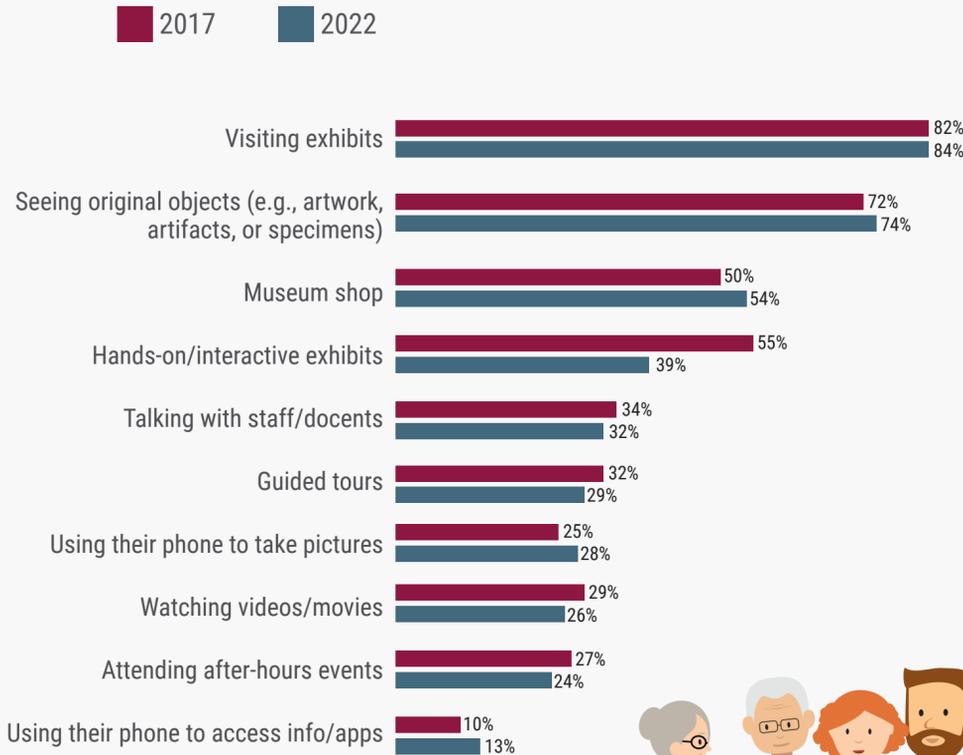


MUSEUM EXPERIENCE PREFERENCES: SHIFTS ... OR NOT: A 2022 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY

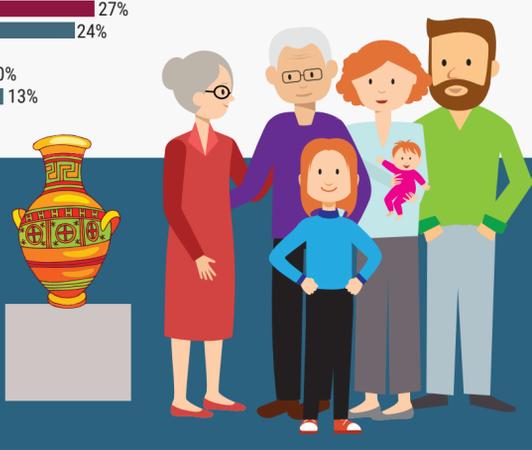
The more things change, the more they stay the same. And the past five years have certainly seen a lot of changes.



But not when it comes to what people enjoy doing when they visit a museum. Indeed, what is remarkable is how little has changed from 2017 to 2022.



Most people who visit museums do so to see exhibitions filled with original objects, typically in the company of people they care about.



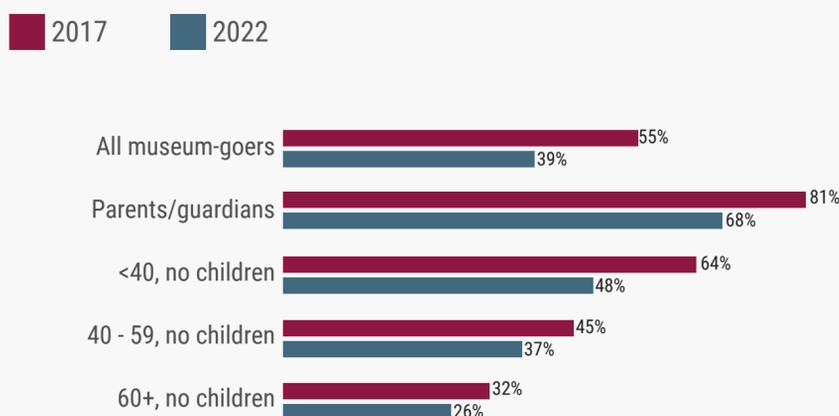
And since those are the very things that tend to differentiate museums from other leisure-time and informal learning activities, that's great! We can and should build on those expectations and deliver powerful and meaningful real-life experiences ... supplementing with other interpretation methodologies when they add to the experience.

Let's look at that chart again, however. Not *everything* stayed consistent from 2017. Hands-on activities took a pretty substantial hit, with interest falling from over half of museum-goers to only 39%.

This rather dramatic decline in interest is almost certainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though we have learned that this particular virus is not easily spread via the surfaces we touch, concerns about germs in general seems to have increased ... and for some that results in a decrease in interest in high-touch experiences like interactive exhibits.



To better understand how this is affecting museum-goers, we dug a little deeper and pulled the shifts by life stage.



Interest in hands-on activities dropped consistently across all life stages, but the biggest drop was among young adults without children, a substantial drop of 17 percentage points.

17%

Parents and guardians of minor children also fell by 13 percentage points. That's a lot ... but even with this decrease, 2/3 of parents and guardians do continue to desire hands-on experiences, primarily for their children. And that number matches interest in viewing original objects at museums for this life stage (also 2/3 of parents and guardians).



No question, museums should continue to provide high-quality hands-on experiences for their visitors. The question remains if this decline in interest is a pandemic-related blip or a fundamental shift. And the answer is that we won't know for some time yet.

Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:

• 2022 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 90,747; 186 museums participating
 • 2022 Broader Population Sampling, n = 1,017
 • 2017 - 2021 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers

*Data Stories share research about both frequent museum-goers (typically visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

More Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.