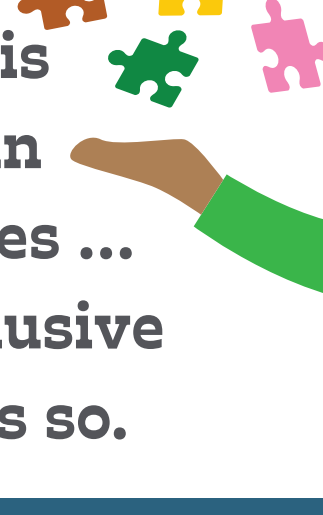


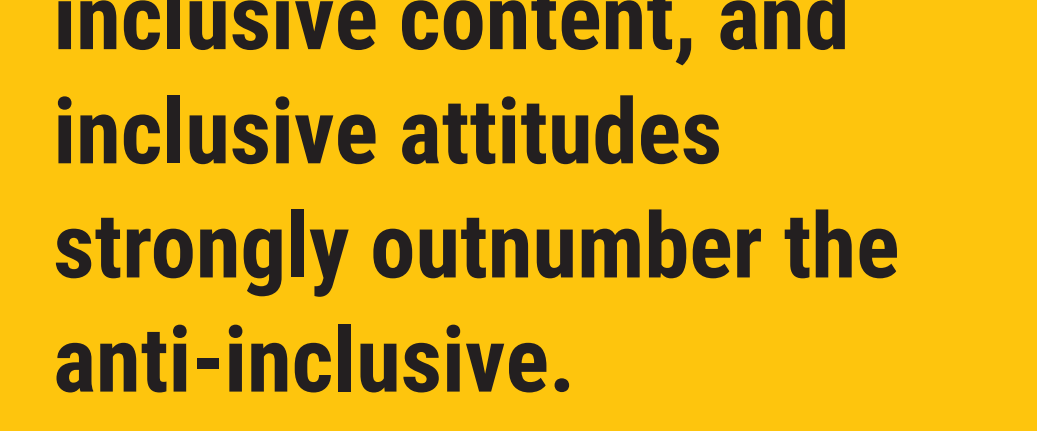
# INCLUSIVE ATTITUDES: A SHIFTING LANDSCAPE

A 2024 ANNUAL SURVEY OF MUSEUM-GOERS DATA STORY

Over the past several years, race and gender have received extraordinary attention. "Me too" conversations, racial reckonings, and conflict over how gender is expressed have resulted in shifts in inclusive attitudes ... some towards a more inclusive viewpoint, and others less so.



Since 2021, we have been tracking how museum-goers feel about inclusive content in museums.



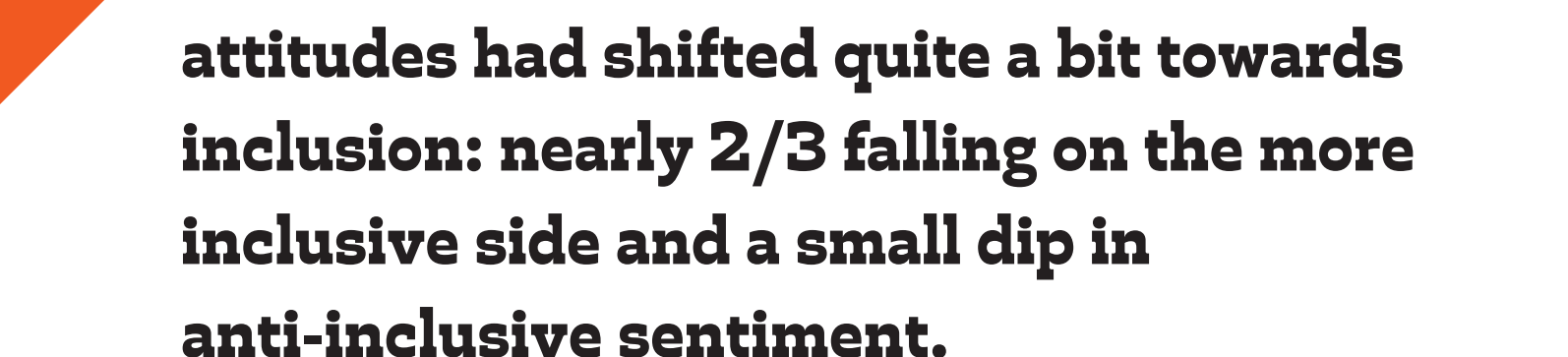
Overall, the news is good: most people want museums to share inclusive content, and inclusive attitudes strongly outnumber the anti-inclusive. Frankly, it's also been a bit of a roller coaster ride.

We use a battery of three questions to assess individual attitudes on inclusion, as there is no single question that helps us sort this out accurately. To learn more about the three questions we use, see our 2021 Data Story "[The Spectrum of Inclusive Attitudes: Methodology.](#)"

## Let's first examine frequent museum-goers and their attitudes.

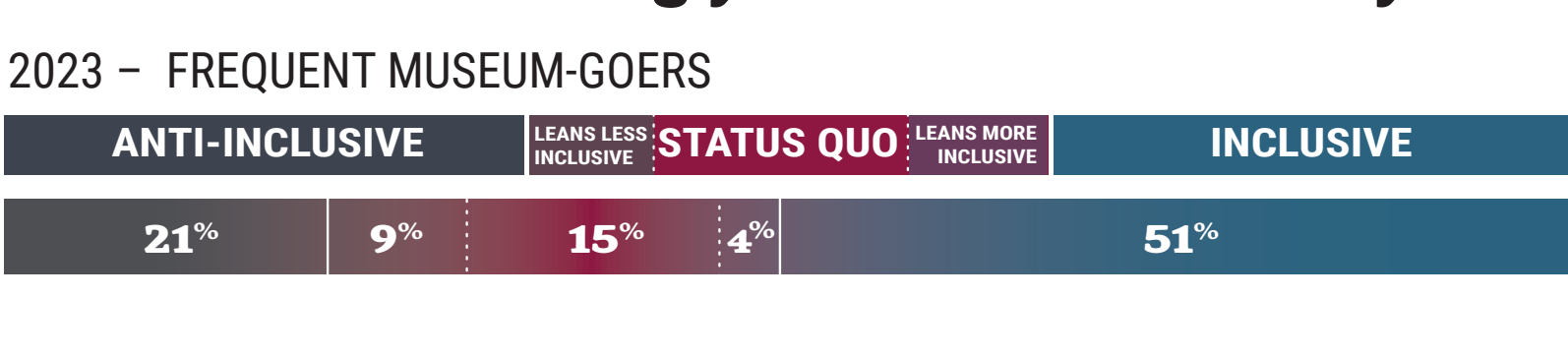
**BACK IN 2021**, we found that just over half of museum-goers fell on the "inclusive" side of the spectrum, and about a quarter fell on the "anti-inclusive" side.

2021 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS



**IN 2022**, we were surprised to see that attitudes had shifted quite a bit towards inclusion: nearly 2/3 falling on the more inclusive side and a small dip in anti-inclusive sentiment.

2022 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS

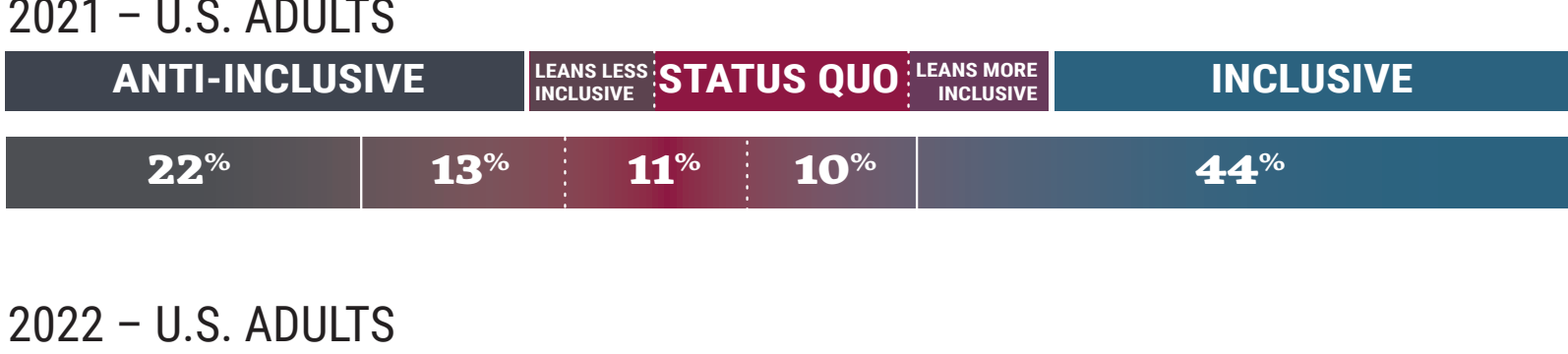


Over the past two years, however, we seem to have reverted back to 2021 norms, and 2022 increasingly looks like an outlier year.

2023 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS



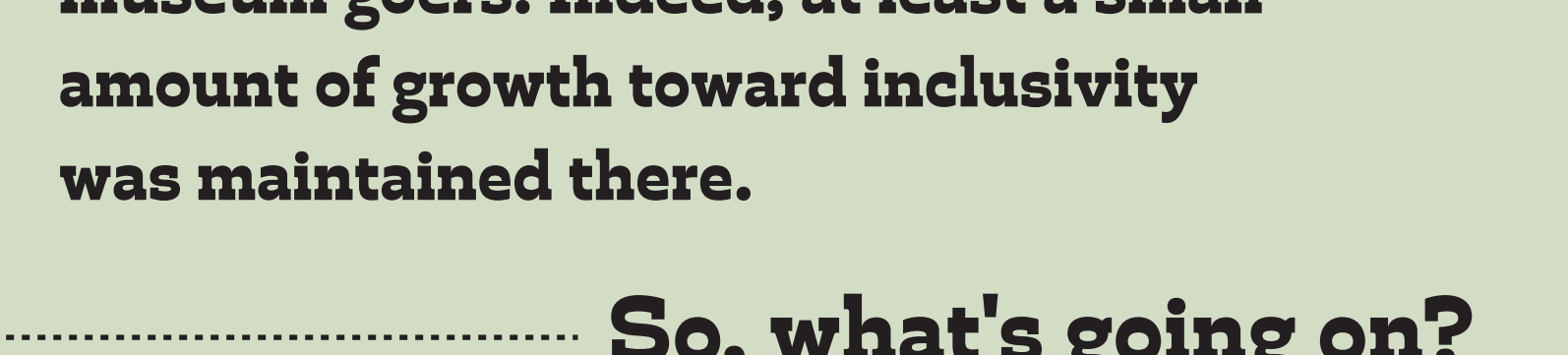
2024 – FREQUENT MUSEUM-GOERS



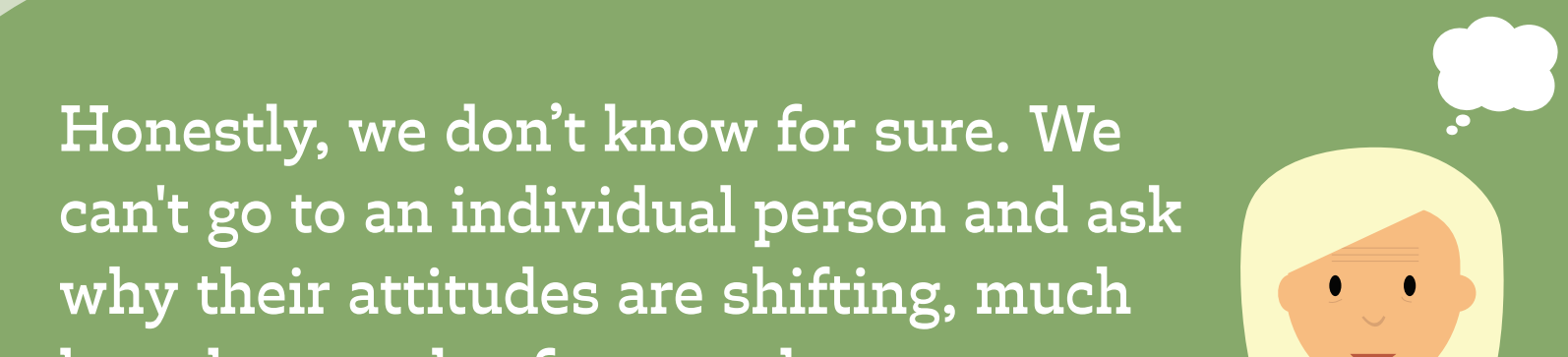
We saw a similar shift of attitudes when we asked a representative broader population sample of U.S. adults the same questions.

## BROADER POPULATION

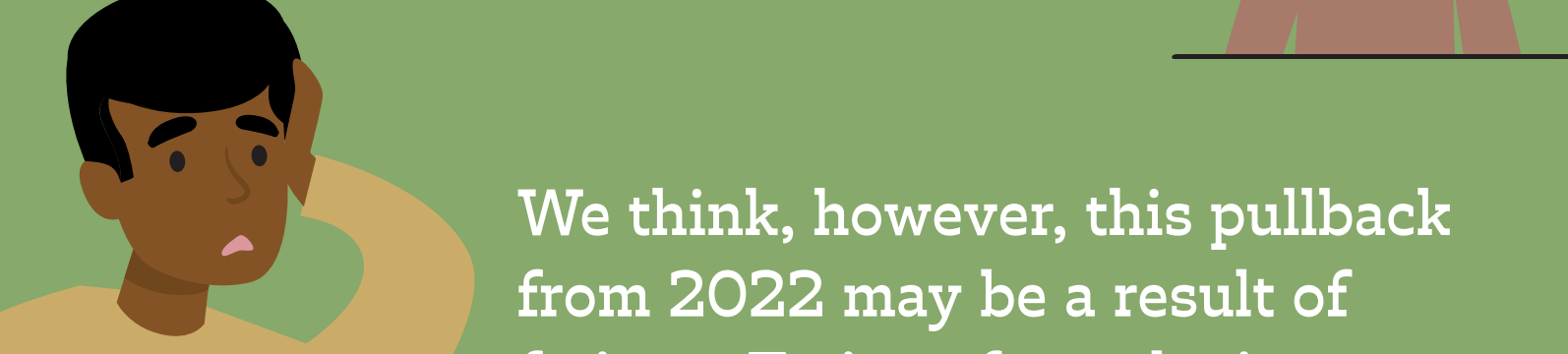
2021 – U.S. ADULTS



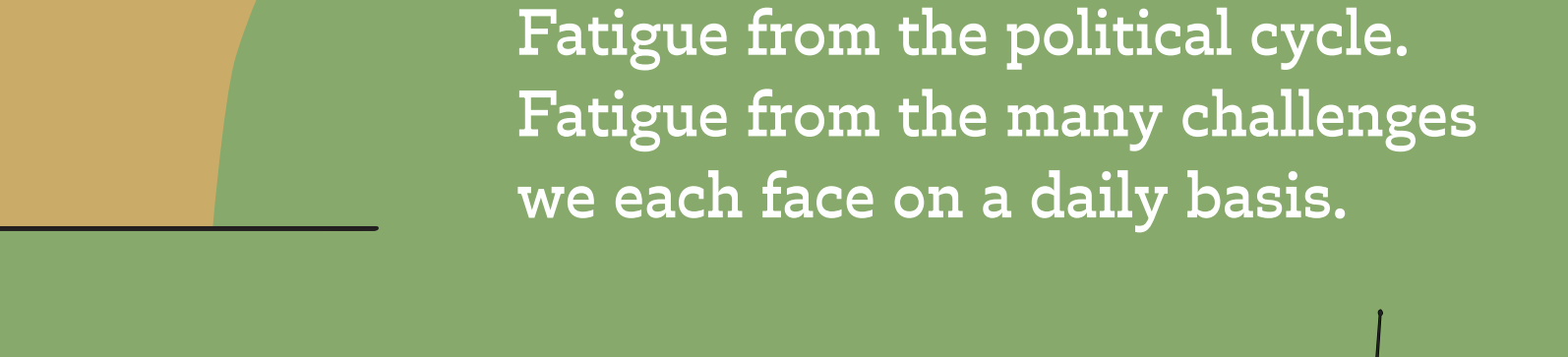
2022 – U.S. ADULTS



2023 – U.S. ADULTS



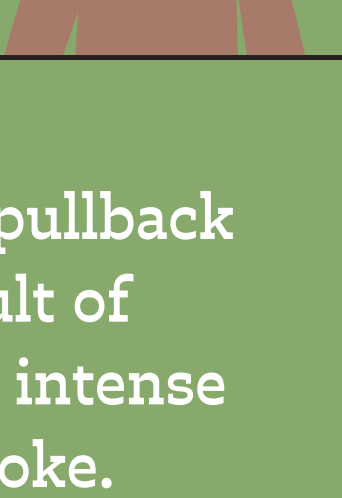
2024 – U.S. ADULTS



For the broader population, inclusive attitudes have not fallen back to 2021 levels, unlike attitudes of frequent museum goers. Indeed, at least a small amount of growth toward inclusivity was maintained there.

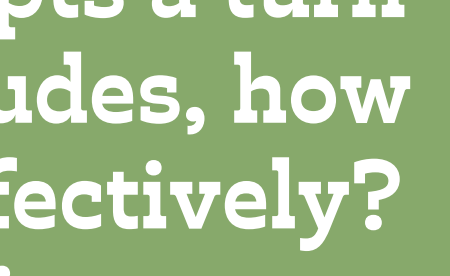
## So, what's going on?

Honestly, we don't know for sure. We can't go to an individual person and ask why their attitudes are shifting, much less thousands of respondents.



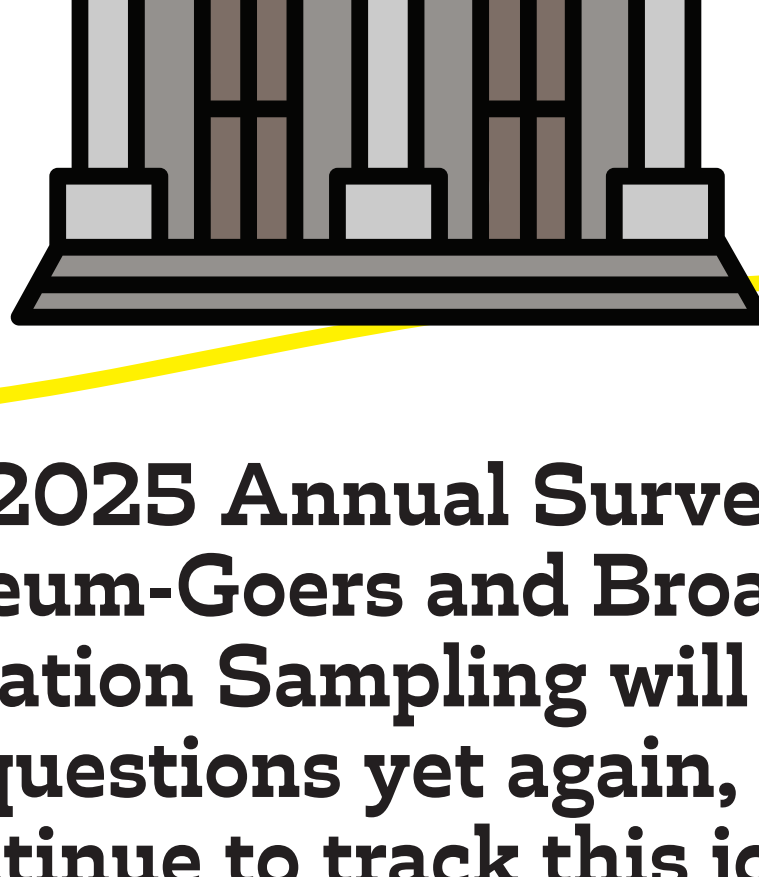
We think, however, this pullback from 2022 may be a result of fatigue. Fatigue from the intense emotions these topics evoke. Fatigue from the political cycle. Fatigue from the many challenges we each face on a daily basis.

When people are tired, they look for respite, comfort, and norms that may make them feel more comfortable. But comfortable for whom? And at whose expense?



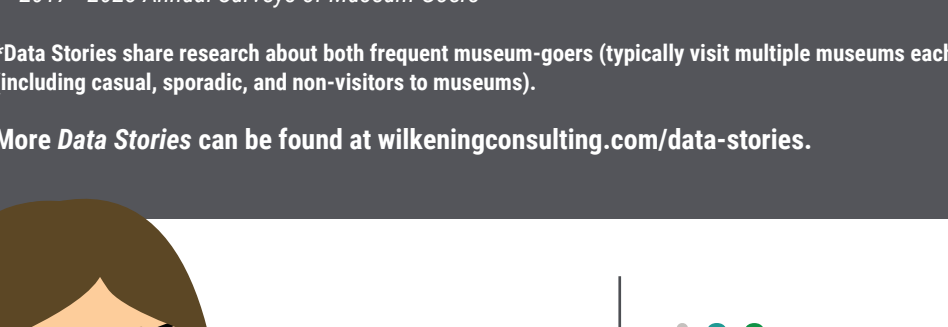
And if such fatigue prompts a turn away from inclusive attitudes, how might we do this work effectively?

Sharing humanity's history, experiences, and cultural and artistic expressions is at the heart of what museums do.



The 2025 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers and Broader Population Sampling will field these questions yet again, so we can continue to track this journey we are all taking together.

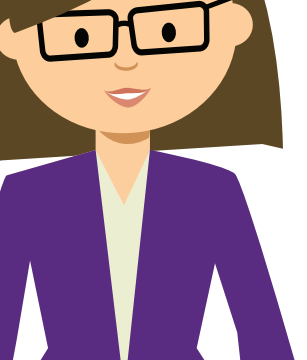
In the meantime, we encourage you to check out some of our resources for sharing inclusive content public, including: [Audiences and Inclusion: A Primer for Cultivating More Inclusive Attitudes Among the Public](#) and our Data Story "[Beware! The False Consensus Effect.](#)"



Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:  
 • 2024 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 90,178; 2022 museums participating  
 • 2024 Broader Population Sampling, n = 2,154  
 • 2017 - 2023 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, sporadic, and non-visitors to museums).

More Data Stories can be found at [wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories](http://wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories).



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American Alliance of Museums



Wilkening Consulting  
audience research | knowledge curation

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