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Sunday at The Kimbell

I began this study hoping to observe how people interact with art and artifacts, and how that perhaps influences or frames their interactions with each other. After my first observation at The Kimbell Art Museum in the Fort Worth cultural district, it became clear to me that to understand this museum, a far more phenomenological approach was warranted. After that realization, I let my field notes write themselves and followed my senses. Really, what I have found is that this museum is much more than a place to view art. Indeed, after my observations of the Kimbell, I would go so far as to say that the art on the museum grounds is seldom the primary focus of visitors. The Kimbell is a place where people create halcyon memories with one another, a place to connect with people more than to connect with art. Sunday afternoon at the Kimbell is a sacred time in a sacred place.

Before I can analyze my observations and experiences at the Kimbell I am going to synthesize my field notes from my three observations into more coherent narratives. My visits were all drastically different from each other in overall atmosphere, energy, weather, and clientele. Consequently, my notes from the observations focus on different things. Discussing my observations chronologically will help me more fruitfully analyze my ethnography.

My first observation was perhaps the most “museum-y,” if that makes sense. I spent more time looking at the actual artwork than my other visits. I think that if I had been seeking to

photodocument my experience during observation one I'd have suffered from a myopic "tourist gaze." Fortunately and coincidentally, the only documentation of this visit is my written notes. I had thought that writing in a small notebook would feel natural at a museum. I have always perceived museums as very "intellectual" institutions. I even thought that using my cell phone for notes would have been viewed as disrespectful by other museum-goers. Instead, I found that, (like everywhere else) use of one's cell phone is not a deviant act; no one bats an eye at cell phone use because everyone in the galleries are holding them, or slipping them out of their pockets from time to time.

I conducted my first observation on Sunday March 10th at 12:41 PM. It was dreary outside, 53 degrees and a slight drizzle. I found myself putting on the performance of a life time to pretend I was at the museum for the art and nothing but the art. I pretended to look at *Christ the Redeemer* for probably 45 seconds (though it felt like an hour) to justify speed walking down the wrong corridor of the museum. I couldn't have cared less about that painting as I stared at it, but I did care about the employee behind me. I didn't want her to think I looked as out of place as I felt. I felt the need to fool the museum employees that I belonged there. This probably isn't something most visitors to the Kimbell would experience, and I think it rendered a large portion of my first observation utterly useless. How could I achieve *verstehen* when I had concocted a stressful phenomenon for myself that other visitors most likely don't experience?

Even so, there are some aspects of my first observation that are useful. During this time, I paid special attention to the size and compositions of groups. By far most attendees were in pairs (my field notes contain detailed accounts describing the different dyads that joined me in the ancient American art exhibit). More often than not, the dyads were comprised of one man and

one woman. Many were white. Groups that weren't dyads often included children from perhaps three years old to early teens. I saw older people too, often paired with other older individuals. Once seated outside the ancient American art exhibit in the lobby of the Piano Pavilion (the museum building that houses the ancient American art wing), I saw more and more groups with young children. If I had to create an average age for the children I saw that day, I'd estimate 6 or 7.

Clothing ranged from casual (jeans and sneakers, and the occasional pair of sweatpants) to business casual, but I don't think there is any outfit that could make one feel self-conscious at the Kimbell. It seems agreed upon that when visiting the museum, come-as-you-are is expected.

After my weird first observation, I didn't want to go back to the Kimbell. I didn't want to sit and feel uneasy for another 45 minutes. Nevertheless, on Sunday April 7th at 2:44 PM I mustered up the courage to once again venture through the great dark grey metal doors into the Kimbell. I made it easier on myself by taking notes on my phone which felt much more natural than the notebook I had previously used. I noticed far more cars in the parking lot than my first observation and I anticipated that a larger crowd would make me feel even more alienated. Instead, I walked into a warm and jovial environment created by several dozen families at the museum. Later on during this observation, I saw a sign confirming that that day was "Family Day." I think it is pretty safe to claim that America is not a family friendly society (just look at our insultingly short maternity leave policies and complete lack of paternity leave). That day at the Kimbell, however, I observed individuals enjoy the pleasures of family life in full force.

Children ran about the museum with painted faces, a young Spider-Man, butterflies, sparkly swirling patterns, and more. Parents looked on in joy. A large, bald, heavily tattooed man

sat next to me for a moment. He stood suddenly and giggled as small girl ran toward him and embraced him. On the lawn between the main building and the Piano Wing, parents chased their children and screams and fits of laughter cut through the heavy damp air. I heard more languages than I could recognize. When I visited the ancient American art that day, I found it almost empty, but with some modifications to the space itself. The bench in the middle of the exhibit was no longer empty, but housed an activity for children. Next to the bench was a box of instruments intended to emulate the musical art of ancient American peoples to supplement the visual art. I ventured back out to the lobby where the face painting line had swelled to well over 20 people chit chatting, laughing, and watching their kids do kid things. That was when I found an informal archive I needed to document: an open mural for children to draw on and create together. In the



photograph, two young boys draw as a girl older than them looks on. She appears puzzled, and they appear not to pay attention to her. Their proximity,

similar haircuts, and similar styles of clothing lead me to believe the two boys are brothers.

I will analyze this informal archive in two ways, first I will take a look at the content of the painting itself, and then I will present the implications of its existence in museum in the first place. Five rainbows, two suns, a volcano, an asteroid, a couple buildings, several houses, a

batman symbol, plenty of people, animals, trees, and scribbles/indecipherable marks. It seems that the green hills, river, and sky were drawn before the painting was handed off to whatever young artists happened by, and everything else is from children. A child psychologist or social worker would certainly be more adept than I at assessing the content of this painting to understand the individual children, but when viewed holistically, this painting has major social implications. There are some deductions we can make about gender at the Kimbell.

There appear to be two categories for the content in the painting. One relates to generally happy things that one might actually find on a hillscape; small houses, animals, rainbows, families, smiles. The other category is on the cusp of violence. The volcano, asteroid, a sign that says “dead end,” and the scribbles. I am going to make a tentative assumption that if we were to get a list of all the children who contributed to the mural, and divide the children into the categories of the art they drew (normal/serene, and cusp of violence) we would get one list of mostly girls, and one of mostly boys. I have memories of drawing volcanoes and asteroids with my male peers as a child. Drawing a house would be too girly (unless it were on fire or the background of a tank war).

As I look back at the painting I am reminded of *Barbie Girls vs. Sea Monsters* where Michael A. Messner discussed children learning to “perform” gender. I am guessing this mural is a snapshot of said gender performances. Once again, these deductions are tentative, and based largely off my own as experience as a child and with children as an adult.

It isn't often one can observe family units in the way one can at the Kimbell. Most families appeared to have the mother and father present (I didn't see any families that weren't heterosexual, though I saw several young childless couples holding hands who appeared to be

demonstrating homosexuality). The fathers and mothers seemed to have very similar roles at the museum. A thought exercise to demonstrate what I mean: if one had no preconceived and reinforced notions about gender in the family, one may have thought “mother” and “father” shared similar social connotations. Mothers and fathers interacted similarly with the children and excitedly encouraged them to explore the world around them.

Now to discuss the implications of this mural activity existing at all. The museum placed out a (basically) blank canvas for their attendees enjoyment. There isn't even an admission charge to any of the permanent exhibits. The pristine halls and lawn of the Kimbell stand out in the world of architecture and are free for us all to enjoy. This, combined with an open mural, communicates a message to visitors that effectively says “Welcome, stay as long as you like and enjoy yourself.” While employees patrol the exhibits, their presence is subtle. It almost feels as if there is no governing body at the museum. No one monitored what went on the mural, and clearly no one stopped youngsters from scribbling along the bottom of it.

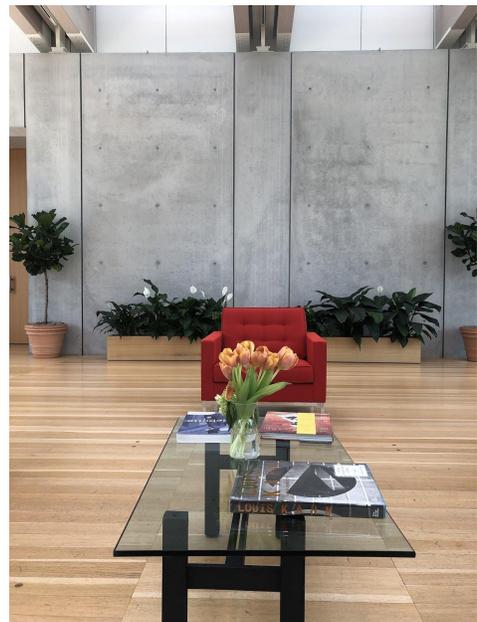
At the Kimbell, one feels relaxed and, quite honestly, at home. It doesn't matter what you know about art, or even if you care about art at all. This is a place of leisure that working class families desperately need. Indeed, I noticed that with all the free activities, I saw many more families who appeared to be of lower socioeconomic status during my second observation than any other day I visited. I say this because the clothing and cars I noticed during observation two seemed generally less expensive than things I had seen at the other observations. “Family fun” often comes with a dollar sign, but not on Sunday at the Kimbell.

For my third observation I arrived at the Kimbell on Sunday April 14 at 4:14 PM. It was sunny and 68 and the emptiest I'd seen the museum. I strolled in without a word from the

employees at the front desk; not that they were being cold, they were just preoccupied. Upstairs in the main museum hall, there were some people loafing about, but all conversations were hushed. It seems the norms developed among that day's group of visitors differed drastically from the families in observation two when it comes to vocal volume.

On the lawn between the main gallery and the Piano Pavilion I saw some familiar scenes: a caregiver chasing a children, children climbing walls, and now a young woman in an elegant black gown getting her photograph taken. I approached the table cluster where I had sat for observation one and that had been converted to a face painting station during observation two. At the table nearest me sat a woman with long red hair wearing sony headphones reading a book with an open spiral bound notebook beside her. At the table across from her, a man in his early 30s, with a corduroy blazer over a turtleneck read from a small book and sipped a Heineken. After watching a tour guide pass through the lobby with a group of people who appear to be of east Asian descent, I grew bored. Most people around me sat in isolated worlds, there was little social interaction to observe. Then, one man from the tour group came back to the lobby and took a photo of one of the walls I couldn't see very well from my spot. After he left, I relocated and tried to mimic the photograph he had taken.

I speculate that the amusing symmetry of the picture is what caught the man's eye, but for us it is more than that and can provide insight into what the Kimbell is all about. Look at the chair and table; they are pristine.



Not a spot on them, they look as if they've never been used. This space is kept shining. The floor is gleaming too, but look closely. It is actually covered in scratches, especially near the pieces of furniture. Books lie eschew on the table. I assume people have thumbed through them throughout the day and they will be nearly stacked after the museum closes. This space resembles the estate of a wealthy and expensively educated person, and yet it is free to the public and actively encourages people from all walks of life to come enjoy the art and facilities. I sat in this spot until 4:45 PM, fifteen minutes until closing. At the point, a woman in the uniform of Kimbell employees walked through the lobby and played four pleasant chimes on an instrument. Without saying a word, the few stragglers about the lobby and nearby exhibits made for the exit, and my final day at the Kimbell came to an end.

Over the course of all three observations, I rarely saw people interact with others outside the group with which they arrived at the Piano Pavilion. People seemed to stick with who they arrived with. Perhaps it feels odd to wander over next to someone in a quiet room and comment on a painting (though this does sound like something that would happen in a romantic comedy). This is important when considering the sociological implications of my observations. It is hard to study race/gender/class etc. relations when individuals are only interacting with their group (and most groups were racially homogenous).

Now, one could argue that the lack of interaction itself could provide some kind of understanding of racial relationships at the Kimbell, however, groups seemed to abstain from mixing with *any* people outside their group, it didn't seem to matter if they shared racial identity. Therefore, the Kimbell presents a unique environment. It isn't a city street where one may frequently make eye contact with strangers and politely nod or cross to the other side of the street

if an approaching person is read as dangerous. In the museum, there are other things to serve as focal points, the art, the architecture, the landscaping. It was as if all the groups (again, mostly couples and families) had mutually agreed to leave each other be.

This seems on point with the overall feel of the museum. Once I ditched my notebook, I felt right at home, even welcome. I now feel that I could go pop a squat anywhere in the Kimbell for three hours and no one would bat an eye.

Sounds of contentment, joy, and awe pierce through white noise from the museum's humidity regulators. The Kimbell on Sunday is a happy place. You would think with all the young children around during observations one and two I'd have seen some tears or tantrums, but I didn't. Once again, I tell you the Kimbell is a sacred place. It seems to be a place to go to enjoy and strengthen (through developing a shared history perhaps) bonds one already has with others, rather than a place to mingle with strangers. It is almost as if one enters the museum in an impenetrable bubble shared with significant others. However, in pondering this claim, keep in mind that I am a straight white man. As such, I am probably not as aware of people watching me as, for example, a woman of color. It is possible that if I had different racial and social identities I would have felt less comfortable in the museum, as a majority of attendees were white.

While not equal, representation from different racial groups seemed stronger at the Kimbell than most places I frequent in Fort Worth. This presents an implication that the museum really is for everyone, and to a degree, the public is aware of that fact. We know we are welcome at the Kimbell, but since it is likely such a drastically different environment than one's most people frequent (I'm a fine arts major and even I don't know quite how to behave at a museum), we are inclined to stick with those we know to share in this less-familiar-than-normal experience.

It is also possible that I am grasping at straws when it comes to trying to accurately observe and describe racial relations through my ethnography at the Kimbell. But, in regards to another critical social concept, gender, I observed more straightforward phenomenon. I would like to take some time now to discuss gender at the Kimbell, and to begin that discussion I have a story.

As I was walking into the museum to begin observation two, I saw an older white woman in red approaching the large bronze statue outside the museum doors. She paused in front of it for a moment, threw her arms open wide, and kept them there as she walked swiftly to catch up to an older man in a blue short sleeve button down who had not paused at the statue and continued towards the museum entrance. After they went inside I approached the statue to read the plaque underneath it. The statue is titled *Woman*



Addressing the Public: Project for a Monument by Juan Miro. The piece is said to a personification of motherhood and should evoke thoughts of the “earth goddess”. I don’t know if the woman in red knew that when she approached the statue, but it looked like she read the plaque and got the same information I have just shared. After reading, she admired the statue and

then approached her partner with power and energy. She seemed almost giddy as she approached him.

An hour later as I was leaving the museum, I saw a trio of women in front of the statue: three black women (one older, one in perhaps her 30s or 40s, and a child I'd estimate to be ten). The oldest and youngest of the group posed in front of the statue while third took their



photograph. This was a decisive moment for certain. I didn't even think to photograph it though because I was standing parallel to the group within their line of sight and would have felt awful for disrupting their interaction with the statue.

I saw a lot of examples of gender performance at the Kimbell, men holding open doors for women, women walking slightly behind men, and so on. But again I am not a woman, so I can only speculate what feelings *Woman Addressing the Public* may evoke for a woman, but this statue seems to have a somewhat galvanizing effect. It is bold and vulnerable and larger than life and it is the dominating point in the visage of the Kimbell. It has a quiet strength about it but still when considered impressionistically feels feminine. The woman in red running with outstretched arms to catch up to the man in blue, and the three black women proudly posing with the statue, for a moment, seemed to experience something outside the socially imposed boundaries of their gender.

On Saturday, April 27th (after I had completed my first draft of this project) I drove by the Kimbell on my way to another attraction in the cultural district and observed a third tableau in front of the statue. Two women, about my age, lounged in front of the statue as the sun set on the museum grounds. They sat with their backs to statue, glancing back every so often. They laughed together. I don't know if they read about the statue or not, and these stories may all be coincidence. Then again, there may be something about the piece that evokes positive feelings. Maybe these scenes would be more extraordinary if I had observed them before the feminist movements of the 20th and 21st centuries, but I don't think it is a stretch to assume most social science suggests that the labels "man" and "woman" still have drastically different social implications and restrictions. This statue, only slightly and only maybe, challenges those implications.

There is more to be said about *Woman Addressing the Public: Project for a Monument* that relates to my earlier claim that the Kimbell is a place for everyone. After reading an analysis of the statue posted on the Kimbell's official webpage, I came to understand another equally important aspect of this statue: the figure's placement in a public setting. This might seem like a no brainer; all art is meant to be seen by people, right? Well, this work of art *must* be seen by people or it would not take on the meaning it has. The public setting is part of the art itself. Perhaps that is why the placement is so powerful. The statue is steadfast, yet incredibly open to the human gaze and the elements alike. This art toys with notions of what it means to be seen as one is-- to be read as one is-- in a public setting This is a little ironic because people don't pay each other much mind at the Kimbell. I don't know what it is like to be a woman and visit the Kimbell, but perhaps they feel eyes upon them more so than I.

I think that after my observations I achieved verstehen with the other visitors at the Kimbell. After all, it is unlikely they have spent much more time there than I have, so it isn't too hard to jump into the swing of things. After my first observation, once I got out of my head and stopped making myself feel like the odd one out, it was easy to ebb and flow within the museum. I think I got a chance to feel the joy of the people around me during observation two; I left smiling. During observation three, when I shared the space with a red haired woman and a man in a turtleneck, I became more absorbed in myself and my own thoughts, just as those around me were. Indeed, I found myself on my phone looking at the history of the museum's architecture which I bet many museum visitors have done when they find still moments during their survey of the Kimbell grounds.

I came to understand what it is like to enjoy a day at a museum on an emotional level. I dreaded returning to the Kimbell after observation one because I had failed to achieve any semblance of verstehen. Once I fell onto the same emotional plane as the other visitors during observation two, I couldn't wait to go back. The Kimbell is an open and friendly place where people are kind and respectfully distant.



To speak to that further, through some unobtrusive measures I observed how subtly the museum's programs affected the museum experience. Recall the small box of instruments I mentioned in the ancient American art exhibit. There is

no employee manning it; no young intern trying to engage the kids running about. There is a little sign, and then some instruments. The museum staff don't seem to want you to experience in any certain way other than how you want to experience it. A survey of all the different descriptions of artwork proved to strengthen this claim, for each plaque accompanying art pieces is in clear layman's terms. There is no elitist art jargon. It is all plainly laid out, because this place is for everyone, not just the art scholars.

Sunday at the Kimbell is a sacred time to enjoy pleasures of microsocial life. It is a break, a breath a fresh-air, a walk in the park. Despite feeling so separate from the profane, the Kimbell, like all things, exists in a social context, and all those who populate the museum are in the midst of experiencing complex social realities that they bring with them. Even so, there is something about the Kimbell that seems to perhaps dull the presence of social facts; to pacify the negative aspects of existing in a public space. I don't know how and I don't know why, but that is what I experienced Sunday at the Kimbell.

Field Notes:

Observation 1:

NOTE: Field Notes were originally recorded in a small pocket notebook. I have transcribed them here because they are most likely unreadable to everyone besides me, and also I will be able to elaborate on any recording to jog my memory in the future. This transcription was done one hour after the observation concluded.

The exact notes I took will be recorded in normal text

Elaborations on my notes will be in bold.

Begin Notes:

Sunday 03/10/2019; Time: 12:41 pm-1:40pm

Kimbell Museum: Ancient American Art

Outfit: Gray gap shirt (**long sleeve, nice material, three button crew neck**), blue glasses, khakis, white shoes

Cloudy, 53 degrees, slight drizzle

- Enter wrong building
- Feel weird walking too fast to find exhibit
 - **I first went into the Asian art section and then the early European art sections.**
- Stop and pretend to look at *Christ the Redeemer* (**In marble**) as young guard, women, short stature and hair, attractive, watches

I then walked into the other building, the Piano Pavilion, and entered the correct exhibit.

- 3 pairs of male and female look together, green and blue vests, man in black and jeans
 - **Green and blue vests refers to a couple whom I shared the space with for most of this observation, Green is the woman, blue is the man.**
- Wall of windows
- Shades drawn
 - **Semi-transparent shades that soften but don't eliminate outside light. I could see (and hear) cars passing.**
- Wood floors

- **Neat, smart, and modern wooden patterns on the floor. Planks were symmetrical and laid in geometric patterns, not like planks you would often find in a house.**
- Cement walls
- 2 younger men
 - Crewneck
 - Jacket
- Vests embrace
- Figures in glass, people lean in
- Hands behind back or crossed or [**held together**] in front
- Guard paces
 - Bald
 - Makes me feel uneasy
 - **I don't know if guard is the right term, but it is how I feel I relate to these people. They are the ones in navy jackets and maroon ties with lanyards and name tags that are in each exhibit throughout the gallery**
- Quiet but murmurs, footsteps, and traffic and purple cane
- People move piece to piece
- Rarely over one group at same piece
- Loud pen
 - **I noticed the clicking of my pen sounded like a balloon bursting**
- Tac tac tac
- Look, read, look, talk
 - **A series of events I observed people demonstrate when approaching new pieces.**
- Trio speaks spanish
- Next room is louder
 - **I could hear them from where I was**
- Two 20s-30s women with coats (**resembling Go-Lite brand, but probably not since those or for extreme temperatures**) and large purses enter, pass me as I write.
- Phones in hand, one on phone
- First phones seen
- Guard walks like on balance beam, bored?
- Vests and boys (**in crew neck and jacket**) remain (**everyone else from the beginning of the observation had left**)
- Young room
- Crouched to read (**a common sight**)
- Shop voice booms

- **I realized the loud room next door was some kind of shop with colorful plates and decor on display. Many voices came from this room during my observation, but one was consistently the loudest, and was present in all conversations.**
- Stunted, naso-pharal sound
 - “115, 125”
- 1 bench, center of room
- Blue vest strokes green vests back
- Other guard
 - Balding, glasses, beard, and taller than me.
 - Watches boy in batman and girl in pink in Africa exhibit with bearded man
 - 6 or 7
- Women in blue button down joins [**bearded man and two kids**]
 - Man quietly reads about urn aloud.
 - Man with Batman, women with pink
 - She strokes [**Pink’s**] hair
 - Now the man is with Pink and crosses room to join women and Batman by mural.
- Smells like paint (faintly)
- Cool not cold
- Guard 2 stretches fingers
- Vests still making rounds, green has arms crossed, blue has in pockets
- New pair of man and woman enter, same ethnicity/race [**while I recorded no assumptions about their race, the way I have been trained to read ethnicity and deduce race through growing up in America led me to label them Asian**]
 - Both in blue, his blue jacket, hers nice shirt (**a blue checkered blouse with a collar and a blue scarf**)
 - He holds a folded up umbrella in a bag that rustles as he walks
- New pair, man and woman enter.
 - Both in running shoes, hers orange and dirty, his blue and clean
 - **(They were the same brand, I think Asics)**
 - She leggings, he jeans
 - He has sunglasses on head even though cloudy
- Vests leave at 1:07
- Alone with running shoe couple
 - They pace, not staying at pieces long. She crosses arms which hold wallet and phone
- Two adults enter with kid in Chiefs hat who stares at pieces but continues motion
- Adults follow, pause in middle of room [**right next to the bench on the side closest to the door**]

- He [**kid in Chiefs**] mimics their [**two adults near him**] soft voices
- Women alone with black backpack, gray tweed jacket, tightly braided hair walks directly to water pot [**a red decorative pot in the shape of an ancient American diety, I forget what civilization.**]
 - She then exits the room
 - [**This woman was the first African American I saw at the museum**]
- New pair enter, male and female, she strokes his back
- The murmur and chuckle
 - 25ish
 - Black and jeans
 - Appear LatinX
 - They separate into opposite corners
- Guard 2s feet turn out like mine
 - Twiddles thumbs
- Maybe they [**guard 1 and 2**] switched at 1:00 without me noticing
- Couple LatinX rejoins and paces together near mural where the woman stops
- Man in blue ball cap and jeans enters alone and paces slow and continuously along the outside of the room
- LatinX sit at bench
 - He points to spot on his lower back and she strokes it
- At 1:16 I meander to the lobby outside the exhibit with a small coffee shop [**they also have other drinks and snacks**]
- I am in the corner with 5 empty white tables each with 3-4 empty orange chairs
- I see guard 1 as I sit
- Man in TCU ball cap with baby in bjorn and women go into exhibit
- Two men with beards and two young boys enter exhibit walking quickly
- Guard 2 is with two women at coatcheck across the room talking
- He does a motion pretending to hit his head, they laugh
- 15 feet from them, three women at ticket sales sit and chat.
 - No one is in line
 - [**The desk was long enough for each of them to have their own space, so it seems they chose to sit close together**]
- Guard 2 and women make exaggerated thinking poses with arm over torso and finger to chin
- 2 pairs approach women at desk and are greeted with warm hello
- Three pairs enter and exit lobby
- Desk girl pretty, pink sweater, long thick dark hair, eye makeup I can see from across the room
- Older woman pushes stroller as two kids (dirty blond, male) walk beside

- Old man [**I feel like I shouldn't use old as an identifier, but this is what I wrote**] holding hand of much younger child (approximately 3) slowly follow and met at one of the tables in my clump
- Another pair approaches tickets
- Guard 2 is with women still
- Blond short hair woman and girl in pink flowy flower dress go into exhibit
- Kids with stroller eat Pb+j looking sandwiches from tupperware and watch me.
- Blue Ball cap man gets cup of coffee, sits in red cushy chair reads
- People filter in and out, can't catch it all
- Elderly pair, male and female, male helps female get something out of her teeth
- Blue Ball cap now has a newspaper
- Who has somewhere else to be? I feel to be the only one.
- This is a place of leisure; this isn't somewhere where we hurry. It is Sunday.
- Would as many kids be here if it weren't dreary outside?
- Most everyone is white except 2 of the 3 girls at tickets.
- Art is ancient American and African in this wing and the people looking at it are white
- I get distracted thinking about my ex-girlfriend and my current girlfriend brought on by a nightmare last night.
- Blue ball cap puts down paper, glances around, looks content.
- A ticker girl smiles 1:33
- Asian [**Family I read as Asian American**] fam with young kids (girl approx 3 and boy approx 9) strikk around lobby, look at various hallways to pursue, decide africa and ancient america, and go. 2 secs later, man with girl [**from this same group**] turn around and sit on red couch near Blue Ball cap
- Two women get coffee, gray hair, brown hair, black coats.
- Man in green coat and nice shoes buys something at snack bar, beep beep beep
 - Puts change [**single dollar bills, 2 or 3**] in wallet and gets coffee
- Man in green converses with elderly couple with stroller and 2 kids, IDK where 3rd kid and 2 women with them went. He [**man in green**] and 1 kid embard off to other hallway, IDK where it goes.
- Scuff scuff tack tack rattle jingle tack, the loudest keys in the world in the world.

End 1:40 PM

- [**Note written in bathroom on way out**]
- I'm anxious to get back to my car to leave this place where I have made myself an outsider.

NOTE:

I do not think I came close to verstehen in this observation. Indeed, I felt anxious, and hurried which seems to completely contradict the experience of the others at the museum. I think to achieve verstehen I either need to: ditch the notebook and take fewer more detailed notes on my phone OR go to the museum with a partner like most other people I observed. I also may need to expand my area of observation. People do not go to the Kimbell to hunker down in one room, so why should I?

Notes for observations two and three were taken on my cell phone notes app

Observation 2:

Sunday April 7th, 2:44pm

- cloudy again, very humid no rain
- Parked again in E parking lot
- More cars here than last time
- Saw four pairs of people approaching museum
- One was man and woman holding hands but standing a stride apart happily swinging free hands, another was older couple well dressed
- Pic one woman in red approaches statue with wide arms then joins man in blue and go inside
- The statue she approached: woman addressing the public by Joan Miro
- I was going to wait to take more notes until I reached the lobby outside the ancient AMERICAN exhibit but there is a LOT going on. People dressed smartly in black and a row of tables also black table clothes. People, many minorities get their faces painted and enjoy other activities with artists
- Large tattooed man, possibly latinx with gold chain around neck watches contently. In the field between the main building and piano wing, bass heavy music plays and a group of people in outlandish clothing (sequin blazer and silver cape) loaf about near music source
- I hear Spanish, which I did not hear my first time here
- It is very busy
- Now moving to piano wing
- My spot last time is occupied by a line about ten people long, all with kids, waiting to get faces painted
- Many minorities
- The museum is bustling today I fear I won't catch everything

- An older couple passes a group of three women, when one of the women sneezes, the older man pleasantly says bless you
- More parish
- A little girl in PJs lead her mom around
- A boy climbs a sign as his mom says “that is not to hold a little boy”
- Five pairs around me without kids, the rest are larger groups with kids
- The man seated next to me with many tattoos walks past me very slowly and is happily greeted by his young blond children. They run about the field and he goes inside, telling them to stay within eyesight. They run to the opposite side of the field and climb a wall
- There are many more Minotaurs here today, many families speaking Spanish and many African American families
- I go to the ancient AMERICAN exhibit to try and decrease foot traffic and focus in
- Inside, a sign says “family festival”
- A mural made by a group of collaborating children stands in the middle of the room, kids right all over it
- It shows green hills and a bright blue sky. Lots of scribbles, I’ll get a better look on my way out
- Last time I stood out because I didn’t have a mate, now I stand out also bc i don’t have a kid
- Guard 1 was in the main building when I came in
- Now guard in AAA room is pretty young brunette woman
- She glances at my as I enter and quickly looks away— a very frequent interaction I have with women.
- Her and I are alone in the exhibit except an older women who appears latinx standing very close to the artwork she inspects with large brown glasses
- A lone man in blue jeans and collared shirt and ball cap enters and approaches my favorite statue of the thunder god
- He is short, maybe 5’3” examines it from all sides and moves on with hands in pockets
- I feel much more at ease today and hear frequent laughter and shouts from the children in the lobby
- A couple enters, sweeps the room and leaves quickly, seem disinterested
- I’m joined by more, now some other people who are alone
- Pic two, addition to this room not here before
- Other changes:
- A small spider man Wanders past me withou regard
- I weave through young ones back to the lobby and out of the main lobby
- To the courtyard
- I am more mobile now to better capture this experience
- Two men wAtch four young children play at a statue outside and laugh.

- A high voice shrieks “HEY DAD! COme ere”
- A woman skips behind a young child in a purple dress, then chances her and both erupt in a fit of laughter
- More teens dressed sharply in black appear to be here for something else
- I see a young venom
- I leave smiling
- As I leave, three African American women are at the big statue, older, middle age, and young
- Older and young take pic in front of statue
- End 3:20

Observation 3:

Sunday April 14 begin 4:14pm. Sunny and 68, far fewer cars in lot

- much quieter than last time
- I talk to no one at the front desk
- Fewer kids in main lobby
- Whispers
- A well dressed young woman in a black gown poses for photos outside and a young girl in pink stands next to another young girl on a bench. On the adjacent bench, two women with pink children’s roller skates
- A man in a yellow beanie chases after a young girl in a pink pastel dress and she giggles
- A man in a turtleneck and quarterly blazer sits in my table pod, as does a red haired women reading from a textbook with Sony headphones in
- The piano wing lobby is almost empty and much quieter, two or three voices tops
- Bar is closed and coffee machine is stored away out of sight
- It feels private
- This IS a good place to do homework... today at least.
- The pretty young woman with lots of makeup is once again at the ticket counter with her two colleagues (same trio i saw during observation 1)
- A man in a two piece suit and comfortable yet stylish yellow shoes paces about, white hair, classes, older.
- Two women of color emerge from a corridor I cannot see and place two Dr peppers and a 1/5 full OJ on the snack table counter. They put the cans out of sight, and one grabs a backpack from under the table
- A man and woman about my age stand close together. Blue hoodie, khakis, something I would wear. His girlfriend is dressed similarly to how mine dresses, and carries a backpack as mine does.

- A man in an official looking blue shirt likely speaks to a group of adults outside, they appear to be Asian. Most are older. They have jackets and bags though it is warm outside.
- Two women at coat check chit chat, I THINK maybe the same two women as before
- Another young pair, man and women Walk by the windows and down the stairs outside to my left
- I move into the ancient American art gallery
- Completely empty
- guard is elderly man this time
- I wonder what he could do to stop me if I snatched a painting of the wall. Obviously SOMEONE would stop me, but I doubt he could.
- Pristine. No informal remnants of interaction
- The tour group coagulates at the entrance of the African art exhibit. I shimmy through them back to my seat because the guards gaze made me uncomfortable.
- Everything in here looks new
- The couches look like they've never been used
- A man with an large camera kneels and takes picture of a wall
- this wall
- The large group wanders past me and talks in another language
- They have guest WiFi
- I'm bored and kill time trying to find the year this was built
- Apparently it wasn't well received by the artistic community
- As prestige as the furniture is, the floor is scuffed up considerable near the sofas
- a dead flower petal lies on the table
- Coat check continue to chatter
- There are cubbies behind them
- I get distracted scheduling tabling for my friend running for student body president
- This place right now is completely different than last time. Relaxed. Quiet. Comfortable. A lazy Sunday.
- The museum closes in 20 mins. I should leave soon.
- Turtleneck talks a drink from a green long neck bottle next to him
- Stella Artois
- A man in a blue button down with a bag from the museum gift shop sits directly across from me
- A woman walks by and chimes four notes in different rooms, signaling it is closing a pleasant tone
- End 4:45

