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**Tourists at Art Museums. An Anthropological Study of Museum Visitors.**

Summary

Many contemporary tourists visit art museums and the anthropological perspective adopted in this work places them in the center of attention drawing focus to their expectations, motivations and ways of visiting. The author attempts to answer the complex question of the phenomenon's cultural significance taking into consideration works of anthropologists, museologists and art historians. Those theoretical reflections constitute a framework for the analysis of data collected during 151 interviews conducted at the Czartoryski Museum in Krakow, the Louvre in Paris and the Uffizi Gallery in Florence and followed by thirty in-depth interviews performed outside the museum context. The author classifies museum visitors by assigning them one of the following roles: *Knowledge seeker, Admirer, Connoisseur, Attraction seeker, and Companion*. The general topics emerging from the research include aesthetic and heritage experiences entwined with enculturation and self-development as well as the perceived personal contact with the artist. The category omnipresent in the interviews was the unique experience of authenticity and aura inside the art museum walls which enables to consider an engaging visit as a potentially numinous experience. It further leads to understanding the tourist art museum visits as ritualistic. The history of tourism as well as the present pandemic-related inability to travel make for the general context.

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