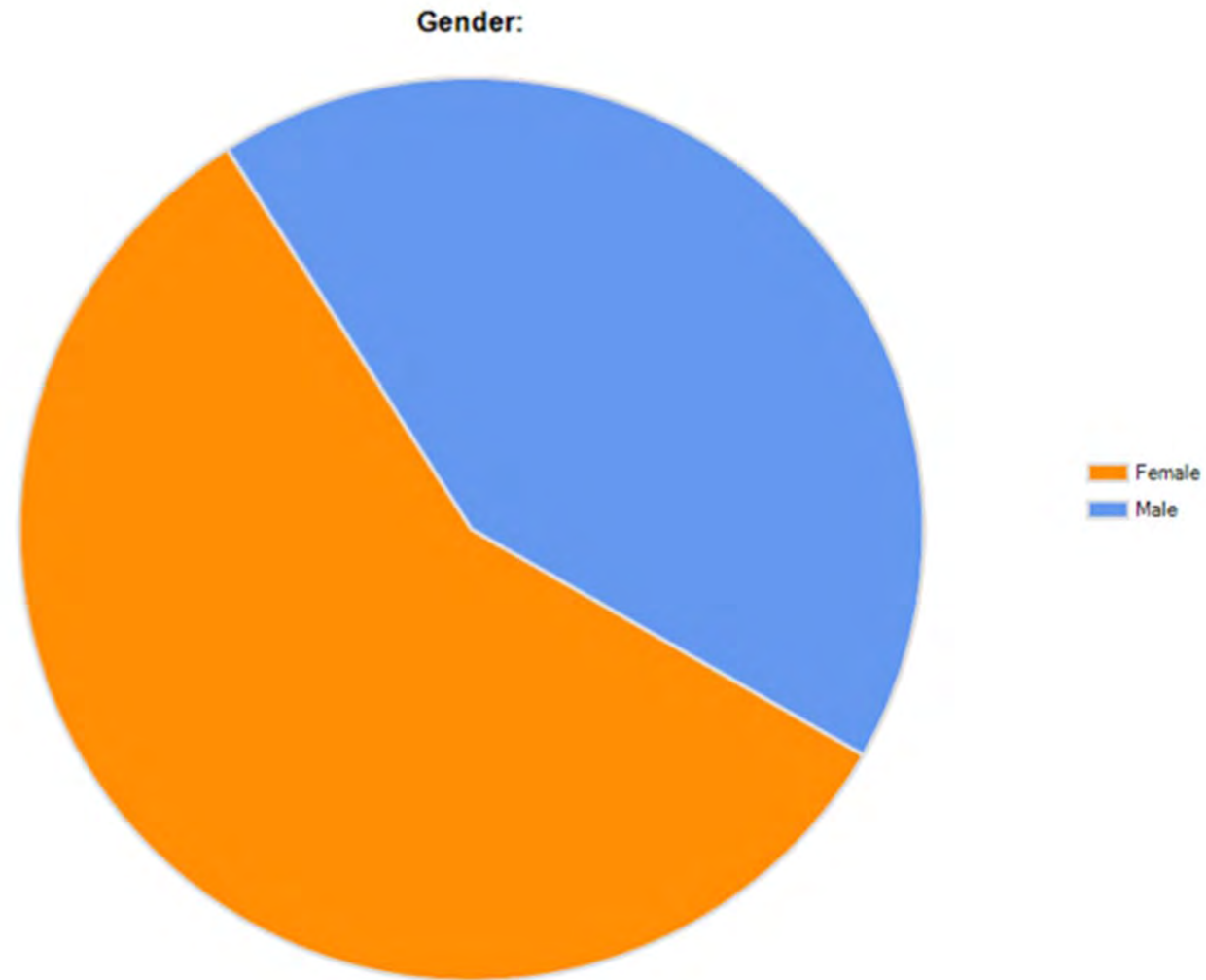
- KU student group leaders
- SMA interns past and present
- SMA board members
- Creative voices from Lawrence community
- 4 groups comprised of scholars/ researchers
- SMA “heavy users”

SurveyMonkey = 66 participants

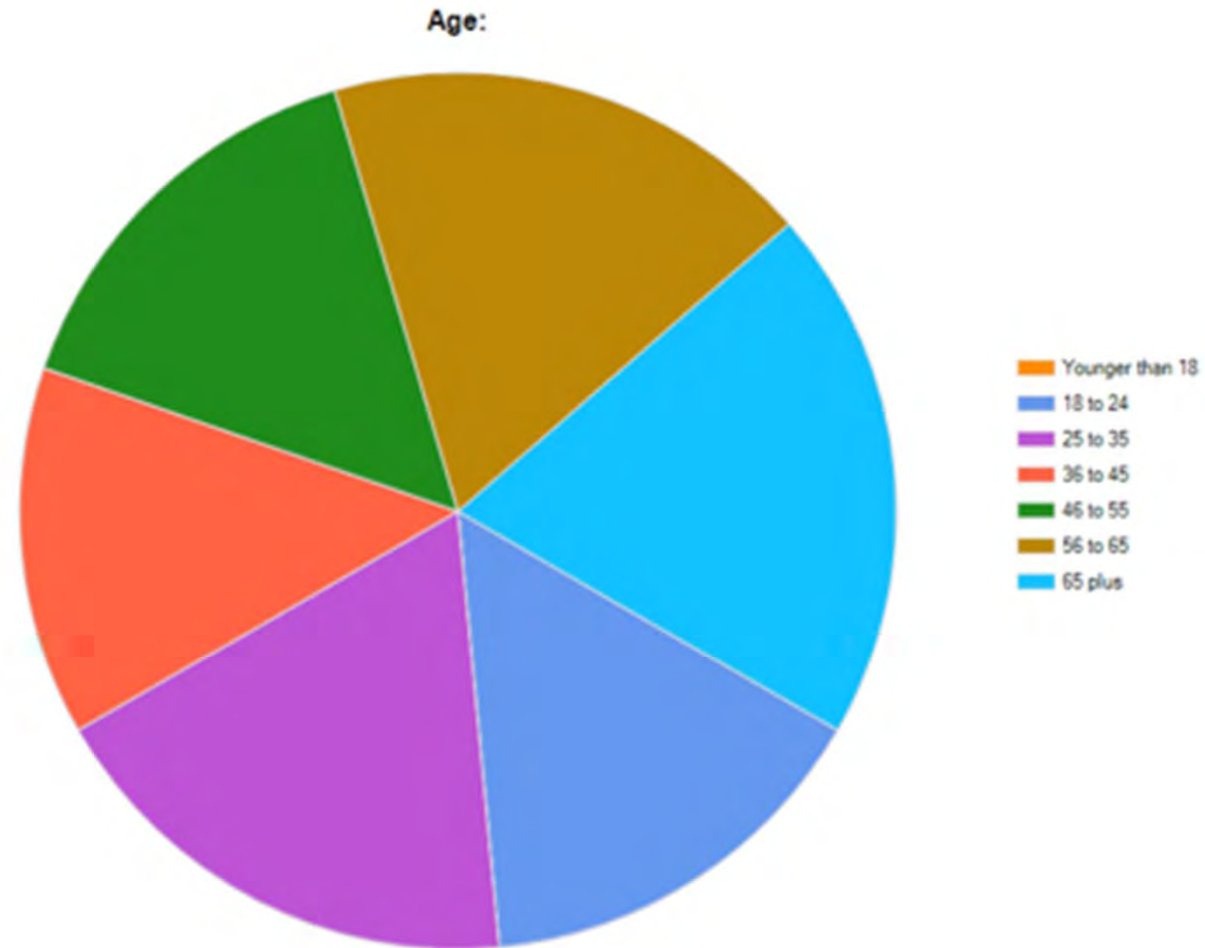
Where are you from?



SurveyMonkey = 66 participants

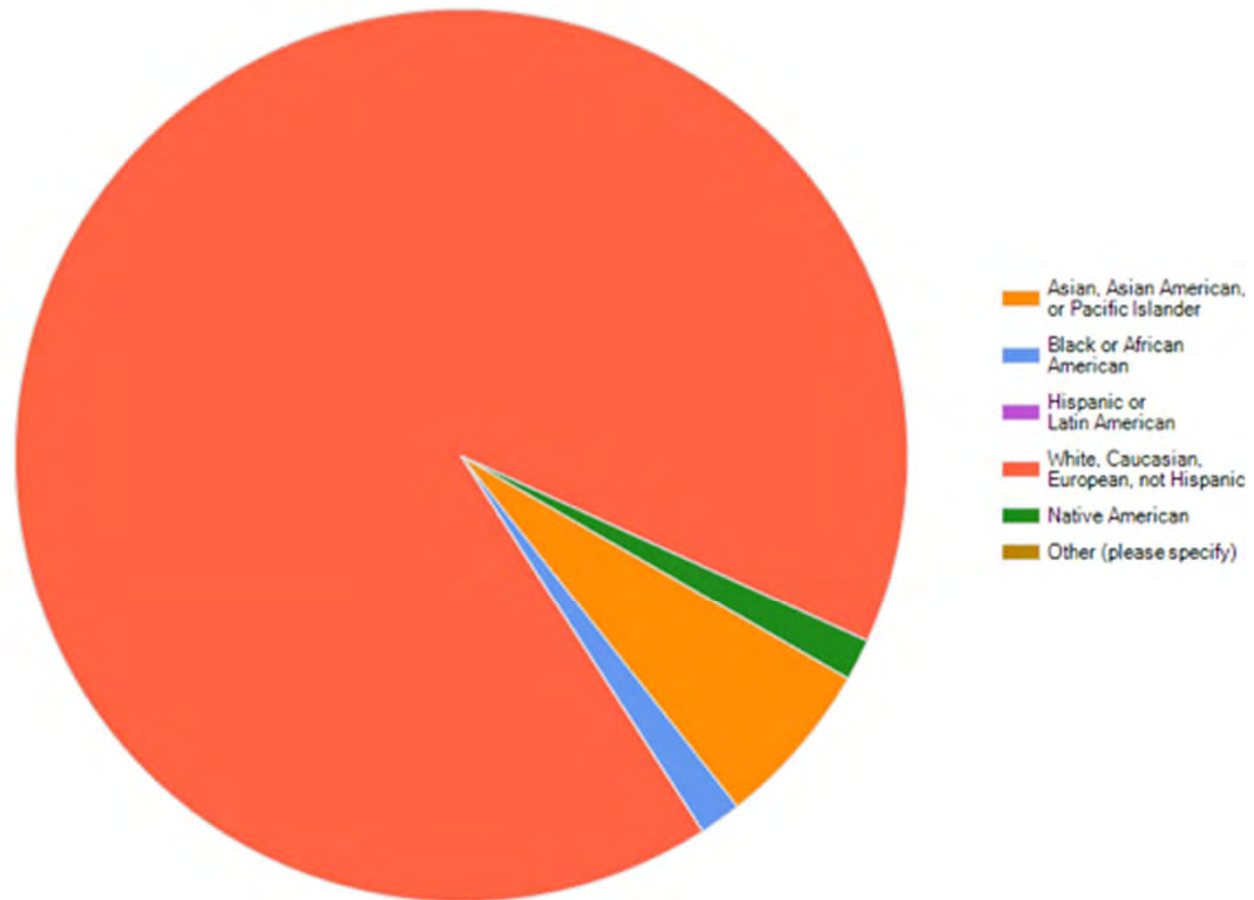


SurveyMonkey = 66 participants

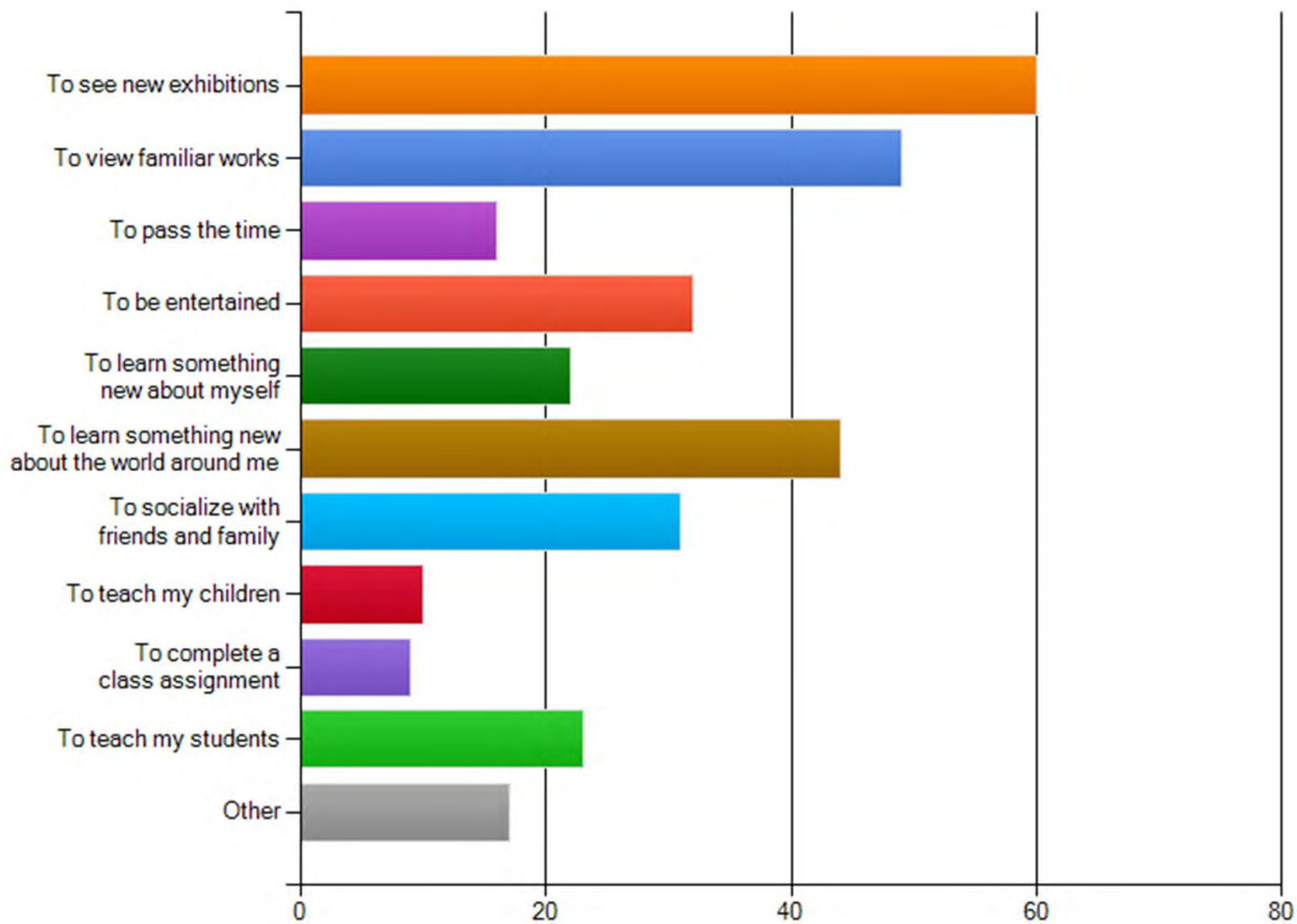


SurveyMonkey = 66 participants

Race/ ethnicity:



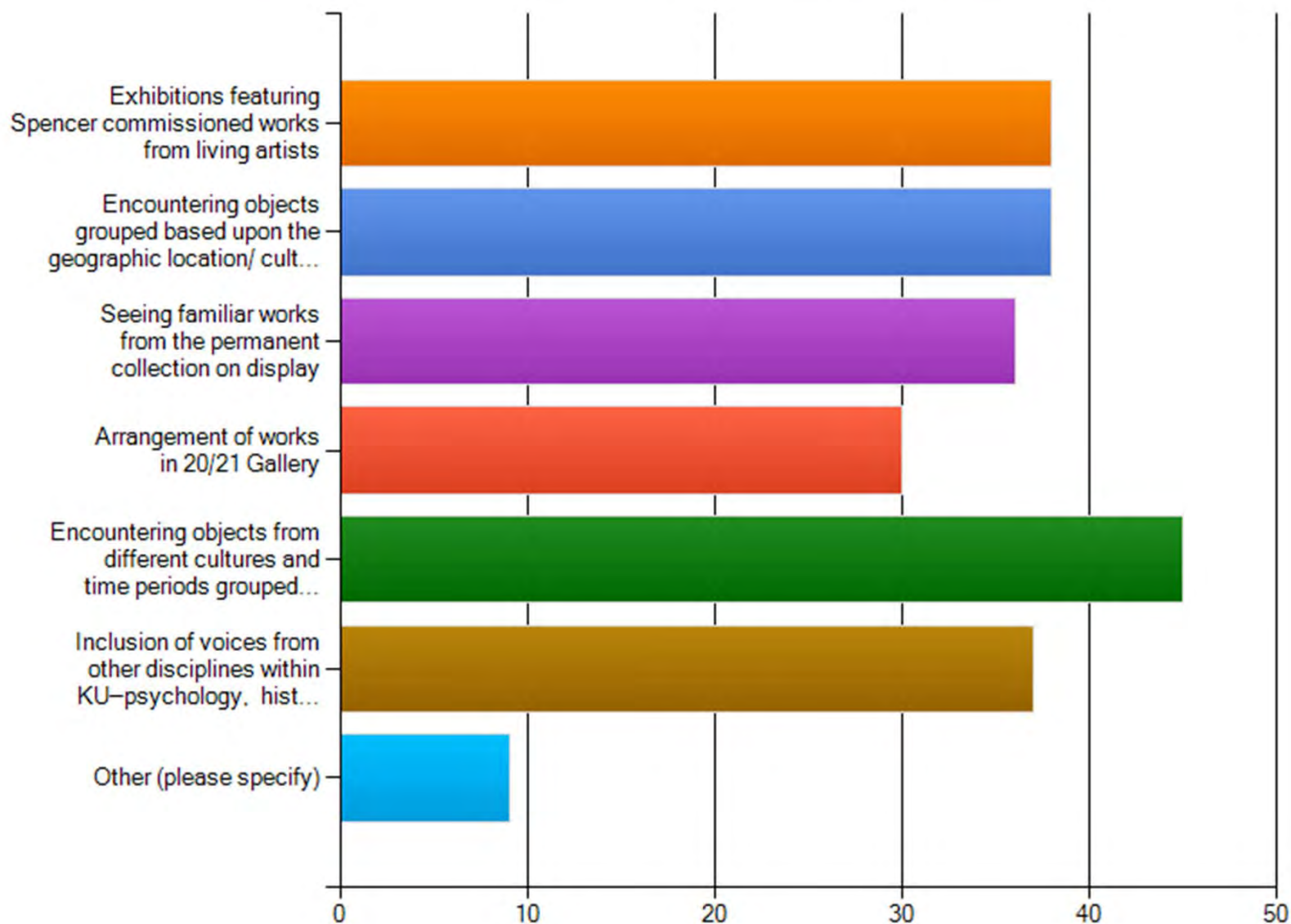
Why do you go to the Spencer? (Please CIRCLE all the answers that apply):



Why pursue this activity at the Spencer?

- ❑ Convenience—only legitimate art museum in the area
- ❑ Find changing exhibits exciting
- ❑ Extraordinary permanent collection—quality and diversity
- ❑ Local Link to Global World
- ❑ Personal: creativity, relieves stress, education, self-reflection
- ❑ SMA Staff = knowledgeable and friendly
- ❑ Intimate size lends itself to engagement
- ❑ Enriches teaching outside classroom
- ❑ Programming around exhibitions enjoyable
- ❑ Provides insight into different time periods/ cultures/ places
- ❑ Only opportunity to view Spooner works

What do you like about the Spencer's current exhibitions/installations?



Focus Groups: What have you enjoyed?

- Exhibits
 - “hip, modern, awesome”
 - Multi-sensory
 - Interdisciplinary
 - Intimate
 - Engage new audiences
- Programming
 - Engaging
 - Multi-sensory

What about the reinstallation excites you?

- New connections/ fresh approaches to familiar works
- New works
- Juxtaposition of “Art” + “non-art”
- Removal tired/ inferior works
- Much needed update in décor
- Being challenged
- Some galleries have been to once and have never felt like going again—needs to be corrected
- Disjointedness of European and American collections from antiquity to present will be addressed
- More Asian objects and objects from Spooner on view
- Central Court is so cavernous art gets lost
- Labeling

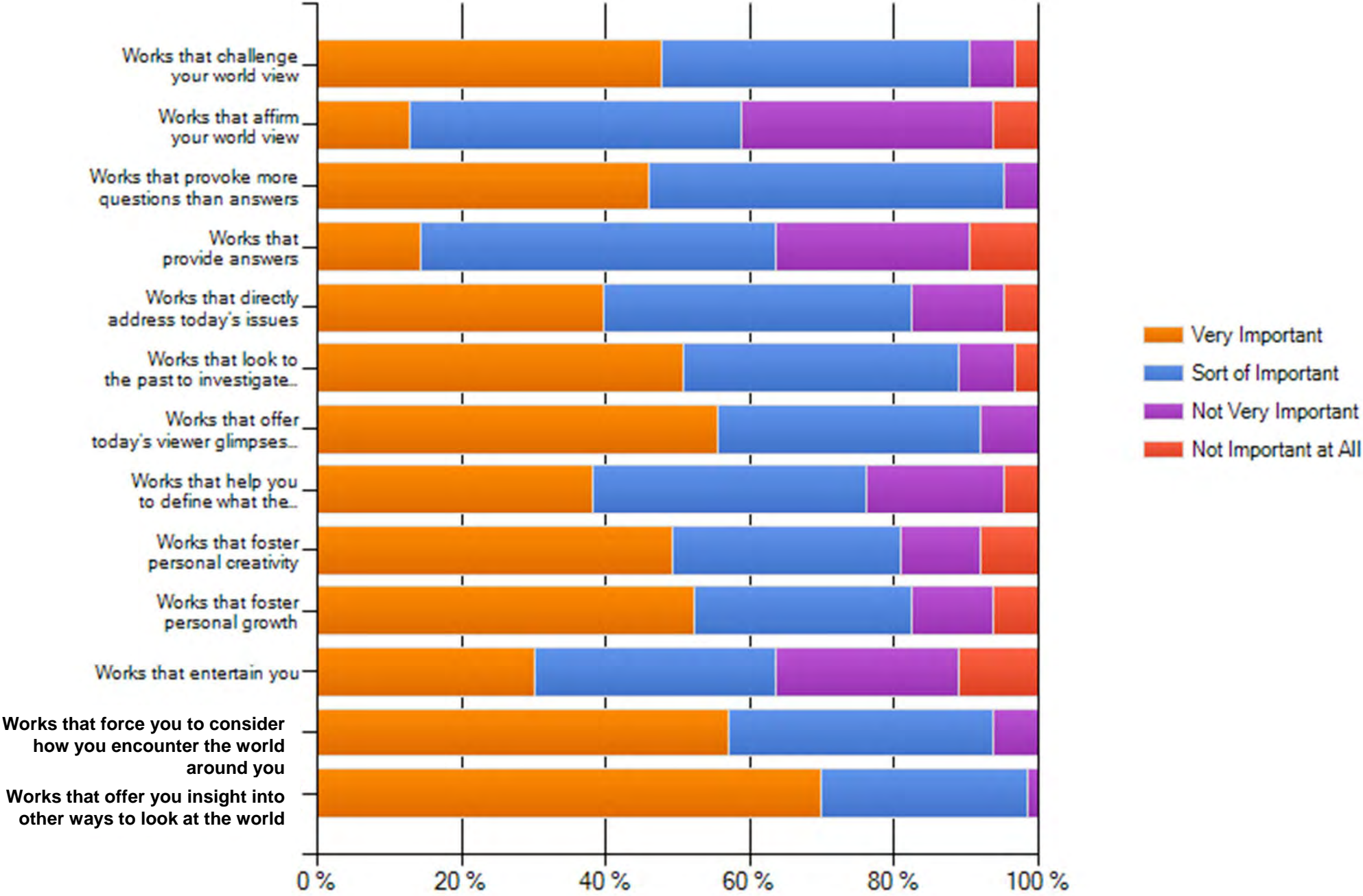
What barriers prevent you from being excited about the reinstallation of the permanent collection?

- ❑ Lack of transparency
- ❑ Description of GOAL is too vague—too open-ended
- ❑ Museum will not go far enough
- ❑ Entire museum will become “busy” space
- ❑ “fear of unknown”
- ❑ Quality will suffer
- ❑ “repetition of 20/21”
- ❑ Lack of rigorous and compelling new didactic content
- ❑ “self-interest” over public’s needs
- ❑ Marginalization of earlier works in favor of new
- ❑ Removal of iconic works
- ❑ Context will be lost or subordinated
- ❑ Change will happen too quickly
- ❑ Spooner collection
- ❑ “student first mentality”

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Criteria of Object Selection

When at the Spencer how important is it for you to experience the following:



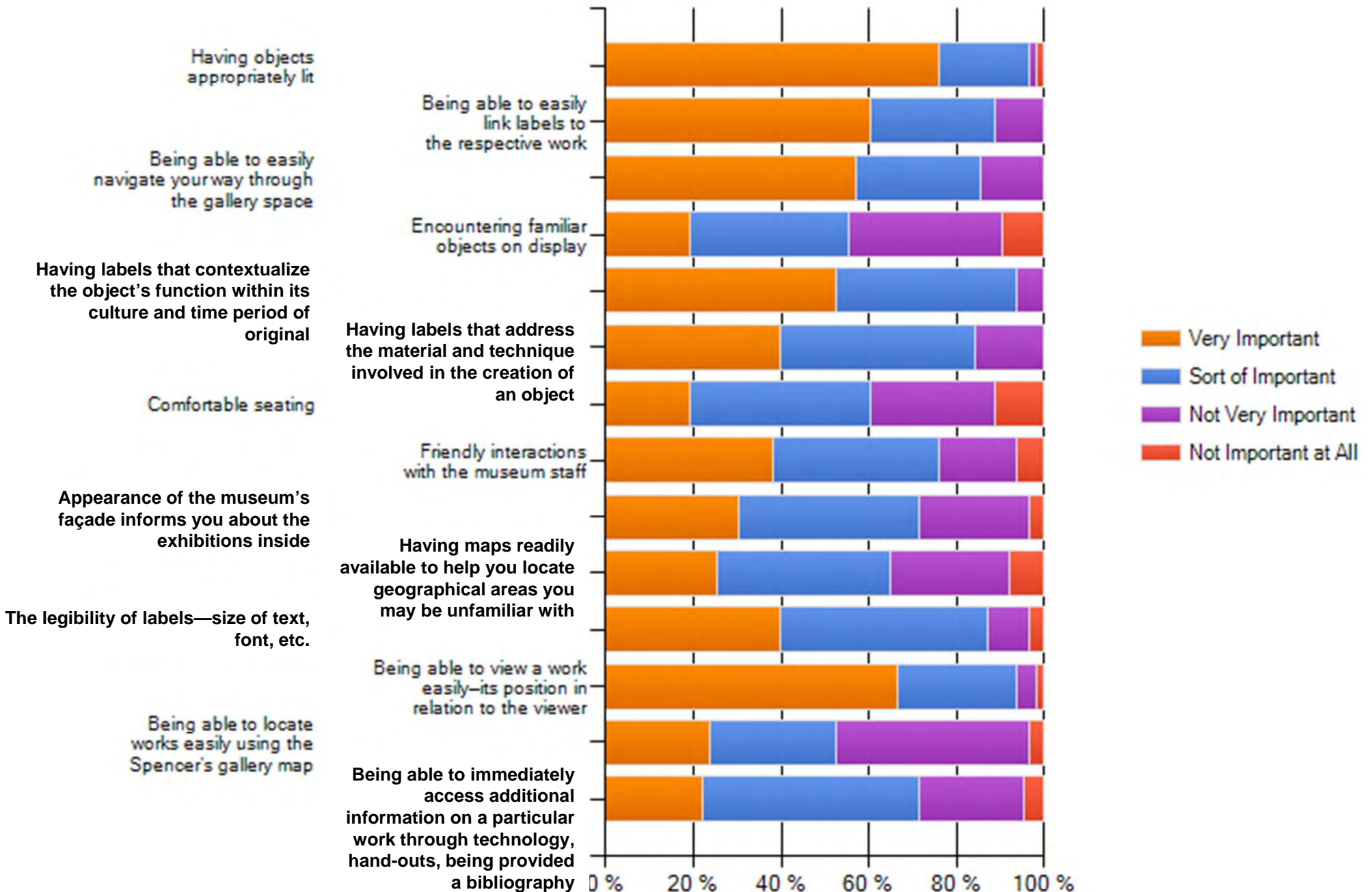
What about museums helps you to appreciate and understand art?

- Historical context
- Contemporary viewpoint
- Personal relevance
- Creative process
- Labels
- Breadth of objects—objects themselves
- Programming
- Leaving room to ponder
- Scholarly exhibitions
- Diversity of voices
- Quality and authenticity
- Seating at optimal locations
- Local and international artists
- Provoke new ideas/ ways of thinking

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Mode of Display

When at the Spencer how important is the following to helping you to feel at home:



Imagine your ideal experience...

- ❑ Accommodates variety of learning styles
- ❑ Way finding
- ❑ Objects easily visible
- ❑ Provokes me to learn more/ Challenges me
- ❑ Comfortable atmosphere
- ❑ Staff availability
- ❑ Element of surprise
- ❑ Alone/ “with friends”
- ❑ Music vs. no music
- ❑ Relaxed guards
- ❑ Natural lighting
- ❑ Open spaces
- ❑ Small thematic exhibitions pulling works from several times and places
- ❑ New and familiar works
- ❑ Interdisciplinary exhibits
- ❑ Contextualization
- ❑ “Museum of 21st Century”

Focus Groups: Structural Suggestions

- Satellite SMA sites
- Café, Bookstore—“providing the total experience”
- Roof garden
- Sculpture garden
- Address entrance and foyer
- Including more floor pieces
- Dedicated media spaces
- “art meditation”
- “visually open seating”
- Open storage/ print room model
- Regular venue for performances
- Stairs leading to 4th floor from central court
- Flow: 4th floor, mobile walls
- Find donors to replace frames
- Look to innovations in public library design
- Central court as common area
- Site lines

Setting the mood ...

... motivating, inspiring, enchanting, rich, “appropriate to exhibition,” comfortable, friendly, contemporary, respectful, professional, open, passionate, unbiased, relaxed, insightful, calm, tranquil, guttural, polished, unfamiliar, relevant, refreshing, spacious, colorful, inviting, challenging, accessible, accommodating, airy, striking, energetic, engaging, topical, critical, personal, political, stimulating, contemplative, alive, chill, sexy, representative of the world, friendly, “beautiful and occasionally terrifying”...

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Nature of Interpretation

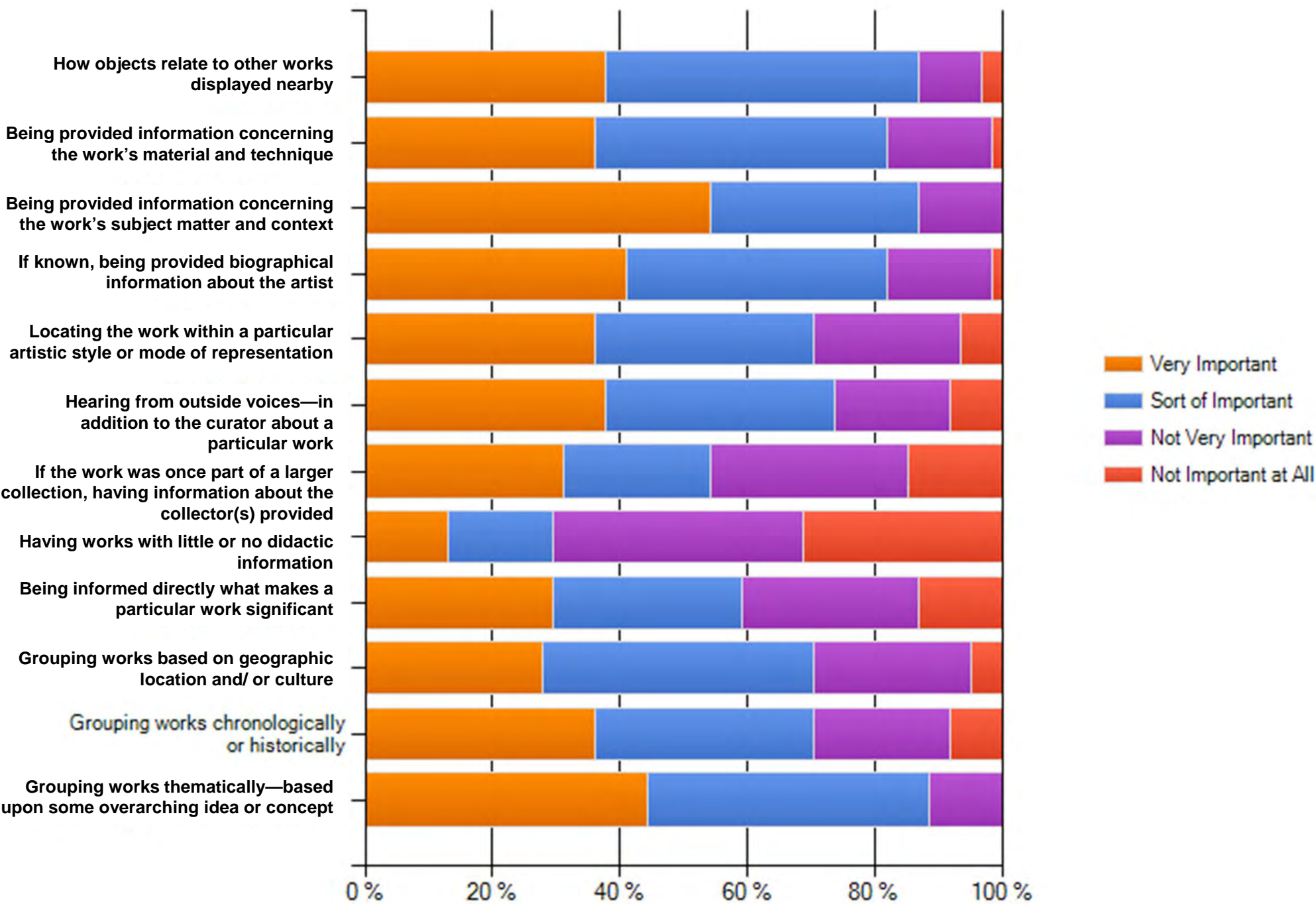
Focus Groups: Exhibiting Suggestions

- Organizing Works
 - ▣ Thematic and “traditional”
 - ▣ Partnering works
 - ▣ Creating a mood
 - ▣ Mix of historical/anthropological/ design objects and “Art”
 - ▣ Regular Rotations: object and/ or intimate groupings

Focus Group: Exhibiting Suggestions

- Available resources being underutilized
 - SMA education department
 - Art History, Museum Studies, Visual Arts Education
 - Research expertise of interns
 - Other collections on campus
 - Humanities
 - Connecting with community

When at the Spencer how important is the following to you:



What issues would you like to see pursued?

- ❑ Reinstallation of permanent collection
- ❑ Cross-disciplinary issues
- ❑ Human condition: emotions, creativity, age
- ❑ “Introduction to ____” (social realism, expressionism, formal elements)
- ❑ Museum as institution
- ❑ Ethics of display
- ❑ Range of topics (i.e., topics appealing to 18-30 age group: pop culture)
- ❑ Historical/cultural comparisons on particular topic (i.e., advertising)
- ❑ Intern-driven shows with opportunity for intern to discuss experience with public
- ❑ Environment: conservation, global warming
- ❑ Design: architecture, industrial design
- ❑ Local: history (i.e., Manifest Destiny), artists
- ❑ Outside Western culture
- ❑ Technical: Artistic technique; conservation
- ❑ Relevance to particular place/time & to world today (i.e., health, economics, war, travel, classification, globalization, identity, racism, technology, multiculturalism)
- ❑ Public interventions in conjunction with exhibits

Focus Groups: Suggestions for Disseminating Information

- Avoid text heavy signage—omnibus panel with basic didactic labels per object and “food for thought”-type information
- Expert—SMA, KU, community, etc.—talks on student nights
- Plumbing creativity
- Avoid using archaic/ scholarly/ outdated terminology
- Multi-sensory
- Context: timelines, maps
- Regularly scheduled gallery talks

What would be your ideal way of receiving information about an object?

- Variety
 - ▣ Active: discussion groups, questions on labels, programming
 - ▣ Passive: audio, labels (unobtrusive and adjacent to work), video, take away
- Providing means for receiving further information
 - ▣ Bibliographies
 - ▣ On-line links
- Exhibition catalog (if possible)

How can the Spencer make learning an active discovery process for visitors?

- Transparency
- Provide variety of learning experiences
- Provide means for audience feedback/ input
- Technology
- Increasing university (departments, faculty and students) and community involvement
- Basic Information: labels, maps, timelines
- Accessibility



Hungry for more?

Further suggestions: increasing student involvement, inspiring graduate students and scholars of all disciplines to see collection as a resource, encouraging more “foot traffic” through public involvement.