



Guided Tours in Photography Exhibitions: Requirements and Effects on Perception and Memory

Notes

- The full report can be found here: <https://foto-psychologie.de/publikation/>. Please cite only from this report.
- In this brief version, results are only summarized in excerpts. Further details on methodology and limitations can be found in the full report.
- !! The sample of this study consists exclusively of individuals from the Umfeld of the Sammlung Klein (Kunstwerk). Therefore, the results cannot be directly generalized to the broader population or other art institutions. Another critical point is the small sample size for certain sub-questions. This reduces statistical power and increases the likelihood that random effects may influence the results. !!
- Legend: * = significant; bold: medium or large effect; value 5 = high level/agreement, value 1 = low level/disagreement. Example: w/m+* = this aspect is significantly more important for men.

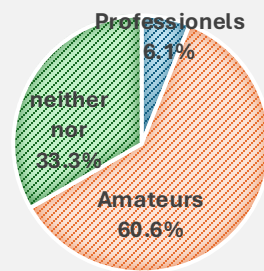
Sample

N = 66

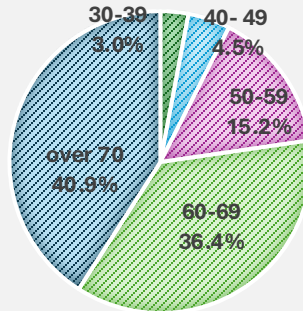
- N = 4 Professionals
- N = 40 Amateurs
- N = 22 neither nor

Conducted in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, 2024

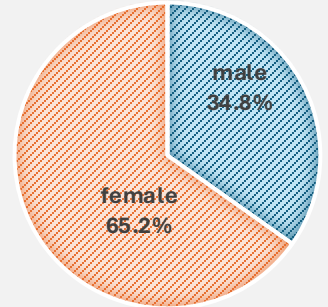
PROFESSIONALS / AMATEURS



AGE

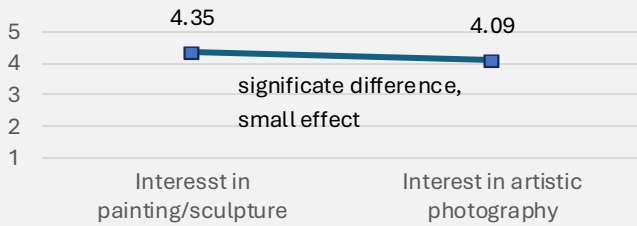


GENDER



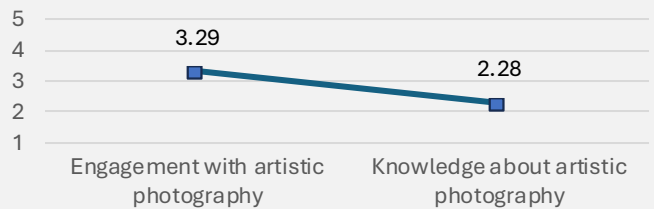
Interest, engagement, knowledge, exhibition visits artistic photography

Interest in painting/sculpture vs. artistic photography



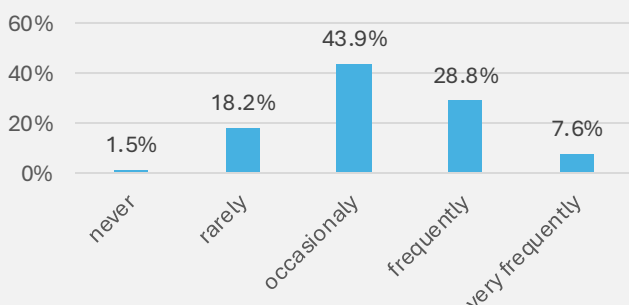
The individuals in the sample have a strong interest in artworks in the fields of painting and sculpture. Interest in artistic photography is also high. The interest in painting and sculpture is significantly higher than the interest in artistic photography.

Knowledge about and engagement with artistic photography



Engagement with artistic photography is only moderate. Knowledge of artistic photography is only minimally developed.

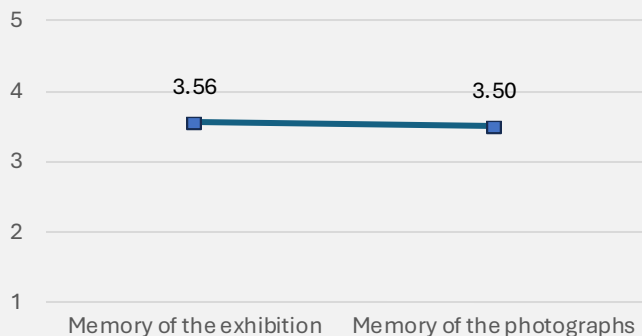
Frequency of exhibition visits with artistic photography



There are clear correlations between the frequency of exhibition visits and interest in, engagement with, and knowledge of artistic photography. The higher the interest in artistic photography ($r = .56^*$, large effect), the more one engages with it ($r = .66^*$, large effect), and the greater the knowledge of artistic photography ($r = .73^*$, large effect), the more frequently exhibitions featuring artistic photography are visited.

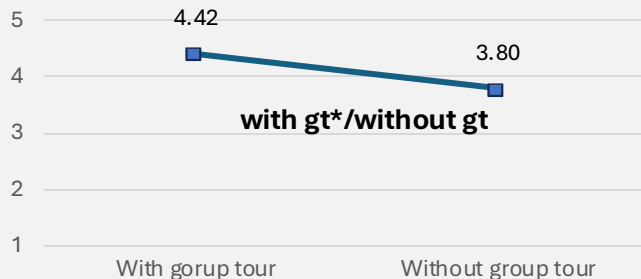
Results for Hängung #24 (Exhibition 2022, Survey 2024)

Memory of Hängung#24 (2022)



With an average score of 3.56, those who visited the exhibition tend to remember it relatively well. The memory of Andreas Mühe's photographs is also generally good.

Retrospective assessment of the artistic quality of the photographs



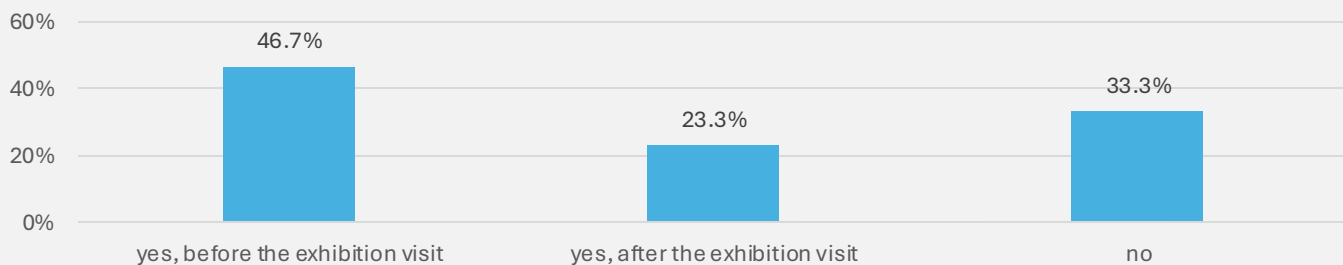
Of those who visited the exhibition, 48.1% participated in a guided tour. The artistic quality of Andreas Mühe's photographs is rated higher in retrospect by those who participated in a guided tour.

	With guided tour	Without guided tour	Significance
Memory of Hängung#24	3,85 (N = 13)	3,50 (N = 12)	n.s.
Memory of Andreas Mühe's photographs	3,62 (N = 13)	3,40 (N = 10)	n.s.
Liking of the photographs	4,15 (N = 13)	3,70 (N = 10)	n.s.
Emotional impact of the photographs	3,82 (N = 11)	3,78 (N = 9)	n.s.
Enthusiasm for the photographs	3,58 (N = 12)	3,78 (N = 9)	n.s.
Artistic quality of the photographs	4,42 (N = 12)	3,80 (N = 10)	sign.
Understanding of the artist and their work	3,08 (N = 13)	3,30 (N = 10)	n.s.

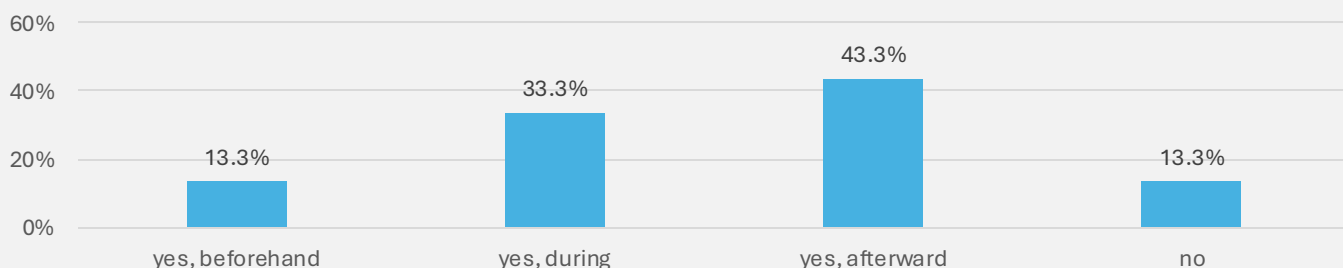
The goal of the study was also to investigate whether participation in a guided tour improves memory performance and promotes a more positive reception of the photographs. However, due to the small sample size, no reliable conclusions can be drawn. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with utmost caution and primarily considered as exploratory indications.

Results for Hängung#26 (Exhibition 2023, Survey 2024)

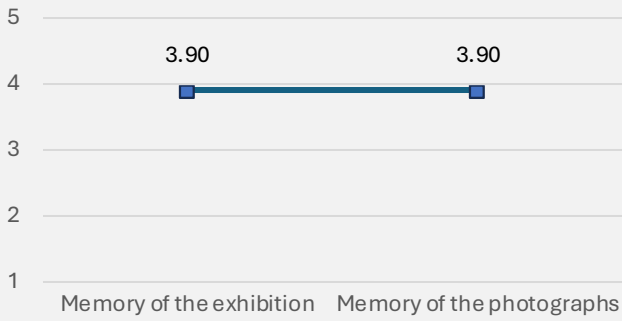
Reading texts about photographs on the website



Reading texts about photographs in the brochure



Memory of Hängung#26 (2023)



With an average score of 3.90, those who visited the exhibition tend to remember it well. The overall memory of the photographs is also good.

45.5% of the sample visited Arrangement #26 in 2023, 47% did not visit the exhibition, and 7.6% no longer remember. Of those who visited the exhibition, 56.7% participated in a guided tour, while 40% did not. 3.3% do not remember whether they participated in a guided tour.

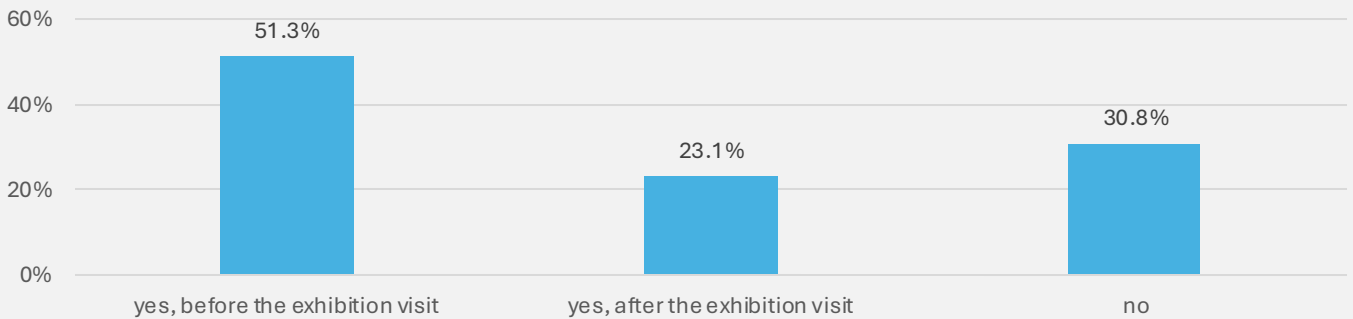
Among those who did not visit the exhibition, the most common reason was that the exhibition was not known (41.9%), followed by lack of time to visit the exhibition (25.8%). 19.4% were not interested in the exhibition, and 3.2% can no longer remember.

	With guided tour	Without guided tour	Significance
Memory of die Hängung#26	4,24 (N = 17)	3,58 (N = 12)	n.s.
Memory of the photographs overall	4,18 (N = 17)	3,67 (N = 12)	n.s.
Memory of the photographs by Will Wilson	4,27 (N = 15)	4,00 (N = 10)	n.s.
Liking of the photographs	4,13 (N = 15)	4,20 (N = 10)	n.s.
Emotional impact of the photographs	3,80 (N = 15)	3,70 (N = 10)	n.s.
Enthusiasm for the photographs	3,87 (N = 15)	3,60 (N = 10)	n.s.
Artistic quality of the photographs	4,00 (N = 13)	3,70 (N = 10)	n.s.
Understanding of the artist and their work	3,07 (N = 15)	3,10 (N = 10)	n.s.

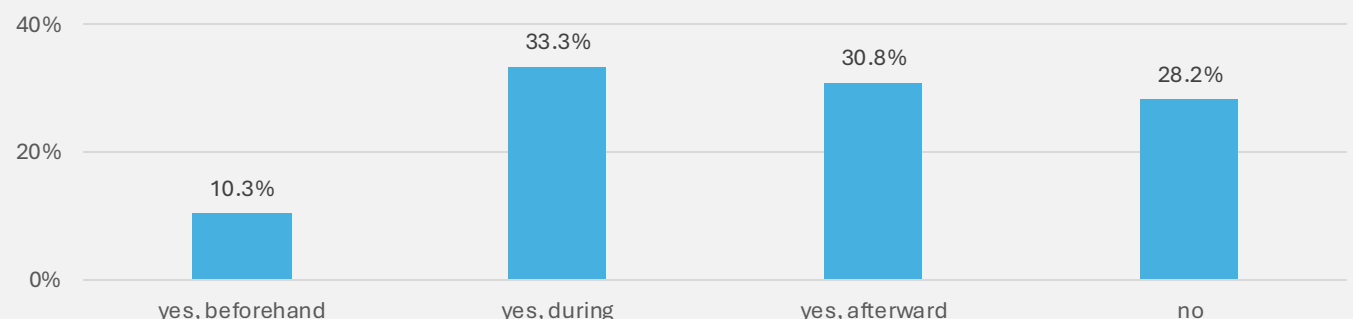
Due to the small sample size, no reliable conclusions can be drawn here either. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with utmost caution and primarily considered as exploratory indications.

Results for Hängung#27 (Exhibition 2023/2024, Survey 2024)

Reading texts about photographs on the website

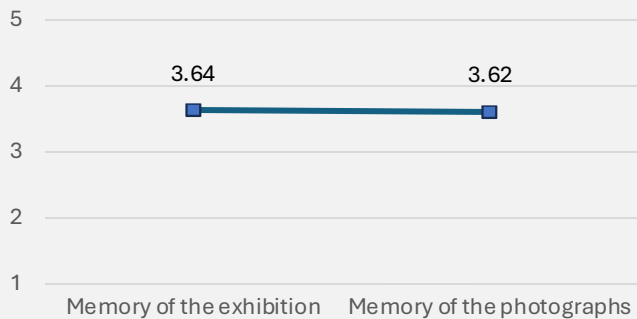


Reading texts about photographs in the brochure



Memory and reception Hängung#27

Memory of Hängung#27 (2023/2024)



With an average score of 3.64, those who visited the exhibition tend to remember it relatively well. The overall memory of the photographs is also generally good.

59.1% of the sample visited Arrangement #27 in 2023/2024. Of those who visited the exhibition, 64.1% participated in a guided tour.

Among those who did not visit the exhibition, the most common reason was lack of time to visit the exhibition (42.3%), followed by not being aware of the exhibition (34.6%), and 15.4% were not interested in the exhibition.

	With guided tour	Without guided tour	Significance
Memory of Hängung#27	3,88 (N = 25)	3,15 (N = 13)	sign.
Memory of the photographs overall	3,80 (N = 25)	3,23 (N = 13)	sign.
Liking of the photographs overall	4,04 (N = 25)	3,54 (N = 13)	sign.
Feeling informed about the works and artist	4,24 (N = 25)	3,69 (N = 13)	sign.
Memory of the photographs by Alina Frieske	4,05 (N = 15)	4,00 (N = 9)	n.s.
Liking of Alina Frieske's photographs	3,84 (N = 15)	3,57 (N = 7)	n.s.
Emotional impact of Alina Frieske's photographs	3,94 (N = 15)	3,00 (N = 7)	n.s.
Enthusiasm for Alina Frieske's photographs	3,15 (N = 15)	3,42 (N = 7)	n.s.
Artistic quality of Alina Frieske's photographs	3,94 (N = 15)	3,71 (N = 7)	n.s.

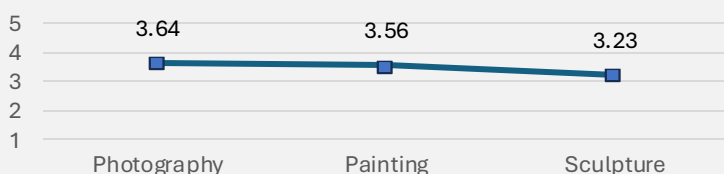
Significantly better memory, liking, and feeling informed overall for those who participated in a guided tour. Caution is required in the interpretation due to the small sample size.

Correlations between dimensions	Liking of the photographs	Emotionally touched by the photographs	Enthusiastic about the photographs	Artistic quality
Liking of the photographs	--	0,53-0,80* large effect	0,62 - 0,83* large effect	0,59 - 0,89* large effect
Emotionally touched by the photographs		--	0,64 - 0,73* large effect	0,64 - 0,76* large effect
Enthusiastic about the photographs			--	0,74 - 0,84* large effect

There are strong correlations between the dimensions evaluated for the photographs displayed in each exhibition. The higher the rating of the photographs (in retrospect), the higher the ratings of the other dimensions are also assessed.

Exhibition tours

Importance of guided tours in exhibitions in the field of ..

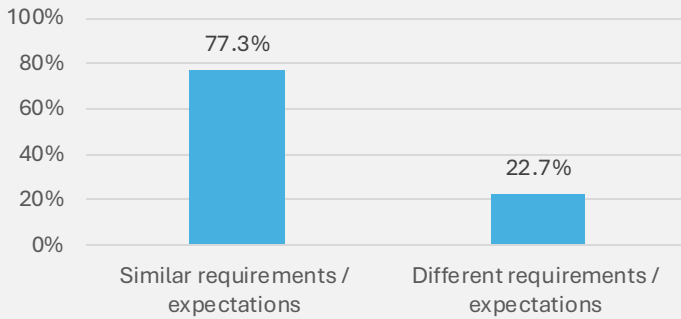


Guided tours in the fields of photography and painting are the most important. Guided tours in the field of sculpture are slightly less important.

The individuals in the sample generally participate in guided tours for art exhibitions to a moderate extent. The average score is 3.02. For specific exhibitions with artistic photography, the average score is 2.95. The older a person is, the more frequently they participate in guided tours for art exhibitions ($r = .34^*$, medium effect). This correlation does not appear with guided tours in the context of exhibitions featuring artistic photography.

Photography tours

Different vs. similar requirements and expectations for guided tours

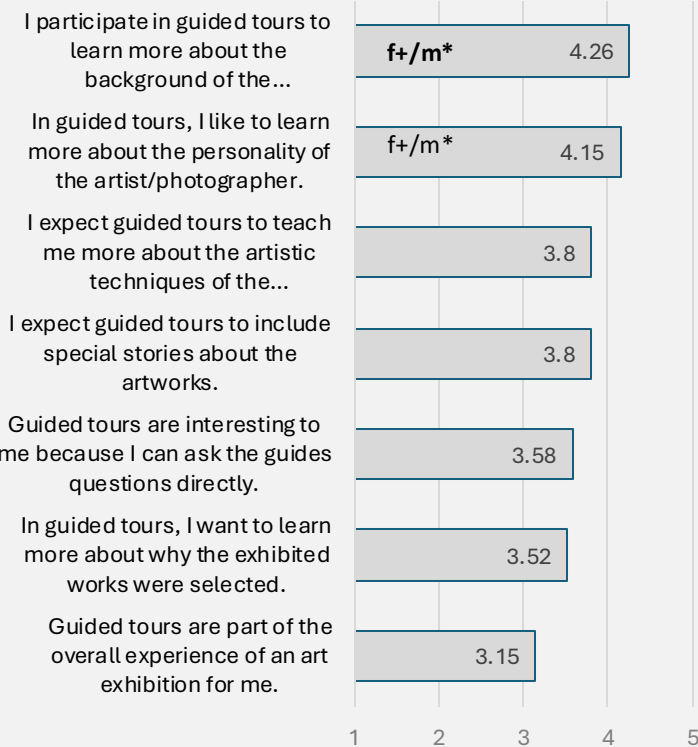


For the majority of 77.3%, the expectations and requirements for guided tours on artistic photography align with those for tours in the fields of painting and sculpture. 22.7% have different expectations.

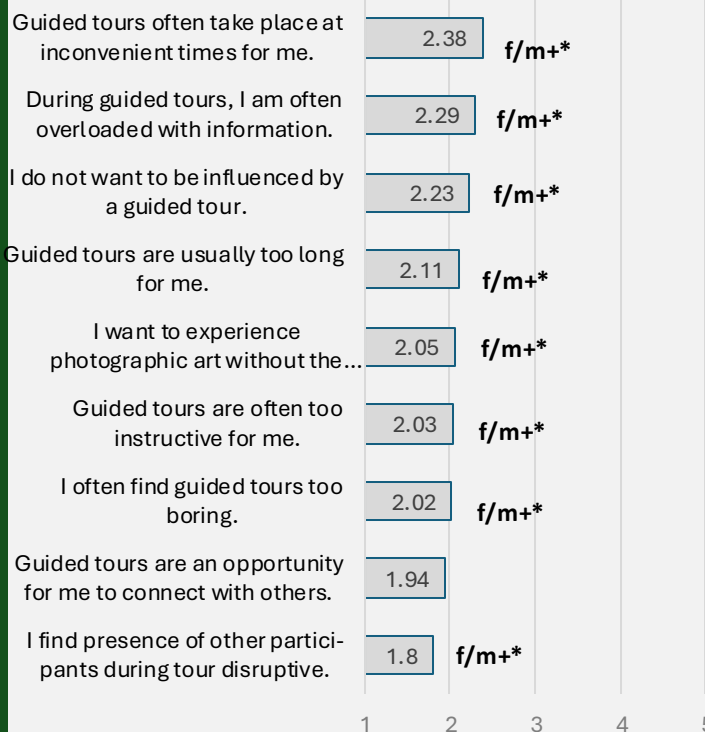
The majority of responses regarding other expectations emphasize technical aspects of photography (67%). Some responses highlight the importance of context and perception as a way to approach the works (20%). Less frequently, there is a call to discuss photography as an independent art form with its specific characteristics (13%).

The optimal duration of a guided tour varies greatly among the participants. A majority of 51.5% state 60 minutes. The average is 55.9 minutes, and the median is 60 minutes. A similarly diverse pattern is seen for the maximum duration of a guided tour. 37.9% again state 60 minutes, while 25.8% choose 90 minutes. The average is 74.5 minutes, and the median is again 60 minutes.

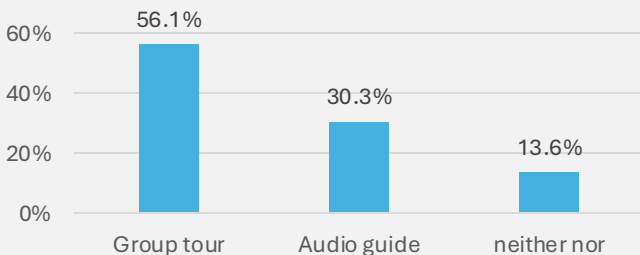
Requirements for guided tours



Critical and insignificant aspects of guided tours

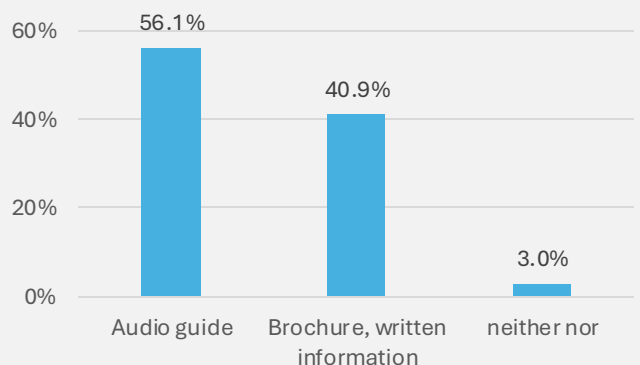


Preference for group tour vs. audio guide



Group tours (56.1%) are clearly preferred over an audio guide (30.3%). 13.6% would not use either option.

Preference if no group tour is offered



Summary

The present study investigates the effects of guided tours on the reception and memory of exhibitions featuring artistic photography in the Sammlung Klein (Kunstwerk). The focus was on four past exhibitions (“arrangements”), for which an exploratory questionnaire was used to collect general questions about guided tours and specific questions on memory and evaluation of the photographs presented. The aim was to shed light on the role of guided tours in art mediation and their influence on subjective perception and cognitive processing.

The composition of the sample reflects an art-affine, older audience that regularly attends photography exhibitions. The majority of participants were over 60 years old, with younger target groups being scarcely represented. Women were disproportionately represented, and a significant portion of respondents identified as amateur photographers. This specific composition limits the generalizability of the results to the broader population but provides valuable insights for comparable contexts.

The findings show that guided tours can improve memory performance regarding exhibitions. Notably, for Arrangement #27, guided tour participants demonstrated significantly better recall of the exhibition and the photographs presented compared to non-participants. For the other arrangements, the differences were less pronounced, partially due to the small sample size. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that guided tours support the cognitive processing of exhibition elements.

Another result of the study is the limited effect of guided tours on the aesthetic reception of individual photographs. While guided tour participants rated the overall exhibition more favorably and felt better informed in Arrangement #27, no significant differences were observed in the evaluation of individual photographs. This indicates that subjective perception and individual preferences play a stronger role and are only marginally influenced by additional information provided during guided tours.

The study confirms that guided tours are particularly appreciated when they provide contextual information and explanations about the exhibitions. Participants place high value on background information about the artworks, insights into the artists’ personalities, and technical details about photography. However, some participants occasionally criticized an overload of information or the scheduling of the tours.

Another key finding is the strong correlation between various evaluation dimensions—such as enjoyment, emotional resonance, and artistic quality. This suggests that viewers perceive photographs holistically, with these dimensions influencing each other. The results of a previous study are thereby confirmed. Guided tours can support this process by highlighting the connections between artistic, technical, and emotional aspects.

In summary, the study demonstrates that guided tours enrich the exhibition experience, particularly enhancing memory and understanding of the overall concept of an exhibition. However, their impact on the evaluation of individual works remains limited. Future studies with larger and more diverse samples could help validate the findings and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of guided tours on various levels of reception.