

Picture Perfect

Exploring **Self-Presentation** And

Social Dynamics Through *Photo*

Taking And Sharing At Art Museums

AGENDA

Motivation

Method

Findings

Recommendations



Motivation

Information Mediated By

Our original hypothesis was people were intimidated by art museums because the information was **multi-modal, required expertise, and great in volume.**



Through observations, we found that art appreciation and information processing are **mediated**, very frequently, by **phone cameras and looking down at screens.**

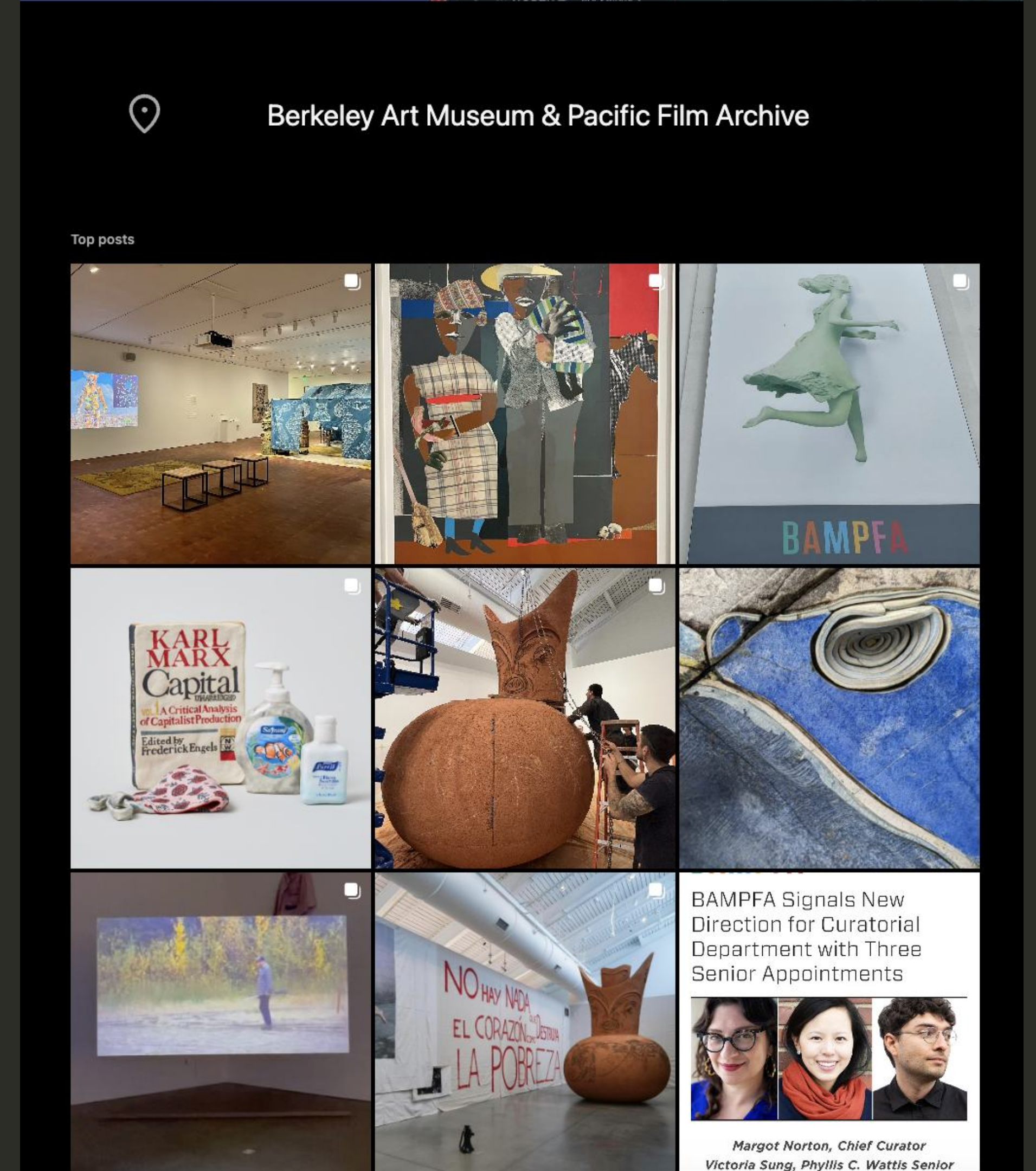
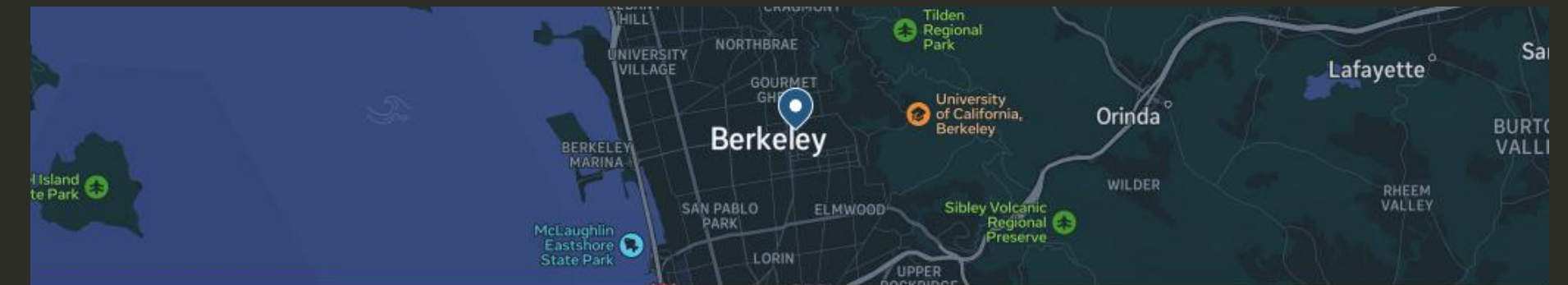
Motivation

Effect Of On

How do **photo-taking** and **photo-sharing** behaviors **manifest and shape** the experiences at art museums *both during and after the visit*?

- ✓ Engagement and interactions with photos and posts from an art museum visit
- ✓ Characteristics and impact of visitor-generated content
- ✓ Mediation of social media tools during visit

How can museums better attract and serve visitors?



Research Methods

Observation Study

- Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive

- Focused on visitor navigation and appreciation

- Noticed heavy usage of mobile devices

Instagram Analysis

- **4 museums** in the Bay Area; **100** public IG posts each

- 2 independent coders; multiple code refinements

- Codes focus on **social and art** interactions/discussions

User Interviews

- **12 participants**; Berkeley affiliates and the public

- Motivations for museum visits and photo taking/sharing

- Applied **ground theory** on transcriptions

Method



Instagram Analysis

- **4 museums** in the Bay Area; **100** public IG posts each

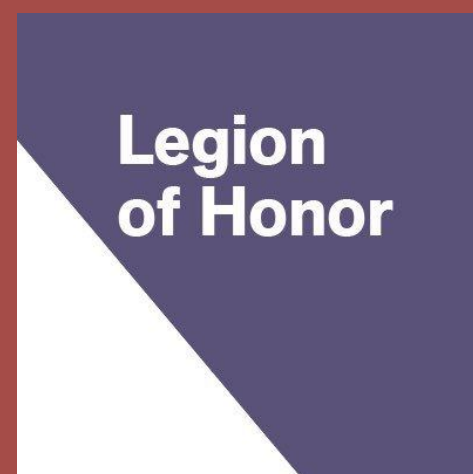


Asian
Art
Museum

**SF MO
MA**



de
Young



Legion
of Honor

- **Zeeschuimer** (open-source firefox extension) ---> Public posts in late March/early April ---> .ndjson file ---> .CSV
- Filtered and removed certain accounts e.g., Museums' official accounts and posts consisting of wedding photos

Method



Instagram Analysis

- 2 independent coders; multiple code refinements

item_id	source_platform_url	artsy_profile	fashion_exhibit	letter_writing	irving_penn	art_present	engage_model
332447565	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	traditional
332439153	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	traditional
332412475	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	traditional
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332387118	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	traditional
332386045	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	traditional
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332248131	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	interactive
332234022	https://www.instagram.com/p/...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	traditional

- **Adjusting:** We changed several codes into **True/False tags** for simpler aggregations
- **Merging:** *hash_community* and *hash_other* ---> *hash_other*
- **Splitting:** *inform_emotion* ---> *reflect_detailed* and *reflect_generic*
- **Adding:** *artsy_profile*
- **Removing:** *art_medium*

comment	comment_response	discuss_art	visit_interest	none_art	cont_companionship
TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE

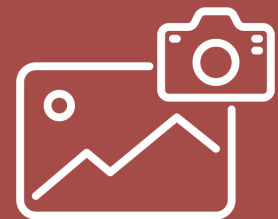
hashtag	hashtag_location	hashtag_art	hashtag_other
TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE

Instagram Analysis

- Codes focus on **social and art** interactions/discussions



Indicate **whether artwork is present** and in which engagement model



Detail the **components** of the photograph such as environment



Classify identification and interactions in the **comments and hashtags**



Identify **social dynamics** present in the photo and text interactions

Semi-Structured Interviews

● **12 participants;** Berkeley affiliates and the public

How often do you visit an art museum or gallery? *

Never/ Once a year

2 - 5 times a year

More than 5 times a year

Do you take pictures during your visits to art museums? *

Yes

No

1. Screening survey

- Art museum goers
- Have taken photos and shared them on social media

2. Participants selection

- A range of experiences with art, art history, and art museums
- A range of preferences for social media photo-sharing

3. Interviews

- 11 interviews conducted over Zoom
- ~ **60 min each**; 1 interviewer and 1-3 note-takers

A.D. describes going to the museum to "kill time" when visiting another city.	A.D. goes to the museum to "kill time" when visiting another city.	A.D. got prompted by Instagram ad and went to a museum	MK has a groupchat where they will share notable artworks to keep connections with each other even though they are physically apart.	MK posted a series of photos during their visit to SFMOMA and made it into a highlight.	MK went to SFMOMA with friends and they all dressed up before going.	Intentionally use hashtags in captions to promote his posts to a broader audience.	Strangers reach out to his public account regarding his posts	Uses tour guide for most museum visits
A.D. always take photos during their museum visits	A.D. uses Instagram as a hub to store their memories, often refers to the archive feature	A.D. takes photo of the artworks, architectural details, and intriguing scenes	MK posted pictures of various subjects, including artworks, selfie with the artworks, portrait with the artworks, labels.	The intention of posting the labels is "to educate people". "People need more context to understand art."	One of the motivation of sharing is "validation". People interacting with the content they posted gives them validation - related to the broader social media landscape. "The whole generation is like that"	Do voice recordings during a visit. Write down notes after getting back home	Posts on his way to museums. "to people know what to expect in the next few hours". Get live recommendations from previous visitors	Use public account to post about art-related stuff and private account for personal life
A.D. does not (but no portraits of themselves/their companion, described as "it's cringe")	A.D. is annoyed by the no-photo policy at certain museums, not understanding the rationale of why, becoming their ability to converse with friends who are physically not there	A.D. constructs their online identity by posting photos of visiting art museums, "look, I am so cultured"	Another of the motivation of sharing is "educating" others.	Another motivation of sharing is sparking conversation and social connections	MK is a avid Instagram user, with an active community that they interact with.	Able to recall background stories of artworks in great detail	Packed his camera the night before the visit	Younger sister tagged along after seeing his post on his way to a museum

🗨️ Semi-Structured Interviews

● Motivations for museum visits and photo taking/sharing



- **Warm-Up:** Can you tell me about your experiences with art museums?
- **Critical Incidence:** Tell us about the last time you took a photo at an art museum
- **Photo-Taking:** What are some examples of Instagram-worthy photos/moments?
- **Perspectives:** How do you think photo-sharing enhance or diminish your in-person experiences?

PicturePerfect

FINDINGS

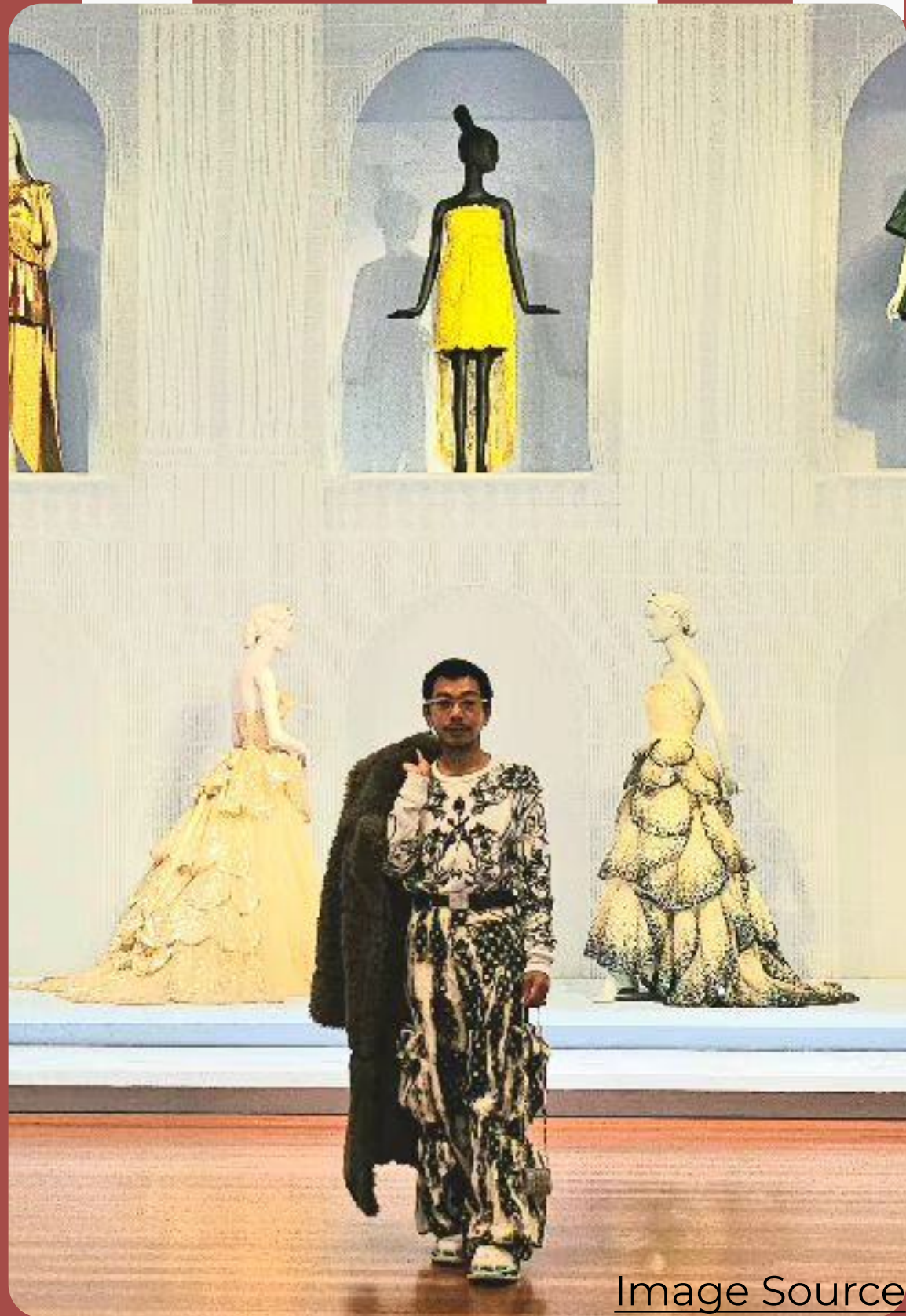


Image Source



Image Source



Image Source



Image Source

Findings

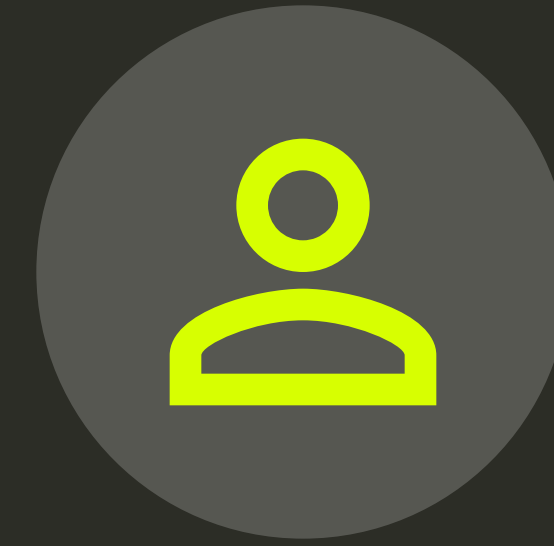
In-Person Experience



Preparation



Navigation



Identity
Management

Findings

Preparation



Image Source



Image Source

Navigation



- Queuing up for photo
- More time taking photo
- Setup conducive to photography

Findings

“Instagrammable”



No. of posts analyzed for SFMOMA	No. of posts featuring	
	<i>Yayoi Kusama: Infinite Love</i>	<i>Olafur Eliasson's One-way color tunnel</i>
97	32	27

No. of posts analyzed for de Young	No. of posts featuring	
	<i>Fashioning San Francisco</i>	<i>Irving Penn Exhibition</i>
99	52	6

Findings

“Instagrammable”



Image Source

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Findings

Identity Management



*'Look at me, I'm so **cultured** because I go to a museum and look at exhibitions.'*

-- Frequent Visitor (28) on why they post

*I have a lot of friends who are from very rich background... They think they have **good taste** so if I want to join them, I'm supposed to have **good taste** of art.*

-- Visitor (26) on why "taste" is important

*when I was younger, I thought the act of going to the art museum was a very adult activity. This adult has their life together. Very **cultured, well-rounded** person. There is an element of "pretending"*

-- Visitor (24) on why they dress up

Identity Management



Taste

*I have a lot of friends who are from very rich background... They think they have **good taste** so if I want to join them, I'm supposed to have **good taste** of art.*

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Identity Management



Taste

Status

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Findings

Identity Management



Taste

Status

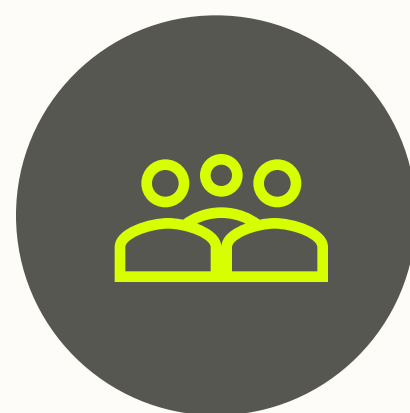
Sophistication

Findings

Online Experience



Limited
Public
Discussion
on Art



Context
Collapse

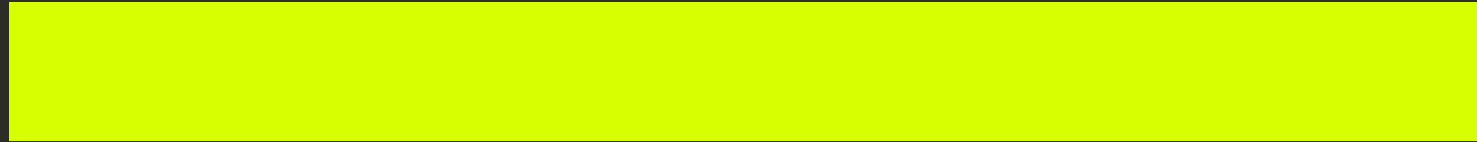


Invisible Art
Lover
Community

Findings


Limited Public Discussion On Art

Posts with:

Exhibition description  37%

Artwork description  16 %

Detailed reflection  11 %

Generic reflection  18 %



Findings

Limited Public Discussion On Art

Posts with a comment section that involves:

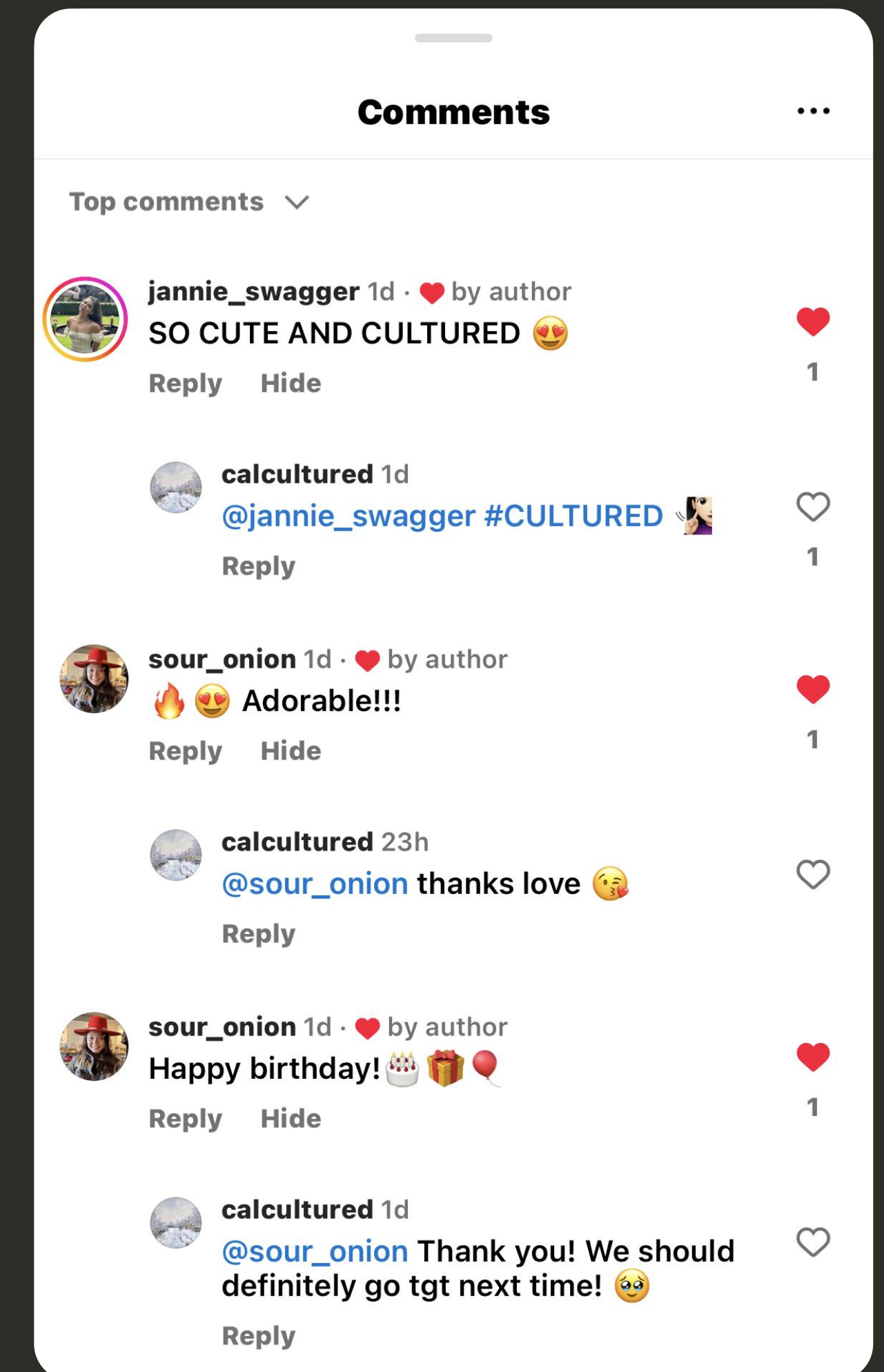
Author's response



Art discussion



Non-art discussion



Context Collapse

The flattening of different audiences into one context

*I am a lot more aware of the kind of personal content I post. I have a lot of **people watching my life** that I don't really engage with.*

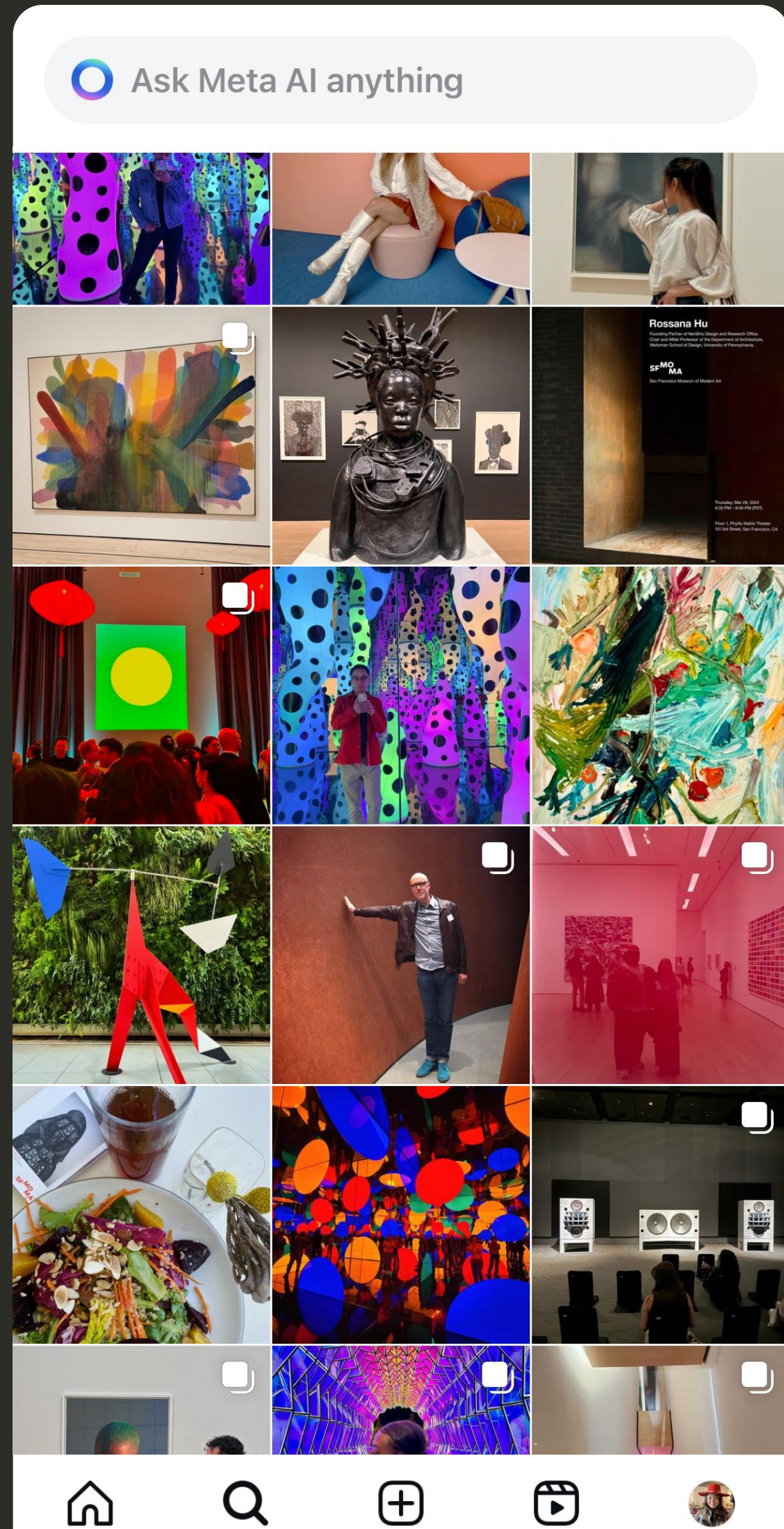
-- Visitor (24) on posting personal reflection on art

*Regarding art, 80% of my followers probably **won't understand** what I write in a caption. I feel stupid sharing it on social media with all my followers.*

-- Visitor (26) on posting personal reflection on art



Invisible Community Of Art Lovers



- Content recommendation algorithm
- Indirect social exchange
- One-to-many communication channel
- No direct contact or reciprocity

Findings

Invisible Community Of Art Lovers

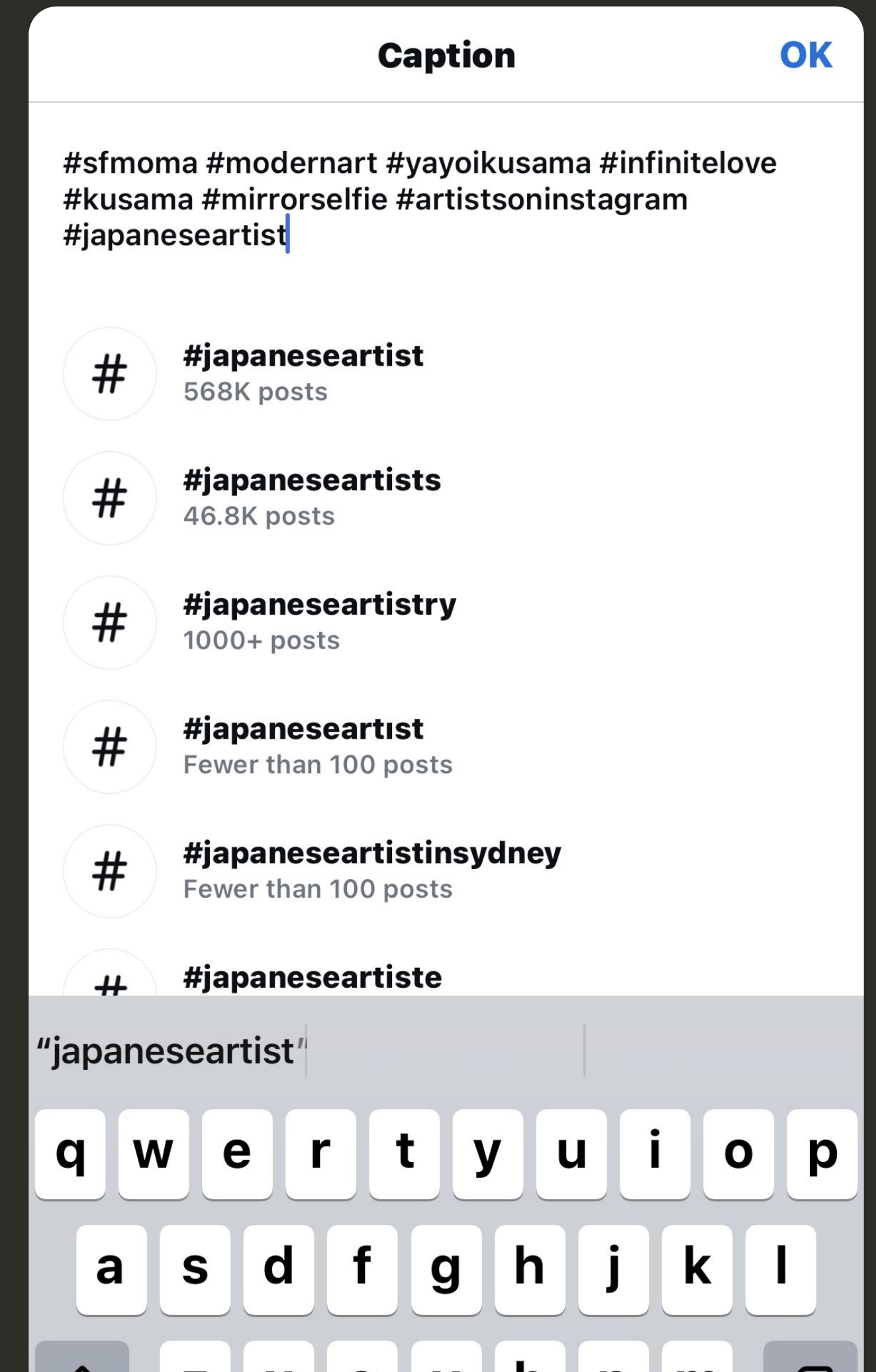
Posts with:

Hashtags 38%

Location hashtags 25 %

Art-related hashtags 23 %

Other hashtags 21 %



1. Social Norm

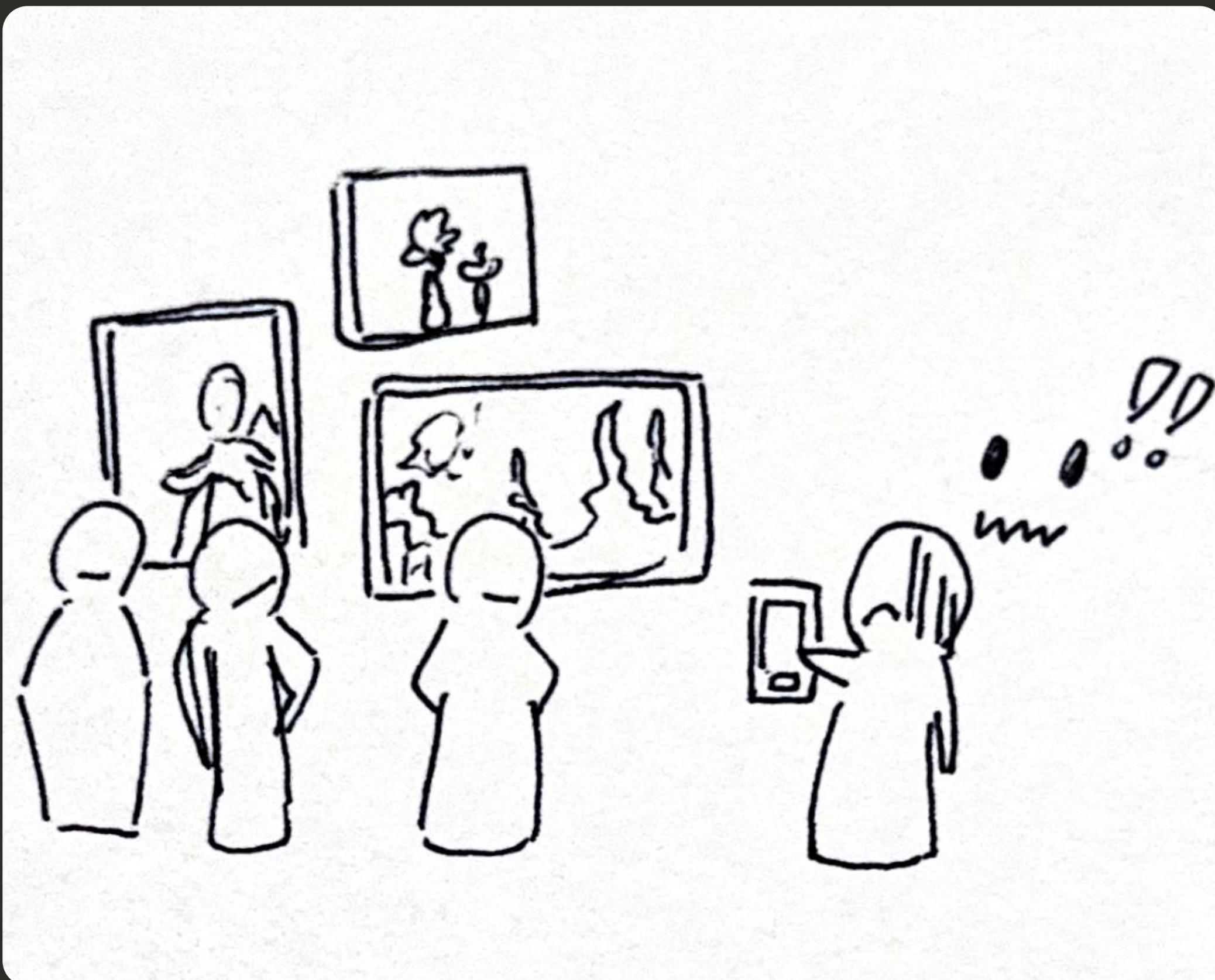
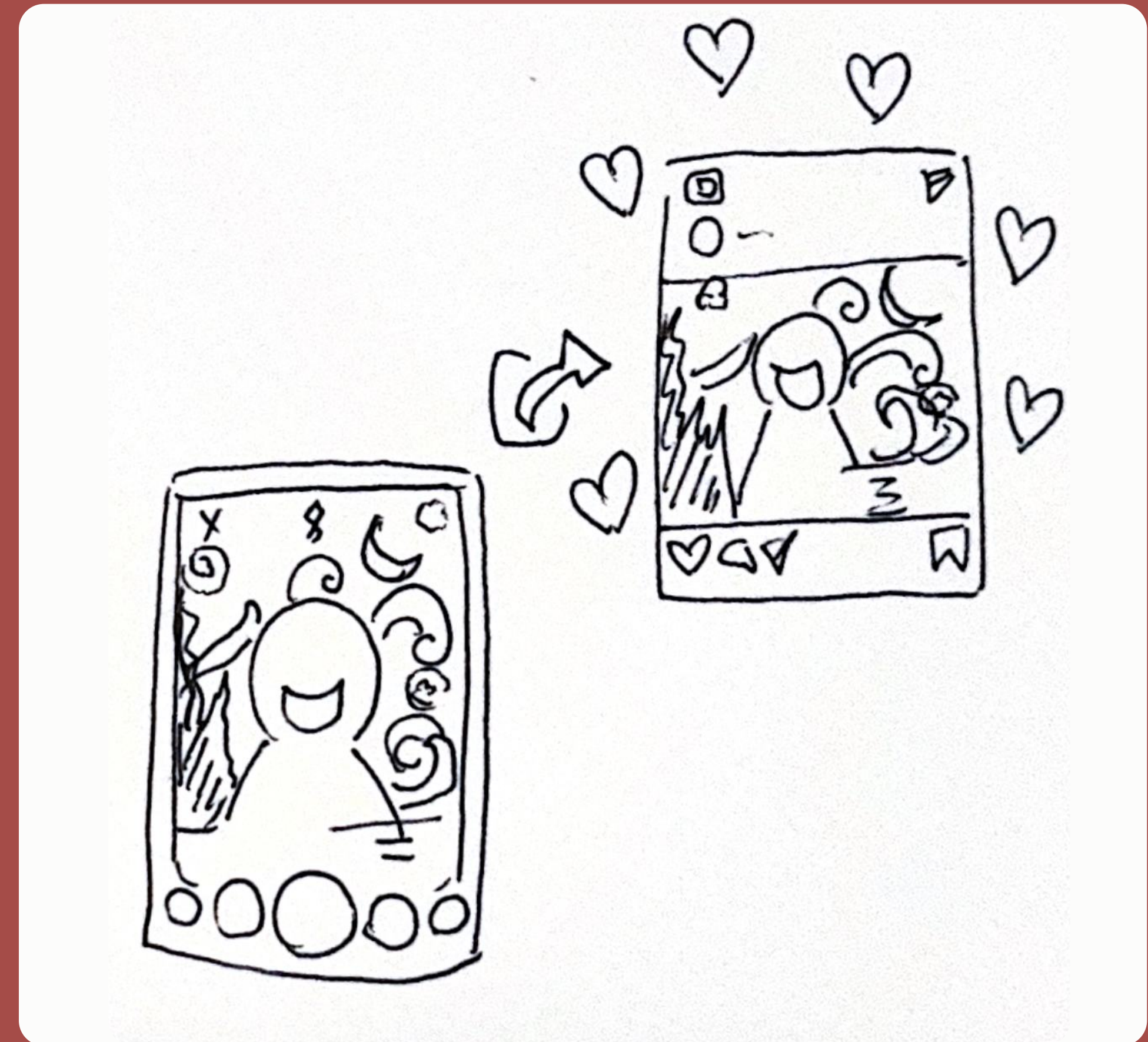
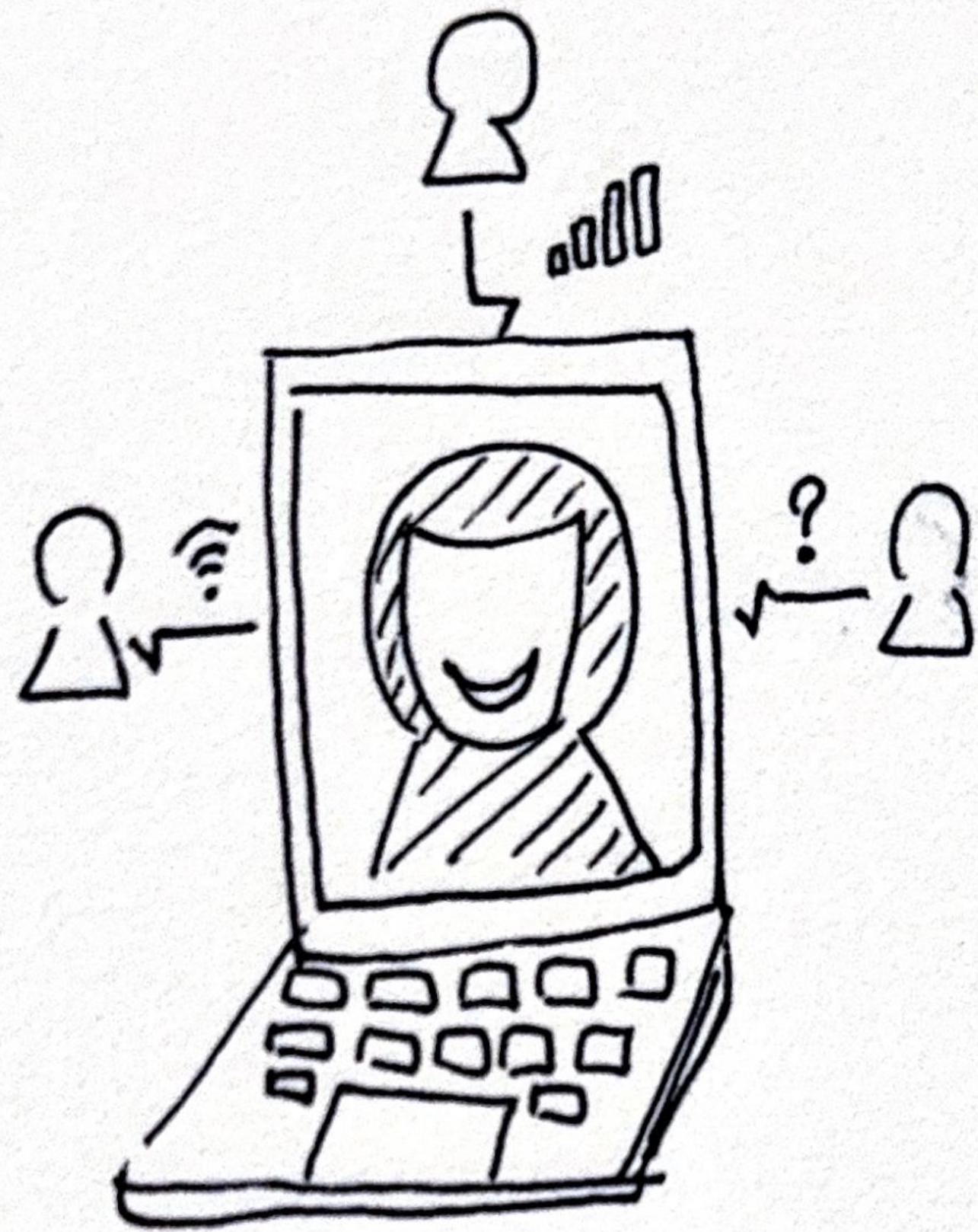


Photo-Taking is **against the social norms** making it difficult to take pictures although it is important to visitor's art museum experience.

1. Instagrammable Zone

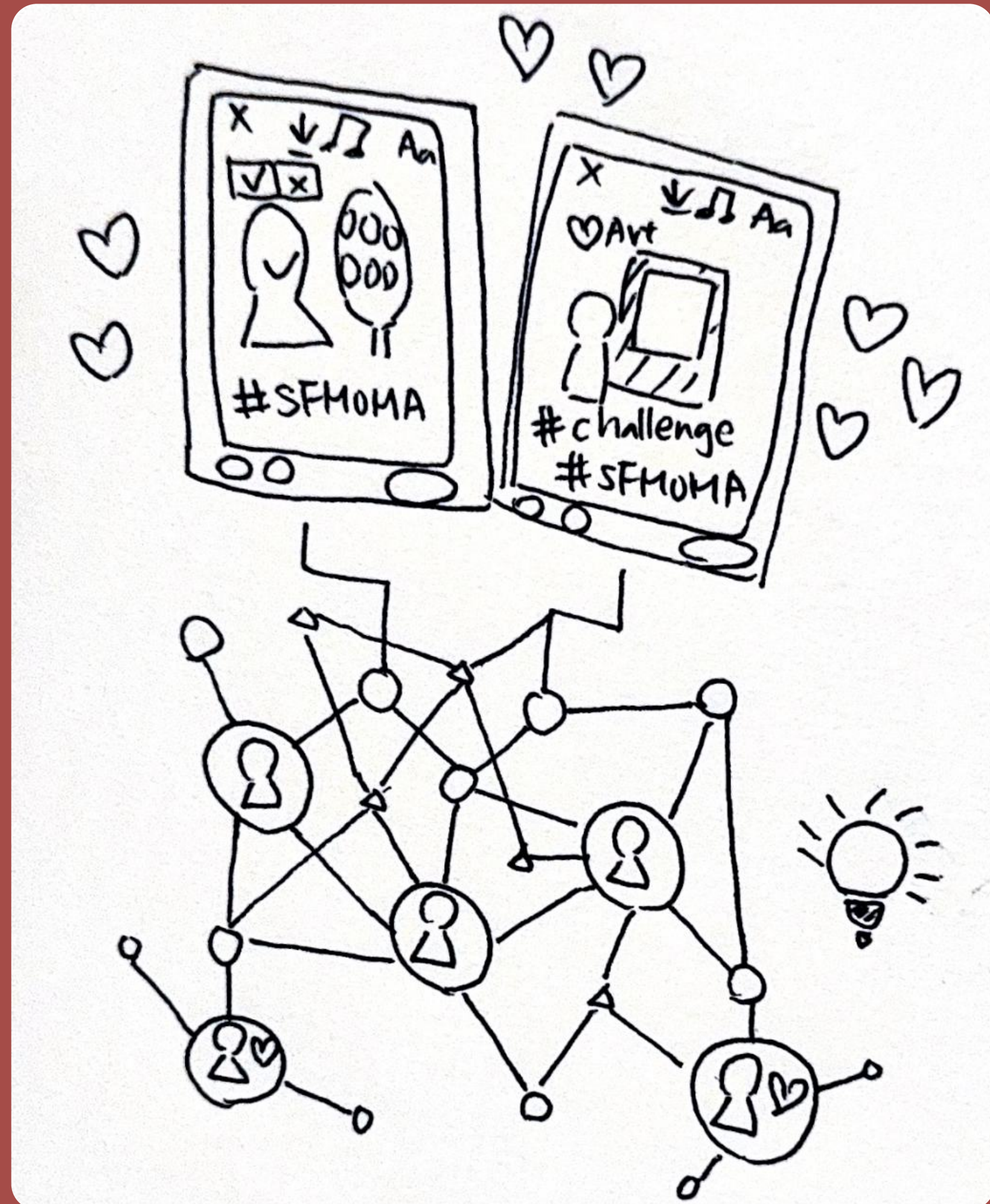


2. Context Collapse



Art museum visitors feel “cringy” to share their reflections publicly due to **context collapse**.

2. Stories & Hashtags



- Build online engagement with Instagram Story Challenges.

- Use hashtag to contribute to *“Information based public goods.”*

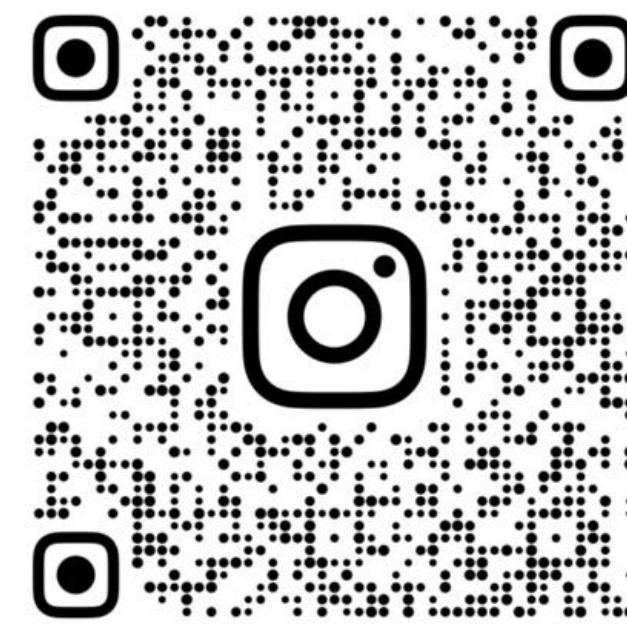
PicturePerfect

THANK YOU

Scan The QR Code To Enjoy A Parody Of Our Observations!

#CalCultured #Taste #Classy

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