



**Impact Planning, Evaluation & Audience Research**

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# **Front-end Evaluation: CLC Home Exhibition**

*Prepared for the*  
**Baltimore Museum of Art**  
**Baltimore, MD**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... iii**

    Introduction..... iii

    Summary of Results ..... iii

    Recommendations and Next Steps ..... v

**INTRODUCTION ..... I**

    Methodology..... 1

    Data Analysis and Reporting Method..... 1

**PRINCIPAL FINDINGS ..... 2**

    Introduction..... 2

    Initial Reaction to the Objects ..... 2

    Interest in the Exhibition..... 7

    Understanding of the Exhibition..... 10

    Alignment of Exhibition Materials and Intended Outcomes..... 15

    Additional Feedback..... 21

**APPENDICES ..... 22**

# SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) contracted Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) to conduct a front-end evaluation for a new exhibition around the theme “home.” The exhibition will be the first in the CLC, a new space in the BMA that will be dedicated to creativity and learning. The following summary and recommendations describe the results of interviews with 32 BMA visitors about a mock-up of the exhibition that included two-dimensional representations of several potential works of art that may be included in the exhibition as well as four text panels, one that introduces visitors to the overall theme and three that describe object groupings.

**The findings presented here are among the most salient. Please read the body of the report for a more comprehensive presentation of findings.**

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The following summary is organized by the objectives of the study.

### VISITORS' INTEREST IN THE OBJECTS

One of the primary goals of the study was to explore visitors' interest in the proposed objects for the exhibition both outside the context of the exhibition (i.e., general interest) and within it. Visitors found a range of objects interesting, which is always encouraging because it means that there is something in the exhibition for everyone; visitors are undoubtedly unique and have diverse interests and preferences, and the selection of objects seems well-aligned for the diverse range of visitors to the exhibition.

### VISITORS' INTEREST IN THE THEME “HOME”

Visitors expressed strong interest in the theme “home.” Sometimes a “familiar” theme does not resonate with museum visitors because visitors feel that they know about it already or that it is simply prosaic because it is such an ordinary or common idea. However, the theme of “home,” while familiar, was positively “universal.” It resonated with visitors in highly personal ways; for instance, Frances Benjamin Johnston's *Sophia's Dairy, Harford County, Maryland* prompted one woman to reflect on the parallel condition of her mother and her mother's home, while the *High-backed Seat* of the Lobi people made one man think about what home means to other cultures and how different cultures use objects in their homes. In fact, the objects and text in support of the theme prompted strong feelings that visitors handled in different ways. A few visitors were candid and even vulnerable when sharing their reactions to the mock-up of the exhibition during the interviews with evaluators. By comparison, the



**Figure 1.** Frances Benjamin Johnston's *Sophia's Dairy, Harford County, Maryland*

evaluator sensed strong reactions from some visitors who were noticeably reluctant to share their feelings, such as a teenage boy when talking about the prayer mat, and a 20-year-old woman in reference to Jim Goldberg's *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*. As previously discussed with BMA staff and outlined below, creating a safe space for visitors to explore their feelings about home and giving them outlets to share or reflect (privately or through visitor-generated content) will be an important consideration as exhibition development continues.

### **BARRIERS TO THE THEME OF "HOME"**

There were few barriers to the theme of "home," all of which focused on how some representations of the idea of home did not align with how visitors' naturally think about home. For instance, the *Horn Chair* was out of place to some since it did not fit with their ideas of home as a place of comfort. Additionally, a few felt that Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3, Laredo, Texas* was a distasteful inclusion because they did not think that immigrants who used the hiding place would consider it a home. Another few found the Jim Goldberg's photo *This is affluent America* to be very politically charged. While described as barriers, these examples demonstrate that the BMA is taking visitors to a new place in their thoughts about home and present opportunities rather than considerable hurdles for the BMA to overcome. That is, because some of the aforementioned ideas and objects sparked strong reactions, they are ideal candidates for enhanced interpretive development through interactives or alternative strategies. Doing so would allow the BMA to convey content (Museum or visitor-generated content) to support visitors' thinking.



Figure 2. William C. Mittmann's *Horn Chair*

Another potential barrier is the lack of people represented in the selected objects. Visitors desired and were surprised not to see more people represented in the works of art or stories about individual's homes. As the BMA noted, access to works of art with people for this exhibition is limited, but the Museum may consider creative ways to address the absence of people and the stories. Potentially, the interactives to be developed can help fill this void by capturing visitors' stories about home. Additionally, the Museum may address the issue directly through text or by asking visitors to reflect on what is missing from the depictions of some of the representations of people-less homes.

### **HOW THE OBJECTS AND EXHIBITION SUPPORTS THE INTENDED OUTCOMES FOR THE EXHIBITION**

In its preliminary phase, the exhibition seems to support the outcomes for the exhibition, given our understanding of them and the relative importance placed on them. In this evaluation, our particular focus was on exploring how the exhibition helped visitors achieve the following outcomes: (1) make personal connections in the exhibition; (2) think about home in new ways; and (3) consider how artists think. The first two outcomes listed here were most important in this evaluation and most supported by the mock-up, while the third outcome was least explored and supported.

#### **PERSONAL CONNECTIONS**

As noted previously, many visitors made personal connections with text and objects, which were generally strong. For instance, the idea of moving or leaving a home was an idea that the majority of

visitors had experienced, so it resonated. Additionally, several objects prompted visitors to think about their own home, such as Ben Marcin's depiction of a single Baltimore row home in *Baltimore, MD* and Marguerite Gérard's painting *Motherhood*. A few times, interview responses suggested the exhibition struck such a personal chord that the evaluator was uncertain as to how to further clarify visitors' responses given the perceived sensitivity. For instance, when asked about a work of art that may have made visitors think about their home, one young woman said the Goldberg photos; but she responded with great hesitation when the evaluator asked her what about those photos reminded of her of home.

### THINK ABOUT HOME IN NEW WAYS

The majority of visitors seemed to think about home in new ways, whether they self-identified as doing so or their responses suggested so. For instance, visitors alluded to familiarity with phrases such as “a house is not a home . . .” However, the mock-up exhibition presented home as a psychological state or impermanent place, and these ideas seemed to expand on some of the visitors' familiar notions about home. Additionally, the visual deciphering of home as a welcome or unwelcome place seemed to take visitors to a new place in their thinking.

### CONSIDER HOW ARTISTS THINK

About one-half of visitors said they considered how artists think at some point in their experience. The variety of media presented tended to prompt visitors to think about artistic technique—as did some objects like the *Horn Chair*. Aside from technique, a few thought about artists' decision making such as through composition and Ben Marcin finding beauty in the single Baltimore row home depicted in *Baltimore, MD*, even though the surrounding area is run-down and almost vacant. There are seemingly other opportunities to emphasize artistic thinking should the BMA choose to do so. For instance, one visitor wondered whether Alfred Stieglitz selected the subject for *The Steerage* because he immigrated to the country. Likewise, some visitors imagined artists were inspired by their own homes and were curious to understand how that may have influenced their work.



Figure 3. Marguerite Gérard's *Motherhood*

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In its preliminary form, the exhibition tested very well, with the objects and theme being of interest to a variety of visitors. Below are some recommendations for the further development of the exhibition.

- ◆ The objects tested well, so there are no concerns proceeding with the selected objects; however, some objects, particularly those objects that have a function like *Cradleboard*, of the Northern Tsistsistas people, and *Baggage Stand*, of the Tuareg people, will require more explanation than others to connect with the theme of “home.”
- ◆ Consider how to create a comfortable physical environment for visitors to explore their ideas about home and encounter new ideas. For instance, the design of the space itself will be important, and as one visitor mentioned, there may be opportunities to integrate home design into the actual design of the exhibition (e.g. foyers, windows, kitchen tables, etc.). Perhaps there is a small, private space in which people can reflect.

- ◆ The text will be important in framing the ideas of home as being both universal and highly individualized; this will prepare visitors so that they may see some things that resonate with them but also have their idea of home challenged. The text does this fairly well already, particularly in the introductory panel, but it is something to keep in mind throughout development.
- ◆ The few barriers to the idea of “home” present opportunities to deepen engagement through the use of interactives. For instance, objects that proved more controversial, such as Jim Goldberg’s photos, might be a good candidate for visitors’ written responses. Additionally, the absence of people in the selected objects may make a “selfie” interactive fitting—visitors could tag themselves in a photo with an object in the exhibition that best represents home to them. In this way, visual depictions of people and people’s stories will be introduced into the exhibition.

# INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) contracted Randi Korn & Associates, Inc. (RK&A) to conduct a front-end evaluation for a new exhibition around the theme “home.” The exhibition will be the first in the CLC, a new space in the BMA that will be dedicated to creativity and learning.

The objectives of the evaluation are to explore:

- ◆ What about the objects pique visitors’ interest (in general and when they think about them in the context of the theme “home”);
- ◆ What about the theme “home” interests visitors;
- ◆ What are potential barriers to presenting the theme “home”;
- ◆ How, if at all, do the objects support the intended outcomes for the CLC’s Home exhibition;
- ◆ What are potential barriers to the objects supporting the intended outcomes for CLC’s Home exhibition (in particular outcomes to: make personal connections in the exhibition, think about home in new ways, consider how artists think);
- ◆ How, if at all, the proposed sections of the exhibition and theme “home” support the intended outcomes for CLC’s Home exhibition (in particular outcomes to: make personal connections in the exhibition, think about home in new ways, consider how artists think).

## METHODOLOGY

The BMA recruited volunteers for the evaluation through its Facebook page. Participants were scheduled for 30-minute time slots during which they spent about 10 minutes looking at a mock-up of exhibition materials and 20 minutes participating in an interview about the mock-up. The mock-up exhibition included photographs of objects that might be part of the exhibition and four text panels that gave context for the ideas that may be explored. A few participants were recruited from walk-in visitors at the BMA on the days the evaluators were there. All participants received a \$10 gift card to the BMA store as a token of appreciation.

When participants arrived, an RK&A evaluator provided an introduction. RK&A asked participants to start by looking at just the objects before answering a few questions. Participants then were invited to look at the objects again and to read as much or as little text as they would like before answering a few more questions. The introductory script and interview guide are included in Appendix A. RK&A took detailed notes and audio recorded the interviews.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING METHOD

The interviews produced descriptive data that were analyzed qualitatively, meaning that the evaluator studied the data for meaningful patterns and, as patterns and trends emerged, grouped similar responses. Where possible, participants’ verbatim language (edited for clarity) is included to exemplify trends. Within quotations, the evaluator’s comments appear in parentheses.

# PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

## INTRODUCTION

During one Friday and Saturday in July 2014, RK&A interviewed 32 participants about the mock-up for the Home exhibition. Three-quarters were recruited in advance via the BMA's Facebook page, and one-quarter were recruited from walk-in visitors at the BMA.

Of the individual participants:

- ◆ Two-thirds are female, and one-third are male.
- ◆ Participants range in age from 14 to 70 years, and the median age is 28.5 years.
- ◆ Two-thirds are repeat visitors, and one-third are first-time visitors. One is a member.

## INITIAL REACTION TO THE OBJECTS

In their introduction, RK&A told participants that the theme of the mock-up exhibition was “home.” Participants were invited to look at just the objects for as much or as little time as they would like before answering some initial questions. They were asked not to read the exhibition text and instead to focus solely on the objects. The findings below describe these initial reactions to the objects in “Home.”

## INTEREST IN THE OBJECTS

### ***MOST INTERESTING***

Participants were asked to name an object that was most interesting to them. Objects named in order from most to least frequently mentioned are:

- ◆ The chairs (E. Anton Lorenz's *KS 47 Chair*, William C. Mittmann's *Horn Chair*, and the Lobi *High-backed Seat*)
- ◆ Ben Marcin's *Baltimore, MD*
- ◆ Emile Antoine Bourdelle's *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*
- ◆ Dave Egger's *Shower Curtain*
- ◆ Walter Henry William's *A Quick Nap*
- ◆ Starlee Kine's *Bamboo Cutting Board*
- ◆ Tracey Snelling's *El Mirador*
- ◆ Eugene Kupjack's *Entrance Hall in a Southern Plantation*
- ◆ Jim Goldberg's *This is affluent America, What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive, and It's kind of stinky living in this hotel*
- ◆ Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage*
- ◆ Waters-Genter Company's *Toastmaster Toaster*
- ◆ Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3*
- ◆ General Electric Company's *'Moderne' Iron*
- ◆ Carolyn Brady's *Letters From Home*



When participants talked about why an object was interesting, it was often because they felt a personal connection to the work of art. For example, one-quarter said that Ben Marcin's *Baltimore, MD* was the most interesting, and a few of these participants described a connection to Baltimore as the primary reason for their interest (see the first quotation below). Some other participants talked about an emotional connection with the objects. For example, a few said that Walter Henry William's *A Quick Nap* reminded them of family and that contemplating the character's emotions made it interesting (see second quotation).

(Can you tell me about an object that was most interesting to you?) The house. The rowhome. (What about it interests you?) The way it's isolated, very simple, but it kind of tells a story. Just because I know the city so well—I'm from Baltimore—it makes you think of all the things that might have happened over the years. I've seen that before with a lot of the older, less taken care of neighborhoods. [male 33]



Figure 4. Ben Marcin's *Baltimore, MD*

My favorite was the girl on the balcony. Something that expressed a feeling about where you live but also how you feel about it. [female 25]

Participants also talked about objects that were unexpected or intriguing when describing those that they found most interesting. Some of these participants talked about the chairs, with a few mentioning William C. Mittmann's *Horn Chair* specifically; these participants were primarily interested in comparing the strange and exotic appearances of the chairs (see the quotation below). Several were surprised to see an object depicting Medusa in an exhibition about "home" (Emile Antoine Bourdelle's *Head of Medusa (Door Knockers)*), while others said that they were interested in objects that depict non-traditional types of homes, such as Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage*.

I like how you grouped similar objects together. I liked the horn chair—never seen that before. When put next to others that would be in a home, I was like 'Oh, people actually use this.' It was cool. [female 23]

Several participants said that objects that told stories or that allowed them to see the interiors of homes were the most interesting. For example, a few participants mentioned Dave Egger's *Shower Curtain* and stated that they enjoyed reading the text on the object (see first quotation below). Some of these participants talked about an interest in seeing the interiors of homes more generally (see the second quotation).

The shower curtain. In the home the bathroom tends to be your most intimate spot, where you're alone with your thoughts. The fact that the shower curtain was almost speaking to you, kind of pushing you forward, it was pretty interesting because your thoughts tend to free-flow in the shower, and I think it captured that particular room pretty well. Took an everyday object and made it speak. [male 54]

I really liked the photos of the interior spaces. Seeing the different environments, each one for each different person. Then thinking about how this exhibit is called Home and look, these are photos of home. [female 30]

### LEAST INTERESTING

Participants were asked to name an object that was least interesting to them. Objects names in order from most to least frequently mentioned are:

- ◆ “Domestic/everyday” objects, including General Electric Company’s *Moderne’ Iron*, Waters-Genter Company’s *Toastmaster Toaster*, *Red-Figured Bell-Krater*, *Child’s Mug*, *Tea Cup*, *Tea Bowl*, *Bowl (Jade)*, and Starlee Kine’s *Bamboo Cutting Board*
- ◆ The chairs (E. Anton Lorenz’s *KS 47 Chair*, William C. Mittmann’s *Horn Chair*, and the Lobi *High-Backed Seat*)
- ◆ Northern Tsistsistas *Cradleboard*
- ◆ Jim Goldberg’s *This is affluent America*, *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*, and *It’s kind of stinky living in this hotel*
- ◆ Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*
- ◆ Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*
- ◆ Marguerite Gérard’s *Motherhood*
- ◆ Ben Marcin’s *Baltimore, MD*

When participants talked about why objects were least interesting, it was often because they found them to be mundane. Slightly more than one-half of participants mentioned a variety of “domestic” or “everyday” objects; several of these participants specifically mentioned General Electric Company’s *Moderne’ Iron* and Waters-Genter Company’s *Toastmaster Toaster*, while a few referenced the various cups and bowls. Some of these participants said that they were not interested in these objects because they were ordinary, while a few said that the objects lacked meaning and sensation outside of an actual home (see the first and second quotations below).

(What object was least interesting to you?) The pieces of this exhibit that didn’t work as well as the others were some of the everyday objects you use like the toaster or the iron. I know that’s part of a home but taking them out of context it didn’t do much for me. [male 54]

Probably the actual objects like the iron—more like objects that are part of domestic life. I guess it’s maybe too mundane; [it] didn’t have a sensation of being home. [female 28]

Several participants talked about needing more context in order to understand some of the objects in relation to the theme “home.” Some of these participants had trouble interpreting the function of objects such as the Northern Tsistsistas *Cradleboard* and Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*, as well as Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*, and were interested in learning the stories behind the objects and how they were used.

Participants also said certain objects were not interesting for aesthetic reasons. For example, a few participants talked about how the chairs were not interesting because they looked uncomfortable (see the first quotation below). Two participants said that they did not like Jim Goldberg’s photographs, and said that they felt that the artist was trying



Figure 5. Emile Antoine Bourdelle's *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*

to tell them what to think and that the objects' focus on the individual alienated them from the rest of the objects in the exhibition, which spoke to larger trends or ideas (see the second quotation).

There was a weird chair that looked like a spoon. It looked so uncomfortable and not homey. [male 27]

The pictures of the writings about people were more limited in scope. They dealt with a specific subtext of identity and had a narrow individual focus versus the rest of huge collection. [female 24]

## PERCEIVED CONNECTION OF THE OBJECTS TO THE THEME

### **BEST FIT THE THEME**

When asked how the objects best represent the theme of “home,” slightly more than one-third of participants talked about how the objects made them think about domesticity or the activities of a family or people who share a home (see the first quotation below). Some of these participants spoke about the idea that family creates a home, with a few emphasizing the connection between motherhood and the concept of home (see the second quotation). Others discussed the idea of people and family being an essential part of home more broadly, often in connection with objects that depicted the interiors of homes such as the Goldberg photographs and *Entrance Hall to a Southern Plantation*.

(As I mentioned, the theme of the exhibition is ‘home.’ Thinking about this, how do these objects best represent that theme?) Personally, the ones I thought that made me feel something showed the interior of homes with people in them. Like the foyer, you see the interaction between people, moms with children. [female 23]

The motherhood one. You can't have a home without a mom. [male 14]

About one-third said that objects that could be found in a home best represent the theme “home.” Most of these participants spoke about people's possessions being part of a home in a general sense (see the first quotation below), while a few specifically mentioned how these objects were things that people used in a home as well as having used some of these objects themselves, such as the iron and the toaster, in their own homes.

(As I mentioned, the theme of the exhibition is ‘home.’ Thinking about this, how do these objects best represent that theme?) [They] represent interiors, objects found in the home, things that make the home special. [male 54]

Less than one-quarter said that the objects that depict how homes differ within and across cultures best represent “home.” These participants enjoyed the opportunity to compare the things that people around the world use or used in their homes and how these objects differ from those in their own homes (see first and second quotations below).

I liked seeing the representations of different households—how it varied from one person to the next. I liked seeing the objects that were part of that experience in front of the fireplace, radio, television. Some of the objects were from other cultures that have nothing to do with our experiences. I like the variety. [male 49]

I thought it was very interesting to see different cultures' items put together. I liked the idea of thinking that you could see different items from different cultures around eating, entering, community. [female 25]

A few participants said that objects that showed that home is a safe and comfortable place best represent the theme “home.” These participants described home as a place where they feel protected, describing home as a “safe haven”, as well as a place where they can relax and be themselves (see first and second quotations below).

The photograph of flowers at the center of the table with radio.  
Home is someplace to relax and listen to the radio. [male 25]

(As I mentioned, the theme of the exhibition is “home.” Thinking about this, how do these objects best represent that theme?) It feels like cozy, maybe. I’m not sure if that’s the right word. Some pictures represent what home really means—a place where you can rest, be at peace. [male 15]



Figure 6. Carolyn Brady's *Letters from Home*

#### **LEAST FIT THE THEME**

Participants were asked how the objects are a mismatch for the theme of “home”; keep in mind that participants’ responses are solely based on object-viewing without reading any contextual information. One-third said that, overall, the objects did not appear cohesive or that they needed more context to understand them in relation to the theme (see the first and second quotations below). A few specifically mentioned wanting more information about the objects’ original environments (i.e. where they came from or how they would have been used); these participants also said that many of the domestic objects, such as the chairs and the appliances, did not seem like a thoughtful inclusion without providing this information.

I think it depends on what kind of representation of home you’re trying to get. I think you have quite a mix at the moment. You cover a wide range of representations about home, not directed towards one kind of thing. You go back to ancient Greek crater, red figure vase, etc., which spans the idea of home back to antiquity, then to irons and cutting boards, and more modern things. [female 26]

It didn’t seem like there was a central theme of the exhibit. Had pictures of furniture, rooms—without reading captions, I thought it was disjointed. [male 28]

One-quarter of participants thought that some of the objects depicting non-traditional homes were unexpected or were unsure of what they were or of their function. These participants talked about how certain objects, such as *Cradleboard* or *Hiding Place No. 3, Laredo, Texas*, defied traditional definitions of home (see the quotation below). A few named objects that they did not recognize or whose functions they did not understand, including the Tuareg *Baggage Stand (Ebel)*, Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*, and Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*.

Spoon-shaped chair. Picture of nest, which is technically a home, but just wasn’t expected. [male 27]

Several participants said that none of the objects felt like a mismatch for the exhibition's theme. A few stated that they felt that there was not enough variety among the objects; these participants said that the exhibition did not include enough diversity of cultures and socio-economic classes, and also said that the objects did not show enough contrast between the interiors and exteriors of homes (see the quotation below).

I was hoping to see objects that are everyday objects that we all relate to from different eras and cultures. See how different cultures and era deal with form, function and, interior versus exterior. [female 39]

A few participants mentioned people when discussing how the objects were a mismatch for the theme. These participants expressed a desire to see more people and families in depictions of home (see the quotation below), with two specifically mentioning wanting to see more men with their families.

I found myself wanting to see more people in homes. I wanted to see the human presence. [female 39]

## INTEREST IN THE EXHIBITION

After answering some initial questions, RK&A invited participants to look at the objects again and to read as much or as little text as they would like before answering a few more questions. The findings below describe these reactions—to the objects with exhibition text.

### **MOST INTERESTING ASPECTS**

Participants found many aspects of the exhibition interesting. All interests described were highly nuanced and individualized. Additionally, when describing their interest, participants often named multiple aspects or an aspect that overlapped with another. In reading the trends identified below, keep in mind that there are many facets to each larger trend, which we have tried to highlight as much as possible.

Almost one-half of participants talked generally about how the exhibition explored different ways of thinking about “home” and what makes a home. Some of these talked about how people's definitions of home vary (see the first and second quotations). A few participants said that the concept of home is universal, while others discussed the changing nature of home across time and cultures (see the third quotation).

(What about the exhibition sounds interesting to you?) How home is represented in different ways. When I think about home, I think about comfort, shelter, and relaxing. It opened my perspective. Home is different for other people. [male 27]

I liked the idea of the juxtaposition between physical objects in the interiors, the things you'd interact with in your day-to-day life, with the broader aspects of home. What might that mean to people? It's not just a stagnant place. For some people, home is something they carry with them, and it's more than one place. [female 25]

I think the whole theme is a great idea—investigation of the home. Everyone's idea [of home] is fixed, but it's actually fluid across time and cultures. [female 28]

Several participants were interested in considering the physical and psychological dimensions of home. Some of these participants talked about the idea that home can be carried with you and that it is not confined to a physical structure; three specifically mentioned the introduction label when discussing this idea (see the first quotation below). Additionally, a few participants were interested in the idea that home is a safe and comfortable place. Some of these participants talked generally about how home can be anywhere that you feel comfortable (see the second quotation), while some discussed the idea that home can either be a place to welcome others in or a place of retreat (see the third quotation).

I like what it's trying to do. I've moved around a lot in my life. Probably thirty times, maybe more—state to state, country to country. So you make your home where you live. It's interesting because the first panel tried to address that. Is home, or the concept of home, a physical thing or an ephemeral thing? I think that it's probably a combination of both. [male 54]

(What about the exhibition sounds interesting?) The last part of the home show label. How home isn't necessarily a place where you live, but somewhere where you feel comfortable. [female 30]

The idea of home being an inviting place or one that's meant to keep others out. In some cases, it's sort of stand-offish, and for others it's not. That's interesting, and I wouldn't normally think of that. You need more to demonstrate that idea. [female 26]

Several participants talked specifically about the idea of people moving or changing homes when asked what sounded like the most interesting part of the exhibition. Some of these participants talked about the ideas of coming and going, leaving old homes behind, and creating new homes more generally (see the first quotation below), while two participants specifically referenced the immigrant experience (see the second quotation below).

The picture with the ship makes you think about where you're going and what you consider that home to be. [male 33]

The thing that resonated the most with me, at least in the wall posts, were the things about immigrants, emigrating, and the idea that there's always some part of home that's left behind. Maybe because I just moved back from England—I've had that feeling recently. I want to see it in the space. I want to see more already because I'm wondering how it's going to translate three-dimensionally. [female 26]

Several participants were interested in the relationship between home and identity. Some of these participants discussed the opportunity to think about personal experiences in their homes and the chance to reflect on why they have either stayed in or moved homes (see the first quotation below), while others talked about the idea that home is a reflection of your identity and personality (see the second quotation). A few participants said that the opportunity to see the interiors of people's homes was interesting. Some of these participants talked about seeing the inside of people's homes more generally, while some of them talked about wanting to see people's activities in the home.

(What about the exhibition sounds interesting?) I like the potential for self examination. Asking oneself what home means, giving someone the opportunity to reflect on childhood homes and current homes, and thinking about differences and how memories fade. Like the abandoned Maryland house of Sophia's Dairy. I was visiting my mom in my childhood home and noticing how both she and the house have deteriorated, lost their shine. [female 54]

I liked the idea of how you present your home—what that means about your personal identity and how you want to feel in the space. [female 30]

### **LEAST INTERESTING ASPECTS**

When asked what they thought sounded least interesting about the exhibition, almost one-half of participants named a specific object they did not think was interesting. Several talked about objects that they found to be aesthetically off-putting, such as the iron and the chairs (see the first quotation below). A few discussed objects that they felt were offensive or whose message they did not agree with; these included Jim Goldberg's photographs (in particular *This is affluent America*) and Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3* (see the second and third quotations).

(What about it [the exhibition] does not sound interesting?) The basic items like the iron and the chairs. They don't appeal to me. I'm more interested in antiques. [male 21]

I find a fair amount of it disagreeable. The affluent photos [Goldberg photograph]—my reaction's adverse. I don't care for it. I guess I've made certain decisions about it. Those people (in *This is affluent America*) seemed sort of unsettled to me. I think people are willfully unsettled. It's verbiage that people produce when that's the case. [male 55]

The animal house that was turned into a place where people crossed the border. I found it offensive. It's a desperate space, not a home. [female 23]

Slightly less than one-half of participants said that there was nothing they found least interesting about the exhibition. However, a few talked about needing more context or information to understand how the objects relate to the theme or how the exhibition's sections relate to one another. For example, one participant said that they had trouble understanding the connections between the objects in the "Threshold and Facades" section (see the first quotation below).

There wasn't much with the 'Thresholds and Facades,' only a couple of pieces. It was an interesting concept. I guess you could have disparate parts of all of this, but not much of it tied one object to the next. They're (the objects) distinctly different, bordering on unrelated. They really don't have much to do with one another. [male 49]

A few participants talked about wanting to learn more about human experiences behind the objects. Some of these participants said that domestic objects, such as the various cups and bowls, do not tell stories (see the first quotation below), while others said that they wanted to know more information about how people created and used the objects in the exhibition (see the second quotation).

I think some of the exhibits about regular things in the household aren't that interesting. They don't tell much of a story. They're something that most people have in their homes. It doesn't stand out. Regular everyday households don't give much of a story. [male 33]

I would like something more about design and how the human body relates to it. I can recognize an American decade by a chair. It is tied to social conditions. I would love to know why horns are used on the chair. Who made it? Were they from the culture that could get those horns? Or why did an Art Deco iron develop? You need to pull in an understanding for people. [female 39]

One participant said that the amount of questions asked in the exhibition text made it hard to focus (see the quotation below).

(What about it [the exhibition] does not sound interesting?) Presenting so many questions about ‘What is home?’ It lost my interest because I didn’t have something to really think about. If it were more focused on a few questions, I’d feel more connected to what I was seeing and would make more connections. [female 30]

## UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXHIBITION

### CONFUSION AROUND THE EXHIBITION CONCEPTS

When asked if anything about the exhibition was confusing or hard to understand, keeping in mind that the exhibition is roughly mocked-up, more than one-half of participants said nothing was confusing.

By comparison, one-quarter talked about objects. A few named specific objects whose functions they had trouble understanding, such as the cradleboard and Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3* (see the quotation below). A few other participants discussed objects that they felt did not embody the theme “home,” including the chairs and the Tuareg *Baggage Stand (Ebel)* (see the second and third quotations).

(Was there anything that was confusing or hard to understand?) I was a little confused about what the cradleboard was. [female 23]

Some of the objects included were a stretch for me to think of it as something used in a home. There were very architectural chairs and very beautiful pieces of furniture, but they don’t make me think about home. They are so particular to a certain kind of person—an art collector. I would have found it more interesting if there was a kind of everyman sense to a lot of the piece. So I would have found more popular pieces of furniture from a certain time to be more interesting than a very artistic chair. [female 30]

The one next to grass (Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*) is something that is tall, thin, and carved. It didn’t look home-ish so I didn’t pause. [female 45]

A few participants were confused by the exhibition’s text. Some of these visitors said that the questions asked were too broad, while others said there were too many rhetorical questions (see the first quotation below). One participant said that the fact that the text mentioned so many objects in each label was confusing (see the second quotation).

(Was there anything that was confusing or hard to understand?) There were a lot of rhetorical questions. The entire first paragraph of *Domestic Interiors*. [female 23]

Some of the signage talked about multiple pieces. Like the label towards the back talked about the hiding place, that set of photos, but also about the photos of abandoned homes, which I felt was at the front. [female 25]

One participant said that, overall, they were confused by the connections between the objects due to the wide range of time periods covered (see the quotation below).

There are objects that are very old, and then there is a modern iron. It’s a broad range. There needs to be some context since it is a wide range of time. Link the commonalities. [female 59]



## PERCEIVED FIT OF THE OBJECTS WITHIN THE CONCEPTS

### BEST FIT WITH THE CONCEPT

Participants were asked to name objects that best fit the theme “home.” Objects named in order from most to least frequently mentioned are:

- ◆ Ben Marcin’s *Baltimore, MD*
- ◆ The chairs (E. Anton Lorenz’s *KS 47 Chair*, William C. Mittmann’s *Horn Chair*, and the Lobi *High-Backed Seat*)
- ◆ The appliances (Waters-Genter Company’s *Toastmaster Toaster* and General Electric Company’s *Moderne’ Iron*)
- ◆ Jim Goldberg’s *This is affluent America, What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*, and *It’s kind of stinky living in this hotel*
- ◆ Alfred Stieglitz’s *The Steerage*
- ◆ Dave Egger’s *Shower Curtain*
- ◆ The paintings (Walter Henry William’s *A Quick Nap*, Marguerite Gérard’s *Motherhood*, and Pierre Bonnard’s *Luncheon Table*)
- ◆ Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*
- ◆ Starlee Kine’s *Bamboo Cutting Board*
- ◆ Frances Benjamin Johnston’s *Sofia’s Dairy, Harford Country, Maryland*
- ◆ Eugene Kupjack’s *Entrance Hall in a Southern Plantation*
- ◆ Northern Tsistsistas *Cradleboard*
- ◆ The cups and bowls (*Red-Figured Bell-Krater*, *Child’s Mug*, *Tea Cup*, *Tea Bowl*, *Bowl (Jade)*)
- ◆ Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*
- ◆ Tracey Snelling’s *El Mirador*

When participants talked about why objects best fit the theme “home,” slightly more than one-quarter said that they were domestic objects, or things that could be found in a home. Some of these visitors talked about how the exhibition showed domestic objects from different cultures and how possessions affect people’s interpretations and definitions of the concept “home” (see the first and second quotations below). Others noted the importance of everyday objects in the home, such as the toaster and the chairs (see the third quotation).

(In your opinion, which objects best fit the ideas of home described here? How so?) The exhibition showed different stuff from different houses around world. [male 14]

What I like best is that you have this array of traditional items, but non-traditional manifestations of them. The first thing I thought of was that home is different for everyone. It’s hard to think of this when you’re so used to what you see every day. [female 23]

I like the mundane things, like the toaster. (How do they fit with the idea of ‘home’?) Because when you stay at home you have things that you use every day that you take for granted, but that are really a necessity. They are important elements. [female 25]

One-quarter talked about seeing people in their homes and the relationship between home and family. For example, a few discussed Jim Goldberg’s photographs. Some of these participants said that

opportunity to see people at home with their possessions allowed them to think about others' thoughts and feelings about the concept of "home" (see the first quotation below), while others talked about how the meaning of "home" differs between individuals and families (see the second quotation). A few talked more specifically about the relationship between parents and children. For example, one visitor mentioned Walter Henry William's *A Quick Nap* and Marguerite Gérard's *Motherhood*, and talked about how parenting can be a sort of shelter (see the third quotation). Another mentioned Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage* and talked about the need for parents to provide a sense of home for their children (see the fourth quotation).

(In your opinion, which objects best fit the ideas of home described here? How so?) Definitely the images of the interiors that included people and gave some context about the thoughts or feelings that they had. [female 25]

I liked the pictures of people's spaces the best and what that means to an individual or a family. Home is a very individualistic place. [male 28]

The woman with house at her back [*What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*]. The baby kissing its mother [*Motherhood*]. The girl standing outside near the ladder [*A Quick Nap*]. They don't show just the world's aspect of it but the parenting aspect of how a child grows up. How it acts as a shelter. It's more like something that signifies identity. [male 21]

*Steerage*. It speaks to how regardless of where you are you need to give kids a sense of home. [female 29]

Several participants talked generally about how the objects depicted different types of homes. Some of these participants said that the objects showed different types of houses (see the first quotation below), while others discussed the architecture of the houses more specifically, like in Frances Benjamin Johnston's *Sofia's Dairy, Harford Country, Maryland* (see the second quotation).

(In your opinion, which objects best fit the ideas of home described here? How so?) I think they all do. There was nothing that didn't fit. They're all either objects in a home, or depictions of a literal house. A couple of the ones in the back. I hadn't thought about the hole in the straw (Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3*). [female 64]

The one with the two stairs that came up. The design was interesting. To think of what type of house would have that kind of stairway. [male 33]

A few participants talked about objects that they felt spoke to the temporary nature of homes, including Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage* and Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3* (see the quotation below).

(In your opinion, which objects best fit the ideas of home described here? How so?) The temporary shelter was cool. All housing is temporary. The burrow in a field is the ultimate temporary shelter. [male 25]

One visitor said that objects that showed homes from different time periods, like Eugene Kupjack's *Entrance Hall in a Southern Plantation*, best fit the theme of "home" (see the quotation below).

I loved the miniatures. Glimpses to another period in time. [female 59]

### LEAST FIT WITH THE CONCEPT

Participants were also asked to name objects that least fit the theme “home.” Objects named in order from most to least frequently mentioned are:

- ◆ The chairs (E. Anton Lorenz’s *KS 47 Chair*, William C. Mittmann’s *Horn Chair*, and the Lobi *High-Backed Seat*)
- ◆ The cups and bowls (*Red-Figured Bell-Krater*, *Child’s Mug*, *Tea Cup*, *Tea Bowl*, *Bowl (Jade)*)
- ◆ Susan Harbage Page’s *Hiding Place No. 3*
- ◆ The appliances (Waters-Genter Company’s *Toastmaster Toaster* and General Electric Company’s *Moderne’ Iron*)
- ◆ Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*
- ◆ Alfred Stieglitz’s *The Steerage*
- ◆ Tuareg *Baggage Stand (Ebel)*
- ◆ Starlee Kine’s *Bamboo Cutting Board*
- ◆ Dave Egger’s *Shower Curtain*
- ◆ Northern Tsistsistas *Cradleboard*

When asked which objects least fit the theme “home,” about one-third of participants said that none of the objects least fit the theme. A few participants said objects that did not show people in their homes or people interacting with the objects least fit with the theme “home.” These participants talked about a variety of objects when discussing this idea, including the chairs, the appliances, the cutting board, and the shower curtain. Some of these participants felt that they needed more information to understand how specific objects, like the Lobi *High-Backed Seat*, would have been used by members of the cultures that made them (see the first quotation below). Others discussed a desire to see people interacting with objects in their homes more generally (see the second and third quotations). One participant said that spaces, rather than objects, create a home (see the fourth quotation).

(Based on the little information I have given you, which objects do you think least fit with the ideas of home described here? How so?) The spoon chair. It needs to be more authentic. I want to see how it’s actually used there, in West Africa, versus the artistic perspective. [female 25]

I don’t know the meaning of the appliances. A person interacting with a home would show me what home is and how he values his home. [male 15]

Some of the quirkiest items were maybe not as poignant, like the shower curtain. Just because the more still life ones lacked the humanity aspect. There’s always a dynamic interaction between objects and people. A house is just a structure. [female 23]

The toasters. I like the concept of the kitchen, but maybe not a particular object from the kitchen. Because the object is not the home, the space is. [male 54]



Figure 7. Lobi *High-Backed Seat*

A few talked about objects that they did not like for aesthetic reasons as well as objects that they felt they could not relate to. Some of these participants mentioned the chairs and the appliances and said that the styles that were shown in the exhibition were not the styles that everyday people would have in their homes (see the first quotation below). Others talked about the difficulties of picturing how objects that they have never used before, such as the *Tuareg Baggage Stand (Ebel)*, would be used in someone else's home (see the second quotation).

(Based on the little information I have given you, which objects do you think least fit with the ideas of home described here? How so?) Some of the things, like the chairs, were more design-y than the kinds that you would have in your home. We don't live in palaces. You can connect them to the theme, but it is an afterthought. [male 23]

Towards the back wall, the tent pin. It's kind of hard because it's not something I have in my home or use. It's hard to think about how it'd be applied, what type of home it'd be in. It's different for me. [female 25]

A few participants talked about needing more context or information to understand how the domestic objects, including the cups, bowls, and chairs, relate to the theme "home" (see the first and second quotations below).

(Based on the little information I have given you, which objects do you think least fit with the ideas of home described here? How so?) The domestic pieces on their own. I would be thinking, 'where's the theme?' [female 25]

I think that if there was an area that could be eliminated it would be the individual objects. The horn chair, for example—unless you add a lot of other household objects, like the teapots, I don't think it explored that idea enough. [male 28]

A few participants also talked about objects whose functions they did not understand when asked which objects least fit the theme "home." Objects mentioned included the cradleboard, the *Tuareg Baggage Stand (Ebel)*, and Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3* (see the first and second quotations below).

(Based on the little information I have given you, which objects do you think least fit with the ideas of home described here? How so?) The cradleboard. I still don't know what it is. [female 29]

The tent pole. That was confusing. It was hard to understand how it would work in a home. [male 25]

Two participants talked about Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage* when asked which objects least fit the theme. These participants said that the object represented the ideas of transition and change, rather than a home (see the quotation below).

I really like the piece with the ship, passengers, and the two decks. I kind of get the theme of traveling and going. But it doesn't say home to me—it says a kind of transition, or change. [male 33]

## ALIGNMENT OF EXHIBITION MATERIALS AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

### PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

When asked how the objects prompted them to think about their own homes or their ideas about home, more than one-third of participants talked about connections between home and family. A few of these participants generally discussed how the presence of family allows you to create a home anywhere (see the first quotation below). A few reflected on their own family's experiences or mentioned a specific family member. For example, one visitor talked about how looking at Jim Goldberg's photographs reminded him of the struggles of growing up in a lower-middle class family, while another said that the prayer mat made him miss his mother and his home (see the second and third quotations). A few participants talked about the link between home and motherhood and females' role in the home more generally (see the fourth and fifth quotations). Some of these participants specifically mentioned Marguerite Gérard's *Motherhood* and Jim Goldberg's *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive* when discussing these ideas.

(What, if at all, did the objects prompt you to think about your own home or your ideas about home?) The text is well done. I thought about the different areas of home. I work in a jail, so their [the prisoners'] home right now is a confined space, but it is their home. I work with children in prison, and they [children and prisoners] make a home when they are together. Home is created wherever you are. [female 59]

My relatives came from Greece. The other side was West Virginia coal miners—hillbillies. I think, growing up, I found it interesting that there were two different home experiences and families. It was very different from what the other kids had. I grew up in a middle-class neighborhood. I remember feeling ashamed and out of place around the other kids I went to school with. Some of these images of less well-off people remind me of what I was used to compared to what the other kids experienced. [male 49]

The prayer rug. I'm here on my own and miss my mom and my home. [male 14]

Being a mother, I liked the painting of motherhood. Everyone had a mother. It's basic for many people. Home is family and comfort. [female 54]

I liked some of the text and imagery about the feminist ideals behind home and a domestic space. I connected with that. I wish there were more female artists in the exhibit. Because to me, home, especially in the domestic context, ties in women so much. It would be interesting to hear more of a woman's voice in regards to their domestic and interior spaces. The paintings that were with the text talk about that. I forget the artists—the interior of a room with people and a cat in the corner. [female 25]

Slightly more than one-quarter of participants discussed how home reflects your personality. A few talked generally about how peoples' homes tell stories about them (see the first quotation below), while others discussed how objects that contained people, including Walter Henry William's *A Quick Nap* and Marguerite Gérard's *Motherhood*, made them think about how people's behaviors differ inside and outside of their homes (see the second quotation). Other participants said that the meaning of home differs among individuals, and mentioned Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3* and Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage* (see the third quotation). One participant said that Jim Goldberg's *This is affluent America* made him question his own experiences (see the fourth quotation).

(What, if at all, did the objects prompt you to think about your own home or your ideas about home?) It makes me think about what my home says about me as a person. What items reflect my personality and what I've been through? If someone were to walk into my home, what story would it tell? [male 33]

Just thinking about home as a direct representation of yourself in society. Are you a different person when you're at home? Is it your stage? Are you restricted by rules? Personally, I think that home is where you're not restricted by rules. I'm thinking of the objects with women, children, and bonds between people—the girl on the fire escape. [female 23]

I think it prompted me to think about how home is an individualistic place and how home means something different to everyone, even if it's the same place. I'm thinking of the section with the temporary homes—the ship, the burrow. [male 28]

The photograph that talked about affluent America and how he felt trapped. I'm confused about my own existence. [male 27]



Figure 8. Jim Goldberg's *This is affluent America*

Participants also discussed the changing nature of home when asked to reflect on how the objects made them think about their ideas of home. Slightly more than one-quarter spoke generally about the mobile nature of our society and how people change homes often (see the first quotation below). A few specifically mentioned immigration and referenced the objects in the “Arrivals and Departures” section. Some of these participants shared personal stories about having left a home (see the second and third quotations). One visitor mentioned Frances Benjamin Johnston’s *Sofia’s Dairy, Harford County, Maryland*, and talked about how houses change over time (see the fourth quotation).

(What, if at all, did the objects prompt you to think about your own home or your ideas about home?) The changing nature of home. We're in a very mobile society, constantly changing home, but we're all looking for stability. [female 28]

The steorage thing for sure, because I've lived in a couple of different countries. I think of it as home over there. [female 30]

My home feels temporary to me, here in Baltimore. I'd rather be in California. I came here because it was it was more affordable. [female 70]

I love that wonderful staircase in that photograph. It's an interesting photo, the double staircase. An empty house that has seen happier days. [male 54]

Several participants talked about how home is a welcoming and comfortable place. Some of these participants said that the objects in the “Thresholds and Facades” section, in particular Emile Antoine Bourdelle’s *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*, made them think about the idea that home can either be a place to welcome others or a place to retreat (see the first quotation below). Others associated the idea of home with things that make them feel comfortable. One participant specifically mentioned that the exhibition text made him think about this idea (see the second quotation).

(What, if at all, did the objects prompt you to think about your own home or your ideas about home?) The idea of home as a welcoming place or as a place that keeps you out. It makes me wonder what image our home conveys. [female 57]

I’ve done a lot of traveling, so I think more about home when I’m not in it. I think about things that give me comfort. It was more the reading that made me think of that. [female 24]

Several participants also talked about domestic objects when asked how the objects made them think about their ideas about home. Some of these participants described objects like the chairs and the appliances as “universal” and talked about how they are objects that everyone has in their homes. One participant talked about the chance to see how domestic objects vary across cultures (see the quotation below).

(What, if at all, did the objects prompt you to think about your own home or your ideas about home?) Some things are universal for everyone, like the cups, the toaster, and the chairs. Seeing multiple versions of those will get people thinking about our culture, hopefully. Why was it designed this way? [female 39]

### THINKING ABOUT HOME IN NEW WAYS

When asked how the objects prompted them to think about home in new ways, more than one-quarter talked about the idea that community helps constitute a home. Some of these participants spoke generally about how one’s home extends beyond the house (see the first quotation below). Others talked about how people’s daily paths in their cities or towns also make up part of the home (see the second quotation). A few talked about places in their own communities that they consider to be “homes outside the home” and said that places where people gather can be part of a home (see the third and fourth quotations); these participants primarily talked about the exhibition text and did not mention specific objects when discussing this idea.

(How, if at all, did any part of the text or any of the objects make you think about “home” in new ways?) The idea that home isn’t necessarily confined to a house. I like that. [female 39]

Saying that the whole city is part of it [home], everywhere you go. You don’t encounter an entire city, you have specific paths—but that’s all part of your home. [female 70]

I thought about the introduction text where they discussed the question of ‘what is really home?’ Is the structure? Where you gather? A church? Liquor stores? The idea that it could be places that you gather, meet, or hang out opened up a lot of other things for me. Where might that be for me? I guess we hang out in certain stores and museums. We’re not at home very often. [male 49]

The three photos of less opulent homes [Jim Goldberg’s photographs]. Each have their own aspirations and goals that may not conform with the idea of the typical white picket fence.

People find a community in addition to the traditional American home. It would be nice to have a section on that. I'm a school teacher, so I think of school as a second home. [female 59]

More than one-quarter also talked about the variety of emotions that people feel towards their homes when asked how the exhibition made them think about home in new ways. Some of these participants spoke more generally about how different experiences can affect how people feel about their homes (see the first quotation below). Others specifically discussed the idea that home can be both a positive and negative environment (see the second and third quotations); these participants mentioned objects from all sections of the exhibition when discussing this idea, including the chairs, Emile Antoine Bourdelle's *Head of Medusa (Door Knocker)*, Walter Henry William's *A Quick Nap*, and Jim Goldberg's *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*.

(How, if at all, did any part of the text or any of the objects make you think about "home" in new ways? Which ones? How so?) Some of the huge paintings, like the girl on the balcony. The women from the 1800s. They made me think about what home can mean to a wide variety of people. [female 24]

The idea of a home being non-inviting in some ways, or having negative associations. For me the word home doesn't. The idea that it might for someone is interesting. I've never thought of it in that way. Door knockers to keep people out, furniture designed to keep people from wanting to sit in them. I don't associate that with home. It's different for sure. [female 26]

The idea of what home can be. I think of it positively, but some think of it negatively. The mother with a baby on her shoulders. She wants more for her son. Also, the idea of home keeping people out and in. [male 27]

One-quarter talked about the impermanence of homes when asked how the exhibition made them think of home in new ways. Some of these participants talked about nomadic peoples but did not mention specific objects (see the first quotation below), while others said that specific objects that nomadic peoples might use, like the cradleboard, made them think about the idea that home is not fixed to one location (see the second quotation). A few visitors specifically mentioned Alfred Stieglitz's *The Steerage* and Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place No. 3* and talked about how these pieces made them think about how everyone has left a home (see the third quotation). One participant said that seeing the image of an immigrant's temporary shelter made her think about the modern-day immigrant experience (see the fourth quotation).

(How, if at all, did any part of the text or any of the objects make you think about "home" in new ways?) When it talked about nomads and how their home is wandering. It's an interesting reminder of different ideas. [female 28]

I definitely liked the cradleboard. Because now that I think about it, that's a home for a child that's using it but also a traveling object. The idea of something not permanent or fixed to one area. [female 25]

The photographs of steerage and the immigrant crossing the border. The 'home you leave behind text' is provocative. The images of the homes we grew up in are romantic or idealistic. But most of us leave behind homes multiple times in our lives. [female 57]

The nest one. When I saw the steerage picture I thought 'Oh, the people are looking for a new life.' How historical it seemed. Then looking at that one [Susan Harbage Page's *Hiding Place*



No.3]. I thought of how current it seems. How ironic and sardonic it is to include that piece. To think that somebody might be making a ‘makeshift’ home in a nest all for the larger purpose of creating a new home in a new country. [female 25]

A few participants said that the exhibition did not make them think about home in new ways. A few talked about objects that people use in their homes. Some of these participants said that objects such as the cups, bowls, and chairs made them think about how cultural differences affect domestic environments (see the first and second quotations below).

(How, if at all, did any part of the text or any of the objects make you think about “home” in new ways?) I noticed that the chairs were different. The bowls and vessels too. It’s something to think about. I think about how other people used to or do think about different environments. [female 19]

It made me think about the cultural differences. I forgot what the thing is—the cradleboard. Even the layout of the plantation home, how it’s high-quality furniture. Thinking about what cultural differences there are and what home represents for different people. Oh, and also the chair from Ghana. I’ve never seen a chair designed that way. It’s right next to what we’d consider a comfortable chair in our culture. The way that you have things positioned next to each other makes you think about the differences between the two. [male 33]

### CONSIDERING HOW ARTISTS THINK

When asked how the objects made them think about how artists think and their process, slightly more than one-quarter of participants talked about the materials and media that artists use. Most of these participants spoke generally about how the objects were made (see the first quotation) without referring to specific ones; however, these participants also said that a discussion of artists’ processes was not included in the exhibition text. Three mentioned that they wondered about how Tracey Snelling created *El Mirador*; (see the second quotation).

(The Museum also hopes to provide insight into how artists think and their process. How, if at all, did the objects make you think about that?) Well I’m an artist, so for a lot of them I was looking more at how they were put together and made rather than what the image was. First I look at materials and how it’s put together. [male 49]

The apartment building, that is mixed media. It made me think about it a little bit, but the explanation doesn’t go into process. [female 59]



Figure 9. Tracey Snelling’s *El Mirador*

One-quarter said that they thought about how artists capture and convey emotion when asked how the objects made them consider how artists think. Some of these participants talked generally about how artists express their feelings about “home” (see the first quotation below), while others mentioned specific objects that captured other people’s emotions. For example, one participant said that Jim Goldberg captured his subject’s thoughts and feelings in *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive* (see the second quotation). Another participant mentioned Alfred Stieglitz’s *The Steerage* and wondered about the artist’s personal connection with immigration (see the third quotation).

(The Museum also hopes to provide insight into how artists think and their process. How, if at all, did the objects make you think about that?) How artists express how they feel about their experience of home. Is it a secure place of peace, or chaos? [female 64]

I think about how artists are keyed in to the humanity of what they are observing and capturing that moment in time. The emotion they feel in that moment. Like the woman who would like nice furniture and a van to drive. Goldberg captured that desire. [female 54]

I would love to know what the artist was feeling. I want to know more about what was important to them. Like for the steerage photograph. Did the artist's family migrate? [female 29]

One-quarter said that the exhibition did not make them think about how artists think or their process. A few talked about how artists choose the subject of their works. For example, one participant talked about storytelling and said that the objects on display showed artists' awareness of history (see the first quotation below). Another talked about how the artists chose their subjects and about how they made decisions about the text included in the works (see the second quotation).

(The Museum also hopes to provide insight into how artists think and their process. How, if at all, did the objects make you think about that?) I think that artists are more in tune with history than people give them credit for. This shows with the stuff that you have on display. I'm really big on storytelling, so to look at something that has a story behind it is really what I look for from an artist. [male 33]

I liked the Dave Eggers shower curtain. It made me think differently about him and his work. I had never thought about him as an artist before, only as a writer. I loved the word choice for the words on the photos (Goldberg) and how they were staged. How he chose his subjects, how he picked which message to include with each one of those. Also the single rowhouse. I'm not sure what else that artist focuses on, but how do you decide to focus on a single rowhouse? I can put myself in his place because I could stop in front of that and take a mental image of that, and he's taken a physical one.

A few talked about the idea that everyday objects could be considered art when asked how the objects made them think about how artists think and their process. Some of these participants said that they thought about how mundane objects could be considered art (see the first quotation below), while others talked about decorative or functional objects (see the second quotation); objects discussed include Starlee Kine's *Bamboo Cutting Board*, Dave Egger's *Shower Curtain*, and the various cups and bowls.

(The Museum also hopes to provide insight into how artists think and their process. How, if at all, did the objects make you think about that?) I like how they see something mundane and something general and present it as art. It's actually interesting. Like the cutting board, the artist imprinted some text on it. The cutting board and shower curtain are talking to me. They have a bunch of words on them. It gave me an idea of how artists do something interesting with something I don't really pay much attention to in my home. [female 25]

A few things came to mind [including] whether something is decorative or functional, like the bowls, vessels, and chairs. [female 19]

## ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

Participants were given the opportunity to provide additional feedback about the exhibition. Overall, participants said they liked the exhibition and talked about objects they found interesting. A few participants said that they thought that the exhibition should show more people interacting with their homes (see the first quotation below). A few wanted to see more cultural and socio-economic diversity in the exhibition as well as a greater variety of the types of houses that people live in (see the second and third quotations). One participant said that the exhibition should explore the idea that home is a place of comfort more deeply (see the fourth quotation). Another suggested providing a space for visitors to respond to the exhibition and share their thoughts on and experiences with “home” (see the fifth quotation).

(Do you have any other feedback that you would like to give the Museum about this upcoming exhibition?) There’s nothing that’s uninteresting, but I wanted to see more about people in homes. [female 23]

The initial concepts of home are interesting. It’s very American, and I’d like to see other cultures’ homes. [female 38]

I want more diversity—different house structures and time periods. [female 25]

I keep coming back to the word comfort. I want to see things that remind people of their childhood, or comfort, or of a happy time. [female 54]

You could have a wall at the end where people can leave things and say something about how they connected to the exhibition. Home is where we interact. [female 39]

## EVALUATOR’S NOTES

Based on our experiences, the feedback that came out of these interviews was highly personal. Most of the participants recruited had volunteered in advance to participate in the interview, so we may make assumptions that they are more comfortable viewing and talking about art. Nevertheless, some of the responses were extremely personal and vulnerable even; for instance, one woman described her mother’s deteriorating condition, while another man described being ashamed of his upbringing. Furthermore, responses from walk-in visitors recruited at the BMA also indicated strong personal connections to the theme, although some of these participants seemed less comfortable expressing themselves. For instance, a teenage boy said the prayer mat reminded him of home and how he misses his mother, but he did not expand on this idea. Additionally, a 20-year-old girl said Jim Goldberg’s depiction of a young mother reminded her of home, but she did not explain further.



Figure 10. Jim Goldberg’s *What I really want is a real home with nice furniture, also a van to drive*

## APPENDICES

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