This paper presents the results of a study investigating the interactions between public library users, art, and library buildings. Drawing upon the results of an art inventory, user observations, a user survey, and staff interviews, the study addresses the extent of users’ interactions with art in two public libraries, and the possible effects of art on users’ library experiences. The research was driven by the question: Do public libraries in which the art displayed is perceived favorably draw more recreational users than public libraries in which the art displayed is unnoticed or perceived unfavorably? The study finds no relationship between patrons’ activities and their tendency to view art, but finds that patrons are engaged by art, and suggests that users may spend more time in a library in which the art displayed is perceived favorably.

Headings:

Public Libraries

Library Buildings

Art in Libraries

User Behavior
WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: ART AND THE USER IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

by
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A Master’s paper submitted to the faculty of the School of Information and Library Science of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Library Science.

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Approved by

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public libraries have long served as community spaces all over the United States. As publicly funded institutions, they offer citizens of every age and socio-economic class a venue for solitary study or social interaction. As non-commercial public spaces, they also serve the greater good by providing a space for free assembly and by fostering strong community ties. By providing programs and responding to local concerns, public libraries facilitate connections between community members. By providing technology, resources, and information, they cultivate connections to the world beyond the local community.

But while the public library seems to be innately positioned to operate as a community space, in recent years many writers have expressed concern about its continuing ability to fulfill this role. The rise of the big chain book store – a place in which customers are allowed, and indeed encouraged, to spend hours at a time reading and socializing, with seemingly no pressure to buy anything – has presented a challenge to the traditional perception of the library as a center for community discourse and leisure.

Bookstore proprietors have endeavored to promote their establishments as community spaces in their own right, primarily by devoting a great deal of attention (and a great deal of money) to manipulating the in-store environment to maximize customers’ comfort and pleasure. They have benefited from decades of marketing research investigating the physical elements of retail environments and their effects on consumer
behavior. Like all retail domains, bookstores provide evidence for the success of “atmospherics,” the art of manipulating aspects of the physical environment – lighting, smell, color, and interior decoration – in order to achieve desired effects. (Kotler, 1973)

Their strategies have succeeded in affecting customers’ perceptions of both bookstore and library spaces. Studies comparing libraries and bookstores have found that libraries are perceived widely as places to study or conduct research, while bookstores are commonly perceived as places to relax and socialize. Perhaps not surprisingly, these studies have induced many writers to express concern that bookstores are getting better and better at doing what public libraries have always done best. (Cartwright, 2004; OCLC, 2005)

Fortunately, the simple passage of time has stripped much of the immediacy of this debate, as many alarmists have conceded that big chain book stores pose less of a threat than previously thought: Behemoth book stores have existed for decades now, yet, by and large, public libraries continue to thrive. Clearly, there is enough room the world for both types of establishment. Clearly each has found its own niche.

Nevertheless, a side effect of big book stores’ longevity has been their effect on public library patrons’ expectations of building interiors. Library users have grown accustomed to moving in spaces that have been carefully designed to maximize their pleasure. And while a user may come to the public library with different needs than those she takes to the book store, she does not arrive at the library’s door as a clean slate. She holds in her memory, however subconsciously, the feeling of walking into a warmly lit building, guided by impeccably placed signage, stimulated by a carefully selected color palette, and soothed by comfortable furniture.
If the public library is to become an experience, rather than simply a place to use resources, such seemingly minor details of the library’s interior must not be overlooked. While building design has long been an important topic in the library world, a review of library design literature indicates that only relatively recently has the focus been placed squarely on the ways interior library environments can affect the emotions and experiences of patrons. And although the proliferation of articles and books about the designed environment of the library is encouraging, few attempts have been made to isolate individual elements of library interiors in an effort to determine their effects on users. As a result, library directors and planners have little empirical research upon which to draw when making decisions about such details as the arrangement of furniture, the selection of a color scheme, and the display of art.

The display of art, in particular, is one facet of the library atmosphere that deserves more attention than it has traditionally been paid. Art can play an important role in the creation of a welcoming environment in any building. It can cultivate communication by stimulating discussion within the community while linking it to the world outside its borders. And, perhaps more than any other individual element of a building’s interior, the display of art offers an avenue for unique expression, providing a purposeful departure from the excessively branded, vanilla environment of chain retail stores. Unfortunately, while many (if not most) public libraries display art in some quantity, there seems to be no empirical research on the interface between art and public library users.

This paper presents the results of a study investigating the interactions between public library users, art, and library buildings. Drawing upon the results of an art
inventory, user observations, a user survey, and staff interviews, the study addresses the extent of users’ interactions with art in two public libraries, and the possible effects of art on users’ library experiences. The research was driven by the question: Do public libraries in which the art displayed is perceived favorably draw more recreational users than public libraries in which the art displayed is unnoticed or perceived unfavorably?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The basis for this study draws upon three primary areas of scholarship: First, ideas about the necessity for and characteristics of community space, and the potential for public libraries to fulfill this role; second, research on retail interiors as they influence consumers’ emotions and behaviors; and finally, historical and current thought on the intersection between library design and users’ experiences, with particular attention to the role of art in library environments. Therefore, it will be important to examine the literature from all three of these areas.

2.1. Public Libraries as Community Spaces

In Ray Oldenburg’s *The Great Good Place*, he describes the characteristics of what he calls a “third place” – a place, neither home nor work, where people spend a significant amount of time. He lists cafes, coffee shops, bars, and hair salons among typical third places. According to Oldenburg, these spaces are essential elements of any community, providing “the core settings of informal public life.” (Oldenburg, 1989)

Third places offer numerous benefits to their patrons: a break from the home-to-work-to-home routine, opportunities for social interactions, and the chance to gain a broader perspective of the world. Beyond these personal benefits, third places also contribute to the “greater good” by providing countless social benefits: enabling grass-
roots political participation, venues for free assembly, and the collective benefits to society from providing a place for people to “let off steam.” (Oldenburg, 1989)

To these benefits, Kevin Harris adds that community spaces have the potential to “minimize inequalities, to maximize learning opportunities, and to stimulate both diversity and cohesion within local communities.” (Harris, 2003) Citing Oldenburg’s research, he suggests that public libraries are uniquely situated to be third places for many people. Although typically less interactive than the prototypical third places described by Oldenburg, Harris emphasizes the importance of public libraries in providing support and fostering trust in local communities. Mats Lieberg sees a need for different kinds of third places, and distinguishes between “places of retreat” and “places of interaction.” (Lieberg, 1995) Harris suggests the public library can be both of these – a place of retreat and a place of interaction.

Additionally, libraries are optimally situated to contribute to the “greater good” because

they provide the hyperlinks to the wider world, while being there in the local one. Impotent awareness of the global, through broadcast media, can be profoundly disempowering, especially for those whose lives are highly localized. Libraries can counteract this effect by contextualizing the local in the global. (Harris, 2003)

Corneliuson (2005) points out that, unlike most other public spaces in the U.S., public libraries are non-commercial spaces. As such, they connect with people as citizens and members of a community. The result is “integrational”: “People enjoy a feeling of wholeness with the other visitors, even though their purposes are of an individual nature.” Public libraries, then, not only serve communities, but also participate in the creation of communities.
As William David Davies (1974) reminds us, ideas about public libraries as community spaces are hardly new. Davies traces the origins of non-literary uses of public libraries in Britain and the United States, beginning in the late 1800s. He finds evidence that in late 19th-century Britain, “non-book” activities – serving food, offering classes, and staging plays – were used regularly to attract people to libraries. Over time, these kinds of activities came to be viewed as a natural part of the function of libraries, and contributed to the now common conception of libraries as social, cultural, and recreational centers. (Davies, 1974)

Although the notion of libraries as community spaces is an enduring one, in recent years many writers have voiced concern about the present and future state of libraries in this role. A great deal of this concern is aimed at the recent rise of the big chain bookstore, which many have accused of usurping the public library’s role as a “third place.” Indeed, over the past several years, bookstores have gained a reputation in news media as community centers. To cite just one example, a 2000 article in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* claims, “Today the bookstore has become… yet another urban location that social-minded Americans have adopted as a surrogate community center.” (Przybys, 2000)

Helen Cartwright’s 2004 study of bookstore and public library patrons sought to determine whether the rise of the book superstore has affected “use, perceptions, and expectations of public library space in the U.K.” She found that library users perceived bookstores to be “warmer, smarter, more comfortable and more modern than public libraries,” and concludes that “while the library appears to be strongly associated with
focused research, information and education, the bookstore is in contrast associated with browsing, casual use and recreational reading.” (Cartwright, 2004)

While this study was conducted in the U.K., similar studies in the U.S. have supported Cartwright’s results, finding that American library users echo the sentiments of their British counterparts. A 2005 OCLC study asking respondents to compare libraries with bookstores found that most favor libraries for certain things, like free internet access. On the other hand, however, they favor bookstores for “coffee shops, current materials and meeting their friends.” (OCLC, 2005) These results suggest that libraries tend to be used as information centers, while bookstores tend to be used as social and community centers.

The OCLC study suggests that libraries and bookstores serve different needs, which raises the question of the importance of these recreational users to the public library: If the library’s primary function is to provide information, is it necessary for it to also serve as a community space? Jeannette Woodward responds to this question by pointing out that “to be there when needed, the library must become a lifelong habit. Only the customer who checks out travel books or mystery novels month after month will turn naturally to the library for information.” (Woodward, 2005) In other words, in order for the library to be seen as an information center, it must also be seen as a community center.

2.2. Retail Interiors and Consumer Responses

How, then, have bookstores managed to beat the library at its own game? William W. Sannwald (1998) suggests that the increasing use of bookstores as community spaces results from the ways bookstore proprietors manipulate in-store
A vast body of empirical evidence stands behind this formula, suggesting that the elements of a building’s interior play a significant role in consumer attitudes and behaviors. In 1973, Philip Kotler introduced the term “atmospherics” into marketing science, theorizing that retail environments have the power to influence behavior in customers. He defines the term as “the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers. More specifically, atmospherics is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability.” (Kotler, 1973)

R. J. Donovan and J. R. Rossiter (1982) tested Kotler’s theory using an environmental psychology framework, and found that store atmosphere can influence two basic emotional states in consumers – pleasure and arousal. They determined that these two states, in turn, cause consumers to exhibit either approach or avoidance behaviors in response to particular retail environments. (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982) Their study established a valid relationship between in-store environments, consumers’ psychological states, and consumer behavior. Evidence for such a relationship has been further
supported in subsequent studies by numerous researchers, including Grewal and Baker (1994), Babin and Darden (1996), and Babin and Attaway (2000).

Baker, Levy, and Grewal’s 1992 study extended the work of Donovan and Rossiter by proposing that the retail environment is composed of a variety of distinct elements, including design, ambient, and social factors, each of which has an independent effect on consumers’ emotions. (Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992) Their research isolated two ambient factors (music and lighting) and two social factors (number and affability of salespeople), and provided a precedent for subsequent studies examining individual elements of retail environments.

Retail scientist Paco Underhill (1999) has built a lucrative career on such research and their impact on the marketing world. His work highlights the excruciatingly detailed planning that contributes to the creation of an ideal retail environment. Decisions that were once made arbitrarily on a case by case basis (e.g. the placement of an in-store sign), have been studied extensively to determine optimum practices. One of the consequences of these carefully manipulated retail spaces is that most Americans are now accustomed to spending time in buildings that have been meticulously designed to maximize their pleasure and arousal. In short, consumer expectations have evolved with marketing science.

As a result, public libraries neglect their interior spaces at their own peril. While public libraries have an obvious cost advantage over bookstores, free resources alone do not constitute a sufficient draw for today’s heavily catered-to consumers. As Woodward writes, “Free or not, people won’t spend time in a library unless the experience contributes something to their day.” She insightfully points out the origins of libraries as
places of extended study, places from where books didn’t circulate. “People came to the library to read and often stayed for hours… Since ‘a place to be’ is an important function of the library, it should be an inviting, enjoyable place… In short, it should be a place that gives pleasure to the senses.” (Woodward, 2005)

OCLC’s 2005 studies demonstrate that patrons notice when buildings fail to meet their expectations. One study, which measured users’ positive and negative associations with libraries, found that one of the most frequently cited negative associations (at 26%) relates to facilities and the environment. Another study found that “poor signage, inhospitable surroundings, unfriendly staff, lack of parking, dirt, cold, hard-to-use systems and inconvenient hours were mentioned many, many times by respondents.” The study concludes that “the overall message is clear: improve the physical experience of using libraries.” (OCLC, 2005)

2.3. Library Design and the User

Building design has long been a topic of interest in libraries, at least since Library Journal published its first annual building profiles in 1937. Since then, countless books and articles have provided advice and guidelines for library design. Wheeler and Githens’ 1941 text The American Public Library: Its Planning and Design with Special Reference to its Administration and Service reflects a particularly thorough approach to design. The authors make recommendations pertinent to every part of the library, from reading rooms and the placement of the reference desk, to “public toilet rooms” and the boiler room. (Wheeler and Githens, 1941) They note the evolution of public libraries from staid, closed-stacks environments for scholars, to the era of more user-friendly spaces. In their rejection of dreary libraries, Wheeler and Githens urge,
The new generation of librarians and architects must rise up with a mighty resolution to crush this evil tradition in design, this false attempt at a heavy dignity and copying of outworn patterns, and produce new libraries which will be the liveliest and most inviting buildings in their communities, full of color, action, and interest, where all will delight to come.

However, while this passage acknowledges the importance of creating pleasing libraries, the text largely steers clear of advising designers on precisely how to create such lively and inviting interiors. Apart from a few brief mentions of maximizing natural light, the authors’ emphasis rests firmly upon more practical, structural guidelines. (Wheeler & Githens, 1941)

Rolf Myller’s 1966 *The Design of the Small Public Library* approaches library design in a similar fashion. Myller describes the entire process of planning a new library building, beginning with surveying the site. His attention to the combined effect of a building’s ceiling, windows, and floors recognizes the importance of creating an interior aesthetic. (Myller, 1966) However, like Wheeler and Githens, Myller’s focus is chiefly functional and structural. Neither devotes attention to the experiences of potential library users.

A survey of *Library Journal*’s annual design issue as it has changed through the years illustrates how thinking about library design has evolved over time. The first annual issue to feature library buildings appeared in 1937, and included four building profiles. Each article primarily focuses on the physical layout of the building it describes, including its dimensions, storage capacity, security features, and component materials. (Le Fevre, 1937; Gooding & Noyes, 1937; Craigie, 1937; Douglass, 1937.)

The authors note the type of wood used in the reading rooms and the color of the walls, but their attention is undeniably focused on the attributes that make the library
work, rather than what the library looks like. And certainly no consideration is made for how patrons are expected to respond to the library environment. In fact, Douglass’ profile of the University of Oregon Library emphasizes the planners’ explicit concern for function over aesthetics: “After analyzing the library needs of the University of Oregon, and studying over a term of years practices and trends in library buildings, the library staff and the faculty library committee arrived at several conclusions and convictions.” Among these are “that the library building, although attractive, should be planned as a place essentially for service rather than display.” (Douglass, 1937)

Published ten years later, *Library Journal*’s 1947 design issue shows a greatly expanded effort to document library design, including over 20 pages of new library buildings and expansions. (Ellsworth, 1947) Still, however, the emphasis is on numerical data and building functionality. The 1957 design issue includes 69 pages of building profiles, and its writers reveal an increasing concern for aesthetically pleasing buildings. Words such as “atmosphere” and “attractiveness” appear in the articles. (Foote, 1957; Robinson, 1957) Although the inclusion of aesthetical descriptions marks a move away from earlier, purely functional concerns, the writers do not extend their consideration to the impact of an attractive building on those who enter it.

The building profiles in the 1967 *Library Journal* design issue reveal progress in this direction, with articles that make reference to the way a building can make its occupants feel. Writers mention buildings that evoke “a sense of rational discipline” or “a sense of quiet energy.” (Orne, 1967; “St. Mary’s Dominican” 1967) This association of feelings with buildings reflects a move away from the purely functional, and toward a more holistic, user-centered approach to library design.
By 1987, the conversation surrounding library buildings had clearly moved beyond the cut-and-dried structural approach to thinking about design. The introduction to the 1987 *Library Journal* design issue, while still prioritizing functionality, explicitly links the attractiveness of library buildings to the experience of the people who use them:

An emphasis on energy-efficient design, the norm recently, is now coupled with the desire to create beautiful, functional buildings that enhance and harmonize with the natural environment of the area. Use of natural products and materials… allows the libraries to segue into their surroundings, offering visual consistency and intellectual resonance for the patrons. (Fox, 1987)

In recent years, design has emerged even more as a hot topic, and libraries that break new ground aesthetically draw a great deal of attention in professional publications as well as in the mainstream press. More attention has been paid to the notion that library buildings can affect their users, and many recent articles describing new and redesigned libraries focus on the feelings the buildings invoke in patrons. In 1998, a *Bottom Line* article described a new branch of the St. Louis Public Library in emphatic terms, noting that the renovation had transformed an ugly building into one that “delighted” users, an improvement that translated into heavy use patterns. The article calls for a proliferation of such “libraries that delight,” with “classy, distinctive, retail interiors.” (Holt, 1998)

The opening of the Seattle Public Library in May 2004 marked a watershed moment in library design, and has been featured in numerous articles in American and European publications – again with a focus on how the building makes people feel. Brian Kenney (2005) writes, “Seattle’s Living Room is entirely different. It’s not about research… It’s about pleasure.” Deyan Sudjic (2004) characterizes the library’s reading rooms as “exhilarating,” a word that describes not the building itself, but the feeling it may evoke.
Shortly thereafter, Philippa Harper (2006) declared that the field was witnessing “a sea change in the nature of top library design.” Harper’s article outlines current library design trends in the U.K., noting a turn toward “high design values” and “artistry in design.” Indeed, photographs in *Library Journal*’s 2006 design issue reveal libraries that have kept abreast with design trends, featuring high ceilings, expansive entryways, clean lines, natural light, and warm colors. (Fox, 2006) According to Harper, this reflects a growing recognition among librarians that “good design is not a costly luxury… [It] delivers better value for money.” (Harper, 2006)

**2.4. Libraries and Atmospherics**

Although the concept of “atmospherics” in marketing was developed in 1979, it was not until many years later that the concept was invoked in conjunction with library design. Sannwald (1998) drew upon this body of marketing research when he wrote,

> In order for libraries to achieve the optimal atmospheres – that is, those atmospheres that are conducive to library user satisfaction as well as stimulating use of the library – librarians must first identify the determinants of atmosphere, with related feelings on library image, and then incorporate such knowledge into their strategy and planning.

Sannwald recognizes that atmospheric variables can be modified to influence library users’ behavior. But notwithstanding this acknowledgment of the importance of atmospherics, and despite the field’s longstanding interest in buildings and design, very little empirical research has been done to attempt to establish a relationship between library interiors and users’ experiences, and such research as exists has been concentrated in academic libraries.

In 1979, Campbell and Shlechter examined the influence of a university library building on student behavior and satisfaction with the library. Their in-depth research
used three different methods to measure this relationship. The study concluded that only tentative inferences could be drawn, because the library was studied in isolation, and no comparison data from other buildings was gathered. Despite this caveat, however, Campbell and Shlechter concluded that the library’s physical environment did, in fact, have a significant impact on student behavior and satisfaction. (Campbell & Shlechter, 1979).

Drawing on Campbell and Shlechter’s research, Clee and Maguire (1993) conducted a study in another university library in an attempt to establish the influence of the library environment on its patrons. Their research addressed the question: “Do students regard the library… as a place in which to spend constructive time, or as a place to visit when necessity dictates?” Like Campbell and Shlechter, the researchers used three different measurements to conduct their inquiry, but unlike Campbell and Schlechter, Clee and Maguire attempted to isolate various elements of the library environment, such as lighting, noise, color scheme, and ornamentation. The study concluded that, “although individual factors in the library do affect a user’s perception, it is the total environment that has the greatest effect.” (Clee & Maguire, 1993)

2.5. Art in Public Libraries

While a great deal has been written on art libraries in academic institutions, scant literature discusses the role and presence of art in the context of public libraries, particularly as it relates to user experiences. Robert McClarren’s 1967 survey of “integrated art” – art planned as part of a building’s design and incorporated into its architecture – lists public and academic libraries that include integrated art, and provides advice for library planners who wish to build art into their designs. McClarren
enumerates ten reasons for incorporating integrated art into a building, and although “enhanc[ing] the beauty of the building’s design” appears on this list, he makes no direct mention of the effect integrated art might have on a library’s users. (McClarren, 1967)

Davies (1974) describes a continuous history of art exhibits in public libraries throughout the 20th century, but he, too, does not address users’ responses to the art displayed. David Liddle (1988) advocates for public libraries to serve as places where the public can encounter art in a non-threatening context. His emphasis, however, is not on art as a way to enhance the library environment for users, but rather as a way to increase the visibility of art for its own sake. Karhunen (1996) notes that works of art play an integral role in most Finnish library buildings, but again, no mention is made of any interaction between the art and the library’s users.

The lack of literature linking art in libraries to library patrons offers a challenge, but also provides an opportunity. The display of art is one area in which public libraries may have an advantage over the carefully constructed environment of the big bookstore. Large bookstore chain designs, like those of any major retail chain, are predicated on the notion of consistency and similarity. A Borders bookstore in Colorado looks, feels, and smells almost exactly like a Borders bookstore in Florida. This inter-store consistency is just as intentional as any other aspect of retail store interiors.

According to an article in Chain Store Age, retail chains benefit from creating a “prototype” store design: it allows them to create a recognizable brand, and “decreases the costs of architectural and engineering plans.” (“Perfecting the Prototype,” 1997) The reach of the chain store prototype extends all the way to the art on the walls. In an article describing Borders bookstores’ 2004 prototype, for example, Rachel Carlton notes one
area of the model store with “a boutique feel with sisal-like carpeting and decorative and
elegant ceiling hangings.” (Carlton, 2004)

A public library, by contrast, is unique: Decisions made about interiors come from within the library, or from the regional system to which it belongs – not from a corporate headquarters in another state. (Barton & Jones, 1997). When it comes to selecting art, chain bookstores are constrained by the dictations of corporate policy regarding the store prototype. Public libraries, on the other hand, are constrained only by the imaginations of their leadership and staff (and, to some extent, by the approval of the community.) The world of art, of course, lends itself more to the ground-up approach than to the top-down approach. Therefore, the selection of art is one area in which public libraries can and should maximize their freedom of choice.

2.6. Conclusion

As bookstores and other retail stores have made great strides in providing attractive in-store environments, public library interiors have noticeably lagged behind. Public expectations of buildings have changed with the times, and the research reviewed has shown that libraries have suffered an image problem as a result. The literature of atmospherics clearly establishes the demonstrable effects of building interiors on consumers. However, despite the validity of atmospherics research in retail environments, it has yet to be adequately applied to public library buildings.

Research that has sought a link between library interiors and user experiences has suggested that such a link exists, but the studies have been partly inconclusive because they did not employ comparative methodologies. Furthermore, as these studies have focused on academic library buildings, a clear need exists for research conducted in
public libraries. Finally, the glaring absence of literature about the effects of art in public libraries points to a necessity for research in this area. Many (if not most) public libraries display art in some quantity, but there seems to be no empirical research on the interface between art and library users.

This study draws upon atmospherics research and applies it to public libraries, isolating the element of art. The research challenges Clee & Maguire’s conclusion that the “individual factors” of a library’s environment are not as important as the library’s “total environment.” From a designer’s standpoint, this conclusion is not very useful. The “total environment” is, in fact, made up of such individual factors, each of which must be addressed as discrete choices when planning a library building. This study investigates whether the presence of art in public libraries influences users’ experiences, and whether it might contribute to community members’ use of the library as a “third place.” By examining the interface between art and public library patrons, it also seeks to provide the basis for further research upon which library designers might draw when making decisions about art.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted to examine the interactions between public library users and the art displayed in library buildings. It was expected that:

- users would report more favorable opinions of art in a public library where art is an explicit focal point than in a library where it is not;
- when presented with a choice between using a library with more favorably perceived art and one with less favorably perceived art, recreational library users would elect to use the former;
- users would tend to view art more frequently and for longer periods of time in a library where the art displayed is perceived more favorably than in a library where the art is perceived less favorably; and
- recreational library users would elect to spend time in library areas where art is visible.
A combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was employed to test these expectations. The study was conducted in the winter of 2007, using a purposive sample that included two public libraries: the Greendale Branch Library and the Hartwood Branch Library, which are part of the same public library system in a mid-sized city in North Carolina. [Note: To protect the anonymity of the libraries and library staff, both library names and all staff member names are aliases created by the author.]

At Hartwood, art is the library’s focal point and, as such, is very visible. The library’s resources and programs support and emphasize the display and creation of art. At Greendale, the art displayed is somewhat less visible and primarily supports the library’s mission of serving the neighborhood’s multicultural community.

These libraries were selected for several reasons. Because both are neighborhood branches operating under the same system, they can be assumed to be comparable in several aspects, including administration, funding, and approaches to collections and public service. Furthermore, because the libraries are geographically close to one another (within five miles of each other), it can be assumed that the populations they serve share at least some similar characteristics.

While these similarities facilitate comparisons, the libraries’ different approaches to displaying art provide an opportunity to study the effects of these distinct approaches. The proximity of the branches also allows the study to address the question: Do some patrons have a choice between using one library as opposed to the other, and, if so, does the display of art in either library affect that decision?

Before data collection began, an inventory of art displayed at each library was conducted. The intention of the inventory was to become familiar with the interiors of
the libraries being studied, with particular attention to the art displayed therein. Each library’s art was documented in writing and in photographs. Because aesthetic quality is an entirely subjective judgment, no attempt was made during the inventory to categorize any of the art displayed as “good” or “bad.” The inventory did, however, enable a discussion of factors affecting the visibility of the art in each library, in terms of placement, contrast, and dimensions.

Following the inventory, data was gathered in both libraries. Using the methodologies of both Campbell & Schlecter (1979) and Clee & Maguire (1993) as a model, this study employed three different data-collecting methods in an effort to form a comprehensive picture of user behavior as it overlaps with library buildings. Like Campbell & Schlecter, this study combined solicitation of feedback from users with observation of users’ interactions with library interiors.

The methods employed were observations of public library patrons, patron surveys, and interviews with library staff. The population being studied consisted of the adult patrons of the Greendale and the Hartwood libraries, and for each data collection method, a different sampling technique was used.

Patron observations were undertaken to determine the extent to which users in each library interact with the art displayed, and to ascertain whether the majority of patrons tend to use the library for recreational purposes or as a place to complete tasks. The observations made use of a systematic sampling method, whereby the first five adults to enter the library each hour were observed, with a sample size of 30 patrons at each library. The systematic sample was used in an attempt to minimize selection bias.

The observation data was an essential component of the study because, as
Greenland and McGoldrick noted in their research, consumers are frequently unaware of their emotional responses to atmospheric elements on a conscious level, even while these elements may significantly influence their behavior. (Greenland & McGoldrick, 1994). Because patrons were observed engaging in their natural library activities, the observations enabled the unfettered study of users’ behaviors.

A survey of patrons at each library was then conducted, with a sample size of 25 patrons at each library. Because the majority of the questionnaires were picked up by patrons at the libraries’ circulation desks, the survey made use of a self-selected sample. Additional questionnaires were collected by requesting patron participation. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information regarding opinions about art in the library, the length of travel time it took for users to reach the library, the amount of time spent in the library, areas of the library used, and activities in which patrons engaged. While the observations provided an objective measure of patrons’ behaviors, the survey allowed for the direct study of users’ opinions and self-reported behaviors.

Interviews with library staff were also conducted, using a purposive sample of two staff members at each library. Because the interview questions were designed to elicit staff insights on patrons’ opinions and behaviors, interview participants were selected on the basis of the amount of time spent working in public areas of the library. Each staff member was asked the same series of questions.

The interview data was crucial for several reasons. Because staff members observe and communicate with patrons every day, interview participants provided a valuable perspective on the interactions between users and art in each library, and on the behavior of library users. Additionally, the subjective nature of the research demanded
the use of some qualitative measurement: A user’s question or comment to a staff member about a specific piece of art is capable of communicating aesthetic opinion in a way that cannot be coded by a multiple-choice questionnaire. The interviews also offered the potential of validating the data gathered by other means. Staff members are well-positioned to understand the daily patterns of library use, removed from any idiosyncrasies of methodology or timing that may have affected the other means of data collection. Finally, staff members hear from users who make comments or pose questions about art without being prompted by a survey. Because such remarks by patrons are unsolicited, they may therefore be construed as less biased and perhaps more reliable than survey responses.

4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this study, the term “public libraries” includes the two public library branches in which the research was conducted. The word “art” is used to denote the paintings, mobiles, photographs, decorative posters, ceramics, dioramas, murals, sculptures, decorative woven items, and quilts that were displayed in the libraries observed during the time of the study. Due to time constraints, the study’s scope excluded the art displayed in children’s reading rooms. It should be noted, however, that some interview participants discussed art in the children’s sections during their interviews.

Patrons’ opinions of a library’s art were considered to be “favorable” if their response to a survey question rated that library’s art as “excellent” or “satisfactory.” (Other possible responses were “No opinion/Not applicable,” “Unsatisfactory,” and
“Extremely unsatisfactory.”) Patrons were also considered to hold “favorable” opinions of art if they provided positive feedback about the art to library staff.

Patrons were classified as “recreational library users” if their use of the library extended beyond deliberate information searching, or if they used the library as a venue for engaging in social and/or leisure activities. Patrons were classified as “task-oriented” if they used the library for deliberate information searching (or if they were obviously completing tasks that may have been unrelated to the library’s resources, such as stopping in to pick up children.)

While determinations of which activities belonged in the “recreational” and “task-oriented” categories were somewhat subjective, the researcher’s categorizations were independently corroborated by two unbiased coders. Furthermore, patrons’ self-reported classifications of their own activities into these categories on survey questionnaires generally correlated with the researcher’s.

For purposes of analyzing observation data, task-oriented activities included studying in a quiet study room, consulting with a librarian at the reference/circulation desk, returning books, picking up information (e.g. tax forms), picking up other people (e.g. children), using the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC), and stopping in solely to use the rest room. Recreational activities included browsing the book shelves or video collection without first consulting the OPAC or a librarian, reading magazines, and reading newspapers. During observations, a few patrons were observed engaging in activities that did not seem to fit clearly in either category; these were categorized as “undetermined.”
Because it was impossible to determine whether patrons using the library’s computers were using them for recreational or task-based purposes, computer users were grouped in a category of their own ("computer users.") While this appeared at first to be a limitation of the methodology, it ultimately facilitated a more nuanced analysis of the data collected.

5. BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS and ART INVENTORY

Due to time constraints, the scope of the study excluded the art displayed in the children’s reading rooms in either branch. For the sake of providing a more thorough impression of each library’s atmosphere, a brief overview of the art displayed in the children’s sections of both branches is included. However, a detailed description of art displayed in the children’s reading rooms is not provided. The inventory is also limited to art displayed inside the libraries, and excludes any art displayed outside the buildings on the library grounds.

**Greendale Library**

The Greendale branch is in a 9,600 square foot building built in 1995. An essential element of the branch’s mission is to serve the city’s increasingly multicultural population, and the library’s facilities, resources, and collections support this mission. Greendale is home to a Multicultural Resource Center, which includes a foreign language learning collection and materials in several different languages; a computer lab dedicated to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) education; and a small meeting room which holds ESOL classes. Greendale also houses a Non-profit Resource Center, which supports non-profit organizations from the city and the state, and a large meeting room where programs and meetings take place.
Much of the art displayed in the building, too, presents an image of a library focused on cultural diversity and support for the community. The branch’s art consists of:

- A series of eight tall, colorful paintings made by a library patron. Seven hang on the walls of the large meeting room; one hangs in the vestibule between two sets of doors. Each painting portrays a specific culture or region of the world through an assemblage of symbols, most of which are plants and animals representative of the culture or region. Regions and cultures represented are the U.S., the Middle East, the South Pacific/Oceania, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Native American cultures. The paintings measure approximately 4 x 9 feet, and occupy nearly the entire height of the walls on which they hang.

- A series of four framed posters hanging above a computer bank near the front entrance, entitled “Everybody’s Ethnic: A Multi-cultural Alphabet.” Each letter of the English alphabet is represented by a photograph of a cultural tradition or piece of art that begins with that letter. (e.g. “E” is “Easter Egg,” “P” is “Piñata.”) A caption below each photograph explains the cultural tradition. Each poster is approximately 2 x 2½ feet.

- A wire and enamel mobile hanging above the center of the main area of the library.

- A framed color drawing of the mobile, which sits on a windowsill behind the circulation/reference desk. The drawing gives the title of the mobile (Soaring) and the artist’s name. It is approximately 22 x 8½ inches, and sits about four feet above the floor.

- A gold paper fan on which is painted a scene of two Asian women and a pagoda, with flowers and leaves in the background. The fan is about 2 x 1½ feet, and sits on the windowsill behind the circulation/reference desk next to the sketch of the mobile.
- A framed poster hanging on a brick pillar in the main area of the library. The poster says “I Love My Library” in English and about 20 other languages, against a backdrop of a sepia photograph of books on a shelf. The poster is approximately 11 x 17 inches, and hangs at eye level.

- A diorama on the windowsill in the Multicultural Resource Center, portraying an East Asian landscape scene with trees and pagodas. It is approximately 2 x 1 feet, and sits just below eye level.

- A colorful woven bag hanging on the wall between the windows in the Multicultural Resource Center; it appears to be Central or South American. It is approximately 2½ feet x 10 inches, and hangs slightly above eye level.

- A framed poster of cartoon watercolor cows flying, with the Spanish phrase “A la Orilla del Viento,” (“To the Edge of the Wind” in English) hanging on a wall in the Multicultural Resource Center.

- Two posters hanging on the opposite wall in the Multicultural Resource Center:
  - One is published by Immigration and Refugee Services of America, and is entitled “Coming to America as a Refugee.” It describes aspects of refugees’ experiences in text and images. The poster is approximately 36 x 11 inches, and hangs at eye level.
  - The other is part of a series entitled “Women of Hope: African Americans Who Made a Difference,” and depicts a black astronaut and physician. It is approximately 16 x 22 inches, and hangs directly below the “Refugee” poster.

- A series of three posters standing in the windows in the Multicultural Resource Center. Two have phrases in both English and Spanish. Each is approximately 11 x 17 inches, and sits on the windowsill, about at eye level.
Art displayed in the children’s reading room consists of a number of pieces made by children and mounted on construction paper, hanging on most of the walls in the room.

**Hartwood Library**

The Hartwood Branch is an art-themed library located in a 15,000 square foot building less than five miles away from the Greendale Branch. The building is somewhat newer than Greendale, having been completed in 2004. According to the library’s self-description, it “strives to nurture reading, inspire creative expression and foster lifelong learning through the experience of art.” As a result of its partnership with a local non-profit art gallery and art center, Hartwood is home to an art studio for children and rotating art exhibits in the library’s gallery and main reading areas. The building is also home to several permanent pieces of art.

At the time of this inventory, the art in the library consisted of:

- A series of five black and white photographs of scenes from Mexico by North Carolina photographer David Spear. They are exhibited in the gallery, a hallway which connects the adult reading room to a meeting room, and span the length of an approximately 14 foot wall. [Note: during the course of the study, the photographs were removed and replaced by an exhibit of art by local students.]

- Dolls and woven bags from Colombia displayed in three glass cubes standing on wooden bases just inside the library’s front entrance. The cubes are approximately 2½ x 2½ feet, and the bases on which they stand are about 2½ feet tall. [Note: during the course of the study, the art in these cases was removed and replaced by an exhibit of art by local students.]

- Ceramic and fiber arts from Colombia, displayed in two glass cubes standing on wooden bases in the rear of the library. The cubes are
approximately 2½ x 2½ feet, and the bases on which they stand are about 2½ feet tall. [Note: during the course of the study, the art in these cases was removed and replaced by an exhibit of art by local students.]

- An oil painting, entitled *Saturday Morning – Piazza Della Republica – Cortona*, by children’s book illustrator Virginia Wright-Frierson, depicting a bustling Italian piazza. The painting is approximately 12 x 4 feet, and hangs about 6 feet high on the wall above the video shelves near the library’s front entrance.

- A mobile entitled *Garden for the Floating Life*, consisting of nine blue boats and one building painted with golden letters. The mobile hangs from the high ceiling over the adult reading room. While most of the boats hang close to the front of the building, one stray boat is suspended in the rear of the reading room, resulting in the mobile occupying a great deal of the overhead space in the room.

- A series of four paintings entitled *Four Seasons*, representing a landscape from each season in North Carolina. Each painting is approximately 4 x 6 feet. The series hangs high on the wall in the adult reading room – perhaps nine or ten feet, and spans two-thirds of one wall.

- Two colorful quilts illustrating the story of a boy who is afraid to read out loud in class. The quilts are approximately 6 x 4 feet. They hang above the periodicals shelves along the wall toward the rear of the adult collections area, about 6 feet off the floor.

- An arrangement of colorful painted tiles hung in geometrical patterns above the water fountains, between the men’s and women’s restrooms in the front of the adult collections area. The piece is about 5 x 3 feet, and hangs at eye level.

- Art displayed in the children’s reading room includes two large quilts made by children in collaboration with a local artist, a mural spanning the back wall depicting five people standing in a field surrounded by butterflies, a framed series of preliminary sketches for the mural, a
paper mâché dragon sitting on top of a bookshelf, and a life-sized sculpture of a hollow tree in which children can sit and read.

Although Greendale displays a greater number of individual pieces overall, the art displayed in the Hartwood Branch appears to be more visible for several reasons. First, the pieces in Hartwood tend to be larger and occupy more space than the pieces in Greendale. In addition, many of Hartwood’s pieces hang higher on the wall than Greendale’s, and therefore can be seen from further away.

The physical layout of the libraries also affects the visibility of the art in both branches. Greendale’s main public area comprises the central reference area, the children’s section, the Multicultural Resource Center, the Non-profit Resource Center, and a room containing the fiction and non-fiction stacks. The central reference area extends from the entrance to the back wall, and includes the circulation/reference desk, a small computer bank, and several reading tables. Each of the other rooms is accessible from the central reference area, which sits under a higher ceiling than the other areas. The boundaries separating the areas from each other are demarcated by brick pillars. In contrast, the adult reading room in Hartwood consists of one large room, all under one high ceiling. [Floor plans of both libraries appear in Appendix A.]

These differences in the branches’ physical attributes contribute to differences in the natural lines of sight in each: While the separations between the rooms and the different ceiling heights in Greendale constrain a viewer’s ability to see art from certain perspectives, the open floor plan and high ceiling in Hartwood renders most of the art visible from various vantage points.

In addition, the interior walls in the Hartwood Branch are painted a very light beige color, while Greendale’s interior walls are dark red brick. The lighter walls present
more of a contrast with the art than do the dark brick walls. As a result, art hanging on Hartwood’s walls tends to stand out more than art hanging on Greendale’s. Furthermore, the darker walls of Greendale tend to absorb more light than the lighter walls of Hartwood. Although both libraries contain many windows which infuse the buildings with natural light, the color of the walls causes Hartwood’s interior to appear brighter than Greendale’s. Consequently, the art in Hartwood is simply easier to see than the art in Greendale.

The characteristics of the windows, too, contribute to differences in the visibility of art. Hartwood has high frosted windows spanning the walls along the ceiling, which let in natural light but obscure the view of the outside. Six tall windows line the back wall, but the presence of blinds also serves to partially hide the outdoors. In Greendale, on the other hand, the back wall facing the entrance is almost entirely composed of a large window, through which the trees outside the building can be seen. The windows along the other walls are also large, and unobstructed by window treatments. The overall effect is that the view of the outdoors is much more apparent at Greendale, while the windows at Hartwood serve to let in light but emphasize the building’s interior. As a result, the art in Hartwood seems more immediately eye-catching than Greendale’s.

Finally, in keeping with its mission to promote the experience of art, the Hartwood Branch actively works to draw patrons’ attention to the art displayed. Just inside the front entrance at Hartwood, a table holds informational fliers describing and explaining the pieces of art displayed in the building. Calendars announce upcoming programs, many of which have an art focus. Signs on the walls identify the works and their creators, some with photographs of the artists.
In contrast, because of the distinct mission of the Greendale Branch, its literature and signage draw patrons’ attention to the specific resources and programs available to non-profit organizations and members of the neighborhood’s multicultural community. While Greendale does display art, the pieces seem to merge with the overall atmosphere of the building, supporting the library’s multicultural theme.

6. OBSERVATIONS

6.1. Method

The study began with a series of user observations conducted at each library. The purpose of the observations was to gain insight into whether library patrons noticeably viewed or interacted with the art, and whether patrons tended to use the library for recreation or to complete tasks. While the research as a whole attempted to gauge patrons’ opinions of the art and use of the library, the observation process was specifically designed to provide an unfettered snapshot of patrons’ day-to-day interactions with the library space, eliminating the testing bias inherent in directly asking users’ opinions.

The unit of analysis for the observations was the individual library patron, with a sample size of 30 patrons at each library. The use of a data collection form facilitated the standardization of data for each user, and enabled the comparison of the aggregated data from the two branches. [The data collection form appears in Appendix B.] Each patron’s gender and apparent age were recorded, as were answers to the following questions:

- Does the patron look at the art displayed in the library?
  - If yes:
o For how much time?

o Does the user react visibly?

  ▪ If yes: What is the patron’s apparent reaction?

- Where does the patron choose to sit/stand/put personal belongings?

- What activities does the patron engage in?

- Do the patron’s activities appear to be task-oriented or recreational?

Observations of Greendale were conducted from the rear of the building, facing the entrance. Observations of Hartwood were conducted from various positions facing the library entrance. The difference in approach in Hartwood was due to the presence of columns in the center of the reading room which obstructed the line of sight from the rear of the library to the entrance. As a result, time spent observing was divided between the three most effective vantage points within the library.

Observations were conducted on the same days of the week (a Saturday and a Tuesday) and at the same times of day at each library, in an effort to minimize selection bias. The observations took place in the main adult reading room at each library. For each observation session, a systematic sample was used, whereby the first five adults to enter the library each hour were observed.

6.2. Limitations of Observation Methodology

The methods employed during the observations presented a few obvious limitations. First, the obstructed line of sight at Hartwood resulted in the entrance being observed from a few different vantage points, whereas the structure of Greendale’s reading room allowed for observations to be conducted from one position. As a result, Hartwood patrons were not always viewed from the same angle, which may have affected
results. The columns in the reading room also caused some viewers to temporarily move from sight, which caused temporal gaps in some observations. Furthermore, from any given vantage point, one or two pieces of art were inevitably difficult to see.

A further limitation was the ability to only observe patrons’ initial activities in the library. Because patrons were observed during their first moments in the building, the possibility exists that the researcher may have missed a later encounter between the patron and a piece of art. Finally, the subjective nature of the categorization of patron activities placed a constraint on data analysis, which was addressed by the previously mentioned use of two independent coders.

### 6.3. Observation Results

In each library, 30 patrons were observed. The number of males and females observed were roughly even at each library, and patrons’ ages were fairly evenly distributed. Tables 1 and 2 show gender and age data for each library. There was only a slight difference between the numbers of people viewing art at the two branches: At Greendale, six people were observed looking at art; and eight were observed viewing art at Hartwood. In both branches, the number of art-viewing patrons was evenly divided between men and women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Observation subjects by gender
Table 2: Observation subjects by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-29 years old</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years old</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years old</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69 years old</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 years old +</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No noticeable difference was recorded in the length of time users spent viewing art. [See table 3.] At Greendale, art-viewing patrons looked at art for an average of 5.67 seconds; the longest time spent viewing art was 15 seconds. At Hartwood, average art-viewing time was 5.87 seconds; the longest time was 20 seconds. No patron reacted visibly when viewing art.

Table 3: Time spent viewing art (in seconds)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>5.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Longest</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Greendale, only one piece of art was viewed; at Hartwood three different pieces were viewed. Of the Greendale users who were observed viewing art, all six looked at the multicultural alphabet posters above the computer bank at the front of the library. Of the eight art viewing patrons at Hartwood, three looked at the mobile that hangs from the ceiling in the front of the adult reading room, three looked at the Columbian crafts displayed in the display cubes in the front of the library, and two looked
at the *Four Seasons* paintings that hang on the wall above the reference/circulation desk.

In each library, every piece viewed hangs in the front of the adult reading room.

The activities of users who viewed art varied greatly by library branch. [See table 4.] At Greendale, nearly all the art-viewing patrons (five out of six) were computer users. They looked at the multicultural alphabet posters above the computer bank while approaching the computers, or while waiting to use the computers. By contrast, most art-viewing patrons at Hartwood (five out of eight) used the library to complete a task – usually consulting with a librarian at the reference/circulation desk. These patrons looked at one of three art pieces while physically moving through the library, or while waiting to complete their task.

**Table 4: Activities of art-viewing observation subjects: Greendale vs. Hartwood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational &amp; Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Library users’ activities at both branches were fairly evenly divided between recreational activities, task-oriented activities, and computer use. [See tables 5 and 6.] At Greendale, 12 patrons completed tasks, 11 engaged in recreational activities, and 10 used computers. One user engaged in both recreational and task-oriented activities, and one patron’s activities were undetermined. Patrons who viewed art were almost entirely
computer users: five of the six used computers, and the remaining one engaged in both recreational and task-oriented activities.

Table 5: Observation subjects’ activities and art-viewing behavior, Greendale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewed Art</th>
<th>Didn’t View Art</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational &amp; Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Observation subjects’ activities and art-viewing behavior, Hartwood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Viewed Art</th>
<th>Didn’t View Art</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational &amp; Task-Oriented Activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undetermined</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At Hartwood, 12 users completed tasks, 10 used computers, and 6 engaged in recreational activities. One engaged in both recreational and task-oriented activities, and the researcher was unable to classify the activities of one patron. Art-viewing patrons were mostly task-oriented: five of eight used the library to complete tasks, two engaged in recreational activities, and the researcher was unable to determine the nature of the remaining one.
In both libraries, the area within the building where users spent time depended primarily on the activities in which they were engaged, and seemed to be independent of the presence of art. At Greendale, patrons were observed in twelve distinct locations. Users involved in completing tasks generally spent time at the reference/circulation desk, or at a shelf that held income tax forms. Patrons engaged in recreational activities tended to spend time at the tables in the middle of the adult reading room, or sitting in the chairs in the back of the room near the magazine racks. Computer users spent time at the computer bank at the front of the library or in the ESOL computer lab. Most art-viewing patrons (four out of six) sat at the computer bank at the front of the library.

At Hartwood, patrons were observed at eleven distinct locations. Task-oriented users generally spent time at the circulation/reference desk. Patrons engaged in recreational activities were more widely distributed than at Greendale, but mostly browsed at the new book shelves, fiction shelves, or video section; or read in the chairs along the back wall of the adult reading room. Computer users sat at the computer bank at the front of the library. The distribution of art-viewing patrons at Hartwood also varied more than at Greendale. Four of the eight spent time at the circulation/reference desk, and one each spent time at the new books shelves at the front of the library, at the fiction shelves in the middle of the adult reading room, at the video section at the front of the reading room, and in the middle of the floor near the front entrance.

6.4. Analysis of Observation Results

Patron behavior

It was expected that more users would view and react to art, and for longer periods of time, at Hartwood, where art is the library’s stated focal point, than at
Greendale. Instead, the observations revealed only a slight difference in the numbers of art viewers. Six out of 30 patrons at Greendale (20% of the patrons observed) looked at art; while eight of 30 at Hartwood (26.7% of patrons observed) viewed art. In neither library were visible reactions to art observed.

Similarly, the data revealed no noticeable difference in the time spent viewing art in the two branches. No patron at either library was observed looking at art for longer than 20 seconds. In fact, 20 seconds was a relatively long time, compared to the median times of 3.5 seconds at Greendale and 4.5 seconds at Hartwood. Also, contrary to expectations, no patron purposefully approached a piece of art in order to gain a better vantage point, and no patron reacted noticeably to a piece of art.

It is notable that, upon entering the library, the vast majority of the patrons observed walked directly to the area of library they used first. This suggests these patrons had used the library before. Therefore, if these patrons held an interest in the library’s art, it is likely that they had already viewed it on a previous visit. For repeat users, the art in the library may have become a part of the familiar background.

**Characteristics of art viewed**

The study was undertaken with the expectation that a wider variety of pieces would be viewed at Hartwood than at Greendale, due to the wider variety of art displayed. The data supported this expectation, but the difference was not very dramatic. During the observations, only one piece was viewed at Greendale, while three were viewed at Hartwood. This unexpected finding could be a result of the area observed; a wide variety of Hartwood’s art is displayed in the children’s section, but observations only occurred in the adult reading room. It could also be attributed to another inherent
bias built into the methodology: Only the first few moments of library use were observed, so it is possible that patrons could have viewed other pieces later, as their activities brought them into different areas of the building.

A consideration of the pieces of art that drew the most attention reveals some interesting results. At Greendale, the series of multicultural alphabet posters hung above the computer bank was the only piece viewed. At Hartwood, users viewed the *Four Seasons* paintings hung above the circulation/reference desk, the *Garden for the Floating Life* mobile hung above the front of the adult reading room, and the Colombian crafts displayed in the cubical display cases.

Notably, all of these pieces are displayed in the front of the buildings. Again, this may be a function of the observer’s vantage point, and the fact that only users’ first movements in the library were observed. However, it is likely due to fact that the front of the building was the most heavily trafficked areas in both libraries. The resources used by 83% of all users – including computer banks, the circulation/reference desks, and the “new books” shelves – occupy space in the front of the libraries.

The vast majority of art-viewing patrons in both libraries tended to view art when it was in their line of sight as they walked through the building, or when they stood and waited to use a resource. Users who were not moving through the building and were not waiting for a resource were engaged in activities. No patron who was seated and engaged in activities was observed viewing art.

**Areas of library used**

The study was designed with the expectation that recreational users would elect to spend time in library areas where art was visible. Instead, the data indicate that the area
in which users chose to spend time corresponded entirely to the task in which users engaged – and, consequently, to the resources available nearby. Of the recreational users, many stood at the new books shelves and browsed. Most others sat and read; these patrons tended to congregate at spacious tables or in comfortable chairs. The users who tended to view art were actually moving through library, or standing and waiting. In either case, those who viewed art were in transition, and not nestled into a comfortable spot as had been expected.

**Commonalities of art-viewing patrons**

It was expected that a relationship would exist between recreational users and users who viewed art. While the observations did reveal a strong correlation between a patron’s activities and his/her tendency to view art, the nature of the activities which correlated to art-viewing differed for each library. Contrary to expectations, recreational patrons in both libraries were least likely to look at art. At Greendale, a strong relationship existed between patrons using computers and patrons viewing art: Five of the six art-viewing patrons used computers. At Hartwood, a close relationship was found between task-oriented users and art-viewing users: Five of the eight art-viewing patrons used the library to complete tasks.

This puzzling discrepancy reveals an interesting pattern upon examination of the pieces of art viewed at each library. All of the art-viewing computer users at Greendale looked at the multicultural alphabet posters, and also used the computers directly below the posters. Many of these users had to wait for an available computer, and looked at the posters while they waited. The task-oriented patrons at Hartwood who viewed art looked at three different pieces, all of which are displayed near the circulation/reference desk.
Generally, the task these users engaged in involved speaking to a librarian at the desk. As at Greendale, many of these patrons spent some amount of time waiting, and during this time they looked at the nearby art. [Appendix E lists more detailed descriptions of the art-viewing patrons in both libraries.]

So, while there seemed to be no objective relationship between art-viewing and whether a patron was using the library to complete a task, use computers, or for recreation; a correlation did emerge between time spent waiting to engage in an activity and the presence of art in the vicinity.

7. SURVEYS

7.1. Method

The second phase of data collection entailed the use of a user survey in both libraries. For approximately two weeks in February, a self-administered questionnaire was left at the circulation/reference desk in each library. A recruitment sign posted next to the questionnaires invited patrons to participate in a survey for a library science student’s project, which sought opinions about the library. Because the survey was designed to gauge users’ unbiased opinions, the recruitment sign did not specify the study’s particular focus on art. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire anonymously and return it to the desk.

Response rates for the two branches differed slightly: At Greendale, 20 questionnaires were returned to the desk. At Hartwood, 16 questionnaires were returned. Because the sampling frame of the study included only adults, surveys completed by respondents who listed ages under 18 were eliminated. This resulted in the elimination of one survey at Hartwood. Another Hartwood questionnaire was eliminated due to a
missing page. After eliminating these surveys, Hartwood’s response rate was reduced to 14 questionnaires. To increase response rates to 25 surveys at each library, five random patrons at Greendale were approached, and their participation was requested. At Hartwood, eleven random patrons were solicited to reach the target sample size.

The survey instrument was an eleven-question questionnaire, which appears in Appendix C. The survey included three questions addressing respondents’ opinions of specific facets of the library. To minimize potential bias caused by respondents’ awareness of the study’s focus, these included questions about various aspects of the library – lighting and collections, as well as the displayed art. Questions asking for patrons’ opinions made use of a five-point Likert scale, asking respondents to register opinions ranging from “Excellent” to “Extremely unsatisfactory.” The questionnaire also provided space for respondents to submit comments to supplement their opinions.

The questionnaire also asked each respondent the length of time it took to arrive at the library, the means by which s/he traveled, and whether s/he knows of another public library closer to where s/he works or lives. Because the two libraries studied are within five miles of each other, these questions sought to discover whether some users might prefer to use one over the other because of its interior environment.

Each respondent was also asked to report the kinds of activities in which s/he had engaged during his/her visit to the library (“Work/Research,” “Computer use,” “Recreation/Leisure,” “Meeting people,” or “Other”), and the length of his/her visit. These questions were included to gain potential insight into whether a given user treats the library as a “third place” or community space. In combination with a respondent’s
opinion about art, the questions were also included to provide an indication of whether his/her experience of the library’s interior might influence the length of a user’s visit.

Finally, the questionnaire asked two sets of open questions about the library space: “Which area of the building is your favorite? Why?” and “Which area of the building do you spend the most time in? Why?” These questions were included in an effort to discover the factors that influence users to spend time in particular areas within the library.

7.2. Limitations of Survey Methodology

The sampling method used in the survey’s collection places a constraint on the methodology. Because the questionnaires and recruiting signs were left at the circulation/reference desk, they were more likely to be noticed by patrons who approached the desk. The observations conducted revealed that many patrons of both libraries come to use the computers or other resources and leave without ever approaching the desk. Analysis of the data, however, reveals a fairly even distribution of respondents who reported using computers, engaging in recreational activities, and completing tasks. The gender and age distribution of respondents, however, did prove to be slightly uneven. At both libraries, females and patrons between the ages of 36 and 45 were the demographic groups most likely to complete and return the questionnaire.

A change in the art displayed at the library occurred at Hartwood during the administration of the survey, which may have affected some users’ responses on the questionnaire. The exhibit of Columbian art in the library’s display cases was replaced by a display of student art. Because the questionnaires were undated, it is impossible to determine which were completed before the change, and which were completed
afterward. There was also a brief period of time between the two exhibits during which no art was displayed in the cases.

The difference in the response rate at the two libraries resulted in a different number of directly recruited survey respondents – patrons who were approached by the researcher as opposed to patrons who completed the survey after seeing the recruitment sign. At Greendale, five respondents were recruited via this face-to-face method; at Hartwood, eleven respondents were directly recruited.

A further limitation is presented by the survey’s sample size. Time constraints prevented a longer survey collection period, which resulted in a relatively small sample (25 respondents at each library.) A higher number of respondents would have conferred more validity on the data gathered.

Finally, the possibility exists that the questionnaire might have elicited different responses if it had specified what constituted “art” for the purposes of the survey. One or two respondents at each library reported that they did not notice any art, or that there was minimal art displayed. These comments suggested that some respondents may have conceived of art narrowly, perhaps including only paintings. However, because part of the survey’s purpose was to gauge patrons’ individual perceptions of art, an explicit definition of “art” on the questionnaire may have elicited biased responses.

7.3. Survey Results

In both branches, considerably more females than males completed questionnaires. At Greendale, 18 females and 6 males submitted surveys, and one respondent left his/her gender unspecified. At Hartwood, 14 females and 8 males completed surveys, and three respondents left the gender question unanswered.
Respondents’ ages, while uneven, were more regularly distributed. In both branches, most respondents reported ages in the 36-45 year range. The age distribution of survey respondents closely resembled that of observation subjects, suggesting that the samples used in both methods may represent typical library user populations. Tables 8 and 9 show the gender and age breakdown of survey respondents.

### Table 8: Survey respondents by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 9: Survey respondents by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, respondents registered favorable opinions of art at both libraries – either “excellent” or “satisfactory” on the five-point Likert scale. Table 10 and Figure 1 show respondents’ opinions of art. No patron at either library answered that the art was “extremely unsatisfactory.” Opinions of the art at Hartwood were generally more favorable, with 23 out of the 25 respondents answering “excellent” or “satisfactory” – these included 12 “excellent” responses and 11 “satisfactory” responses. At Greendale,
17 out of 25 patrons answered “excellent” or “satisfactory,” with 5 answering “excellent” and 12 answering “satisfactory.” Two Hartwood respondents answered “no opinion/not applicable,” while seven Greendale respondents provided this response.

Table 10: Survey respondents’ opinions of art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion / Not Applicable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Bar chart – survey respondents’ opinions of art
A roughly equal number of respondents supplemented their opinions of art with comments: Seven Greendale patrons made comments about the library’s art, and eight Hartwood patrons commented. Appendix F lists all respondents’ comments about art. Respondents who commented about Greendale’s art were rather stratified in their ratings. Comments were made by two who said the art was “excellent,” two who said the art was “satisfactory,” two who answered “no opinion / not applicable,” and one who reported the art was “unsatisfactory.” The respondent who answered “unsatisfactory” wrote “Not enough detail. Minimum of art displayed.” One of the respondents who rated the art as “excellent” made a comment that seemed to be unrelated to the library’s art. (“Very nice customer service.”)

Comments about Hartwood’s art were made by four patrons who rated the art as “excellent,” three who answered “satisfactory,” and one who answered “no opinion/not applicable.” This latter respondent commented that the art “could be better.” Interestingly, one of the respondents who rated the art as “satisfactory” wrote, “the art is few and far between. Could be more ‘local artist’ pieces of work.” As at Greendale, one respondent who reported a “satisfactory” opinion made a comment that seemed to be unrelated to art. (“Should have more reading areas for elementary students.”)

In each library, only two respondents commented about specific pieces of art. At Greendale, the children’s art displayed in the children’s section was mentioned by one respondent. The other commented on the series of paintings in the large meeting room. One user simply commented, “multicultural.”

One Hartwood patron commented favorably about the colorful tiles arranged above the water fountains, and one described the children’s and young adults’ art as
“wonderful.” (It was unclear whether this comment referred to a new exhibit of student work that was displayed during the time the survey was administered.)

According to patrons’ responses, there was not a great deal of difference between the two libraries in terms of the time it took for patrons to reach either branch. The vast majority of respondents traveled less than 15 minutes to reach either library, and all but three traveled by car. Table 11 shows survey respondents’ travel times to the library. Responses to the question “Do you know of another public library closer to where you live (or work) than this library?” were equally inconclusive. At Greendale, 11 answered “yes,” and 14 answered “no.” At Hartwood, 8 answered “yes,” while 17 answered “no.”

Table 11: Survey respondents’ travel time to libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Travel Time</th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 min.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 min.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 min.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 min.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 min.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both libraries, respondents’ activities proved to be relatively evenly distributed among recreational activities, task-oriented activities, and computer use. Table 12 shows the reported activities of survey respondents. Five patrons at Greendale reported engaging in more than one type of activity, as did four at Hartwood. An analysis of the respondents who spent the most time in the libraries revealed that Greendale patrons completing tasks or using computers were more likely to spend 45 minutes or more in the library. The activities of users who spent the most time at Hartwood were evenly distributed between computer use, task completion, and recreational activities.
Considerably more recreational users stayed longer at Hartwood than at Greendale: Five recreational users at Hartwood stayed for longer than 45 minutes, while only one recreational patron at Greendale reported such a long visit. Table 13 shows the activities of patrons who reported using the library for longer than 45 minutes.

Table 12: Survey respondents’ activities: Greendale vs. Hartwood
[Note: Because many respondents reported engaging in more than one activity, the numbers add up to more than 25 patrons for each library.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-oriented Activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unspecified</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Activities of respondents who reported using library for 45 minutes or more:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Hartwood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-oriented Activities</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Use</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overall analysis of the time respondents spent at each library shows that visits to Hartwood tended to be longer than visits to Greendale. A majority of Hartwood respondents (15 out of 25) reported using the library for longer than 30 minutes. In contrast, a slight majority of Greendale respondents (14 out of 25) reported using the
library for 30 minutes or less. Eight Hartwood patrons used the library for over an hour, as opposed to five at Greendale. Figure 2 shows a comparison of the time survey respondents spent in the libraries.

![Figure 2: Time Spent in Library](image)

The question “Which area of the building is your favorite?” elicited a wide variety of responses in both libraries. At Greendale, the computer area found favor with the highest number of respondents, with five out of 25 patrons responding “computers.” This was followed by four respondents who favored the chairs near the magazine racks along the back wall, in front of the large windows. At Hartwood, the most common response was a combination of magazines and/or books, with seven patrons providing this
response. (A number of respondents answered both magazines and books, so these were grouped together during analysis.) Six patrons answered that the children’s section was their favorite area. Appendix G compiles all the responses to this question.

Because this was an open question, allowing users to phrase their answers freely rather than selecting from a predetermined list of responses, the respondents’ answers provided valuable insight into how users conceive of library buildings’ space. The vast majority of respondents described their favorite areas in terms of the resources available in the vicinity, rather than by the area’s physical location or aesthetic attributes. The tendency of survey respondents to favor certain areas based on functionality, rather than design elements, was consistent with the behaviors of observation subjects.

Nineteen out of 21 responses at Greendale described favored areas solely in terms of their resources. Three respondents listed resources to delineate particular areas, but listed reasons other than the resources themselves to justify affinities for the locations: the presence of windows near the chairs in the back of the library, or “smiling librarians” at the circulation desk. Only two patrons described areas solely in terms of their physical location or atmospheric attributes: One respondent favored “the central area where it is open and light,” and one wrote “by the windows” because she doesn’t “feel enclosed.” Notably, no respondent mentioned art when describing his/her favorite area.

Similarly, at Hartwood, 17 out of 28 answers described a favored area entirely in terms of its resources. (The higher number of responses is due to some respondents listing more than one area, with a different reason for each.) Two described a favorite area in terms of its resources, but provided a justification other than the resources themselves: “The table by the magazines area is very nice and free all the time;” and
“One can maintain brain power through reading.” A slightly higher number than at Greendale (nine, as opposed to two) reported favoring a particular area because of its physical or atmospheric characteristics.

For the nine respondents who described favorite areas based on physical attributes, a variety of characteristics proved to be important. The most frequently noted concern was noise level. Four patrons mentioned favoring rear areas of the building because of “peace,” “quiet,” or “less traffic.” Comfort was important for two respondents, who wrote that they liked areas where there were comfortable chairs. One patron praised the design of the main lobby “because of its high ceilings.” And one simply wrote that the front is “a nice place to come to.” Only one respondent mentioned art when describing his favorite area, but, interestingly, he listed “the outside art pieces” rather than the art in the building.

The higher number of responses to the “favorite area” question at Hartwood makes a direct comparison difficult, but physical or aesthetic characteristics seemed to factor into patrons’ responses at Hartwood slightly more than at Greendale. The overwhelming concern for patrons in both libraries, however, seemed to be the resources available in different areas of the library.

Responses to the question “Which area of the building do you spend the most time in?” proved similar to responses to the “favorite area” question. Twenty-two out of 25 Greendale patrons, and 20 out of 23 Hartwood patrons described the area by its resources. Three Hartwood patrons described an area in terms of its location in the building. All of these respondents reported spending the most time in the back of the
building because it was quiet. In both branches, nobody mentioned the presence of art when answering this question. Appendix H compiles all the responses to this question.

7.4. Analysis of Survey Results

Respondents’ opinions of art

The survey was administered with the expectation that respondents would report more favorable opinions of art at Hartwood, where art is the library’s focus, than at Greendale. While the data met this expectation, the difference between respondents’ opinions of art at the two branches was not particularly pronounced. Overall, opinions of art at both libraries were positive. No Hartwood patrons found the art to be “unsatisfactory,” and only one patron at Greendale provided this response. The opinions of Greendale patrons were fairly evenly distributed among “excellent” (5 responses), “satisfactory” (12 responses), and “no opinion/not applicable” (7 responses). Hartwood patrons were more concentrated in positive opinions; twelve (nearly half of the 25 respondents) described the art as “excellent,” eleven answered “satisfactory,” and two responded “no opinion/not applicable.”

An analysis of respondents’ comments about the libraries’ art provides a more in-depth indication of patrons’ opinions. The one-word comment, “multicultural,” made by a Greendale respondent appeared at first to be a brief, offhand remark. Upon further examination, however, this comment is remarkably insightful. It concisely characterizes the majority of the art displayed at Greendale, and suggests that, at least for this patron, the message of the building’s interior coheres with the message of the library’s resources and programs.
On the other hand, two Greendale respondents commented that they did not notice any art, and one wrote that there was not enough art displayed. These responses may indicate that the art displayed is not eminently noticeable, or that these are frequent patrons who have ceased to attend to the details of the building’s environment.

Respondents at Hartwood who made comments about art were more uniform in reporting positive opinions: Seven of the eight patrons who wrote comments reported that they found the art “excellent” or “satisfactory.” However, their comments show a considerable range in attitudes. One who rated the art as “satisfactory” also commented that the art displayed was “few and far between;” whereas a patron who found the art to be “excellent” commented, “It looks as if someone took time in their displays.” (Although the questionnaires were undated, it is possible that the “few and far between” comment was made when one temporary exhibit was removed from the display cases to make room for a new exhibit.)

Individual pieces of art mentioned by patrons provide an indication of which pieces are most noticeable. Interestingly, only two survey respondents in each library commented on specific pieces of art. At Greendale, one patron noted that she only notices the children’s art displayed in the children’s section. The other wrote that the “art in the large meeting room is great.” The large meeting room, accessible through the lobby or through a door in the children’s section, serves as a venue for meetings and programs, and is not typically used by Greendale’s day-to-day users. The art displayed in the large meeting room, which consists of a series of eight multicultural themed paintings, is not visible from the adult reading room.
It is important to note, though, that patrons who use the large meeting room are not likely to be engaged in typical library activities, nor are they likely to be absorbed in the library’s other resources. It is possible that the art in the adult reading room may go unnoticed because patrons are occupied by activities or resources. But because of the more passive nature of the activities that take place in the large meeting room – e.g., listening to a person speak – patrons using the space may have more opportunity to notice and view the art displayed.

At Hartwood, two specific art pieces elicited comments. One respondent wrote that “children, young adults’ art is wonderful; showcases talents;” but it was unclear whether this comment referred to children’s art displayed in the children’s section, or to a temporary exhibit of student art in the adult reading room.

The other respondent reported particularly enjoying “the tiles with the children’s art work.” This comment refers to a decorative arrangement of painted tiles displayed above the water fountains in the adult reading room. The water fountains are tucked in a small alcove between the entrances to the men’s and women’s restrooms, and are removed from the main traffic flow of the reading room. As in the case of the art in Greendale’s large meeting room, a user confronts the art above the water fountains in a moment of relative stasis. She is not engaged with the library’s resources, and is taking a break from more active pursuits. A user viewing this piece may have more opportunity to contemplate art, because no other intellectual entity is occupying her mind. This comment, and the one regarding the paintings in Greendale’s meeting room, suggests that users may be more disposed to directly interacting with art in moments of inactivity.
Surprisingly, no respondent commented on the pieces viewed most frequently during the library observations. In the case of Greendale, this could most likely be attributed to the fact that the two pieces mentioned by survey respondents were not visible from the observer’s vantage point in the adult reading room. In the case of the tiles above the water fountain at Hartwood, the discrepancy could be attributed to the piece’s location. Perhaps the water fountain is more likely to be used at a later time in a patron’s visit, rather than upon her/his first entering the building, which was the moment during which the observations were conducted.

**Travel time to the library**

Survey questions about the length of time patrons traveled to reach the library, and whether they knew of a closer library to where they live or work, were asked in acknowledgment of the two branches’ proximity to one another. Because the libraries are within five miles of each other, the questions were aimed at discovering whether users might travel further to reach a library where they found a more favorable environment.

Responses indicated that there was not a great deal of difference in the length of time traveled by patrons to either library, so this question proved to be an inconclusive test of patrons’ willingness to travel further to a more favorably perceived library. Responses to the question, “Do you know of a public library closer to where you live (or work) than this library?” were similarly inconclusive. However, a slightly higher number of Greendale respondents than Hartwood reported that they knew of a closer library: Eleven Greendale patrons responded affirmatively, as opposed to eight Hartwood patrons.
This result was surprising, in light of the higher overall opinions of art at Hartwood than at Greendale. However, a closer examination of the survey data revealed that four Greendale respondents who reported knowledge of a closer public library were in the library to tutor or to recruit for the job corps. While this information renders the difference in numbers negligible, the responses to this question remain ambiguous.

**Time Spent in Library**

The survey was designed around the tentative hypothesis that users might spend more time in a library where the art displayed was perceived favorably by patrons, as opposed to a library where the art was perceived less favorably or was not as visible. The expectation was that users who treated the library as a community space would be likely to choose a place where the atmosphere included vibrant, highly visible pieces of art. The survey data indicates that this may, in fact, be the case. At Hartwood, where nearly all respondents (23 out of 25) rated the art as “excellent” or “satisfactory,” the majority of respondents reported using the library for longer than 30 minutes. At Greendale, where fewer respondents (17 out of 25) rated the art as “excellent” or “satisfactory,” the majority of respondents (14 out of 25) reported using the library for 30 minutes or less.

Due to the study’s small sample size, however, the differences between these numbers are inconclusive. It is further possible that the results may be attributed to a bias of the methodology – users who are in the library longer may be more likely to encounter and complete a survey than users who are in the library briefly. But the comparative analysis of the two libraries makes the data more compelling than an analysis of either branch in isolation. Therefore, the study’s tentative findings, with regard to this hypothesis, seem to be worth further study.
Respondents’ activities

The community space hypothesis also gave rise to two questions related to patrons’ library activities: 1) Are patrons who use the library for longer periods of time more likely to engage in recreational activities than patrons who report shorter visits? 2) Does a library in which the art is viewed more favorably tend to draw more recreational users than a library in which the art is perceived less favorably?

The first question, of whether users reporting longer visits might tend to be recreational users, proved not to be the case at either library. Only one Greendale patron who stayed for longer than 45 minutes reported engaging in recreational activities. At Hartwood, five users who stayed for longer than 45 minutes reported engaging in recreational activities; this number was roughly equal to the number of task-oriented patrons and computer users who reported equally long visits to the library.

The expectation that recreational users might tend to spend more time in the library may have been the result of a flawed assumption; namely, that in order to serve as a community space, a library must be used for recreational purposes. It is possible that a better indicator of a community space may be found. The data suggest that it is more likely the case that time spent in a library may be a more accurate measure of the extent to which it serves as a community space, regardless of the activities of its users.

The second question – whether a library with more favorably perceived art may tend to draw more recreational users than a library with less favorably perceived art – was based on the similar assumption that the presence of appealing art might contribute to an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere in which people would want to spend their free time. Indeed, the data gathered reveal that at Hartwood, where more users consistently
reported favorable opinions of art, more respondents reported engaging in recreational activities than at Greendale. The number of recreational patrons, however, was only slightly higher: 13 Hartwood patrons categorized their activities as recreational, as opposed to 9 at Greendale. Overall, the numbers were fairly evenly split between patrons engaged in various activities. A larger sample size might have produced more conclusive numbers. But, again, this question may have been based on a flawed assumption. The presence of art could just as easily induce people to select a particular environment in which to complete tasks as to engage in recreational activities.

**Interactions with library space**

Perhaps the most revealing data elicited by the survey pertained to patrons’ interactions with particular areas of the libraries’ interiors. This data was gathered in an attempt to gauge whether atmospheric elements, particularly the presence of art, would influence heavier use of some areas of a library and lighter use in other areas. Open questions addressing this facet of the research allowed survey respondents to supply their own descriptions of their favorite areas of the library, and of the areas in which they tended to spend the most time.

These questions employed the use of the phrase “area of the building” as opposed to “part of the library” to encourage respondents to describe specific physical locations in the building, rather than designations of library resources. However, despite this phrasing, the vast majority of responses to these questions – 41 out of 46 at Greendale, and 37 out of 51 at Hartwood – described areas of the library in terms of resources, rather than physical areas, design features, or atmospheric elements.
Although this trend in users’ responses signified a departure from the questions’ intentions, the answers proved to be illuminating, and provided a revealing measure of how patrons conceive of library space. The responses suggest that most patrons do not think of the library as a building (a designed space with intentionally arranged furniture and décor) as much as they conceive of it as a collection of resources housed under the same roof.

Furthermore, the respondents’ focus on resources was consistent with the data collected via observations, which indicated that patrons’ decisions to use particular areas of the library were more dictated by their activities than by any apparent concern for atmospheric factors. Both sets of data point to the possibility that patrons may not be influenced by the physical/aesthetic elements of a library’s interior, or, at the very least, seem to be unaware of such an influence.

Some patrons, however, did report favoring a particular area because of its physical or atmospheric characteristics. A slightly higher number of respondents at Hartwood than at Greendale described their favorite areas in these terms (nine, as opposed to two). In combination with the tendency toward longer visits at Hartwood, this suggests that elements of a library’s interior may, in fact, influence some patrons to spend more time in a particular library. Here again, the small sample size renders the numbers inconclusive, but the data available provides an opportunity for future research.

8. INTERVIEWS

8.1. Method

Interviews were conducted with a purposive sample consisting of two staff members at each library. Branch managers at each library were asked for the names of
staff members who have relatively frequent contact with library patrons. Each staff member was asked the same series of questions, which addressed patrons’ interactions with and feedback about art, and the library habits of recreational users. The interview script is included in Appendix D. Operational definitions of “art” and “recreational users” were clarified for interview participants. Participants’ responses were analyzed on their own, and in conjunction with the observation and survey data.

8.2. Interview Results

Greendale participants included Mike, site supervisor of Greendale; and Shannon, a library services assistant. Hartwood participants consisted of Katie, a library associate; and Pauline, a children’s specialist. All participants reported spending roughly 20 to 30 hours a week in the public areas of the library in which they work. [Note: To protect the anonymity of the libraries and library staff, both library names and all staff member names are aliases created by the author.]

When asked whether patrons view art, Mike responded that regular Greendale users generally do not look at art, but that first-time users sometimes do. He estimated that new patrons spend about ten minutes viewing the art, but they do it as they walk around the library and browse. Shannon stated that Greendale users who look at art are generally new to the building, or are waiting for something, such as an available computer. “You see people looking around while they’re waiting, but a lot of times, when someone’s new, the first thing they do is look around at the architecture and the walls, and the different things on the walls.” Most patrons, she added, do not spend much time looking at art unless they are waiting to use a resource.
At Hartwood, Katie responded that patrons do view art, particularly when they are first-time visitors. She reported seeing patrons look at art once or twice a week. Pauline reported seeing Hartwood patrons look at art more frequently, about 10 to 15 times a week, generally for about a minute or two. She added, though, that this high number was partly due to her actively drawing patrons’ attention to art when speaking with them.

“Most of the time, if you take the effort to call attention to an exhibit or a piece of art, they’re going to take the time to at least look at it. Now, they may just give it a passing glance, but then again, they may actually look at it, and say, ‘Oh, who did this?’”

The question of which pieces tend to draw the most attention drew consistent responses from participants at both libraries. Mike stated that, based on his observations from the desk, first-time Greendale users look at the mobile hanging over the front of the library. Additionally, “If they are using the meeting rooms… the biggest response we get is about the panels that were painted by one of our patrons.” He added that the artist responsible for the series of paintings gave the library a written description of each panel, listing what each element in the paintings symbolizes. Whenever possible, he said, staff members will show the descriptions to patrons who inquire about the paintings.

Shannon also responded that the Greendale mobile and the paintings in the large meeting room attract the most attention from library users. According to Shannon, the visibility of individual pieces makes a critical difference in the amount of attention they receive. She observed that there are some pieces in the library that are “hidden and tucked away,” and that, “maybe if they were in a more visible area, people would spend more time looking at them.”
Hartwood participants also appeared to be in agreement with regard to the most frequently viewed pieces. Katie responded that the *Garden for the Floating Life* mobile, “the boats hanging from the ceiling; that probably gets the most attention when people first walk into the library.” She reported that people tend to spend the most time looking at pieces displayed in the display cubes that stand in the adult reading room. According to Katie, exhibits in these cases change about every two months.

Pauline stated that the Hartwood pieces that receive the most attention tend to be those that are newly displayed, as well as pieces she termed “focal points.” These include the *Garden for the Floating Life* mobile, because of its prominent, central placement; and a life-sized tree sculpture in the children’s reading room that is impossible to miss. She also reported that some users have come just to look at certain pieces of art. “When David Spear’s photographs were hanging in the gallery… I did have patrons say, ‘I’m here to see the David Spear exhibit; where is it?’”

According to Pauline, Spear’s exhibit was not the only instance in which people specifically sought out art at Hartwood. Any piece that attracts publicity will draw people in to see the work. This includes art by local students, whose friends and family come to see their art on display, as well as work by more well-known artists.

When asked whether patrons ask questions or make comments about art in the library, Mike responded that this happens fairly infrequently at Greendale. When it does, users tend to ask who made a particular piece, or whether the mobile has been in the library for as long as the building has been there. On the whole, though, he has only heard positive feedback from patrons about the art.
Shannon stated that patrons do remark about Greendale’s art, and, as did Mike, that the majority simply ask what artist made a certain piece. For example, users have asked her who designed the mobile. Such questions prompted Greendale staff to unearth a framed sketch of the mobile’s design, which they subsequently displayed behind the desk for the benefit of curious patrons. Shannon noted that, even though patrons do not tend to ask in-depth questions about the art, the simple fact of patrons’ commenting about a piece indicates that it succeeded in capturing their attention. She stated that patron feedback about the art is generally positive, and added that patrons also comment favorably on the library’s windows and lighting.

Katie affirmed that patrons also pose questions and comments about Hartwood’s art. “And when anybody does, [the branch manager] often refers them to me, because I’m… the person who gives the art tour. So if anybody has questions about a particular piece, we’ll do a quick walk-through of the library and I’ll show them everything that we’ve got.” According to Katie, this happens more than once a month. As at Greendale, Katie stated that questions about specific pieces at Hartwood generally focus on who made a given piece. She observed that feedback is overwhelmingly positive, and that visitors from out of town frequently comment favorably about the library in general.

Pauline reported hearing feedback from patrons about the art about once a week, and observed that it is always positive. She recalled specific comments such as, “Oh, this person’s really talented.” She also reported receiving positive comments from the families of children who participated in making a quilt that is displayed in the children’s reading room.
When asked whether he was aware of Greendale patrons who use the library recreationally, Mike responded, “A lot are here to complete tasks because they’re involved with the programs that we have here, but a lot of them are just readers that are coming to check out books. And I think that’s recreational, for the most part.” According to Mike, these patrons spend time in different areas of the library depending on the activities in which they are involved. Many tend to spend time at the tables in the main section of the adult reading room. Shannon observed that a lot of Greendale patrons use the library for recreational purposes, such as reading magazines. She concurred with Mike that, among those who use the library recreationally, the tables in the adult reading room enjoy a great deal of use.

Katie stated that a lot of people come to Hartwood and “hang out.” Many of these are children, and they tend to spend time in the children’s reading room or in the children’s art studio. Pauline responded that she is aware of a lot of returning Hartwood patrons, but she was careful not to classify them as “hanger-outers.” “Usually people who come are using either a computer or they’re reading newspapers, looking at books, they’re doing research, they’re reading our periodicals.” She listed areas in which repeat users spend time according to patrons’ activities: “Newspaper readers tend to sit at the reading chairs at the back, or they may be at a table in the center. Of course, computer users are always at a computer, or they’re sitting in the chairs, waiting for a computer. Families usually gravitate into the children’s room. And children know now that we have an art studio, for the most part, and they’ll be in the art studio, creating.”
8.3. Analysis of Interview Results

Patrons’ art-viewing behavior

Shannon’s comment that Greendale patrons who view art for the longest stretches of time are generally waiting for something was consistent with patrons’ observed behaviors: The patron who spent the longest time viewing art during Greendale observations was waiting for an available computer. At 15 seconds, this patron far exceeded Greendale’s median art viewing time of 3.5 seconds.

Participants’ responses about which patrons are most likely to view art also supports the observation data. All four interview participants said patrons tend to look at art upon first visiting the library, and that returning patrons tend to view pieces when the art itself is new. During observations, no patron at either library was seen looking at art for longer than 20 seconds, and no patron who viewed art reacted to it noticeably. The vast majority of these patrons went from the entrance directly to the area of the library they proceeded to use, which suggests that they had used the library before. It is possible that some of these patrons had already become familiar with the library’s art.

Also, perhaps significantly, the Hartwood patron who spent the longest time viewing a particular piece spent 20 seconds looking at a temporary exhibit of Columbian crafts in the library’s display cases. Because the art in the cases changes fairly regularly, it is possible the patron had not seen the pieces on a previous visit. Such behaviors suggest that Hartwood’s practice of exhibiting some art on a temporary basis serves to keep regular users engaged in the library’s atmosphere. It is also possible that this approach contributed to the generally more favorable opinions of art among Hartwood patrons: If users are more apt to notice new art, Hartwood’s changing displays would
likely attract more attention than Greendale’s art, which changes with relative infrequency.

On the other hand, as Shannon at Greendale insightfully noted, the fact that frequent patrons do not actively view art does not render its presence unimportant: “I think [art] can have a really great effect on the environment of learning, and if it’s absent, it can create a really cold atmosphere. But… it’s kind of hard to see that in the people who use the library regularly.”

**Art and user feedback**

All four interview participants reported receiving feedback from users about art, but with varying frequencies. While patrons’ responses to art have been, without exception, positive, all four said that the most common feedback is in the form of questions about the artists responsible for particular pieces. Shannon interprets such questions as a way of commenting favorably about a piece without explicitly saying “I like that.”

It is also possible that patron curiosity about the artists whose work is displayed may indicate the potential of art to build community: These patrons’ questions may reflect an awareness of the libraries’ tendency to display works by local artists, and a concomitant pride in those talented artists who are community members. This sense of pride in local talent was also evident in the survey respondent’s comment – probably regarding an exhibit of local student work – that “children, young adults’ art is wonderful; showcases talents.”

Each interview respondent subsequently discussed some of the practices employed by library staff when fielding patron feedback. Notably, each library has
structures and practices in place to provide interested patrons with more information about the building’s art. At Greendale, these include printed descriptions of the paintings in the large meeting room and a framed sketch of the mobile in the adult reading room. At Hartwood, they include a guided art tour, an art map that lists and describes each piece, and patron-staff conversation.

While such practices were anticipated at Hartwood, where providing information about art is central to the library’s mission, they were unexpected at Greendale, where the art displayed is secondary to the library’s multicultural focus. But the fact that the staff has established systems to handle patrons’ art inquiries offers further testimony to the amount of feedback received. This unexpected finding suggests that many users do notice and appreciate art, whether they actively seek it out, or it is peripheral to their experience.

**Visibility of art**

When asked which individual art pieces tend to draw the most attention, interview participants addressed the themes of placement and novelty. On the whole, placement seems to be of paramount importance in attracting the eye of library users. Each library has a mobile hanging above the front of the adult reading room, near the entrance, and all four staff members noted that the murals attract a great deal of attention from patrons. The data gathered during observations also revealed that many patrons view the mobiles in both libraries. Because the mobiles hang from the ceiling, they are easily visible from various vantage points within both libraries. And because of their position near the entrance, they are well-placed to capture the eye of patrons as they walk through the door.
Shannon speculated that some pieces in Greendale would attract more attention if they were more prominently placed. When conducting observations, it was difficult to tell whether patrons looked at some pieces that were obscured from the observer’s view by shelves, for example. But such pieces are certain to attract the attention of only those few patrons who pass directly in front of them, while the mobile is visible to nearly all who enter the building.

According to interview participants, pieces also attract attention when users encounter them for the first time. Both Hartwood staff members stated that many patrons look at the art exhibited in the standing display cases. According to Katie, Hartwood changes the art in these cube-shaped cases about every two months. As a result, even frequent patrons regularly encounter new pieces of art in the library. The art in the cases also has the benefit of placement in addition to novelty. Because the cases are free-standing, they are in the path of patrons walking through the library. They are also viewable from all sides, and are at torso height for many adults, which enables users to approach them easily and from a close proximity.

Both Hartwood staff members reported that new art displays always draw comments. Pauline stated that art can be a draw that attracts first-time users to the library. She noted that many people come to the library for the first time to see a particular exhibit, and remark on how impressed they are by the building and the art displayed in it. According to Pauline, “having a library with art in it is not new. But having a library with an art focus is a fairly new concept. And I think that it’s a wonderful way to pull the community in to the library and show them the resources that we have.”
According to Mike, Greendale’s art does not change nearly as frequently, so first-time interactions between users and the library’s art exclusively occur when new patrons use library. Both Greendale staff members commented that first-time users tend to view and comment about art far more often than frequent users.

For the most part, the pieces singled out as receiving the most user attention share the characteristics of advantageous placement and relative novelty. The one notable exception to these themes arose in the case of the paintings displayed in Greendale’s large meeting room. Both Greendale staff members noted that this series of paintings elicits a great deal of patron feedback, and it was one of only two pieces mentioned by Greendale survey respondents. Interestingly, the pieces are in a separate room that is not visible from the main public areas of the library. However, because the pieces are so large (roughly 9 feet tall), and because there are seven of them, they occupy most of the available wall space in the meeting room. So while the majority of Greendale’s day-to-day patrons do not encounter the paintings, their placement and size renders them highly visible to any users who enter the meeting room.

**Recreational patrons and library space**

All four interview participants acknowledged the presence of recreational users in the libraries. According to the respondents, the areas in which these users spend time are primarily dictated by resources and activities, rather than by atmospheric factors such as art. Both Greendale staff members noted that many recreational users spend time at the tables in the adult reading room, but it would be difficult to determine whether this is attributable to the proximity of magazine shelves and the fiction collection, or to other factors. Participants’ responses to these questions are consistent with observation and
survey data, which also suggested that patrons’ use of library space is primarily
dependent upon patron activities and library resources.

9. DISCUSSION

This study was based upon the initial expectations that:

- users would report more favorable opinions of art in a public library where art is
  an explicit focal point than in a library where it is not;
- when presented with a choice between using a library with more favorably
  perceived art and one with less favorably perceived art, recreational library users
  would elect to use the former;
- users would tend to view art more frequently and for longer periods of time in a
  library where the art displayed is perceived more favorably than in a library where
  the art is perceived less favorably; and
- recreational library users would elect to spend time in library areas where art is
  visible.

These expectations will be discussed in light of the findings of all three methods of data
collection.

**Art and users’ opinions**

The study found that users did, in fact, generally report more favorable opinions
at Hartwood, where art is the library’s explicit focal point, than at Greendale, where art is
secondary to the library’s mission. But while the survey data supported this expectation,
the difference between respondents’ opinions about art in the two branches was too small
to be conclusive. Responses at Hartwood overall included more positive opinions and
fewer neutral or negative opinions than responses at Greendale, but patrons generally
reported favorable opinions of art in both libraries. It is likely that a more conclusive
analysis could be conducted using a larger sample size.

**Art and users’ library preference**

Data addressing the expectation that recreational patrons who faced a choice
would elect to use a library with more favorably perceived art, rather than one with less
favorably perceived art, proved to be similarly inconclusive. This expectation was primarily addressed with survey questions that asked how far users had traveled to reach library, and whether users were aware of a more convenient library. Even if users’ opinions of art had been found to be dramatically different between the two libraries, no noticeable difference was found in the length of time traveled by patrons to either branch. A slightly higher number of Greendale respondents reported that they knew of a closer library, but many who gave this response reported coming to Greendale to participate in ESOL tutoring. These patrons, therefore, could not be assumed to have exercised choice in determining which library to use.

But although it is impossible to determine whether art was a deciding factor influencing users to visit Hartwood as opposed to Greendale, one interview participant suggested that the presence of prominently displayed art can induce first-time users to come to the library – independent of any intention to use the library’s resources. As Pauline at Hartwood noted, while a particularly compelling art exhibit may be the impetus for a patron’s first-time visit, the library’s resources may influence that patron, who may not have otherwise visited any library, to return.

In addition, the survey found that patrons tended to spend more time in Hartwood, where nearly all respondents reported favorable opinions of art, than in Greendale. The majority of Hartwood respondents reported visits of longer than 30 minutes, while the majority of Greendale respondents reported visits of 30 minutes or less. While the study’s expectation about library patrons specifically focused on recreational patrons, this finding applied to all patrons, regardless of their activities. In retrospect, the “recreational user” specification may have been the result of a flawed assumption. It is
equally likely that a patron who visited the library to engage in research might favor a building with pleasing art.

Here again, the study’s small sample size renders negligible the difference between the number of users reporting short visits and users reporting longer visits. But the preliminary finding suggests an avenue for future research.

**Frequency and length of art-viewing**

The study’s third expectation was that users would tend to view art more frequently, and for longer periods of time, in a library where the art displayed is perceived more favorably than in a library where the art is perceived less favorably. The observations revealed that slightly more users at Hartwood viewed art, but the average art-viewing times were roughly the same in both libraries. No conclusive difference was observed in either frequency or length of time during observations.

The interviews also revealed that patrons of both Greendale and Hartwood view and comment about art. Staff members at both libraries mentioned engaging with patrons about art, and providing information about pieces that pique users’ curiosity. The fact that staff members have established procedures for providing patrons with more information about art indicates that a significant number of patrons have made relevant inquiries in both branches. This further suggests that users do notice and value art, even if it may be peripheral to their experience.

Overall, the findings of the observations and interviews are inconclusive about whether users view art more frequently, or for longer periods of time, in one library as opposed to the other. However, interview respondents at both branches noted that users tend to pay the most attention to art upon first encountering it. Because Hartwood’s art
changes more frequently than Greendale’s, the possibility for more first-time encounters exist at Hartwood. This suggests that patrons may view art more frequently at Hartwood, but this assumption is insufficiently supported by the data gathered.

**Use and conceptions of library space**

The expectation that recreational library users would elect to spend time in library areas where art is visible was contradicted by the study’s findings. The data gathered via observations, surveys, and interviews suggested that the physical area of library where patrons spend time has very little to do with aesthetics, atmosphere, or art. Instead, it appears that a patron’s decision to use a particular area of the library corresponds strongly to the patron’s activities and the resources available in that area. This seems to be the case whether patrons are completing tasks, using computers, or reading magazines for recreation.

This finding was particularly well-supported by users’ survey responses describing their favorite and most-often-used areas of the library buildings, which focused almost exclusively on resources. These responses provided an unanticipated, yet revealing, insight into how users think about library space. While the questionnaire asked users to name an “area of the building,” respondents overwhelmingly named resources or collections (computers, DVD collection, etc.) Such responses suggest that many patrons envision the library less as a building than as a collection of resources. The responses of interview participants, all of whom concurred that returning patrons generally do not look at art, provide further evidence for the possibility that many library users simply tune out the physical details of their surroundings. If the presence of art
does contribute to users’ decisions about where to spend time in the library, they do not seem to be aware of it on a conscious level.

The observations found that, perhaps obviously, users entirely ignored art while they were engaged in activities. Data gathered via all three methods indicated that when patrons do notice art, they primarily view it during moments of transition or relative inactivity – when waiting to use a computer or speak to a librarian, when walking through the library, when sitting in a meeting room, or when drinking from the water fountain. The results indicate that patrons conceive of art displayed in the library as a way to occupy their eyes while waiting to use a resource or when moving from one area to another. Clearly, this is a more utilitarian concept of art than the one employed by patrons of art galleries or museums, where art is displayed for its own sake. For most users of public libraries, art appears to be a secondary concern, providing a backdrop to the main purpose of their visit – even if the main purpose is to flip through the pages of a magazine.

On the other hand, the way patrons seemed to conceive of and use space in the libraries indicates that both buildings are designed well for usability and functionality. The fact that users did not seem to notice the buildings’ design features suggests that neither building imposes physical impediments to patrons using resources. For most patrons, the building seems to act as a conduit facilitating whatever activities the patrons may pursue. In the libraries studied, the functionality of the buildings’ designs seems to extend to the art displayed. Much of the art supports the libraries’ other functions by providing users with engaging works to contemplate while waiting for, or taking a break
from, library resources. Also, because most of the art is non-textual, it may serve to refresh the minds of users whose other activities in the library may be reading-intensive.

The number of unsolicited comments received by staff members and patrons’ responses to survey questions indicates that art is important, even though it may serve to support the library’s other functions, rather than existing as an end in itself. Shannon, at Greendale, emphasized this notion when she said, “I think [art] can have a really great effect on the environment of learning, and if it’s absent, it can create a really cold atmosphere.”

Finally, the Greendale patron who made the comment “multicultural” when describing the art displayed suggested another function of art in the library. In addition to making the building more aesthetically appealing, art can send a non-textual message about the space and its resources. In the case of Greendale, the multicultural theme of nearly all the art displayed communicates that the building is a welcoming space for its principal user group, the multicultural community in the neighborhood. The individual pieces, when considered together, offer a visual counterpart to the library’s mission statement.

10. CONCLUSION

In The Architecture of Happiness, Alain de Botton wrote, “Our designs go wrong because our feelings of contentment are woven from fine and unexpected filaments.” (de Botton, 2006) In other words, it is sometimes difficult to put a finger on exactly why a space makes us feel comfortable, or, for that matter, uncomfortable. Buildings’ interiors have the capacity to affect people in unexpected and often elusive ways. Shannon addressed these intangible qualities when she speculated that, in the absence of art, the
library would feel “cold.” While de Botton, Shannon, and this writer have intuited that
the presence of elements such as art can go a long way in making a space feel inviting or
warm, the results of this study have indicated the difficulty of measuring such effects
empirically.

The key to this difficulty may be that patrons’ mental maps of a library seem to
represent the building’s areas in terms of the resources present, and not necessarily in
terms of physical space. If this is in fact the case, patrons are not likely to be aware of
any impact the building’s environment may have on their experiences in the library. In
order to reach more concrete conclusions, a successful research design would likely need
to better address the subconscious aspects of patrons’ interactions with library buildings.
The findings presented here, however, do provide a basis on which to continue the
discussion of the role of art in users’ public library experiences.

The research question initially sought to investigate whether favorably perceived
art in a library might contribute to the use of the library as a community space. In order
to address this, the study examined whether a library with more favorably perceived art
tended to draw more recreational users than a library in which the art was not perceived
as favorably, or not noticed. However, an analysis focusing on whether patrons pursued
recreational activities in the library proved not to be fruitful. It is likely that the
assumption that a library must attract recreational patrons in order to serve as a
community space was a flawed one. For example, according to the study’s
classifications, a patron providing ESOL tutoring would be classified as “task-oriented” –
but what activity could be more illustrative of the library as a community space than a
patron sharing her language with a new community member? Such revelations led to the conclusion that better indicators of a library’s role as community space were needed.

While the study did not find any evidence that art influences patrons to prefer one library to another, it did find tentative indications that users may stay longer in a library where the art is more favorably received. Although a direct correlation between the two could not be established, the tentative finding suggests that time spent by patrons in the library may be an appropriate measure of the effects of art on patrons, and is worth further study.

Perhaps most importantly, while many of the study’s expectations were not supported by the data gathered, the results of the observations, survey, and interviews all indicate that users do notice and appreciate art. Some users communicate their interest in art by expressing curiosity about the artists who created the work displayed. Because these patrons may have come to expect to see local artists’ work displayed in the library, their questions may reflect a community pride in the talent of local artists. Furthermore, some survey respondents directly praised work created by local students, or expressed an interest in seeing more pieces by local artists. Such feedback alone may suggest the ability of art in the library to cultivate community by fostering pride in community talent, and by providing regional artists with a venue to share their work locally.

The research results, tentative though they may be, also suggest potential guidelines for library staff seeking to maximize the impact and visibility of art displayed in libraries. The findings indicate that users tend to view art while waiting, or in moments of inactivity. Staff seeking to display art would be wise to identify the areas of a building where users typically wait for resources, or where they take breaks from
activities, and exhibit art nearby. When displayed in these areas, art may support the library’s other functions by occupying patrons’ time and attention during times when resources are temporarily unavailable. It may also provide users with a needed rest from text-heavy activities.

It also appears that the most heavily trafficked areas are, perhaps obviously, the site of the most frequently viewed art – in many cases, these areas are in the front of a building. It may be possible to maximize the benefits of a particular piece of art by exhibiting it near these frequently traveled paths. Finally, the study’s findings suggest that the most common interactions between patrons and art occur during first-time encounters. It therefore seems probable that changing a library’s art more regularly can re-engage frequent patrons with the library space by offering more potential for such first-time interactions.

For further research

The patron survey used in this study employed closed-ended questions to facilitate reasonably comparable responses. A future study might benefit from posing open-ended questions to library users about their reasons for coming to the library, and the aspects of the building that appeal to them. The extent to which users mention design features and/or art in the library might provide a useful measure of the value patrons place on the aesthetical features of the library.

It may also be worthwhile to conduct a comparative study of the ways art is displayed and perceived by patrons in other establishments, such as airports, bookstores, and banks. How do patrons interact with art in these places, and how do such interactions compare with those that occur in public libraries? Such a comparison might provide
some further insight into the nature of community spaces, and how they may be affected by the presence of art.

When conducting this study, some findings arose that, although interesting, were outside the scope of the research question; they may also provide promising avenues for future research. The most compelling of these related to the interactions between children and art in libraries. Part of Hartwood’s mission is to promote children’s experiences with art, and the library’s partnership with a local arts organization supports programs that enable children to participate in art projects. Some of the art displayed in the children’s reading room was created on site by young patrons, in collaboration with local artists.

Both of Hartwood’s interview participants remarked that many of the library’s most frequent visitors are children – Katie, at Hartwood, commented that a lot of the children see the library as a “second home.” This raises a number of questions: How does participating in the library’s art programs affect children’s experiences with the library? Does displaying art created by children imbue them with a sense of belonging and ownership of the space? Does the presence of youth art programs increase the library’s use as a community space for children?
References


Appendix A: Library Floor Plans

Greendale:
Hartwood:
Appendix B: Observation Data Collection Form

Library __________
Date _____________
Time ____________

Patron’s apparent age ______________

Patron’s apparent gender ________________

Does the patron look at the art displayed in the library? ______

If yes:
Which piece (or pieces) does the patron view? ___________

How much time (in seconds) does the patron spend looking at the art? ___________

Is there any apparent reaction to the art? __________

If yes:
What is the patron’s apparent reaction? _______________________________________

Where does the patron choose to sit/stand/put personal belongings, with regard to proximity to the art displayed? ________________________________________

What activities does the patron engage in? ________________________________________

Do the patron’s activities appear to be primarily task-oriented or recreational? ________________________________________
Appendix C: Survey Questionnaire

[Note: The questionnaire used for the study was oriented differently on the page, allowing the choices available to fit on one line. The format has been altered to fit this paper’s orientation.]

Public Library Survey
Please circle one response to the following questions:

1. What is your opinion of the lighting in this library?
   Excellent  Satisfactory  No opinion / Not applicable
   Unsatisfactory  Extremely unsatisfactory

   Comments:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

2. What is your opinion of the art displayed in this library?
   Excellent  Satisfactory  No opinion / Not applicable
   Unsatisfactory  Extremely unsatisfactory

   Comments:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

3. What is your opinion of the books available in this library?
   Excellent  Satisfactory  No opinion / Not applicable
   Unsatisfactory  Extremely unsatisfactory

   Comments:
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
4. **How long did it take you to get to the library today?**

- 0-5 minutes
- 6-10 minutes
- 11-15 minutes
- 16-20 minutes
- Over 20 minutes

5. **How did you get to the library today?**

- On foot
- Bicycle
- Car
- Public transportation
- Other

6. **Why did you come to the library today? (Circle all that apply.)**

- Work/Research
- Computer use
- Recreation/Leisure
- Meeting people
- Other

7. **Do you know of another public library closer to where you live (or work) than this library?**

- Yes
- No

8. **About how much time did you (or will you) spend in the library today?**

- 0-15 minutes
- 16-30 minutes
- 31-45 minutes
- 46-60 minutes
- Over 60 minutes
9. Which area of the building is your favorite?

____________________________________________________________________

Why?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

10. Which area of the building do you spend the most time in?

____________________________________________________________________

Why?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

11. Please describe yourself:

Gender: Male Female

Age: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55
      56-65 66-75 Over 75
Appendix D: Interview Script

- What is your position at the library?

- Approximately how many hours per week do you spend working in public spaces in the library?

- Do you ever notice patrons looking at the art displayed in the library?
  - If yes:
    - How frequently?
    - Approximately how much time does the average patron spend viewing the art?
    - Which piece or pieces draw the most attention?

- Do patrons ever ask you questions about the art, or make comments about it?
  - If yes:
    - How frequently?
    - Do patrons’ reactions tend to be positive, negative, or mixed?
    - Do you recall any specific comments or questions made by patrons about the art?

- Are you aware of patrons who use the library recreationally? [By this I mean patrons who come to the library frequently -- every week or so, and who use the library for purposes beyond conducting research or using the library’s resources.]
  - If yes:
    - Is there a certain area of the library where these patrons tend to spend their time?
      - If yes: Which area of the library?
Appendix E: Descriptions of art-viewing observation subjects’ activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>No. of patrons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks at multicultural alphabet posters while waiting for open computer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at multicultural alphabet posters while seeming to decide whether to use computers under posters, or computers in ESL lab</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at multicultural alphabet posters while waiting for companion to finish using computers under posters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at multicultural alphabet posters while walking to an open computer below posters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hartwood</th>
<th>No. of patrons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks at <em>Four Seasons</em> paintings or at mobile while waiting to talk to librarian at circulation/reference desk</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at Columbian crafts in display cases while walking to circulation/reference desk to consult with librarian</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at mobile while walking to “new books” shelves to browse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at <em>Four Seasons</em> paintings while walking toward fiction shelves to browse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at Columbian crafts in display cases on the way to browsing video shelves</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks at mobile while standing near front entrance, waiting for companions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Survey respondents’ comments about art

**Greendale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“Excellent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“Very nice customer service.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>“Multicultural”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>“There isn’t much art displayed but the art in the large meeting room is great.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion / Not Applicable</td>
<td>“I’d only notice the children’s artwork but if you’re talking about artwork of any other type, then I don’t notice that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion / Not Applicable</td>
<td>“Never really notice it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>“Not enough detail. Minimum amount of art displayed.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hartwood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“Any art (in good taste) is good in my opinion.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“I really enjoy the tiles with the children’s art work. My children like them, too.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“Children, young adults’ art is wonderful; showcases talents.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>“It looks as if someone took time in their displays.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>“Should have more reading areas for elementary students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>“I think that there should be a few more painting. As they should be lower on the walls.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>“The art is few and far between. Could be more ‘local artist’ pieces of work.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion / Not Applicable</td>
<td>“Could be better!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix G: Which area of the building is your favorite? Why?

**Greendale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite Area</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td>“Easily accessible.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The computers.”</td>
<td>“This is my main purpose for visiting the library.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The computer lab.”</td>
<td>“Because I love my privacy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The soft chairs by newspaper shelves.”</td>
<td>“The comfortable chairs and the view from the windows.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chairs by magazine racks.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Behind the magazine stands with the windows.”</td>
<td>“I like the big windows.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“By the windows.”</td>
<td>“I don’t feel enclosed.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children’s area.”</td>
<td>“My kids enjoy it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children books area.”</td>
<td>“It is my girls’ favorite place and I find all their needing in it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children’s section w/ seating area.”</td>
<td>“Nice relaxing place to read w/ window scene.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Front desk.”</td>
<td>“Smiling librarians.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Circulation desk.”</td>
<td>“They put up interesting and varied topics, authors, and of course plots.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The non fiction/fiction shelf you see when you first walk in.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Book shelves/new books.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fiction stacks.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The chairs in the middle of the library.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The central area where it is open &amp; light.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Multicultural Resources/Decorating/Video’s, DVD’s”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All.”</td>
<td>“See above listings.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Hartwood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favorite Area</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The magazines area.”</td>
<td>“The table by the magazines area is very nice and free all the time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“New fiction / newspapers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Newspapers and magazines area.”</td>
<td>“Reading is recreational for me, educational and enjoyable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[Hartwood continued]</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fiction.”</td>
<td>“I read a lot.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where the books are.”</td>
<td>“What I like to read.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Biographies.”</td>
<td>“I have two young children as I am able to enjoy an adult book such as a mystery while still spending time watching my children. The location of the audio books selections next to the children’s area allows me to browse while my children enjoy their area within my view.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Audio books/DVD and the kid’s area.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s room.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Periodically look at new books, art.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s section.</strong></td>
<td>“I’m a teacher and I enjoy seeing what new literature is available.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kids area.</strong></td>
<td>“I come here with my children and get books &amp; art section.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The children’s activity room.</strong></td>
<td>“It’s always busy! There is always something going on in there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children’s dept.”</td>
<td>“Because of the large variety of leveled reading books for children.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main entry area.</strong></td>
<td>**New books and mysteries (What I enjoy reading.)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The main lobby because of the high ceiling.</strong></td>
<td>[high ceiling]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The front.</strong></td>
<td><strong>It is a very nice place to come to.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computer area.</strong></td>
<td>“I enjoy the internet.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computers.</strong></td>
<td>“One can maintain brain power thru reading.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The reading table.</strong></td>
<td>“I need the peace to concentrate on work assignment.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The back tables.</strong></td>
<td>**Less traffic; quieter.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rear work spaces.</strong></td>
<td>**It is usually quiet and allows me to focus on the task at hand.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quiet room.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interesting.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The area set aside for ‘reading, reflecting, &amp; relaxing.’</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Not sure but most likely front lounge area w/ comfortable seating that’s available there.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The outside art pieces.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chairs for reading!</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comfortable &amp; roomy!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Which area of the building do you spend the most time in? Why?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greendale</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td>“It’s why I came.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td>“For research and printing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td>“To check e-mail &amp; to get employment opportunities online (job search.)”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lab.”</td>
<td>“Because it’s fun.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computer.”</td>
<td>“Children.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computer.”</td>
<td>“I have an 8 year old.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computers.”</td>
<td>“Kids love coming.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children’s.”</td>
<td>“It is very neat and nice.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children’s.”</td>
<td>“I do interviewing &amp; recruitment for Job Corps.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children area.”</td>
<td>“That’s where I teach ESOL.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Children section in rocking chair.”</td>
<td>“Near the non-profit center area.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Near the non-profit center area.”</td>
<td>“Tables section.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tables section.”</td>
<td>“Tables for tutoring.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Tables for tutoring.”</td>
<td>“Tables.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The fiction area.”</td>
<td>“The fiction area.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Fiction stacks.”</td>
<td>“I have some favorite authors I’d search for when I’m here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Front desk.”</td>
<td>“I only come in to get the books I placed on order.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Check out desk.”</td>
<td>“Multicultural Resources.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Front desk.”</td>
<td>“The reference computer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Front.”</td>
<td>“Looking up books &amp; audio books.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Chairs in the back, near the magazine racks.”</td>
<td>“Near the non-profit center area.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Newspaper &amp; word definition.”</td>
<td>“Tables.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hartwood</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favorite Area</strong></td>
<td><strong>Why?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Main entry.”</td>
<td>“Areas of reading interest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“New books.”</td>
<td>“To check out books to read.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Book shelves.”</td>
<td>“I love to read. I check out books for my husband. Also, I bring my grandchildren at least twice a month.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where the books are.”</td>
<td>“To sharpen my skills.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Biographies &amp; fictional mystery &amp; children’s sections.”</td>
<td>“Newspaper &amp; word definition.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Any area where there is a computer.”</td>
<td>“I don’t own a home computer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The computer area.”</td>
<td>“That’s because my computer is broke.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mainly the computer area.”</td>
<td>“Research and quiet time.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Computer.”</td>
<td>“That’s where the computers are.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Front.”</td>
<td>“Doing research and using printers. We have a computer &amp; internet but no printer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The computer lab.”</td>
<td>“My children love the art studio and enjoy having books read to them in the resource area on the love seat.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| “The art studio and parent resource room in the children’s area.” | “I have 4 kids who enjoy the activities.” |
| “The children’s area.” | “Books, computer and art section.” |
| “Children.” | “I have children that get books from there.” |
| “In the children’s area.” | “Because it’s quiet.” |
| “Children’s.” | “Less traffic; quieter.” |
| “In the back.” | “More quiet.” |
| “Rear.” | “Roomy & comfortable!” |
| “The back.” | “Like checking them out.” |
| “Chairs for reading/studying.” | “Research and quiet time.” |
| “Video, DVD’s.” | “Reading tables.” |