

Museums, Millennials and Gen Z

Towards a participatory and engaging museum for young adults

Alexis Medina Trejo

656228

Koen van Eijck

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

CC4008 Master Thesis

14th June of 2023

Museums, Millennials and Gen Z: Towards a participatory and engaging museum for young adults

ABSTRACT

To know the expectations and motivations behind the cultural consumption of Millennials and Gen Z, I compared the opinions and experiences regarding museum visits between young visitors and museum professionals of the Kunstinstituut Melly and Boijmans van Beuningen. Based on theoretical concepts such as cultural capital, cultural consumption of young audiences and the New Museology, I built two interview guidelines that, through qualitative methods, allowed me to compare the answers between the participants and analyze them under the same theoretical concepts. Some of the results this research indicate are the importance of engaging activities in museums, approaching social issues through curated efforts and museums becoming places of social interactions outside of purely cultural topics.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural participation, participatory museum, engaging exhibitions, new museology, youth cultural consumption, diverse audiences, cultural access.*

Table of contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	6
Chapter 2. Theoretical framework	8
2.1. Defining concepts.....	8
2.2. Cultural Capital and Omnivorization	8
2.2.1 Cultural capital	8
2.2.2 Cultural omnivores	10
2.3. Cultural Participation of Millennial-Z.....	12
2.3.1 Who are the Millennial-Z?.....	12
2.3.2 What do Millennial-Z want regarding cultural offers?	13
2.3.3 The importance of technology and (social) media for Millennial-Z.....	15
2.3.4 Why are not all Millennial-Z going to museums?	17
2.4. The New Museology	19
2.4.1 What does The New Museology represent?.....	19
2.4.2 The New Museology and its Use for Millennial-Z.....	21
2.4.3 The participatory museum as Part of the New Museology and the Use of Technology ..	22
Chapter 3. Methodology	25
3.1 Research question.....	25
3.2. Qualitative methods.....	25
3.3 Sampling.....	28
3.4 Operationalization.....	29
Chapter 4. Analysis	34
4.1 The cultural offer in Rotterdam.....	34
4.2 Section 1. Cultural capital.....	35
4.2.1 The omnivorous cultural consumption of Millennial-Z.....	35
4.2.2 Habits of cultural consumption in young adults	36
4.2.3 Cultural Interests of Millennial-Z.....	38
4.2.4 What motivates Millennial-Z to visit museums?.....	42
4.2.5 Expectations of Millennial-Z towards museums	45
4.2.6 Is having prior knowledge needed to enjoy these museums	47
4.2.7 What makes a museum visit feel worthwhile?	49
4.3 Section 2. Inclusion and engagement of young adults	50

4.3.1 How do young audiences learn about new exhibitions and what the museums are doing to be more engaging?	50
4.3.2 Inclusion of Millennial-Z.....	55
4.3.3 What would be different if young people felt more included in museums?.....	62
4.4 Section 3. New Museology	63
4.4.1 The Role and Goals of Museums in Today's Society	64
4.4.2 What is Expected of Museum Staff.	66
4.4.3 Young people and engaging activities	69
4.4.4 Electronic and digital engaging tools.....	73
Chapter 5. Conclusions	76
Chapter 6. Discussion	83
References.....	86
Appendix.....	91
Appendix A1: Interviews topic list and guideline.....	91
Appendix A2: Overview of participants.....	99

Aknowledgements

I want to thank all the participants that gave a bit of their time since their voices and opinions were always full of enthusiasm towards culture. I want to thank Koen van Eijck for always being kind and supportive no matter what. I am also thankful for all the friends I made during this process.

Most importantly, I want to thank my mom, dad, and sister since all their love and support made this possible, and without them, I would not have been able to enjoy my time and process. Finally, I want to thank my partner, who was always lovingly supporting me and motivated me to continue improving myself.

I am infinitely thankful to all the people above.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to better understand the relationship that members of the Millennial and Gen Z generations have with museums as cultural institutions. With this research, I want to know how Millennials see museums and what attracts them to pay a visit or participate in the activities found in museums. I also want to know how museums interact with young audiences, what are they trying to do for them, and how both groups can work together toward a participative museum community. This research wants to be helpful to other students that are interested in the cultural consumption habits and interests of their peers, as well as to museum professionals who want to know how their efforts can be more effective when trying to approach the young adult demographic.

According to a substantial part of the available literature, Millennials and Gen Z, especially those without a lot of cultural knowledge, are not properly represented in what museums do. This research aims to discover whether that is the case and how museums may become a place where all types of young people can feel represented and invited to learn more.

This research is unique in that it wants to combine the experiences of young people and museum professionals on the same topics, mainly inclusion, participation, interests, and technology through interviewing both parties. Thanks to this approach, I can answer the research question of How museums can become more engaging and participative for young adults? and see to what extent the answers of both sides are similar or different. I will also answer the following sub-questions: What do Millennials-Z expect of museums? What are the intentions of art museums regarding this audience? How does The New Museology help in improving the experiences of young visitors? Since it will tell ideas about how both groups can work together towards a better museum experience.

This research is motivated by my curiosity regarding the representation of young adults with different cultural and educational backgrounds in museums. What are their cultural consumption habits and how could museums be the place where Millennials and Gen Z get together to learn, spend their time with friends, and have fun while supporting cultural institutions.

Through the use of a qualitative methodology, I will be able to answer such questions and learn how the opinions and personal perspectives of the participants affect what they want from cultural institutions, as well as understand how museums try to approach and listen to young adults. This methodology was chosen since, it allows me to approach different perspectives of the same topics through different questions. It also allows me to see in more detail how the participants felt when visiting a cultural institution. For this research, the museums Boijmans van Beuningen and Kunstinstituut Melly were chosen as case studies since they are prominent cultural institutions in Rotterdam, both have educational departments and they agreed to participate in this project.

This research is organized into an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. After the introduction, I will explain the three main guiding concepts of this research, these being cultural capital and cultural omnivorous consumption, the participation in culture of young adults, and the *New Museology*. The narrative of it is that I will first explain how what young people know affects their cultural interests as well as their cultural consumption patterns. Then I will describe the focus group of this research (young adults or Millennial-Z as it will be explained), their motivations to consume culture, their habits of consumption, and why they do (or do not visit) museums often. The last concept develops how museums can be more attractive, fun, and engaging for young adults and how some tools such as technology can be used for their objectives. In the end, a conclusion will summarize the findings and answer the main research question and sub-questions.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Defining concepts

The rapid pace of change in Western society has changed the responsibilities of museums. They have to be more mindful and diverse in their operation. To remain relevant, museums need to be flexible and adapt to the changes in society right now and in the future. To study the relationship between museums and Millennial-Z and how can new alternatives improve their association, this research focuses on 3 main concepts:

- Cultural Capital and Omnivorization: The purpose of these concepts is to understand how the traditional idea of cultural capital is embodied in Millennial-Z. And the how and why of their cultural consumption habits and motives.
- Cultural participation (of Millennial-Z): This concept is useful since it allows me to explain who the main focus of this research is, what they like and dislike regarding cultural alternatives, and their relationship with museums.
- The New Museology: Peter Vergo's proposal is used as a concept since it allows to comprise how museums can fulfill the expectations of Millennial-Z. Based on Vergo's idea, the 'old' museology can be understood as the judgments that defined what was valuable or significant enough to be collected, protected, and displayed. This judgment was rooted in a particular set of education, upbringing, and prejudices of the people in power (Vergo, 1989). So the use of the concept of The New Museology has the intention of explaining the opening of the museum practice for Millennial-Z.

2.2. Cultural Capital and Omnivorization

2.2.1 Cultural capital

The concept of cultural capital is important since it is a crucial determinant of people's cultural taste and consumption habits. It affects the experience people have when visiting a museum and how often they go. Finally, it is a decisive factor when trying to analyze how museums can be more engaging for Millennial-Z (term explained further in the research) since understanding their cultural capital would allow museum professionals to recognize and approach their taste and consumption habits effectively.

Defined in 1973 by Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, cultural capital can be described as the "familiarity with the culture of the dominant class and a mastery of the signs and emblems of distinction and taste" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 141). This can be inherited and accumulated for the individual's advantage and, over time, may grow the differences between classes generating inequality (Bourdieu, 1984). For Bourdieu, there are three forms in which cultural capital occurs. The embodied state can be explained as the form in which an individual incorporates certain types of cultural knowledge (usually those associated with the elites) and then assimilates it for their advantage and/or enjoyment. Acquiring it is seen as an investment that uses individual time and economic capital (this type of capital cannot be acquired second handed). The objectified state of cultural capital is the collections of books, paintings, sculptures, etc., that physically represent the acquisition of culture. Once an individual has this type of cultural capital, they could know how to use it for their own gain or through a proxy. The last form is the institutionalized state, it is the materialization or proof of knowledge supported by institutional prestige such as school diplomas. It can be used to determine the value of individual qualifications and turned into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Authors Lareau and Weininger (2003) add to the discussion that Bourdieu's idea is too ingrained in his reality and experiences from the 1960s in Paris and what it meant to be elegant, classy, and cultured by then. They say that we need to create a broader definition than the dominant interpretation of the concept. For the concept of cultural capital, they propose to examine the micro-interactions in which individuals use strategically their set of skills, knowledge, and multi-generational experience to engage with institutional evaluation processes to access places (typically monopolized) in which they can receive advantages and profit (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Their proposal is pertinent since it brings flexibility

to the original concept. Not only do they argue that cultural capital is a resource, but they also show that any skill, ability, talent, etc. that can be used as a resource to elevate one's prestige, fame, or situation can be considered cultural capital. Which skills or know-how work as socially valued cultural resources, is contingent on socio-historical contexts.

Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital was developed regarding the prestigious cultural representations of the time and how knowing them was useful for students (Bourdieu, 1986). Yet Lareau and Weininger show, by dissecting the same concept as discussed by different authors, how cultural capital is not all about the traditional highbrow knowledge, but any resource that can be used to further a person's goals. Depending on the social or economic system a person lives in, even matters such as language, confidence or skin color can work in favor (or against) a person. So what was considered necessary to thrive in French society during the '60s is not the same as the skills and expertise needed today (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). Today, cultural capital can be understood as whatever is useful for a person, not just highbrow expressions.

2.2.2 Cultural omnivores

Richard Peterson defined 'cultural omnivorization' as the tendency of highly educated people (usually, but not limited to, young adults from higher stratus in society) to enjoy not only the traditionally highbrow cultural expressions but also the more popular and massive cultural productions (Wel, et al., 2008). This means that cultural omnivores can understand different cultural expressions, from popular to elitist, and enjoy them equally. Some authors have argued that the rise of cultural omnivores is associated with the upward social movement of highly educated people from lower socio-economic classes (Van Eijck, 1999, 2000, in Van Wel et al., 2008). These omnivores do not want to restrict themselves to just one type of cultural expression and choose to enjoy them differently depending on their context and personal taste.

Peterson and Kern's (1996) work shows how there has been a clear shift from snobbishness to omnivorous consumption regarding cultural capital by people (particularly young) of

high social status. Their research shows that people from the upper-middle classes are also enjoying art expressions traditionally associated with lowbrow tastes. They propose that people consume more and more omnivorously as time passes, meaning being able to appreciate and criticize something for what it is; not liking everything but being open to appreciate it.

According to Peterson and Kern (1996), the changes in society that had an effect on what younger generations (like Millennial-Z) experienced are structural changes in Western society that raised the standard of living, increased average education levels, the introduction of highbrow arts to society through mass media and furthered globalization elements such as more frequent geographic migrations and social class mobility. A change in values in which exclusion is no longer tolerated due to more open-minded ideals also led to a diminishing significance of cultural hierarchies. The art world itself changed as well since the elitist standard of what is art was challenged by a more inclusive way of understanding art and its economic and societal value of it. Finally, status-group politics changed, traditionally dominant groups defined what was popular or not depending on their interests, yet there has been a change from just defining what was popular as being of low value towards a 'gentrification process' of popular cultural expressions and incorporating them into their culture. The authors also claim that the omnivorous consumption of culture is more adapted to the realities of a globalized world, which requires more openness to unfamiliar cultures and their products.

For this research, the structural changes, changes in the art world, and changes in values are important since they help to understand how Millennial-Z have a different experience of the cultural offers open to them, and what they expect from them. Today Millennial-Z are more educated, come from different social backgrounds, and may have been more in contact with art through social and mass media; all of this comes together to create a generation where omnivorous consumption is the norm among peers. Changes in the art world are also important for Millennial-Z, the idea that only one type of aesthetic is "the right one" is not valid anymore, now the art world focuses on other values to define what is art and what is not, giving some space for younger people to participate and enjoy their individuality. Finally, the change in values is important since each youth culture can be unique, not

having to follow the highbrow ideal of what culture is. Now Millennial-Z can grow up following the culture they wish to, challenging exclusion and valuing inclusion. How omnivorous consumption is present in Millennial-Z will be explored more in the analysis and conclusion sections of this research, especially to try to discover if their omnivorous consumption is related to the incorporation of all sorts of culture equally or through the erasure of the boundary between highbrow and popular cultural expressions.

Ng and Johnson add to what Peterson and Kern presented by saying that Millennials were also influenced by trends such as an increase in divorce rates, greater participation of women in the workforce, and rapid technological change. They were also raised in a relatively middle-class environment that led to higher education levels which brought expectations regarding their work/life balance that sometimes are not easily attainable in today's economic system. Finally, they grew up in ethnoculturally diverse environments which makes them more racially and culturally inclusive than older generations, meaning that they are more receptive to the cultural expressions of others (Ng & Johnson, 2015).

2.3. Cultural Participation of Millennial-Z

2.3.1 Who are the Millennial-Z?

To understand the particularities of young adults, the term 'Millennial-Z' will be used as a simple fusion of the Millennials (1980-1995) and Gen Z (1995-2010) terms. The reason for putting them together is that these generations are similar in their frustrations, ideals, expectations, and challenges present in today's society (Rue, 2018). And as Ng and Johnson argue, this similarity is not about the year a person is born, it is about "the shared historical events and experiences accompanied by social changes" (Ng & Johnson, 2015. p. 121). In the United States, Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the country's history. At 75 million people they represent up to 25% of the general population and by 2025 they will be 75% of the global workforce (Deloitte, 2018 as quoted by Black, 2021). Meanwhile, in the European Union, they represent 24% of the total adult population.

In the European case, they are still a minority, ranging from 28% of the total amount of adults in Poland to just 19% in Italy (Stokes, 2015).

As stated by Rue (2018), Millennials and Gen Z have more similarities than differences. The main difference is that the latter is 'digitally innate', meaning they have a closer relationship with mass media and technology since growing up they have been immersed in it (unlike Millennials who adopted it). Therefore, it is assumed that most of the social changes that Millennials have experienced have impacted Gen Z similarly and both generations could be studied together. Millennial-Z can also be characterized by their omnivorous consumption of high and lowbrow culture. Van Wel et al.'s (2008) research shows (with some reservations about the generalization of their research) that young generations are more open regarding different types of cultural expressions no matter the media (film, tv, literature, etc.); almost half of the participants considered themselves cultural omnivores.

2.3.2 What do Millennial-Z want regarding cultural offers?

Most of the efforts of traditional cultural institutions are made keeping older generations or highly educated people in mind. Mainly highly educated Millennial-Z can enjoy them as they are right now though. The number of Millennials with tertiary education in the European Unions is 40% as of 2021, meaning that more than half of the Millennial population may not feel represented or understood in the way museums are organized today (Eurostat, 2021). Of course, this does not mean that 40% of Millennials are keen visitors to museums. For example, in 2015 in the United States, only 21.9% of adult Millennials visited a cultural organization, meaning that the rest of them did not feel compelled to visit a museum even once. Ironically, Millennials are the generation that makes up the largest share of visitors to cultural organizations in the United States (Christine, 2020). While in the Netherlands in 2017, when asked about how often they visited a museum, 25% of Millennials answered that they did not visit a museum even once in the past year, 31% visited once, followed by 21% who attended only twice the past year (Statista, 2018). This would mean that only around 23% of Millennials in the Netherlands are regular visitors to

museums (at least 4 times a year), while the other 77% visit 0 to 3 times on a yearly basis (Statista, 2018). The low level of attendance (or return) by a high percentage of Millennial-Z is something that should motivate museums to understand, rethink and plan accordingly their goals and efforts to be as inclusive and representative as possible.

Young audiences indicated that some of their main reasons to go to museums are to be entertained, for a social outing, or as a leisure activity (Prentice et al, 1998 in Batat, 2020). This means that Millennial-Z expects a welcoming environment where they will not be judged by their passions, how they present themselves, or a lack of knowledge about museums' language and "behavior", where there is no fear in asking any question to any staff member, where they can engage in activities by themselves or with their friends (Black, 2021). They want a museum experience in which to relax, chat and interact, and they expect a high-quality social and recreational environment that matches their lifestyle. "On-site, users want to engage actively together with what is on offer – to explore, to discover, to broaden their horizons, and/or to engage with their children (in the case of young parents)" (Black, 2021. p. 149).

Outside of mainstream popular culture, young people create subcultures to explore artistic expressions, they build codes and elements based around an art expression or even brands, which work to communicate and differentiate themselves from others (Batat, 2020). Batat (2014, in Batat, 2020) argues that analyzing young people's subcultures as their own unique groups with differences between each other and the mainstream culture is important since it is a way to see their particular cultural consumption behaviors, and since these are different to those of their parents or other generations, it can be useful to know what is important for different Millennial-Z subcultures and how their worldview and expectations are different from what museums are offering.

Visiting with friends is very important for Millennial-Z since they highly value positive social interactions. They prefer attending cultural activities with another person in which the learning experience can be shared later between each other or through their social media accounts (Gofman et al., 2011). A way for museums to encourage Millennial-Z to attend their space is through attractive programming. For example, events, where food and alcohol

are present, are sought by young people wanting to have a good time with their friends (Gofman, 2011 in Batat, 2020) (Black, 2021).

Millennial-Z want to learn about the situation of the world, about topics such as politics, climatic and social issues. But they want to do it in the form of the cultural entertainment expressions that they are used to. This applies mainly to Millennial-Z without a lot of highbrow cultural capital, since those who have the academic/cultural education can enjoy the learning experience from traditional cultural spaces in their current form since they are familiar with the format.

Millennial-Z's visitors don't want to be passive receivers of curated information by an unknown individual. They want to be, as O'Connell (1979) pointed out, actively involved, be understood and taken seriously, supported by the museum staff, able to choose their own program, and utilize their own imagination and experience to enjoy the visit (Xanthoudaki, 1998). Millennial-Z want to be able to enjoy their museum visits regardless of their cultural capital or their emotional mood. It is not just a matter of interest, but rather a discrepancy between how institutions have tried to teach and how young people want to learn and enjoy it at the same time (Black, 2021). Finally, each visitor takes from museums what they can and want at that moment. So when museums propose accessible, didactic, and thoughtful exhibitions or programs, the visitors have the agency to personally define what to explore, take part in and choose how much they will engage with the exhibitions. (Black, 2021)

2.3.3 The importance of technology and (social) media for Millennial-Z.

Black said, "Nothing epitomizes Millennials and Generation Z more than their relationship with new technology and associated social media, something that has also influenced many of their elders." (Black, 2021. p. 41). However, having a social media account does not mean that one has plenty of cultural capital thanks to it. Yet the intensive digitalization of the world makes cultural information more accessible and knowing how to use these platforms in an advanced skillful way can be considered cultural capital.

In the early 2000s, Tim O'Reilly coined the term Web 2.0 to define the online trend to build and connect with different communities. This is the beginning of a participatory culture in which individuals could connect with like-minded peers and build communities where the barrier entries were low. Daniel Brown defines this as the 'creators' internet, meaning anyone could create their own content, changing the online dynamics forever (Black, 2021). In this context, social media platforms became extremely popular with younger generations because they give them the space to connect, communicate with like-minded people, and customize their online experience and presence (Black 2021).

Millennials and Generation Z are changing how cultural capital is understood. While it is true that highbrow cultural expressions are still reserved for more privileged people, now almost every member of the Millennial-Z can learn to understand and enjoy some traditionally 'elite' expressions. An example of this is the Dutch reality show called Project Rembrandt from 2019, this show is a competition in which ten amateur artists compete with each other to create a painting in the style of Rembrandt van Rijn or something related to him to later be judged by a varied panel of judges on their technique, style, etc. On IMDb the program has an eight-point six rating over 10 and on Facebook, their official page has over 14,000 followers (IMDb, 2023). The show has an overall positive reception from varied audiences. For example, the Facebook publication of the competition winner got over 22,000 views, and most of the comments in the same publication praise the program and the participants, showing an organic interest in people of all ages regarding this show (Facebook, 2023).

With the adoption and popularization of social media platforms by Millennial-Z, different types of art or culture can be shared or understood by people from different social strata as long as they have an interest and a smartphone with an internet connection. According to De Waal, young people in the Netherlands tend to discourage their peers to show enjoyment in highbrow culture (De Waal, 1989 in Van Wel et al., 2006); yet what happens when traditionally highbrow cultural expressions become more accessible and understandable through the internet? Does it become normalized and raise the interest in enjoying it in real life? And if this is the case, should museums try to turn their efforts to become more accessible so that enjoying them is more normalized?

The relevance of social media platforms and digital technologies brought a change in emphasis and policies in museums. They aimed to be more connected with popular culture by experimenting with their collections in ways in which the public would find them more interesting and related to them. Social media facilitate the dialogue between the experts and the public, allowing for a two-way conversation instead of a one-way lesson (Langsley, 2018). The plethora of voices (alone or combined in groups) expects a more equal relationship with cultural institutions (Black, 2021).

Researchers found that Millennial-Z use social platforms as places where they can learn by themselves but also be able to create relationships with people with the same interests (Shaw & Krug, 2013). Social media are also allowing for more fun and digestible bite-sized chunks of information delivered at high speed, which proves useful for the self-didactic ambitions Millennial-Z have. So, if museums want to be pertinent for the mass population, they need to propose entertaining learning experiences that Millennial-Z with any level of cultural capital can enjoy, share, and engage.

Museums always need to be on the lookout for new developments in ICTs (information and communication technologies) since as society embraces technology more and more, museums have to be aware of the impact it is going to have on themselves and how to use it for their goals in the smartest way possible. As Bast et al. say: "New technology will give museums their own public sphere. Not only by online distributions and exhibitions but also by interactive tools in the exhibitions themselves, which will create a new dialogue between the audience and the artwork." (Bast et al., 2018. P. 49)

2.3.4 Why are not all Millennial-Z going to museums?

Museums have been rather slow in changing their ways and perspectives to be more attractive for the chosen generations. Instead, most have continued working as they did when their main audiences were Baby Boomers (1946-64) and Generation X (1965-80). Some museums have tried to attract younger audiences through different policies, yet most of these efforts seem like simple gestures of welcome to the rest of the population who is not already versed in the museum language (Charman, 2013). Research shows tailored digital and internet-based strategies can be helpful to approach young visitors who are

becoming an important target audience for museums since the institutions want to enhance their engagement. However, they are still underrepresented among museum visitors (McLean, 1997; Black, 2005 in Batat, 2020). In the past, many museums overlook the needs and expectations of different young groups. Today, museums are trying to incorporate sub-groups of the Millennial and Gen Z generations, however, the results have not been as successful as some institutions wish they were. For example, minorities, diverse communities, and low-income/cultural capital individuals may not feel represented yet and rarely visit any type of museum or cultural institution (Black, 2021).

Xanthoudaki and Hood state that the reason young people are reluctant to visit museums and galleries during their leisure time is because traditional institutions seem to be lacking the services and offers that are of interest to this group (Xanthoudaki, 1998). This relates to the hesitation felt by young people towards 'adult' life and education, which museums are part of. So the lack of understanding of young interests by institutions results in limited use and visits to cultural places (Xanthoudaki, 1998; Hood, 2004 in Black, 2021).

In the UK, 87% of museum visits are made by people from higher social classes (together with a big racial disparity), Graham says that “there has been a failure to ‘scale from intensive and expensive small group work to create sustainable change in the overall demographics of museums’” (Graham, 2020 in Black, 2021. p. 80). Black adds to this that this change has not happened because there are: 1] a failure to focus on the fundamental task of growing and maintaining audiences; 2] the political challenge and 3] the fact that some museums are ok with the present situation and leave the inclusion and community work as relegated actions (Black, 2021). Museums urgently need to transfer their focus from the already well-educated to become institutions of mass public engagement (O'Neill, 2020 in Black, 2021), where everyone feels welcomed, represented, and included." (Black, 2021. p. 79). This does not mean that museums have been static or that there have not been positive changes or innovations in museology, catering to audiences with more diverse cultural capital, but change is slow and museums are still figuring out how to be more democratic.

2.4. The New Museology

Now that the main social group of this research was defined, as well as what they want regarding culture and their reasons to visit (or not) museums, I will focus on how can museums pay more attention to this group, what changes have happened in the last decades, and what can they do to attract Millennial-Z to their brick and mortar and digital spaces.

The use of *The New Museology* as a concept comes in handy in this research since it is an alternative to working on and improving some situations Millennial-Z experience in museums today. For example, how institutions offer activities that fulfill the expectations and interests of Millennial-Z concerning their lifestyle, the adoption of technology as a way to be more engaging and finally to be more accessible to many different types of Millennial-Z not just the highly educated ones.

Peter Vergo understands the 'old' museology as "too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of the museum" (1989. P. 3). This phrase says a lot about the state of museology some decades ago. It is fair to say that some museums have been open to adapting, however, most museums and their policies continue being for the "object" and not for the audiences. Because of that, Vergo said, "Unless a radical re-examination of the role of museums within society - by which I do not mean measuring their 'success' merely in terms of criteria such as more money and more visitors - takes place, museums in this country, and possibly elsewhere, may likewise find themselves dubbed 'living fossils'." (Vergo, 1989. p. 4).

2.4.1 What does The New Museology represent?

The idea to change this situation and turn museums into modern institutions focused on the communities is what gives birth to the 'new' museology. It is the study and efforts to approach diverse audiences such as visitors, scholars, art lovers, children, minorities, people from different cultures, etc., the topics these groups are interested in and the responsibilities incurred by museums through their history (like safekeeping, mass educating, sharing knowledge, etc.) (Vergo, 1989). An example of a museum that has

adopted policies similar to those proposed by The New Museology is the Immigration Museum in Australia. Their staff develops educative material intending to support the engagement of students and visitors. Because they know a visitor will not learn automatically just by observing their collection, they understand the importance of some 'educational mediation' (Charman, 2013). Educational mediation is understood as the efforts that museums take to make their exhibitions or whatever they produce to be as accessible, understandable, and educative to as many people as possible.

Education in museums involves situating the exhibition and the efforts in time and space. Meaning that museums should explain how their pieces represent a certain moment and what it meant at the moment of its creation. This contextualization allows visitors to understand the historical/artistic significance of the object and how the museum contributes to their surrounding communities. It is also important for visitors to see the museum as a 'negotiated space', a place that is always changing thanks to the community's needs and in which every individual could participate in its development of it (Charman, 2013). Therefore museums, through emphasizing their educational role, could turn into community spaces where art, leisure, education, tourism, and commerce get together to culturally develop and revitalize their surrounding communities (Anderson, 1999)

Anderson suggests that museums should see and position themselves as centers of cultural rights and cultural democracy, being as integrated as possible with their surrounding communities because, as he says, "[a museum] which fails to encourage wider participation by the public in cultural activities, is antithetical to the development of a strong and healthy democracy" (Anderson, 2005 in Earle, 2013. p. 542). Therefore, museums need to participate as actively as possible in the conversations affecting society if they want to continue being pertinent in the lives of the surrounding communities. Most importantly, they need to fulfill the role of artistic/scientific authorities giving context, arguments, and information against "fake news" or dangerous challenges in society like xenophobia (Bast et al., 2018). Thus they contribute towards a more democratic and free society.

2.4.2 The New Museology and its Use for Millennial-Z

Cultural organizations in general should pay close attention to the needs and wants of Millennial-Z and put them as one of their main focuses of attention in their services. This might be done through interactive art exhibitions where the visitor can participate directly and co-create into what the museum offers. This co-creation can be done by involving Millennial-Z participation in the artistic process (in films, sculpture, digital art, painting, writing, etc.) or through voting and giving ideas and recommendations. This participation does not "demerit" the museum space, it enriches it by being open to the input of young voices (Batat, 2020).

The idea of 'co-authorship' or co-creation changes how museum content is thought, presented, and communicated. From "passive consumers of given knowledge to active participating customers of a living museum community" (Bast et al., 2018. p. 87). To co-create, participative engagement and sharing are essential in the expectations and enjoyment of the user of cultural activities (both online and offline). To create an engaging participative climate for young adults, the entrance threshold should be low, where little or no explanation is needed to play, connect and interpret the exhibition; as well as non-judgmental surroundings (Black, 2021).

There is an interest among Millennial-Z to visit museums and participate in cultural activities, even paid ones. But they want to take the experience into their hand and participate in it. They dislike the traditional didactic museum displays where access to knowledge is static. Rather, they want to be surprised with unique experiences that they can share with other visitors or online (Black, 2021). They value cultural offers where they can identify themselves and their personal views, as well as find acceptance and interest in their perspectives of life by the cultural institution (Xanthoudaki, 1998). The importance of such interest in experiences and the weight given to it by the consumers is what Pine and Gilmore (2011) meant with the experience economy.

For young people, participation in cultural activities can spark long-term interest in learning or revisiting museums, Kaufman and Gabler found that active participation in arts may increase students' investment in school and enhance intellectual curiosity (Kaufman &

Gabler, 2004 in Kisida et al., 2014). When young students attend museum workshops where they can learn skills related to the functioning of the museum like project preparation, curatorship, publicizing and marketing exhibitions, etc. they become more appreciative of the museum and its content since they understand what it means to run it. Knowing this contributes to a shift from passive to active participation since students can use their visits and new knowledge to inspire them in their own creative projects (Charman, 2013)

2.4.3 The participatory museum as Part of the New Museology and the Use of Technology

A participatory museum is an institution in which the audience is the agent that decides how, when, and with whom they will engage, not the curator. This liberty allows each person to question, debate, and speculate about the exhibition, its importance, and how it relates to them. Participatory exhibitions will not be finished once the installation process is done, they can only be completed once the audiences are engaging and participating with it (Black, 2021). Museums should seek to involve visitors in their own process of learning by fostering a balance between looking, doing, and reflecting (Longley, 2018). And a way to do this is through participatory museums.

The museum space should be open so visitors can involve their emotions in their learning process without being discouraged by others for being too 'loud' or emotive (Charman, 2013). For this purpose, multidisciplinary teams in museums may keep in mind and support the many learning styles that visitors might have (Visual, Auditory, Read/write, and Kinaesthetic). Since participative museums are about the visitor, it is important to explore what people see as useful (or not) in their path. Black claims that if museums provide interpretive approaches to each one of the learning styles, there is a framework in which the visitor can build on their own engaging experience (Black, 2021)

Engaging exhibitions and installations are a way in which museums can respond to the needs of Millennial-Z. For example, Longley talks about the impact of digital technology in science museums, which has led to the development of interactive installations and displays that improve the experience of the visitors and the collections (2018). Another example is the gamification of the museum experience, which "helps engage new audiences and allow

these audiences to participate where traditional experiences enact more prohibitions through their mechanics and rules” (Black, 2021, p. 74).

One important distinction is that an interactive exhibition is not the same as a participative one. In the first type, the exhibition suggests that the visitor is expected to learn something proposed by the museum. This can be flashy and technological, but it is still a one-way dialogue. As the name implies, the visitor just interacts. In a participative exhibition, the action of the visitor creates a reaction to the installation, then the visitor reacts to this in their own agency and is expected to learn something. It is outcome-driven (Black, 2021). This flexibility will allow visitors to personalize, share and contribute to their own unique experience since Millennial-Z seek to be "creators as well as consumers" (Black, 2021. p. 153).

The use of technology in museums is appealing to young visitors since it allows them to immerse physically and psychologically in the exhibitions, as proven in the case of virtual reality in the research of Valiyeva and Skeiseid (2020). It can also be used to create engaging installations like the touchscreen tables in the exposition about aboriginal canvasses called "Yiwarra Kuju" in the National Museum of Australia, where these tables could be used to get more information about the canvasses (in case of someone curious for more) or just as a creative communal output in which anyone, no matter the age could participate freely (Longsley, 2018).

The main point of participatory technology and displays aimed at younger audiences is to integrate a fun dimension to whatever museums want to exhibit. It makes complex messages easier to receive and memorize. It is also a way in which museums can talk a language that is usually one of the young subcultures to address them and get their attention (Batat, 2020). Millennial-Z who are less adept at speaking the museum language are the ones that usually further enjoy technological innovations in their visits. New technology allows museums to develop ways to engage visitors and enhance their visit through personalization, different perspectives, entertaining activities, and the possibility to share it online (Black, 2021).

Both new technology and the digital space are important for museums since it amplifies how Millennial-Z and visitors in general engage with the exhibitions in and outside the museum walls, even building and sharing their technological skills. Black argues that Millennial-Z seek to use freely the collections and information of museums, both online and offline. An example of this is the digitalization process of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the marketing department of the museum argued that "the core goal of the museum is to get the public familiar with their collection, and that the internet can greatly facilitate that" (Pekel, 2014. P. 7). So in 2012 they launched Rijksstudio, a webpage to promote the images and collections of the museum, as well as get closer to more audiences who could easily access the high-definition images, create their own exhibitions and share the results online with the museum. For the museum, this represented more exposure, reputational benefits, and the possibility to enter some funding programs that outweighed the reduced sales of images (Pekel, 2014).

Now that the 3 main concepts that led this research have been explained, I will describe the motivations for this paper and the research questions that guided the qualitative methodology.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Research question

This study aims to improve the understanding of what Millennial-Z expect regarding cultural institutions. To do so, this research aims to find what kind of activities, exhibitions, and programs attract Millennial-Z towards museums and make them attractive social spaces. The research question that guides this exploration is: *How can museums become more engaging and participative for younger generations?*

To answer the main research question, the following sub-questions will be helpful:

- What does Millennials-Z expect of museums?
- What are the intentions of art museums regarding this audience?
- How does The New Museology help in improving the experiences of young visitors?

The usage of qualitative research methods allows us to answer the research questions since it is possible to compare, contrast and assemble the experiences of young visitors and the museum professionals in charge of teaching and connecting with them.

3.2. Qualitative methods

This research aims to find out how museums can be more engaging for Millennial-Z. Although there are plenty of activities and efforts museums can do to achieve this, I am focusing on participative activities since they can be seen as a conversation between the museum and the young audiences.

Boijmans Van Beuningen and Kunstinstituut Melly were selected as case studies since they are among the most renowned cultural institutions in Rotterdam for their contemporary art exhibitions and collections (in the case of Boijmans). They also have multidisciplinary

teams that offer good educational programs (such as CLIP in Melly and the workshops in Boijmans Zuid) and quality exhibitions (in the case of Melly and Boijmans Zuid). So the choice of these institutions is based on the objective of comparing how their education and exhibition efforts are done and how young people feel when they are visiting them. Both institutions have a consistent digital presence with easily digestible looks for young audiences making them pertinent to research about the usage of social media in Millennial-Z regarding cultural exhibition spaces.

However, it is important to note that at the moment of writing this paper, both Melly and Boijmans are not museums in the full sense of the word. Kunstinstituut Melly is an art house where they exhibit the work of artists and their ideas, commission art, and publishment and development of educational and collaborative initiatives; but Melly does not hold a permanent collection as a museum would (they do keep an archive of their history and past activities though). On the other hand, Boijmans Van Beuningen is institutionally a museum. Yet their main exhibition place is under renovation and will continue to be so for a couple of years so currently there is no museum to visit. However, they built the Boijmans Depot, a state-of-the-art building to preserve their collection and offer a behind-the-scenes experience to the visitors where they can see the compartments that hold the collections and exhibit a small number of pieces. The other part of Boijmans is Zuid, a listening post in the south part of the city where visitors can take part in activities and workshops and/or visit a project/exhibition of local-based artists.

Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a qualitative approach was used since it allows to develop open-ended questions that grant detailed descriptions of the visitor's background, current thoughts, opinions on the exhibitions, and their expectations of museums. Regarding the museum professionals, it allows us to understand their academic background, past and current efforts, opinions on young visitors, and the importance they hold for the future of museums. This approach also allows to integrate multiple perspectives into one cohesive understanding of how museums relate to young people and vice versa. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over surveys since the latter would only allow to discover information that was deemed relevant beforehand by the researcher. In contrast, open-ended interviews allow us to discover new opinions that were not thought of

beforehand. Also, since this research is based on the motivations and experiences of a mixed group of people, allowing them to answer in their own words makes the results more meaningful.

All interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility during and after the questionnaire. It allowed me to have organic conversations when, for example, some questions were already answered before I got the chance to ask them or when questions were not pertinent anymore because of the task the museum professionals have. The exploration came together when I could tell the opinions or reasoning behind something to the other side of the research participants, hoping for it to be helpful or at least give a different perspective of the visit/interview.

Since the goal of this research is to understand visitors and professionals, two interview guidelines were made, each with different questions but relating to the main topics. These topics were chosen and built from the theoretical framework researched during the earlier stages of the thesis, this proved useful since it allowed me to see what kind of results other qualitative and quantitative research got and, regarding the topic of museum audiences, showed me what perspectives were missing or not.

The original plan for this thesis was to interview two museum professionals and five members of the audience in the Millennial-Z age group for each museum. The professionals were going to be from Kunstinstituut Melly and Boijmans Van Beuningen. These institutions were chosen because of their reputation and the quality of their exhibitions and programs, and because I had the opportunity to talk with the pertinent education professionals thanks to visits during field trips. The goal of this distribution was, as said before, to compare and contrast the museum's efforts and the experiences of young visitors. Regarding the visitors, I intended to interview in total of ten Millennial-Z from the south of Rotterdam, since this area is known for its multiculturalism and its complex relationship between highbrow cultural institutions and the inhabitants. I wanted to compare how the cultural capital of Millennial-Z in the area was going to reflect in the efforts of Boijmans and Melly. However, just like these institutions, I struggled to create a connection with locals. My lack of contacts and inability to speak Dutch proved too much to find reliable participants. To try and motivate random participants I designed and printed posters looking

for participants offering a monetary reward. Sadly I did not receive an answer to my efforts and had to try and find participants through other means and of other social and cultural backgrounds.

Using my personal social media accounts, I shared a post detailing that I was looking for participants for my thesis. I only stated that the topic was museums and young people, that the visit would be free either to Melly or Boijmans Depot/Zuid, and a free cup of coffee for any participant. I expected that my acquaintances would share my post and that way I could contact potential participants. This process would be a part of the technique known as snowball sampling. Weiss (1995, p. 32) defines it as "If people you want to interview are likely to know others like themselves, you can ask them for referrals. Then the referrals can provide still further referrals". Ultimately this was successful since I found 7 participants through this method. All the participants were friends of friends so the snowball sampling was useful. Regarding the museum professionals, I had two interviews planned with the head of education at Boijmans and the education coordinator at Melly. During the process to organize my interview with the education coordinator at Melly, I was presented to the curator of collective learning from Melly, who accepted to participate in this research as well, making a valuable contribution to the entire research thanks to her interview.

Due to the limited number of participants and their varied cultural and educative backgrounds, this research is not representative of all young visitors/Millennial-Z and their hopes and expectations regarding museums. This means that the interviews have certain biases regarding cultural organizations and what they offer to young audiences, however, this bias is considered during the analysis chapter of this thesis.

3.3 Sampling

As previously mentioned, the participants of this research are divided into two groups, three museum professionals and seven visitors/participants. Regarding the museum professionals, three of them have higher education, two in art education and the other in lifestyle and design. This is important since it means that these professionals have studied

academically and know how to use their knowledge at their jobs. The museum visitor group is more varied. The original aim for this group was to be as varied as possible, since this way their answers would be more diverse and rich. Eventually, this was useful since the participants were from different places in the world, yet all of them had experience with the cultural scene of Rotterdam, proving their participation valuable since this cultural richness is a micro-example of the multiculturalism in Rotterdam. All the museum visitors were between 23 and 29 years old, meaning that they identify with the term Millennial or Gen Z, so the targeted audience of this research was found. All of the seven participants studied until tertiary education, only two of them recently acquired their Master's degree and one is currently doing her Ph.D. After the interviews, it was clear that the participants, at varied levels, were highly educated and liked to consume both highbrow and popular cultural expressions.

3.4 Operationalization

All the contact before the visit and interview itself was made through Instagram due to the snowballing technique. All the visitors were given the chance to choose where to do the visit, at the same time I wanted it to be balanced so three visitors decided to go to Melly while four decided to visit Boijmans, regarding Boijmans three visits were to the Depot, and one in Zuid. This was due to the different activities offered, exhibitions present in Zuid, and, at first, economic issues with the price of the ticket. I met the participants outside the chosen institution and either accompanied them through their visit or told them to visit it by themselves. Since I wanted to have unadulterated results, I told the participants to enjoy the visit as they usually would, I also told them that I would not be walking with them, instead, I would also visit at my own pace and just on particular occasions we interacted. I think this was a useful approach since, as I saw in the interviews, every participant enjoyed their visit differently when they were by themselves. It is also important to keep in mind that, as said in the theory part, Millennial-Z enjoy visiting museums with their social groups, in this thesis this was not the approach, but it is kept in mind during the analysis and the interviews.

After the visitors told me they were ready we walked to a coffee house in the center of Rotterdam where there were enough people to create the right context for an organic conversation, yet silent enough for the interview to flow and the recording of it to work. Naturally, every interview was different, yet some very interesting similarities and differences appeared that will be explained in the analysis section. Regarding the museum professionals, the prior contact with the people from Melly was entirely through email while for Boijmans I could ask for the interview in person thanks to my volunteering actions in Boijmans Zuid. All these interviews were held in the pertinent institution. For all the interviews, I first told the participants the purpose of the research (How can museums become more engaging and attractive for young audiences) and how it was going at that moment. I explained to the participants the structure of the interview and the themes I was going to address.

Every interview started with background questions, regarding the visitors this was intended to assess their prior education, taste, and cultural consumption habits. Since these topics have to do with cultural capital, it was a quick way to know if someone holds plenty (or not) of knowledge about highbrow art expressions. On the side of the museum professionals, the background questions were about their perception of the cultural consumption of Millennial-Z and the general public in Rotterdam. In the same section, prior knowledge (for visitors) and past efforts (for professionals) were asked. For the first group, it was through questions about their motivation, good and bad experiences in other museums, and general expectations when visiting a museum. The results of these questions were useful since they allowed me to see what each visitor considered valuable regarding a museum visit, what they did not like, and what type of knowledge was memorable for them. For the museum professionals, the questions were about their present goals, their knowledge of the motivations of Millennials-Z to visit their institution, and about good and bad past efforts during their careers.

The next section of the guideline has to do with the current thoughts and feelings each participant had regarding the chosen museum, what could be improved, what was unique, the role of museums in society, and the communication efforts of this or any other museum. All the visitors told me about their experience and if they found it more entertaining or

educational. I also asked them what part of the visit they felt was more dedicated to them as young adults, since this question would let me know how welcoming the museum feels to an average visitor of the targeted age group. I also asked them about what part of the visit felt unique, this had the purpose of knowing if there was something that could create a new relationship between the museum and the visitor through a feeling of being represented. I questioned the visitors if they thought that a person or themselves needed a particular academic/cultural background to fully enjoy the museum, I asked this because I wanted to compare the cultural capital of the participants and see if it affects how comfortable they felt during the visit. A question about the staff was asked to know what the normal Millennial visitor wants from the workers that act as the face of the institution. Interestingly the answers were very similar for all the participants. Regarding the museum professionals, this part of the interview focused on the multidisciplinary efforts they take between departments of the same institution or with other institutions, in line with the theory stating that multidisciplinary teams are needed to design the future of museum practices and to understand the needs of Millennial-Z (Bast et al., 2018). I also asked them about their main obstacles to realize their past and/or present plans, to learn if a lack of funding, lack of interest or any other challenge was present in these institutions. Finally, I asked them about the role of museums in contemporary society. This question was very interesting since the visitors answered the same one, allowing comparing the answers and seeing if there were connections or different worldviews.

The next section related to the digital presence of the museum, how visitors approach museums online and what is the opinion of both sides regarding the use of electronic gadgets in the museography space. The visitors were asked about their usage of social media and if they had any past interactions with the chosen institution or any other cultural one. They were also asked which cultural content they find attractive and which "popular" type of content they also like to consume. The reason for these questions was to learn if they had a strong social presence and if they use it normally for their cultural consumption. They were also asked about the highbrow and popular content they usually consume online. The reason for this was to know how omnivorous the participants were and if they had a negative or positive opinion regarding one particular type of online cultural expression. Regarding the usage of electronic gadgets in museums, the questions were pretty

straightforward regarding the use of interactive installations in past museums and their opinion about them. I also asked about the use of apps, this was pertinent since it related to the importance of smartphones in the daily life of Millennial-Z. Respondents from the museum's professional side were asked about their digital presence and efforts to attract and/or teach audiences online, this was due to the theory focusing on the importance the internet has regarding the museum role of communicator and educator (Bast et al., 2018). I was very interested in their opinion regarding the use of electronic tools in their educational goals since this topic is still controversial due to the nature of how teaching in museums should be.

The second topic was about the inclusion and participation of young adults in museums, this topic was divided in two. The first one was about how Millennial-Z are represented in the marketing and educational efforts of the museum and the second one was about their participation in any museum close to their house. The intention behind these topics was to know the opinions of the participants during their visits to later compare them with the intentions regarding the topic of inclusion with the museum professionals. I asked the museum professional about their efforts in including the chosen demographic in their programs and efforts, how their institution would benefit from more Millennial-Z engaging with them, and if the young adults communities around their institution were present in the museum programs. The idea behind this topic was to know the present situation regarding cultural offers for Millennial-Z and how museums are planning (or not) to cater to the interests.

The last topic of the guideline focused on the New Museology and how both institutions offer more engaging, supportive, and public-oriented exhibits. The visitors answered questions regarding their cultural consumption and regarding museums as places where they could learn about their interests (not only the ones about culture). This would allow me to know what type of interests Millennial-Z have and what type of change museums could implement to be more attractive. I also asked them about what type of cultural expression (highbrow or popular) should museums focus more on. Finally, I asked them about their expectations regarding edutainment. I asked them if they would like for museums to be as entertaining as they are didactic, what the balance should be, and how they like to engage

with the exhibitions (along with some examples, the purpose of this section was to know if Millennial-Z do care about being entertained in museums and how this would affect their decisions regarding their leisure time). On the side of the museum professionals, I asked about their opinion on edutainment since, similar to the opinion of technological gadgets, it is a much-debated topic.

Once all the interviews were done, I transcribed them into Microsoft Word documents using the online platform Temi, an AI-powered platform. I still had to verify the quality of the transcription but it was helpful to save some time. While doing the transcriptions I did a very general coding of all the answers from the participants, I based it on the general narrative of the analysis section, first the cultural capital of the participants, the expectations regarding learning in museums, and finally about the New Museology practices. This last part was crucial for this research since it is where I could compare and contrast the experiences and expectations of Millennial-Z visitors, the museum professional, and what the theory says about it.

Chapter 4. Analysis

The analysis will be structured as a constant comparison between what the visitors answered and what the museum professionals said about the same topic. And, when pertinent, the answers will be contrasted with the theory. All the participants were given a code to identify them, it is comprised of a first letter S for staff/museum professional and V for visitors. It is followed by another letter signaling the institution the participant is talking about, M is for Kunstinstituut Melly, and B is for Boijmans van Beuningen. This code ends up in a number that expresses the order in which the participants were interviewed. The analysis will follow the narrative of the interviews, meaning I will start with cultural capital and how it related to the answers of the participants, then will write about the inclusion of young adults to end up with the participatory museum/the new museology.

4.1 The cultural offer in Rotterdam

Rotterdam is a good city to do this research on cultural consumption habits thanks to its multiculturalism, the diversity of its population, and its great cultural offerings all around the year. For example, participant V-M-2, who lives in The Hague, told me that Rotterdam "has a lot to offer culturally when it comes to the arts and the community. I think that they have a lot of opportunities and spaces, a lot more than they do in The Hague". The same participant also said that its society is more diverse and it has an urban feeling to it. This opinion is similar to the one shared by participant V-B-2, who said "I think it is greater than in The Hague (the cultural offer). I think it's very varied. It has from classical art as we saw a little bit today from the Boijmans collection, but it's also known to have a little bit more experimental, I would say, a little bit more contemporary." Both opinions coincide in seeing Rotterdam as a place where culture is more present than in other cities. V-M-1, a Rotterdam resident, agreed regarding the different cultural offerings it has in comparison to other cities in the Netherlands, while also adding that it tends to skew more towards contemporary and modern art. S-M-2 answer was close to that of the participants, stating that "it's diverse. I

think it's, there's plenty to see. I think maybe it's a bit hard to navigate sometime. I can imagine as a visitor". Finally, this professional added that cultural institutions could do more to facilitate this difficulty "I think (the) cultural field can be more present as well, like visibly present. But I really like it." S-B-1 added a similar but also broader way of seeing Rotterdam. In his opinion, today Rotterdam is in the midst of an intense cultural development, both the city and the cultural institutions. That Rotterdam is a city of many opportunities and many challenges and "it is yet to become clear where that development is headed.". These answers let us see how Rotterdam, as a city with many cultures and points of view, is a great place to learn and experiment with what should be the future of museums since a lot of its inhabitants can be open to new cultural alternatives and museums are working towards becoming more visible and ingenious in their efforts.

4.2 Section 1. Cultural capital

Millennial-Z can be considered a culturally omnivorous generation. Following Peterson and Kern's (1996) proposal that people tend to consume more and more omnivorously as time passes and that younger generations tend to appreciate and criticize all types of cultural expressions more than older generations, this section focuses on getting to know the habits of cultural consumption of young people. This had the intention of discovering how diverse such habits are, how common it is for them to consume 'highbrow' or popular content, how much of this consumption is done online or offline, and to find the points in common between the participants.

4.2.1 The omnivorous cultural consumption of Millennial-Z

For example, participant V-M-2 said:

"I consume everything honestly. Music, literature, art in every, literally in every shape and form. I think that because social media makes it so accessible to

everything. And if it's not an artist that you really like that's, you know, like sharing their new stuff online. It's this person from your neighborhood to start doing music and of course putting everything online and you follow it. So I, I do feel that there is an overwhelmingly amount of content within the cultural sector and fortunately for me I do follow a lot of artists, so it's, it's, I've cultivated this little bubble of really nice stuff to look at in my phone“.

Another example of a cultural omnivore is participant V-M-1 who said "I guess I am a bit of a mix between more like classic art or, and popular culture, contemporary art. [...] I think I'm quite open to experiencing new types of culture. I'm just curious about those kinds of things. I don't necessarily confine myself to a bubble of the things that I understand already". Both answers sum up really well what the concept of cultural omnivore is about, a person that consumes all types of media and art creations, from highbrow to popular to improve their general cultural understanding and learn more about what they find interesting or important. With respect to the question asked in the theory section of this research regarding the possible implications of how omnivorous consumption appears in Millennial-Z, at least when pondered with the omnivorous participants of this research, it seems to be related to the day-to-day incorporation of all sorts of cultural expressions.

Museum professional S-B-1 said that for him, the consumption of culture by Millennial-Z seems to be very eclectic. This can be another way to define the wide range of cultural interests young audiences have. It is also important that museum professionals know how varied audiences are, so in the case of Boijmans this is taken in mind.

In other words, both visitors and museum staff understand that the Millennial-Z consumption of culture is very diverse and it includes a lot of topics and art expressions, this diversity of interests is an opportunity that museums need to take to get closer to younger audiences.

4.2.2 Habits of cultural consumption in young adults

Regarding the topic of how often they consume culture, participant V-M-2 told me:

“I think at least once a month. At least, maybe two. It depends on how busy my agenda is, but at least once a month. [...] Concerts. I visit a lot of concerts. I love going to Musea. So probably one museum visit a day.... Oh, wow. A month, not a day. [...] Museums, theaters as well. They have a course of theater in the Hague in the city, so I visit that often, galleries”.

On a similar note, participant V-B-2 is also someone who actively participates in plenty of cultural activities like going to the cinema, and visit the theater and art houses:

“if it counts, going to Pathé to watch a movie, if that does, then probably once a week to once every two weeks I try to go to the movies or watch a new movie. I like going to the art house because the art house in the Hague is right in front of my university. And on Wednesdays it costs five euros [...] the art school in the Hague is actually pretty big, so they do quite a lot of exhibitions that also have to do with music and street art and Raves. So that’s a cultural thing, kind of, I of guess, so then definitely once a week if we like, obviously some weeks more and some weeks less, but if I would average it, it would be once a week. [...] there’s also the theater, the Amare, which is also in front of my university. And there they have the NDT, which is a Netherlands dans theater, I go every time that there is a new theater performance, I go there because student tickets are only 10 Euros and you can be sitting like right in the front”.

As seen by their answers, both participants are habitual consumers of culture, both do traditionally highbrow (like visiting galleries or going to the theater) and popular activities (like going to the cinema and raves). If some Millennial-Z actively search for cultural activities to do once every month (or even weekly), then museums should try and attract these visitors by offering diverse activities.

On the other side, some participants told me that they do not participate in cultural activities as often as they would like. An example is participant V-M-3 who said that due to how much she works she does not visit museums as much as she wanted “I maybe go to a museum like once or twice a year. I don’t really go that often because I’m busy and I work a lot, but I do try to actively participate in cultural activities as possible. So if my friends invite me to museums or to other types of cultural events, I do try to go”. What is

interesting about this answer is that Millennial-Z now have to balance their jobs or school with their leisure time. So museums may want to keep in mind the responsibilities and free time that Millennial-Z have to program for them in time schedules that work for them.

To conclude the topic of the habits of cultural consumption that Millennial-Z have, the answers let us see that they do have a lot of interest in participating in cultural activities, but their agendas and their free time play an important role in how often they do so. The participants that were students (V-M-2 and V-B-2) said that they do cultural activities at least once a month, while participants with jobs (V-M-1 and V-M-3) go less often. So if museums were to plan and prepare activities/workshops/exhibitions that keep the interests and leisure time of Millennial-Z, they might get more participants and visitors.

4.2.3 Cultural Interests of Millennial-Z

Regarding what topics interest Millennial-Z when visiting museums, all young participants talked about social and global issues that affect them, such as global warming, racism, LGBTQ+ topics, feminism, and inequalities in society. What interested young audiences the most was how museums propose different points of view to approach these topics, not only to discover unknown issues or solutions but to see the issues that affect society and Millennial-Z through different artistic perspectives.

Participant V-M-3 was very interested in social issues, so when she visited Melly and saw a display with a feminist topic, she felt very motivated. Regarding her interests, she said:

“I like learning about social issues or things that concern, uh, that are going on in the world via museums or galleries or expos. I like those types of events, (since they) are really good at expressing or explaining important problems in the world. [...] if it’s about like social issues, I do enjoy (visiting museums), like I’m really invested in feminist movements, the LGBTQ+ movements. So if there is an expo or a museum that has something related to those topics, I do feel inclined to or motivated to go.”

Participant V-B-3 was interested in how museums can offer unique narratives that recontextualize their collections/exhibitions with important topics of today.

“I like exhibitions that provide me a new narrative in artistry. For example, there was recent exhibition at Kunsthall in Hamburg that unfortunately I didn’t get to go. It’s called *Femme fatal, the Fatal Woman*. So it looks at the so-called dangerous Woman in art from a new perspective, like it interpreted women in history like Medusa and mythologies, like from a new light and how they were not the traditionally dangerous woman, but they’re actually the victims of patriarchal systems. And how they were just a person trying to fight for her own rights. I haven’t been to the exhibition, but I’ve read about it and heard reviews about it. But that’s the exhibition that I would be interested going to.”

Regarding the artistic narrative of illustrating a social problem and how this is interesting to Millennial-Z, participant V-B-1 answered about what type of exhibitions he likes to see: “I think usually how some artists try to illustrate modern world problems and even though we might know of these problems, but for me I like that they try to make you aware of them. Like, we realize that this is a problem.”

For participant V-M-1, exhibitions that make the connection between social problems and artistic narratives are very interesting, when I asked her what was the most memorable moment of her visit, she answered:

“I very much enjoyed the exhibition about those artists that were making their pieces focusing around sustainability. There was a piece where, or an installation, I guess it could be where the artist "Havel" "Habel", her surname was, she made a lot of different very scientific looking displays. Using dying and using different techniques specifically with this plant. That was an invasive species of plant that was growing, I guess nearby where she was. And just kind of repurposing this kind of deemed useless or deemed a pest plant. And I think the the use of that and the philosophy of that is very interesting.”

Regarding museum professionals and their role in approaching this type of topic, participant S-M-2 said:

“for example, environment is a big topic, Self-care. After pandemic, we made eighty-four steps, which is all about care. So these kinds of topics that are, yeah the things that might be there. Feminism. Certain also like health, families have put that a lot. Colonial history is very important. The museums can act like as conversation study. You know? [...] That is an important part of why you visit a museum, to enlighten yourself, but also, you know, to understand the world a bit more.”

In this case, Melly’s professionals are aware of the importance of these topics and are open to beginning conversations about them.

The received answers show that, as said in the theory before, Millennial-Z are interested in exhibitions that talk about social topics but they need to be properly curated and they have to re-contextualize what the audiences know. Museums have to show that they are institutions that understand the interests and societal issues that affect young people.

Regarding the interest of young people in culture, S-B-1 said that, generally, young people have more interest in culture than “maybe seven years ago”, especially in the type of engaging culture that motivates people to make a difference in the world. He then added: “I also realize that this is a specific part only of the demography of young adults”. S-M-2 adds that a lot of young adults are not familiar with museums and what they offer. This participant said that places like Melly feel like a mystery to these groups since they are not used to entering museum spaces. However, once they have their first positive experiences in a cultural institution “then it's easier and they come back. So that's a good, like, development, but you need to have something to attract them, you know?” This last part resonates with something participant V-B-1 said. He was mainly interested in historical topics since for him contemporary art exhibitions could be too vague for his liking, making him uninterested in visiting any museum of this type, unless the exhibition was properly contextualized. He gave an example of how a cultural place could lose someone's interest:

“I can think of one instance in the Kunsthal actually and it was more about, it was just modern art, it was very abstract stuff. And I remember [...] the art pieces just had like a name of the artist and that was it. So I know that they're trying to get you to imagine what it's about. But personally for me it was the opposite. I actually get more, I would say disconnected, for lack of better word. Like, I'm not interested, I'm

very disinterested because I don't know what it is, sometimes it's a very weird shape, so you can't even imagine anything”.

Participant V-B-1 said that his interest to go to a museum “depends on the exhibition. I guess if it's more about abstract art or more than modern art, I don't feel super interested”. This answer may reflect a simplistic view that what each person expects regarding museum exhibitions depends solely on what type of culture each person is interested in. However, I think that the actual point was revealed a little bit further into the interview, this participant said, when asked about what exhibitions he finds interesting:

“The history ones for sure are interesting, but for the modern ones, the ones that more illustrate, uh, a context. So it doesn't need to tell me what it is, but just, if the context is known, then I can be more interested in it personally.”

According to this participant, what makes museum exhibitions interesting is not only the personal baggage someone has, the contextualization that curators and educators in museums apply to their exhibitions also has a big weight in how interesting museums can be. This point will be explained deeper in the following sections.

Participant V-M-1 said something similar regarding the proper contextualization of museum exhibitions while keeping in mind different types of public. She said that "I also expect to have some kind of explanations for the exhibitions or for the pieces to have a bit more background information." When I asked her about museums giving all the context or being open to interpretation, she said:

“I think a balance of both. A balance is good. because I think that there are visitors who need more context because they perhaps aren't equipped with the right tools to have more in-depth interpretations. So a piece or an exhibition can be very openly interpreted, I think, but for a large portion of the population or for you know, different, different groups of people, it can be difficult to come to those interpretations at all. So I think some context is good”.

This answer is valuable since it shows how (in this case modern art museums) should try to give the proper tools to understand the general context so that all types of visitors can interpret the rest of the collection to its fullest potential.

4.2.4 What motivates Millennial-Z to visit museums?

About what motivates Millennial-Z to go to a museum, participant V-M-1 shared that she likes "the idea of having a story presented to me or a concept interestingly presented to me and I can think about it. And I like the, the visualization of these ideas and, and these stories". The experience of participant V-M-2 adds to the same idea "I love when art shocks me and when it would, whether that's in a positive or negative way. I believe that that's the essence of art to make an impression. So I think that's what I look for when I go to a museum to be impressed". Both participants want to be proposed new ways of seeing reality, they are motivated to visit museums because they want to get something (emotions or knowledge) that they did not have before.

Another main motivation to visit museums is to acquire new knowledge, participant V-B-1 defined his motivation simply as "to acquire more cultural knowledge, I would say".

Participant V-B-4 said that for her:

"I think it's the learning aspect of it. Like I'm not really someone who grew up busy with sports or anything. Like, I was very academic focused and learning focused and I think I still have that. So what I really enjoy when I'm in a museum is like mostly reading the description. So I really like (to know) where it came from and who did it. Maybe sometimes more than the painting itself or the piece of work".

The answers of both participants show that acquiring more knowledge/cultural capital is something that Millennial-Z still want in museums. Therefore, museums have to make learning as accessible as possible so anyone can acquire knowledge to their own capability and intention.

Participant V-M-2, told me that her main motivation to visit a museum is to see:

"A good exhibition. But also honestly a checklist of places where I haven't been yet, that a lot of people talk about or that I have seen on social media. But mostly like

places that show any kind of artistry that I'm into like to see that live instead of from my screen. Nothing specific, honestly. A vibe. . . <Laugh>”.

What is interesting about this answer is that it revolves around the act of socializing during a museum visit. That the motivation to visit a museum can be determined by what people she knows say or what appears in her social media is an indicator that Millennial-Z care about what their social groups consumes or likes, therefore museums can motivate young sub-groups to visit if their exhibitions are perceived as 'cool' or a 'vibe'. This way the members of such sub-groups will act in a way that invites others to visit. This part of the analysis can be related to what Van Wel et al. (2008) said regarding how young people want to be perceived by their peers (through 'normalcy'), so if the topic of a museum exhibition is perceived as part of their normal cultural consumption, it will be inviting to others.

Continuing with the topic of being motivated to visit a museum due to social interaction, I found it interesting how socialization affects the overall museum experience. When I asked participant V-M-1 about a poor museum experience, she told me:

“I think it had to do more so with who I was with. And if I was with somebody who didn't enjoy it or didn't understand it or didn't see the purpose of it, or didn't, you know, truly a get the pieces or the exhibition, then perhaps I would have felt I don't know, like I couldn't help that person to change their mind or anything. So maybe in that sense, I don't know, it would've been less enjoyable”.

This answer adds to the importance that Millennials-Z put upon the social act of visiting a museum.

Finally, participant V-B-4 gave me an example of how she improved her visit at the Boijmans Depot thanks to going with a friend:

“So there was one painting that my friend actually told me, like ‘oh, this is a really famous painting’ and I didn't know about it. It was The Tower of Babel. So yeah, so I didn't know about it, but it was beautiful. and she was like ‘oh, look really closely, there's all this detail, like very minuscule detail’. So I really enjoyed seeing that. I was really impressed by it. And I think if she didn't bring it to my attention, I wouldn't have looked at it that closely“.

This answer expects to show how for Millennial-Z going to a museum with friends and/or sharing their visit improves the overall experience. Therefore, museums could become more attractive to this generations if they motivated people to go with their friends and makes the museum space (in a way) their own.

These answers show that what Black said applies also to the participants of this interview; young people expect high-quality social and recreational environments where they can share their discoveries with their peers (2021).

When I asked museum professionals about what they thought the motivations were for Millennial-Z to visit their institutions, participant S-M-1 told me:

“I think it depends on the topic of the arts that is being shown. I mean, there's always, like, you have this very conceptual art that many people don't understand. And that was a bit like the thing of this institution [...] the topics are interesting. I think it's about that. [...] The topic and the artist. But one thing of this institution is that we mainly show artists that haven't been shown before in Europe. That's why we're an international art institution. So that's our mission. To bring in new names. So that's then a bit tricky, because many of the artists, people don't know. So then it's interesting, like, for us it's easy (as people with cultural capital). It's interesting because we want to see new artist [...] But for younger people, they need a recognition in a way. If it's even if it's one artwork or a name of a thing, or something like this. And we have found out like the more active it is, like with performance exhibition, if there's a performance within the exhibition, the more people you get.”

This answer is quite interesting because it also shows how they know that topic is very important for young visitors; we can think of the case seen above of visitor V-M-3 who really enjoyed seeing feminist topics presented and it improved her overall visit to Melly. This museum professional also talked about the recognition of the artist as being important to young people. Remarkably, only one participant in this research stated that as a proper motivation to visit a museum. However, it seems plausible to make the connection with what visitor V-M-2 said about the 'checklist' of what to see and what people are talking about, making sure that what the museum professional said is still true.

Participant S-B-1 approached this topic from a different, but valuable, angle. He said that it:

"Depends on who they are. Some young people are intrinsically motivated to do something with culture, and to be artistically active. That's an easy example. But also more and more, for instance, they are motivated because they want to learn a job. Like with the programs we are doing vocational training, these focus on, not so much on art or the museum as a place where you learn and learn creativity or about art history, but where you can also just be trained to be a security guard or, art handler. So there are many different ways of motivating or reasons why young people will be motivated".

I found this answer very important for the future of museums since it shows how museums could become spaces where people expand their cultural capital through knowledge that may be useful to get a job.

4.2.5 Expectations of Millennial-Z towards museums

When I asked the visitors about their expectations when visiting a museum, most of their answers were quite short. Most of them do not expect anything new outside of what museums already do. The main expectations they have towards museums are related to the accessibility, quality services, amenities offered, and explanations. Participant V-M-1 gave a good round-up answer about what she expects:

"I expect firstly accessibility, a location that is accessible, and also the facilities themselves to be fairly accessible. And I am not somebody with a disability, so not necessarily, so for me personally, I don't need, you know, a wheelchair ramp or anything like this. But just other things that can facilitate the comfort of the visitors such as like lockers and coat hangers and things like this. I also expect to have a bit of a clear floor plan or a pathway that the visitors can follow. I find that sometimes not understanding the floor plan can be kind of frustrating. And I also expect to have some kind of explanations for the exhibitions or for the pieces to have a bit more background information".

It was interesting that the expectation of clear delimited and curated pathways was the service that most participants asked for since this allows them to engage as much or little as they might feel during their visit. Participant V-B-2 told me about this that:

“I like it to have like a path. I like it for them to guide you a little bit. For me, like, especially when they're big, I can get very overwhelmed. So I like them to tell me like, we recommend this. Like, I would like, obviously like the Rijksmuseum is always like the big Dutch artist hall, but then I would also like them to create like little paths that you can do, like if you wanna do this, if you wanna do that, and then them guiding you through that. I also really appreciate explanations for the paintings, which is something that I think that lacked today.“

I think the importance of this answer and this expectation is that it is a simple way in which museums could cater to all type of visitors no matter their cultural capital, since it would be up to each participant to decide which pathways to take depending on their emotions, preparation, etc.

With respect to what Millennial-Z expect from museums, museum professional S-B-1 added something unexpected to me. He said about the expectations of the visitors:

“You should always take that into consideration and work with it. Again, it's not like you don't listen to what they wanted and do it because then you will have a couch [...] No, you listen to what they wanted and you think, okay, and how can we take this a step further?”

This comment was in relation to the example he gave me about asking what younger audiences want and how they always say, “a couch”. If museums stop here, they will not know what the people actually wanted, museums need to look deeper to be able to respond to what the audiences expect. Continuing with the couch example:

"Why do you want the couch? Right? what does this couch signify and how could we create that in different ways? And that is, that is what action, that is when the work only starts. And creating a conversation around this what is it implied about homeliness? Is it about physical well-being? How do we not cater to physical

wellbeing at the moment and so forth? And there was this before this. That is the interesting part".

The commentary of participant S-B-1 was quite useful since, in short, is about looking deeper at what the audience says about their expectations and thinking critically about what it actually means and how can museums then approach the root of the expectation and fulfill it in the best way possible.

4.2.6 Is having prior knowledge needed to enjoy these museums?

All the interviewed museum professionals answered the same when I asked them if visitors require certain prior knowledge to fully enjoy their efforts or those of the institution. For example, participant S-M-2 answered:

“We try to make the exhibitions and we try to make the programs (accessible) especially for the tourist. The tools and the workshops are always made for people. Like, we all also have <inaudible> groups here, and Eska is like a school for children that just came into the Netherlands and don't speak Dutch, they don't speak English. So we cannot communicate in words. They use very simple art language, for example, to make them experience the artworks. But only that, they're using, we have different tools to engage them in, in exhibition. So yeah. No education. Like, it doesn't matter what level, what age you are.”

As seen in this example, Melly has programs that aim to teach people that do not even speak the same language, so it could be said that their educational programs try to be as accessible as possible.

When I asked participant S-B-1 the same question he answered, "No. At least we try not to presume people have (prior knowledge)." To my question about how do they do it then, he said:

“You add like layers to your programming. In the most literal sense, in the Depot you add layers to the interpretation. So if you just want to walk around and take

selfies, then yeah, you go out, go ahead and knock yourself out. If you want to know a little bit more, you look at the touch screens that are on the walls and you find some basic stories. And if you want to know everything about every artwork, you download the Depot app and you scan the codes with every work, and it tells you exactly where it's from.”

This is one of the most important changes museums can apply to be able to approach all types of diverse audiences, therefore this point will be expanded further into the research when the topic of engaging museums is analyzed.

Remarkably, this same topic elicited 2 opinions when I asked the Millennial-Z visitors, for visitors V-B-1 and V-B-2 (both visited Boijmans, one Boijmans Zuid and the other Depot, respectively). What they saw was understandable and they thought it would be for any person no matter their background. The rest of the participants (All the ones from Melly and 2 more of Boijmans) agreed in that what they saw was accessible to everyone but if there was more explanation it would be better. For example, V-M-3 said:

“I want to say no, but I feel like maybe knowing some feminist history would be relevant (regarding the feminist exhibition), at least for some parts of the museum. But I also think like this could also be a good introduction to feminist movement. So I guess not really.”

Participant V-B-3 answered: “I would say you, if you know something about art artistry, it's definitely more interesting. But if you don't, it doesn't really matter.”

In conclusion of this topic, we can see that both Melly and Boijmans are and feel accessible enough to young audiences. All the participants saw something that made them relate to it. However, 5 out of 7 visitors agreed that when the exhibitions/pieces are properly explained, their understanding is multiplied. How well explained everything differs between the museums, Melly being the one that received the most praise. "I think Melly does a very good job of explaining, of having the little explanation placards by the pieces and by the exhibits. And I think it helps the visitors to get in the right like mindset or like headspace to observe the pieces." (V-M-1). The Boijmans Depot was deemed paler in comparison: "I

also really appreciate explanations for the paintings, which is something that I think lacked today” (V-B-2).

4.2.7 What makes a museum visit feel worthwhile?

As to what makes a museum visit worthwhile (a question asked only to the young visitors), participant V-B-1 told me that if during his visit one of the exhibitions was more contextualized it would have been better:

“Maybe for the scooter part more of the entire story because the amount of, well, you know, it clearly said what they were trying to do, but the whole timeline of how the process went for them would be slightly more interesting. Or not interesting but would just add to the exhibition itself. [...] More context, Yeah.”

We can assume from this answer that when exhibitions are properly contextualized the visitors can get a better idea of what the museums are proposing and they feel that their time spent in the museum was better spent because they understood more than just the basic details.

I asked this question to someone who seems to have enough cultural capital (or who at least in her answers seemed to be more omnivorous in her cultural consumption). She answered that generally, she thinks that all museum visits are worth her time. She appreciates exhibitions where she feels "that there was like heart in the planning and if there was (something) genuine in the curation of it, for example that there was a feeling that it was stories that needed to be told, or perspectives that needed to be shared. For whatever reason I think it's always worth it." Likewise, participant V-B-2 said something that rounds up what cultural omnivores need to find a museum visit worthwhile:

“I think always going to something that has to do with culture is always worth it. Even if you don't like it, it's worth it. [...] let's say I went to the NXT museum a few weeks ago. It had such a weird exhibition, like, so weird. It's about fluidness and

gender and weirdness. And it was like, at the end I was like, whoa. Like it's insane. I don't know if I liked it. But I don't regret going because I exposed myself to that.”

Both answers relate to what the theory says about cultural omnivores and how they are open to trying different types of cultural expressions and enjoy them depending on the context.

4.3 Section 2. Inclusion and engagement of young adults

4.3.1 How do young audiences learn about new exhibitions and what the museums are doing to be more engaging?

Effective communication is key for museums to approach and convince young audiences to visit them or participate in any other activity. As said in the theory section, social media facilitate the dialogue between the experts and the public, allowing for a two-way conversation (Langsley, 2018). This means that if museums want to properly communicate with their public, their presence on social media and the streets should be visible, attractive, and appealing so these two-way conversations can happen.

With regards to this, I asked the young participants how they usually learn about new exhibitions and if they feel compelled to go because of it. Participant V-B-3 told me that her main channel to discover cultural activities is through Instagram and Tik Tok:

“I like to follow Instagram's museum pages and see the new exhibitions. Or maybe TikTok [...] just people that have like a platform or even like my friends, they go to museum and they upload it and I'm like, oh, where is that? And then they tell me where to go. [...] TikTok also has the beauty that you don't need to follow the people to get the videos. You just need to be like, in the location or in the hashtags and that algorithm is scary. But through Instagram is mostly like through my community and my interests, that I get the suggestions.”

What I find interesting about this answer is not only the clear usage of social media platforms to influence and decide on what cultural activities are worth visiting, is that the element of socialization is still very present. As this participant said, when Millennial-Z see something that they like being shared by their friends they feel more motivated to go to museums.

Promoting this type of organic interaction between users is challenging no matter the size of the organization. When I asked the participants how could museums become more attractive for them and to their friends, I saw that the key to fostering these interactions is through the development and marketing of unique experiences that cater to the interests and aesthetic pursuits of Millennial-Z. Participant V-B-4 told me that:

“If they (museums) were to show something about how they're unique or how they're different or how it's an experience you've never experienced before. I think I had that with Fabrique des Lumières, where basically they project, at that time it was the artwork of Gustav Klimt and they had a beautiful soundtrack and it was inside a church. And I think that advertising was like, you've never experienced something like this. Like this is like visual, it's audio, it's in a beautiful location. So to me that really seemed like, oh, this is unique, this is something else.

This type of experiences, specially the Fabrique des Lumières, came out at least 3 times in the interviews. Participant V-M-2 also talked about this event and how she saw it advertised online and motivated her to buy the tickets, She told me that:

“It was very targeted as well. Like, I like they knew that I was (interested) because I also went to the Fabrique des Lumières in the Westerpark. It's also a similar idea, digitalized work of art by different artists. So I think that they like, you know, my algorithm. They know (The social media algorithm), they did the math. We're like ‘she's gonna buy this’.”

About her experience she said:

“This is like, this light show or like images show from Van Gogh at the Noorderkerk in Amsterdam, Rembrandt Meets Vincent. Beautiful, it was gorgeous and a friend of mine had already sent me the link and I had seen the ad a couple of times on my

feed and I really, really want to visit, really want to go. So just bought tickets right away and went, it was beautiful. Really. You're in a, you're in a church basically, which he visited as well, which is really nice. Bringing back that little concept and context thing that I love. I was like, oh my God, he breathed this air, but they have like his work digitalized and animated to fit the church inside. So you can like lay down on the ground and then like this beans sack thingy and just enjoy like the lights. It was beautiful.”

As seen by these two very positive experiences, if museums were to offer innovative and unique events, with an educational purpose but through an entertaining medium, where Millennial-Z could feel that it is a unique experience they have to visit, then there would be bigger chances that they share this enthusiasm with their friends and there would be more interest through all types of museum's marketing channels. Of course, these types of efforts are difficult and expensive, yet their success is proven and museums could do similar-type events suitable to the museum budget.

Returning to the use of social media to discover new exhibitions, participant V-B-4 told me that instead of following museums individually, she follows public accounts whose purpose is to concentrate on and advertise the cultural happenings around the country. She told me "I follow a few accounts that are like central to the city. So like things happening in The Hague or fun things to do in Amsterdam. And they usually have these kind of suggestions". Another example of curated third-party efforts that reach Millennial-Z quite efficiently is We Are Public, as participant V-M-2 described it:

“There's also this app, well, it's not really an app, it's more of a website. It's called We Are Public. It's like a subscription. And they curate exhibitions, films, theater, whatever throughout the whole country and as long as you have like your subscription with them, you can go to whatever show it is for free. So a lot of, a lot of things come also from there.”

The type of accounts like @Rotterdam_info and We Are Public are followed by Millennial-Z since they share interesting curated (by them) cultural activities happening in the moment

or in the close future. So it could be pertinent for museums to connect with this type of third parties to maximize the reach the exhibitions or workshops may have.

When I asked how, outside of the internet, people discover new museum exhibitions, most participants told me that they do not pay close attention to posters or ads they see on the street. Participant V-B-4 told me that she sees them:

V-B-4: “Usually at the bus stops. And so like, the one that comes to mind is the Stedelijk museum. Like I know I have seen quite a few advertisements for that. And then in The Hague, the Escher Museum has quite a lot of advertisements around, around The Hague.

Researcher: “And do these physical ads motivate you to go to a museum?”

V-B-4: “Yes, it does if they're done right. Sometimes it's just a very interesting artwork or photo that really like grabs your attention, I think. And, and that's very nice. but sometimes it's very abstract by just saying the name of the exhibition, then it doesn't necessarily draw my attention. I need support a visual input.”

This answer shows that ads outside of the internet may not be as efficient to capture the attention and interest of young audiences. However, if they are “done right” and show the value of visiting the exhibition in a simple but objective way, Millennial-Z might be motivated to visit or at least search for more information online.

Regarding what museums do to attract visitors through their social media, museum professional S-M-2 told me even though it might seem good to try to catch the attention of as many people as possible, the real reason must be to attract a delimited audience, that is what guides the social presence of an institution:

“I think that if you want to use social media for new purposes, like promoting educational programs, you need to have, like, it needs to be like good. Like, it needs to attract people. [...] we really need to think about what the target audience is. And if we don't have clear targets, then it's messy. You know?”

She continued by telling me about the quality of the interactions she is looking for in her programs:

“That's why I think as long as I don't believe that it will attract the right people, or it'll be informative to the people that I wanted to do, everyone who's interested, then I don't post it. [...] I search for different ways to approach these people. (in) Social media is you need to stay critical of what you propose because it needs to attract your targets, but you also need to realize that a lot of other people are seeing it. All at the same time. So do you want it to be seen by other people? Like, you need to think about how many people are willing and approaching it.”

Her answer is very useful to understand how some museums interact with their social media presence and how their efforts are well thought and targeted to the sub-groups they want to respond to it.

Museum professional S-M-1 said something very interesting regarding how to approach young online audiences. She said that at the beginning of her career in Melly the digital communication efforts about her programs were made in a very institutional way, academically written and following what could be defined as a 'corporate image'. After the institution hired a marketing agency that told them to brand itself as a place that felt closer to the people, then the communication and marketing started to be more aligned with the online language and logic of young people. She said:

“if I'm doing an event then the event is written in my own handwriting. Or if someone else is doing an event, then it's written in their handwriting. So that people also get to know the person behind it, you know that it's more aligned and that you really, like, talk as in person, as a person. That's why also the neon signs in this space are handwritten. they're handwritings of our team members. So that was the whole marketing strategy there and branding. So we started doing that also on the Instagram.[...] So it became much more personal. And also the pictures, like the images, first it was very static. Then you would have an exhibition, and then one person would be sitting in it from behind. And then it's very clean. Now we're just like eh look at this disco ball here, you know, like more fun, more playing with it.”

This change in language and logic is pertinent to the theory regarding how Millennial-Z expect to be accepted in a welcoming environment where how they present themselves will not be judged. This way of communicating with young people makes the conversation between both sides easier and keeps it in terms that Millennial-Z know and comfortable with, while still maintaining the institution's goals in mind.

About what young audiences want to see online, participant V-M-1 answered:

“I enjoy coming across interesting articles on magazine websites. Like sometimes I read the New Yorker, sometimes read books, smaller magazines or maybe blog type of posts. [...] I like to come across anything that sort of helps me to maybe expand like my list of things I wanna read. [...] Occasionally I use social media to kind of discover tattoo artists that I'm interested in because I have tattoos and I am having experience interacting with artists I've discovered through Instagram”.

Her answers allowed me to see how varied the online cultural consumption of young people is and how this can be a challenge for museums in respect to how to approach them.

An example of how to do is through the answer of participant V-B-2, she said that she follows various museums online, she gave the example of The National Gallery in the UK and how she likes their efforts to interact with their followers “they do like stories, like quizzes on their stories. And I think that's very fun. I always participate so that like, using social media not only to post, but to interact and to like to get something out of the public” I find her answer valuable because it shows how the digital accounts of museums can promote engaging activities with their followers and how this can shift how some people feel about the museum, getting a feeling of a more accessible and open institution.

4.3.2 Inclusion of Millennial-Z

One of the most important topics of this research is the inclusion of Millennial-Z in museums today. I wanted to know if the young participants felt represented or included during their visits and in other museums, at the same time I wanted to know what the museum professionals were doing to include this demographic; and if the opinions of both

discourses related to what theory says about a lack of inclusion or underrepresentation of young adults in museums (Batat, 2020) (Black, 2021).

When I asked participant V-B-1 about the visit to Boijmans Zuid and if he felt represented or included in the exhibition spaces, he told me very concisely “Yeah, I would say so. Yeah”. Then I asked what made him feel represented or included, to which he answered that what made him feel represented in the 2 exhibitions present at the moment was:

V-B-1 : "Well, the first one that's about the scooter that you could use since the use of E-scooters nowadays are quite prevalent. You know, since they're all shared. And with the second one with the bowls I would say maybe in two ways, reading a story about, it's by a lady of immigrant descent, and the fact that more Asian cuisine is more popular nowadays. (This participant is also of Asian descent) So my interaction with these bowls is also more common. So I just I would say in those in those ways."

Researcher: “In that case, what will make you feel even more represented in this Museum?”

V-B-1: “That's a good question. Maybe if there are more exhibitions about stuff that we encounter”.

To this participant what makes him feel included in a museum is being able to connect what he sees in the exhibition with what he knows from his personal experience. This relation is what makes exhibitions to feel close and relatable for Millennial-Z

When I asked Participant V-B-4 if she feels represented in museums in general, she answered that:

“It depends what museum, I think some are so famous or so established they don't need to cater to young people. Especially because they get a lot of funding from older people and sometimes, they cater to super young, so there's a lot of activities for like six-year or five-years old. So sometimes it does feel like the middle group is missing.”

Her answer is very interesting because she knows, as some theory says, that some museums don't offer enough activities or topics to which young adults can relate or participate. I then asked her about what would make her feel more represented in museums as a young person, she told me that if she could relate to what other people of the same age group could have experienced in other times or in other places, she would feel more represented. On a similar note as the last participant, for her too what makes museums exhibitions welcoming is being able to connect what she sees in the museum to the real world:

"As a young person? Hmm. I think if there was some sort of, I don't know, connection to the real world. I like what I said earlier, like if there was something like the depiction of a child working as a chimney sweep or something. And they would put the age they would be like; this is comparable too. and then what that person is doing in this day and age or that kind of stuff. I would find that really interesting. Or like if they show a young girl getting married and say, oh, this would usually be a bachelor student or something. That makes it a bit more concrete to me."

When I asked participant V-B-2 if she felt represented during her visit she said:

"Not really. I mean, I didn't feel excluded, but I wasn't like, oh, this is targeted to people like me. It was more like, yeah, I'm here. I'm enjoying it, I can do it. But it wasn't anything that I was like, you know how like the interactive rooms, you know, they're for the kids and like other things are for others".

This answer shares some points with the participant V-B-4, in that they know that museums make efforts to improve the visits of other demographic groups, but they don't feel that there is something specifically for them. It is important to also say that no participant felt excluded, they still enjoyed the exhibit without a problem. I will come back to this point with one of the museum professionals.

Later I asked participant V-B-2 what would make her feel more included in the museum, to which she answered:

"Maybe if they would have like something more made by contemporary artists and like young contemporary artists, like students I'd be like, oh, it's one of like, I could

be my friend, you know? That'd be cool if they would do like activities in there, like, I don't know, like a film night and like a cocktail, something like that made like for 21 plus. Then something like that.”

This answer adds to the point that Millennial-Z feel included and represented in museums when they can see what other people of their same age are doing (or did in the past), this could be young artists, young curators, young staff, etc. Her answer also approached the topic of museums offering accessible events that Millennial-Z traditionally do outside of the museum walls. This same type of event was also proposed by other authors such as Gofman (2011 in Batat, 2020) and Black (2021).

Participant V-M-3's answer works well as a connection and example of how when museums approach the interests and topics of young people, they also feel included and welcomed:

“At this moment in my life, I find certain social movements very important, and I feel like we're living in a very dynamic and extremely active social justice era. And I feel like I'm very invested in that. [...] I feel like that really does attract me to a museum. If they, for example, discuss values that are important to me, but also let's say include non-binary artists or feminist artists, or when a person that created this art piece is a woman of color or something like that. I feel like that really makes me, I guess not respect (the museum), but it does make me feel more like welcome to it because like, especially for Melly at least, I think it really resonated with me today because it's about women, which I am one, and it talks about mental health, which is a really what topic in my life right now. So I guess what really resonates with me at the moment, if my identity is expressed somehow, I definitely feel like that attracts me more to a place.”

When I asked her what would make her feel more included in museums, she said:

“For it to be affordable. <Laugh>. Sometimes a 25 euros ticket feels a little bit too much. For me, even though I, I want to support art, I think it's really important that they're, that we pay for these things. Sometimes it's too much, especially if I don't get to see everything.”

On a similar note, participant V-B-3 told me that she would feel more welcomed if the price of the coffee was accessible:

"Because the cafe is usually the place where people want to go. After a very, very tiring trip in the museum. And if the price is friendly for young people, then it could retain more people, clients, visitors and also, I would say museum shop. If there is a connection is quite fun if, you know, if the merchandise is diverse and also friendly in the price for young people, then it's definitely going to be attractive for young people."

Both of these points are not simply about money, using the example of the couch, we can say that Millennial-Z want to be able to use museums as a cool inexpensive place to be together or by themselves. This does not mean that museums should not charge for tickets, but as Melly and many others do, allow people to use the museum space for free during their leisure time to create communities.

Participant V-M-1 is someone who can be considered a cultural omnivore and even though her cultural consumption habits are not unique relative to other participants, she is someone who completely understands the museums language. Regarding the question of representation, she told me that:

"I guess it depends on the museum itself, but at the same time, I'm not sure if I fully paid attention. Mostly because I don't necessarily seek representation from museums. Like I have said before I kind of just go to experience something outside of myself for a moment. Other perspectives, other stories, if it just so happens that some of these stories and perspectives are similar to mine, I think that's very interesting. But I'm not necessarily expecting that or looking for that myself. Because I think that there's a lot more to my perspective and my story than just my age. For example, uh, even pieces that are done by women who are older than me can be, for example, identifiable as like women's issues because I am a woman also. So it does not necessarily have to be because I am a young person, in that sense."

I find this answer fascinating because it includes many lectures on the representation of young adults. Firstly I think that this participant does not seek representation in museums

because she already has the cultural capital to appreciate different types of realities other than her own, while someone with less cultural capital would prefer something closer to themselves to feel identified in a museum. She also talks about being able to identify parts of herself in other themes, not only through her young age. I think that this is exactly what other participants meant when they expect something they can relate to and it shows how the topics that museums can create with Millennial-Z in mind can be of many different perspectives, not only focusing on their age.

Focusing now on the museum professionals, when I asked participant S-M-1 about how to be more inclusive towards young audiences, she told me that one way to do so is:

“I think it's very interesting to step outside of the institution, huh. So what I just said, like not only the followers you have on Instagram, but talk to people. Go to other events and then speak to people and see what is in their interest. See where you find these people. What are these hubs they go to? And then you talk to people. I think that's the main thing”.

I think this answer is very important because it shows how a museum should not be a static institution just waiting for young visitors to appear, they should go (like in Melly) out of its space to learn more about young people, to make a closer connection with them that might prove more attractive to Millennial-Z since they can see how the institution is open and willing to work together. S-M-1 continued:

“Because for the destination of CLIP (Collectief Leren in de Praktijk), we had to also do an outreach for the open call. And I wanted to focus more on the MBO school instead of the masters and the Willem de Kooning people. [...] so me and the filmmaker made a strategy. So he went to some of the schools. We made a video message. We shared on our own platforms [...] on our personal Instagrams as well. But we actually asked some of the ambassadors, like you know, we made former fellow, like ambassadors as well. Like, please share in your network. Here's a video message. We made like a gif. Like moving image. That it's like that. Then it sticks.”

As seen in this answer, creating a connection with young audiences is not easy nor it is the institutional focus of many museums. Yet is with the efforts of professionals like S-M-1 that museums could break their popular image of being stiff institutions.

Finally, Museum professional S-B-1 gave a different perspective through his answer. First, he told me that in Boijmans they approach young adults through three main avenues:

“So for schools we work with vocational schools and higher education. So with the Zadkine and Albeda doing these programs about jobs and with the university, with Willem de Kooning and so forth around things like the summer school. The second is at the Depot, one of the target groups are the millennials, and the communication and branding around the Depot is all focused on this. Like you see with the advertisements we have now with Ace & Tate and these types of companies. And here in Zuid I think the main group that we are aiming here for is like talent development. So we work with a lot of young artists in this age demographic that you research for.”

What I liked about this part of the answer are the many different outreaches Boijmans is trying to get. I think that the combination of efforts, between the three avenues Boijmans pursue, approaches many different sub-groups within the general Millennial-Z demographic. However, what I found more interesting is what he said afterward:

“But it's not, it's never, we've not really started from saying, okay, there's this age group, Millennials, what can we do for them? It's always been kind of the other way around saying, okay, what's the talent and how, and they happen to be Millennials. [...] I don't target groups. I like to think more of <inaudible> about source groups, people you work with, rather than who you try to do something for.”

In short, the point this professional was telling me is that museums should not try to cater only to young generations because they are young, it is about working with them as a source of knowledge, inspiration, and talent. That is why when participants V-M-1 and V-B-2 said that they don't feel included but also not excluded makes sense, for these museums the focus is not to cater only to what Millennial-Z want, is to work with them as participants and sources of knowledge. Albeit there's more effort to be done.

This approach is how museums should work with their audiences, according to some authors. It is through this mentality that the concept of Co-creation becomes pertinent in the museum context since this participation enriches both the museum and the overall experience of the young visitor (Batat, 2020). He finished his answer by describing the process he and his team followed when they were planning Boijmans Zuid:

“We said we don't start with a program; we start with a <Word in Dutch> listening station. And we said, let's talk and see what people would like to have to, and one of the things was this Talent development program, which we started. [...] Now, there's a there's a big, it's a big challenge and young adults are a very difficult group to approach and to work with in Zuid specifically. It works sometimes, but so much more to be done.”

Boijmans Zuid is a good example of how museums can take the extra steps to understand younger generations better with the hope of being able to create connections and participation with young people. The deeper focus of museums should be that of a co-creator that fulfills its educational roles through the efforts of both professionals and diverse audiences.

4.3.3 What would be different if young people felt more included in museums?

To finish this section I asked visitors and professionals what they think would be different if Millennial-Z were more present in museums today. Some participants were concise with their answers, like participant V-B-1:

V-B-1: “I think their consumption would increase, of the museums.”

Researcher: “Will you personally visit more museums like this?”

V-B-1: “Yeah, probably.”

While other participants were more detailed with their opinions, as participant V-M-3:

“I think it would be more of a dynamic space that changes over time, where people can gather, interact with pieces and each other. And it would be more of a social space rather than a highbrow kind of like cultural environment to where you just sit and look at things. That's what I feel because I feel like that's becoming more common now.”

Both answers show 2 positive and plausible outcomes for museums if they focus more in the interests and the representation of Millennial-Z. Similar to the answer of participant V-M-3, museum professional S-M-1 said that, if museums were to be more open for young adults:

"I think I think it will be more fun, in a broader sense. I think it will be more bottom-up movement. So more smaller activities where more people can join. I think it will be like this, this kind of grassroots vibe where people can play amongst like experiment and develop. I think it will be so good if we would have that representative of young people, it will become automatically more diverse, more inclusive. Instead of institutions holding on to their main structure [...] Just facilitate and learn together instead of “We are the institution and we have to teach you”. I think that would be that would be amazing actually. That would be revolutionary.”

Now that we saw the opinions and points of view of how young adults are represented in cultural institutions and how museum professionals try to do so, I will focus on how museums could do it.

4.4 Section 3. New Museology

Based on the ideas of Vergo's New Museology, I wanted to know how museums could shift from being for the object to be for the audiences. Of course, some museums are already adapting to the new expectations audiences put on them, so I wanted to know what museums efforts visitors enjoyed the most and made them feel like the museum is an approachable place where they can learn. And of the museum professionals I wanted to

know if their efforts were focused on the audiences, their way to do so, and how to make museums places where learning can be fun while maintaining the educational quality.

4.4.1 The Role and Goals of Museums in Today's Society

To start I wanted to know how visitors and museum professionals saw the role of museums in today's society, this had the intention of knowing how valuable museums are for Millennial-Z and if they still hold them as figures of cultural authority. I also asked museum professionals what goals they want to achieve regarding young adults, I did this because I wanted to compare if what museums want to do is similar to what Millennial-Z value of museums.

Participant V-M-1 told me that for her museums are valuable because they preserve history and art roles as well as their influence in broadening the perspective of society:

“I think they offer a very positive contribution to society if not for preservation purposes, for example, of historical artifacts or historical artworks. I think they serve as important spaces for people to think about important issues or think about different issues or witness other perspectives that they otherwise wouldn't just see out in the world or in their communities. So I do think they're very important”.

Participant V-B-3 approached this answer through a more economic and heritage point of view:

"Museums and cultural institutions provide this spilled good how do you call it? I forgot the term. But basically, it can generate more economic benefits than, than it looks. So when a museum becomes an attraction, then all the businesses around the museum benefit from it. And that is one thing, economically speaking, but also, it becomes some kind of cultural icon of the city. It becomes something people remember the city by. And that is more important than the economic value, I would say. And of course, just the pure pleasure of culture that is already a benefit for the visitors."

Of course, her point of view is also valid and I liked how she focused on the value museums have to their city and the communities around it.

Visitor V-M-2 raised an interesting point about the contributions of museums to society, she said:

“I think that yes, they do contribute, but at the same time who decides who gets to be in museums? Who decides who is worthy to be showcased in that way? Who decides who are the masters? What is? And what is in high culture and is it better than least culture? I do think that it would be nicer and I guess it could contribute more to society if society actually engaged into what is showcased. [...] So there's still a lot in my perspective that I cannot really come up with the right terms. But who ends up there and who ends up influencing us is not necessarily a picture of society. As it is more of a cultivated image of what art is and what should be, what should be perceived as art. And who we should look up to, to understand what art is and how it influences us. So yes, it is nice, but I think that it would be better if there is more of a public approach to it. And that people have more to say into what it gets to get it to be in museum.”

Her answer shows an analysis of who chooses what we, as a society, see as art or as culture. She says that if museums want to contribute actively to the whole society, they should involve themselves in what is shown, not only an up-to-down point of view of what is art. In short, museums will contribute more to society if society acts as a co-creator. In this logic, museums would focus less on the object and more on society and what they perceive as valuable.

The museum professional S-B-1 told me that he sees the contribution of museums to society in three ways:

“I think museums do three things. One is they show us in one way or the other what our society is and where it comes from, what they, what a shared repertoire of signs and metaphors and stories we have. Two, it shows the extraordinary capacity and skills of people contributing to that, artists making things. And three, it can give

people, also young people, ideas and tools and ways of also changing that into the future.”

His answer puts museums as a valuable agents in societies because, in a way, they let us see where we (as communities or entire societies) come from. It allows us to admire the work and minds of people in the present and these two combined motivate people to continue creating and contributing to their communities.

Concerning what goals museums professionals have, S-M-1 told me:

"I want to make a bridge between this gap. I want to close this gap more between the elite, the top down/the bottom-up. The young people versus the professional people. The community, the audience, and the providers, in the sense, like the professional providers, I mean, the institution would not exist if there's no audience. [...] So to move away from this notion of we know everything we're in an ivory tower, we provide you. I'm really striving for this bottom-up mentality, but really the mentality, like not just programming and then that's it.”

Her goals are really motivating because it questions the status quo of museology and bring it closer to audiences that were less of a concern for the institutional museum for many decades. Her answer also values the same things that visitor V-M-2 told above, questioning who decides what is art, and opens up the possibilities for other people (Millennial-Z included) to be part of the cultural world. Something that really motivates this museum professional is to open up the museum as an institution to have systematic inclusion and participation of people of different backgrounds and colors, as she said: "really the mentality, not just the programming".

4.4.2 What is Expected of Museum Staff.

If museums want to be the place where visitors can have a positive experience, not only in the educational aspect but during the entire visit, then it is important to know what Millennial-Z expect from the staff working there, since that affects their overall involvement.

Participant V-B-2 told me that what she likes about the museum staff is:

“Friendliness, helpfulness. Just being very much there today. I think the people there helping were great. No complaints. Like we ask them like three times questions with the lockers that we had a malfunction. Like they gladly came and helped us and they weren't like a bit of a hassle. Sometimes Dutch people tend to be Dutch directness and tend to be quite hostile but they were so good. [...] Welcoming accessibility. It would also be cool, obviously we don't know because there weren't that many staffs, like once you went inside the museum. I think there was like the guard in the gallery. From there on there wasn't that many people, but it would be cool maybe to also have people around to explain things or if you have a question. But I also liked that it's very self-guided and self-exploring.”

Participant V-B-3 told me:

“I think it would be great that museum, oh, okay. First of all, most museum staff is just friendly and just very nice. That's great in itself. I think it would be really, really nice if they also know about the exhibition and the history of the museum or story behind an artwork. But I understand that not everyone is an art historian and of course not everyone's professionally trained in art. So it would be a, it would be like extra nice.”

Finally, participant V-M-3 said:

“I think just friendliness, just kindness, I guess. I don't really, I don't feel like I really interact with staff at museums. Like if I don't feel like I've ever had the need to, but just being open to help, if necessary, I guess. I think museums have a very positive atmosphere, so it'll be nice if those of the staff have a positive welcoming energy. The atmosphere itself.”

As seen by these answers, the two main expectations Millennial-Z have towards museum staff is to be welcoming, kind and helpful, the other would be that the staff can share a bit of knowledge about the exhibitions or the museum itself to improve the experience of the visitor once he, she or they know a little more context of what is presented. This connects with how the museum staff can also learn about their own collections to feel more

connected with it and to be able to give a better service to the visitors. The museum staff's interest to learn is shown by what S-M-2 told me: "We did the workshop that we normally do with schools, we did with Melly staff a few weeks ago and everyone was like, can we do this again?". Therefore, museums can teach their staff the same way they would teach visitors so that they can, through a welcoming atmosphere, share a bit of that knowledge with visitors that would like to know more context.

To match what the visitors expect of museum staff, I asked the professionals what skills they think museum workers should have to reach their objectives regarding the visitors. Notably, the three professionals talked about the same skills, listening to the visitors and being brave to incorporate what the audiences tell them.

Museum professional S-M-1 told me that museums workers need to:

“Be aware, open minded, willing to learn and they have to be resourceful. I think it is very important that you have people in a team, in a cultural institution [...] that can understand the value of different perspectives. [...] I think that is very important because [...] they're mainly the same people in the same positions for a long period of time. And then they want to change. So I think it's about this openness and this willingness, like it's about the intention. And yet the intention should not be about the intention only. No. Like, you also should have this courage to act”.

Her co-worker, S-M-2 answer expresses the importance of listening and empathy:

“You might need to be communicative, you might need to also be just polite, like people loving, like [...] Welcoming. Like hospitality is a big part of it as well. But like really like skills is being able to listen. That's the thing, that's important one as well. Just like as an institution, but also as a someone who works here, you need to listen. To what people are saying, what visitors are saying and not only listen, but also act on it. You know? That's, I believe that's it, but yeah compassionate.”

As seen by these answers and regarding Millennial-Z, both the public and the professionals agree that being kind and listening are the most important features museums can enhance to welcome young audiences. When museums listen to what audiences have to say and prepare their staff to be as welcoming and kind as possible, it makes Millennials from all

kinds of educational backgrounds feel more comfortable and at peace during their visit. This is something theory also argues, specifically when there is no fear of talking to any staff member when Millennial-Z can engage in activities by themselves or with their friends without the fear of feeling judged for not knowing. (Black, 2021).

4.4.3 Young people and engaging activities

As said in the theory section, the participatory museum is a way in which audiences would feel more attracted to go to museums since they can participate and have fun with what the museums are showing. When the visitor has the agency to participate as much or as little as they want, this allows them to feel more comfortable, since they do not have to act in a certain way or know something to enjoy their time and their visit. A way to do so in through the use of interactive electronic tools that have the intention of integrating fun into the learning process. It is also a way in which museums can 'speak' a similar language to that of some Millennial-Z sub-groups (Batat, 2020). The main point of this type of exhibition is not for the visitors to just interact, is for them to participate and engage with the exhibition so they can act as co-creators of their own learning process.

For example, when I asked Professional S-M-2 about how Melly approaches young audiences and makes them participate in what they do, she told me that:

“(The intention with Melly school programs is also about being) entertaining. Because for example like the exhibition, like an installation of Anna Witt’s (*Soft Destruction*), which is an ASMR installation. Kids love it because they know ASMR, they follow. It's like again, a popular thing, you know? So they, they know about it, they recognize it, they want to be entertained. So they put on their headphones, they listen to it, but then again, the (museum) activator can say like, okay, so ASMR stands for Automatic sensory meridian response. [...] So, you know, so they learn something like this and then they can say as well like this artist works with it, so they do learn about it while being entertained. And that is the golden combination for students to be engaged and also to receive something and keep it,

you know? Because when they leave, they forget a lot. But then maybe some work they keep. That makes them grow. In their emotional (aspect) maybe.”

This answer is very useful to see how some museum professionals know that the ‘golden rule’ in museum education is for students/visitors to learn while being entertained. And one way of doing so is through topics that they already know that interest them and that allow them to be engaged with these, as well as having the physical possibility to participate into what is being shown.

I used this example because I found it interesting that the visitor V-M-1 also got the intention of the Melly curators and artists and knew that it is with topics like this that young people feel invited to participate in museums. I asked her which part of her visit did she think was aimed at young adults. She said:

“The living space destroyed with some ASMR videos in the back. And I think the phenomenon of ASMR as this social media trend and like YouTube trend, I think is kind of a young person thing. I think only people from a certain generation might understand that reference and might take, get something out of that exhibition as opposed to maybe older people. So I think that one specifically might have been targeting that group.”

As seen by her answer, this exhibition at Melly is correctly aimed at young people who find it relatable and feel motivated to participate with it, as participant V-M-3 said about her visit: “there was this one part on the floor that I mentioned that was an interactive display that things were mashed around [...] just thrown around, ripped apart. I wish I could do that. <Laugh>”

Participant V-B-1 also gave a good example of how, when visitors can interact with something related to the exhibition, they remember it better:

V-B-1: “Because I remember going to museum that had an exhibition on these types of rocks. And what they were trying to illustrate or demonstrate rather, was the, the texture of the rock. So in that case, I fully understand I would need to touch it.”

Researcher: “Do you feel like this remembrance from your part had something to do with you being able to touch it?”

V-B-1: “I think so, yeah. Because I interacted with it.”

For all visitors to be able to interact with the exhibitions or installations, there needs to be a low entrance threshold, where little or no explanation is needed on what to do and how, and the time a person has to invest to participate can be just seconds or minutes if they wish so (Black, 2021). It was participant V-B-4 who told me that if she finds an engaging prop in museums, she only participates if she can do so in a couple of seconds, more than that and she feels like she would rather continue her visit:

“It really depends on what it is. I think if it's something that is quick, I will tend to do it. like I remember, I don't remember which museum it is, but you could write like a little post-it and stick it on the wall and I'm like, oh, okay, then will take 10 seconds. I will do it. But if it's anything longer than that, I would rather spend that time looking at other parts of the museum.”

Regarding the investment of energy and attention, she says that if it seems even a bit arduous, she would rather skip it: “I feel like, oh, now I don't wanna learn how to use this screen and what to press”.

Two participants told me about how when museums let the visitor play like ‘a child’ the overall visit is more fun and even educational. Interestingly, it was both a visitor and a professional who said so. Visitor V-M-2 told me this:

V-M-2: “Have you been to NEMO? It's a science museum in Amsterdam. I know it's like targeted for kids, but I love going there. I love, I think it's just great. Like, you walk in and the first thing that you get to do is like, put yourself in a little bubble. [...] It's targeted for kids. It's meant for you to pull through the whole museum, touch everything, make little experiments, play games that are related to science. So you get to learn a little bit, but at the same time you just want to play and that's just very lovely.

Researcher: “So in that case, when you visit museums, do you like to interact with them?”

V-M-2: “Of course. If there is a possibility to interact. I'd love to. Because it's like, it brings you into the art. I feel that it brings you into the art piece itself whenever you're able to interact with it. You feel like you're part of it. And more often than not, we just expect, to just look at the art instead of like, being in it.”

Researcher: “Do you think that you also learned from it?”

V-M-2: “I could. I feel like ‘course it depends on the exhibition and what we are doing . But of course I could learn, I can learn something theoretical or I can learn something about myself. So it like really depends.”

Museum professional S-M-2 told me this regarding interactivity and the chance to play:

S-M-2 : “Little story. last weekend I was in Het Scheepvaart Museum in Amsterdam, which is a ship museum. And they had two interactive parts, which were both for kids and me and my husband, we are in our thirties. So we were like, why is this for kids?”

Researcher: “You want to play.”

S-M-2: “I want to play <laugh>. So I believe young adults are still children. And we like to be entertained and interact with, we, we'd like to interact with art the same. So my ideal museum would be a place where, museum or cultural institution, at the institution would be a place where young adults can be kids again but also get the knowledge to grow their emotional(ly) [...] It doesn't matter how it looks. It doesn't matter what artwork there are or the topics, it doesn't matter what topics there are, but well, it doesn't matter what topics there are. But I believe that every museum strikes good topics, you know? I try to have good conversation. That's why I more focused on how it can be interesting for young adults, In interaction.”

As seen in these two answers, young participants want to be able to play and have fun in the museum in a pertinent way. Millennial-Z want to have the chance to embrace the exhibition and enjoy their moment during the visit. This does not only bring knowledge also brings memorable experiences for them.

Finally, museum professional S-B-1 told me how museums could act if they want to foster the engagement of Millennial-Z:

"In broad strokes, two ways. One is to create projects that are really made in co-creation. So where people are not, do not even see themselves as visitor to the project, like here in Zuid would be an example of this. Or Mahjouba (An exhibition about e-scooters present at the time) same eh. There are people who feel that they've been actively making whatever the show or exhibition or project is. Right, so there's like co-creation. Participation is a bit easier level. And that's like, for instance, with unpacking Boijmans, where you have ways of interacting, asking questions back. Even if it's on a sign, if it is in the app, it's returning information. So those are two ways of going about that."

His answer is a good explanation of what the participative museum could do to improve the experience of the visitors. It is up to the museum to decide which topics and in which exhibitions an interactive or participative display is pertinent. Either be the case, there's room for creativity and for museums to teach while allowing Millennial-Z to have the best time possible.

4.4.4 Electronic and digital engaging tools

As hinted before, technological and digital gadgets like TV's, videogames, touchpads, projectors, VR, etc. can be used to motivate young people to visit and participate in the activities museums create. When I asked museum professional S-B-1 his opinion about the inclusion of such gadgets, he answered very concisely and accurately what it means to museums:

S-B-1 "Same question as like, what do you think about using a pen [...] It's a tool."

Researcher: “Yeah. So are you not against the use of it?”

S-B-1: “No.”

In the opinion of S-M-2, these types of tools are:

“I do believe that using digital instruments, like this or anything can help you in your purpose. To showcase it in a particular way or try to make people engage in it in a particular way, then it's good. You know, it just needs to have a target. It needs a goal, like why do you use it. You don't want it to be overly stimulative. Like you don't want it to be only digital, because I do believe that some things need to stay analog as much as possible [...] they also need to be used you know, with a purpose to make better exhibitions, better installations and more engaging, you know, more interactive. And a good balance of course I believe it's also what, what visitors would like to have. Like good balance of both. Keep them interesting, but also leave something for imagination, you know?”

As seen in both answers, electronic gadgets have a space in participative museums since they can be used to improve what the museum, artist or curator has to say, as well as make young participants feel more familiar with their surroundings. One young visitor (V-M-3) gave me a good example of how an electronic interactive display helped her to summarize the entire visit into a cool experience.

"I think that's very fun. Especially if I get to draw things with it or like, actually put into practice what I learned at the museum, you know? Like recently, I also went to a street art museum in Paris there, and they had a very fun screen where you could practice using different tools that street artists use or graffiti artists use. And I thought that was a very cool and fun idea because I've never touched anything of the sort in real life, or never have before in general. And even though it wasn't actually touching a real thing, I think it was a fun little way to close the exposition that where I could see or do what the artists, I just learned about do. So I do, I do find that very fun, especially if it's connected directly to the to the exposition."

As seen all over the analysis section, there is a true interest in Millennial-Z towards museums, the technological and didactic developments applied to the museum world prove as valuable tools that allow to create engaging experiences for different audiences. In the next section I will discuss the information obtained and as well as some finishing thoughts to combine what was analyzed and the theory.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

After analyzing the answers of the participants and seeing how the different points of view get together to create a clear image of the relationship between Millennial-Z and museums, it is possible to now answer the main research question *How can museums become more engaging and participative for younger generations?* The answer is multifaceted and there is not one simple way of attracting all Millennial-Z since there are many variants in the museum world and the personal taste of each young individual. Yet, thanks to the research process I can say that Millennial-Z have some similarities regarding what they find attractive and engaging in museums. This research found that museums can become more attractive for Millennial-Z by exhibiting, curating, and offering topics regarding social issues found in society that affect or relate to their life experience, done in a well-curated and 'cool' re-contextualization way. This finding was also shared by Batat (2020) when he talks about social and ecological issues in museums offering. This proves that, as said in the theory, visitors do like to learn about the situation of the world. All the young participants agreed that learning about what is happening in a creative, engaging, and enjoyable way made their museum visits memorable and they saw it as a learning experience.

Millennial-Z also find museums more interesting when the exhibitions are properly explained, no matter the academic or cultural background of the individual. They like that museums offer useful tools to interpret the exhibitions since this allows them to get a better understanding of what is being exposed and, as Charman (2013) argues, when visitors can make sense of an exhibition then they can realize the significance of what they are seeing and can even relate to it.

Millennial-Z like it when museums propose alternatives or spaces where visitors can share their newfound knowledge with their companions or other visitors. Black (2021) found something similar when he said that most visitors want a shared museum experience in which they can relax, chat and interact in a recreational environment. This possibility to share can be done either online or offline and they are equally important. As Batat (2014, 2020) said, young people create sub-cultures around their consumption habits. I understood the creation of sub-cultures as a way of socializing around their interests. This research saw

how young people are indeed more interested to visit museums when their friends, or people they look up to like influencers, share positive experiences in cultural environments. As said by Bast (2018), social media is used by Millennial-Z as another way of socializing their knowledge and their interest. This also connects with De Waal (1989) when he said that young people aim for normalcy with their peers. Some visitors like to do their museum tours by themselves since this offers another set of experiences. Museums can help these visitors through the creation of curated pathways that allow visitors (alone or accompanied) to choose their level of investment in the visit, how much energy they want to invest, and how long their visit will take. This is what Rue (2018) says as well; young audiences enjoy “amazon-like” personalization of their visits. This allows museums to propose different participative experiences with what they already have.

As Black (2021) argued, there is without a doubt interest in Millennial-Z to participate in culture, and the best way for them to do so is through participatory and engaging activities. All the participants agreed that when they can participate in something related to the exhibition, their experience is greatly improved, which is why Bast et al. (2018) argued, that Millennial-Z want to change from being passive consumers to members of a participative community. One of the main things that make Millennial-Z want to participate in museums is when the latter propose and create unique experiences that the visitors cannot have in other places. This is a great opportunity for museums since the Millennial-Z that are interested in unique cultural experiences are open and willing to learn while participating in the experience. This is similar to when Black (2021) said that young adults want quirky, surprising, and unique experiences they can share online. Therefore, it is convenient for museums to be creative and design experiences where the enjoyment of the visitor is considered but the education part of it can and should have a role as big as the entertainment part.

One of the main results of this research was that participatory and engaging activities are key elements to attract Millennial-Z and make them enjoy their visit substantially more. When they can participate in digital or analog engaging activities related to the exhibition, where the entrance threshold is low and the energy commitment depends on them, then

their learning and enjoyment improve. This also makes the experience more memorable and overall improves the reputation of the museum as a 'cool' place where they can learn and have fun at the same time. Not only that, but it is also a way in which learning is achieved and as Longley (2018) says, visitors get involved in the process of learning, and a balance is achieved between looking, doing, and learning.

When Millennial-Z see people of their age participating, experiencing, working, etc. in the museum space, they feel more represented and open to participating in what the museum proposes. This effect has a self-reinforcing character in which Millennial-Z, when seeing others, will likely be more enthusiastic to share their own experience or to participate in it.

The first sub-question was *What do Millennial-Z expect of museums?* I found that Millennial-Z do not expect to get a lot out of museums. My explanation is that they are used to how the traditional institution works and is structured, so for them, that is how it should be. Meaning that the weaknesses and habits of museums are accepted by Millennial-Z since they do not know what else they could expect from them. However, the main thing that Millennial-Z want when visiting a museum is accessibility, not only physical for people with disabilities (which shows empathy for other visitors) but also accessibility to the knowledge that is being offered for everyone. They expect quality in their exhibitions, they want to see and feel that the museum built something with "brain and heart", meaning telling a story in a smart but heartfelt way. They also expect to have certain amenities that allow them to have comfortable visits, amenities such as Wi-fi, places to sit, a quality café and a good museum shop are some of the physically convenient things that improve the experience of the visitors. They also expect stimulating events where they can assist their friends, family, etc., and enjoy a thought-provoking cultural moment while enjoying the socialization that might come with it and some high-quality services. From the museum staff, they expect friendliness and willingness to help them with anything that might arise, this makes them feel more comfortable no matter their prior cultural capital, along with the staff being able to share a bit of knowledge and contextualization if the visitor wants to ask. All these expectations get together to form a sum of a certain quality of content Millennial-Z await when visiting a museum, which as Black (2021) says, the expectations of this type

of visitors for high-quality personal experience demands that museums take them into account.

On the other hand, I asked *What are the intentions of art museums regarding this audience?* I found that some of their main intentions with their work is to build a bridge between people, between people with a lot of knowledge and with little, between the audiences and the providers of knowledge. They also have the intention of being able to listen to what young audiences have to say and be brave to adopt what they are being told for the sake of the visitors. This mentality change is extremely important and it is remarkable that museums already have this audience-focused mentality. Museums also intend to teach people not only about art, history, or culture, but also about real-life skills that they can use for their own good, such as getting a job or developing talents. This shows that museums are conscious of the times and want to teach the right tools for Millennial-Z to improve themselves since, as Rue (2018) says, Gen Z members want to be ‘job-ready’ after their education is over. However, as Xanthoudaki (1998) says, the main goal of this type of ‘long-term’ education projects is to break the barriers between young people and museums to encourage them to visit more regularly and develop an interest in learning and engaging with the collections.

One of the main goals of museums is to be as accessible as possible. This resonates both what Millennial-Z expect (therefore both visions are compatible and symmetric) and with what Batat (2020) said about museums only matching the expectations of young people by being accessible, desacralizing culture and other actions. The most interesting result of this aspect was learning that museums do not want to work for Millennial-Z just because of their age. Their true intentions are to work with them, to use their talents, voices, knowledge, experiences, etc. to improve the museum itself and what they offer to the rest of society. Museums should be conscious that the way to do so is through appealing to the interests of Millennial-Z and showing that they understand them and can even speak the same language. As one of the museum professionals told me, if museums were to work with these intentions in mind, the result would be an institution that is excited to work with young audiences for the improvement of both, which would lead to museums becoming closer to their communities and turning into places where unique grassroots culture can

grow and develop. This is also something Black (2021) said, that museums need to invest energy and time to get to know and invite new audiences to museums.

The last sub-question was *How does The New Museology help in improving the experiences of young visitors?* To answer this question, I found that if museums were to implement actions in line with the New Museology, then Millennial-Z would see how their experiences and their interests are taken into account and shown in a ‘cool’ way, augmenting and improving their experience regarding museums and, as Brida et al. (2016) said, the improvement of a museum to be more audience-centric does not only promote loyalty in the visitors; it makes the institution more manageable and economically sustainable. As said before, museums listening and being brave to go out of their comfort zone is changing the focus from the object to the audience. Since The New Museology is focused on the audiences and the communities, the way to make young adults who do not speak the museum language feel comfortable in museums is through kindness, empathy and willingness to teach everyone. This was also an answer that both young visitors and professionals shared. Along those lines, when museums embrace their place as institutions for and of the community, then they look for opportunities to involve all types of audiences not only the young ones. This is how museum can reach their potential since museums will contribute more to society if society is a co-creator, which, as Bast et al. (2020) say this allows for the creative potential of each individual to be found no matter their place in society or what they do.

All of the participants said that they do consume all types of cultural content (online and offline) quite often, making it the usual type of consumption. This relates and supports what Peterson and Kern (1996) said about omnivorous consumption, especially in young audiences. For some museum professionals, the cultural consumption of Millennial-Z seemed to be more hectic, making it more difficult to approach. This differs from what Peterson and Kern said since for the museum professional I interviewed, it is not only a phenomenon seen in people from high social strata but also visible in other groups of the generations. Another discovery, though quite logical, is that the consumption of culture and its engagement with it is also present in the online space. As Daniel Brown (Black, 2021) argued, the internet users of today want to participate and create something when they

connect with other social media accounts. In the case of the museum, I saw it when one participant (V-B-2) told me that she followed an Instagram account and truly enjoys that she can engage with the account in quizzes or activities that made her feel engaged and invited to participate.

I was able to compare what Xanthoudaki (1998) and Black (2021) said regarding the hesitation felt by young adults to visit cultural institutions. I discovered that they do so because they do not see their life experiences portrayed or present in some museums. They conceive of the offers of those museums as more ‘adult’ and do not find it interesting. Thanks to the interviews I can say that when Millennial-Z see themselves, in a way, present in what museums propose, their hesitation to visit is smaller and they feel more motivated to go. Some of the participants shared that they do not feel included in museums when there are no activities or workshops aimed at their interests and objectives. This connects with what Charman (2013) said about how, when there are activities targeted at young people that they can do, they feel more appreciative of the museum and its contents. In short, the participants of the research agree with Charman (2013) and they would like to be able to participate in their creative growth in the museum space.

Many authors like Black (2021), Valiyeva and Skeiseid (2020), and Longley (2018) argued that technology opens up a possibility that allows museums to connect with younger audiences in a language they understand better. My research found that this is true but only when the technology is used to deliver a message or improve the learning process. The young participants agreed that technology has a place in the museums of the future as a way of communication, but it is not the destination. Finally, they all agreed that the participatory museum and the use of technology is something to aim for, since their answers show that they were conscious of the positive effects it has on visitors. However, they all said that, even if they want to make museums as entertaining as possible, it is all based upon the museum's role of education, making it the priority as both theory (Black, 2021) says and what young participants want.

The real focus of museums should not be delimited to just the Millennial-Z and who they are. This research pushes for the continued process of learning about what young generations want and expect from cultural institutions as time passes. It is about being

dynamic institutions that prepare themselves to execute their educational role the best they can with the help of young audiences. It is not only about what is best for Millennial-Z, but also about creating the processes that allows new and creative knowledge to be adapted to the museum efforts as society changes. And the Millennials-Z are a good starting point for this process.

This research hopes to be useful for any person who wonders the same questions as I did, people who want to make museums places of community and of personal improvement but do not know why it is not part of our reality. This research aims to convince museum professionals to be brave in their efforts to make museums social places where young people will not be afraid to ask, to be wrong, to show emotions or to make it part of themselves, It also hopes to be relevant to better adapt to the new challenges ahead of us regarding the participation of diverse audiences. Finally, I hope to add more arguments to the debate about how should museums develop in the close future and how young audiences are the key for museums to adapt, improve and be more pertinent than before.

Chapter 6. Discussion

The first expectation I had doing this research was to discover the reasons why Dutch Millennial-Z from the south of Rotterdam did not visit the museum often or, if they did, what were the Dutch museums doing for this to happen. My motivation came out of the personal experience with people close to me without plenty of cultural capital and how I, as someone who had the privilege to learn more about certain highbrow cultures, could be of help in the context of a museum, especially the education department. However, as said before, I found out later, both during the literature research and the interviews, that young adults from the area are a particularly difficult audience to approach. Professional S-B-1 told me that approaching this group has plenty of particularities that make their job challenging but interesting. So one shortcoming of this research is that the point of view and experience of young adults from the south of Rotterdam could not be assessed. If this research could continue, I would try to contact young workers from the area in the hope of convincing them to participate, even if the inclusion of money was necessary (with caution about the results). I think that if this scenario was possible, I could interview more participants who could help me to build an explanation of the cultural consumption habits they have and how cultural institutions can start the long process that is building participative connections through their interests and motivations.

Since I did not succeed in engaging this group for my study, I focused on Millennial-Z from different academic backgrounds. Yet all of my participants had completed their tertiary education and were (on different levels) conscious and habitual consumers of culture. Therefore, the results represent a percentage of young adults who already consume popular and more 'elite' cultural expressions.

I think that this research would have been more complete if I could have interviewed young adults with different levels of education and who do not visit museums at all. The participation of Millennial-Z with this characteristic would result in probably understanding how they see museums, why they don't feel welcomed, or any other reasons for their limited cultural consumption. This would also have the intention of helping museums to create educational programs or workshops that could motivate or attract people with these

characteristics to work with them. Ideally, these programs do not need to be in the museum space, they could be somewhere else but would spark the curiosity for this type of Millennial-Z to visit the museum at some point. I think that, with the proper nuances, the results of my research are still relevant for museum professionals to have a better idea on how to approach target groups who belong to the Millennial-Z demographic.

Another way of improving my results would have been if I could have compared the consumption of ethnic Dutch young adults with the answers from my participants since four out of the seven were half-Dutch or Dutch nationals born from parents of a different cultural background. The rest of my participants were from Mexico, China, and Hungary. This richness in culture of the participants, compared with the opinions of Dutch Millennial-Z, would have allowed me to see the difference and similarities of feelings between the inclusion and representation in museums for both types of participants. One more aspect that would have improved the analysis would have been if some people from Gen Z would have participated in the interviews. Supposedly their point of view would have been similar to that of Millennials, but their participation would have shown if my assumption to group them with Millennial-Z was pertinent or not. The differences would be very interesting, especially concerning what they expect from museums and the importance of the digital space.

I realized during the process of the interviews that I did not take into account the efforts that museums make toward young people in schools, also in universities or similar educational degrees. This was ironic since I met the museum professionals that participated in this research through visits organized through my master's degree classes. If I had taken this into account, I would have understood since the very beginning where most of the efforts of the educational departments in both institutions went, and I would have improved my questionnaires to account for the schools' visitors experience. However, since the focus of this research was the museum non-visitors, the young adults in schools were not crucial for the thesis.

Regarding the interviews, I also got told a couple of times that my questions were too broad, especially when I talked about young people (since it's an entire generation all packed together). I know that the breadth of my questions was due to the process of

defining my research focus, therefore when I built the questionnaire, some aspects were still not fully defined. This is something that would be different in further research.

I also found some confusion in the question when I asked young participants about their online cultural consumption habits. The confusion arose since the delimitation between what content was “cultural” and what was not, was poorly explained. I would approach the topic differently now, asking the participants only about their overall digital consumption habits and how those interests connect with the museum presence online or how would they like for museums to try and approach them through what they already consume.

Finally, all the museum professional participants were working in the educational department of their institution. And I realized after the interviews that some questions were more pertinent for people of different times such as marketing or even curators. If I could have interviewed professionals from different departments (together with the education ones) then the results of the museum perspective would have been more nuanced to the many ways of approaching Millennial-Z, not only through education.

References

- Anderson, S. L. (2019). The interactive museum: Video games as history lessons through lore and affective design. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 16(3), 177–195.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2042753019834957>
- Bat, G., Carayannis, E. G., & Campbell, D. F. J. (Eds.). (2018). *The Future of Museums*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93955-1>
- Batat, W. (2020). How can art museums develop new business opportunities? Exploring young visitors' experience. *Young Consumers*, 21(1), 109–131. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-09-2019-1049>
- Black, G. (Ed.). (2021). *Museums and the challenge of change: Old institutions in a new world*. Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. Richardson, J.G. (Ed.) (1986). The Forms of Capital. *Handbook of Theory and Research of the Sociology of Education*, Greenwood, 241–258.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (11. print). Harvard Univ. Press.
- Bourdieu, P., Passeron, J.-C (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (2 .ed., reprinted). Sage.
- Brida, J. G., Meleddu, M., & Pulina, M. (2016). Understanding museum visitors' experience: A comparative study. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development*, 6(1), 47–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCHMSD-07-2015-0025>
- Cerquetti, M. (2016). More is better! Current issues and challenges for museum audience development: a literature review. *Current Issues and Challenges for Museum Audience Development: A Literature Review (December 1, 2016)*. *Journal of cultural management & policy*, 6(1). 30-43.
- Charman, K. (2013). Education for a new 'museology.' *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 17(10), 1067–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2012.730066>
- Cristine, R. (2020). *The Numbers on the Millennial Museum Visitor*. Lucidea.
<https://lucidea.com/blog/the-numbers-on-the-millennial-museum-visitor/>

- Di Pietro, L., Guglielmetti Mugion, R., Renzi, M., & Toni, M. (2014). An Audience-Centric Approach for Museums Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 6(9), 5745–5762.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su6095745>
- DiMaggio, P. (1982). Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students. *American Sociological Review*, 47(2), 189-199. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094962>
- Earle, W. (2013). Cultural Education: Redefining the Role of Museums in the 21st Century: Cultural Education: Redefining the Role of Museums. *Sociology Compass*, 7(7), 533–546.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12050>
- Eurostat. (2017). *Culture statistics—Cultural participation*. Eurostat.
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture_statistics_-_cultural_participation
- Eurostat. (2022). *Educational attainment statistics*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Educational_attainment_statistics
- Facebook. (2023, May 29). *De finale van Project Rembrandt wordt gewonnen door...*
<https://www.facebook.com/ProjectRembrandt>
- Farrel, B., & Medvedeva, M. (2010). *Demographic transformation and the future of museums*. American association of museums.
- Galloway, S. (2007). Cultural Participation and Individual Quality of Life: A Review of Research Findings. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 1(3–4), 323–342.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-007-9024-4>
- Gheorghilaş, A. (2017). The challenges of the 21st-century museum: Dealing with sophisticated visitors in a sophisticated world. *International Journal of Scientific Management and Tourism*, 61-73.
- Gray, C. M. (1998). Hope for the Future? Early Exposure to the Arts and Adult Visits to Art Museums. *Journal of Cultural Economics Vol. 22*, 87-98.
- Greenhow, C., & Lewin, C. (2016). Social media and education: Reconceptualizing the boundaries of formal and informal learning. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 41(1), 6–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2015.1064954>

- Hughes, K., & Moscardo, G. (2019). For Me or Not for Me? Exploring Young Adults' Museum Representations. *Leisure Sciences*, 41(6), 516–534.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2018.1550455>
- ICOM. (n.d.). *Museum Definition*. International Council of Museums. Retrieved January 27, 2023, from <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>
- II, B. J. P., & Gilmore, J. H. (1998). Welcome to the Experience Economy. *Harvard Business Review*. Vol. 76, No. 4, 97-105. <https://hbr.org/1998/07/welcome-to-the-experience-economy>
- IMDb, *Project Rembrandt*. (2019, January 27). [Reality Show].
- Kiger, M. E., & Varpio, L. (2020). Thematic analysis of qualitative data: AMEE Guide No. 131. *Medical Teacher*, 42(8), 846–854. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2020.1755030>
- Kisida, B., Greene, J. P., & Bowen, D. H. (2014). Creating Cultural Consumers: The Dynamics of Cultural Capital Acquisition. *Sociology of Education*, 87(4), 281–295.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040714549076>
- Lang, C., Reeve, J., & Woollard, V. (Eds.). (2006). *The responsive museum: Working with audiences in the twenty-first century*. Ashgate.
- Lareau, A., & Weininger, E. B. (2003). Cultural capital in educational research: A critical assessment. *Theory and Society, Special Issue on The Sociology of Symbolic Power: A Special Issue in Memory of Pierre Bourdieu*, Vol. 32, No. 5/6. 567-606.
- Longley, P. (2018). *Engaging Collections and Communities: Technology and Interactivity in Museums*. Proceedings of the Digital Humanities in the Nordic Countries 3rd Conference.
- McCall, V., & Gray, C. (2014). Museums and the ‘new museology’: Theory, practice and organisational change. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29(1), 19–35.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2013.869852>
- Miles, R. S., & Zavala, L. (Eds.). (1994). *Towards the museum of the future: New European perspectives*. Routledge.
- Ng, E. S. W., & Johnson, J. M. (2015). Millennials: Who are they, how are they different, and why should we care? In R. Burke, C. Cooper, & A.-S. Antoniou (Eds.), *The Multi-generational and Aging Workforce*. Edward Elgar Publishing. 121–137.
<https://doi.org/10.4337/9781783476589.00014>
- Parry, R. (Ed.). (2010). *Museums in a digital age*. Routledge.

- Pekel, J. (2014). *Democratising the Rijksmuseum Why did the Rijksmuseum make available their highest quality material without restrictions, and what are the results?*. Europeana Foundation, 1-15. <https://pro.europeana.eu/post/democratising-the-rijksmuseum>
- Perry, S., Roussou, M., Mirashrafi, S. S., Katifori, A., & McKinney, S. (2019). Shared digital experiences supporting collaborative meaning-making at heritage sites. In H. Lewi, W. Smith, D. vom Lehn, & S. Cooke (Eds.), *The Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Heritage Sites* (1st ed., pp. 143–156). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429506765-13>
- Peterson, R. A., & Kern, R. M. (1996). Changing Highbrow Taste: From Snob to Omnivore. *American Sociological Review*, 61(5), 900-907 . <https://doi.org/10.2307/2096460>
- Rue, P. (2018). Make Way, Millennials, Here Comes Gen Z. *About Campus: Enriching the Student Learning Experience*, 23(3), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086482218804251>
- Shaw, A., & Krug, D. (2013). Heritage Meets Social Media: Designing a Virtual Museum Space for Young People. *Journal of Museum Education*, 38(2), 239–252. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10598650.2013.11510774>
- Statista. (2018). *Netherlands: Museum visit frequency Millennials 2017*. Statista. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/868866/museum-visit-frequency-of-millennials-in-the-netherlands/>
- Stokes, B. (2015). Who are Europe’s Millennials? *Pew Research Center*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2015/02/09/who-are-europes-millennials/>
- Stuedahl, D., & Lowe, S. (2014). Social Media as Resource for Involving Young People in Museum Innovation: A Cultural Studies Approach to Co-Design. *International Journal of Sociotechnology and Knowledge Development*, 6(3), 60–80. <https://doi.org/10.4018/ijskd.2014070104>
- Valiyeva, S., & Skeiseid, H. V. (2020). *The importance of technology for young visitors at heritage sites*.
- Van Eijck, K., & Lievens, J. (2008). Cultural omnivorousness as a combination of highbrow, pop, and folk elements: The relation between taste patterns and attitudes concerning social integration. *Poetics*, 36(2–3), 217–242. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2008.02.002>

- Van Wel, F., Couwenbergh-Soeterboek, N., Couwenbergh, C., ter Bogt, T., & Raaijmakers, Q. (2006). Ethnicity, youth cultural participation, and cultural reproduction in the Netherlands. *Poetics*, 34(1), 65–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2005.06.001>
- Van Wel, F., Maarsingh, W., Bogt, T. T., & Raaijmakers, Q. (2008). Youth cultural styles: From snob to pop? *YOUNG*, 16(3), 325–340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/110330880801600305>
- Vergo, P. (Ed.). (1989). *The New Museology*. Reaktion Books.
- Vicente, E., Camarero, C., & Garrido, M. J. (2012). Insights into Innovation in European Museums: The impact of cultural policy and museum characteristics. *Public Management Review*, 14(5), 649–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2011.642566>
- Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies* (First Free Press paperback ed). Free Press.
- Xanthoudaki, M. (1998). Educational Provision for Young People as Independent Visitors to Art Museums and Galleries: Issues of Learning and Training. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 17(2), 159–172. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647779800401702>

Appendix

Appendix A1: Interviews topic list and guideline.

X = Not pertinent for this side or did not have a pair.

<i>Knowledgeable participant / museums personnel</i>	<i>Representative sample of participants</i>
Ask consent to participate in the interview	
<u>PAST THOUGHT AND FEELINGS</u>	
Background questions	Background questions
How long have you been working in this institution or museums in general?	Where are you from? How old are you?
Regarding your education, what is your field of study and until what level did you studied?	What is your academic background?
What do you think of the cultural offer in Rotterdam?	What do you think of the cultural offer in Rotterdam?
X	How often do you go to museums or participate in any other cultural activity? (Cultural activity as festivals, exhibitions, workshops, movies, theatre)
What is your opinion regarding the interest in young adults towards museums?	Normally, do you feel interested about going to museums?
X	(CONTINUATION) If so, what kind of exhibitions do you find interesting?
Prior efforts/knowledge on museums	Prior opinion/knowledge on museums
What are some of the goals you wish to achieve in this museum?	X

Which groups of people are your main target and why?	x
What do you think motivates young people to come to museums?	What motivates you to go to a museum?
From all your time working in a museum, what is the most successful project in which you have participated (or the one that makes you the proudest)? And why?	Which prior visit/exhibition to any museum do you remind fondly? And why? (Anywhere, with school, family, friends or any topic)
On the other side, which project was not as successful as you intended but left you some lessons? Why wasn't it successful?	Which prior visit/exhibition to any museum do you remind poorly? And why?
X	When you go to a museum what do you expect from it?
<u>CURRENT THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS</u>	
Intentions and efforts of the last exhibitions /education program	Opinion after the visit/activity
What are the main benefits for a museum to approach young audiences through their education programs?	How was the visit? Tell me your opinion of the entire experience. What did you get from it, from each particular? (define more about "what does it mean to you")
Do you work with another department from your institution to plan/build the educational programs?	(CONTINUATION) Do you think it was educating or entertaining?
If so, how and what are your intentions?	X
X	What did you find more memorable through your visit? Good or bad.

X	What aspect of the visit or the museum do you feel is aimed at you being a young adult? And how does it made you feel?
What could be improved	What could have been improved
X	Do you feel that this visit was worth your time? If not, What makes you feel that a museum visit is worth your time?
x	Can you think of something that would have made your visit better?
What do you identify as the main obstacle(s) to realize your plans in the museum?	X
In prior exhibitions, what would be a different outcome you would have liked to see but didn't due to such obstacles/limitations?	x
Uniqueness of this museum	Uniqueness of this museum
What efforts made by this museum do you consider unique?	What particular aspect of the visit was unique to this particular museum?
What type of programs/efforts made by other institutions could work in this museum? IF PERTINENT. Have type of efforts of other museums would you like to do here?	From other past experiences you have had in other cultural places, what would you you like to see in this museum?
When you're planning a new program/exhibition do you keep the particularities of the public in Rotterdam in mind? And of what public?	Do you think that to enjoy this exhibition/activity you have to be from the city or anyone can enjoy it equally?

	Same question but about the age of the visitor.
To fully enjoy the exhibition, do you think that visitors require certain art education, knowledge about the artist or the museum, have friends or family with whom to come, etc.?	Do you think that to enjoy this museum you need a particular personal background?
The role of museums today	The expectation on the role of museums today
Do you think museums offer a positive contribution to society in general? What would that be?	Do you think museums offer a positive contribution to society in general? What would that be?
What skills do museums professionals need today to successfully do their mission?	What do you expect from the staff working in museums? (the staff)
Communication with the public	Known communication channels
What do you think of the communication/marketing efforts of this museum?	What do you think of the communication/marketing efforts of this museum?
What do you consider as a successful communication/marketing campaign	Usually, either today or in other experiences, how do you learn about new exhibitions?
X	What information do you usually look for when you're visiting a museum's webpage or social media
What is something that the pandemic changed regarding communicating with people through the digital space?	After the pandemic, do you approach cultural offers in a different way?

<u>1 TOPIC (DIGITAL SPACE)</u>	
Social media	Social media
What digital presence do the education programs have?	Do you follow this or any other museum online?
How do you think the digital presence should be present in the museum's activities?	X
What would you like to be able to offer digitally to the young audiences?	What would you like to see from museums online?
X	Regarding art and cultural topics, what type of online content do you find interesting?
X	Now, outside of cultural topics, what type of online content do you find interesting?
Either in your personal experience or what you have seen in other cultural organization, what elements should be present in a social media campaign to be effective?	Have you ever seen something online (either an add or a post) that motivated you to visit a museum?
Electronic tools	Electronic tools
What do you think about the effectiveness of using interactive electronic tools as TVs, videogames, gadgets, etc. in the museum? Are they educational?	What do you think when there's TV screens, videogames or any other electronic gadget to interact with?
What is your opinion about using apps to develop more educating/entertaining experiences?	If museums offered an app from where you can learn or enjoy the museum more, would you use it?

x	If from this app you get pertinent activities/news/games/etc., would you keep it or you would only use it when in the museum? IF PERTINENT
<u>2 TOPIC (INCLUSION OF YOUNG ADULTS)</u>	
Young adults' participation/representation	Young adults' feelings or representation
Currently how do you include this demographic (18-30) into your programs?	As a young person, do you feel included or represented in museums programs/communications?
How do you think you could include them even more in the future? IF PERTINENT	What would make you feel more represented or welcomed in this or other museum?
What do you think would be the effects of young adults get more representation in this museum?	What do you think would change if young adults get more representation in museums?
ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY'S YOUNG ADULTS	ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY'S YOUNG ADULTS
Do you think that the young adults from the surrounding community have a presence in this museum?	x
How can museums approach the interests of young adults from the surrounding communities?	Does any cultural place near your house interest you enough to return occasionally? If not, why not?
X	How do you think museums become more accessible/open to you and your friends?
<u>3 TOPIC (EDUTAINMENT/NEW MUSEOLOGY)</u>	

Culture consumption for oneself	Culture consumption for oneself
What habits of cultural consumption do you see in young adults?	What type of culture do you like to consume? Either in music, visual art, new media, etc. EXPLAIN MORE THE EXAMPLES
x	Do you see museums as the place in which you can learn more about your personal interests? And how?
Popular or highbrow	Popular or highbrow
Regarding this museum, how would you place its efforts between popular or highbrow culture?	Do you think that this museum is more related to highbrow (intellectual) or popular cultural expressions? Why is that?
What do you think about museums becoming places where both “intellectual” and “popular” art are represented?	On what type of cultural expressions do you think museums should focus?
Entertainment/leisure in museums	Entertainment/leisure in museums
X	What would make this museum visit more entertaining? And what would make it a place where learning is easier?
In your opinion should museums also focus on entertaining?	Do you think that museums can become places where you can also have fun while learning? What did you see in this museum that was entertaining and taught you something?
If so, And how do you see your role in that situation?	How do you think the balance between education and entertainment should be?

How do you merge both?	Using your imagination, how would you like to see the connection between entertainment and learning in museums? MAYBE? OR REPRHASE
How do you build exhibitions/programs where instead of being participating passively, the visitor actively engages with it?	When visiting museums, Do you like to interact with the exhibition? Or do you prefer to observe it?
When planning dynamic activities, do you think that the educative goals were also achieved?	When visiting museums with dynamic and didactic activities, do you feel that you also learned?
What do you think of the concept of Edutainment/entertaining at the same time as educating in museums?	x
Do you remember any good example of this connection?	Do you remember any good example of this connection?
END OF INTERVIEW	END OF INTERVIEW
LAST QUESTION	LAST QUESTION
What skills do museums professionals need in the future to successfully do their mission?	Using your imagination, how would the ideal museum visit should be?

Appendix A2: Overview of participants

V-B-1	Male	28	Engineer	Dutch/Turkish	Master's degree
V-B-2	Female	26	Student	Mexican	Master's degree
V-B-3	Female	25	Student	Chinese	Master's degree
V-B-4	Female	24	Student	South African/Dutch	PhD
V-M-1	Female	25	Office worker	Dutch/Mexican	Bachelor's degree
V-M-2	Female	24	Student	Venezuelan/Dutch	Bachelor's degree
V-M-3	Female	23	Office worker	Hungarian	Bachelor's degree
S-M-1	Female	20's	Curator Collective Learning, Kunstinstituut Melly	Dutch	Bachelor's degree
S-M-2	Female	30's	Interim project leader, education department, Kunstinstituut Melly	Dutch	Bachelor's degree
S-B-1	Male	40's	Head of education and interpretation, Museum	Dutch	Master's degree

			Boijmans van Beuningen		
--	--	--	---------------------------	--	--