

Title: Are galleries becoming redundant in the world of social media?

Name: William Collyer

Student Number: 1701279

Course: BA Illustration

Tutor: Louise Burston

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA (Hons)

University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Swansea

11th December 2016

3. Introduction.....	2
4. Chapter 1: Galleries.....	9
12. Chapter 2: Social Media.....	10
21. Conclusion.....	2
23. Bibliography.....	6
29. Appendix.....	1

Word Count: 6086

Are galleries becoming redundant in the world of social media?

Summary

This enquiry serves as an analysis of the current state of galleries, their role in society and how they maintain an audience in the world of social media and instant information. During this essay the tools and techniques social media sites such as Instagram and Pinterest use to maintain user's engagement will be examined as well as how the digital experience compares to the physical. Through this a conclusion will be made on how both social media and galleries influence each other and if there is a need for galleries in the modern age.

Introduction:

Due to the internet there has never been a time where information and services have been this accessible to such an amount of people freely. The internet has changed almost every aspect of our lives, arguably making our society more digitally integrated. An area which has been heavily affected by the internet is the shopping industry, where we are seeing high street retail stores and individual markets closing and shifting their focus on e-commerce and maintaining an online presence as a result. Subsequently, companies are less likely to invest in physical shops if an ever-increasing amount of their sales are coming from internet orders. As recent figures from the Office of National Statistics show that on average internet sales have increased to “19%” of all sales in Britain which is a large increase from 2009, where at the same time of year that percentage was “6.8%” (Ons.gov.uk, 2019). Footfall is also decreasing as a result of the ease and stress-free experience of online shopping as shown in research completed by Springboard from 2016. The percentage change of footfall as of 2019 is now at “-2.0%” where in 2015 it was only “-0.4%” over the three popular destination types; high street, shopping centres and retail parks which has led to the highest average vacancy rate of “10.3%, its highest level since January 2015” (BBC News, 2019).

Retail shops are not the only places which have felt the pressure of online spaces and the benefit that going digital can provide however, as social media and forums have overtaken coffee shops and public social areas in popularity, especially amongst the younger generations. Art galleries fall amongst these pressured high street establishments with online sites such as Pinterest and Instagram with their digital

platforms for sharing images making it easier to access millions of artworks online for free, regardless of geographical location. It's with the rise of social media and the internet replacing much of our social interaction with each other and with high street shops that directly inspired this enquiry. During which I will analyse the purpose of galleries in contrast to social media and the individual challenges each face in the modern world. Additionally, I will look at each in terms of popularity and what elements of each attracts people to them as well as who is attracted to them. During this we will look at how inertia, anxiety and sentimentality affects how we spend our past time and if these play a part in the psychological aspect of visiting a gallery. Finally, we should be able to conclude if galleries are becoming redundant, like many other physical spaces in this digital age or if there is still a need and requirement for them.

Chapter 1: Galleries

The Sala Dalmau art gallery in Barcelona states that the purpose of an art gallery is to

Exhibit works by artists known by the general public, drive the career of young contemporary artists or recover the name of those artists whom, despite the quality of their work, for historical reasons have been relegated to the background (Sala Dalmau, 2018).

They start this discussion by referring to the creative process as “a route, a story. A road that goes from the moment the artist creates to the day the gallery selects it for an exhibition and shows it to the public” (Sala Dalmau, 2018). In this sense the role of a gallery is to publicise artwork and create a platform for artists to have their work shown to an audience. In the Tate gallery's mission statement, they support this by referring to art as a “universal human right” and that they see their galleries

As sites of creative learning, ... We want to champion the importance of making art and encourage people to explore the many ways in which art is created and to develop their own creative potential (Tate, 2019).

In this sense galleries and museums can be attributed to starting a person's interest in the arts as a well varied gallery can surely open a person's mind to the scope of the industry and the different techniques and approaches of making art. To support this, the DfES museums and galleries education programme recognised that "The physical experience of visiting a museum or gallery (a new experience for many children and some teachers) created a huge excitement and considerable awe" and supported the importance of galleries and museums stating that the "environment is rich and dense" ... "the collections can work across the curriculum and opportunities for fresh ways of thinking can occur while working out of the classroom" (Clarke et al 2002, p.5). A factor in creating that sense of awe can come from the scope of a collection or the quality of the pieces on display. In the report '*The popularity of museum galleries evaluation*' by Jenesys Associates discussing what appeals to people about art galleries "The joint-third most common (14% each) explanation were the variety or diversity of exhibits and collections and the scope for art galleries to house temporary exhibitions" (Jenkins, 2013, p.27). Due to the range of artworks a gallery can possibly house and the changing nature of gallery exhibits it can be argued that the likelihood that a person will find an artwork item interesting is relatively high.

Galleries are also businesses that need to constantly invest in regularly changing exhibitions and art sourced globally as to maintain public interest. Subsequently refreshing artwork in galleries is good for visitors and for the galleries themselves, as alongside increasing the scope of a collection it also increases the chance that a

person will return to the gallery to find something new. Artwork from around the world from respected and new artists additionally helps the gallery's exposure and expands the range of artwork whilst enabling visitors to become more informed of global cultures portrayed through the artwork featured. This style of museum education is sort after by admirers and students of art as it is possible to compare global artwork and techniques used around the world to local artwork and their own practise. Because of this aspect, galleries are considered "the beating heart of the art world" and are the "mechanism through which many artists find their way to institutions, the world's great collections, or just the homes of people who love their work" (Sussman, 2017).

Galleries can be seen as a catalyst for the whole breadth of artistic endeavour and can be exciting places to watch evolve, as styles and choice of subject matter change with culture and what is deemed popular or important to critique. Through the selection of art on display up and coming artists can potentially learn from the calibre of artwork featured in an exhibition. A large majority of work that ends up being displayed and featured in traditional galleries happens to be examples of fine art from well-known artists such as Vincent Van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci due to their popularity and cultural impact. Works by these artists have driven the popularity of certain galleries in a fashion that dictates the way the public visits a gallery. To use the '*Mona Lisa*' as an example, people visit the Louvre exclusively for that painting, leading to article headlines like "How to make sure you enjoy your Mona Lisa visit at the Louvre" (Discoverwalks.com, 2018). Because of the attention artwork like these can attract, galleries make sure to feature them on their walls in order to benefit from the foot traffic.

A popular endeavour for most galleries in recent years is to then use the artwork and the increase in foot traffic in order to sell related merchandise like clothes and household items. Here galleries have an opportunity to combine popular pursuits such as art and shopping in order to draw a larger audience into the gallery to maximise profits from visitors. The addicting nature of retail shopping is also hugely beneficial to keeping visitors attracted to galleries as it keeps visitors engaged and aware of the gallery's collection. As a result of the extensive audience galleries can offer to pieces of art as well as the financial investment the gallery makes for pieces of exceptional art, they are frequently spotlighted and advertised which could give the impression that "the main function of art galleries is to promote fine art" (Thegreenbook.com, 2012) although in reality, galleries feature all different kinds of art but the purpose is to display and maintain the artefacts much like a private collection would but to a public stage.

Largely unnoticed is a gallery's ability to restore and archive art of any discipline. Whilst artwork created centuries ago frequently shows us examples of masterful skill, they are also examples of historical artefacts that offer us valuable insight into the time they were created. Not only are they present day links to the past and the lives of the artists that created them but links to the time period in which they were made. In this sense galleries serve the same purpose as museums "to collect objects and materials of cultural, religious and historical importance, preserve them, research into them and present them to the public for the purpose of education and enjoyment" (N. Arinze, 1999). A gallery's ability to maintain and preserve art that would otherwise be lost to history is arguably overlooked by the public. But without galleries or museums, it could be argued that society would care less about maintaining and respecting their cultural

heritage, “the development of cultural centres and villages is crucial to National Identity and Conscience as it serves as a neural fibre to the historical and social core of any particular nation” (Nationalgallery.co.zw, 2016). It is the purpose of galleries and museums to serve as collective public places to display the work of our ancestors so that we can learn through their creations and art more about our past.

To use a recent example of how important ancient artefacts and relics are to galleries and museums and how much they affect visitor numbers the “National Museums Liverpool attracted a record breaking 2.89m visitors between April and October 2018” as a result of an exhibition showcasing “China’s First Emperor and the Terracotta Warriors, which drew in more visitors than any ticketed show in the UK in the previous year” (Browne-Swinburne, 2019) and helped the museum’s visitor numbers “jump by 111%” (BBC News, 2019). Continuing with museum and gallery statistics, from recent figures of visitor numbers to British galleries collected by the UK statistics authority, we can see that gallery visitor numbers have fluctuated since 2004 (the year the statistical series was started). The common pattern found is an increase in visitor numbers for a couple years followed by a decrease for a couple years after. To use the statistics of the British Museum as an example, for the years 2009 and 2010 visitor numbers were “5,650,399” and “5,869,396” (GOV.UK, 2013). In 2011 and 2012 the visitor numbers had dropped to “5,869,396” and “5,841,658” (GOV.UK, 2013) only to again increase for the next couple of years. Taking the total number of visitor figures from all Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport sponsored museums into account we can see that visitor numbers for all British museums are increasing by a million visitors a year. The rise in visitor numbers can be attributed in part to unique exhibitions such as the Terracotta Warriors that satisfy our passion for the past and

most recent artistic endeavours and cultural artefacts made possible by globalising art in gallery exhibitions.

In writing about history and why we should care about our past for the Edmond Historical Society and Museum, Amy Stephens writes “People discover their place in time through stories of their families, communities, and nation” (Stephens, n.d.). Through an interest in history one can develop an understanding of cultural movements and events which have led up to the present day. Artwork, in any practise is a visible method for these stories to be captured through an artist’s observation of events which not only are “important to the artists practise” but also to improve “visual understanding, sense of design, spatial awareness, memory and details” (Paterson, 2015) of a subject. It comes with this desire to improve our understanding of the past through visible mediums that we come to an additional agenda visitors may have in visiting a gallery or museum which is the feeling of sentimentality.

‘Aging of psyche’ by Petrov supports the theory that the feeling of nostalgia and sentimentality comes with the passing of time and old age “There is a growing tendency to re-evaluate one’s life throughout the whole period of old age” (Petrov, 1978). Adults who were raised with visiting galleries during their childhood are more likely to want to share that experience with their children as they grow up in order to offer them that experience as well as to satisfy a parent’s nostalgia. This could be the reason for the “number of visits from children swell to 8.5 million” (GOV.UK, 2019) as it is evident from looking at the statistics of the age range of visitors who are more likely to visit a museum or gallery that the ages of first-time parents are the most common. From the Office of National Statistics “The average age of first-time mothers

was 28.8 years in 2017” and “the average age of all fathers increased to 33.4 years in 2017” (Ons.gov.uk, 2019) which directly correlates to research; “adults aged between 25 and 44 were most likely to visit a museum or gallery (56.4%)” (Department for Culture Media & Sport, 2016), with second being adults aged between 45 and 74.

From this research we can deduce that adults are taking their children more regularly with them to galleries for that shared experience and due potentially to the beneficial effects of “face-to-face” viewing art and how that affects young minds as discussed earlier. Author Peter Boreham states in his article *‘Twentieth Century: Leisure and Entertainment’* there's always been “a demand for places and facilities where people could relax, enjoy each other’s company and actively pursue mutual hobbies and interests” (Boreham, 2008). Galleries accomplish this by creating a space where visitors can meet and share a joint appreciation for art in an establishment specifically designed for this goal. Galleries offer a place to contemplate artwork by being for many the only opportunity to physically share the same space with the art in order to admire and learn the craftsmanship and narrative behind it. Physically viewing art up close also allows the viewer to appreciate all the minute details in a piece such as imperfections and texture that you would find harder to detect when looking at a piece online through a screen. TJ Clark on viewing the same two pieces of art repeatedly for half a year notes,

“Each time he returns he notices something else; the light changes, and then another thing: people come in and out of the room, which provokes ideas, directing his attention to another thing, and so on” (P Watts, 2019).

If he spent the same amount of time looking at a photograph through a screen although he would still be able to admire the craftsmanship, he would not experience the

changing of the light on the painting or the people moving in the room meaning that as a result the experience would likely not be as interesting or enthralling to him. Susan Sontag summarises our attraction to reverting to photographs as “a way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it-by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir” (Sontag, 2005) which would indicate that the public spends little to no time actually interacting with the artwork, instead grabbing snapshots to look at later or to show friends and relatives.

The format and layout of galleries allows visitors the ability to appreciate art in their own way, providing the space and time to experience the surroundings and the artwork if we choose to, which has been noted to being similar to “‘sensory mindfulness meditation’ where your focus of attention is in the moment and not on external ideas or thoughts” (P Watts, 2019). However, researchers found in 2017 that visitors to the Art Institute of Chicago spend an average “28.63 seconds looking at artworks” (P Watts, 2019). The act of walking around the halls of a gallery in this sense could be compared to the experience of scrolling through an Instagram feed if taken into consideration that the average time devoted to each post/artwork is seconds. Where Instagram is able to tailor posts and photos depending on a user’s interests, galleries are physically unable to adapt to every potential visitor’s preference meaning that for them they need to rely on people’s common preference for art or trending artists to draw in visitors and potential customers.

Jenesys Associates evaluation of the popularity of museums and galleries found that the “most common (31%) explanation for favouring art galleries was a general liking

for art” and the “second most common (21%) explanation was a specialist interest through teaching, study or pursuing art as a hobby” (Jenkins, 2013, p.27). In an interview with Robert Mackenzie, marketing assistant at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery, he states “Permanent displays are designed to engage a range of ages, interests and abilities. A busy schedule of activities, events and special exhibitions further extend target audiences.” however the ages “13 to late 20s under represented” (Mackenzie interview: Appendix 1) which could be a result of them having minimal life experience which in turn would reduce the likelihood of them feeling nostalgia if sentimentality comes “throughout the whole period of old age” (Petrov, 1978). The impact of this is that younger generations may feel detached and less sentimental leading to low interest in exhibitions and low visitor numbers of young adults with no education around art. As this age group grows older and transition into older generations, they are more likely to feel a stronger passion for galleries as a “source of enrichment of the past memories” (Gradev, 1987) leading again to an increase in visitors. This cycle is likely to continue throughout time even as social media continues to grow as the contents of exhibitions and collections will continually change to reflect society’s interests. Additionally, experiencing artwork and exhibits through screens and technology does not have the same impact and feeling as physically standing with a painting and as a result is likely to not be replaced.

Chapter 2: Social Media

Social media has triumphed with the way that it has used the internet to connect people from long distances quickly becoming one of the most popular means of communication. The initial aim of the world's most popular social media site Facebook

was “To give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected” (Coren, 2017), which is largely how it remains today and is shared with its image sharing app Instagram. Social media has allowed us to connect to millions of people around the world and share our whole lives with complete strangers if we choose to. Because of this, it has garnered massive appeal in particular with teenagers and young adults as found in a survey conducted by the Pew Research Centre, the percentage of people who use Facebook in America is “51% of U.S. teens ages 13-17” (Anderson, 2018) and “81% of 18-29 year olds” (West, 2019). Social media also has an extensive reach as it is compatible with most devices such as our mobile phones, tablets and even our televisions. Coupled with the fact that social media sites are created to be relatively easy to use has led to a global reach, with a reported “3.484 billion active social media users around the world” with “45 million social media users in the UK alone” (Battisby, 2019). Of a 2017 statistics Instagram has “1 billion monthly active users” which is only likely to increase.

As discussed, because of the convenience of having the entire world-wide web accessible to us all the time, people are spending increasing amounts of time using technology, in particular smartphones. The result of smartphones and tablets being so accessible is that we are spending ever increasing amounts of time on social media (as supported by a survey conducted in 2018 by Ofcom) here it was found that “people in the UK now check their smartphones, on average, every 12 minutes of the waking day” and “One in five adults (19%) say they spend more than 40 hours a week online, up from 5% just over ten years ago” (Ofcom, 2018). As a result, instead of utilising public spaces we are becoming more distracted by social media and digital platforms for entertainment, in replace of or whilst visiting public establishments such as

museums, gyms and galleries. Through this conflicted attention it can be argued that our enjoyment of both will be hindered.

The Ofcom statistics indicate that the internet and social media has shaped the way in which we utilize our free time. From a survey carried out by the Office for National Statistics whilst “91% of adults in the UK have engaged in at least one cultural activity in the past 12 months” less than half “42% have visited a museum or gallery” (Bridgewood et al., 2003). The rest of leisure time is divided but it is reported “device use occupied 35%” of leisure time for men aged 25 and under “whereas for women it was 29%” (Ons.gov.uk, 2017). Clifford Stoll summed up this lack of interaction with physical, substantial things: “Every hour that you’re behind the keyboard is sixty minutes that you’re not doing something else” (Stoll, 2005), in particular having real life interactions with people and objects.

Young adults are proving harder and harder to attract to galleries without an aim or agenda in mind, as Robert Mackenzie when asked on the difficulty of attracting young people states:

Primary school ages easy. With the exception of groups of foreign students, teens and early 20s more difficult. Visits tend to be for a reason e.g. school project or specific relevant exhibition (Mackenzie interview: Appendix 1).

Here it is more likely that a teacher or tutor has heavily suggested to visit a gallery, or the students have visited one during a school trip rather than by their own accord. They may also have visited via a trip with their parents as pointed at via the statistics already discussed.

What initially started as a way of connecting people has become quite the opposite and it is frequently being discussed whether social media is actually harmful for us. Research completed at the University of Virginia points towards us being more disconnected as during a survey of 120 people the individual's felt more distracted during "face-to-face interactions if they had used their smartphone compared with face-to-face interactions where they had not used their smartphones" (ScienceDaily, 2018). A reason why we are spending more and more of our lives looking at our screens instead of physical interaction may be caused by the features and techniques that companies put into apps and social media to keep us 'hooked'. An instance of this would be "the pull-to-refresh feature common to social media apps" promoting the same emotion we feel when "pulling the lever on a slot machine" (Price, 2018). Similarly, all social media websites "make their feeds bottomless" which reduces the amount of effort the user needs to use to browse those sites, this is an example where "companies have systematically removed stopping cues – those brief moments, like reaching the bottom of a screen, that suggest you might want to move on to something else," (Price, 2018) says Adam Alter, author of the book irresistible '*The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Getting us Hooked*'.

Of Course, social media websites such as Facebook that are free for the public to use, need to utilise features like this in order to maintain user's attention as they get their money from advertisements and their user's engagement. They are aware that we are using social media and technology in increasing amounts and want to profit from as much of that time as they can. Those are examples of features social media sites implement in design and code to control user's actions subconsciously however, there

are elements external from the sites that play a factor in the popularity of social media such as the user's accessibility to physical alternatives to consider.

One of the most limiting factors restricting a person's accessibility to leisure activities is their amount of free time. In a report on Leisure time in the UK "Of the individuals who were working, on average, those employed full time spent the least amount of time performing leisure activities" (Payne, 2017). This leaves children, students, people who are retired and unemployed who are more likely to engage with leisure activities or be over-capacitated with the scope of how they could be spending this 'free time'. Students and young people are more likely to want to go on social media or play video games as that is entertainment targeted towards their demographic and are forms of low effort to high enjoyment ratio. In an article about why *My Brushies* use video games as a tool to engage children says,

Video games also give children real-time feedback and positive reinforcement which, as we all know, is an effective way to encourage good behaviour. Video games offer immediate gratification as well as rewards for the children (MyBrushies, 2017).

Video games have lots of other features that developers use to keep players engaged and hooked but the core premise is very similar to how social media works. In addition, younger generations are also more likely to own smartphones and gadgets as proved by Statista's research in 2018 "93 percent of children aged 15 years owned a smartphone" (Statista, 2019) and even by the age of 3 years old 15% of children owned a tablet. As children are becoming familiar with technology at younger and younger ages they've grown up around these kinds of technology and thus are more knowledgeable of how they work and what they are capable of doing. Because of this

and the ease of access to the internet it is easier for them to use social media to access artwork online rather than engage with the gallery experience.

Social media although an affective learning tool as it enables users to view resources from around the world, can also breed what is known as the “Compare and Despair factor” (Schneiderman, 2013) which comes when often young people “compare themselves to photos of others and the illusion of other’s better lives” which can lead to the user experiencing “decreased self-esteem and depression” (Newyorkbehavioralhealth.com, nd). This same factor could be a motive why young people are hesitant or resistant to go to galleries due to the formal etiquette that has become associated with them. Ashleigh Hibbins writing about taking his family to the San Antonio Museum of Art, discusses the anxiety that people may feel about visiting galleries. “As the date of the museum visit drew closer, some members of our group started expressing increasing doubts and concerns about visiting an art museum” (Hibbins, 2016). He continues that his family suffered from worries that,

they didn’t have enough education about art history; that they would do something wrong; that they wouldn’t understand or appreciate what they were viewing; that their personal beliefs would be challenged or offended; that they would feel inadequate and out of place (Hibbins, 2016).

Of course, these worries aren’t attributed to an excess of social media use however, it goes to suggest to an extent the effect a gallery visit can have on a person. Studies support the idea that as a result of limiting social interaction to only through screens “reduces the time spent developing skills to read non-verbal cues of human emotion” which is important as “children who understand emotional cues in social settings can

develop superior social skills and more positive peer relationships” (Newyorkbehavioralhealth.com, nd). Regardless of how much ‘free-time’ available to a person, if they are unable to visit a gallery, they will find alternatives such as apps like Pinterest and Instagram, the two largest image sharing sites on the internet.

As already mentioned, Instagram is the most popular image sharing app and the “the second-most popular free app” (Hartmans, 2018) in the Apple App and Google Play store. One of the reasons why it has garnered so much success is the fact that it, alongside Pinterest is free. This allows anybody to download it without an ‘entry fee’. The app allows users to create an account much like any other social media site and share photos with their friends and other users from around the world. The premise is very simple but with the addicting features mentioned before, it makes posting and liking photos enticing and rewarding which keeps users hooked. As Instagram is a product of Facebook, it is heavily influenced by it and shares a lot of its features such as the like button. Contacts and suggestions are linked together between the two platforms meaning that all the user’s friends and acquaintances are in one place which means the apps allows the user to share posts simultaneously from one to the other. Instagram’s key feature is the ability for the user to personally curate what kind of photos and posts are shown to them. This is achieved by two methods; through the user physically following creators and other users they like or through an algorithm Instagram uses to automatically suggest content that the user may like. The purpose of Instagram’s algorithm is to keep the user engaged and to remain on the app. In this sense it functions similarly as a gallery curator as summarised in an article written by Caroline Forsey about Instagram’s algorithm,

To understand how Instagram's algorithm works, it's important to consider the purpose behind it: the algorithm aims to delight you. If it doesn't show you interesting and engaging content, you'll exit the app. The algorithm needs to keep you scrolling (Forsey, 2018).

The algorithm that Instagram uses takes note of a user's likes, searches and history to produce a customised feed that should tailor to an individual's taste. In addition, the algorithm is constantly working and is on from the start regardless of the user's wishes, meaning that the system is always learning from a user's actions within the app. This in turn should keep people engaged with the app as they are exposed to more things that they like than don't like and even exposing users to new things that Instagram has calculated that the user may like. In comparison to Pinterest, the closest rival to Instagram in the image sharing field, users can enter search terms for example, '1980s Swedish artists' and get custom results tailored to really specific requests which can be invaluable for someone who is interested in niche categories of art or want to see all examples of art that relate to a specific theme. A gallery is restricted in this sense as it would be physically impossible to tailor to the preferences of every potential visitor to the gallery. As a result, gallery exhibitions must specialise in satisfying a specific range of audience and to frequently change the art on their walls.

This drawback is made apparent during Robert Mackenzie's interview as he states that "Keeping up with fast changing communication channels" as well as "Responding to increasing demands from funders along with increasingly uncertain funding" (Mackenzie interview: Appendix 1), are some of the biggest challenges in maintaining visitor numbers. Instagram has the edge here as the platform is easy to keep updated with current and upcoming trends and is currently reported by Bloomberg "Estimated to be worth more than \$100 billion" (McCormick, 2018). Being a digital app Instagram

doesn't need to invest in expensive overhead costs that affect galleries and museums and only rely on software engineers and designers to keep the system running. Galleries on the other hand require additional staff such as receptionists, cleaners and security as a drawback to a physical property. This also means that these establishments are unable to remain open 24/7 which is an issue that is non-existent to social media and other internet services. A potential drawback to Instagram is the risk of becoming out of fashion with their predominantly young user base and the risk of potential data leaks which could cost the company millions in damages however these could potentially be fixed with a rebrand or a software fix which would be easier to implement due to the digital platform. Facebook has already proven how easy features can be removed or added as evidenced by their plan to "remove the number of likes" visible on posts" which is aimed to reduce the "compare and despair factor" and "depressurize Instagram a little bit, and make it a bit less of a competition" (Wagner, 2019).

As a result of the ease that features and updates such as those can be implemented, as well as the popularity and costs of running an online business, increasing amount of companies are moving their businesses online and leaving highstreets and retail parks behind. This transition towards digitisation has created a shift where we are more likely to initially use the internet before exerting extra energy required to visit physical destinations which can be interpreted as making us lazier however, as analysed before, certain physical interaction such as experiencing art in person isn't completely replaceable by social media and through mobile phone screens. Although often easier and more approachable to view art on Pinterest and Instagram, galleries

have made every effort in order to make sure that their artwork is accessible to everyone, even those with the most inertia to want to visit one.

Conclusion:

There's no doubt that social media has changed the way that we share and consume media in particular artwork. It is now easier than ever for anybody to find artwork that they like and for artists of any discipline to find an audience for their work. Social media in this way acts as a free tool available to the public, used in order to learn and to be exposed to media from around the world. The two are not strictly competitors although both accomplish the task of showing artwork to the public. Whilst social media has mass appeal and is extremely varied in the content it presents, it is more of a promotional tool than a gallery is. Galleries are more specialised in that; they also work as an archive of what has been accomplished artistically in the past and preserve it whereas social media focuses on what is trending and popular now. Subsequently, because of this, social media tends to be more popular with younger audiences whereas older, more mature audiences are more likely to want to visit a gallery as a result of varied exhibitions, the social interaction and the beneficial effects of physically viewing artwork. Although as a society we are spending more time than ever consuming entertainment and using social media it would seem by national statistics that visitor gallery and museum figures are actually on the rise in recent years helped by new and modern constantly changing exhibitions that are appealing to a broader audience of ages. Again, social media and the internet is used more to find instant information about the background and history of a piece of art or art movement than to view and experience the art itself. Usually a gallery visit is used after initial research

online and in conjunction to deepen a visitor's understanding and appreciation of the art and potential discover new artists in the process.

Although pressured by overheads and government funding cuts, it would seem as for now that galleries are as relevant as they have ever been regardless of the popularity of social media and digital means of viewing artwork. Currently the physical experience of viewing high quality artwork in person and the social participation that comes with a gallery visit cannot be replicated by digital means and is what has led to generations of visitors to return to galleries. In order to maintain audience engagement in the future and to maximise from the physical spectacle galleries must continue to keep innovating their show spaces to reflect the needs of modern society and offer an experience that is both accessible and rewards repeated visits.

Bibliography:

Articles:

N. Arinze, E. (1999). *The Role of the Museum in Society*.

ScienceDaily. (2018). *Dealing with digital distraction*. [online] Available at:

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180810161553.htm>.

Books:

Gradev, D. (1987). *Sabitiata v zhiznenia pat na lichnostta* [Events in the life time of the personality]. Sofia, Bulgaria: Nauka I izikustvo.

Petrov, I. (1978). *Stareene na psihikata* [Aging of the psyche]. Sofia, Bulgaria: Nauka I izikustvo.

Sontag, S. (2005). *On Photography*. New York: RosettaBooks LLC, p.6.

Stoll, C. (2005). *Silicon snake oil*. Brantford, Ont.: W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, p.14.

Magazines:

P Watts, J. (2019). Slow Art in an Age of Speed. *Tate etc*, [online] (46), p.19.

Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/tate-etc/issue-46-summer-2019/slow-art-take-time-jonathan-p-watts>.

Price, C. (2018). Trapped – the secret ways social media is built to be addictive (and what you can do to fight back). *BBC Focus magazine*, [online] (321). Available at: <https://www.sciencefocus.com/future-technology/trapped-the-secret-ways-social-media-is-built-to-be-addictive-and-what-you-can-do-to-fight-back/>.

Websites:

Anderson, M. (2018). *Teens, Social Media & Technology 2018*. [online] Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech. Available at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>.

BBC News. (2019). *Tate Modern becomes top UK attraction*. [online] Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-47711540>.

Boreham, P. (2008). *Twentieth Century: Leisure & entertainment - The leisure revolution*. [online] Dartfordarchive.org.uk. Available at: https://www.dartfordarchive.org.uk/20th_century/leisure.shtml.

Browne-Swinburne, J. (2019). *Visitor Numbers Boom at Nationals in North of England*. [online] Museumsassociation.org. Available at: <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/09012019-visitor-figures-dcms-2018>.

Discoverwalks.com. (2018). *How to make sure you enjoy your Mona Lisa visit at the Louvre*. [online] Available at: <https://www.discoverwalks.com/blog/the-best-way-to-see-mona-lisa-at-the-louvre/>.

Forsey, C. (2018). *How Does the Instagram Algorithm Work?*. [online] Blog.hubspot.com. Available at: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-does-the-instagram-algorithm-work>.

Galería Sala Dalmau. (2018). *What is the purpose of an art gallery? | Galería Sala Dalmau*. [online] Available at: <https://www.saladalmau.com/en/2018/01/30/what-is-the-purpose-of-an-art-gallery/>.

- Hartmans, A. (2018). *The most downloaded iPhone app in the world right now is one you've probably never heard of.* [online] Business Insider. Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/most-downloaded-iphone-apps-worldwide-tik-tok-q1-2018-5?r=US&IR=T#5-instagram-6>.
- Hibbins, A. (2016). *The Scary Museum: Who's Afraid to Visit You?.* [online] The Museumphiles. Available at: <https://museumphiles.wordpress.com/2016/01/23/the-scary-museum-whos-afraid-to-visit-you/>.
- McCormick, E. (2018). *Instagram Is Estimated to Be Worth More than \$100 Billion.* [online] Bloomberg.com. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-06-25/value-of-facebook-s-instagram-estimated-to-top-100-billion>.
- Nationalgallery.co.zw. (2016). *The Importance of Cultural Centres.* [online] Available at: <http://www.nationalgallery.co.zw/mutare/index.php/news/95-the-importance-of-cultural-centres>.
- Newyorkbehavioralhealth.com. (n.d.). *The Impact of Social Media Use on Social Skills.* [online] Available at: <https://newyorkbehavioralhealth.com/the-impact-of-social-media-use-on-social-skills>.
- Paterson, M. (2015). *The value of Observational drawing.* [online] mariapaterson.com. Available at: <https://mariapaterson.com/blog/88081/the-value-of-observational-drawing>.

- Schneiderman, K. (2013). *Compare and Despair*. [online] Psychology Today. Available at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-novel-perspective/201310/compare-and-despair>.
- Simpson, E. (2019). *Why the UK's shops are closing down*. [online] BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49349703>.
- Stephens, A. (n.d.). *Why Care About History?*. [online] Edmondhistory.org. Available at: <https://www.edmondhistory.org/why-care-about-history/>.
- Sussman, A. (2017). *How Galleries Support Their Artists?*. [online] Artsy. Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-galleries-support-artists>.
- Tate. (2019). *Our Vision | Tate*. [online] Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/our-priorities>.
- Thegreenbook.com. (2012). *Function of Art Galleries*. [online] Available at: <http://www.thegreenbook.com/function-of-art-galleries.htm>.
- Vallance, C. (2019). *Empty shops hit highest level for four years*. [online] BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-49311298>.
- Wagner, K. (2019). *Instagram Will Remove 'Likes' From Posts for Some U.S. Users*. [online] Bloomberg.com. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-11-09/instagram-will-remove-likes-from-posts-for-some-u-s-users>.
- West, C. (2019). *Social media demographics to drive your brand's online presence*. [online] Sprout Social. Available at: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/>.

Reports:

Clarke, A., Dodd, J., Hooper-Greenhill, E., O'Riain, H., Selfridge, L. and Swift, F. (2002). *Learning through culture: the DfES Museums and Galleries Education Programme: a guide to good practice*. [online] Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, p.5. Available at: <https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/27/1/learningthroughcult.pdf>.

GOV.UK. (2013). *Museums and galleries monthly visits*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/museums-and-galleries-monthly-visits>.

GOV.UK. (2019). *Record breaking year for museums and galleries in England*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/record-breaking-year-for-museums-and-galleries-in-england>.

Jenkins, S., Lisk, J. and Broadley, A. (2013). *The Popularity of Museum Galleries Evaluation for Natural Sciences Collections Association*. [online] p.27. Available at: https://www.natsca.org/sites/default/files/publications-full/Evaluation-Report-Museum-Gallery-Preferences-Final_0.pdf.

Ofcom. (2018). *A decade of digital dependency*. [online] Available at: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/about-ofcom/latest/features-and-news/decade-of-digital-dependency>.

Ons.gov.uk. (2017). Young people spend a third of their leisure time on devices - Office for National Statistics. [online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism/articles/youngpeoplespendathirdoftheirleisuretimeondevices/2017-12-19>.

- Ons.gov.uk. (2019). *Birth characteristics in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics*. [online] Available at:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/livebirths/bulletins/birthcharacteristicsinenglandandwales/2017>.
- Payne, C. (2017). *Leisure time in the UK: 2015*. [online] Ons.gov.uk. Available at:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/satelliteaccounts/articles/leisuretimeintheuk/2015>.
- Statista. (2019). *Children: tablet and smartphone ownership by age UK 2018* | Statista. [online] Available at:
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/805397/children-ownership-of-tablets-smartphones-by-age-uk/>.

Appendix

01/11/2019, *Robert Mackenzie interview* conducted by William Collyer, Email

How do you engage your audience?

We have incredibly varied collection, locally based but global in reach and outlook. Permanent displays are designed to engage a range of ages, interests and abilities. A busy schedule of activities, events and special exhibitions further extend target audiences. We aim for nationally and international standards and relevance. We have a large online presence – website and social media. Locally we advertise widely (on a very limited budget) and engage with a wide range of partners.

Has there been any fluctuation in visitor numbers in the past 5 years?

We have about 250,000 visit per year. There are fluctuation but no clear trends.

What methods do you use to keep track of visitor numbers?

Magic eye at entrances.

What demographic make up the majority of visitors to the gallery?

Lots of families with young children. 13 to late 20s under represented. More female visitors than male. 60% Devon. Social profile similar to city profile.

How difficult is it to attract young people to the gallery?

Primary school ages easy. With the exception of groups of foreign students, teens and early 20s more difficult. Visits tend to be for a reason eg school project, specific relevant exhibition.

What is the biggest challenge in maintaining visitor numbers?

Maintaining local authority and national funding. Responding to increasing demands from funders along with increasingly uncertain funding. Keeping up with fast changing communication channels.

Rob Mackenzie | Marketing Assistant

Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery | Queen Street | Exeter | EX4 3RX

(t) 01392 265858 (DL) 01392 265317

www.exeter.gov.uk/RAMM