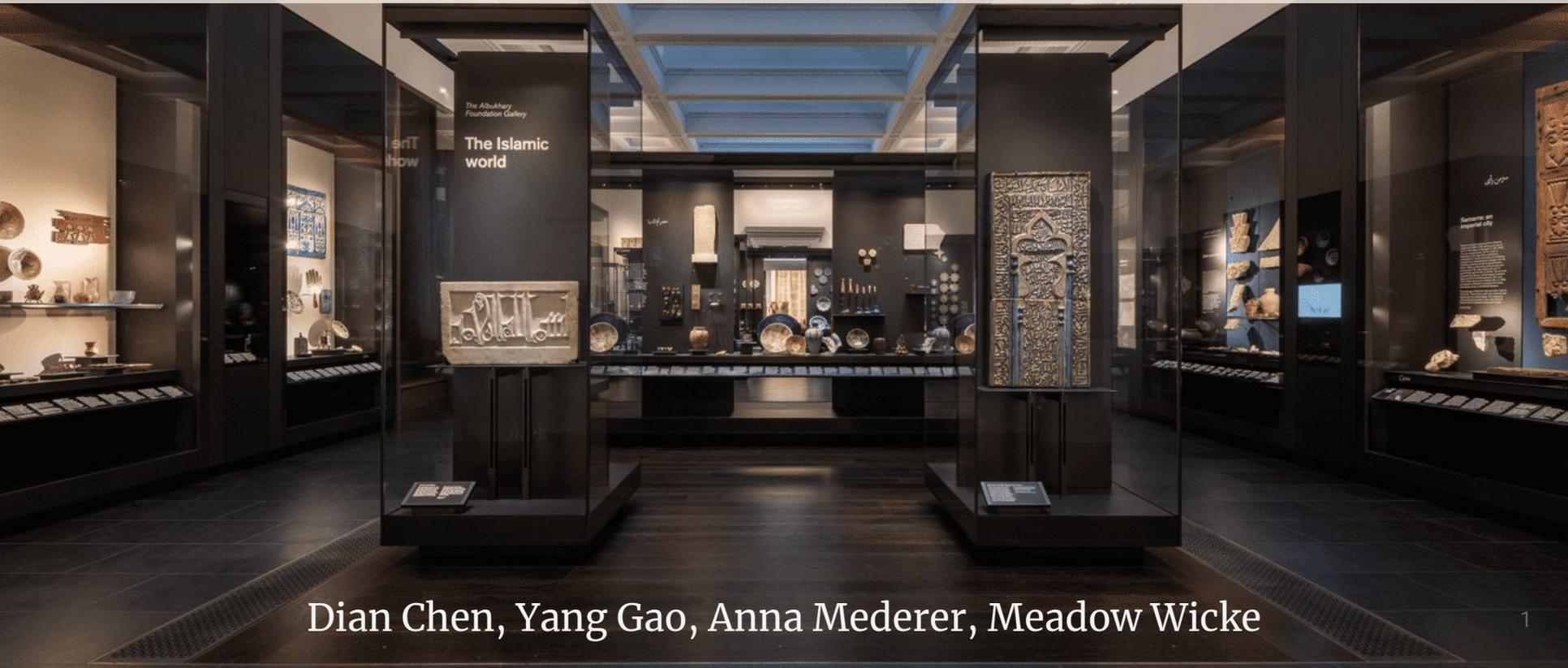# Evaluation of the Islamic World Gallery in the British Museum

Dian Chen, Yang Gao, Anna Mederer, Meadow Wicke

The British Museum

John Addis Gallery

Albukhary Foundation Gallery

Our Project Goal

To assist the British Museum in assessing how visitors engage with the redisplayed Islamic World collections in the Albukhary Foundation Gallery

Objectives

| Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3
Identify the purpose for the modifications and additions to the new gallery to develop a framework for measuring visitor engagement.	Measure the visitor engagement in the Albukhary Foundation Gallery by documenting visitor movements, behaviors, and perceptions.	Develop recommendations aligned with the British Museum's goals to improve the visitor experience.

Framework & Data Collection

Measuring Visitor Engagement
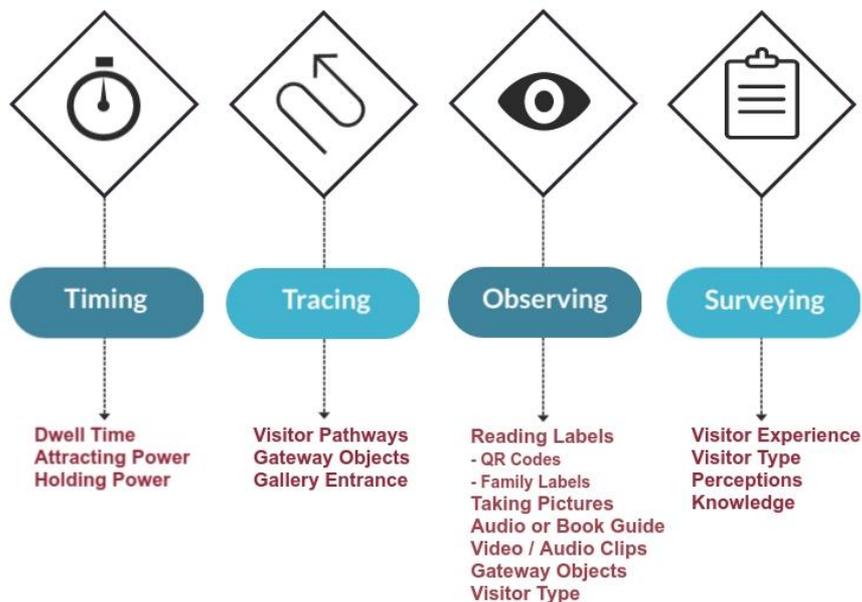
- ➢ Timing – 185 visitors
- ➢ Tracing – 110 visitors
- ➢ Counting – 4470 visitors
- ➢ Surveying – 100 visitors

Finding Outline

Visitor Demographics

- ➢ Nationality
- ➢ Visit frequency
- ➢ Visitor motivations

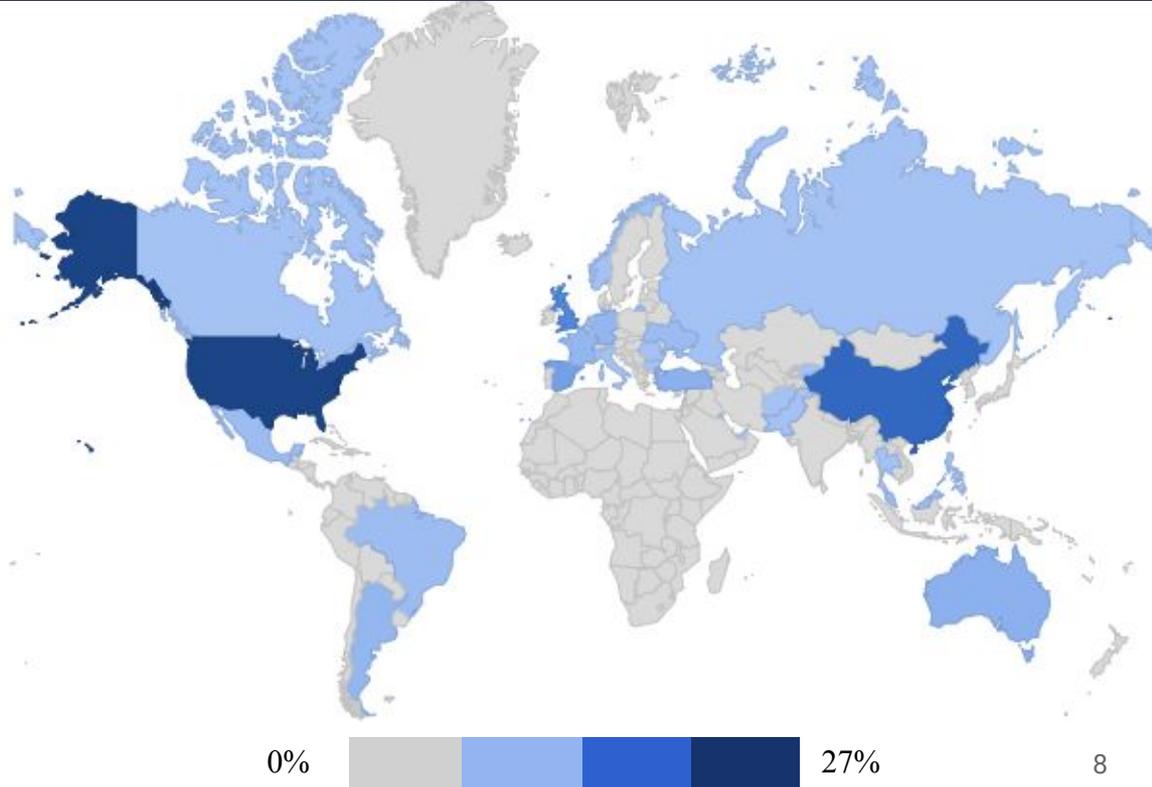## Visitor Behaviors

- ➢ Initial turn
- ➢ Visitor's pathway
- ➢ Dwell time
- ➢ Attracting power
- ➢ Holding power

Visitor Thoughts

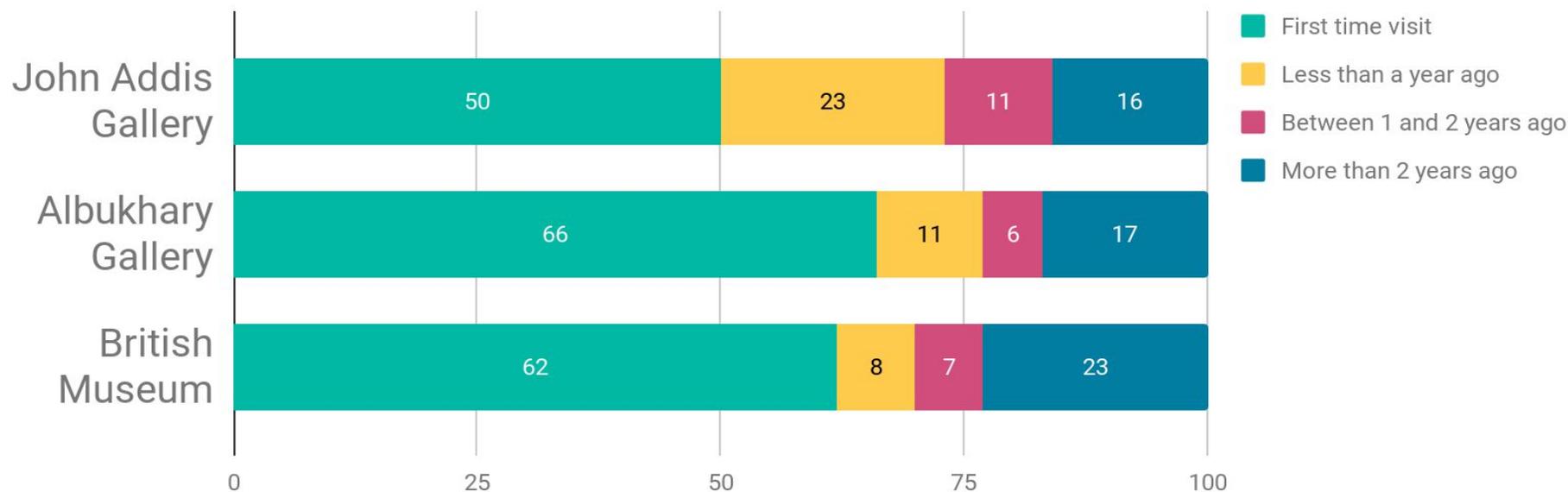- ➢ Visitor perceptions
- ➢ Visitors' favorite object
- ➢ Word cloud

Findings: Majority of visitors were international

Country	Number	Country	Number
USA	27	Bulgaria	1
China	18	Canada	1
UK	11	Italy	1
Spain	7	Kuwait	1
Australia	4	Kyrgyzstan	1
Turkey	4	Lebanon	1
Argentina	3	Netherlands	1
France	3	Norway	1
Germany	3	Pakistan	1
Brazil	2	Philippines	1
Malaysia	2	Romania	1
Mexico	2	Russia	1
Ukraine	2	Thailand	1
Afghanistan	1	UAE	1
Belgium	1		

0% 27%

Findings: Increase in first-time British Museum visitors

Visitor Frequency

Legend:
- First time visit
- Less than a year ago
- Between 1 and 2 years ago
- More than 2 years ago

Gallery	First time visit	Less than a year ago	Between 1 and 2 years ago	More than 2 years ago
John Addis Gallery	50	23	11	16
Albukhary Gallery	66	11	6	17
British Museum	62	8	7	23

9

Findings: Almost half of the audience intentionally visited

Motivations for visiting the Islamic World Gallery

- Walked by with no intention to visit
- Interested in Islamic culture
- Recommended by a friend or source
- Other

54
31
11
5
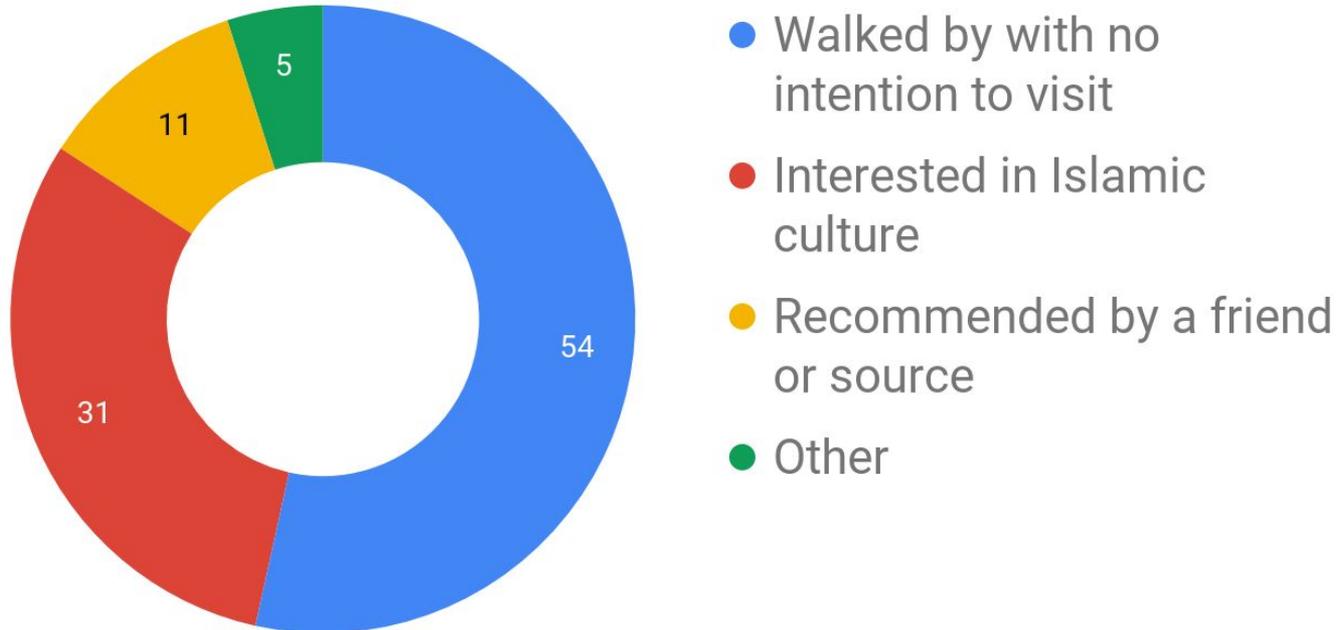
Findings: Majority of visitors turned right entering Room 42

Initial turn in Room 42

902
33%

1269
46%

579
21%

- Right
- Straight
- Left
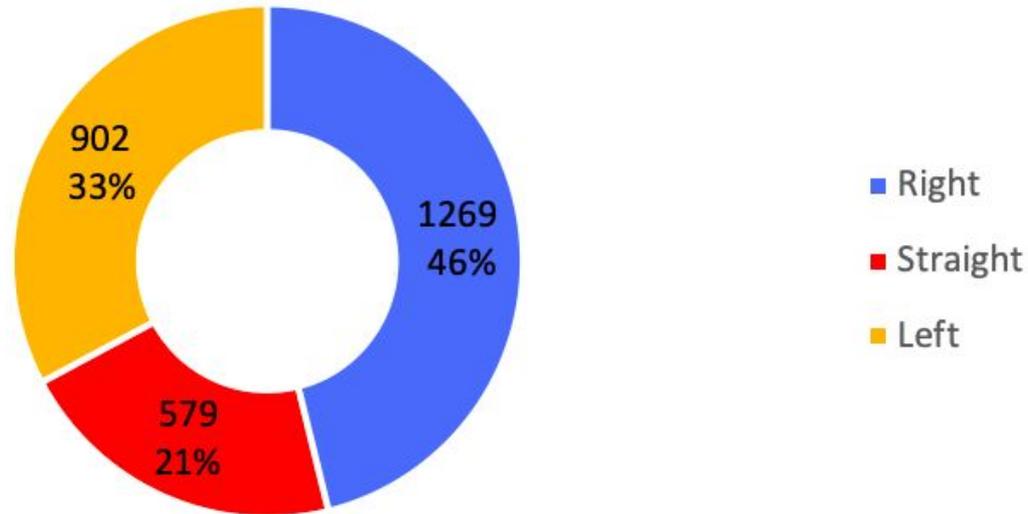
Findings: Most popular visitor pathways were along edges

A: Audio
V: Video
VA: Video, audio
Q: QR code
F: Family Label
QF: QR code & family label

Bold F: Family label with questions
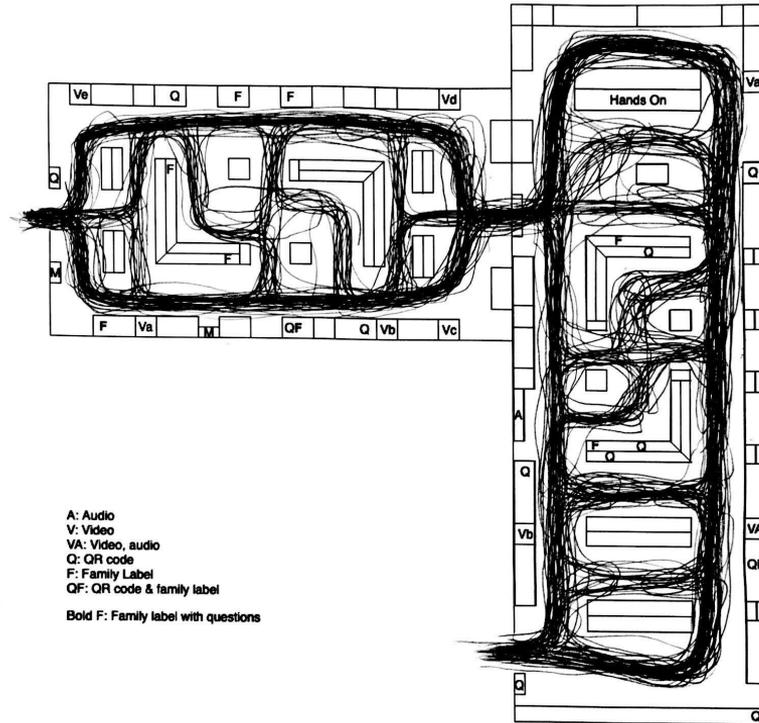
Findings: Decrease in dwell time in the Islamic World Gallery
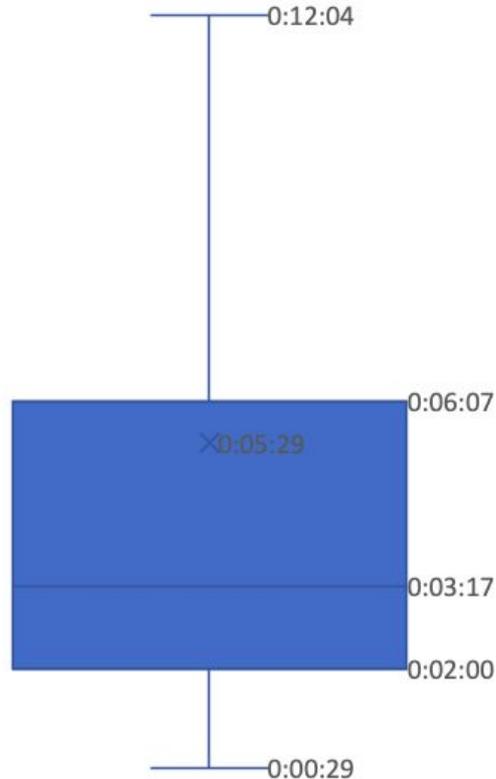
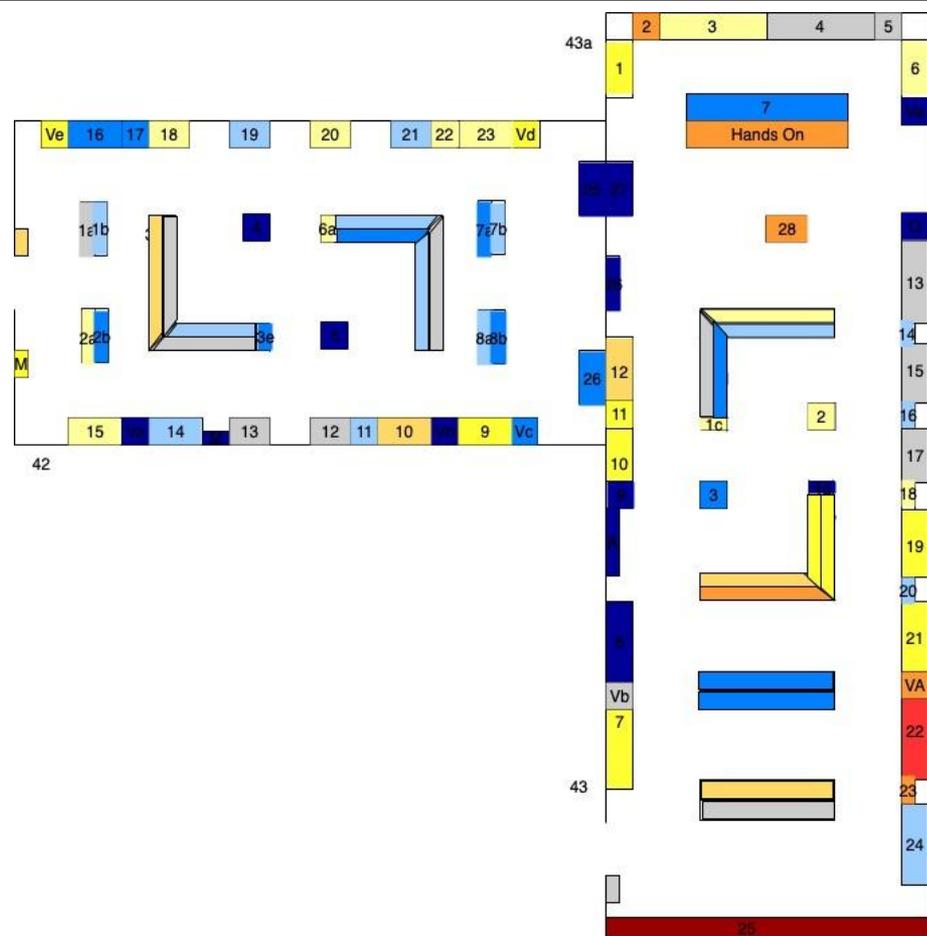| Outlier Data |
| :---: |
| 0:12:34 |
| 0:13:09 |
| 0:13:22 |
| 0:14:12 |
| 0:15:53 |
| 0:18:34 |
| 0:19:43 |
| 0:21:15 |
| 0:24:03 |
| 0:30:28 |
| 0:35:43 |
| 0:50:19 |
| 0:55:24 |

Heat Map: Attracting Power of the displays in the Albukhary Foundation Gallery

Three most popular displays:

Rank	Display	Room
1	21 Stones	43
2	Music and performance	43
3	The robe	43a

Percentage

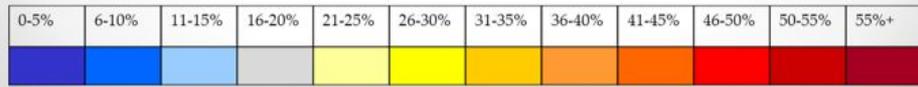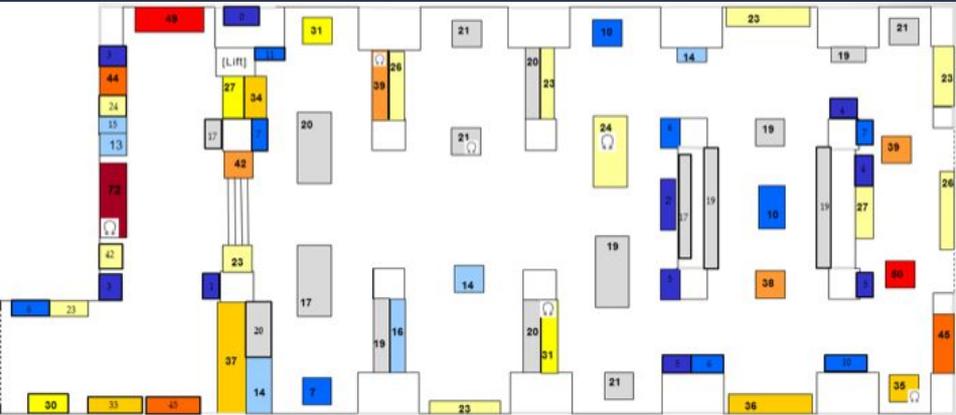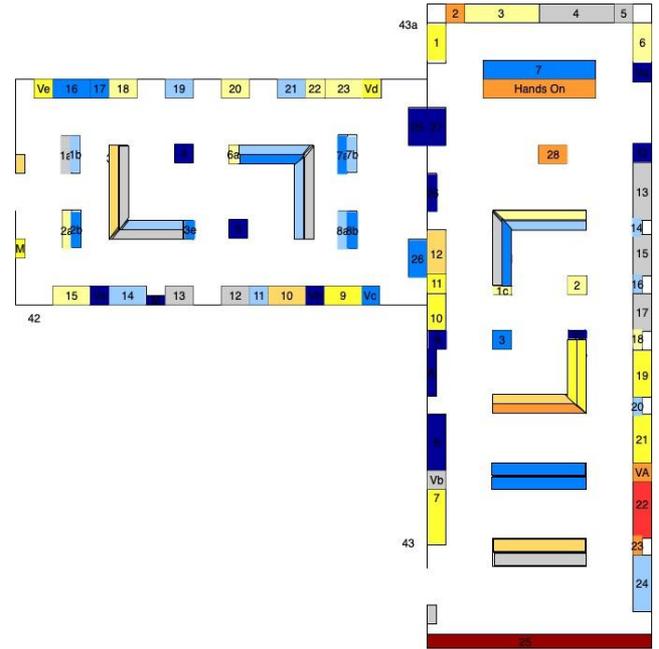| 0-5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | 36-40 | 41-45 | 46-50 | 51-55 | 55+ |

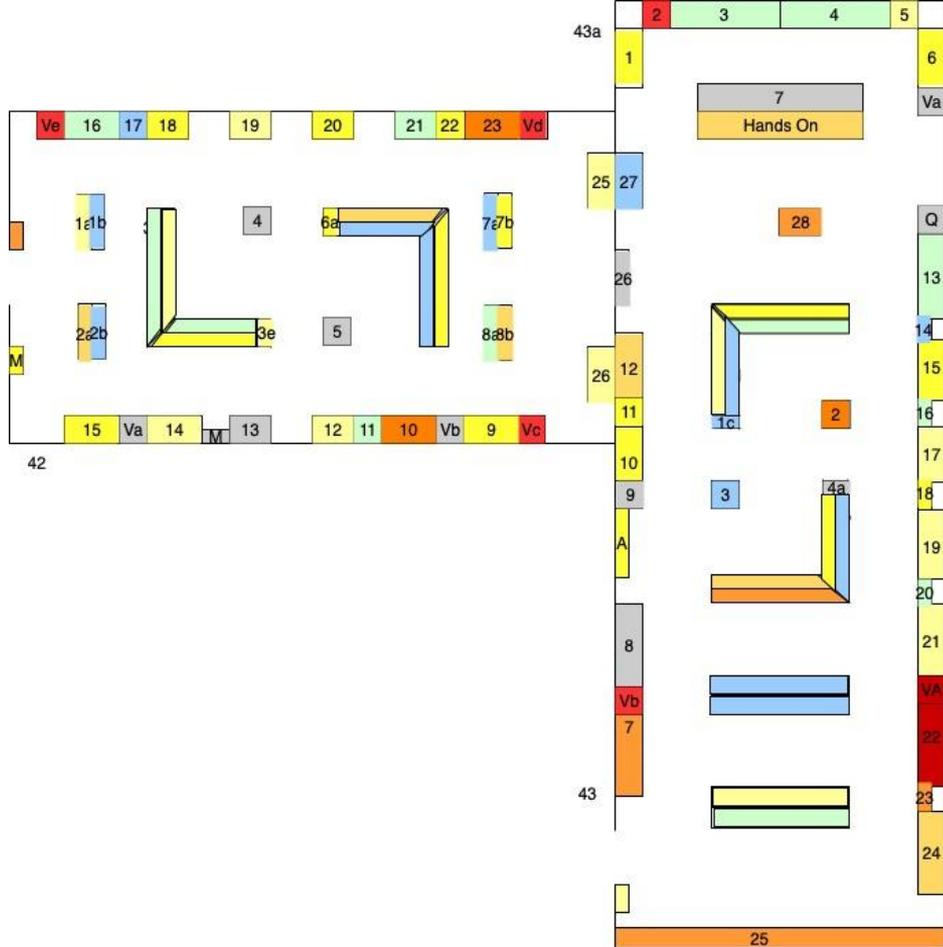# Similar attracting power

John Addis Gallery

Albukhary Gallery

Heat Map: Holding Power of the displays in the Albukhary Foundation Gallery

Three most captivating displays:

Rank	Display	Room
1	Music and performance	43
2	Video & audio	43
3	Introductory video	42

Time: Seconds

0-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   21-25   26-30   31-35   36-40   41-45   46-50   51+

Slight decrease in holding power

John Addis Gallery

Albukhary Gallery

17

Findings: Limited use of family labels

Family Labels / Objects

- Did not notice
- Used them
- Did not use

26

10

64
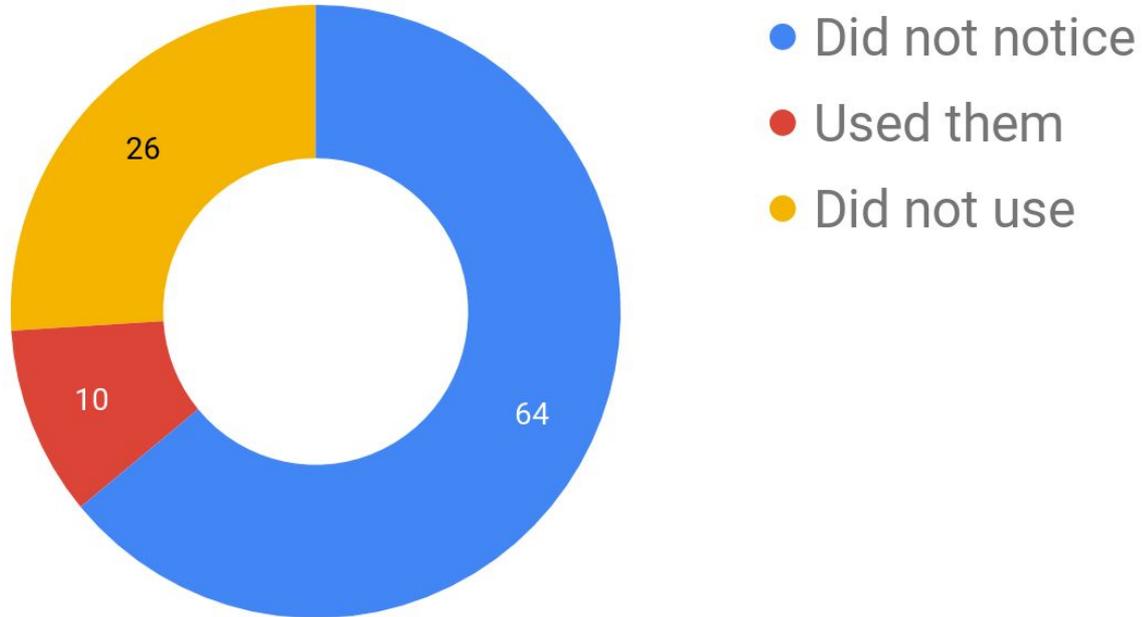
# Findings: Most common favorite displays were new additions to the gallery

Favorite Display
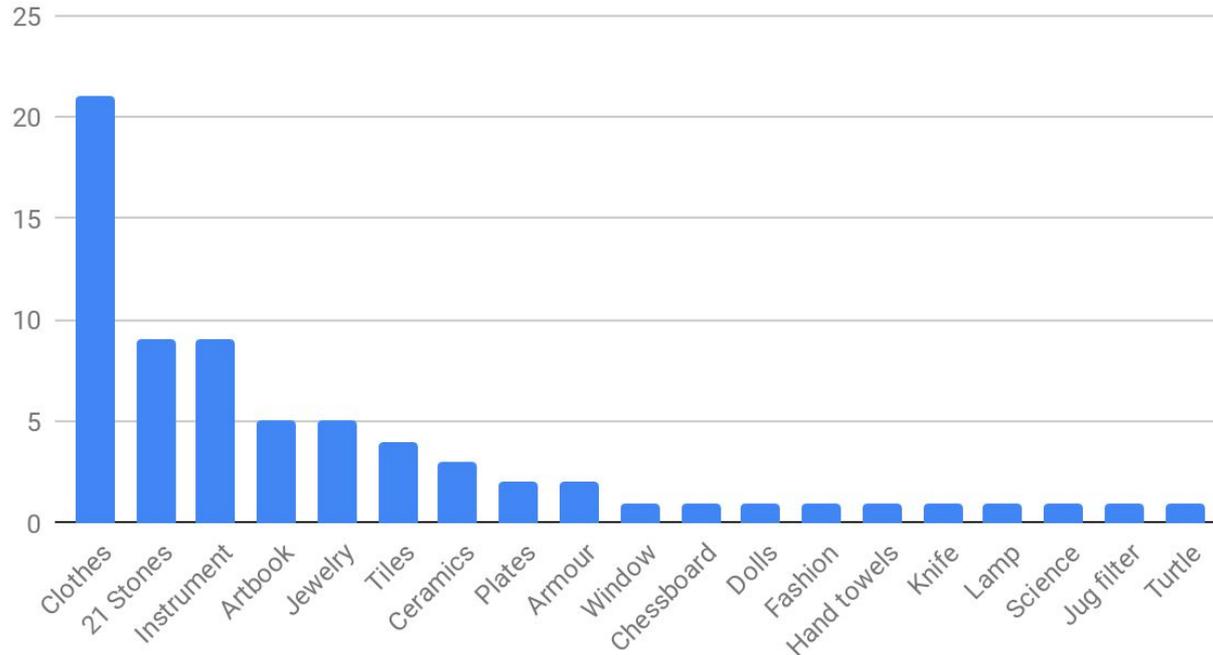
Reasons for changed or challenged perceptions

➢ Learned about the widespread Islamic culture

➢ Amazed by the bright colors people used on clothing

➢ Impressed by the diversity of the art pieces and musical instruments

➢ Surprised by the connections between Islam and other religions

Change or Challenge Perceptions

● No

● Yes

16

84

20
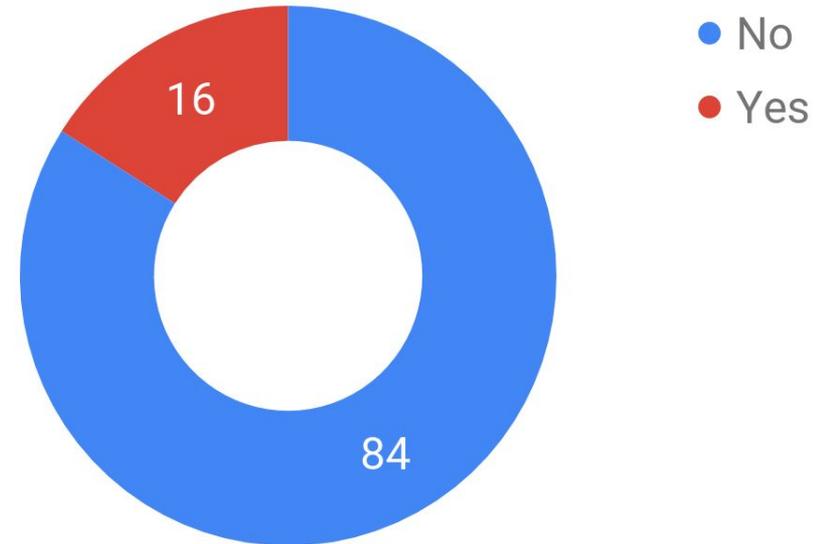
Findings: Overall positive thoughts about the gallery

Recommendations

Facility

➢ Add more seating to the gallery

Design

➢ Provide translations for the objects' text

➢ Include QR codes for details on objects

➢ Provide a way to view clothing from the front and back

➢ Make family labels clear and obvious

Content

➢ Add a timeline to the regional map

➢ Include more audio clips for displayed instruments

➢ Display more Qur'an books, paintings, and calligraphy arts

Acknowledgements

➢ Project Advisors: Professor Brattin & Professor Tuler

➢ Sponsor: Stuart Frost

➢ Members of the Interpretation and gallery project team

  ○ Jonathan Lubikowski

  ○ Venetia Porter

  ○ Zeina Klink-Hoppe

  ○ Tess Sanders

➢ Volunteer Office

➢ The British Museum

References

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Jakeman, J. (2018). British Museum's Islamic art finally gets its fairy-tale ending. *The Art Newspaper.* Retrieved from

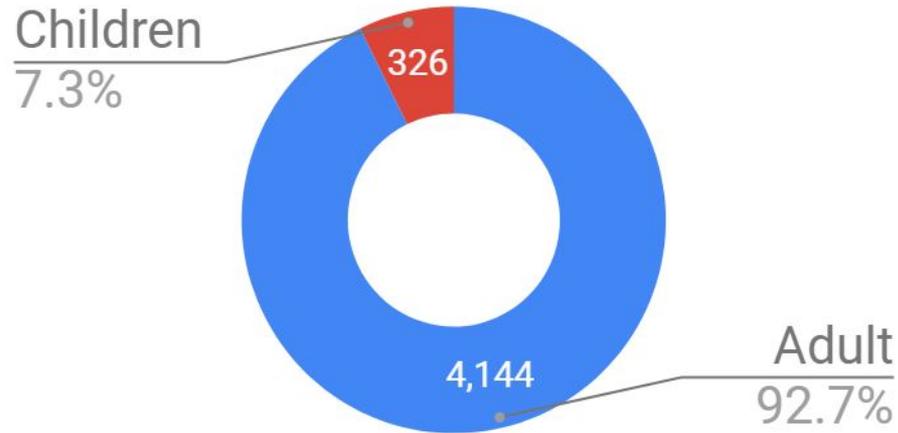   https://www.theartnewspaper.com/review/british-museum-s-islamic-art-finally-gets-its-fairy-tale-ending
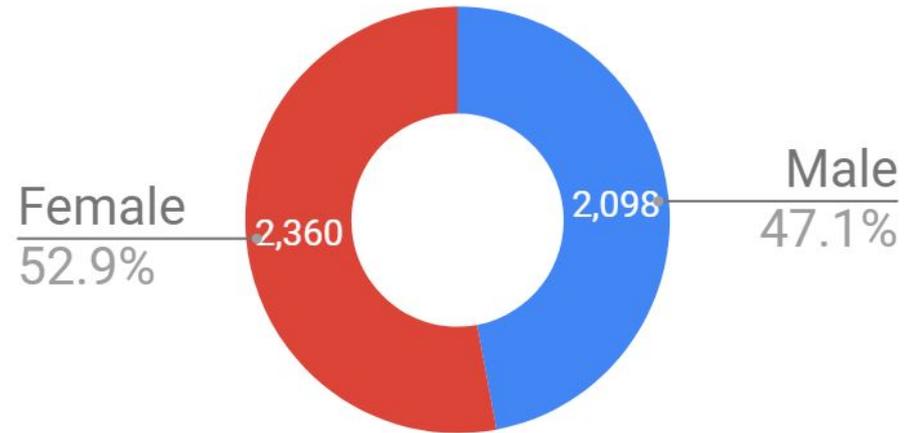
Thank You!

—Additional Information—

Findings: Consistent with the British Museum's audience
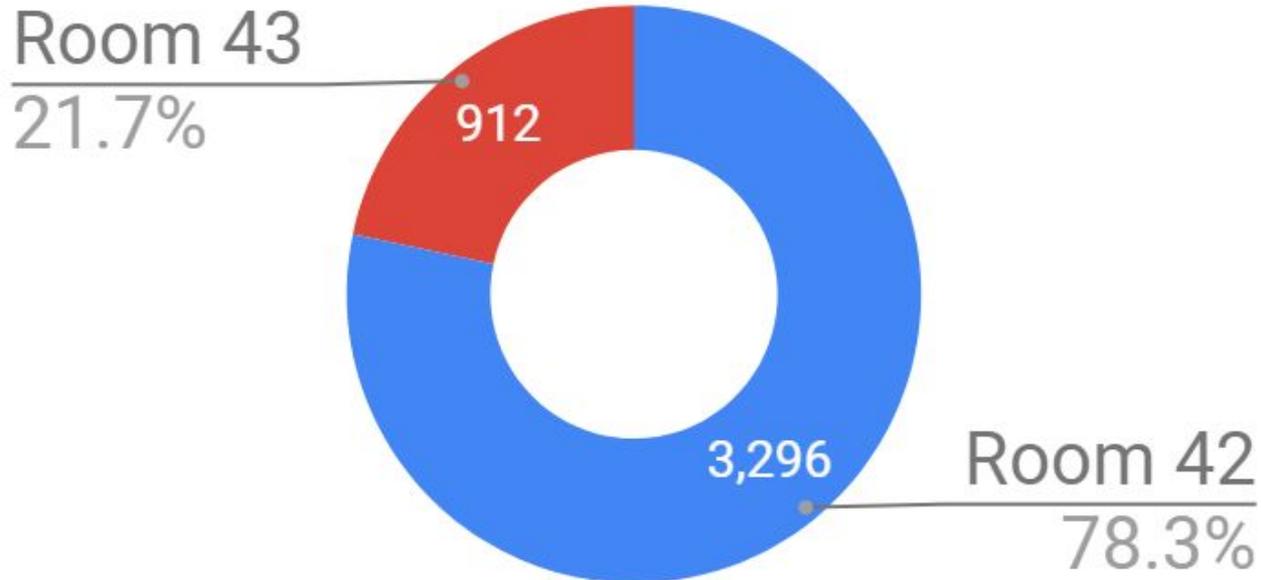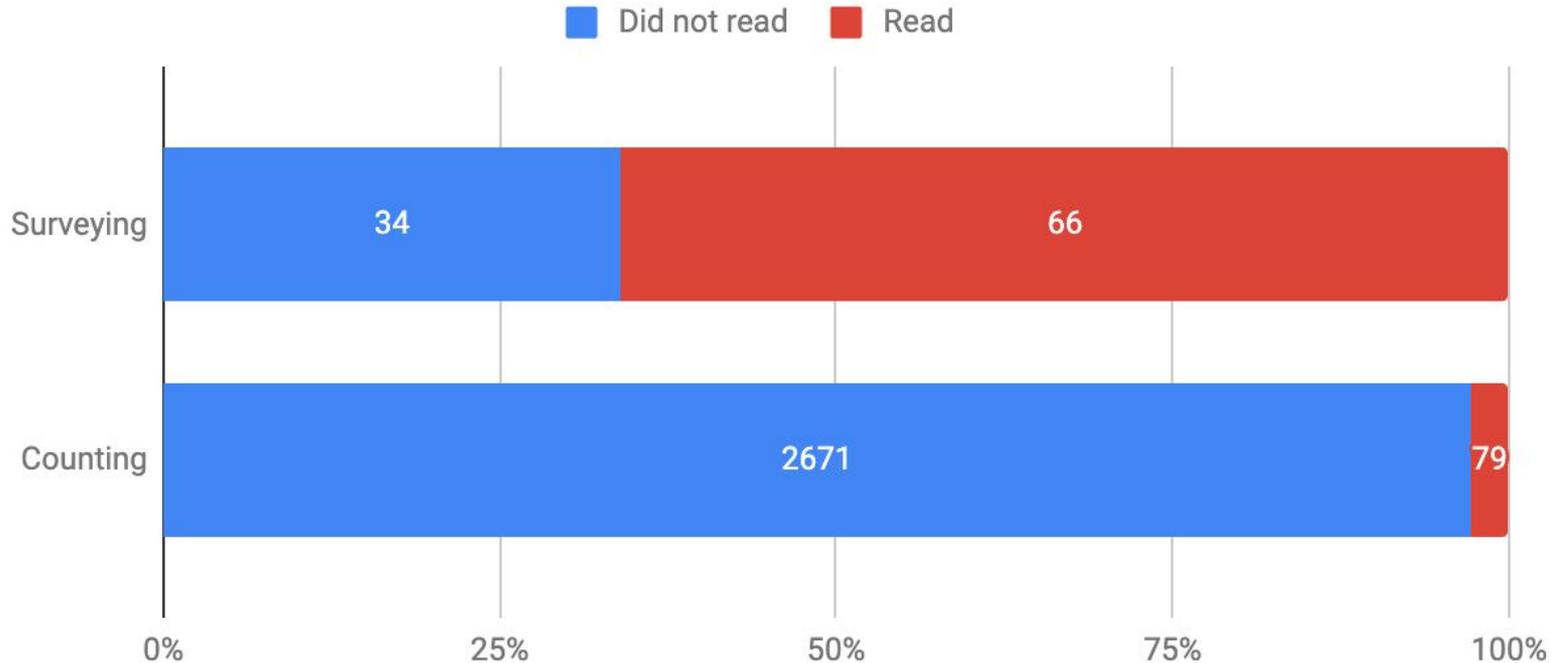

Adults to Children Ratio

Children
7.3%

326

4,144

Adult
92.7%

Male to Female Ratio

Female
52.9%

2,360

2,098

Male
47.1%

Findings: Majority visitors go through natural entrance

Room Entrance

Room 43
21.7%
912

3,296
Room 42
78.3%

Findings: Few visitor read the regional map

Regional Map

Did not read · Read

	Did not read	Read
Surveying	34	66
Counting	2671	79

0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Findings: New gallery has a younger audience

Visitor Group Age

Gallery	0 - 15	16 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 +
John Addis Gallery		9	11	12	10	11	7
Albukhary Gallery		28	31	16	11	10	4
British Museum	11	19	23	16	15	10	7
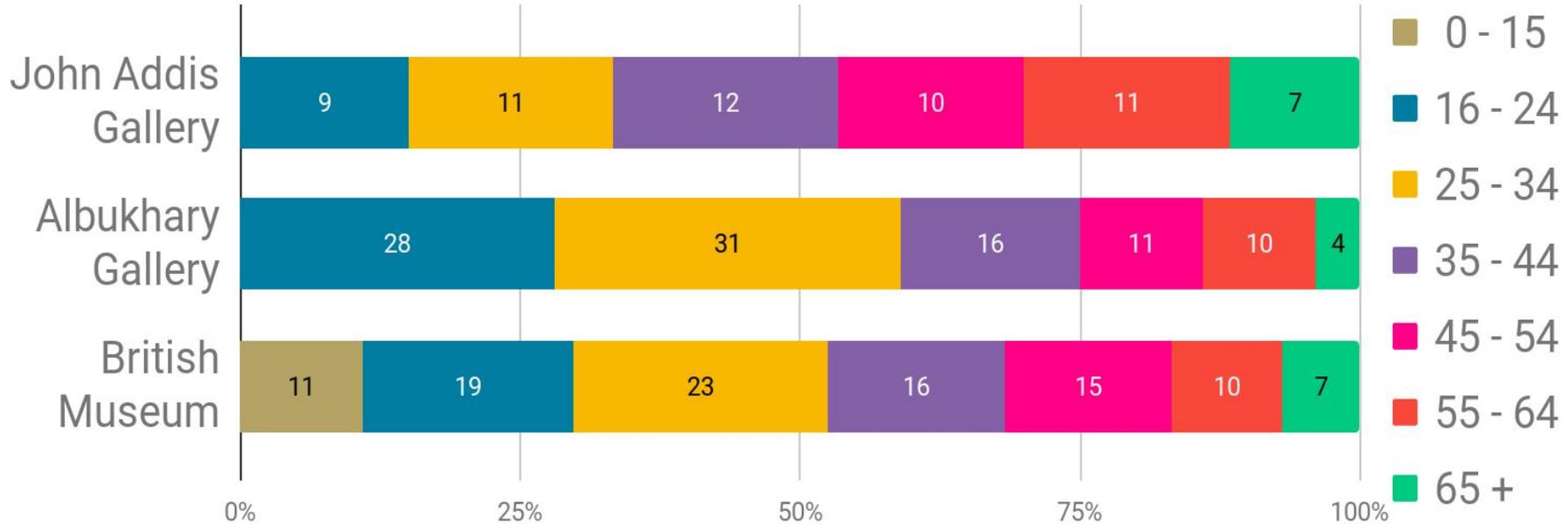
Findings: Objects near doorway have high First Case Visited
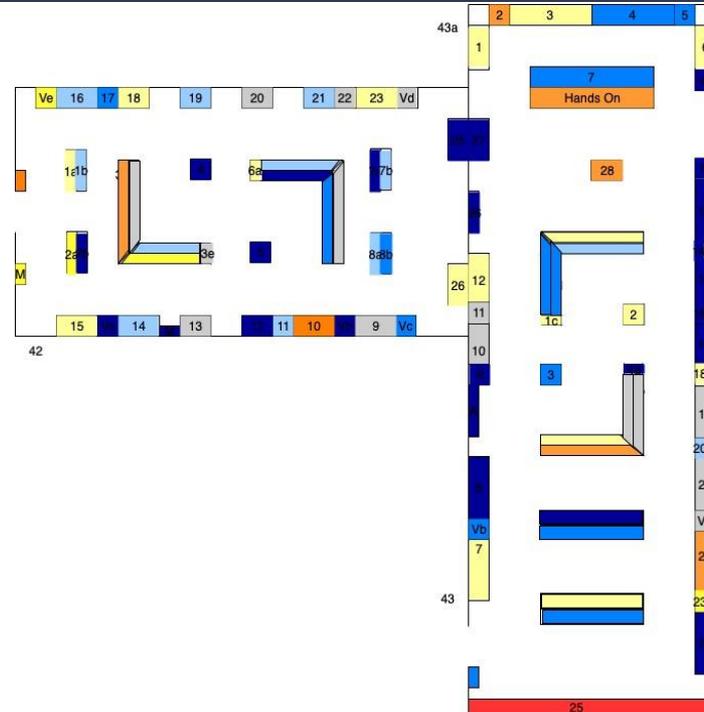
Findings: More religiously diverse audience