

TATE PAPERS 11

Tools to Understand: An Evaluation of the Interpretation Material used in Tate Modern's *Rothko* Exhibition

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Q.5 What are your expectations of the Mark Rothko exhibition?

Mark the words that apply:

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Accessible | Demanding | Biographical | Chronological |
| Comprehensive | Focused | Educational | Informative |
| Emotional | Relaxing | Inspiring | Spiritual |
| Factual | Complex | Fun | Historical |
| Technical | Thematic | Other..... | |

Q.6 There are different educational resources to help you interpret the exhibition. Do you plan to use any of the following?

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|----|
| Wall and caption texts | yes | no |
| Booklet | yes | no |
| Multimedia tour (MMT) | yes | no |
| None of these | yes | no |

Q.7 What do you expect the relationship between the educational resources is?

a) I expect the type of information in the different resources to be

identical overlap completely different

b) I expect the tone of voice in the different resources to be

the same very different

c) I expect the complexity in the different resources to be

the same very different

If different: Please rate the order of complexity you expect for the resources (1 = simplest, 3 = most complex)

| | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|
| Wall text | Booklet | Multimedia tour |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|

Q.8a We would like to know more about your expectations of each of these educational resources. Please indicate what you think each will provide?

| | Wall/caption texts | Booklet | MMT |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|-----|
| Description of the works | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Motivation of the artist | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Human interest details | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Facts and figures (dates etc.) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Information on materials/techniques | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| General (art) historical context | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rothko's artistic development | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Help to look more closely at a work | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Different perspectives on the works | 0 | 0 | 0 |

8b Which three of these do you consider most interesting? Please mark with * [asterisk].

Q.9 Do you expect the resources to be designed for different audiences?

Yes

No

If 'yes', please explain:

.....
.....

Q.10 If you could only choose one educational resource for this exhibition – MMT, wall texts in the gallery, booklet – which would you pick?

Multimedia Tour

Wall texts and captions

Booklet

None of these

Q.11 How often do you visit Tate Modern?

First time

Once a year or less

About three times a year

Every month or more

Q.12 Do you consider yourself an experienced museum-goer in general? Can you rate your experience on a scale of 1–7?

(how easy is it to find your way, to interpret what is offered?)

Inexperienced 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Experienced

Q.13 How would you rate your knowledge of (modern) art?

Little/no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Specialist
Knowledge

Q.14 How would you rate your interest in (modern) art?

(curiosity: how much do you want to know about (modern) art?)

Not interested 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very interested

Q.15 How important is (modern) art to you?

(involvement/relevance: what role does art play in your life?)

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very

Q.16 What is your sex?

Male

Female

Q.17 How old are you?

- Under 16 16–24 25–34 35–44
 45–54 55–64 65–74 75+

Q.18 What is your nationality?

.....

Q.19 Where do you live? (Mark one response)

- Greater London Area
 Rest of the UK
 Outside UK, please specify.....

Q.20 Please indicate the highest level of education that you have completed.

- No qualifications
 O-levels, GCSEs or equivalent
 A-levels or equivalent
 University degree or equivalent
 Postgraduate or equivalent
 Still in education
 Other.....

Thank you very much for sharing your opinions with us, we really appreciate you sparing the time!

2 Morris Hargreaves McIntyre segmentation questions

With whom are you visiting today? (Mark one response)

- Alone
- Children under 15
- Friends/relatives
- Tourist group
- Company outing
- School group
- Other (please specify):.....

Which of these statements are the reasons for your visit to Tate Modern today?

- It's one of the major attractions in London
- I am drawn to interesting buildings and places
- It's an enjoyable way to pass the time
- It is a nice place to spend time with my friends and family
- To encourage children's interest in art
- To improve my own knowledge or experience of art and artists
- I have a personal interest in the subject
- I have an academic or professional interest
- A strong sense of personal connection or identity
- To see fascinating, awe-inspiring things
- To see beautiful things in an attractive setting
- To stimulate my own creativity
- Peaceful, quiet contemplation
- To escape and to recharge my batteries
- Don't know

Which one of these is the *main reason* why you have visited Tate Modern today?
Please mark with * [asterisk].

Do you have a professional involvement with visual art?

- Yes
- No

3 Observation sheet

Rothko Evaluation part 2: visitor observation

Observer:

Date:

Time:

Subject A: Rooms 1–3

Instructions: pick the next person who comes through the door into Room 1 and follow him/her discreetly through Rooms 1–3.

We need at least twenty respondents initially.

Entrance: How do people choose educational resources and which choices do they make?

Does this person accept the booklet when it's offered?

Yes No

Does this person talk to the guard about its contents?

Yes No

If so, what are the comments/questions?

.....
.....
.....

Is this person visiting the exhibition alone?

Yes No

Does this person have a MMT?

Yes No

Does this person read the introductory wall text?

Yes No

How does this person 'get organised'? Describe:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Rooms 1–3: General behaviour

How is this person moving around?

Browsing Following Searching Choosing

Does this person use the interpretation material? Tick:

Wall text Booklet MMT

Observe his/her interaction with a work in Room 1 and one in Room 3.

In what combination/order is s/he doing things? Use 1, 2, 3, etc.:

Room 1:
Wall text.....

Booklet.....

MMT.....

Artwork.....

Room 3:
Booklet.....

MMT.....

Artwork.....

What is his/her level of engagement with objects?

Orientation Exploration Discovery Immersion

What is his/her level of engagement with interpretation material?

Orientation Exploration Discovery Immersion

Do the levels of engagement with objects and interpretation material seem related?

Yes No

Notes:
.....
.....

Does this person search for text-based information on the walls?

Yes No

What percentage of time (roughly) does this person people look at the resources, compared to looking at the art works?

Art works %

Wall texts %

Captions %

Booklet %

MMT %

Other %

How much time does this person spend in these rooms?

Room 1: < 2 mins 2–5 mins 5–10 mins >10 mins

Room 2: < 2 mins 2–5 mins 5–10 mins >10 mins

Room 3: < 2 mins 2–5 mins 5–10 mins >10 mins

Was there a difference in behaviour in these three rooms?

Yes No

Describe:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Subject B: Room 4

How does this person respond to the techniques and materials info?

Instructions: pick the next person who comes through the door and observe him/her discreetly in Room 4.

Does this visitor enter the room alone?

Yes No

Does this person have any interpretation resources?

Booklet MMT

Does he/she use them?

Yes No

How is this person moving around?

Browsing Following Searching Choosing

In what order does s/he approach different aspects the room? Use 1, 2, 3, 4 etc. Please note if visitor returns to a particular aspect. Leave blank if visitor does not use.

Wall text.....
Light box.....
Front of painting.....
Reverse of painting.....
Looking at MMT.....
Reading booklet.....
Photos.....

Does this person approach the light box?

Yes No

If yes, what is this person's level of engagement with the techniques and materials information in the light box?

Orientation Exploration Discovery Immersion

How much time does this person spend in this room?

< 2 mins 2-5 mins 5-10 mins >10 mins

Notes:
.....
.....
.....

4 Post-exhibition interview questions

General instruction: ask open questions (so no questions one can only answer yes to).

General questions

First we want to thank you for your time and cooperation. We work for TM and are carrying out a small survey to evaluate the interpretation material in the Rothko exhibition.

What did you expect this exhibition would be like? Have these expectations been met? (content, quality of works, type of information, type of experience)

We're first going to ask you some general questions about all the interpretation materials, then go on to ask you specific questions about each.

You have used the booklet, MMT and read the wall texts. What was your general idea of such materials before you used them today?
(what did you expect)

What do you think of them now you've used them?
(more/less positive, same/different as/than expected)

What about you say the differences are between the different types of interpretation materials?
(listen vs read, different types of information)

And the similarities?
(supplement, overlap)

Did these materials help your visit? And how? How did the interpretation materials add or detract from your appreciation of the exhibition?
(help to see more/engage in more depth, form own opinion, understand more about...)
(or material got in the way of enjoying visit?)

Did you appreciate/use one type of material more than the others? And why?

Can you talk about the content of the material? Is there a difference in the type of information?
(context vs help to see, background info vs different voices, interesting/boring)

What did you think of the tone of voice/style of writing of the material? Is there a difference?
(museum or outsiders talking, formal/informal etc.)

What did you think of the complexity of the material? Is there a difference?
(simple/difficult, complex)

Who do you think the different materials are designed for?
(tourists, experts, me, old people, children...)

Can we now look in more detail at the interpretation material(s) you used?

Instruction: we might want to start with the product the respondent liked best and ask all the questions about that resource. Then move on to the other resources with some additional/specific questions.

We might also want to alternate which product we discuss first, to make sure every product gets enough coverage.

Wall texts

How much did you read? Why?
(all texts, a bit of each text)

Was that different per room? Why?
(one room might need more explanation, position on wall, check if they've noticed there's not texts in every room)

What can you say about their presence in the exhibition?
(intrusive vs didn't notice them; (not) enough-about right-too many)

What do you think of wall texts and captions in general?
(necessary, intrusive, interesting/boring, too much information, too difficult)

How do you compare the wall texts and captions in the Rothko exhibition?
(content, complexity, type of information, enough information?, no caption text)

Is there anything in particular you'd like to say about the content of the wall texts/captions in the Rothko exhibition?

Can you say anything specific about the tone of voice/style of writing?

Can you say anything specific about the complexity?

How would your experience of the exhibition have been affected if you hadn't read the wall texts?
(what would you have missed: type of info, level of engagement)

Booklet

How much of the booklet did you read? Why?
(a little – some/about half – most – all)

Was that different per room? Why?
(one room might need more explanation, text may be easier/more complex per room)

How do you use this kind of material in an exhibition?
(read before looking, take home and read afterwards, ...)

What do you think of exhibition booklets in general?
(necessary, intrusive, interesting/boring, too much information, too difficult)

How do you compare the exhibition booklets in the Rothko exhibition?
(content, complexity, type of information, enough information?, no caption text)

Is there anything in particular you'd like to say about the content of the exhibition booklets in the Rothko exhibition?

Can you say anything specific about the tone of voice/style of writing?

Can you say anything specific about the complexity?

What did you think of the layout/design?
(off-putting – inviting etc.)

What do you plan to do with the booklet?
(read in the café/at home, keep/throw away)

How would your experience of the exhibition have been affected if you hadn't taken the booklet?
(what would you have missed: type of info, level of engagement)

MMT

How much of the MMT did you do? Why?
(a little – some/about half – most – all)

Was that different per room? Why?
(one room might need more explanation, text may be easier/more complex per room)

What do you think of multimedia tours/audio guides in general?
(necessary, intrusive, interesting/boring, too much information, too difficult)

How do you compare the multimedia tours/audio guides in the Rothko exhibition?
(content, complexity, type of information, enough information?, no caption text)

What did you think of the audio texts?
(tone of voice, complexity, difficult words, for different audience)
(but also: American voice, length)

How do you appreciate the different items (content)? Were there any you liked in particular?
(about this work, video material (the content, and the visual quality of it), music, poetry, different voices)

Can you say anything specific about the tone of voice?

Can you say anything specific about the complexity?

What do you think of the volume/distribution of the information?
(enough/too much, not in the right room)

How do you feel about the balance between looking at the MMT screen and looking at the artworks?
(too much looking at screen, not enough referral to screen, just right)

How would your experience of the exhibition have been affected if you hadn't used the MMT?
(what would you have missed: type of info, level of engagement)

Room 4

Now we'd like to look at one particular room: Room 4, that deals with the techniques and materials Rothko used.

How did you appreciate this section of the exhibition? What do you think of this type of information being offered in the exhibition?
(interesting, too technical, good addition, disturbing the emotional/spiritual experience)

How much time did you spend here? Why?

How much of the information did you read?
(wall text/light box; a little/some/most/all)

How did you go about it?
(behaviour: just read, just looked at art, read and looked at art, moved to and fro)

Did you use other interpretation resources? Can you compare them?
(order of using materials)

Can you say anything specific about the content of the light box in room 4?
(type of information, interesting/boring, difficult/easy, relevance, did you miss anything?) (but also: was it balanced?: too much in depth technical info, not enough, just right)

Can you say anything specific about the tone of voice/style of writing?

Can you say anything specific about the complexity?

What did you think of the layout/design?
(off-putting – inviting etc.)

How would your experience of the exhibition have been affected if you hadn't learned about techniques and materials?
(what would you have missed: type of info, level of engagement)
(but also: has it affected your way of looking at/experiencing Rothko paintings?)

Would you like similar information to be part of future exhibitions at Tate?

Looking back on the exhibition

We've discussed the different educational resources in this exhibition. Is there anything we forgot to ask? Anything else you'd like to say about them?

Are there unanswered questions? Things you didn't understand?

Was anything missing?

Can you tell us in a few words what this exhibition was about?
(focus and narrative)

Is there a storyline/narrative?
(beginning and an end, conclusion)

Is that different than what you expected before your visit?

Could you describe your exhibition experience by choosing from these words?:

| | | | |
|---------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Accessible | Demanding | Biographical | Chronological |
| Comprehensive | Focused | Educational | Informative |
| Emotional | Relaxing | Inspiring | Spiritual |
| Factual | Complex | Fun | Historical |