


EVERYTHING IS INTERTWINED

RESEARCH INTO THE MOTIVES
AND AESTHETIC PREFERENCES
OF THE LOYAL AUDIENCE OF
ART MUSEUMS

A CASE STUDY AT MUSEUM BOIJMANS VAN BEUNINGEN



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A portrait of Erasmus of Rotterdam, an elderly man with a long, dark beard and a black cap, wearing a black robe. He is looking slightly to the left. The background is a plain, light blue color.

Everything is intertwined

Master Thesis

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Abstract

In this study, it is examined what the motives and aesthetic preferences are of the loyal visitors of art museums. By means of a case study performed at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, where in-depth interviews have been conducted with thirteen of its loyal visitors, insight has been given into this target group. The results show that the loyal visitors like to be challenged emotionally as well as intellectually by art. In addition, art plays a very important role in their lives, and they value various functions of art like learning, inspiration, and escapism. Moreover, the results show that the loyal visitors of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen mostly prefer to experience art on their own, while they are fully concentrated, but that they also appreciate the social function that art has. This study is conducted to gain more knowledge about the group of loyal visitors of art museums and to see if Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen can use the results to improve the relationship that it has with its audience.

Key words: Art museums, loyal visitors, intrinsic motives, extrinsic motives, aesthetic preferences, cultural participation, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

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Maria van Tongeren

June 7, 2015



BRUE GEL

museum van
boijmans beuningen

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Introduction

'[...]One can assert with confidence that the most fundamental change that has affected museums [...] is the now almost universal conviction that they exist in order to serve the public. The old-style museum felt itself to be under no such obligation [...]. They [the visitors] were in no sense partners in the enterprise. The museum's prime responsibility was to its collections, not to its visitors.'

This is a quote by Hudson (1998:43), a prominent museologist and journalist in Europe, who has written a lot about the great changes that have affected the museum sector. During the bigger part of his working life, in the second half of the twentieth century, the role of the museum was undergoing a real transformation. A great part of the reason for this transformation was actually a change in the museum-going public. Hudson (1998), whose ideas were later followed by many other researchers like Hood (1993) and Kotler and Kotler (2000), argued that whereas visitors used to consume what the museums had to offer, this is no longer exactly true.

A factor that has greatly contributed to this change has been a shift in cultural consumption. In his research from 1992, Peterson introduced the term 'cultural omnivore' into the sociological cultural field (Peterson, 1992; Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Van Eijck & Lievens, 2008). He found that people from high status groups did not only engage in highbrow culture, like visiting art museums or theatre plays, but that these people also liked to participate in lowbrow culture, like pop concerts or festivals (Van Eijck & Lievens, 2008). Due to this shift in cultural consumption, especially the big cities have started to offer a growing range of various cultural activities. Therefore, the museums are challenged and have to compete with other cultural institutions in the leisure environment (Butler, 2000; Burton, Louviere & Young, 2004).

This 'competition' has also been stirred up due to the great subsidy cuts that the former Dutch Secretary of State Halbe Zijlstra has announced for the subsidy period of 2013 to 2016 (Ministry of ECS, 2013). Because of these cuts many cultural organisations have to be more entrepreneurial and try to get their money from sponsors or through donations. To achieve this, museums can either apply to cultural grants, or they can knock on the doors of their loyal visitors. Hence, many museums

today have membership programs to increase admissions and revenue (Slater, 2003). In addition, Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn (1995) contend that identification with the museum is an important reason to become a member, and Slater (2003) argues that these memberships are likely to be the result of frequent visiting. However, though it might be true that loyal visitors are most likely to support the museums they love financially; it is not all about money. Loyal visitors are very important for museums, because they visit frequently (Caldwell, 2000) and they can function as ambassadors: by spreading optimistic thoughts about the museum through word of mouth, they can attract new visitors and generate positive publicity.

Therefore, to keep their loyal visitors happy (and close), museums should not make too many concessions while competing in the leisure environment, and always keep their loyal audience in mind. Thus, it is important that museums know who their loyal visitors are, and what they seek for in a museum. Hence, in this study it is examined what the aesthetic preferences of the loyal audience of art museums are, and what their motivations are for visiting. Consequently, with this information museums can think about how to maintain the special relationship between the museum and its most loyal audience, by making sure that the visitors feel comfortable and that they feel identified with the museum (Rentschler, 2004; Falk, 2009).

1.1 The research question

The information provided above shows that especially at a time like this, cultural institutions learn how valuable their loyal visitors are, and how important it is for them to hold on to their existing audience and keep them interested. To be able to do this, the museums have to know what the characteristics of their loyal visitors are and what it is about the museum that makes them repeat their visit. Several scholars have already looked into this from a marketing perspective (Bhattacharya, Rao and Glynn, 1995; Bradburne, 2001; Doering, 1999; Kotler, 1999; Slater, 2003). Although these researches have produced valuable information, they do not say anything about the visitor's personal museum experience or to what extent the existing visitors value the content of the museum; like its collection or its exhibitions.

On the other hand, sociological research has shown that loyal visitors seek for trust and commitment in their museum visit (Rentschler, 2004), and that the museum

experience that visitors are looking for depends on their identity (Falk, 2009). Hence, it is interesting to build upon this research, to find out *what* it is that causes this feeling of trust, or this identification with a certain museum, and what kind of art (experience) stimulates the loyalty of the audience. Accordingly, by examining the motives and aesthetic preferences of the loyal visitors, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding as to what the loyal museum audience seeks to find in a museum. Consequently, the outcome could provide valuable insight into the visitors' reasons to stay loyal to a certain museum, and what it is about the museum (collection, exhibitions, atmosphere) that makes the audience repeat their visit. Hence, the research question of this Master Thesis is:

“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”

1.2 The case study

As a case study for this Master Thesis a part of the loyal audience of Museum Boijmans Van Beunigen in Rotterdam will be examined. This museum is one of the most renowned museums in The Netherlands, and has one of the richest and most diverse art collections in the country; including visual art, applied art and design. The museum displays 3150 of its own artworks permanently, and for changing exhibitions it has 305 items on loan (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2014). In 2014, there were 266.921 people from The Netherlands and abroad who visited the museum (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2014). Within these 266.921 visitors, there are loyal visitors, occasional visitors, and incidental visitors. As to its loyal audience, the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has 1388 ‘Boijmans Friends’ who support the museum financially, but these are not the only loyal visitors that the museum has. Instead, there are so many loyal visitors that have a special relationship with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen that the museum itself does not know. These visitors may not support the museum by paying money to be a Boijmans Friend, but they are not less loyal than the visitors who do this. Therefore, it seems interesting to find out more about the loyal visitors that support the museum (financially, or by promoting their favourite museum to others through word of mouth for instance), and

to find out *what* it is that attracts and binds these visitors to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. By learning about the intrinsic and extrinsic motives and the aesthetic preferences of this group of loyal visitors, it is possible to find out what the reasons are for their loyalty.

On the one hand, it could have something to do with the diversity of the museum's collection, or with the masterpieces that can be found in it. For this, it is essential to examine the loyal visitors' aesthetic preferences; what type of art do they like, and in what way can it affect them intellectually or emotionally? In addition, the intrinsic and extrinsic motives of the loyal audience can provide other insights like: what are their reasons for encountering art, what functions of art do they find important, and what role does art play in their personal and professional lives?

On the other hand, the visitors' loyalty could have been caused by the relationship that they have with the city of Rotterdam, or it could be the result of their cultural upbringing. Perhaps they went to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen as a child with their parents, and they have built a nostalgic relationship with the museum because of these visits. Moreover, the visitors' loyalty could also be a combination of the reasons mentioned above.

Overall, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is very interested in its (loyal) audience. For many years, they have commissioned various organisations to perform market research on its visitors, in order to gain insight into this interesting group of people. These marketing studies provide information on matters like demographic features of the visitors, recognition and identification, expenditures, visiting frequency, information sources, et cetera (Beerda, 2015). However, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is not perfectly familiar with the sociological aspect, and has little knowledge about the intrinsic and extrinsic motives of its loyal audience, as well as their aesthetic preferences. Therefore, this research will provide Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen with new, valuable knowledge about their loyal visitors, and consequently, the museum will be able to take the motives and preferences of its audience into account, and relate to their needs in the best way possible.

However, before going into the details of this case study, first an overview of the existing literature on the loyal museum audience will be given, and the concepts of the research question will be explained more explicitly. After that, the case study will be further introduced and its methods will be explained. Then, the results of the

case study will be presented, and finally, the research question will be answered in the conclusion.



GEERT GEN TOT SINT JAN

museum van
boijmans beuringen

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Chapter 2: Literature overview

In this chapter, an overview will be given of a range of interesting theories from established scholars on characteristics of the museum audience, audience segmentation, visitor's museum experience, aesthetic dispositions, motivations, et cetera. The research question of this thesis can be divided into two parts: the first part can be read before the comma, the second part comes after the comma:

“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”

The first part of the question is about the more general existing museum audience. In this part, the goal is to find out what the aesthetic preferences and the motivations for museum visits are of the existing museum audience as a whole; what does this group look like, how do the people within this group differ in their motives and tastes, and in what way are they alike? Hence, the literature overview will provide information about this first part and therefore offers an insight into the general museum audience, their characteristics, motivations and dispositions. Consequently, this theoretical framework functions as a foundation for the case study that is conducted at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, and will help to answer the research question.

2.1 Pierre Bourdieu's theory on Cultural Capital

According to Bourdieu (1984) –as well as many other researchers–visitors of highbrow culture can be characterised by a high socioeconomic status and a high level of education. In his book, *La Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu clarifies this by means of his theory on cultural capital, which he describes as a collection of dispositions and tastes that people have with regard to arts and culture. According to him, this collection is part of an even larger system: the *habitus*. The habitus can be defined as a system of dispositions, which determines aspects of everyday life like people's perceptions, tastes, actions and preferences (Bourdieu, 1984). All the dispositions within a person's habitus depend on his or her socioeconomic status; people from high status groups have different perceptions, tastes, et cetera, than people from low

status groups. The reason for this is that these people grow up in different environments; if someone is born in a high social environment, that person will generally complete a higher level of education and is therefore more likely to reach a higher occupation level, than someone that is born in a low social environment. Therefore, the habitus determines as a whole the connection between social class and taste.

While the habitus concerns dispositions about all kinds of issues in life, different forms of *capital* can be distinguished within it (Bourdieu, 1984). One of those forms is *cultural capital*, which covers the *cultural* tastes and preferences of a person. Bourdieu argues that cultural capital can be divided into three forms, namely: the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalised state (Bourdieu, 1986). First, the embodied state refers to the cultural tastes and dispositions that people personally acquire over time. These acquisitions require effort and are seen as personal investments that are influenced by the social environment in which one lives, but can be extended by self-improvement (Bourdieu, 1986). The objectified state is about cultural goods; like a collection of books or paintings for example. Although these are material goods, the objectified state can be closely related to the embodied state of a person when one focuses on the symbolic value instead of the economical (material) value. Finally, the institutionalised state refers to the academic qualifications that one has acquired with regard to arts and culture. These qualifications can be used to compare between people's cultural competence and symbolise one's 'legitimate' authority in the area of arts and culture (Bourdieu, 1986).

Since cultural capital is reflected in the habitus of a person, this means that these cultural tastes and preferences are similarly determined by one's socioeconomic status. Consequently, Bourdieu (1984) argues that people from high status groups have a high cultural capital, which equals a highbrow cultural taste (embodied state). According to him, highbrow taste requires certain skills and knowledge, which can only be acquired by people that are highly educated (institutionalised state). On the other hand, people from low status groups do not have this knowledge and are therefore more interested in popular, lowbrow culture.

2.2 Cultural reproduction

In essence, the theory of cultural capital explains that the extent to which a person possesses cultural skills and knowledge depends on his or her socioeconomic background as well as that person's educational and occupational status. These factors, that cause the unequal distribution of cultural capital between people from high and low status groups, result mostly from social and cultural reproduction (Kraaykamp, 2009). Kraaykamp (2009) explains social reproduction as the phenomenon in which children with highly educated parents are more likely to complete a higher education themselves and will hold higher professional positions later in life than children with lower educated parents. In addition, cultural reproduction is about the opportunities and cultural knowledge that parents transfer onto their children. Likewise, Bourdieu and Darbel (1991) argue that differences in cultural participation are the result of the way in which higher status groups transfer their cultural lifestyles onto their children, by letting them become acquainted with the arts, and letting them gain experience in cultural practices. Furthermore, they argue that these experiences highly contribute to one's cultural participation later in life, and to a person's cultural competence. Therefore, cultural capital is very much influenced by one's social environment and socioeconomic status.

2.3 Cultural competence

Overall, Bourdieu (1984) keeps emphasising the importance of parents getting their children acquainted with culture because, according to him, these experiences highly contribute to one's cultural participation later in life. Simultaneously, he argues that these experiences contribute to a person's cultural competence; the more experience a person has with art, the more knowledge or skills that person acquires. Due to the fact that lower status people encounter less experience with highbrow art in their lives, they do not have much knowledge about it.

Accordingly, Bourdieu (1984) contends that the difference in cultural knowledge is the reason why there is a difference in the ability of understanding art, between people with high cultural capital and low cultural capital. The first are the few that 'master the aesthetic codes' and can understand highbrow aesthetics, which

presume 'art for art's sake'. With the ability to master the code of highbrow aesthetics Bourdieu (1984) means that certain skills or cultural competence are needed to understand this type of art. These skills can either be passed on through cultural reproduction, or acquired through personal effort or education (Bourdieu, 1986). Therefore, people who have these skills do not need elaborate explanations to go with each artwork, but they can appreciate the art on itself (for its 'own sake'), since they are able to understand it and to assess it from an aesthetic perspective.

People with low cultural capital on the other hand, are not familiar with such codes and cannot simply 'decipher' them. Therefore, they rather appreciate functional art that represents something that they can relate to. Bourdieu (1984) explains this difference in appreciation by means of the worries that people from low occupations can have about everyday concerns. According to him, low status people cannot appreciate highbrow art since they are not in a 'carefree state'. As a result, these people worry about materialistic or financial matters, and are for example distracted by thoughts about the high price they have paid for the ticket. With this Bourdieu means that because of the worries that these people have, they are not able to fully concentrate on the art. Nonetheless, this concentration is very much necessary for them, because they have to make a real effort in order to be able to understand it; only when they are in intense concentration they could be able to grasp something of its meaning. Therefore, Bourdieu (1984) argues that these people rather prefer functional, pragmatic art that they can easily relate to. On the other hand, he contends that people with a high income are free from financial worries, and generally reject functional art, because they prefer art that offers an intellectual challenge. Later on in this chapter, the subject of (the code of) aesthetics will be discussed more elaborately.

2.4 An unequivocal view

Actually, Bourdieu's explanation about the cause of the difference in appreciation that is mentioned above is not completely suitable. The reason for this is that people that are highly educated do not necessarily earn a high income, and it could therefore be possible that they would worry about the ticket price as much as their lower educated counterparts. In addition, lower educated people do not naturally worry about money, because they may also be very rich.

Moreover, people with a high income are not per definition culturally active. Nagel (2004) argues that practitioners of professions that have a cultural focus like journalists, teachers or scientists are generally more culturally active than people that have economically focussed jobs like bankers or managers. She also cites Ganzeboom (1989) who has demonstrated in his research that income does not generally affect cultural participation. He contends that cultural participation is only affected by income when the cultural activities are relatively expensive like going to opera or buying art or an instrument (Nagel, 2004). Consequently, this would imply that a high level of occupation does not necessarily determine cultural participation.

Although Bourdieu's argument about financial worries does not completely work, he might be right that people from higher status groups have more cultural competence in understanding highbrow art. However, there does not seem to be an unequivocal view about what it is exactly that determines people's cultural competence. Despite the fact that parents' influence appears to have a large effect on cultural competence and cultural participation later in life due to cultural reproduction, it cannot be the only determinant, since there are many active cultural participants that did not have this parental influence in their upbringing (Van Eijck, 1999).

2.5 Social mobiles and social networks

Despite the fact that Bourdieu's theory about cultural capital is widely adopted, and that many scholars have built upon the work of Bourdieu (1984) and his theories on social stratification as a determinant of cultural taste (Brown, 1995; De Graaf, De Graaf & Kraaykamp, 2000; DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004), some aspects of Bourdieu's ideas are a bit out-dated. One important aspect that seems to be 'out-dated' is the idea that high status groups are solely composed of people that have a high status background. Instead, Van Eijck (1999) argues that the group of highly educated people is far more heterogeneous nowadays, due to the fact that since the 1960's more and more people from different backgrounds mobilised their way 'up' and have come to be highly educated as well. Similarly, Nagel (2004) contends that people who are not raised with arts and culture can still become part of the higher status groups, due to the independent effects of educational level, cultural instruction in education and

the social background of one's partner on cultural consumption. Thus, in today's society, socialisation still determines cultural taste, but this taste does not depend (solely) on the socioeconomic environment in which a person is born.

In addition, not only the *social mobiles*' cultural tastes diversified because of the influences from their high status peers, but also this latter group has gradually begun to consume more popular culture. Therefore, the phenomenon of social mobility has greatly contributed to the diversity in cultural taste that the people from the higher status groups nowadays seem to have (Van Eijck, 1999). Consequently, the essential difference in highbrow and lowbrow cultural tastes that Bourdieu (1984) stresses in his theory could be perceived as less relevant in today's society.

The irrelevance of the clear distinction between cultural tastes can also be perceived in research done by Peterson (1992), who introduced the term *cultural omnivorousness* to describe the increasing engagement of higher status groups in non-elite or lowbrow culture. As is indicated by Van Eijck (1999), these higher status groups are now much more heterogeneous and consist of individualistic people with different backgrounds. Hence, Peterson (1992) showed that high status people are not as 'snobby' as Bourdieu claims, but that they are instead open and tolerant towards different cultural practices. In addition, the idea that being open and having a broad cultural taste applies more to high status people has, according to DiMaggio (1987), to do with the fact that the network of high status people is bigger than for people of low status groups. He points out that 'research on social networks has shown that socioeconomic status is positively related to their size, complexity, and diversity, and negatively related to their density and average tie strength' (DiMaggio, 1987:444).

All of this demonstrates that cultural capital is still dependent on socialisation; however, it shows that the social environment in which a person is raised does not solely determine one's cultural tastes and preferences. Due to the heterogeneous social networks that the higher status groups nowadays have, many different factors and peers influence their cultural taste.

2.6 A provisional summary

To sum up, some more insight is given into the type of people that participate in highbrow culture, and where their appreciation for culture comes from. It is clear that

although most people who visit museums, theatre plays or concerts come from high status groups, they do not necessarily have the snobby highbrow attitude that this group appeared to have had in the past. Nowadays, high status people are seen more as cultural omnivores that have an open, individualistic character, and who do not disapprove of new or more popular cultural styles. Consequently, it is interesting to find out more about the reasons and motivations that these people have to engage in cultural activities. Since this thesis is about loyal museum visitors, the focus will be on them. Therefore, in the next few paragraphs, an insight will be given into this specific type of audience. Moreover, the intrinsic and extrinsic motives of museum audience to visit art museums will be discussed, as well as their aesthetic preferences.

2.7 A horizontal differentiation of the audience

Most of the theories that have been discussed so far demonstrate the vertical differences in art appreciation and participation between the different status groups. Thus, it is obvious that many scholars find it interesting to relate cultural taste to social inequality. However, it is not only interesting to pay attention to the dispositions of the people with a highbrow versus a lowbrow taste, but one can also derive valuable information of a study that focuses on the horizontal differences *within* a particular group.

Similarly, Van Eijck (2011) argues that taste is more than a matter of status. He examined an audience of visual art that did not differentiate so much vertically (i.e. highbrow/lowbrow taste, status), but he focused on the horizontal differences between these people to see if their taste was more traditional or modern, and if this preference could be explained by their attitudes towards society or religion (Van Eijck, 2011). Although he found evidence that taste for art is more than a matter of status and that social orientations partly determine one's preference for modern art, it is still mostly determined by education, because to understand modern art, more cultural capital (institutionalised state) is required. In addition, age appeared to be the most important determinant for classical art, because this appeals to older people with a more traditional taste, as well as to younger people with a broad cultural taste. Therefore, it becomes clear that even when focussing on horizontal differences, age and education still appear to be very important determinants.

Since this thesis focuses on loyal museum visitors, and it has already been shown that their (highbrow) cultural taste can be determined by vertical differences like socioeconomic environment, education and status, it is also valuable to gain some insight into the horizontal differences of this group; like their motivations and aesthetic preferences. This is something that Roose (2008) has examined in his research on visitors of classical music concerts. Instead of paying too much attention to the vertical differences of this group such as socio-demographics, he focused on the differences within this group. Hence, Roose (2008) argues that this group is not homogeneous, and he therefore wants to demonstrate what the horizontal differences are. To show this, he has based his research on a combination of the ideas on internal stratification by Becker (1984) and Laermans (2002), who argue that within the audience for highbrow art, different groups or segments can be perceived that are each determined by different levels of knowledge of, and experiences with art.

According to Becker (1984) and Laermans (2002), the first group consists of the core audience. This *inner circle* contains mainly people that are (professionally) part of the art world; they have had educational and professional training in arts and therefore possess the most cultural knowledge. The second group are the *interested participants* who participate less frequently than the inner circle, but are still very interested and well informed about the arts. These are people that have much artistic experience, but are not professionally trained in their knowledge about arts and culture. According to Becker (1984), the third group consists of *art students* who are actually part of the first and second groups as well. Hence, these art students start in the second group, where they learn about art and gain experience in it, and gradually mobilise to the first group when they have become professionalised in art.

Laermans (2002) on the other hand, argues that this third group does not consist of art students, but rather of *incidental visitors* that do not have a genuine interest for the arts but visit more for extrinsic (e.g. social) reasons. This type of reason will be discussed more elaborately later on. Moreover, due to the fact that this thesis is about the *loyal* museum visitors, and it is assumed that these people are all very much interested in the arts, it seems better to hold on to Becker's segmentation of the audience, where interested art students form the third group, instead of Laermans' vision that includes disinterested participants. However, in order to be able to confirm these assumptions, first an insight into the audience of loyal museum

visitors is required. Therefore, the next paragraph offers information about this particular group, to gain better understanding of their motives and preferences.

2.8 *The loyal audience*

Since the interest group of this thesis consists of loyal visitors, it is important to give a definition of loyalty first. Oliver (1999:34) defines loyalty as ‘a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronise a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, *despite* situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour’. In addition, he distinguishes four phases in which a consumer can become loyal to an organisation, namely: 1) cognitive loyalty; which is thin loyalty, based on positive, but superficial knowledge about a brand; 2) affective loyalty; which is still thin, but occurs when an appreciation towards a brand is developed through positive personal experiences with it; 3) conative loyalty; in this phase the loyalty becomes stronger because of a behavioural intention to re-purchase, or re-visit (however, it is still an intention); and 4) action loyalty; where the intention turns into actual readiness to act (re-visit) and to actively overcome obstacles that would prevent this re-visit (Oliver, 1999).

While Oliver’s study offers insight in the general definition of loyalty, other studies focus specifically on loyal *visitors*. For instance, Caldwell (2000) describes loyal museum visitors as frequent visitors who continuously repeat their visit. In addition, members (or ‘friends’) of a museum are seen as the most loyal part of the loyal visitors (Caldwell, 2000; Rentschler, 2004). Moreover, Rentschler (2004) argues that loyal visitors have a special relationship with certain museums and rather seek trust and commitment from their visits than the (short term) satisfaction that incidental visitors are looking for. The search for trust and commitment has to do with the fact that loyal visitors like to identify themselves with the museum that they are loyal to. In turn, this vision can be related to other ideas on visitor’s loyalty and identification.

For instance, according to Falk (2009), studies on the existing museum audience can reveal many layers of the complexity about the person, his or her museum experience, and his or her motivations for visiting. Falk (2009) argues that

the reasons why people visit museums can differ quite often because their behaviours are strongly related to the visitors' own identities. People could use museum visits in different ways that are connected to their spiritual identity, their imaginative identity, their creative identity, their curious identity, or their inquisitive identity for example (Falk 2009). When examining these different identities of museum visitors, one could come to understand more about their behaviour and motivations. For instance, a person with a creative identity could visit a museum because he or she wants to be inspired; a person with an inquisitive identity could visit because he or she wants to learn something; or a person with an imaginative identity could visit a museum because he or she wants to be overwhelmed by art.

In the next few paragraphs, the various motivations that the museum audience has to visit a museum will be discussed. Hence, these paragraphs will cover the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of museum visitors.

2.9 Intrinsic rewards and the concept of flow

Motivations drive behaviour. Slater (2007:151) defines motivations as 'a trigger that leads somebody to act on a salient, unmet need'. The motives that people could have for visiting a museum can be divided in intrinsic motivations that come from within a person, and extrinsic motivations that are stirred up by an external source.

As mentioned above, loyal museum visitors are visitors that continuously repeat their visit. Hood (1993) argues, that due to the fact that frequent museum visitors generally have much expertise, knowledge and experience in relation to visual arts, they care a lot for goals like learning, being challenged and doing something worthwhile. Goals like these are intrinsic, because they contribute to the self-development of a person. Moreover, Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) describe intrinsic and extrinsic motivations by means of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that one could get from doing something. They argue that extrinsic motivations are present when a person does something in order to get a good grade, avoid punishment, or when that person wants to 'fit in' in a certain social environment. Intrinsic motivations on the other hand, occur when someone does not do something for the approval of others, but rather for his or her own satisfaction. Thus, intrinsic rewards are self-gratifications that a person obtains when doing

something for its own sake; for the satisfying experience that he or she gets from it. Therefore, intrinsic motivations for museum visits could be personal development, to learn something, to be inspired, or to be intellectually challenged for example. Only then, if visitors focus long enough to achieve such goals, intellectual or emotional changes can occur (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995).

Moreover, intrinsic motivation is something that Csikszentmihalyi pays extra attention to when he explains his theory of '*flow*' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This theory indicates that people get (aesthetically) aroused if they are challenged by something (e.g. an activity) in their environment. In order to achieve flow, there are two pre-conditions that have to be met: 1) the challenges or opportunities have to *match* the capacities in order to extend one's existing skills; and 2) clear, near goals have to be set and immediate feedback has to be received on the progress to maintain a continuous stream of events. Furthermore, flow is possible when someone is in intense concentration and fully absorbed by the activity that is being practiced. This is also the reason why frequent museum visitors often seek for silence and security in their museum visits, because then they are able to participate actively intellectually (Hood, 1993).

Flow is an 'unfolding experience' that depends on the match between one's own skills and the challenges offered by the environment; if the challenge is too difficult to accomplish with the possessed skills, people will get anxious; if the challenge is too easy, people will get bored. Because one's skills are determined by a person's expertise, knowledge, experience, et cetera, they determine what challenges that person. Eventually, when a 'goal' is reached, the person pushes his or her limits by searching for new challenges that suit newly acquired skills, and consequently he or she can experience a *shift* in flow, which will lead to personal growth (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Because of the shifts in the flow experience, people will be able to gradually handle more complex activities, and they will continue to seek new challenges to improve their skills. Therefore, these people will become more and more open for innovative and experimental activities. For audience of visual art this means that more complex art will become more pleasurable to them.

2.9.1 Mindfulness

Since it was mentioned above that people get bored if the challenges that are offered to them are too easy, it is important for museums that they stay attractive and keep arousing the curiosity of its visitors. In addition, Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) argue that in order to maintain the visitors' interest, the objects in the museum have to relate to the visitors' lives, and perhaps even inspire them to create their own art after they have left the museum.

Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) as well as Moscardo (1996) contend that in order to learn, exhibitions should be approachable from different perspectives so that visitors are not steered in a certain way and can experience the art in a state of mindfulness. This idea is derived from research on mindfulness and mindlessness behaviour done by Langer and Piper (1987). They argue that only with an open state of mind, emotional and intellectual abilities can optimally be engaged in the visitors. Therefore, it becomes clear that a state of mindfulness is essential when a person wants to take up the challenges in order to improve his or her skills. Due to the fact that this state of mind requires much effort, it is important that the visitor is not exposed to many distractions, so that he or she can be fully concentrated on the challenge. For mindlessness on the other hand, no effort is required, because this state of mind results from too much familiarity (no challenge offered) or too little perceived connections to the visitors' lives (Langer & Piper, 1987).

2.9.2 Specific and general intrinsic motivations

Overall, intrinsic motivations vary from visitor to visitor, and it depends on the amount of skills they have how much complexity the visitors can handle. However, besides the thought that intrinsic motivations are motives for personal growth that presume intrinsic rewards, there are also other types of intrinsic motives that can drive a person to a museum. For instance, these are motives that refer to (elements of) the museum or exhibition itself, or that are related to the cultural taste or aesthetic dispositions of the visitors. Thus, intrinsic motivations can be divided in general and specific intrinsic motivations (Roose, 2008).

On the one hand, general intrinsic motivations refer to a general interest in museums, when someone has a Museum Card, or if a person follows the programme of a certain museum (Roose, 2008). Moreover, general intrinsic motivations are linked to people's aesthetic preferences; people come to escape the hectic of everyday life, to fantasise, to experience beauty, or to be inspired for example (Slater, 2007). Therefore, learning, or being challenged can be seen as part of visitors' general motivations. Specific intrinsic motivations on the other hand, can be related to the love for certain artworks or artists that can be found in the permanent collection of a specific museum, or in a special exhibition that is shown.

2.10 Extrinsic motivations and the social experience

As explained earlier, in contrast to intrinsic motivations that result from a need for self-gratification, extrinsic motivations are motivations that presume external rewards. Therefore, when a museum visitor visits a museum for extrinsic motives, he or she could want to go for social reasons; like sharing the experience with friends or family, or being able to talk about the experience with others later on. Several studies have indicated that social context is an important motivation for people to visit a museum (Goulding, 2000; Kelly, 1985; Hood, 1993). Moreover, Kotler and Kotler (2000) contend that most visitors rather visit museums for social and recreational experiences than for educational and intellectual ones, which contradicts the individual, cognitive museum experience. In addition, Goulding (2000) argues that many people visit museums because these visits are seen as 'meaningful' in a social context. Hence, she refers to research by Kelly (1985) who demonstrated that social groups to which people belong often influence their attitudes and behaviour. In the case of museum visits, Kelly (1985) contends that people use these visits to distinguish themselves intellectually and to achieve a status of 'having been', so that the museum visit gets the function of a status symbol (Goulding, 2000).

While the above-mentioned sounds rather negative, the museum visit as a social activity can be fairly important. In his audience research on the museum experience as social practice, Coffee (2007) refers to renowned Russian psychologist Vygotsky when discussing the essential factors of the collaborative museum experience. Vygotsky (1978) argued that personal development could not occur when

it is not preceded by social interaction. According to Vygotsky (1978), a dialogue has to be realised between skilled and less skilled people to guide the latter group through the experience and let them gain more knowledge. These ideas can also be found in one of Vygotsky's theories on education, namely 'the zone of proximal development' theory (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). In this theory, Vygotsky (1978) stresses on the fact that an individual cannot learn everything by himself from the inside out, but that he or she sometimes needs help from the outside in the form of support or *guidance*. ZPD is a theory of assisted problem solving and is often used in the same way as the term 'scaffolding', determined by Sawyer (2005:11) as 'the help given to a learner that is tailored to that learner's needs in achieving his or her goals of the moment'. Therefore, it could be argued that the state of flow cannot be achieved solely with intrinsic motivations, but that it also needs the extrinsic motivations of the museum visit as a social experience, due to the fact that to be in flow requires constant feedback (or guidance). On the other hand, one could refute this by saying that the museum visit as a social experience interferes with the flow criterion of optimal concentration.

2.10.1 The origin of extrinsic motivations

Up until now, extrinsic motivations have been described as motivations that are focused on the *outcome* of an activity. However, extrinsic motivations also differ from intrinsic motivations in their *origin*. In other words, with intrinsic motivations, the activity is done from someone's own initiative, due to the fact that the need to do this activity comes from within that person. The initiative with extrinsic motivations on the other hand, does not necessarily have to come from the person in question. Although he or she eventually is the one to perform the activity, someone or something else could have encouraged that person to do it in the first place. For instance, one could be invited or advised by a friend to visit a museum, or such motivations could be evoked by the amount of media coverage that the visitor is exposed to (Roose, 2008). In addition, a person could read a review and let that motivate him or her to visit or not. However, these advices or reviews can either stimulate an extrinsic motive (this is a 'must-see', everybody has seen it, so I should see it too), or an intrinsic motive (this sounds interesting, I have to go see it for

myself). Moreover, often people have intrinsic and extrinsic motives at the same time (I will visit because I am very interested in that kind of art, and then I can also reflect on it afterwards with my friends who have already been there).

2.11 The mode of the visit

While different people have different motives to visit a museum, they could therefore also differ in their preference of visiting alone or together with friends or family. Since visitors that have intrinsic motives to visit a museum often look for a personal experience where they can personally develop and gain knowledge, it seems plausible that these people would sooner be inclined to visit a museum by themselves. In his study on the role of companions in the art museum experience, Debenedetti (2003) distinguishes four modes of museum visits, namely: 1) the fusion visit, in which the companions actively share the experience; 2) the separated visit, where the companions split up after entering and encounter the experiences separately; 3) the private experience, where a sole visitor encounters the experience alone; or 4) the pursuit of social contact, in which the sole visitor feels a need for social interaction after all.

In addition, Debenedetti (2003) shows that sole visitors who prefer anonymity in their visit seek for five types of benefits that are either high cognitive involvement, high emotional involvement, a sense of ease within the museum, autonomy, or a profound and intimate relationship with the artworks. Overall, these benefits are comparable to intrinsic motivations and seem more likely to occur in separated visits or private experiences, than in fusion visits or pursuits of social contact that are primarily driven by extrinsic motivations. Moreover, it seems that people who look for these benefits are most likely to be frequent (experienced) museum visitors, while they do not need companions for reassurance, for guidance or for transmission of knowledge for example. This view is supported by Hood (1993), who argues that frequent visitors do not mind attending a museum by themselves, or even prefer it, because they feel comfortable in that environment due to their cultural competence (Bourdieu) and their acquaintance with cultural practices.

2.12 *From motivations to aesthetic dispositions*

Now that the motivations of museum visits are covered, the aesthetic dispositions that visitors have will be discussed. Sometimes these dispositions are closely linked to people's intrinsic motivations; for example, the concept of flow can be perceived as a motivation to come to a personal aesthetic experience. Moreover, people could want paintings to trigger their emotions, they could want the artworks to startle them, or they could seek for the soothing environment of the museum to escape the hectic of everyday life. One by one, these factors all contribute to achieving an optimal aesthetic experience.

2.13 *The aesthetic experience: connections to everyday life*

When starting to discuss the topic of aesthetics, it seems useful to first offer a definition for the term. However, this is easier said than done. The term is derived from the Greek word *αισθητικός*, which means something like the philosophy or perception of beauty, however many philosophers struggle with the final definition that they should ascribe to it (Kristeller, 1951). They argue that the phenomenon of aesthetics covers so much more than just one's *perception* or *sensitivity* towards something, and that a 'strict' definition hinders when trying to grasp the exact meaning or feeling that a person in an aesthetic situation experiences.

In his article, Park (1993) tries to come to a unified theory of the aesthetics. He is reluctant towards the traditional idea of philosophers like Kant (1790), who argues that aesthetics is something that is beautiful or sublime, and is more inclined to concede with the ideas of Walhout (1986), who contends that aesthetic experiences can be derived from situations in our daily life. This idea implies that one is able to have an aesthetic experience when he or she has a certain bond with an artwork, and refers to the view about the personal connection (artworks that relate to one's own life) with art that was discussed earlier. Consequently, when a person feels connected to a certain object he can become aesthetically aroused, which could eventually lead to achieving a state of flow: the optimal aesthetic experience (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Therefore, it can be argued that beholders prefer art that covers (general) themes or contains elements that can be related to one's own life.

By the same token, Park (1993) argues that aesthetic situations depend on a specific mode of relationship between an individual (subject) and an object. Therefore, he argues that the observation has no other goal than the enjoyment of the object itself. Again, this relates to the theory of flow by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), which presumes intrinsic rewards. Furthermore, Park explains that the specific mode of relationship consists of three phases, namely: 1) the individual is positive and has an open view towards the experience of the object; 2) the individual wants to be as fully absorbed by the experience of the object as possible; and 3) the individual fully accepts the experience, but is critical towards its quality and wants to be sure about its source (Park, 1993).

A very important aspect that Park (1993) mentions is that while going through the different phases of the relationship, there has to be a special ‘aesthetic consciousness’, which makes sure that one is feeling (willingness, curiosity, etcetera) and thinking (cognitive engagement) at the same time. This aesthetic consciousness could in turn be connected to the state of mindfulness that was also mentioned in relation to the theory of flow. Here, it was argued that conscious effort had to be made to optimally engage the emotional and intellectual abilities within the beholder. Only when this state of mindfulness is reached, a person can have an open view towards the object (phase one), and he or she can be fully concentrated (phase two). However, it is important that there are no distractions that could hinder the experience (phase three).

2.14 The bilateral approach

As mentioned above, Park (1993) stresses the importance of valuing an aesthetic object emotionally and cognitively at the same time. In contrast, other researchers argue that one should be able to separate knowledge from emotion, while attending to a work of art (Bell, 1914; Scruton, 1997). However, one could question whether this is in fact possible, especially when people’s appraisals are influenced by interpretations from their own lives (knowledge and experiences). Perhaps it is conceivable, when having a lot of knowledge about art, to still positively evaluate certain artworks even if one does not appreciate them emotionally. In that case, even if that person does not perceive an underlying personal connection in an artwork, he or she could still appreciate its form.

It is important to discuss this matter when examining the loyal audience of art museums, because they generally have a lot of knowledge about art. Therefore, the information provided about the bilateral approach of art is necessary in order to understand the way in which frequent (loyal) visitors attend to artworks, and how they approach and appraise them. Accordingly, in his research on the evaluation of artworks, Harrison (2009) discusses the generalist versus the particularist approach on art. The first is a rational approach, which presumes general standards that can determine if an artwork is 'good' or not. Harrison (2009) refers to Beardsley (1982) while explaining that an artwork is good if it causes the right aesthetic experience, which depends on unity, complexity, and intensity. These elements could be interpreted as follows: unity refers to familiarity, complexity refers to innovativeness, and together they determine the intensity of the aesthetic experience. On the other hand, the particularist approach implies that every artwork should be judged on unique grounds (Harrison, 2009). Here, beholders have other (subjective) criteria for the aesthetic appreciation of art. For instance, they appreciate a work of art when they perceive it to be beautiful, skilful, when it contains a message, or when it arouses emotion (personal connections).

While Park (1993) would be likely to agree with the particularist approach because he thinks that aesthetic experiences are subjective, derived from personal experiences, Bell (1914) argues that the representational (subjective) element of an artwork is always irrelevant to its value. Therefore, he would be likely to agree with the generalist approach. Although Bell (1914) acknowledges that people can differ in their cultural tastes, he contends that people should agree on the fact that they should only (objectively) assess artistic value based on the *form* of the artwork, and not be distracted by its content. Therefore, he argues: 'For, to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions' (Bell, 1914:266).

Thus, Bell (1914) argues that in their assessment, people should be able to distinguish between aesthetic emotions and everyday emotions (in other words: distractions). Likewise, Scruton (1997) shares Bell's conception, and relates this to the aesthetics of music. Therefore, Scruton contends that a detachment of all distractions (lyrics, producer, situational circumstances), a separation from the music's causal sources, is necessary to come to the optimal music-listening

experience; only then can a person fully understand the music (Goehr, 1999). Although Scruton (1997) acknowledges the fact that certain listeners of music draw meaning out of the subjects that music represents, he himself rejects the notion of musical representation. Instead, he argues that musical representation devaluates the understanding of the music's significance.

Scruton's view on the aesthetics of music casts doubt on the idea that more knowledge about artworks produces more aesthetic pleasure (Leder, Belke, Oeberst & Augustin, 2004). However, the 'problem' might not be that beholders have (too much) knowledge about art, but rather that they should be able to separate and switch between the cognitive and emotional evaluation, and not let their knowledge get in the way of their aesthetic judgment.

2.15 The knowledge of the loyal museum audience

The overview of the conceptions discussed above shows that the opinions are mixed with regard to the cognitive and emotional assessment of art. However, it is very important to take these opinions into account when examining the loyal museum audience in order to understand their aesthetic preferences and appraisals. Due to the fact that the loyal visitors generally have a lot of knowledge about art, it is interesting to see if this knowledge helps them in their assessment or if it gets in the way of their emotional appraisals.

2.16 The perception of beauty and the immediate response

Now that a range of the more rational interpretations of the aesthetics has been discussed, Kant's (1790) definition of something that is beautiful or sublime has been set aside rather quickly. However, most definitions do connect aesthetics (partly) to beauty and sublimity; after all, beauty is something that evokes an aesthetic experience of pleasure (Tatarkiewicz, 1972; Reber, Schwarz & Winkielman, 2004). Additionally, Reber, Schwarz & Winkielman (2004) refer to Santayana (1955) who contends that a reaction towards something that is perceived as beautiful is always a subjective, immediate, intrinsic (unexpected) reaction towards an object. Therefore, one could argue that the cognitive appraisal always comes after the emotional,

subjective response.

In the same way, Park (1993) discusses the para-aesthetic experience as a spontaneous aesthetic emotion ('wow') that can take someone off guard. This implies that due to the unexpectedness of the reaction, there is no time for rationality. Likewise, according to Konečni (2005) the ultimate aesthetic response is the 'awe response', which is '[...] a prototypical subjective reaction to a sublime stimulus' (Konečni, 2005:31). It is a response that evokes emotions of joy or even fear, brings one in a state of being moved, and can cause chills or thrills. However, Konečni (2005) contends that one does not have to have an awe-response to be moved by something; to be touched or moved is still seen as an intense reaction towards something, but less unique than the ultimate awe-reaction.

Nevertheless, the aesthetic emotion that results from these unique responses implies that people like to be surprised by art. However, this would suggest that although beholders seem to prefer art that refers to elements of their own lives, they do not want the things they see to be too familiar because then it would not surprise them anymore. On the other hand, they could be surprised because they discover new things about the issues of life that they thought they knew everything about already. Nonetheless, all things considered, the surprise function that art has seems to be rather important for its experienced beholders.

2.17 (Un)ambiguous information processing

Although it is argued that the aesthetic experience of pleasure is always immediate and unexpected, beholders' appraisals of visual art always depend on the background knowledge of the subject that the beholder has in advance. In other words, people sooner appreciate art when they need little information to understand it (Garner, 2014). Therefore, people often find symmetrical, harmonious, and 'good' proportionated art more beautiful, because it is easier for them to process this kind of unambiguous information (Hekkert & Leder, 2008). Consequently, people who have more knowledge about art are more inclined to appreciate modern, conceptual artworks that are often more ambiguous, in contrast to people that have little knowledge about the different art types, and therefore fail to understand complex art. Hence, the latter group is more likely to connect the things they see in art to familiar

things from their everyday life, while experienced viewers do the same, but also try to grasp the underlying, contextual meaning (Hekkert & Van Wieringen, 1996). This idea refers directly to the theory of cultural capital by Bourdieu (1984), because here it is argued that for people with fewer skills or knowledge on art it is more difficult to understand complex art, and therefore these people prefer to hold on to (functional) elements in art that they can recognise.

By the same token, Leder, Carbon and Ripsas (2006) as well as Russel (2003) examined if titles and descriptions enhance the appreciation and understanding of artworks. It appears that descriptions about the meaning and relevance of artworks positively contribute to its enjoyment (Russel, 2003), however elaborate titles do increase beholders' understanding, but not their appreciation (Leder, Carbon & Ripsas, 2006). This could imply that people can indeed make a switch between their cognitive (rational) and emotional (subjective) appraisal of artworks.

While Leder, Carbon and Ripsas (2006) used abstract paintings for their experiments, it seems to be the case that with unknown, ambiguous artworks it is more difficult, even for experienced viewers, to appreciate this kind of art. Perhaps this has something to do with the fact that due to their relative 'newness' these artworks do not have acquired a certain reputation, and therefore confirmation of judgment by others, or by indirect sources that tell something about the work (i.e. artists, museums, critics), is needed for their appreciation (Temme, 1993). However, it could also be that the challenge of the experiment of Leder, Carbon and Ripsas (2006) was too high for some of the participants, and that it was therefore difficult for them to appreciate the abstract art.

2.18 The role of escapism

Although the views depicted above argue that in order to understand the more conceptual, complex art one needs to have a lot of knowledge about art, Halle (1992) contends that this knowledge is not always necessary to be able to appreciate it. Hence, he has found that a common response from an audience that likes abstract art is that they like it because they can look at it creatively and it permits their imagination to wander. Therefore, he argues that the appreciation of this type of art may not require elaborate cultural training, but rather a certain motivation or

preference.

Due to the fact that abstract art allows the imagination to wander, this could imply that the 'escapist' function of art is instigated. Consequently, this causes the beholder to be absorbed by art, and forget about the here and now. According to Tuan (2000) and Roose (2008), a person that looks for escapism in art wants to be overwhelmed by it, seeks comfort or recreation in it, or wants it to stimulate fantasies about a different world. In addition, Tuan (2000) argues that the escapist function causes a person to forget about his or her day-to-day worries for the time being. Therefore, it could be argued that people with less cultural knowledge (or cultural capital, as Bourdieu would say) could also occasionally appreciate the escapist function of conceptual, or complex art, depending on their motives and preferences at that moment.

2.19 The psychological appraisal

In general, the study of the appraisal of art is strongly connected to the study of psychology. Up until now, the overview of the literature has shown that the way in which (experienced) beholders value art is to a large extent determined by the relationship between the art and the personal lives of the beholders. In addition, this relationship influences the behaviour (motivations) of the loyal museum visitors. Therefore, in order to understand the aesthetic judgment of this audience, one has to understand certain things about how this relates to the study of psychology.

Leder, Belke, Oeberst and Augustin (2004) have developed a psychological model of aesthetic experience and judgments, in which they take different psychological and emotional components into account. First of all, they contend that to be able to have an aesthetic experience, one has to be in a certain state that warrants aesthetic processing. As mentioned earlier, Hood (1993) argues that frequent visitors seek for silence and security to be able to concentrate fully on the art. Likewise, Leder et al. (2004) contend that the safe environment of a museum or art gallery enhances the ability for aesthetic processing. Also, the symbolic value that artworks acquire when they hang in a museum strongly contributes to this (Park, 1993; Goodman, 1978). Moreover, after all stages of the model have been completed and an artwork is cognitively 'mastered', the aesthetic judgment is formed through perceptual inputs

(sensory impressions), cognitive inputs (knowledge-based) and possibly emotional inputs (Leder et al., 2004; Juslin, 2013). Whereas emotional inputs do not have to be present *per se* in the formation of aesthetic judgments, it is incorporated as a separate outcome in Leder et al.'s model of aesthetic experience.

Conversely, in Berlyne's theory of 'New Empirical Aesthetics', emotional arousal (hedonic value) is a very important aspect (Berlyne, 1971). Berlyne (1971) developed an optimal arousal model of the relation between collative variation and aesthetic preference. This model indicates that the arousal potential of a work is dependent on things like complexity, originality, and novelty, et cetera; demonstrated by means of the inverted U (or 'Wundt') curve. This curve shows that arousal goes up, when novelty, or complexity goes up. However this arousal reaches a maximum if the work is too complex, too novel, et cetera. Then the person is not able to understand the work anymore, and his or her appreciation will go down again. Overall, the Wundt curve provides an adequate description of the appraisal of loyal museum audience, however the curve cannot be used to make statements about the subjective meaning of the stimulus, and explain *why* the relation occurs. In addition, it turns out that in Berlyne's model not every aesthetic attitude can follow the Wundt curve. For instance, 'interest' as an emotion is used quite a lot, however this emotion cannot be incorporated in the U-curve.

To make up for this insufficiency, Silvia (2005) argues that in order to understand emotions, they have to be differentiated and evaluated by means of interpretations or appraisals. Additionally, appraisal makes the understanding of emotions subjective based on cognition and context, and this is something that is neglected by Berlyne. Thus, the appraisal structure comprises a novelty check (complexity, challenge), which influences emotions like interest, and this relation is mediated by a coping-potential check (skills), which causes a positive or negative effect on the appraisal (Silvia, 2005). If an appraisal is congruent with the goal relevance (the influence an artwork has on one's goals or values), this will evoke happiness. If the goal congruence is low and the coping potential too, this will evoke fear. In addition, anger can be evoked when the beholder appraises an artwork to be intentionally goal incongruent. Then, the artwork does not correspond to the values that the beholder has, and he or she has the idea that the artist deliberately did this (Silvia & Brown, 2007). It is notable that Silvia's appraisal structure can be compared

to the theory of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), however in Silvia's model the different emotions that can be evoked by art are explained as well.

Furthermore, some interesting research demonstrates that most (experienced) beholders do not like to be (consciously) guided in their appraisals (Temme, 1993). Temme shows in his study that a phenomenon of psychological reactance occurs, which can be described as the awareness of attempted influence that makes people obstinate. Hence, they want to decide for themselves what they perceive to be beautiful or ugly, because taste is something personal. Influencing only works with unknown works (with ambiguous status) and when it is done subtly (Temme, 1993). However, one could question if this psychological reactance is real, due to the fact that people often do let their attitude or behaviour be influenced by people from their social (expert) environment (Kelly, 1985). Nevertheless, it is interesting to connect Temme's study to the extrinsic motivations that are mentioned above about the possibility that a person is encouraged by someone from his or her social environment, or because a review was read that influenced the visit.

2.20 Some concluding words

Overall, this literature overview has gained insight in the loyal visitors of museums; elements like their background, their motives for visiting, and their aesthetic appraisals and preferences have been discussed. Previous research demonstrates that the loyal museum audience is an intellectual group of people that has (had) a lot of experience with arts and culture. However, it is also shown that it is not a homogenous group: the motives, preferences, and tastes of the people within this group can vary widely. First of all, their motives for visiting can differ; some people visit to be inspired, some visit to escape the hectic of everyday life, and others visit to be intellectually challenged. In addition, people can visit for social reasons, but often it is a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Moreover, the literature overview demonstrates that the opinions of researchers regarding the aesthetic experience are rather mixed. Some say that is about beauty (Kant, 1970), some say that it is about form (Bell, 1914), some say that it is about preferences (Halle, 1992), and others say that it is about psychological appraisals (Silvia, 2005). In addition, there is not an unequivocal view about the

question if somebody that has much cultural knowledge, can still appreciate an artwork purely based on subjective emotions. The questions remains if one should attend to art with a particularist or a generalist approach, and if cognitive and emotional abilities should be separated, or combined. Nonetheless, most scholars agree that the more experience one has had with art, the better he or she can understand it, and the more that person will enjoy (complex) art.

So all in all, after everything that has been discussed until now, still some ambiguities exist about the loyal visitors of art museums. Therefore, the case study of this research will provide a deeper, specific insight into this particular group, and will try to clarify some of these obscurities. Additionally, due to the fact that in the case study the opinions and conceptions of an actual part of the loyal museum audience will be reviewed, it contributes to a better understanding of the literature. In the next chapter, the methodology of the case study will be described.

METHODOLOGY

REEM
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Chapter 3: Methodology

Due to the decline in subsidies that cultural institutions nowadays have to face, they have to come up with new ways to financially stabilise themselves. Consequently, they have to appeal to funds, find sponsors, and attract a bigger audience. Likewise, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has to face the changes. Therefore, as mentioned in the introduction, the museum already commissioned various research companies to do research in order to gain insight into its audience, its image and its reputation in the market place. Because of its varied permanent collection, the museum can design a lot of different exhibitions that appeal to a broad audience, while at the same time staying true to its own mission and vision. However, though it is essential for the museum to attract a broad new audience, it should not forget about its long time loyal visitors. They are very important because the museum's loyal audience is more or less the business card of the museum; they talk about their favourite museums to others and tell them about the nice collections or exhibitions that they should visit. Furthermore, loyal visitors are most likely to support their favourite museums financially (Slater, 2003). In addition, the outcomes of this case study will offer valuable insights to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen about its loyal audience that enable the museum to relate even better to the needs of its visitors.

In this chapter, the operationalization of the research at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen will be described. As mentioned before, the research question can be divided into two parts, before the comma (general) and after the comma (case study): *“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”*

In the previous chapter an overview has been given about the preferences and motivations of the general existing museum audience. Therefore, this theoretical framework functions as a foundation for the research question and the case study. Before the outcomes of the case study's research will be discussed, this chapter will cover the methodology that was used, and here it will be described how the research was actually conducted. Although the outcomes of this small research, for which only thirteen people have been interviewed, cannot be generalised, they do present an image of the group of loyal museum audience and offer valuable insights into their

preferences and motivations for visiting.

3.1 Data collection

Overall, thirteen loyal visitors contributed to the research and participated in thirteen in-depth interviews that lasted between forty and eighty minutes. The respondents were approached via an appeal that was sent out through different communication channels of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, and the only criterion that was mentioned in the appeal was that the respondents had to be loyal visitors who had visited the museum at least once in the last six months. As mentioned in the previous chapter, loyal visitors tend to have a special relationship with a museum and seek trust and commitment from their visits in order to identify themselves with the museum (Rentschler, 2004). In the appeal no definition of loyal visitors was offered, to keep it short and clear. However, in the responding emails and during the interviews the participants all pointed out that they visited often and that they had a special bond with the museum.

First, the appeal was sent out through the social media channels of the museum: Facebook and Twitter. Then, the message was included in the newsletter of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, and finally also in their special friends newsletter that is sent out to the members or ‘friends’ of the museum. In the appeal it said that the museum was looking for loyal visitors of the museum that wanted to contribute to a research that was done in cooperation with the Erasmus University. If they were interested, they could respond by sending an email to a given email address.

In total, twenty-two people replied; sixteen people responded to the appeal from social media and the general newsletter, and six friends of the museum responded to the appeal that had been incorporated in the letter to the members. It was arranged that the museum would reply to all volunteers with a short ‘thank you note’ that said that they would soon receive another email to make an appointment. After responding to all twenty-two people to try to make an appointment, it appeared possible to make an appointment with fifteen of them. Eventually, two of the fifteen appointments did not go through; one participant cancelled last minute and one participant did not show up at all. It is remarkable that these two participants were both friends of the museum.

After all, thirteen participants remained. Amongst these thirteen loyal visitors who were interviewed for the case study there were two friends of the museum. Furthermore, the respondents were between 22 and 72 years old, and the average age was 53 years. There was no selection made in the age of the respondents, due to the fact that the loyal visitors were most likely to be a little older, and it did not seem relevant for the study to exclude younger people because the study is not so much about comparing the differences between the visitors, but rather about providing an insight in the group of loyal visitors as a whole. For the same reason, education and profession were not used as selection criteria, although it appeared afterwards that many of the respondents (had) studied or worked in the cultural sector. Overall, the group consisted of two students, four working people and seven people who were either unemployed or retired. Four of them were actually born in Rotterdam, but had moved away for study or work. Six participants were currently living in Rotterdam, three lived near Rotterdam, two lived in Leiden (both born in Rotterdam), and two lived in Amsterdam. Ten of the thirteen participants had a strong bond with the city.

Incidentally, a division occurred: the division of male and female participants appeared rather equal; eventually seven women and six men participated in the study.

3.2 Method

As mentioned above, this research is conducted by means of a qualitative research method consisting of thirteen in-depth interviews. According to Wester (2004), a qualitative research method is useful if one wants to learn about the perspectives, behaviours and ideas of respondents. Therefore, it is important that these visions are captured in the respondents' own words and that they are recorded on tape, so that the researcher can interpret and analyse them optimally afterwards (Wester, 2004). In addition, qualitative research is inductive research, where the theory results out of the findings, instead of forming the basis of the research (Bryman, 2012).

For this thesis, the research method of interviewing was chosen because it can generate new knowledge due to its combined nature of structure and flexibility (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). This means that a loose structure of topics and questions can be made beforehand, but the open questions of the interview make sure that the interviewee can elaborate and perhaps come up with topics that the

interviewer had not thought of earlier. Likewise, Hodkinson (2008) contends that a research question can be formulated in advance, as well as some subjects or topics that the researcher wants to address, however all of this is preliminary and nothing is definite.

This qualitative study was based on semi-structured in-depth individual interviews, which presumed a set of pre-determined questions, while the course of the interview and the follow-up questions depended on the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The interview guide was followed, however it varied per conversation; sometimes it seemed more logical to pose a certain question earlier, and at other times the interviewee already answered a question while talking about something else. All the questions from the interview were open questions. The ones that seemed 'closed', and could be answered by a yes or no, were formulated differently depending on the conversation, or were consolidated with follow up questions. After the interview guide was drawn up, the Head of Marketing & Communication of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen went through the list and added some questions about the museum and the relationship that the respondents had with the city of Rotterdam. These comments were incorporated in the final version of the interview guide, which can be found in the appendix (7.1).

None of the respondents were given any information about the content of the interview and they were not asked to prepare anything. In the couple of minutes before the interview they were told that the interview was part of a thesis research about the motives of visiting and the artistic preferences of loyal museum audience. In addition, the respondents were told that Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen cooperated because it wants to learn how to be even more interesting and connect even better to the wishes of its loyal audience than it already does.

Furthermore, due to the fact that all loyal visitors that responded to the appeal were Dutch, it was chosen to conduct the interviews in Dutch to make the interviewees feel as comfortable as possible and to make it easier for them to express their feelings and perceptions. Although the transcripts are also in Dutch, all the quotes that are used in the results chapter are translated into English.

3.3 *Period & place of research*

In consultation with Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, several interview dates were set up. Most of the interviews took place in different conference rooms in the museum itself, because it was a familiar environment for the participants, and at the same time it was hoped that the museum's atmosphere would help to stimulate some ideas or personal experiences. Moreover, in this way it was possible for the participants to combine their visit for the interview, with a visit to the museum's collection and exhibition. Due to the fact that the interviews took place in the museum, the regular opening hours of the museum had to be taken into account. Moreover, weekdays as well as weekend days had to be included in the planning so that it was possible for participants with work or study obligations during the week, to come by in the weekend.

At first, two dates were approved by the museum and the first fourteen volunteers were emailed and asked to indicate which dates and times suited them to come to the museum for an interview. They were asked to be flexible in their indications, so that it would be easier to make a good interview scheme. For every interview one hour was scheduled, with thirty minutes between each interview, and with a maximum of four interviews per day. Some of the other volunteers who replied later on could be fit into the existing dates, and for the rest of them one extra weekday was added. Eventually, the schedule consisted of two weekdays and one weekend day, in which eleven people have been interviewed at the museum. Two of the participants were interviewed in Amsterdam, since they had pointed out that this would be more convenient for them.

To increase the validity of the research all the interviews were recorded with a recording device, so that they could be played back and transcribed later on. Almost all words are transcribed, even the '*uhms*', so that it was easier to remember the context of the conversation. According to Maxwell (1992) this can be referred to as 'descriptive validity', which emphasises the importance of an accurate description of the interview and its contextual elements. Here, the validity is increased by the textual indication of pauses (...) or laughs for example. At the same time, the recordings and accurate transcripts contribute to the 'interpretative validity' of the research, since the more accurate the data are, the better the researcher can capture the perspectives of

the participants (Maxwell, 1992). Furthermore, Maxwell (1992) stresses the importance of ‘theoretical validity’, which occurs when the researcher conscientiously connects the perceptions of the participants to existing theories, and ‘evaluative validity’, which assesses the evaluations drawn from the data by the researcher. Both have been taken into account, and the recordings and transcriptions can function as a frame of reference. The last type of validity that Maxwell (1992) mentions is ‘generalizability’, which he argues is always problematic for qualitative research, because the outcomes can generally not be applied universally. This difficulty was already mentioned earlier in this thesis because of the small, select group that was interviewed. However, Maxwell (1992) also contends that the outcomes may indeed be generalizable, or at least be compared to similar groups of people.

Furthermore, at some points, short parts of the conversations really were not relevant at all, and in those cases it was decided to leave out those parts and write down how many minutes were omitted in the transcription. Maxwell (1992) also refers to omission in his article by citing Runciman (1983:97) who argued: ‘accuracy is a criterion relative to the purposes for which it is sought’. Examples of elements that were omitted are parts where the participants elaborated about personal issues, like why they do not have a job at the moment, or which restaurants and shopping streets help to elevate the city of Rotterdam besides Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

In addition, the reliability of this research can be found in that for each interview, the same interview guide was followed, and that it was tried to cover as much of the same topics in each interview. However, some scholars refute reliability in qualitative research by arguing that it only concerns (quantitative) measurements (Stenbacka, 2001).

3.4 Operationalization

The research question of this Master Thesis contains concepts (motivations –intrinsic and extrinsic– and aesthetic preferences), which need to be defined and explained to turn them into indicators for this research. As mentioned before, the interview guide was set up on the basis of the concepts from the research question, as well as topics like cultural participation and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. An additional topic

that is important to determine, and is already mentioned in the literature overview, is the topic of social demographics. The information for this topic is sought for in the first few minutes of every interview, where the participants were asked to introduce themselves, by stating things like their age, place of birth and residence, education level and profession. For the operationalization of this research, the six concepts and topics that were incorporated in the interview guide are explained below. An overview of all the questions that were drawn up can be found in the appendix (7.1).

3.4.1 Social demographics

As explained in the theoretical framework of this study, the cultural consumption pattern of a person often depends on his or her socioeconomic status (Bourdieu, 1984). Therefore, all of the participants were asked in the beginning of each interview to introduce themselves in order to find out about the social demographics. The participants mentioned their age, place of birth, place of residence, education and profession. Although all of the people in this research are kept anonymous, they have been given names that match their sex, so that it is still possible to perceive the comparisons and differences between them. Overall, due to the small number of interviewees it is not possible to generalise the outcomes, however it does offer insight into the social demographics of the group of loyal museum visitors.

3.4.2 Cultural consumption

After introducing themselves, the interviewees were asked about their cultural consumption pattern. Katz-Gerro (2004) defined cultural consumption [as] ‘a standard and a basis for social and cultural positions, preferences, and behaviours’ (Katz-Gerro, 2004:12). Examples of questions about these elements are: What kind of role does art play in your life? Do you have a Museum card? How often do you visit museums? How do you keep yourself informed about cultural events or exhibitions? Moreover, they were asked if their love for art had changed over the years, but also how their own upbringing had looked like on a cultural level.

3.4.3 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation occurs when someone does something for his or her own interest; to learn something, to be inspired, etcetera. It is the opposite of extrinsic motivation, which occurs when someone is not personally interested in the activity, but rather does it for an external purpose, like a reward or social purpose (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992). To discover loyal visitor's motivations, the participants were first asked to state their primary motivation to go and see art. According to their answers, it could be determined if they would do this mainly for intrinsic or extrinsic purposes. After this, more questions to determine their intrinsic motives were asked, like: Do you visit a museum rather for a specific exhibition, or do you just randomly go and find out what is on, when you are there? Are there specific works of art in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen that makes you visit the museum? Do you use art in a certain way in your lifestyle/work/other?

3.4.4 Extrinsic motivation

After the questions on the participant's intrinsic motives were answered, other questions were asked to see if they were sometimes also driven by extrinsic motives like being entertained, or perhaps to be able to join in the conversation with friends or co-workers. Some questions were asked to check if a visit to the museum was mostly the participant's idea, or if it was mostly a suggestion made by someone else, or because of a review, for instance. In addition, it was asked if the interviewees would rather visit a museum on their own, or together with someone else. Furthermore, the participants were asked if they visited openings of exhibitions, and if they did this to see the art, or for social reasons. Finally, they were asked if they thought that a museum should attract a broad audience.

3.4.5 Aesthetic preferences

To determine the participant's aesthetic preferences, questions were asked to figure out which factors they found important with regard to their valuations of the artworks. Here, the questions were drawn up by means of the five aesthetic factors used in the

study of Roose (2008), namely: emotion, escapism, familiarity, normativity and innovativeness.

First, it was asked if certain artworks could evoke emotions within the participants. Here, the participants were asked if they could describe a situation like that, and what types of emotions could be evoked in different situations. For instance: What happens to you -emotionally- when you see an artwork that you find very beautiful? Can art that you do not appreciate make you mad?

Secondly, the escapist factor was examined. Here, the researcher wanted to find out if the participants supported the view of art as a part of their daily lives, or if they rather thought about it as a way to escape the hectic of everyday life.

Third, the interviewees were questioned about familiarity. Thus, the researcher wanted to find out whether the participants liked to encounter familiar artists and artworks, or if it would also bore them at some point when it was not 'challenging' anymore. Questions about this were: To what extent do you think familiarity is important in art? Does art ever get boring to you?

The fourth factor that was examined was normativity. Here it was asked what the participants thought about artists that use their art to protest against injustice and criticise society: Do you think that an artist should -or has to- criticise society through art?

The fifth factor of Roose (2008) that the interviewees were questioned about was innovativeness. Questions about this were often asked as a follow up or before questions about familiarity. The main question about this was: To what extent do you think innovativeness or experiment is important in art? Consequently, the interviewer tried to find out when the participants appreciated art that was experimental or new to them, and when they could not appreciate it.

Besides the questions about the factors used in Roose's article, the participants were asked if they could describe how they would normally walk through a museum, and how they would normally look at the art. This was done in order to see if the participants themselves would come up with personal aesthetic preferences, without consciously being probed. In this way it was possible to find out if they could appreciate art for art's sake, or if they normally needed background information to be able to appreciate art. If the interviewees seemed to need some guidance in their description, additional questions were asked like: Do you just look at what you see, or

do you want to know some background information? Do you take audio tours or read the gallery texts? Do you prepare for a museum visit by reading articles for example? On average, how long do you look at one artwork?

3.4.6 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Through the whole interview guide, connections were made to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, but in the end a few additional questions about the museum were asked like: Do you visit the museum mostly for the permanent collection, or more for its exhibitions? Which part of the museum's collection do you like best? Does the museum relate enough to your preferences, or are there some things that you miss in the museum? And, as a final question: What would you say is the reason that you keep coming back to the museum? Mainly, these questions were asked on behalf of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, so it would become clear why this museum was particularly valuable to the visitors. In this way, it could be examined what it is that the museum has that the visitors are repeatedly drawn to, how the museum connects so well to their loyal visitors' needs, and what it can do to improve this.

3.5 Data analysis

After the interviews were conducted and the data was collected, the recordings were transcribed in Microsoft Word. As mentioned above, it was decided to transcribe almost every word, to be able to remember the context of the conversation, and also to increase the validity of the research (Maxwell, 1992). Although it took a long time to play back and transcribe the interviews, it proved to be very valuable because it helped to already make links between the answers of the different participants and to already think about the analysis that had to be done afterwards. Moreover, during the transcription process common topics or *themes* within the answers of the participants appeared in the data. Words and lines that seemed to belong to a common theme were highlighted with the Microsoft Word programme's option 'Track Changes', and a note about it was written down and could be seen in the side bar on the right side of each page.

All the themes and topics are based on interpretations of the researcher, and are derived from concepts or indicators that are found in the data (Bryman, 2012). In this research, the inductive analysis was executed on the basis of Charmaz' structure of initial coding and focused coding that is explained by Bryman (2012). Hence, in the first phase (initial coding) almost every sentence of the data is coded very precisely in order to generate as many information and indicators as possible. Here, all of the key topics within the interviews were identified. Afterwards, in the second phase (focused coding) the initial indicators are compared and the most common indicators remain, whereas some indicators are dropped and some are added.

During this second phase, the key themes and indicators had to be organised. To arrange all the different themes and topics that were discussed in the interviews, the transcriptions were reread several times and, simultaneously, all the quotes that seemed significant for the research were organised in Excel. During the organising of the quotes, fitting topics were created for them in the Excel sheets. At first, some of the quotes seemed to fit under more than one topic. After all the quotes were organised some topics were added, while other existing topics were deleted, given a different name, or were combined with overlapping topics.

Eventually, the themes and topics that remained were selected and put in a 'topic scheme'. This scheme was drawn up *after* the data was collected. This method is in line with the conception of Tonkiss (2004), who claims that 'we cannot *make* the data 'say' what is simply not there' (Tonkiss, 2004:254). Here, he argues that although it is tempting to analyse on the basis of a previously made scheme, it is simply not possible if the data does not correspond. Hence, in this research it was hoped for and anticipated that the interviewer would also learn new things from the interviewees and thus gain new knowledge that could be incorporated further in the research, which is common for inductive analysis (Bryman, 2012).

The results chapter was structured on the basis of the six themes and twenty-two topics that eventually remained after the part of focused coding. Per topic, all the quotes of the participants were discussed and analysed. An overview of the themes and topics that were eventually perceived can be found in the appendix (7.2).



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RESULTS

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the results of the case study will be presented. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the most common themes and topics that appeared in the transcriptions of the interviews have been organised in Excel, and are put into a topic scheme. By means of this topic scheme, the results chapter is drawn up. One by one, each theme and each topic will be discussed. In addition, the most representative quotes that belong to each theme and topic are discussed, analysed, and connected to the literature.

Eventually, the results will lead to the answer of the research question: *“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”*

The answer to the research question will be provided in the conclusion. However, before the results are discussed, first the participants will be introduced briefly; their gender, age, and occupation will be mentioned, as well as the pseudonyms that have been appointed to them.

4.1 Introduction of the participants

Yara van Loon is a twenty-two year old student from Schiedam. At the moment, she is doing an Arts Master at the Erasmus University, where she also works as a student assistant. Moreover, she is a standby employee for the Kunsthal, which is an arts exhibition space in Rotterdam that has no permanent collection.

Anna Wieringa is a twenty-three year old student from Rotterdam. She has moved to Leiden, where she is doing a Bachelor in Art History at the University of Leiden. As a young girl, since the age of four, she used to visit Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen with her parents. When she got older, she started to visit museums by herself.

Pieter van de Ende is sixty-six years old, lives in Rotterdam, and has recently retired from his job in the brand design business. Pieter has always been very interested in art, and since his retirement he has the time to visit many museums, which he gladly does.

David Hartman is a fifty-three year old graphic designer from Utrecht. He has moved to Rotterdam twenty-four years ago and is very happy there. Besides working as a graphic designer, he writes reviews for several cultural websites on literature and art.

Barbara Fransen is forty-seven, comes from Tilburg, but lives in Rotterdam for about twenty years now. At the moment she is 'job-free' as she calls it, but she has studied urban engineering, and has worked as a manager at a non-profit organisation. Moreover, Barbara is a friend of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Lea van Santen comes from Bergambacht and now lives in Rotterdam since 2011. Before her retirement she has studied English and worked as a secretary. With her seventy-two years she is the eldest participant, but that does not make her the least (culturally) active. She does a course in Art History and visits many museums in her free time.

Chris van Dijk is fifty-one years old and has graduated last year from the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. He was born in Rotterdam and now lives, not far away, in Nieuwerkerk aan de IJssel. He is a professional artist, but he also teaches art at a high school.

Marijke Prins is fifty-nine years old, born in Rotterdam, but lives in Krimpen aan de IJssel. She works at an energy supply company at the Maasvlakte, where she does occupations and communication work, and she is very concerned with the city. She loves art, design and fashion, and she visits many museums.

Caroline West is sixty-one, born in Ireland but speaks Dutch fluently. Around thirty years ago she moved to Amsterdam, and five years later she moved to Rotterdam. At the moment she is retired, but she has worked in the cultural sector her whole life. Before that, she studied Fashion and English Literature in England.

Roos Jansen is sixty-four years old, born in Amsterdam, but lives in Rotterdam for fifteen years now. She has studied Retail at Nyenrode Business University, and before her retirement she worked in retail as well. Roos is very interested in art, and supports several cultural organisations financially, but not Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Tom Vrienten is fifty-five years old and comes from Rotterdam. He has studied Art History at the University of Leiden, and he still lives in in Leiden. Because it was difficult to find work in the cultural sector, he also became a lawyer.

At the moment, he does not have a paid job, but he does do a lot of unpaid work for several cultural organisations. In addition, Tom supports various cultural organisations financially and he is a friend of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

Frank Levi is sixty-eight years old and was born in Delft. Later, he has lived in Rotterdam, but he moved to Amsterdam around thirty-five years ago. Before his retirement he has worked as a curator for two renowned Dutch art museums. His specialisation lies in prints and drawings, of which he also owns a private collection.

Paul van Duren is fifty-eight years old, he was born and raised in Amsterdam, and has never left the capital. He has studied Industrial Design at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and has his own company in retail branding and design since 1988. He loves art and uses it a lot as inspiration for his work.

4.2 Cultural participation

The first theme that was addressed in the interviews is *cultural participation (CP)*. As mentioned before in the literature overview of this thesis, one's cultural consumption pattern can depend heavily on one's upbringing, education, and social environment (Bourdieu, 1984; Nagel, 2004). Therefore, it is interesting to see whether these factors have appeared to be influential for the loyal visitors of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Within the theme of cultural participation, three topics can be distinguished, namely: *CP-past* (how did the participants become acquainted with arts and culture in their early life?); *CP-now* (what does the cultural consumption pattern of the participants look like now?); and *CP-change* (in what way has the cultural consumption pattern of the participants changed over the years?). Whereas the first two topics are more about the general cultural participation pattern, which can include visual art but also music, film, literature, etcetera, the latter topic is rather focused on the participants' love for visual art, and how this has changed with respect to their youth.

4.2.1 Cultural participation: past

Within the topic of *CP-past*, several influences could be distinguished that influenced the participants' love for arts and culture. For most participants, the biggest cultural

influence either came from their parents or from school. This is in line with the many studies that link cultural participation to social and educational environment (Bourdieu, 1984; Kraaykamp, 2009; Ganzeboom, 1989). Similarly, almost all participants have pointed out that their parents were interested in culture, but for most participants this did not mean that their parents actually took them to encounter cultural experiences, like visiting museums. Tom says about this:

‘Strangely enough, my parents did not [take me to museums].. no.. I realised that later on.. my mother was interested in eh, art and she also had like some small notebooks from her youth, from art class and drawing lessons.. and.. my father was just too busy, he was, he worked at the City Council.. [...] music was something else, yes all of my life they [my parents] had concert series in eh.. by the Rotterdam Philharmonic in De Doelen.. and eh.. yes they were indeed cultural.. but strangely enough I cannot remember that I ever visited a museum with my parents.. at that time..’

Tom’s comment can be compared to many of the other participants’ observations. Although it appeared that not all of the participants’ parents actually took them to encounter cultural activities, most of them probably did transfer some cultural influence onto their children, since many of the participants indicate that their parents were indeed interested in (high) culture. However, four of the participants said that their own interest in culture has not at all been influenced by their parents, like David:

‘Not at all, no. I can be very brief about that.’

Likewise, Caroline indicates that her parents did not influence her love for visual art:

‘Actually it is not ehm... my fascination, for visual art and design.. I did not get that ehm.. from my parents, my family background so to speak.. I have ehm.. discovered that more or less by myself.. when I was 16... I got, for the first time.. really impressed.. by art..’

Even though David and Caroline deny the parental cultural influence, it could be the case that their parents influenced them unintentionally in a way, by listening to (classical) music for example, or by reading poetry or literature. In contrast, the relatively younger participants pointed out that their parents really explicitly introduced them to cultural experiences, by taking them to museums, like Anna:

‘My parents took me with them to cultural activities very often, so they found it

nice to indeed eh, visit Boijmans, or the Kunsthal or [...] yeah the Maritime Museum, you know.'

It is interesting to see that the parents of the younger participants have actively let their children become acquainted with arts and culture. This phenomenon is in line with the findings of Bourdieu and Darbel (1991), however the fact that there is a difference between generations is not discussed in their research. An explanation for this difference could be that over time, the bond between parents and their children has changed, and that parents nowadays are much more involved in their children's lives than they were in the past. However, this aspect is not included in this thesis and should be examined in further research.

In Anna's case, the cultural influence from her upbringing, her education and her social environment can be perceived very clearly. Besides pointing out that her parents used to take her to museums (upbringing), she says that her neighbour was the director of de Kunsthal, so she often went there with the girl next door (social environment), and she also visited museums with school (education). Now, she is studying Art History. In contrast, although David and Caroline as well as Lea and Marijke point out that their parents had nothing to do with their interest in arts and culture, all participants indicate that school has played a big role in their cultural upbringing. For Paul, it already started in primary school:

'I, myself eh, got taught in museum lessons in primary school.. eh and I found that very nice.. so we went with school eh, a couple of weeks, maybe six weeks or maybe two months, I can't remember, maybe three months, every Friday to the eh.. to museums in Amsterdam.. particularly the Rijksmuseum I can remember and more often to the Stedelijk Museum, where we also got to hear explanations about eh, about the paintings..'

In addition, Yara points out that her love for art has been instigated during a trip to Rome with her class from high school:

'[...] at a certain point in fifth grade -I was in grammar school- then.. we were taught KCV, that Classical Cultural Development class [...] and then we went to Rome, you were taught that subject- at a certain point you had built, a special relationship with something like that, I can still feel that I like it by the way, but at that time I really found out that I find art sort of interesting..'

Both Paul and Yara declared earlier that their parents were interested in culture, but

that they did not take them to (art) museums very often. The fact that their interest in art has consciously started in school can be related to the study by Nagel (2004), in which she found that education has an independent effect on cultural consumption. As mentioned before, Nagel (2004) also argues that the social background of a person's spouse or partner can have an independent effect on one's cultural consumption pattern as well, and this is something that Marijke points out:

'[...] no, so I really got acquainted with art eh, actually, through school.. eh.. and later my husband who eh, who has studied at the Conservatory, so at the time we were together I learned so to say.. to get to know the music-side of art..'

4.2.2 Cultural participation: change & now

The other two topics that are part of the cultural participation theme are *CP-change* and *CP-now*. As mentioned above, this first topic shows how the participants' love for visual art has changed over the years, whereas the latter demonstrates the participants' current cultural consumption pattern. Overall, with regard to *change*, most participants agree on more or less the same thing:

Marijke: *'Ehm.. [my love for art] has certainly grown.. for sure, yes it has certainly grown..'*

Caroline: *'I do not think [it has changed] much, no. No I have eh.. I discover a lot more.'*

Yara: *'[It has changed] in the sense that it has extended.'*

In essence, most participants indicate that their love for art has increased over the years, and that they have come to like more and more. Of course, age and experience can play a role here. However, several participants say that they not only have discovered more of the art they already liked, but that they have also become to like new types of art. For instance, some of them currently prefer modern art to traditional art, like Chris:

'Yeah eh... there too [in my love for art] the development can be perceived, in the sense that you get more interested in.. eh from the more artisanal to eh.. the more abstract art also.. also because you have to get used to that a bit more.. to.. like, do I understand it, do I have to understand it is perhaps the

most important question.. if you should actually want that.. eh so yeah, there too a development can be perceived.. yeah..'

Chris is not the only one who has become to appreciate more of the modern art; Lea and Roos have experienced the same shift. Likewise, most of the other participants declare to appreciate modern art, as well as traditional art and design. The fact that the participants have such broad cultural tastes can be related to DiMaggio's (1987) conception that people who come from high status groups have a broader cultural taste than people from lower status groups, due to their large and diverse social networks that, again, influence their own cultural taste (Bourdieu, 1984). Although this could be true, not all participants come from a highbrow environment, and this would mean that the people who are from lower status groups are not able to understand the difficult aesthetics code of highbrow art (Bourdieu, 1984). However, Chris says that to understand abstract art, he just had to get used to it and, more importantly, he wonders if people should even *want* to understand abstract art in the first place. In addition, this could mean that Halle (1992) was right about the conception that moving from one taste to another may not require elaborate cultural training and that people with various backgrounds can therefore become to understand abstract (or other highbrow) art. Moreover, Roos also indicates that she prefers modern art over traditional art, however she argues that it is essential to appreciate traditional art as well:

'[...] if I had to choose then, then it [my preference] lies with modern art [...] eh, and yes nevertheless I find that you have to eh, really appreciate that [traditional] art eh.. in order to be able to appreciate modern art as well.'

Hence, Roos' conception could be interpreted in a way that one has to have mastered something comparable to an aesthetics code, in order to appreciate or understand all types of highbrow art.

With regard to the current cultural consumption pattern of the participants, most of them mention other types of highbrow art such as classical music, theatre or literature, however some participants say that they also appreciate lowbrow art, like Paul for example, who really loves pop music; and there are others who call themselves cultural omnivores, like Marijke, or Tom:

'[...] however, I just really like to visit museums, visual art is just very important to me, and music as well, all sorts of music.. I really am a sort of

omnivore.. I almost find too many things interesting and eh.. that really goes from old to, to modern.. eh.. and everything in between..'

Examples like this can again be related to DiMaggio's (1989) research about people with broad cultural taste, and of course to Peterson's (1992) theory on cultural omnivores, which contends that high status people become increasingly engaged in various forms of lowbrow culture.

4.3 Mode of visit

The second theme that will be discussed here is *mode of visit (MV)*. It is interesting to know more about this, because it can already provide insights into the intrinsic or extrinsic motives for visiting that the visitors could have, which will be discussed afterwards. For instance, the motivation for a sole visit can be for intrinsic reasons, while a social visit can imply extrinsic motivations. In this second theme, it is examined if the loyal visitors of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (MBVB) rather visit the museum alone or together with someone else, and also how frequently they visit MBVB or museums in general. Therefore, this theme is divided into three topics, namely: *MV-alone*, *MV-together*, and *MV-frequency*.

4.3.1 Mode of visit: alone

The data that have resulted from the interviews show that all participants often visit museums alone, or at least have done this frequently in (a period of) their lives. There are various reasons for these sole visits that the participants mention. For instance, many of them say that it is best to visit a museum alone, because then they can get the ideal personal experience out of it. Besides Barbara, Yara, Caroline and Lea, Tom is one of the participants who shares this view:

'[...] actually it is, if you really want it for your own eh, eh experience, then you can best visit the museum by yourself, in my opinion.. it is really something else if you do that [visit] with others..'

The mode of visit that Tom and the others seem to prefer can be related to the 'private experience mode' that DeBenedetti (2003) introduced in his study. Here, DeBenedetti argues that a sole visit is always accompanied with benefits like high cognitive and

emotional involvement, as well as an intimate relationship with the artworks, and it seems plausible that these benefits would contribute to one's personal experience. In addition, many of the participants indicated that they really like to be in the environment of MBVB because it is familiar to them and they feel comfortable there, like Barbara who said:

'[...] this [MBVB] feels like home because I come here so often, that it's all tuned in or something, you know like.. so, so in that sense it is also precious to me.. and it is also.. eh.. I like to surrender to that [feeling].'

A perception like Barbara's can be connected to Debenedetti's description of the private experience mode, as well as to the study by Hood (1993), which showed that frequent visitors like to visit by themselves because they feel at ease in the museum's environment. However, it can be argued that even when people visit a museum by themselves it can never be a complete personal experience, while they are always surrounded by other visitors, and therefore share the experience in a certain way. This is something that Paul also mentions:

'[...] I definitely find it [the museum visit] a social.. matter, even though you are silent, you are together, you are observing together.. right? One person observes, you look next to you.. eh see what they think about it, what their reaction is.. it is nice to see the reactions of people and eh.. and see how eh.. what we are all part of..'

4.3.2 Mode of visit: together

Although all of the participants like to (occasionally) visit museums on their own, they also find it nice to share the museum experience with a friend or family member. While most of the participants who are in a relationship indicate that they like to visit together with their partner, others argue that they do not like that, because their partner is not interested in art. Similarly, many of the participants point out that they do not mind to go with someone else, as long as that person shares the same interests. David says about this:

'[...] sometimes I visit with my partner, my girlfriend [...] but that is also because of the.. motivation. Because she wants it too.. well, then there already is a good.. vibe.. and that, that's really enjoyable. [...] it never occurs that I

visit a museum for social reasons, that almost never happens. It is always deliberate and focussed and.. most of the time with people that share.. that same interest and.. then we combine that.'

However, even if the participants visit together with someone that has the same interests, most of them want to experience the artworks separately. Hence, they enter the museum together, but go through the rooms at their own pace, and leave each other to experience the art in their own way. When Lea visits a museum with a friend, she mostly does it like this:

'[...] first we do a quick round together and then we go again separately. Then we say to each other well, let's meet in eh.. and then we agree on a time, like in so much- time, we will see each other again and then we will go and observe separately, because you both have your favourites.. that you want to go see for a little longer.'

Lea's mode of visiting can be compared to the 'separate visit', which Debenedetti (2003) describes, where the visitors split up after entering the museum to undergo the museum experience by themselves. While Lea points out that she does this because, despite their shared interest, she and her friend like different artworks best, other participants said that they would separate because they want to give their companions space; because they go through the museum faster, or because they actually need more time to observe the artworks, for example. Even though it is clear that most of the participants prefer to have their own, personal experience, some of them do like to reflect on the visit or discuss it with their companion, afterwards. The reason why these people like that will be discussed some more later on.

4.3.3 Mode of visit: frequency

The last topic that will be discussed within this theme is the topic called *MV-frequency*. Here, attention was paid to how often the participants visit MBVB or museums in general, and if they sometimes go to see a certain exhibition more than once. Overall, the participants indicated that they visit museums at least once a month. Some of them, who have more time due to their retirement or because they have much spare time next to their study or work go more often; like three to four times a month. Tom visits the most often, at least once a week:

'I certainly visit once a week, on average.. yes, but that can also be quick.. that can also be 15 or 20 minutes, only for a short time in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden for example, to quickly.. see one room, or one object [...] yeah, certainly once a week, somewhere..'

Just like Tom, many of the other participants indicate that due to the fact that they all have a Museum Card or something similar, they frequently pay a quick visit to a museum that is around the corner to see a part of the collection or exhibition. Since many of the participants live in Rotterdam, these people can easily reach MBVB or another museum by foot or bike within a few minutes. As a result of the small distance that some people have to cover between their house and the museum, some of them attend to a certain exhibition more than once, like Pieter:

'[...] you can't do it [see an exhibition] in one time. The first time it is 'aah' and the second time it is, well, all right, that you sort of try to understand it and discover it.. [...] sometimes you have to watch much longer to, to.. yeah.. discover the eh, new elements in an artwork.'

Another reason why the participants sometimes visit a certain exhibition for a second time is when the first visit was during the opening of that exhibition. However, this will be discussed later on.

4.4 Intrinsic motives

The third theme that will be addressed is the theme of *intrinsic motives (IM)*. As mentioned in the literature overview these are motives that are present when someone does something for its own sake, to gain only personal experience. Due to the fact that this theme is part of the research question, it is one of the three largest themes of the research. Since intrinsic motives are very personal, there was much variation in formulation of the answers of the participants, while at the same time many of the answers could be interpreted similarly. Within this theme, five topics were drawn up afterwards, namely: *IM-various*, *IM-inspiration*, *IM-art(ist) specific*, *IM-general*, and *IM-personal*. One by one, these five topics will be discussed below.

4.4.1 Intrinsic motives: various

The first topic within this theme is *IM-various*. This topic is about the various motives that came to the minds of the participants when they were asked about their primary motive to see art. Because almost all participants declared that they want to be inspired by art in some way, a separate topic was drawn up for inspiration as an intrinsic motivation. However, some of the other motives that were mentioned will be discussed here first.

The intrinsic motivation that was also mentioned by many participants was enrichment. These people indicated that they would go to see art to learn, develop themselves, or to gain knowledge. In addition, the participants often connected the comments about self-enrichment to inspiration. Caroline says about this:

'It [observing art] is a sort of eh.. yeah.. a sort of quest for knowledge essentially, right? Via.. via, visual art. Then something is ehm.. actually eh.. being disclosed to you, something that otherwise eh.. that you cannot find in literature...'

Moreover, Caroline and many of the other participants add to this that they really like it when they are surprised by art. This can imply that they, perhaps unintentional, want to be in the state of flow that Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has written about. The fact that they want to learn and be surprised at the same time can indicate that they like to be challenged by art, and be intellectually and emotionally affected. This latter motivation, of being emotionally affected has also been mentioned very often by the participants. Hence, Pieter sees art as *'balm for the soul'* and many others say that they want to be moved or touched by art. Furthermore, Barbara said something notable about mindfulness, which was also an argument that appeared in the study by Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995):

'[...] what really struck me.. when I had I a mindful course here [MBVB] [...] when I, when I committed myself to observe in a different way, then I also started to eh.. again notice some beautiful elements.. [...] yeah so then you get more sensitive.. to it [art]..'

Thus, when Barbara started to open her mind to art that she did not really like at first, it made her able to engage her intellectual and emotional abilities and therefore she was capable to perceive new elements that made her actually appreciate the art.

However, she indicates that she really had to commit herself in order to get there; only when she let herself be fully absorbed by it, she was able to perceive new things. This experience is comparable to the idea of Csikszentmihalyi (1990), who contended that in order to see things from a different perspective or to reach a state of flow, effort has to be made and one has to be fully concentrated and absorbed by the art. Consequently, this can also be connected to one of the quotes by Chris, who wants to learn and be enriched by art:

'Let me put it this way, usually they have to drag me away eh.. when I'm observing something..'

By the same token, many of the participants point out that they really like the serenity of most museums, which can also contribute to people's concentration level. Some of them even say that they visit museums to 'escape' the hectic of everyday life, however this, as well as factors that can intervene with the serenity, will be discussed later on.

A third intrinsic motivation to look at art that was mentioned several times was to see something special (aesthetically, creatively) or to do something valuable. Yara said about this:

'I... want to see something that I think has value, so it makes.. you know, either I find it beautiful, or it has a certain historical meaning, or.. name it, but there's just something special about a particular piece of art.'

Yara's quote can again be related to the study by Hood (1993) who argued that frequent museum visitors like to visit museums to learn, to be challenged, or to do something worthwhile to spend their time and energy.

4.4.2 Intrinsic motives: inspiration

Since all participants indicated to gain some kind of inspiration from art, a separate topic was drawn up for this. Two types of inspiration really stood out, namely: inspiration that stimulates new thoughts, or a different mind-set, and inspiration that stimulates actual (psychical) creativity. Several participants indicated that art inspires them because they think that artists are always ahead of the rest intellectually, emotionally and creatively, like David for example:

'Yeah well art in general is something that eh.. is always ahead, of

everything.. and that is sort of the biggest challenge of art and particularly when observing art. You see things.. that you don't know yet.. and you really start to think about that.. that's very good for you..'

David's quote can again be related to the challenges that experienced visitors seek in art. Here, David points out that the inspiration that he gets from art challenges him intellectually, because it causes him to think and reflect, which he finds pleasurable. Similarly, Paul mentions that artists inspire him because their ideas are advanced, and that even the ideas from artists that lived in the past can be relevant again in the present-day. Moreover, he adds something else to this:

'Well, I really want to be inspired.. eh.. also for my profession, because I, well I'm on the creative side of eh.. of life, so then you'll have to be inspired, it can't all come from within yourself, and I like to find it in art.. ehm.. to, to see what kind of colours to use or.. what kind of story to tell..'

Here, Paul makes a connection between the art and his own life, in particular: his profession. The importance of art that refers to people's own lives is something that Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) also emphasise, due to the fact that it can stimulate inspiration. Additionally Pieter, who has also worked in retail on the 'creative side of life', indicates similar to David and Paul that the creative minds of past and present artists really inspire him. Just like Pieter, many other participants indicate that they can be so surprised or astonished by a certain artwork that they almost cannot believe that it was possible for the artist to come to such a creative idea. For instance, Pieter says that that kind of exceptional creativity really makes him think:

'[...] that [Seascape by Mondriaan] is so immensely creative and so different, out of the box, that someone.. that someone can invent that, and actually make it. From a traditional view.. yeah, I can really ponder upon that for a very long time.. yeah..'

4.4.3 Intrinsic motives: art(ist) specific

As mentioned in the literature overview, art(ist) specific intrinsic motivations can be related to particular elements of a museum. Examples of these elements are: a certain exhibition that is shown, or specific artworks by specific artists that hang in the

museum. Due to the fact that the interviews were conducted with loyal visitors from MBVB, this part will focus on the specific intrinsic motives that the participants have for (the art of) this museum.

In general, the opinions of the participants were divided with regard to visiting MBVB for its permanent collection or rather for its changing exhibitions. For instance, Marijke says:

'Well, I do get.. triggered by an exhibition.. yeah, yeah.. that's true.. and then I combine that with a visit to let's say eh, the usual things..'

Just like Marijke, most of the participants declared that the temporary exhibitions mostly function as a trigger to visit MBVB. This phenomenon can be linked to the study by Roose (2008), about loyal visitors for classical concerts, which shows that most visitors attend for a specific musician or orchestra. However, some participants indicated that they do not need a special exhibition to attract them to the museum, but that they can also just visit the permanent collection and simply enjoy the atmosphere of the museum. It could be argued that visiting the permanent collection of MBVB is not a specific intrinsic motivation, but rather a general one, because one cannot be specifically motivated to visit everything. Nevertheless, some participants indicated that they like to visit specific artworks within the permanent collection, or follow a personal route through the museum that goes along their favourite pieces, like Tom:

'[...] The Tower of Babel was always a classic to start with and that small Geertgen tot Sint Jans, that's fantastic of course.. that sure are my personal highlights on that side so to say.. [...] and on this side I always have eh the Kandinsky.. the horse.. the rider has already.. been a favourite since I was very little.. and.. also the bridges by Seurat..'

While Tom does mention several specific artworks, he cannot decide which part of the collection of MBVB he likes the best. This is the same for many of the other participants, who also ascribe their love for the permanent collection of MBVB to the fact that it is so diverse. However, five of the participants pointed out to be inclined towards the modern part of the collection, and eight participants mentioned Dalí or Surrealism when they thought of a part of the collection that they really like. Furthermore, for Paul, Pieter and Chris their first time at MBVB might have even been at an exhibition on Dalí.

4.4.4 Intrinsic motives: general

The topic of *IM-general* covers a broader context than the previous topic. Here, it is more about people's interest for museums in general (including MBVB), or for a museum's collection as a whole. For instance, Anna and Frank like to visit MBVB even if there is not something in particular that they want to see. Frank says:

'[...] Boijmans is the only museum in The Netherlands eh, that I eh [...] that I still eh, return to.. not to see something specific, but to see eh, to just be.. in that atmosphere..'

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, one could also argue that this is a specific intrinsic motive, because Frank explicitly prefers to go to MBVB to enjoy its atmosphere. However, because the motive of 'visiting not to see something in particular' can be related to the act of following the programme of a specific museum for example, in this study it is seen as a general intrinsic motive.

Other general intrinsic motives appeared to be similar to the general intrinsic motives that Roose (2008) has found in his study. Although the design of this thesis was completely different, the results are comparable to Roose (2008), who used this topic as a quantitative variable by examining if the concert-goers were following the concert hall's programming, and if they went because it was included in their season ticket.

First of all, all the participants of this case study indicated to have a Museum Card, or something similar like an ICOM Card or Rotterdam Card, or more than one, like Lea:

'[...] I have a Museum Card, I have a Rotterdam Card.. so I can always enter for free.. so that's of course also an eh.. an incentive right? When you don't need to pay, you can easily walk in, yes.'

Practically everyone pointed out that a card like that made it very easy for them to just 'hop in' a museum for a (short) period of time when they would feel like it or when they were in the neighbourhood.

Secondly, most of the participants said to be kept up to date with the programming of MBVB through their newsletter or Facebook and Twitter. Roos and Barbara also said that they receive flyers at their homes that are sent by MBVB. In addition, most participants pointed out that they follow the programming of more

museums than MBVB alone, and that they also receive the general museum agenda because of their Museum Card membership.

4.4.5 Intrinsic motives: personal

The last topic on intrinsic motives that will be discussed here is *IM-personal*. Some of the participants indicated that they thought that the art that they loved also said something about who they are as a person. For example, Yara and Lea think that their broad interest in art can be ascribed to their open-mindedness in general. This is something that can be connected to the ideas of Peterson (1992), who argued that high status people are not snobby, but rather open, tolerant and individualistic. In addition, Caroline said that the art that she loves indicates that she is aspirational, and that she is eager to learn from art about the questions of life. Throughout the whole interview, it became clear that Caroline really masters the aesthetics code, and does not even avoid art that literally makes her nauseous, because she wants to learn from it and be challenged by it.

Furthermore, Paul and Anna had a similar view about how art is linked to their personalities. Paul calls it a ‘search for distinction’ and says that it is a combination of style, familiarity and innovativeness. Anna’s view is comparable to the search for distinction that Paul mentions, she says:

‘Of course. Style eh, aesthetics, ehm [...] the taste that you develop yeah.. it doesn’t necessarily have to say something about your background- not at all.. but it surely distinguishes you from eh.. your fellow human beings in what you find beautiful, and what you eh.. what you care about.’

It is notable that Anna and Paul both mention the word distinction, because it actually relates to the ideas of Bourdieu (1984), who argues in his book *La Distinction* (1984) that people can distinguish themselves from others through their cultural taste. Thus, it could be contended that although the distinction that Bourdieu aimed for was a very strict distinction between high and low culture (read: status), and although this view might be out-dated; the idea that people can distinguish themselves through their cultural taste seems to still be accurate.

4.5 Extrinsic motives

The fourth theme in this results chapter is *extrinsic motives (EM)*. As mentioned before in the literature overview, these are motives that presume external rewards that are mostly socially orientated. For instance, one could visit a museum to strengthen social ties, or to be able to talk about his or her museum experience with others, which will in turn distinguish them intellectually from the people within their social environment that have not had this same experience. In addition, the origin of extrinsic motives is different from the origin of intrinsic motives, in the sense that visitors are attracted to the museum not because they follow its programming, but because they come across ads in the media, or read reviews that influence them to go or not. Hence, this theme is divided in the three topics *EM-network*, *EM-media*, and *EM-inexperienced others*, which will be explained below.

4.5.1 Extrinsic motives: network

The first topic discusses the social motivations that people could have to visit museums. Although it has already been mentioned in the *mode of visit* theme that the participants sometimes like to visit museums together with friends or family members, and that they perceive museum visits as a social activity in a certain way, it is still interesting to find out more about the social aspect of museum visits. For instance, several participants mention that they find it important to be able to talk about art with people from their social network, like Roos:

'I would find it rather dreary if there was no art and it, it is also a, a subject of conversation..'

Moreover, Pieter argues that art can also be a means to secure social contact:

'With art you make new contacts and you, you meet people and you, you share.. things that have a common interest, so that is very nice..'

As Pieter indicates, he likes to share the experience that he gets from art with other people. Although he points out that he can easily visit museums by himself, he prefers the 'fusion visit' that DeBenedetti (2003) mentioned in his article, where the museum experience is actively shared. Similarly, Roos' preference goes out to the fusion visit. Although she does not actively need to share the experience while observing, she

certainly likes to reflect on the experience with her husband afterwards because she points out that by doing this, she often discovers meanings that she was not aware of during the actual experience. This perception shows the value of the collaborative museum experience that is comparable to the view of Vygotsky (1978), who emphasised the importance of a dialogue between people in order to gain in knowledge. In Roos' case, the guidance of her husband can sometimes help her to gain new expertise and consequently, improve her own skills.

Another part of this topic is about museum's openings for new exhibitions. Out of the thirteen participants, eight point out that they (regularly) go to these openings, like Yara:

'[...] at Boijmans they have those public openings and I've been there as well a couple of times but I find it very crowded.. and on the one hand that is nice because they organise a lot of activities, but on the other hand.. I sort of have to come back another time to get a good idea.. well not good but to let it sink in.. but I always.. like it, but I rather see it as an event than as a museum visit.'

Similar to Yara, all of the other seven participants admit that they think openings are a social *happening*, and they all say that they actually need to visit the exhibition a second time in order to really experience the art. Even Roos, who points out that she does not visit openings for social reasons, says that she often has to come back another time if it was too crowded at the opening. Nevertheless, it can be noted that many of the participants also appreciate the social and recreational aspect of arts and culture, which is confirmed by the research of Kotler and Kotler (2000). However they mostly do not like to *mix* that aspect with their personal, aesthetic experience.

4.5.2 Extrinsic motives: media

As mentioned before, extrinsic motives can also differ in their origin from intrinsic motives. Roose (2008) contends that extrinsic motives are the result of the attention in the media or the reading of a review. While attention on *social* media certainly is part of this topic, it was chosen to distinguish between general attention on social media, and specifically following certain museums on Facebook or Twitter, which are perceived here as generating intrinsic motives.

In general, all of the participants notice the attention that museums emit

through the media, and it happens that something like a poster on the street activates them to visit a certain exhibition, however they mostly look up relevant information on their own initiative. Consequently, many of them do come across reviews of exhibitions on the internet or in the newspaper, and by those some of them can indeed get encouraged to visit a museum, like Barbara:

'[...] most of the times I come across something in the paper and then I think o sure.. [...] that [a review] is mostly quite a determinant because I just don't have that much.. ideas about it myself [...] so therefore a review does really matter..'

As Barbara indicates, the content of a review can really determine if she will visit a certain exhibition. Although most of the other participants declare that a review can certainly drive them to the museum, most of them point out that they do not want to let their visiting behaviour depend too much on the content of a review. Therefore, even if a review is negative, many of them will still go, like Marijke:

'No that's just like with books, I mean all right I do read the reviews but.. but.. well not completely of course but.. I want to go anyway to see it for myself, I will follow my own gut..'

Almost all of the participants declare that they do not want their behaviour to depend on the opinion of one critic. However, it is not true either that a bad review stimulates them to visit a certain exhibition. Paul points out that if the topic did not interest him in the first place, he will not go after reading a bad review, however this could happen after reading a positive review about it. Nevertheless, he indicates that if the topic were already (positively) familiar to him, a bad review would not stop him from attending the exhibition. This view is shared by most of the participants, although some of them do not read reviews in advance because they do not want to be influenced by them at all, and therefore rather read them afterwards.

Overall, these results show that for the loyal visitors of MBVB, reviews do not merely evoke extrinsic motivations, but also intrinsic motivations. On the one hand a review can notify them about an exhibition that they did not know of, but most of them will not let their visit depend on the opinion of one critic, so eventually they will go for their own satisfaction.

4.5.3 Extrinsic motives: inexperienced others

The last topic discusses more or less the motives that inexperienced others should have according to the participants. All of the participants argued that they thought it is very important for everybody to have experiences with art. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, due to the growing offer of cultural activities, museums have to compete more and more with other museums and cultural institutions within the leisure environment (Burton, Louviere & Young, 2004). According to Kotler and Kotler (2000) museums have to be careful that, while trying to attract a bigger audience, they stay true to their own mission and vision, since they cannot attend to everybody's wishes.

Many museums, including MBVB often organise special exhibitions, and participate in Museum Night; a special night when many museums are open for visitors, and where additional entertainment (music, drinks, etcetera) is provided in the form of a side-programme. Although many of the participants understand why museums participate, most of them do not attend these 'events', like Chris:

'[...] yeah it rather is that there's something to do in the city [...] but well eh, the ends justify the means, eh they should do it of course.. absolutely. Attract those people eh, and then hope that a few of them stick. Of course. So, in that respect, go ahead, but.. yeah it's not something I would go to, no..'

Like Chris, the other participants that gave their opinion about Museum Night said that they rather thought of it as an event, than as a museum visit, but that they thought it was worth it if it would get a few people interested to come back. This could perhaps mean that 'high status people', like the participants, do not only have an open and tolerant attitude towards art (Peterson, 1992), but also towards getting people acquainted with art. However, although all participants argue that museums should not be elitist, and be accessible for everybody, more than half of the participants say that the museums should also consider if they should *want* to be attractive for everybody. Some say that it is not acceptable when the museum has to make too many concessions, and that it is important that the museums keep acting with integrity. In addition, Frank says:

'[...] it's definitely important that everybody.. is offered the possibility to see something [art], however I don't know.. if everybody should have the same

relationship with art.. it's.. in my opinion it's also fine if people don't visit.'

This quote by Frank is relatable to Kotler and Kotler (2000) who wonder if museums can or should be 'all things to all people'. Similarly, Frank explicitly stresses the importance of the accessibility of museums, and he rejects thresholds that hinder the museum visit, however, he thinks that it is not the job of the museums to ensure the bond that people have with art, but that it is a task for the schools.

4.6 Aesthetic preferences

The fifth theme is *aesthetic preferences (AP)* and covers the dispositions that people have when they attend to art aesthetically. Now that the motives that people have to see art have been discussed, it is valuable to see what functions art can have and in what ways it can affect people. Moreover, these results give insight in the knowledge that people need or want to have to appreciate art aesthetically. The theme of aesthetic preferences is divided into six topics, namely: *AP-emotions*, *AP-escapism*, *AP-familiarity*, *AP-innovativeness*, *AP-knowledge and information*, and *AP-normativity*.

4.6.1 Aesthetic preferences: emotions

The first topic of aesthetic preferences is about the emotions that art can evoke within people. As mentioned in the theory, art can evoke emotions of pleasure, fear, or sadness, for example (Konečni, 2005). Generally, all participants indicate that art can move them, but not all of them are moved in the same way or on the same level. However, all of them say that they can really get a happy, joyous feeling from art. Chris describes it as follows:

'Well, it can make me very happy.. absolutely yes.. [...] then you're just.. moved, inside, somehow.. then you think like yes, this, this is it, really.. yeah.. and eh yeah that can last very long indeed, so eh, you can stay happy for the rest of the day for example..'

Thus, for Chris it can have a rather longstanding effect; the feeling of joy can last all day. On the other hand, Anna says that art can give her an optimistic feeling, but she regrets the fact that she has never been really, heavily affected by art, or ever had something like the 'wow effect' (Park, 1993) or the 'awe response' (Konečni, 2005).

In contrast, for Caroline and Lea the reactions that art can evoke are indeed similar to those kinds of intense responses. Hence, Lea describes a feeling that could perhaps be compared to the chills or thrills that Konečni (2005) mentions:

‘When I find something very beautiful, I start to sort of hyperventilate, yes, a sort of [-breathes fast-], and then I really think oh eh, calm down!’

The hyperventilating reaction that Lea gets when she encounters a work of art that she really appreciates could perhaps be explained by means of the optimal arousal model developed by Berlyne (1971). Hence, if Lea’s appreciation goes up, she gets emotionally aroused, and in her case arousal can take on the form of hyperventilation. In addition, arousal can go up if someone is really surprised or intrigued by art and this is something that many participants indicate to experience. However, it is not possible to use Berlyne’s model for this, because it does not make sense if somebody is too surprised or too intrigued (Silvia, 2005). The participants compare the feeling of arousal to joy or happiness and say that they can get really happy when they are surprised by art; they then get a feeling of astonishment or admiration, like Yara:

‘Well, I just saw that Balloon Dog by Jeff Koons in December and.. you can say whatever you want about Koons.. it’s too commercial, it’s this, it’s that.. but it’s just too.. too smart.. it’s too.. how does he get away with this?’

In this quote, Yara already describes that not everybody can appreciate art that is so provocative. There seems to be a thin line between admiration or astonishment and incomprehension or even abomination. However, this will be discussed more later on.

In contrast, art does not solely elicit joy, but it can also evoke feelings of sadness, even (or precisely) when it is perceived as beautiful. Paul, Pieter, Roos and Marijke declare that they can get truly sad from certain artworks. For Pieter, visual art as well as music can even evoke tears:

‘Oh absolutely. And that’s the same for music, of course, yeah.. [...] because eh.. yeah it doesn’t take much, then, then, that can really move me... And that can come with real tears, you know, that is just real emotion, that you, that you really.. feel like.. pfff.. intense, he..’

For many participants, the intensity of art is really important. Although they argue that it is a subjective feeling, it is also something that Beardsley (1982) would contend to be a general standard that determines if a work is ‘good’ and can cause an aesthetic experience.

Furthermore, Pieter is not the only participant who involves the art of music when talking about emotions; Roos, Frank and Paul do the same. They say music can move them more or less the same way as visual art; it can evoke tears of joy, or tears of sadness. In addition, Paul argues that sad art can also have a sort of therapeutic function:

'It can certainly give you comfort.. [...] like the blues is also sung for eh, people to say oh, I'm not alone in my grieve.. eh.. that's also possible eh, with visual art.. like a, like a comforting thing..'

The therapeutic function that art can have could also refer to the escapist function of art. As mentioned before, Roose (2008) describes this function as being absorbed by art, forgetting about the here and now. However, this topic will be discussed afterwards. Nevertheless it becomes clear that especially for the aesthetic preferences it is difficult to exactly categorise the functions that art can have, due to the fact that it are *personal* preferences, and for different people similar emotions can have a different effect.

Up until now, the only emotions that have been discussed were emotions that are evoked by art that is found to be beautiful. To the question whether ugly art can make you angry, most participants answered negatively, like David:

'Well not angry actually, I think.. No I think I'm open-minded enough.. with regard to eh appraisal, or acceptance anyway.. [...] well, everything should have a place, there are many things of which I think hmm, no I just find that.. meaningless, or.. horrible.. repulsive.. that's also possible.. but it doesn't make me angry..'

Here, David already points out that he thinks of himself as being open minded. In addition, he is an artist himself so therefore he really seems to understand the aesthetics code, and knows how to interpret art and process his reactions. However, some of the other participants admit that they can get upset or frustrated by art, because they do not understand it. On the other hand, Paul also admits that he does not like art that is ugly, however he does appreciate the emotion that it brings about:

'Look, something that is really repulsive or something, or ugly, or aggressive or.. ehm I have no desire for that.. eh, but that might be good because.. if I see that then, then it does- then it gives a real emotion of course.. he, eh.. so, I don't completely avoid it either..'

The fact that Paul does not avoid the art that he finds repulsive, and that he perhaps does not understand completely at first, indicates that he appreciates the challenge that he gets from it. Therefore, by letting himself be confronted by that art, he pushes his own boundaries and improves his coping potential, or skills; a phenomenon that is in line with the flow theory by (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or the appraisal theory by Silvia (2005). Moreover, as mentioned in the literature overview, Silvia and Brown (2007) argue that if an artwork does not correspond to the values that a person has, anger can be evoked as well. This is something that Caroline can experience intensely:

'I thought of him [Francis Bacon] as a brilliant painter... but I, was also eh, I also often found him disgusting, what he eh.. painted.. that also has something to do with a eh.. a sort of eh.. sensuality that is linked to an abuse of.. power and cruelty and eh.. [...] I could never be around that [art]. I would, I would make myself sick..'

In Caroline's case, it is not that she gets angry because she does not understand the art. On the contrary, she can really understand and value Bacon as an artist, but she cannot be around his art, because his values do not correspond to hers. Like Silvia and Brown (2007) describe, Caroline cannot appreciate the art because she thinks of it as intentionally goal incongruent.

4.6.2 Aesthetic preferences: escapism

The second topic that will be discussed under the theme of aesthetic preferences is escapism. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the escapist function of art is connected to its compelling character. Thus, a person that looks for escapism in art wants to be overwhelmed by it, seeks comfort or recreation in it, or wants it to stimulate fantasies about a different world (Tuan, 2000; Roose, 2008). It is notable that eleven out of the thirteen participants have indicated that they appreciate the escapist function of art in a certain way. For example, Yara and Paul point out that art can make them relax, and that it makes them forget about day-to-day worries. Yara says:

'When I attend to art it is simply my great passion, so I escape civilisation, I'm relaxed, it's very.. pleasant to me..'

In addition, Yara indicates that she likes to be overwhelmed by art. Likewise, David

indicates that he is also constantly overwhelmed by all kinds of artistic impressions, however he argues that that fact does not contribute to relaxation at all. In contrast, David says that his brain always stays active when he attends to art, and thus he cannot see it as an escape from every day life. Pieter, Marijke and Paul agree partly with David, however they think there are two sides of it; that art can both be part of daily life as well as an escape from it. Pieter argues that looking for escapism in art is something that can be related to the commotion that prevails in the modern world:

'[...] perhaps it really is the, the.. contemporary era he; commotion everywhere in the world, and misery, and each other- we keep battering each other's brains, we steal each others land and so on.. there's climate change, and what will- what will happen..? Art. Balm for the soul.'

Here, Pieter argues that it is something of this point in time that people want to escape from reality. On the other hand, Barbara and Tom contend that art is a reality in itself. Barbara says:

'[Art is] a sort of.. gateway to another dimension [...] that sounds like, like it escapes reality.. but you could also say.. that's actually the true reality or something, right?'

Roos and Caroline share the idea that art can carry a person into another dimension. Hence, Roos argues that it causes you to get your head clear, and that it can be really inspiring to be in that other world. Similarly, Caroline contends that especially with abstract art, this other world can give you room to think:

'[...] that abstract aspect.. provides dimension ehm.. a sort of eh space to ehm.. because it's not a presentation of something, and then you can, if you observe it with great concentration.. very intensely, then you can ehm.. a sort of experience.. that's not- because it's not a scenery or something figurative- then it's.. it appeals to a different part of your.. your 'being' so to speak.'

Again, Caroline speaks about an experience, comparable to flow, that one can get from attending to art with high concentration. Therefore, the escapist function that art can have for people, can contribute to the achievement of being in a state of flow Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Additionally, Caroline's view can be related to the study by Halle (1992), who contends that people like to look at abstract art because it allows them to attend to it creatively and let their imagination stray. This is something that Caroline also emphasises; because she repeats several times that the abstract aspect

(no presentation, no scenery, not figurative) provides a new dimension that appeals to a different (creative) part of her imagination.

4.6.3 Aesthetic preferences: familiarity

As mentioned in the theory, people like it if they can connect the things they see to elements from their lives (Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson, 1995; Hekkert & Van Wieringen, 1996; Park, 1993). Frank indicates that this is one of the two reasons why he loves art:

'[...] I can be moved by artworks because of my knowledge, and I can be moved by artworks because I eh, because I can find something in it.. that refers to me..'

Similar to Frank, Yara, Tom and Paul indicate that they really like the memories that familiar artworks can evoke; it provides a feeling of nostalgia. Moreover, Paul, Tom and Frank indicate that some artworks are like old friends that they meet again after a long time. In essence, familiarity is linked to repetition; if someone has encountered something repeatedly, it will become familiar, and he or she can begin to appreciate it more. Nevertheless, Frank adds that it takes time to appreciate something new:

'[...] actually you should go back a couple of times, to a particular art, return to that artwork or to that artist.. but that's actually the same with modern music.. ehm..., eh that's something, that you should be willing to learn about.. eh and then.. listen to it again, and again, and again.. and then it can become.. valuable to you..'

Frank's view can again be explained by means of the appraisal model by Silvia (2005); because by repeatedly listening to an unfamiliar piece of music, or observing an unfamiliar work of art, one pushes his or her boundaries and can therefore gradually improve one's coping-potential. However, it can also be the other way around; when something becomes too familiar, there is no challenge to obtain from it, and it can become boring. Many of the participants describe this phenomenon as a point where the art or artist can no longer surprise them. This is something that Tom experiences with the artist Kazimir Malevich:

'Well it's something that I've experienced strongly with Malevich the past year.. [...] after that [retrospect of Malevich at the Stedelijk Museum] I felt

very strongly that I've seen enough of Malevich for the rest of my life.. I can place it historically.. but aesthetically and emotionally it does not do anything for me anymore.'

Here, Tom indicates that he cannot be challenged by the art of Malevich anymore, because he knows it too well. Hence, the relation between his skills and the challenge offered by Malevich' work does not match anymore; and therefore the challenge has become too easy, which has caused Tom to loose interest (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990).

4.6.4 Aesthetic preferences: innovativeness

The aesthetic factor of innovativeness can be perceived as an extension of familiarity, because when certain art becomes too familiar or even boring, one starts to look for new (innovative) challenges. Roose (2008) describes preferences of innovativeness as a wish for intellectual challenge and experiment. On the one hand, many of the participants indicate that they like to be intellectually challenged, and that they think of themselves as open minded people; open to encounter new things. On the other hand however, most of them say that they find it often difficult to understand the more complex, innovative art, and that they tend to need some kind of explanation (guidance) with it, to be able to appreciate it, like Chris:

'I also think that it's important eh, that there's a certain underlying [meaning] ehm.. there's of course a lot of conceptual art eh, eh yeah, with that you almost need it [an explanation].. I, I always think that it's important that it can appeal to you in some way.. that can also be through ugliness or through a combination of eh.. whatever..'

Most of the participants agree with Chris; they point out to be open minded towards conceptual art, and they say that they are able to appreciate it, but therefore the art has to have some kind of contextual meaning that can appeal to them. This conception can be related to Hekkert and Wieringen (1996), who argue that experienced viewers attempt to understand the more complex art by trying to grasp the underlying, contextual meaning. In addition, it can be related to the study by Russel (2003), who examined the value of titles and descriptions of artworks, however this will be discussed in the next paragraph.

Moreover, many of the participants frequently linked innovative or conceptual art to art that is ugly, filthy, or obscene, and they indicate that they find it more difficult to appreciate art like that. This view refers to the study by Hekkert & Leder (2008), who found that it is difficult for people to process this kind of ambiguous information, and therefore sooner appreciate art that is symmetrical and harmonious. Therefore, explanations of the artworks or the artist's idea could help to make the information less ambiguous.

Overall, it can be noted that the participants are experienced, open minded viewers, who like to be intellectually and emotionally challenged by art. However, though they might be able to improve their skills faster than inexperienced viewers, it still takes one challenge at a time, so that they can gradually shift in flow (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990).

4.6.5 Aesthetic preferences: knowledge and information

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, it is often necessary to have certain knowledge about an artwork or about the artist's intentions, in order to understand it. Since most of the participants already possess a great amount of knowledge about different types of art due to their extensive experience with it, they already understand much more than the average visitor. Likewise, most participants indicate that their knowledge has made them able to look differently at art, and that they can discover and appreciate more of its features, because of it. Thus, as mentioned in the literature overview, people who need little information to understand art are sooner able to appreciate it (Garner, 2014). Accordingly, several of the participants with a lot of knowledge about art, even say that they do not always need to consult their own knowledge about the art, in order to appreciate it. Hence, they indicate that they can also attend to an artwork truly emotionally, and still appreciate it. This is a view that is shared by Yara, and also by Frank:

'[...] actually, I think.. that you should be able to look at an artwork and even appreciate it, when you're completely wrong [about its meaning].'

Frank's view is also comparable to the view of Bell (1914) who argues that the representational element is always irrelevant to its value, and that people should appraise art by means of its form.

Although Frank, Yara, and the other participants point out that they do not necessarily *need* to know everything about the artwork or artist, in order to appreciate it, most of them do declare that they are indeed interested in the underlying story. This is in line with the study by Russel (2003), which shows that descriptions about the meaning and relevance of the artwork, do contribute to its appreciation. On the other hand, Leder, Carbon and Ripsas (2006) demonstrated that often with abstract art, elaborate titles do increase viewers' understanding, but that they will not necessarily appreciate the art more. Chris indicates that this view relates to his, when he encounters art that he does not really appreciate. Therefore, he says that he can still be intrigued by it, or interested in the idea behind it, but that the information mostly will not make him more appreciative about it.

Thus, the participants indicate that they can appreciate additional information that can complement their existing knowledge about certain art, however this does not account for all information. Generally, all participants indicate that they mostly read the introductory texts or the small texts to get an impression of the collection or exhibition, but especially to grasp its historical or contextual meaning (Hekkert & Wieringen, 1996). For instance, Yara, Anna, Barbara and Lea point out that they often read the small texts next to the artworks to find out when they were made. On the other hand, some say that those texts can sometimes also cause distraction. However, most participants agree that information from audio tours is even more distracting, like Barbara:

'No I don't take audio tours, I don't like that.. that eh.. interferes too much with my own.. thoughts.'

Although many of the participants (almost) never take audio tours because of similar reasons, most of them say that they have to admit that they are starting to appreciate audio tours more and more, because they can be very clarifying according to them. In addition, they argue that the information that is given in the audio tours is not as 'superficial' as it used to be, but that it has become more profound and that they can actually learn from it. However, most participants indicate that they do not like to be consciously influenced while watching (Temme, 1993), and that they therefore more often read information *after* their visits.

4.6.6 Aesthetic preferences: normativity

The sixth topic of aesthetic preferences covers normativity. Here, the importance of the artist's message, which is often ideological, is discussed. Almost all participants contend that social criticism and art are always intertwined. Several participants do not really mind if the artist wants to send an ideological message or not, and some of them even say that it can be risky. However most of the participants argue that it is the job of artists to wake up society and to let their art function as a mirror to the people. In addition, according to Pieter these critical expressions bring about new movements:

'[...] because of that, things originate that just, at once.. are in total conflict with what you know. And that can turn out to be fantastic art, so that's just necessary.. yeah.. otherwise you wouldn't have that. [...] I think that there should always be room for that.. like censorship and all that.. eh oh.. tricky..'

Thus, Pieter argues that social criticism and creative expression contribute to the diverse and innovative aspect of art. In addition, he contends, as well as Roos, Paul Anna and Yara, that society can learn from the ideological views of artists. Yara adds that protest art makes her happy, and can give her a feeling of relieve, because she finds it so important that artists teach society about things like freedom and equality. Therefore, normativity in art is valued, because it contributes to factors like learning, innovativeness, and feelings of joy.

4.7 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

The last theme that will be discussed in this results chapter is *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (MBVB)*. Naturally, this is the art museum that the participants are loyal to, and thus, the subject of the case study. Since this theme has already been mentioned many times throughout the other themes and topics, it will be separately discussed rather briefly. Therefore, this theme consists of only two topics, namely: *MBVB-Rotterdam* and *MBVB-opinions*.

4.7.1 *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: Rotterdam*

The first topic within this theme is about the city of Rotterdam, and the relationship that MBVB has with the city. Because MBVB is in Rotterdam and because most participants are from Rotterdam as well, or have a strong relationship with the city, it is interesting to see what they think is the value of MBVB for the city of Rotterdam. This is important because it can indirectly offer insights into the strength of MBVB on itself.

In general, statements like MBVB is ...: *'an art temple'* (Pieter); *'a kind of Rotterdam on itself'* (David); *'a metropolis in a metropolis'* (Anna); *'our Louvre along the Maas'* (Yara), clearly mark the participants' love for the museum, and it shows that many participants link their appreciation for the museum to their love for Rotterdam. Likewise, Barbara argues that MBVB is like a peaceful oasis in a busy city, and that it strengthens the self-esteem of Rotterdam. Moreover, Marijke contends that the (international) attraction of the museum radiates on the inhabitants of the city. She is not the only participant who thinks that MBVB is important for the city's international image; Paul, for example contends that MBVB is a museum of world class. On the other hand, Paul, Roos, Chris and Yara argue that MBVB does not only contribute to the cultural development of Rotterdam, but that the collection of MBVB and the exhibitions that they organise really contribute something significant to the arts and culture sector as a whole, and that this can stimulate everybody in their cultural development. Finally, all participants agree that MBVB is particularly strong due to its rich and divers art collection.

4.7.2 *Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: opinions*

Since the interviews were conducted with loyal visitors of MBVB, the opinions about the museum were generally positive. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, all participants agree on the fact that MBVB is so great because of its strong and divers collection. The participants find MBVB to be dynamic, inspiring, and always innovative. However, Roos argues that these factors of diversity can sometimes contribute to the conception that the museum is rather fragmented. Therefore, she would like to see more exhibitions that show an overview of the work of one artist.

In general, there are not many negative opinions about MBVB, though most participants regret that the museum is not as renowned as it should be. However, Marijke and Tom think that this could easily change, if the museum would make some effort to strengthen its image and reputation. Here, Marijke stresses the importance of a strong(er) marketing plan. In addition, Yara suggests that MBVB should appoint a special board of young adults in order to get rid of its somewhat stuffy image. Nonetheless, the opinions regarding these measurements are divided; many participants do not think of MBVB's image as stuffy. They rather think of MBVB as a very accessible museum that is not elitist, despite its rich collection of highbrow art.

However, another aspect of the accessibility is something that a few participants do not like about the museum. Some say that they regret that they can only visit the museum in the weekends, because the opening hours during the week make it impossible to visit then. Due to the fact that MBVB opens at 11:00 o'clock, and closes at 17:00 hours, it is very difficult for people with a job to pay a visit to the museum before or after work. Therefore, several participants have suggested that MBVB should set up opening hours in the evenings, for instance once a week, or once a month at least.

Furthermore, despite the fact that most of the participants argue that MBVB could attract much more visitors than they do now, most of them say that they actually love the fact that it is not so crowded at MBVB. They argue that the peace and quiet of the museum contributes to its serene atmosphere and consequently, the participants' ability to concentrate fully on the artworks.

CONCLUSION

museum van
boijmans beuningen

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Chapter 5: Conclusion

The reason that this research has been conducted is to gain insight into the characteristics, motives and preferences of the most loyal, and therefore most valuable, audience of art museums. The relevance of the study is rather obvious: due to the changed economic climate, where entrepreneurship is essential, the market becomes much more competitive and the focus lies on the attraction of new audiences and more money. Although this makes sense, the focus on museums' loyal visitors should not be lost, because they are way too valuable for the museums. One reason for this can be found in the fact that the loyal museum audience very much emphasises the important role that museums and their art play in their lives. From this, the museum can derive its reason for existence. Another reason why the loyal museum audience is valuable is because they are critical towards the museum (here: MBVB), and therefore the museum can use their advice for evaluation and improvements.

Although much research about the general characteristics of loyal museum visitors has already been conducted, this research has zoomed in into a specific part of this group of people. Hence, by examining their motives and aesthetic preferences, it was tried to find out who these people are, what drives them to the museum, and what it is about museums and art that makes them loyal visitors. Therefore, the research question that was leading for this thesis, and that will be answered in this chapter, is: *“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”*

5.1 Cultural participation

First of all, previous literature has shown that most people who appreciate highbrow art have had experiences with that type of art in their youth through cultural reproduction or education (Bourdieu, 1984; Kraaykamp, 2009; Nagel, 2004). The participants of the case study confirmed the role of education, but not everyone has actively experienced cultural reproduction during their upbringing. This contradicts the vision of Bourdieu (1984), but it corresponds to the conception by Van Eijck

(1999) that parental influence is not necessary in order to be culturally active. However, although this research confirms the fact that the group of loyal museum visitors is much more heterogeneous than it was (thought to be) before, the results of this study show that their motivations and aesthetic preferences are actually quite homogeneous; they all value more or less the same things in art and museums.

5.2 A quest for knowledge

As mentioned before, throughout all of the interviews the participants kept stressing the fact that they want to be challenged by art. This can be connected to the theory of flow by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), which describes the phenomenon that experienced beholders are always looking for challenges in art that can improve their skills (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995; Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Due to this, it becomes clear how it is possible that all of the loyal visitors of MBVB have indicated that their love for visual art has constantly extended. Because all different types of art become gradually more familiar to them, they keep on looking for new elements that can surprise them. These notions indicate that the intellectual, cognitive aspect of the aesthetic experience is very important to the loyal visitors of MBVB. However, the emotional aspect also plays a big role in their appraisal and appreciation.

5.3 Being 'moved'

The results of this study have shown that for the loyal visitors of MBVB, the aesthetic experience is not complete without the emotional aspect of it (Park, 1993; Reber, Schwarz & Winkielman, 2004). All participants have indicated that they very much value the emotional function that art has, because they find it important that they can be emotionally affected by art as well. In general, the participants indicate to be emotionally aroused by art by two things.

The first thing about art that can move people is related to *familiarity*. Thus, the beholders can be aroused emotionally by art because it refers to something within themselves or their lives. This is in line with much of the previous research discussed earlier (Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995; Garner, 2014; Park, 1993). The

participants have indicated that the connection that they can have with an artwork can be the result of things like memories, feelings of nostalgia, feelings of trust, or familiarity that are simultaneously being evoked. Thus, by observing art they can become sad, or angry, or (mostly) happy because they relate the things they see to things they know.

The other thing that causes people to be moved has to do with *innovation*. The feeling of surprise that the participants indicate to get from certain artworks gives them a feeling of joy (Konečni, 2005). For instance, they can be astonished by the creativity of the artist, which can very much inspire them. The reason that the experienced audience still finds it important to be surprised by art, is that this keeps them entertained, and interested. In addition, it refers again to the fact that they like to be challenged and elevated in their knowledge, but also in their emotions.

Throughout most of the interviews, it became clear that the participants also *need* the innovation and surprise element of art in order to stay inspired. Thus, the outcomes of the case study have shown that inspiration by art is much more important than the inspiration to create one's own art that Csikszentmihalyi and Hermanson (1995) contended, but that it is about inspiration to clear one's mind, to start thinking about the important things in life, and to be able to reflect on life as well.

5.4 The social function of art

One last essential finding that this study shows is the importance of the social function of museum visits, and of art. The participants have indicated that although they often like to attend to art alone, and encounter the aesthetic experience by themselves, they also like to share their experiences (afterwards), or be even guided by others to be able to get more out of the experience than they could get on their own (Coffee, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). Moreover, the outcomes of the case study show that the loyal visitors do not take their knowledge and experiences for granted and that they find it very important that other, inexperienced people can have the same experiences with art as they have. This has also to do with the participants' notion about the important role that art plays in people's own personal development, and therefore they argue that it is the job of every school to culturally educate their pupils.

5.5 No world without art

A very important conclusion of this case study is that art is not just something that the loyal visitors like because it relates to familiar things in their lives, but rather that art proves to be of great importance for them. They have indicated that they cannot imagine a world without art. In other words: they really *need* art in order to live their lives. This is not some kind of grandiloquent conception, and it is not about an elitist view of elitist people. Instead, it is about the role that art plays in people's daily lives and about the notion that art is in constant conversation with the life that one leads.

For years and years, artists have depicted images of 'reality' in their artworks. Some of these realities are brutal, and can evoke feelings of sadness, anger, or disgust; while other realities are soft, which can make people happy or joyous. The thing that is important about these depicted realities, which is repeatedly emphasised by the loyal visitors of the MBVB, is that they are needed while going through life. Hence, these realities communicate the different functions that art has. For instance, art can offer comfort when one is sad; art can help one mourn; art can confirm someone's feelings; or art can show that people from different places in the world think similarly about certain things or aspects of life. In addition, the loyal visitors indicate that art can imply that there is perhaps a different reality, which is metaphysical; that there is more to life than we think there is.

These are all aspects that artists have brought forward for centuries, and they have helped people to come where they are now. The case study demonstrates that the loyal visitors really value these aspects of art, because it makes them able to reflect on themselves, their actions, and their lives. Therefore, the loyal audience of the MBVB has demonstrated that they really value art, because it helps and guides them in their personal development.

5.6 Everything is intertwined

Overall, it has become clear that there are many different motives and aesthetic preferences that the loyal audience of MBVB has for attending art. However, although it seems much, the motives and preferences are actually all intertwined. In

the last part of the conclusion, by addressing all the factors for one last time, the research question will be answered:

“Which motives and aesthetic preferences characterise the loyal visitors of art museums, and how does Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relate to these motives and aesthetic preferences of its most loyal audience?”

As mentioned above, to answer this question, one should not attend to the motives and aesthetic preferences separately, but rather look for all of the connections between them. It appears that the aesthetic preferences of the loyal visitors of art museums actually determine their motives, and vice versa. Therefore, everything is intertwined: they want to be intellectually challenged, but also emotionally; they want art to evoke feelings of joy, but they do not avoid art that can evoke feelings of disgust; they want to find familiar elements in art, but they also want art to be innovative and surprising; they want to attend to art alone, but they also need others to reflect on their experiences; they want to make use of their knowledge on art, but they also want to switch off their knowledge at some points. All these contradictions actually complement each other; the only thing that the loyal visitor really needs (and has), is the ability to switch between all of them.

5.7 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

After noting the preference for challenge or diversity on the one hand, and the preference for serenity and trust on the other hand, it becomes clear why Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen relates so well to the wishes of its most loyal audience: it is all about the switch between familiarity and surprise. The participants have indicated that they have a strong relationship with the museum, because of their familiarity with it: they like the serenity of the museum; the atmosphere makes them happy; they feel at ease; they feel at home. In addition, they indicate that it feels like meeting old friends, when they encounter particular artworks within the museum’s collection. But, despite this familiarity, MBVB is able to stay refreshing: through the richness and diversity of its permanent collection, and its attractive special exhibitions, the museum keeps arousing even its most loyal visitors. Therefore, the museum adapts itself constantly to the needs of its audience, without losing its integrity; and that ability to switch between familiarity and surprise is what the loyal visitors want, and

that MBVB can offer them.

5.8 What can museums learn from this?

This research has provided thorough knowledge about the motives and aesthetic preferences of the loyal museum audience, which can be used in many ways by museums and other researchers. For instance, in further research the essence of this study could be put in quantitative research, so that the findings can be expanded and that it is possible to generalise them, and apply them universally.

In addition, museums (not only MBVB) can use these findings to focus on the future; on the one hand, they can think about how to hold onto their loyal visitors in the best way, and how to keep them satisfied and interested; on the other hand, they can use the findings to attract new visitors, by developing plans that centralise some of the essential functions of art that appeared from this study, like inspiration, learning, and the ability to escape the hectic of everyday life. These possibilities really connect to the relevance of this study as well, while it is important to attract new visitors nowadays, but at the same time the loyal visitors should not be forgotten, because when they start to feel neglected, they can be lost to the museum.

Moreover, MBVB does not have to separate its focus on loyal visitors and occasional or new visitors; it could also combine them. For instance, MBVB could connect loyal visitors to the latter, and let them experience the museum together. Hence, the loyal visitors could function as advocates of the museum. In this sort of 'buddy system', the new visitors could learn to look at art in a different way, which could inspire them, and the loyal visitors could share their knowledge and perhaps also come to see new things. Although this perhaps does not work for every visitor, it could be refreshing for visitors that want to get more out of the museum experience, and come in contact with other art lovers.

5.9 Limitations

As mentioned before, the main limitation of this research is that the findings cannot be generalised because the group of participants is too small. However, the findings of this study can function as a basis for further (quantitative) research. Hence, MBVB

can focus on the outcomes that it finds most important, and can use them to find out more about the rest of its audience. Moreover, other museums could also start with a small qualitative study like this one, and use the findings to put in larger (quantitative) research as well, like surveys for example.

Another limitation of this research is that there was only one researcher who conducted the study, which can affect the internal validity of the research. For example, the interpretive validity could be affected (Maxwell, 1992), because only one person interviewed the participants and interpreted their conceptions. If more than one person would conduct a follow-up study, they would be able to verify each other's actions and compare and discuss their interpretations.

A third limitation of this research is that the interviews were not transcribed directly after they were conducted. The reason for this is that several interviews were planned on one day, with only half an hour between each interview, so there was no time to transcribe between the interviews. However, in further research it is better to transcribe each interview after it has been conducted because while transcribing, one could notice areas that are incomplete and that should be discussed more in the following interviews for example (Mears, 2012).

5.10 Further research

Within the findings of this study, several interesting aspects have been discovered that are interesting to examine in further research. One thing that was already mentioned in the results chapter, is the fact that although most participants pointed out that they had visited museums with school, only the relatively younger half of the participants (between age 22 and 51) indicated that their parents also used to take them to museums. For instance, it could be examined if there is indeed a difference in cultural reproduction between various generations, and where this difference comes from. In addition, some of the participants that have children said that they (used to) take their own children to museums, because they find it important for their cultural development. However, the people that indicated this were not necessarily the people that were taken to museums by their own parents. On the contrary, most participants that indicated this had become acquainted with art mainly through school. Therefore, this could mean that it is becoming increasingly popular to let your children encounter

psychical experiences with art at a young age, and this could also be examined.

Moreover, the results of this study show that for all of the participants their love for visual art has changed over the years, in the sense that they have become to love more and more types and aspects of it. Here, many of the participants indicated that they gradually have started to like modern art better than traditional art. However, they say that they still value the traditional art as well and that it is even necessary to do this, in order to be able to appreciate modern art. While they did not elaborate on the role that traditional art plays in their appreciation for modern art, it can be further examined what this role is and how traditional art can help to appreciate modern art. This can be very interesting for educational research for example, because it could give insight into how to use traditional art to teach people about modern art.

Another finding of this study that could be the basis of further research is the importance of the normative function of art. The participants have indicated that through art they can learn things about themselves, about others, and about society as a whole. Moreover, they have pointed out that the normative, social function of art is also related to its innovativeness, because through its provocations it can cause a shock within society that can in turn elevate the people. Therefore, it could be examined which kinds of normative art have the ability to teach and elevate people, and how this art can be used to achieve this.

All things considered, it is interesting to find out if there are more ways to communicate with the museum audience, because therefore museums can get closer to their visitors, which will stimulate trust, familiarity, and hopefully loyalty.



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APPENDIX

museum van
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MAU
TAVUS

7. Appendix

7.1 Interview guide (Dutch)

Introductie:

Wilt u zich even voorstellen (naam, leeftijd, woonplaats) en ook kort vertellen wat voor een opleiding u heeft gedaan, wat voor werk u doet?

Wanneer bent u voor de eerste keer naar het Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (MBVB) gegaan?

1. Culturele participatie

1.1 Hoe zag uw opvoeding eruit op cultureel vlak? (school, ouders, eigen initiatief)

1.2 Van wat voor een soort kunst houdt u? Welke rol speelt kunst in uw leven?

1.3 Is uw liefde voor kunst veranderd door de jaren heen? Hoe kwam dat?

1.4 Hoe vaak per jaar bezoekt u gemiddeld musea / het MBVB in het bijzonder?

1.5 Heeft u een Museumjaarkaart?

1.6. Steunt u het MBVB of andere musea financieel? Zo ja, waarom?

1.7 Op wat voor manier blijft u op de hoogte van evenementen/ tentoonstellingen in het MBVB en andere musea?

1.8 Bent u lid van de nieuwsbrief van het MBVB of volgt u het museum op een andere manier, bijvoorbeeld via Facebook, Twitter, o.i.d.?

2. Intrinsieke motivatie

2.1 Wat is uw eerste motivatie om naar kunst te gaan kijken? (antwoorden leiden of naar intrinsieke motivatie bv. leren, inspiratie, persoonlijke ontwikkeling, of extrinsieke motivatie bv. entertainment, mee kunnen praten)

2.2 Gaat u meestal gericht naar een tentoonstelling in het MBVB of gaat u er zomaar naartoe om rond te kijken?

2.3 Zijn er specifieke kunstwerken/kunstenaars waarvoor u speciaal naar het MBVB gaat?

2.4 Wat zegt kunst over uw identiteit / zegt de kunst waar u van houdt ook iets over u?

2.5 Heeft u kunst nodig in uw leven? Zo ja, wat voegt dat specifiek toe?

2.6 In hoeverre vindt u *herkenbaarheid* belangrijk in een kunstwerk?

2.7 In hoeverre vindt u *innovatie* of *experiment* belangrijk in een kunstwerk?

2.8 In hoeverre kan een museum of een kunstwerk u persoonlijk inspireren?

3. Extrinsieke motivatie

3.1 Hoe komt u meestal op het idee om een bepaald museum/bepaalde tentoonstelling te bezoeken? (zelf, aanbeveling vriend, recensie, media)

3.2 Leest u recensies? Zo ja, in hoeverre bepalen die of u een museum bezoekt of niet?

3.3 Gaat u graag alleen of met anderen naar een museum? (Met wie dan, etc.)

3.4 In hoeverre ziet u museumbezoek als een sociale activiteit?

3.5 Gaat u naar openingen van tentoonstellingen? En is dat voor de kunst of het sociale contact? (Gaat u dan nog voor een tweede keer naar de tentoonstelling?)

3.6 In hoeverre vindt u het belangrijk dat een museum aantrekkelijk is voor een breed publiek? (ook als het niet aansluit bij de visie van het museum - blockbuster)

4. Esthetische voorkeuren

4.1 Hoe loopt u door een museum / hoe kijkt u naar de kunst?

4.2 Kijkt u alleen naar wat u ziet, of wilt u ook de achtergrond weten? (info lezen, audiotours).

4.3 Bereidt u zich voor op een museumbezoek? (Artikelen lezen, Wikipedia, etc.)

4.4 Is het voor u belangrijk wat het idee van de kunstenaar was/wat voor een persoon de kunstenaar is?

4.5 Wat gebeurt er als u naar een kunstwerk kijkt dat u heel erg waardeert?

Wat maakt dit in u los?

- 4.6 Wat voor emoties kan kunst bij u oproepen?
- 4.7 Wanneer u een kunstwerk niet mooi vindt, kunt u het dan alsnog waarderen? Hoe? (Kunt u objectief naar kunst kijken?)
- 4.8 Wanneer kijkt u neer op kunst? Maakt het u wel eens boos?
- 4.9 Vindt u dat kunst hoort bij het dagelijks leven, of is het meer een manier om te ontsnappen aan het dagelijks leven?
- 4.10 Vindt u dat een kunstenaar via zijn kunst kritisch moet/mag zijn op de maatschappij?

5. Het Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

- 5.1 Wat is het dat u aantrekt in/interessant vindt aan het MBVB?
- 5.2 Bezoekt u het MBVB vooral voor de vaste collectie of voor de tentoonstellingen?
- 5.3 Welk deel van de collectie van het museum spreekt u het meest aan en waarom?
- 5.4 Sluit het MBVB voldoende aan op uw behoeften/ wat u wilt zien?
- 5.5 Vindt u dat het museum de tentoonstellingen goed inricht? En goed van informatie voorziet? Of heeft u suggesties/zou u dingen anders willen?
- 5.6 Wat is volgens u de reden, dat u blijft terugkeren naar het MBVB?

7.2 Themes & topics

- Cultural participation **CP**

- Past **CP-P**
- Change over time **CP-C**
- Now **CP-N**

- Mode of visit **MV**

- Alone **MV-A**
- Together **MV-T**
- Frequency **MV-F**

- Intrinsic motivation **IM**

- Various ('My primary motive to go see art is...') **IM-V**
- Inspiration ('I get inspiration from art') **IM-I**
- Art(ist) specific ('I visit for a specific artist/art movement/permanent collection /exhibition) **IM-S**
- General ('I follow the newsletter'/ 'I own a Museum Card') **IM-G**
- Personality ('The art that I like says something about who I am') **IM-P**

- Extrinsic motivation **EM**

- Network ('My personal network alerts me about cultural events'/ 'I visit openings for social contact') **EM-N**
- Media ('The media –reviews, posters, TV– alerts me about cultural events') **EM-M**
- Inexperienced others ('I think museums should be available for a broad audience') **EM-O**

- Aesthetic preferences **AP**

- Emotional ('Art moves me, it makes me happy/angry/etc.') **AP-EM**
- Escapism ('Art belongs to daily life'/ 'Art is an escape from daily life'/ 'Art makes me relaxed') **AP-ES**

- Familiarity ('I like to see art of my favourite artists' / 'After a while, some art can start to bore me') **AP-F**
- Innovative ('I am open to see new things') **AP-I**
- Knowledge and information ('I do/ do not need extra information with art') **AP-KI**
- Normative ('An artist should/should not be critical on society through his work') **AP-N**

- Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen **MBVB**

- Relationship Rotterdam and MBVB **MBVB-RM**
- Opinion on MBVB **MBVB-O**