"We strive to be better people, showing more humanity and kindness. We often lack the skills or knowledge on how to do this. Museums can guide us to these realizations." Over the past several years, especially in our

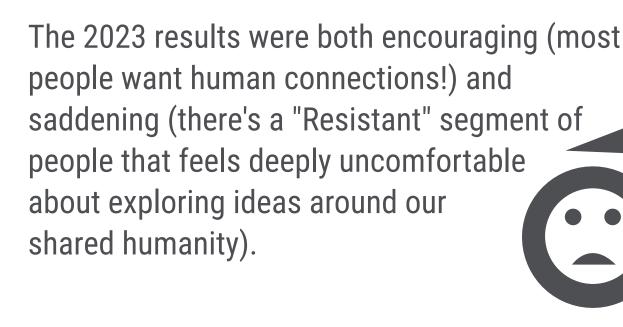
qualitative work, we've

noticed some

museum-goers have provided thoughts about our shared humanity, the human experience, and connecting to humanity. In 2022, the Annual Survey of Museum-Goers gave us a chance to slip some of these ideas into our research. Overall, we found that people who chose answers that considered our connections to others were much more likely to be inclusive and to support climate action.







saddening (there's a "Resistant" segment of people that feels deeply uncomfortable about exploring ideas around our

The good news is that over 4 out of 5 museum-goers agree that this is important! Here's what they specifically shared: How should museums encourage visitors to consider and/or develop their connection to humanity?

(Choose all that apply.)

Share multiple viewpoints so

perspectives other than their own 58%

Cultivate a shared sense of

Encourage visitors to participate

But there is

some not-so-good

of museums."

news here as well. 18% of

Nearly one out of five.

visitors can consider

humanity and care for others 53%

For many of us, the purpose of

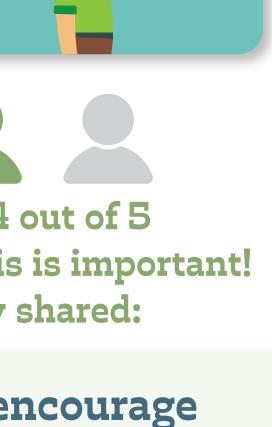
art, history, science, and other

understand our world and the

topics museums share is to

diversity of humanity that

calls this planet home.



Help visitors consider who they are as individuals, and their place in greater humanity 48% Motivate visitors to make the world a better place 45% Encourage visitors to consider and/or contribute to the wellbeing

of others 37%

"Museums give us an opportunity to step back and examine how we arrived where we are ... but I believe that by only showing one side, we force less understanding of how things work ... And many times, our perspectives are ONLY influenced by our own bias based on what and who we know ...

frequent museum-goers said "to be

honest, I don't think this is the role

in community affairs 28%

For many of us, this response might feel perplexing, confusing, perhaps even shocking. After all, isn't this what museums do through the art, history, and science we share? While we don't want to

over-amplify this minority

museum goers1, we also don't

want to ignore it. Instead, we

need to better understand the

why behind this response.

opinion, given that it is a

sizeable sub-group of

Let someone SEE someone else, and

maybe, just maybe, they'll see

the humanity of someone

new or different."

respondents were that disagreed with the question, we dug deeper. We found: **Three-quarters** fell on the "anti-inclusive" side of the inclusion spectrum.<sup>2</sup> And three-quarters also fell on the "anti-civics" side of the civic engagement spectrum.<sup>3</sup>

When we examined their written-in responses,

we found that they tended to link these ideas to

social justice movements, including efforts

scientific topics like climate action. For many,

this felt way too political and partisan, largely

and worldviews lie.

because of where their own values

"If m s ums start drivi g the

ESG r DEI agenda, you can

count me o t. I' m not

empathetic towards these

agendas r the people tha t

CONNICTION

are c rre tly drivi g them."

indicates that "Resistant"

people are also resisting the

of hope in visitors—a topic we'll

towards inclusion, civic engagement, and

To figure out who these

"Resistant" segment of the population, it appears we need to add "connection to humanity" to the list of HUMANITY ideas they are resisting.4 Additionally, preliminary results from the 2024 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers

idea that museums can cultivate a sense

investigate thoroughly later this year.

Which means that when

As researchers, we

looking at these

who doesn't want

have had to fight our

responses. (After all,

museums to make the

world a better place?)

own biases here when

we think about the

humanity. Additionally, three-quarters of U.S. adults from our broader population sampling agreed. Percentage of museum-goers who think we have an important role to play in helping people connect to humanity 80+% This is important and vital work! Because it matters to individuals, it matters for improved prosocial outcomes, it matters to our communities, and it matters to our

Instead, let's celebrate the lovely things we

see in this research. Over 80% of frequent

people—think we have an important role to

museum-goers—the vast majority of

play in helping people connect to

"Museums allow people to explore humanity and see the

civic society and democracy.

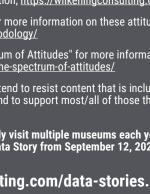
humankind wouldn't be either." Annual Survey of Museum-Goers Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. Sources include:

• 2023 Annual Survey of Museum-Goers, n = 107,187; 228 museums participating

<sup>3</sup>See our Data Story "Civics, Civil Society, and Museums, Part 2: The Spectrum of Attitudes" for more information on these attitudes; <a href="https://wilkeningconsulting.com/civics-civil-society-and-museums-part-2-the-spectrum-of-attitudes/">https://wilkeningconsulting.com/civics-civil-society-and-museums-part-2-the-spectrum-of-attitudes/</a> <sup>4</sup>What do we mean by "Resistant" and "Open?" In short, "Resistant" people tend to resist content that is inclusive, supports climate action, promotes civil discourse and civics, and/or that encourages a connection to humanity. "Open" people tend to support most/all of those things in museums. \*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). See the Purpose and Methodology (Update) Data Story from September 12, 2023 for more information on methodology. More Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.

Susie Wilkening.

lead author





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museums, and maybe <sup>1</sup>See our Data Story "Amplification vs Over-Amplification" for more information, https://wilkeningconsulting.com/amplification-vs-over-amplification/

world in different perspectives.

Museums spark human interest

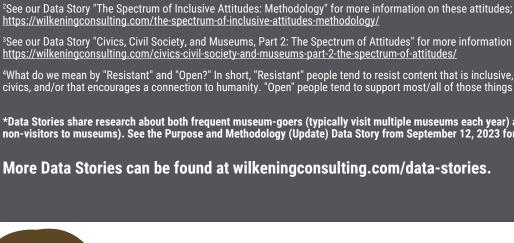
important world events that

changed history and allowed

wouldn't be the same without

for human growth. Society

and teach society about



• 2023 Broader Population Sampling, n = 2,002 • 2017 - 2022 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers