

# Speaking of Art as Embodied Imagination: A Multisensory Approach to Understanding Aesthetic Experience

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This article focuses on somatic experience—not just the process of thinking bodily but how the body informs the logic of thinking about art. We examine the links between embodiment, movement, and multisensory experience insofar as they help to elucidate the contours of art appreciation in a museum. We argue that embodiment can be identified at two levels: the phenomenological and the cognitive unconscious. At the first level, individuals are conscious of their feelings and actions while, at the second level, sensorimotor and other bodily oriented inference mechanisms inform their processes of abstract thought and reasoning. We analyze the consumption stories of 30 museum goers in order to understand how people move through museum spaces and feel, touch, hear, smell, and taste art. Further, through an analysis of metaphors and the use of conceptual blending, we tap into the participants' unconscious minds, glean important embodiment processes that shape their reasoning.

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*Solvitur ambulando* (Solve it by walking)  
(ROMAN PROVERB)

In the twenty-first century, for better or worse, the marketplace has changed its strategy from selling products and services to selling the consumer an experience. In their provocative book entitled *The Experience Economy* (1999), Pine and Gilmore describe the marketplace as a theatrical stage, replete with actors, scripts, and audience participation (consumers). Central to their thesis is the notion that companies such as Pizza Hut now market and sell not so much products as experiences. The corporeal basis for marketing has a decided advantage: success depends on the memorability of the aesthetic experience. This aspect of the consumer economy has merited little attention (Pine and Gil-

more 1999; Schmitt 1999), so it is time for consumer researchers to revisit Kant's question, "How is experience possible?"

In defining the noun *experience* as "the apprehension of an object or emotion through the senses or mind" and the verb *to experience* as "to participate in personally; undergo," the *American Heritage Dictionary* highlights the sensorial and the corporeal. New research on consumer experiences also emphasizes the importance of embodiment. Pham et al. (2001), for instance, state that consumer assessments are often based on both feelings and reason and that one or the other becomes more prominent depending on the context. They argue that feelings play a central role in consumer decision making and merit serious investigation, which, for this study, means that intertwining mind and body is crucial for creating an unforgettable consumer experience. The effort afoot to restore embodied realism to social scientific inquiry (Johnson 1999; Lakoff and Johnson 1999) has generated some of the most exciting research into consumer behavior.

In this article, we address the links between embodiment and consumer experiences in order to elucidate the contours of the aesthetic experience—not just the process of thinking bodily but how the body affects the logic of our thinking about art. With this goal in mind, we revisit Kant's question in order to explore art museum experiences—the simultaneity with which people see, hear, feel, taste, and smell art. We believe, along with Lakoff and Johnson (1999), that our

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conceptual systems and our capacity for critical reflection are shaped by the nature of our bodies and our bodily interactions. We use three frameworks in order to clarify our understanding of the embodied mind—Merleau-Ponty's (1962) concept of embodied existence, Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) theory of image schemata, and Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) discussion of conceptual blending (a modification based on Lakoff and Johnson's work on image schemata). We base our analysis on the metaphorical and linguistic representation of embodiment processes presented to us by the participants in our study.

For the last two decades, social theorists have grown increasingly interested in the body, but almost exclusively as outcome of social process rather than as an embodied agency (Lyon and Barbalet 1994). Even the consumerist body (Featherstone 1998) has not been analyzed effectively as a laboring body, despite our discipline's turn toward cultural phenomenology. Research in phenomenological psychology, such as Gibson's (1966) into the haptic system, points us more in the direction of embodied agency. So, as ethnographers who use their bodies as research tools to both participate in and observe cultural phenomena (Sherry 1995), we turn our attention to body as process, for bodily experience makes up the "existential ground of culture" (Csordas 1994, p. 269). But first, we need to examine the consumer literature on embodiment processes.

### **EMBODIED EXPERIENCES: A SELECT REVIEW OF THE CONSUMER LITERATURE**

To understand the existing consumer literature on embodiment, we need to distinguish between its two levels of awareness: the conscious, or phenomenological, level and the cognitive unconscious level. The former makes individuals aware of their bodies in their thoughts and actions, while the latter involves all the unrecognized activities, including the neural processes of message transmission and learning that enable individuals to think and act (see Lakoff and Johnson [1999] for an extended discussion). To date, with the exception of the research by Zaltman and his colleagues (Zaltman 1997; Zaltman and Coulter 1995, 2000), there are no published studies in consumer behavior that focus primarily on embodiment processes at the cognitive unconscious level.

Throughout the history of Western culture, the state of one's body has been interpreted as a material sign of the moral character within (Foucault 1979). Consumers therefore try to carefully monitor the physical appearance of their bodies, control the foods and substances they ingest, and protect their environment. These personal motivations manifest a form of self-discipline (the disciplinary gaze has become an ordering principle of social life): the consumer adopts the perspective of his or her self, so it becomes natural to regard one's body as a socially visible object that can and should be reconstructed to convey preferred meanings (Joy and Venkatesh 1994). In building a self-image and

an identity, consumers engage in continuous processes (moral and otherwise) that subject their bodies to change and discipline.

Thompson and Hirschman (1995) investigate not only how consumers respond to an abstract and unattainable physical ideal but also how their perceptions are conditioned by social relationships, normative prescriptions, and moralistic dictums about self-control and discipline. In sum, they contend that the social world of each consumer reinforces her system of bodily meanings and practices. Thompson and Hirschman's phenomenology of the body, although insightful, deals only with the conscious understanding of the self and body, whereas the cognitive unconscious largely makes up who we are and how we reason—the very aspect of embodiment processes that a phenomenological approach fails to uncover.

Celsi, Rose, and Leigh's study of skydiving (1993) also turns into a phenomenological account of self-control and discipline. The authors study individuals who hone their physical and mental skills in order to execute dangerous feats while they flirt with death or physical/psychological injury. Such risk-taking ventures transform individuals through what Csikszentmihalyi calls a flow experience, defined as a pleasurable somatic state induced by focused attention on an intense activity. Although Celsi et al. (1993) acknowledge that skydiving constitutes a somatic experience resulting in an adrenaline rush, they concentrate not on its sensory aspects but on the dynamics of motivation and the advantages and disadvantages of high-risk consumption activities (each jump may result in an injury). As Arnould (1998, p. 111) observes, Celsi et al. (1993) had themselves taken up skydiving, so their representation of it reflects lived experience in the phenomenological sense. Arnould (1998) calls this type of ethnographic writing "thick inscription"—one informed by a phenomenological approach in which the participant is also native.

Unlike skydiving, water rafting does not demand extraordinary individual effort, but it does require teamwork, ultimately culminating in the extraordinary experience of river magic (Arnould and Price 1993). Both "thick transcription" (subject narrations are systematically presented by the ethnographer) and "thick inscription" (the ethnographer uses a phenomenological approach to understand the narratives) are offered by the researchers, culminating in a polyphonic text. But Arnould and Price (1993) stop short of defining cultures as a way of sensing the world (Stoller 1997).

Research into impulsive behavior acknowledges the importance of sensations felt in the body. For example, Rook's 1987 study addresses both the biochemical and psychological basis of impulsive behavior, which is emotionally complex. Rook points out that consumers who make impulsive purchases experience bodily warmth but also guilt because they cannot control their spending. Consumers behave irrationally because reasoning is peripheral to this experience, but there are settings, such as amusement parks, where consumers pay to behave irrationally (e.g., they take roller-coaster rides). On a daily basis, however, they must resist

this type of behavior, at least some of the time. In extreme cases, impulsive behavior translates directly into an immediate physical response, or in Levy's words, "consumer spasm" (quoted in Rook 1995). Yet Rook (1995) argues that trait tendencies and normative influences mediate impulsive actions, so that rationality prevails in the end.

Sherry's (1998) work on Nike Town Chicago (NTC), uses a phenomenological approach, concentrating specifically on how a built environment embodies brand essence and how consumers respond to it. He suggests that consumption at NTC is "ultimately about tactile knowing and proprioception: the servicescape engages what Benjamin called our 'optical unconscious'" (p. 138). While Sherry's work underscores the importance of embodied existence, it only taps into the conscious world of consumers as they explore this magnificent storehouse. Duhaime, Joy, and Ross's (1995) study on how consumers apprehend art in a museum also taps into the phenomenology of the body as visitors make their way through the citadels of art. Neither Sherry nor Duhaime et al., however, expand on how this happens (the logic of the body) or how embodiment can be understood at the unconscious level.

Inspired by the work of Lakoff and Johnson, Zaltman and Coulter (1995, 2000) use visual images to study consumption processes. The Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (Zaltman 1997) builds on the idea that thoughts are primarily unconscious, metaphorical, and image based, the assumption being that pictures represent both lower- and higher-order constructs rich in information. Although Zaltman and Coulter (2000) acknowledge the importance of the bodily based deep metaphors, they orient their research not on embodiment processes per se but on the deeper meanings of products and services. They also do not give a clear picture of how cultural rules are learned or changed nor of the mind's ability for conceptual integration. We nonetheless draw our inspiration from these studies.

Overall, the consumer literature has dwelled on the phenomenology of embodied existence, namely, on how the social world helps to shape and reinforce individual bodily meanings and practices. Individuals reflect and act through self discipline and learning. When they flirt with danger, as in skydiving, the body experiences flow, but the authors are more concerned with what motivates individuals to execute such high-risk feats—all of these studies focus on the conscious consumption process. Although Zaltman (1997) and Zaltman and Coulter (1995, 2000) take us into the world of the unconscious through a discussion of deep metaphors and image schemata, they only take us to the brink of what we could know about the unconscious world of consumers. Image schemata reflect fundamental embodiment processes, but they only capture part of the process of meaning making in explicating experiences. So what do we know of aesthetic experiences in particular?

Kant believed that an aesthetic experience was possible only if it was bereft of basic bodily desires, such as sexual appetite or thirst. This can occur only if one distinguishes between seeing and hearing, on the one hand, and tasting,

touching, and smelling, on the other, because the latter group makes it difficult for an individual to be objective.

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's (1990) study of the aesthetic museum experience is insightful, because they address what happens when an individual becomes skillful at understanding and experiencing art. However, their work has three shortcomings. First, they aim to construct a model of the ideal experience based on the highest forms in which it can be expressed, so they interview only curators and art experts about how to make art more accessible to the average museum visitor. Second, although they make passing references to other sensory perceptions (e.g., tactile perceptions) of curators, they emphasize the art of seeing. But the aesthetic experience leaves bodily traces captured in the concept of flow, and, as a result, museum goers—much like the skydivers and the white-water rafters—succumb to experiences that engage them in autotelic activities. Most important, like other phenomenological researchers, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson fail to tap into the unconscious world of the people they study.

In our study, we explore the experiences of both art experts and individuals who either have a passing interest in or a passion for art. We suggest that embodiment processes can be understood at two levels—the phenomenological and the cognitive unconscious. We explain how Merleau-Ponty's theory of embodied existence informs aesthetic experience at the phenomenological level, and we use the concept of image schemata of Lakoff and Johnson (1999), as well as Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) notion of conceptual integration, to understand embodiment at the level of the unconscious. Along with Lakoff and Johnson (1999), we propose that the term *cognitive* include any mental operation of multisensory and neural processing. Bodies move, sense, touch, smell, taste, and act in conjunction with thought and speech within a space, for people experience themselves simultaneously *in* and *as* their bodies (Csordas 1994).

In our narrative, we follow Stoller's admonition to "tack between the analytic and the sensible," to write about embodied engagement in a sensuous form, which requires acknowledging the contingent nature of situated experience (Stoller 1997, p. 23). We do so by analyzing informants' observations and narratives of museum experiences and detailing our own analysis of the issues under consideration. But before embarking on the narrative, we will describe our methods for gathering and interpreting data.

## METHODOLOGY

Our work was informed by the following salient elements of an ethnographic account: extended experiential participation in a specific cultural context, systematic data collection, and recording in natural settings (Arnould 1998; Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Joy 1991; Stewart 1998). For 11 months, we systematically gathered observational data by taking field notes, keeping field diaries, using visual materials, and conducting interviews. The participants gave us permission to tape the interviews, which generally lasted from one and a half to two hours. We used four different strategies for conducting these interviews. We accompanied

one group of participants through the exhibits, engaging them in conversation when they showed a preference for a specific artwork or when they felt like sharing their museum experiences with us. We then followed this up with an interview in the lounge, often starting with questions about our earlier conversation. A second group preferred to view the exhibit without interacting with us, so we followed them through the exhibits, noting how they used space and time and observing the ways in which they approached the artworks—a natural opening for their understanding of aesthetic experience. Then we interviewed them. We let a third group wander through the museum before they joined us in the lounge or cafe for an interview. We made observations of their spatial movements as they traversed the museum spaces. Finally, we interviewed a fourth group whose movements we did not monitor in the museum. While our interview data are drawn from a limited number of participants within a specified time period, our observations are not limited to them alone.

To enhance our knowledge of the exhibits, we took the museum's guided tours and rented audio guides. Further, since some participants mentioned certain artworks, we used them as memory cues and as ways of establishing rapport with people in our study (Heisley and Levy 1991). The textual data include the following materials: the transcriptions of taped interviews with 30 museum visitors, newspaper articles about the exhibits, and art catalogs. We drew on both the observational data and the textual materials to provide a meaningful interpretation of the aesthetic experience.

Informants were chosen mostly on the basis of age, gender, frequency of visits, their knowledge of art, and their ability to speak English. Our limited knowledge of French required that we interview only speakers of English. We interviewed four art critics/curators (one male and three female), to explore the notions of theming, directing, and managing the exhibit from a professional's perspective, and six nonprofessional art lovers (two males and four females), for their knowledge of the museum experience. The remaining participants (eight male and 12 female) were students, volunteers, housewives, and professionals with little knowledge of the artists featured in the temporary exhibits or in the museum collections. Eleven of the participants were over 40 years old: four of the seven people in their mid-forties were curators; two were in their fifties; and two were in their sixties. All other participants were roughly between 20 and 45 years of age. Table 1 provides a list of the participants and their key characteristics relevant to our study.

All participants agreed to visit the temporary exhibits and permanent collections of our choosing (description follows) and to be interviewed about their actual experience in the museum. We recorded, transcribed, and analyzed each interview to better understand it and to identify emergent themes for the next interview. As Thompson, Locander, and Pollio (1989) note, researchers continuously revise interpretations as they grasp more and more of the text. We explored two levels of interpretation, in each case moving

from the particular to the general: on one level, we analyzed parts of an interview in the context of the entire interview; on another, we analyzed each interview in the context of the whole body of interviews (Thompson 1997; Thompson et al. 1989). As Spiggle (1994, p. 495) suggests, such iteration helps to refine concepts and draw out their theoretical implications.

We also took field notes and kept field diaries throughout the research period. Since the experiences were pleasurable for the participants, they spoke freely and did not require much probing. At times, we felt compelled to participate in the discussions and to share our thoughts and feelings with the participants. This put them more at ease and engaged them more readily in the data collection process. We did a follow-up with many of the participants, having given them a transcript of their interview or sent it to them by e-mail (Wallendorf and Belk 1989). This strategy was particularly successful because the participants could correspond with each other by e-mail, using comments they had made in answer to specific questions as a memory cue for gathering further information (Kozinets 2001). In general, prolonged participation, triangulation across different exhibits, sound observation, and good interview techniques—all strategies addressed by Wallendorf and Belk (1989)—helped to bolster the integrity of our explanations.

By focusing on three specific temporally staggered exhibits, we were able to provide a framework for the participants' museum experiences, one in which concrete empirical referents provide a grounding for the abstract. This is what Spiggle (1998, p. 167) refers to as an "eventful frame." Important themes emerged from the interviews, all dealing with the multisensory apprehension of museum art—touching, seeing, body movement, sound recording, taste, and smell. This abstract level of interpretation that draws on major conceptual themes and subthemes may be called an "elaborated frame" (Spiggle 1998, p. 167). In the rest of the article, we show that participants reflected on their interactions with museum space, their use of audio guides, and, most important, on the art they had experienced, which inspired further visits. A third level of analysis that integrates excerpts from interviews, field notes, and descriptive passages may be described as an "interpenetrated frame" (Spiggle 1998, p. 167). Thus far, the data analysis is primarily at the phenomenological level. In addition to the above, we also undertake a metaphorical analysis to uncover mechanisms by which bodily based inferences occur. At the most abstract level, we subsume and integrate all these elements within the concept of embodiment. In the next section, we provide a narrative structuring of our participants' stories. As researchers in art museums, we were quite oblivious to the importance of sensory understanding, so our article represents coming to terms with our own senses in museum spaces (Stoller 1997).

## CREATING THE NARRATIVE: SPEAKING OF ART AS EMBODIED IMAGINATION

Three theoretical frameworks inform our argument: Merleau-Ponty's (1962) existential phenomenology, which is

TABLE 1  
PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS

Name	Age	Education	Occupation	Knowledge of art	Frequency of visits per year
Sheila	45	Ph.D.	Freelance curator	Higher	>12
Trevor	47	Ph.D.	Freelance curator	Higher	>12
Justine	43	M.A.	Artist/curator	Higher	>12
Laura	45	M.A.	Artist/curator	Higher	>12
Danny	30	M.A.	Student	Lower	3-4
David	26	M.A.	Student	Lower	3
Joan	63	High school	Housewife	Lower	4
Michael	22	B.A.	Student	Lower	2
Ken	42	B.A.	Translator	Medium	10
Nelson	24	B.Com	Student	Lower	2
Nancy	26	B.Com	Computer programmer	Lower	5
Tina	32	B.Com	Accountant	Lower	3-4
Tim	22	B.A.	Student	Lower	2
Tom	27	M.A.	Student	Lower	2-3
Karine	28	M.A.	Student	Lower	3-4
Betty	38	B.A.	Secretary	Lower	2
Peter	50	B.Com	Manager	Lower	2-4
Lucinda	50	B.A.	Teacher	Medium	4
Jennifer	40	M.A.	Interior designer	Medium	6-7
Kate	34	M.B.A	Analyst	Lower	2
Christine	22	B.A.	Student	Lower	3-4
Jessica	27	B.A.	Volunteer	Higher	>15
John	60	B.A.	Retired teacher	Medium	6-7
Natalie	26	B.Com	Computer analyst	Lower	3
Monica	27	M.A.	Student	Medium	6-7
Richard	35	B.Com	Accountant	Lower	5
Geena	45	B.A.	Housewife	Lower	3
Ghislaine	38	B.A.	Volunteer	Higher	>15
Grace	35	B.A.	Health professional	Lower	2
Linda	33	M.B.A	Student	Lower	2

NOTE.—The category “knowledge of art” was based on formal art or art history background and what participants said. We also conducted short interviews with Griselda, a doctor, and Bob, a tour guide at the Monkland Museum. B.Com = bachelor of commerce.

grounded in the body; Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) theory of image schemata; and Fauconnier and Turner’s (2002) theory of conceptual blending. Merleau-Ponty’s (1962) existential phenomenology recognizes three levels of embodiment: the role of physical attributes, such as body size and shape, in understanding an object or event; the process of skill acquisition, which suggests that “every perceptual habit (read skill) is a motor habit” (p. 143); and the linkages between the body and acquired cultural skills (elaborated by Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1999). For instance, cutting up food with cutlery, as practiced in the West, is not necessarily done in other cultures: people use chopsticks in China and their fingers in India. Further, in each locale there are finer nuances about using any of these artifacts/appendages that are culturally acquired. In other words, individuals learn to act appropriately in relation to the specific cultural contexts. In any of these contexts, skill acquisition necessitates the embodied presence of an imaginative individual who can respond to stimuli in order to change the current situation. This is why Merleau-Ponty emphasizes an individual’s ability to act in the world, as exemplified in the phrase “I can,” and not merely rely on the body’s structure.

Merleau-Ponty regards perception as both a physiological

event and an intellectual judgment because every object of perception is embedded in a context. The perceiving mind is thus an incarnate mind, and the ability to perceive becomes an acquired body skill. These skills are learned early in life through trial, error, and/or observation and through involvement, practice, and experience. Skill acquisition has a reciprocal aspect, which determines how future situations or things can be dealt with using the appropriate response (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1999). More important, skill acquisition requires imagination and an ability to respond to situations continuously, a process Merleau-Ponty calls the intentional arc.

Further, one acquires skills and acts on them in order to achieve a particular goal, but once this skill is learned, one acts without thinking about the goal. The motivation that drives skillful action is based on Merleau-Ponty’s notion of maximal grip—the body’s tendency to grasp something whether the person is looking at an artwork or learning to ride a bicycle. But once the learning process advances, no explicit motivation is necessary. Expertise can lead to purposeful action without the goal or intention ever becoming prominent in a person’s mind—that is, the body simply takes over because of competence and experience.

When the body performs an activity unconsciously, individuals tend to experience flow (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson 1990), for mastery and expertise lead to total immersion. Purposive intent is absent from such absorption because the body has already learned to act competently and intuitively through skill acquisition, a direct response to a familiar perceptual gestalt (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1999). In such instances, the body achieves an equilibrium with the environment—an optimal body-environment relationship—and any deviation results in attempts to regain the equilibrium. Over time the body learns to not only have a good gestalt in any one domain but also to improve what counts as good gestalt in that domain.

In his discussion of Merleau-Ponty's virtual body, Steeves (2001) further clarifies the ideas of maximal grip and the intentional arc. Merleau-Ponty (1962) regards the virtual body as an imaginative dimension of embodied existence (p. 383), which makes it possible to generate alternative perspectives on the body and consequently to reshape it. Such experiences are not necessarily confined to bodily skills but may be expanded to include aesthetic activities that place imagination and creativity at the heart of embodied life. For instance, the perception of a still life (e.g., Renoir's *Bouquet of Tulips*) involves recognizing the relationships between the viewing subject and the painting, as well as the various aspects of the painting—its color, texture, and so on. Since perception is synesthetic, a picture of a tulip may invoke its perfume (nose), a sound (ear), and even a type of feel (touch): the flower may smell fresh, sound like a tinkle, and feel soft as a caress. When the focus is on vision, the remaining senses remain in the background as a quasi-presence. However, when the viewing subject shifts her focus to the perfume of the tulip (olfactory sense), the background now becomes the foreground, while all the remaining senses recede into the background. This process can be replicated for all the remaining senses the tulip summons. Consequently, to perceive, according to Steeves (2001), is to engage with both receding backgrounds and appearing foregrounds. The background(s) thus represent(s) not merely a stage for what is seen (vision being the dominant sense), but potential modes of embodiment incorporating all the other senses. In other words, the appearance of the object requires more than simply the presence of a set of sense qualities, for it evokes the elusive presence of a background of sensation that is as much absent as present and as much invisible as visible (Steeves 2001, p. 377). To comprehend the entire structure of the perceptual object, the perceiver must engage with the virtual modes of embodiment implied by each quality of the perceptual background. The object/event is thus synthesized through one's own body, says Merleau-Ponty (1962), and like the body, partakes of the virtual as well as the actual (p. 205). Imagination is thus at the heart of perception and is closely tied to the incarnate body.

Despite the importance he attributes to embodied existence, Merleau-Ponty does not explicitly state that the structure of our bodies is central to the reasoning process. He proffers only guidelines for studying perception at the con-

scious and phenomenological level. What we propose here is its application at the empirical level, particularly through a discussion of virtual body enactments on the part of participants. However, while phenomenological reflection is valuable in revealing the felt quality and structure of our experience, it must be supplemented by empirical research into the cognitive unconscious. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) and Fauconnier and Turner (2002) offer mechanisms to tap into the cognitive unconscious level. These authors contend that metaphors and processes of conceptual integration hold the key to understanding the deeper processes of embodiment at the cognitive unconscious level.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) state that complex or abstract metaphors are primary metaphors that bring two distant domains—source and target—into correspondence with each other. The source domain is usually more physical or concrete, while the target domain tends to be more abstract and complex. Further, the source domain is made up of our fundamental orienting concepts known as image schemata or primary (deep) metaphors (Zaltman 1997; Zaltman and Coulter 2000). Image schemata are experienced at the corporeal level by manipulating objects and moving the body in space and time. A considerable part of our reasoning stems from projecting bodily and spatial image schemata onto abstract concepts. These image schemata—the primary means by which we construct order—are flexible enough to take on any number of instantiations in different contexts (Johnson 1987, p. 25), thus allowing for kaleidoscopic variations. They also shape how we express emotions, for the language of emotions does not merely reflect, but in fact constructs, the feelings that we experience.

These fundamental image schemata form the basis of complex metaphors, which are embodied in three ways (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 73): (1) bodily experiences pair sensorimotor and subjective experience; for example, a child learns to gradually distinguish between sensorimotor experiences, on the one hand, and subjective experience and judgment, on the other; (2) the source domain logic arises from the inferential structure of the sensorimotor system; for example, the persisting cross-domain associations are the mappings of conceptual metaphor that allow a child, for instance, to distinguish between being closely held by his mother and the judgment of intimacy; and (3) when cross-mapping occurs, complex metaphors are instantiated neurally in the synaptic weights associated with neural connections. According to Narayanan (see Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 41), during the period of conflation, permanent neural connections are made across neural networks that define conceptual domains. This theory explains how primary metaphors are learned, and it also provides an understanding of the neural basis for metaphorical inferences. Based on this, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) contend that all aspects of our reasoning and thinking are based on neural and sensorimotor processing.

Fauconnier and Turner (2002, pp. 46–50) offer a more complex model of source-to-target domain mapping through the use of additional spaces that they call the generic space

and the blend. They argue that Lakoff and Johnson's two-space model, or target and source domain, does not take into consideration complexities in metaphorical thought—especially when different conceptual domains coactivate. In such situations, metaphorical connections are apparent only in the blend and not through conventional mapping of source-to-target domains. Conceptual integration requires the cognitive manipulation of two input spaces to create a third space, called the blend, through a fourth one, called generic space.

According to Fauconnier and Turner, generic space captures the structure that inputs share. The blend, on the other hand, projects the structure from the two input spaces to a new space that includes the structure in the generic space in addition to a more specific structure. Not all input elements and relations project to the blend, which may also contain ideas that are not present in any of the other mental spaces. The emergent blend structure develops through three processes: composition of projections, completion of basic cognitive processes, and elaboration (p. 48). Composition may be simple or complex, depending on the mental spaces required to resolve the situation. In completion, the principle of closure and pattern completion seems to be at work. Elaboration involves simulations of various blend principles, which can assume many different forms. Such creative possibilities arise from the open-ended nature of completion and elaboration. Finally, the blend contains a structure that is not copied from any of the inputs.

We will illustrate how conceptual integration occurs through a discussion of how the value of art is both created and challenged within the art world. One of the central issues of contemporary aesthetic discourse concerns the relationship between exhibit space and art, more specifically, how one legitimizes the other (Joy 1998). The very concept of art underwent a dramatic change in the nineteenth century when public museums offered their wall space for displaying important works of art (Krauss 1996). The museum wall came to signify inclusion and value, for a work of art acquired value only when it was exhibited there. This symbiosis is reflected in Monet's *Water Lilies*.

If we use Fauconnier and Turner's concept of conceptual blending, the target domain in the first instance is the landscape and the source domain is the museum (both input spaces contribute to the blend). The generic space includes projections from both inputs involving space that represents what is valuable. In the first instance, the blend includes the idea that museums are the ultimate authority in defining what is art, although it may be challenged (principle of composition). In the second instance, Monet's *Water Lilies* (a panoramic painting that takes up all of the walls of the exhibit space) serves as an example of a landscape painting that becomes a part of the museum. At one level, it is a part of what is contained in a museum (painting shown in a museum), and, at another level, it becomes the container or the museum's wall, thus challenging the museum's authority (principles of completion and elaboration). The container schemata do not explain additional features, such as

the steps taken by the Impressionists to bring their art to the public (they mounted a major challenge to the establishment by holding exhibits outside of the academy); Monet's intention to critique museum space vis-à-vis his panoramic painting; and the artist's power to question the entrenched power of museums. Such a play on ideas and forms cannot be grasped through the container schemata alone: only through conceptual integration can we understand how the museum engages in a power struggle with artists, art galleries, art historians, and critics in defining aesthetic value and in wielding power over these actors by achieving professional and institutional status. However, museums continue to be contested spaces, the ground of criticism where artists, art critics, curators, and art directors all seek to leave their mark (Ames 1992).

Armed with the tools necessary to analyze the interview data, we are now ready to explain how aesthetic experiences in the art museum become embodied experiences. We begin with a discussion of how viewers challenge the authority of the museum as they make their way through the exhibits. The remainder of the sections are broken down as follows: *The Triumph of the Baroque*: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration; *Mexican Modern Art, 1900–1950*: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration; Embodiment and Movement in Museum Space: Virtual Body Explorations and Image Schemata; Proprioception and Hearing: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration; and Gustation and Olfaction: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration. In each section, we draw on one or more of the participant interviews to clarify and illustrate our findings. But before we begin our discussion, a brief description of the museum and the exhibits is in order.

### The Monkland Museum of Fine Arts: A Brief History of the Exhibits

Originally called the First Art Association of Monkland, the Monkland Museum of Fine Arts was established in 1860 to provide the city with cultural institutions worthy of its growing status. The museum occupies two pavilions: the first was built on the north side of Lonnergan Street in 1912, and the second, directly opposite, on the south side, in 1992. The pavilions are connected by an underground passage. The older pavilion was modeled on Greek architecture, as evidenced by its white marble facade, grand staircase, large columns, and cool open spaces. The second pavilion reflects the new architecture of the times. Its chrome and glass facade and its soaring ceilings contrast radically with the older building (Fisher 1995). During this study, the museum mounted several temporary exhibits, but all participants viewed only three: *The Triumph of the Baroque*, *Mexican Modern Art, 1900–1950*, and *From Renoir to Picasso* (from the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris).

The temporary exhibits receive special attention as new ambiances are created within existing museum spaces to

reflect and enhance the visiting art. Rooms are color coded, and spaces are used to show films or house special gift stores that sell souvenirs of the exhibits. The museum offers guided tours in French and English and paying lecture series, such as Art and Gastronomy, where one can sample food from France, whose art was showcased at an exhibit. We try to provide a sense of what a person experiences at any or all of these exhibits by paying attention to the sequence of perceived events as well as to what each person is feeling and thinking. We provide several examples to explain the importance of virtual body enactments, the use of image schemata, and the importance of conceptual integration. None of these frameworks by themselves is adequate, but together they help to illustrate what we mean by somatic experience. Table 2 provides a comprehensive listing of the most important primary metaphors that were elicited through the interviews.

### Audience Resistance to Museum Authority: Virtual Body Explorations and Image Schemata

Despite the many challenges from artists and other members of the art world, the museum remains a powerful institution in judging the value of aesthetic works. What is shown on the walls of a museum acts as an arbiter of what is considered important in the art world. Art exhibits are generally staged there from the uniform perspective of one or more curators. For example, although individuals can move freely through a museum, guided tours, audio guides, and camera surveillance all reinforce a top-down orchestration of space. The lack of street sounds, the presence of guards, the prohibition against touching, reinforced through signs, all curtail the tactile and other sensory apprehension of the artifacts. Thus, through specific design and practice (e.g., temporary exhibits are organized and arranged differently than permanent exhibits), an officially documented memory is sanctioned as the public memory.

The formality of a museum notwithstanding, a carnival atmosphere obtains on free admission days, such as, for instance, Valentine's Day. During such occasions it is easier for viewers to physically experience art through their other senses—particularly touch—when they are not reprimanded and constrained (not enough guards to watch over a large number of viewers). In our field notes of February 14, we noted the following:

The permanent exhibit hall of contemporary art . . . several couples walk toward a wax and chalk (white) construction hanging from the ceiling. It's called *Arms*, and it's by a contemporary German artist. It's large and resembles a person's arms—with detailed folds, wrinkles, and so on. Couples walked straight toward it, raising their arms trying to measure its arm span. This work lends itself so completely to tactile explorations.

To describe such an event, we first draw on Merleau-Ponty's (1962) concept of the virtual body. The act of seeing

recedes into the background, while the act of touching enters into the foreground as individuals raise their hands either to mimic the sculpture or to move toward it to touch it. The act of stretching out one's arms suggests one is trying to understand the art object via its similarities to one's own arms, but that is only part of the picture. People may also ask questions about what the artist means to convey, as illustrated by Ken: "Does the artist want the viewer to think about 'the absent body' and by implication the 'absent person,' or does she or he want the viewer to engage in sensory perceptions?"

Such a leap of imagination requires that viewers engage in virtual body explorations, drawing on at least two sensations—seeing and touching. Here, the "seeing is knowing" metaphor is applied to "touching is knowing" (table 2, no. 1), which involves more than sensations alone. The sculptures evoke the elusive presence of an individual's body schemata. To grasp the entire structure of the sculpture, the viewer must engage with the virtual modes of embodiment called upon in the various qualities elicited by the perceptual background. The object is thus synthesized through a person's body.

Johnson's discussion of the force schemata is also useful for understanding the way in which visitors are drawn to the sculpture (table 2, no. 2). One characteristic of the force schemata is attraction and/or compulsion: the magnet pulls everything metallic toward it. Force can be viewed as moving in a specific direction attracting objects/events unless they resist, and its path of motion can be charted out based on the force vector. This same dynamic obtains when viewers walk in a direct line toward the sculpture with outstretched arms (an intuitive response to a familiar perceptual gestalt) to measure the arm span or to touch the sculpture (unless they are forcibly restrained by guards from doing so). Viewers feel a compulsion toward tactile exploration in the presence of the sculpture.

Thus, understanding an art form (sculpture) requires the use of the body (measurement through stretching one's arm) and movement toward it. Having looked at a brief yet illustrative example of how museum goers resist the authority of the museum in interpreting art through touch and virtual body explorations, we turn to how specific exhibits, such as the Baroque miniatures and Mexican art, lend themselves to understanding the logic of the body in aesthetic experience.

### *The Triumph of the Baroque: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration*

Metonymy may be viewed as shorthand communication that works by presenting a minipicture of something it represents. In order to capture the complex blending of history and artifact at the Baroque exhibit, the concept of conceptual integration is essential. In this case, the very term *Baroque* and the Baroque museum exhibit represent something much larger than itself. According to Sproccati (1992, p. 87), the



term *Baroque* refers to irregularity and stems from a jeweler's reference to an uneven pearl. The term was later generalized (metonym) to describe the extravagant, witty, and embarrassingly decorative style of the entire seventeenth century. The Baroque exhibit (metonym) likewise offers an excellent example of how a particular cultural time and space (seventeenth-century Europe) can be rendered effectively within a museum space and experienced multisensorially through models and miniatures. The theatrical presentation of the exhibit transported the viewers into another space and another time, as we shall see in the following examples.

Our field notes state that very few people read either the exhibit catalogs in the halls or the large-font laminated panels next to the models. Visitors walked around the models, peering at them and inspecting the rich details that are visible only in proximity. Our notes of December 16 elaborate:

The museum attracts a large crowd for this exhibit. People are drawn to the models rather than to the architectural plans, sketches, or paintings. They glance at the support materials, but spend a lot of time examining the models from different angles, their bodies almost touching the miniatures. In the last two hours, only a couple of people have actually thumbed through the catalogue or read the panels.

Further, the exhibit models were three-dimensional and enhanced with new technologies, such as screen backgrounds on which images and colors were projected. The staged nature of the exhibit, especially the theatrical presentation of the models, kindled viewer interest in sensory experiences because architectural miniatures make it easier to grasp what is new or different, and, hence, render complexity palpable.

To show how people with varying levels of knowledge experience art, we use excerpts from interviews with three participants who had all attended the Baroque exhibit—Sheila (a curator), John (a retired school teacher), and Christine (a student). Sheila was visibly affected by the dramatic nature of the exhibit:

It was really a theatrical exhibition . . . very dark in places and highly spotlighted in others [table 2, no. 3]. I liked that dramatic aspect. There is also a distinction between how space is used for a temporary exhibit and how an object is made size-specific for a particular site. These models were presented in a specific way—you just feel that you're in historical time. They're so majestic and huge, yet they are models and so not so huge [table 2, no. 4]. The Baroque period was an important age, and they [the curators] conveyed this idea so well. I think they were trying to make the exhibition as theatrical as possible, with the painted backdrops behind the models, so that when you looked through the windows [of the buildings] you would see paintings as in a real home [table 2, no. 5]. What struck me most about this show was . . . you could touch these things. Since they're models, they are manipulable, like something you could touch in a direct way that wouldn't be possible in a real Baroque building.

First, Sheila likens the exhibit to a theater with a stage, lights, props, actors, and scripts, noting that it is "very dark in places and spotlighted in others." She uses the concept of symmetry here, which, in turn, draws on the basic image schema of balance around a center. The metaphor of exhibit as theater effectively conveys the exaggeration and excesses of the Baroque period. For instance, creating special effects through lighting is one mechanism for underscoring the gilded and decorative surfaces of Baroque architecture. There are also painted backdrops for the Baroque miniatures that make it appear as if you were actually there, looking through the windows of buildings (principles of composition, completion, and elaboration in conceptual integration). Further, as Sheila notes rather ironically, you could touch (motor imagery explains how individuals imagine their bodily movements in space and in this case, vision and touch are conflated) the things in these buildings (because they are models and because image schemata allow for spatial and object manipulations—that is, mental scanning is similar to real world scanning) that you cannot do in an actual Baroque building (that are currently museums).

Second, Sheila refers to going back in time. This time travel metaphor uses what Lakoff and Johnson call the space-time metaphor, where individuals move while times are locations in space relative to such movement. The source domain of this particular usage is another basic image schema—the path schema. The essentials of a path schema represent a source or starting point, a goal or ending point, and a sequence of contiguous locations connecting the source with its goal. Any locations that an individual is moving toward must exist and include both the past and the future. Sheila talks about being there (in the Baroque period); in other words, there is an experiential correlation between the source domain, or movement along a path to a physical location, and the target domain, or achievement of purpose, which in this case refers to a Baroque setting, 300 years ago. The result is an isomorphism in which the combined structures of the space-time and path schemata determine the basic character of the metaphorical projection. But, as we have seen earlier, the image schemata by themselves are inadequate to convey what Sheila experiences. For this, we need conceptual integration.

Sheila's third reference is to the site-specific organization of works of art that make the models appear real. The models, she states, look majestic and huge (as if they were the real thing), yet they are architectural miniatures and, hence, quite small. The scale, detail, and beauty of the models commanded Sheila's attention. A common image schema used by individuals is the scale schema, which is basic to both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of experience, says Johnson (1987). With respect to the quantitative aspects, we experience the world as populated by many objects that we can group in various ways along a continuum (based on the principles of more/less/same), and qualitatively we experience objects as having various degrees of intensity—bigger, smaller, taller, shorter, darker, lighter, and so on. The more-or-less aspect of human experience is the basis

**TABLE 2**  
**REPRESENTATIVE PRIMARY METAPHORS**

Number	Subjective judgment	Sensory-motor domain	Example	Primary experience
1	Touching is knowing	Object manipulation	Viewers stretching their arms alongside the sculpture	Getting information about an object through virtual touching and manipulation.
2	Attraction (even a sense of compulsion)	Being pulled (motion)	Individuals and couples walk straight toward it (the sculpture called <i>Arms</i> )	The experience of being pulled with a certain intensity of force toward something along a path (attraction is a kind of gravitational force). If it is compulsion that is felt, then the force can be overpowering.
3	Overawed by presentation style	Bodily agitation and motion	"It was really a theatrical exhibition . . . very dark in places and highly spotlighted in others."	Drama (especially theater) involves stage, props, light, script, direction, and larger-than-life presentations. Experience of symmetry is part of the balance schemata (balance around a center).
4	Scale of objects in exhibit	"More or less" aspect of experience	"They are so majestic and huge, yet they are models and not so huge."	The "more is up" metaphor is based on verticality. When we add more of a substance to a container the level rises and vice versa.
5	Going back in time	Motion	"When you looked through the windows [Baroque models], you could see paintings as in a real house."	Experiencing the passage of time as one moves or observes motion.
6A	Seeing is understanding	Vision/object manipulation	"Every time I look at the exhibit, I recall something I had read about the Baroque."	Getting information about an object through vision and by grasping and manipulating it.
6B	Forces have impact/causes are forces	Exertion of force/origin of force	"I did not realize the importance of openness and dynamism of the architecture of the Baroque."	Openness refers to forces that move in all directions creating a potentially infinite number of paths, and dynamism refers to the speed with which changes are made. A complex metaphor is created when we note that weaker political forces (causes are forces) encouraged the change in architecture.
7	Emotions relating to surprise are powerful	Bodily orientation	"She's just staring at me. Oh my God!"	Powerful psychological force like a physical force affecting the self.
8	Emotion as an opposing physical force	Bodily orientation	"There was this one picture [the suicide of Dorothy Hale] that got to me."	There is a struggle between the self and emotions. The self is in control at first, and then emotion causes the self to lose control.
9	Achieving a purpose is getting a desired object	Object manipulation	"As if life is slipping through your hands, and you can't grasp it."	The object version of the event structure metaphor—where purposes are desired objects and achieving a purpose is a desired outcome. However, in this case the opposite is what happens—the desired object cannot be held.
10	Emotions are powerful psychological forces (like physical forces)	Exertion of force	"When you see that, it is so shocking. . . . I was so taken by the picture."	Cause leads to the emotion of "shock"; feeling "shocked" leads to being overtaken by emotion. The self is no longer in control.

11	Feeling of being overwhelmed	Gravitational force and verticality/ being contained	"When she was falling, the body seemed blurred, but when the body was on the ground, she looked like she was in a coffin . . . no shattered parts, except the blood [on the frame]."	The force of gravity pulls a body to the ground until that path is terminated when another object (the ground) counteracts the gravitational force. In this case there were no shattered body parts except the blood on the frame. In the use of the container schemata there is a physical orientation in space. The blood suggests that it flowed out of the body/ coffin and on to the frame.
12	Harmony of colors	Balance	"This one was really attractive because of the way it worked together."	The weight and force of colors can only be metaphorically related to that of physical objects in a gravitational field. What we experience is the result of a balancing of complex psychological forces at work in our perceptual "play" with the relations of line, space, contours, and colors.
13	Emotion is heat: feeling warm and energized	Temperature/in-out orientation	"Different textures of red get under my skin, and you have this powerful experience. . . . I feel warm and energized."	In this case the "in" movement involves a metaphorical bringing into prominence of the outcome—feeling warm and energized.
14	Emotion is physical agitation; hit by an unexpected and unrestrained force	Mental clarity	"I came away very alert."	A particular cause leads to a particular emotion (the color red creates energy and warmth in an individual). The emotion then leads to a particular response—in this case—a sharp mental state.
15	Passage of time	Motion	"Taking time out of my day and coming here."	Experiencing the passage of time as one moves.
16	Metaphorical extrapolation of an abstract entity entering the body	Bodily orientation (container)	"Something enters into me as I walk."	Body is a container, and something outside the body enters it that makes the individual happy (e.g., peace).
17	Exploring space defined by an individual	Exploration using body movement	"I like to move in my own space; you really have to move bodily through the space."	If you choose to focus on your acts of manipulation and movement, you can become aware of a sense of power to perform some action.
18	Inability to scream/ emotion is contained	Choked/ suppressed sounds	"Soutine wanted to scream but could not get the sound out."	When there is little substance in a container, there is little pressure, but when the substance rises, there is a corresponding increase in emotional intensity, which then causes the self to respond. But in this instance, the individual is unable to respond.
19	Canned programs are boring	Bodily orientation	"I normally don't like canned programs."	The projection of in-out orientation on to inanimate objects is an extrapolation of bodily movement.
20	To and fro movement	No blockage or counterforces	"This to and fro movement is actually a learning experience."	Actions are self-propelled movements and, the freedom to do so suggests that there are no blockages—no physical force to stop this process.
21	Immensity of sensation	Bodily orientation	"They [the calla lilies] are larger than life; she [the vendor] is dwarfed in comparison to the flowers."	If attribute A (largeness) is tied to object A (calla lilies) and if object B (vendor) does not have attribute A, then object B will have to be smaller.
22	Seeing is knowing (the flower jumped out to him)	Smell/olfactory sensation	"I can smell the flowers."	As in actually smelling flowers. Only in this instance it is a metaphorical extrapolation.
23	Savoring is knowing	Taste/gustatory sensation	"I savored this meal . . . because it gave me a chance to absorb what I'd seen."	Just as the body becomes a container when things are eaten, it becomes a container when the paintings are ingested.
24	Smelling is knowing	Odors/olfactory sensation	"Food smells wafted from behind thin paper-like walls."	Odors enter the body easily. At a more abstract level, the odor of poverty seeped into the body.
25	Smell as a powerful physical force	Sensorimotor domain: force	"It is hard to forget such things, and it came back like a flash to me."	Powerful and psychological forces affect the individual deeply. At a more abstract level, it suggests that the individual recognizes the differences between the rich and poor in Mexico and, by extension, between his country (rich) and Mexico (poor).

of the scale schemata. Further, the scale schemata have a more or less fixed directionality and can be expressed in terms of a modified version of the path schemata. The further along one moves on a scale, the greater the intensity experienced. Sheila's comment that the models were majestic and huge (which gave her the feeling of being there) allows us to recognize that she was on the "more" rather than the "less" side of the scale. The experience of scalarity (as she manipulates these objects in her mind) contributes to Sheila's realistic apprehension of the exhibition, but her overall experience is richer and more elaborate and requires the use of conceptual blending the elements of which we noted above.

John, a retired schoolteacher who is also knowledgeable about art, has a different opinion:

Every time I look at the exhibit, I recall something I had read about the Baroque period [table 2, no. 6A]. For instance, I did not realize the importance of openness and dynamism of the architecture that characterized the Baroque age [table 2, no. 6B]. In Renaissance architecture, the geometry that defines it is closed and static, whereas in Baroque architecture it is open and dynamic.

Here, the primary metaphor, seeing is understanding, refers to vision, our primary source for gathering data (in this case, reading about the Baroque period). Vision involves the remarkable ability to focus at will on various features of our perceptual array, to pick out one object from a background or to differentiate fine features (Johnson 1987). In other words, individuals first gain an overall impression of the scene, or top-down processing, while subsequent visual inspection fills in the details, or bottom-up processing. All of these operations have parallels in intellectual acts. Vision is also more or less identical for different people, making it a basis for shared and public knowledge. Perceptual phenomena of this sort makes vision a primary candidate as a metaphorical basis for intellectual acts in which one must discriminate features, examine details, and perform mental operations (Johnson 1987, pp. 108–109).

John's reference to Baroque architecture as dynamic and open (reflecting changing political and social conditions) also evokes force schemata. Force, experienced through interaction, propels an object through space in a given direction, which is typically characterized as a single path of motion. In this case, however, the openness of Baroque architecture points to a force that moves in all directions, creating potentially infinite paths whose dynamism reflects the speed of the changes. John's grasp of the subject matter is based on his skills at bringing historical knowledge to the aesthetic experience. While image schemata are useful to understand what he says, his total experience cannot be grasped without conceptual integration. The following excerpt from an interview with Christine, who has little interest in art in general, suggests that any theatrical attempt to engage an audience is viewed positively because of physical outcomes. Consider what Christine has to say:

I remember the first model that we saw—there were moving clouds against a blue sky projected on to a screen behind it. I remember thinking that this was an interesting example of technology combined with art history. It brings another dimension to the model. I also remember thinking that this was why I was so moved by it . . . the way it [the model] is placed in the space, and you do need a space around it. If [the models] were all lined up one after another, if the ceilings were not high and you didn't have to go into different rooms, you wouldn't really get the European feel. It was good that the entire exhibit was mounted in the older building with its wooden floors that creaked when you took a step back. It made me gasp at what I was seeing. The whole experience was memorable.

Not surprisingly, Christine begins by describing her visceral reaction to the exhibit. The older pavilion, especially its architecturally distinct rooms and high ceilings, the arrangement of the models and the space around them, as well as the use of technology to animate the past, enhanced the European feel of the exhibit and awakened Christine's senses. She experienced different sensations that involved not so much sight but sound and touch (the creaking floors) as she moved from room to room. This multiple sensory experience, combined with the illusion of moving clouds behind the models, produced powerful emotional and physical responses (force schemata: "I was moved by it"; "it made me gasp"). In both instances, there is an external force and a counteracting force—the self. However, in the first case, the individual has more control over the situation than in the second. This is an event-structure metaphor and is dependent on two primary metaphors—causes are forces (force schemata) and changes are movements (into and out of regions—the container schemata; Lakoff and Johnson 1999, p. 179). For Christine, the staging of an event represents an art form, and if, as Deleuze (quoted in Smith 1996, p. 40) notes, the objective of art is "to create sensible aggregates" (because artists think in terms of sensations), there is no doubt that Christine experienced a profound sensation at the Baroque exhibit. All three participants talk about the felt quality of their respective aesthetic experiences. But this is only a partial picture-image schema, and conceptual integration allows us to tap into the unconscious world of these actors.

### *Mexican Modern Art, 1900–1950: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration*

Haptic visuality consists of both touching and seeing, an act that involves not only the hand (the hand is a perceptual and manipulative organ) but also the entire body (Craig and Rollman 1999). Haptic touching requires proximity so that sensations can flow from the point of contact to the rest of the body. Haptic seeing, on the other hand, represents the act of skimming or moving over the surface of objects so form becomes indiscernible. It focuses on textures and craft-

ing. Haptic visuality through virtual body enactments makes viewers more active (Deleuze 1986), because they must draw on their imagination to fill in what is unsaid or unfinished in the image. Viewers also focus not so much on the narrative but on the image itself, that is, on the physical configuration which, in turn, could elicit a sensuous response.

In the following description we use extensive excerpts from an interview with Nancy, a computer programmer, to illustrate these effects.

I remember when I was younger, and we went to the Louvre in Paris to see the Mona Lisa. My parents were very keen that we see at least this painting. It was so funny because my brothers and I would get fairly close to the picture—your eyes and nose are close to the painting [she crinkled her nose and looked cross-eyed to demonstrate how close she got, all the time laughing and talking]—and you really feel that she is looking at you. Or we'd go to the side and scream: "She's just staring at me, oh my god, she's just staring at me" [table 2, no. 7]. And I think this experience of moving close to and away from an art object is an important one. It helps you get the most out of the art. You can read about it or you can hear about it, but when you're in the presence of the object, you know it's the real thing. You say to yourself, "God, that's the real one! And it was made so many years ago!"

Nancy has no training in art, but in describing her reaction to the Mona Lisa, she uses the zoom lens technique (Merleau Ponty's concept of maximal grip), which allows people to move between figure and ground, depending on their purpose. As Nancy is physically moving toward and away from the painting, she feels Mona Lisa is watching her, a haptic feature of this painting. Something happens in the process: she is left with the question, why is the person in the painting watching her? In the process of eliciting an answer, she also reduces the disequilibrium that the question raised. As Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1999) observe, perception and skill learning require an active body.

Nancy also echoes the sentiment of many interviewees when she states that seeing is touching, thereby evoking the seeing-is-understanding schemata. Our field notes confirmed that visitors to the museum also responded to other artwork in this way, some physically touching objects and speaking softly in their presence. Nancy not only perceived the artwork with her eye but also grasped it through her movements: her kinesthetic and proprioceptive senses worked in tandem with the eye, which touched the object.

Nancy also makes a critical distinction between the real Mona Lisa, which follows you with her gaze and smile, and facsimiles that do not. Benjamin (1969) describes this trait of artworks as the aura of the object, which eternally works magic on the living. Finally, Nancy's anthropomorphic experience (the painting had come alive and followed her when she moved away) suggests that a work of art such as the Mona Lisa also triggers private memories (of a wonderful time with her family) that are fragile but recoverable.

Another painting that had a powerful impact on Nancy at this exhibit was *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*, as we noted in our field notes of January 19: "Later we walked into the Mexican exhibit, and Nancy intuitively used the zoom lens approach again. But when she reached the Frida Kahlo painting, *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*, she stood there a long time, contemplating it, so I did not disturb her." This is what Nancy had to say about the aura of this painting:

There was this one picture that really got to me [table 2, no. 8]. The way the paint kind of overflowed onto the frame was frightening. It looked like blood. It was meant to be blood. There was some writing as well at the bottom of the painting that had smudges of blood on it. I could not read it because it was in Spanish and looked like a suicide note. But there was more than that—I had the feeling of a tremendous sadness over the loss of a person's life. And you see the stages of how it happens, as if life is slipping through your hands, and you can't grasp it [table 2, no. 9]. You see the tall building, and then you see her in the air and then you see her on the floor, all in one canvas. When you see that, it's shocking [table 2, no. 10]. You sense it happening, rather than [seeing] that a person is dead. When you see a person dead, you say "Shh! A person is dead." But when you see it actually happening [the act of jumping off a tall building]—when she was falling the body seemed blurred, but when the body was on the ground, she looked like she was in a coffin—and there was no disfigurement, no shattered body parts, except the blood [table 2, no. 11]. And when I saw it, I was replaying it in my mind, and I was so taken by the picture. You get the emotions and the feeling when you're taken by it.

To appreciate fully what Nancy experiences, we need to go beyond a discussion of image schemata and use the conceptual blending process. Even though Nancy knew little, if anything, about Mexican art or Frida Kahlo, she relived the experience of the person jumping off a high building and plummeting to her death. Nancy felt the vibration of the paint, the sensation of red (blood), the force of the body hurtling through the air and hitting the ground. It was a powerful perceptual, emotional, and communicative experience. Nancy was overwhelmed not so much by the history of the suicide but by the sensation of falling, a form of introspection, or touching.

The painting did not have an official story line, but it was emotionally full, so when this happens, the text becomes irrelevant and the sensation, paramount. To confront a recorded or actual image with a recollected or virtual image is to dig between discursive strata, perhaps finding trace images of unofficial or private memories. Thus, a fund of personal memories can create a new act of remembering, which, in turn, affects the aesthetic experience. Museum objects may trigger past memories, but every attempt to draw meaning from them kindles productive and creative processes. Kahlo's representation of Dorothy's suicide brought to the surface—the surface of the body—the horror of taking one's life. In mimicking (virtual body enactments)

the experience of falling in Dorothy Hale's body, Nancy evokes a kinesthetic sense of touch. But the experience is more profound—Nancy becomes Dorothy Hale falling through the air. The eye's readjusting from plane to plane (following the tumbling body as it hurtles toward the ground) is the representation by one part of the body (eye) of what another part of the body would feel and do if one were to jump off a tall building. Deleuze's definition of sensation is useful here: "'being-in the world' as the phenomenologists say: at the same time I become in sensation and something arrives through sensation, one through the other, one in the other" (quoted in Bogue 1996, p. 260). It is by entering into the painting's body that the viewer comes to experience the canvas as sensation. In Kahlo's painting, the invisible becomes visible and nonsensate forces, sensate.

In addition, Nancy also uses several image schemata to describe her experience, the overpowering one being of Dorothy falling down from a tall building. However, she also uses the principles of composition, completion, and elaboration to elucidate her experience. We expect to find a shattered body (gravitational force); instead, we find a body ready for burial (container schema). Dorothy is wearing a black dress with a corsage, but she does not look like somebody who has jumped to her death, because the form of her body did not change during the fall. Furthermore, when Dorothy is falling, her body appears blurred and moving, whereas the body on the ground seems to be sleeping, except for the blood spilling out on to the frame. Nancy's confusion arises from the fact that there is blood on the frame—the only indication of a shattered body. Yet, at a more abstract level, the blood on the frame plays on the idea of what should be contained within the body, the coffin, and the artist's frame. The container schemata are used at the primary level as well as a complex metaphor, but image schemata alone do not capture the richness of the experience. It is only through the process of conceptual integration that Nancy is able to identify the requisite motor imagery of a falling body, to elaborate on the process of how a hurtling body could remain composed on impact, and ultimately to come to terms with blood on the frame and what it means. She did not know then (at the time of viewing) that the artist, Frida Kahlo, was playing out her own life's despair and loneliness on the canvas (her husband Diego Rivera had left her) when she painted the story of the beautiful socialite who was jilted by her lover (Herrera 1983). However, Nancy senses all of this, and this feeling spreads throughout her body. The lack of closure and the sheer sensation of falling and dying frightened Nancy, but when we tried to pursue this further, Nancy was overwhelmed by her feelings and had moved on to another issue. She was ready, however, to answer a question about color:

Color makes such a difference to me. I was thinking that it was a good idea to paint the walls to suit the paintings. Every room [of the Mexican exhibit] had a different color, and it complemented the objects in that room. I've seen other [color-coded] exhibits, but this one really was attractive because of the way it worked together [table 2, no. 12]. Colors mean so

much to me, and you get all these feelings. The different textures of red get under my skin, and you have this powerful experience [table 2, no. 13]. The picture jumps out [at] me. I felt very warm inside and energized. I came away very alert [table 2, no. 14].

Nancy's visceral experience of color makes her understanding and appreciation of art corporeal. Texture "jumps out" from the canvas and "gets under [her] skin," implying that the color is in motion while her body is stationary. Whether infected or injected, she incorporates the painting into her body in a way that alters both her consciousness and her metabolism: the colors of the paintings and rooms enter through her eyes, spreading throughout her body. Further, the transformation of color inside her body generates the sensation of heat—she feels warm (pleasure) and energized. Such a bodily understanding is possible because of visceral sensations. Cézanne (commenting on the importance of color) defines two basic moments from which a painting emerges: "the first a systolic moment in which confused sensations condense into definite forms; the second a diastolic moment when there is no longer anything except colors and in them only clarity" (quoted in Bogue 1996, p. 259). Bogue (1996) notes that this sense of rhythm gives Cézanne's paintings their life and energy.

Nancy's experience of color as pleasing and harmonious results from a fundamental schema of art—that of balance (Johnson 1987). Balancing begins when an individual learns it through bodily activities, such as a child learning to walk. When this sense of physical balance is projected on to visual perception, it makes possible mental manipulations of a physical nature. In the case of color-coordinated exhibits, Nancy experiences pleasure from the balance and harmony that the different colors evoked in her.

Color also stimulates the sensation of touch—the paintings jump out toward her and energize her because the multiple colors work well together. But the act of jumping out of the frame and entering her body is an instantiation of the container schema. The painting is the container in the first case, and her body is the container in the second instance. The in-out orientation is essential to the use of this schema.

Frida Kahlo's self-portraits, in particular, generated intense experiences and virtual body explorations. When we followed Natalie and Monica through the exhibit, they seemed at times overcome by curiosity and emotion, especially when they viewed Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Monkey* (1938) and *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* (1940). They were not quite sure why the artist had posed with a monkey on her shoulder or why she had presented herself in her self-portraits as a woman who looked intensely at the viewer. They kept returning to the paintings, examining them from various angles, and then they thumbed through the art catalog to see if they could learn more about the artist. The intent look of the artist challenged their gaze, they confided later during their interview. Yet, they were fascinated by her vital presence: the unibrow characteristic of the artist and the hint of a mustache

were rather disconcerting—but they were quintessentially her. What these portraits had in common were features that were constant, indicating a certain type of personality. They not only convey information about Frida Kahlo but about all persons with similar features. It is in this sense that the portraits are an idealization—and Natalie or Monica could not walk away without pausing or coming back to these paintings in order to make sense of them. Once again, the insight gained by considering image schemata and conceptual integration enriches the felt experiences described by Nancy, Natalie, and Monica.

### Embodiment and Movement in Museum Space: Virtual Body Explorations and Image Schemata

Interviews with two accountants, Tina and Richard, illustrate how skill acquisition in art occurs—slowly but surely. Their emphasis on walking and moving in exhibit space recalls Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 429): the extraordinary overlapping of vision and bodily movement exemplifies the link between body and world, giving meaning to the world. Although individuals take the ability to orient themselves in space—at work, home, or play—for granted, learning to move one's body in a desired direction involves information processing, imagination, and fine muscular coordination. For example, a child learns how to move his or her body by mimicking adults (Farnell 1999). Over time and through practice, the child learns to actively respond to any situation.

When people explore an exhibit, they often choose their own trajectories, but designers and curators try to impose a linear one on them. From the curator's point of view, the ostensible purpose in visiting a museum is to learn about or experience art. Without this goal, the museum visit would be meaningless, so it forces a visitor to map out an itinerary—one the museum tries to influence by providing a ready-made format of an exhibit.

Consider Tina's observations about wandering through museum space:

Part of the fascination was taking time out of my day and coming here [table 2, no. 15]. It is a leisure experience to get out of my chair [she works in front of a computer all day], out of my usual space, and go into another space. I put myself into my body and get down here. It is a bodily experience—a holistic experience. If I'm with a friend, it's a social experience, and we might end up having tea in the café after and talk about the show. Being in that space changes me, emotionally, I mean. I can be quiet; I can contemplate and enjoy the solitude. I like to walk through the space not necessarily reading the labels or catalogues *as if walking* would change me. Something enters into me as I walk [table 2, no. 16]. It gives me a sense of peace. I notice other people as well. They seem to be doing the same thing. I liked the exhibit very much [reference to the *From Renoir to Picasso* exhibit], but I would come back not only to see it . . . but also to walk in this space.

Walking through an exhibit clearly constitutes an impor-

tant exercise in perambulation and peace for Tina, whose ambulatory experience enables her to privatize and appropriate public spaces for herself. Tina's walk through museum space also releases her from the relentless pace of chronological time—it is a retreat from her world, both spatially and temporally. Tina's description draws on the container schemata extensively as evidenced in the following phrases: taking time *out* of my day and coming *in* here; to get *out* of my chair; *out* of my usual space; go *into another space*. I *put myself into* my body; being *in* the space changes me; something enters *into* me as I walk. It is no wonder that “goalless” movement (once inside the museum) is highly sought after—an attempt to escape regimentation through cultural principles.

Going to the museum signifies a pleasurable shift from Tina's workspace (identified by her chair, her computer, and, by allusion, her mechanical self), but it also invokes the container metaphor of placing her real self into her body to find solitude. This container schema may be extended to include the bifurcated subject-self metaphor, wherein the subject houses consciousness, judgment, and emotionality, while the self encompasses physical characteristics, social roles, and the like (Lakoff 1996). We reason and talk about these internal divisions in terms of spatial relations with external individuals. By North American cultural principles, the subject resides within and is in charge of the self, thereby implying that we have control over our emotions and judgment. In this particular instance, Tina is cognizant of taking her body out of her workspace, putting herself into a receptive mode, and taking the time to view this exhibit. The subject, or consciousness, represents the substance that is poured into the body, or the container. Note that the subject is viewed in an objective manner. For this to work, the target domain knowledge, based on the container schemata and combined with the seeing-is-knowing metaphor, assumes an individual is normally subjective, and being objective takes more time and control than being subjective. Further, something happens to Tina when she walks in this space—it is as if a sense of peace enters her body. That is, she notices that a new substance, which deeply affects her subjective consciousness, enters into her self, or container.

Only by changing viewpoints and mentally reassembling what is of interest could Tina understand the space and the objects within it. Here three types of perception come into play: the form in its entirety, the visual texture, and physical touch (moving from one gallery to another and from one object to another). A temporal frame (time as resource schema) also obtains, because Tina's desire to walk within the museum requires a considerable amount of time, as well as time out of her working day. Consciousness, Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 137) suggests, “is in the first place not a matter of ‘I think’ but of ‘I can.’”

Richard, who visits the museum infrequently, has his own ideas about exhibit spaces and does not like to be shepherded through them:

I like to move in my own space [table 2, no. 17]. I try to ignore as much as possible the information that is given. I

try not to read the panels [or] the labels and little bits of descriptions that are provided. I mean, obviously the artist has called it that something, so there is some validity in looking at it. But to me, I have to look at the art object first, and then having made up my own mind, I will look at what is offered. Sometimes, if I'm moved by something, I'll retrace my steps to the piece and to the museum a second time. But the museum tries to direct your interpretation. In order to get past these restrictions, you really have to move bodily through the space, guided by your own instincts or thoughts.

Richard and several other participants speak about the desire to roam and drift in space—the direction becoming apparent only when one follows one's instincts. They draw upon images of fluid space in which they move as if their bodies were porous and permeable, taking in light, images, smells, sounds, and touch. Richard's moving in his own space without reading the labels evokes the metaphor that both the museum space and the body are a container as well. Richard, however, does not want new information to enter his body before he makes up his own mind about what he has seen.

For Tina and Richard, the "action is self-propelled motion" metaphor applies (examples include "I can be quiet," "walking gives me a sense of peace," "you really have to move bodily through the space guided by your own instincts and thoughts"). While the notions of haptic touching and haptic visuality are not unfavorable to curators, regimented itineraries contradict the average visitor's preferences. Some visitors do not even come prepared for the act of seeing, because they want things to happen to them almost surreptitiously and take them by surprise. They expect that, through their own orchestrated virtual body explorations, they would have a maximal grasp of the subject matter. They wish to find the right optimal body-environment relationship that enables them to appreciate art—an action described by all our participants.

### Proprioception and Hearing: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration

In developing our argument for acoustic sensitivity and virtual body explorations, we drew on the insights of three participants—David, Tom, and Danny—all graduate students in the humanities and social sciences, who saw both the advantages and disadvantages of using recorded commentaries during the museum visit. Audio technologies enable virtual body explorations for viewing art because they disrupt traditional ways of seeing it (Fisher 1997). Furthermore, the perpetually incomplete representation of sound is reinforced by the subjectivity of the listener, who must shift from the dominant perspective of sight to the more peripheral and enveloping process of hearing. The surround sound effect thus subverts the forward gaze of the subject. Present both externally in the environment and internally as resonance or vibration, surround sound blurs the boundaries between the inside and outside of the body. In creating inte-

riority as an avenue of knowledge for the body, sound destroys the subject/environment, self/other, and interior/exterior distinctions. Immersed in sound, subjects can lose themselves (Dyson 1996; Schafer 1977). Further, the audio text, as well as labels and catalogs, constitute a form of ceremonial rhetoric (Fisher 1997) that is used in toasts to honor (or dishonor) a person, event, or object. When oriented to an art object, epideictic rhetoric legitimizes or contextualizes it. In audio guides, epideictic rhetoric is amplified at the moment its listener experiences the artwork visually. As the reading resonates through the listener's body, it stimulates at least three, if not four, of her senses: sight, sound, touch, and movement. Hence, the impact is profound.

David vividly illustrates how such a magical moment occurs during his visit to the *From Renoir to Picasso* exhibit:

I had never heard of the artist Chaim Soutine [1893–1943]. His source of inspiration was Rembrandt, whose works on animal carcasses he studiously scrutinized. One painting in the exhibit was called *Side of Beef and Calf's Head*, and it was a part of a series on dead animals that Soutine had painted. The brushwork is impressionistic and not detailed. The red is vibrant, and the green and yellow marks suggest that rotting had already set in. I grimaced because it was horrible, and I could smell the stench of decaying flesh. But the audio guide gave additional insight. Apparently, in childhood, he [Soutine] had witnessed a butcher cutting a goose's head with great relish. Soutine wanted to scream but couldn't get the sound out, [table 2, no. 18] because of the Butcher's pleasure. Apparently he could never get the scream out of his body. At this point, I really wanted to scream as well.

David's description includes smell, sound, and vision, which, as he observed later, were etched in his body. The impressionistic style invokes the texture of the carcass, and the green and yellow color in turn invokes the stench of decaying flesh. The artist's suppressed scream (from childhood) is finally released through the painting. At that point, David, the viewer, wanted to scream as well.

Several issues are worth noting. David uses the emotions-are-forces schemata, in addition to the container schemata. In the "emotion is pressure inside a container" metaphor, the force schemata are described as internal pressure, which assumes the following: people are containers for emotions, which themselves are substances in the container. In other words, the human body becomes the specific container for emotion. For the artist Soutine not to be able to let out a scream of horror suggests that he could not access this particular emotion other than through his painting. Korsmeyer (1999) provides additional information on the role of carcasses in artistic works: they highlight change and decay in living organisms, thereby violating boundaries of living forms and challenging our conception of order in the world and in our bodies (p. 181).

As David graphically explains, the success of an audio guide depends on the effectiveness of the storytelling and



the storyteller. The narration highlights memorable details, which are enhanced by music and other appropriate sounds. Sound in a narration is ambient and textural, and it can thus be a haptic phenomenon reminiscent of the affecting presence in oral tradition (Armstrong 1974). Second, celebrities often narrate stories because of their ability to persuade an audience of a particular viewpoint. Their recognizable and friendly voices put the listener at ease, creating the illusion that they are offering a personally guided tour. They know where the listener is going, how fast she is walking, and they even give her time to turn her equipment off and on at will. Individuals are thus encouraged to walk around and look—even when signs point to selected works.

When the audio guide is turned on, listeners may not hear other individuals, but they can at least see them, perambulating within the same space either alone or with family and friends. The physical sense of interacting with others contributes to the experience of embodied perception. Events are remembered and inscribed in space, memories preserved in material sites and inscribed into bodies (Casey 1997; Stoller 1997).

Audio guides generally supplement the information panels by providing gossip about an artist or reviews of a specific work, thereby creating a more intimate relationship between artwork and listener. For Fisher (1997), while the art of memory enables an orator to contain a speech, the acoustic and proprioceptive space of the audio guide contains the beholder.

If art makes visible what is invisible, then sound has the same potential. Seemingly chatting with the beholder (a strategy currently used by narrators in audio guides) is one way of breaking up the linearity of storytelling and curatorial authority. Although the words of the audio guide are meant to enhance the visual stimuli, they can acquire a life of their own. Thus, it is no longer a “I will tell you what you ought to know” narration, but a professional performance, with all the theatrical strategies used by actors to involve audiences. This is the moment of magic, of making audible and understandable the inaudible forces.

Consider what Tom has to say about the theatrical elements in an audio guide narration:

I normally don't like canned programs, but sometimes they are good [table 2, no. 19]. Also, they are much more sophisticated in storytelling these days. Sometimes they use more than one person; other times it is just one voice. But they get actors to do these recordings, many of them who are professionally trained. While the curator provides the narrative, the script and the performance [are] staged very well with the right music, the entrances and exits, the pauses and the voices. If I'm not too sure about an exhibit and I'm in a learning mood, I'll use an acoustic guide.

Where vision has been traditionally privileged, the sight lines may be ruptured through sound. Tom uses a container schema (can) to talk about prerecorded curatorial narratives. In addition, vision becomes the background (continuous

shifting occurs between figure and ground) when details about an artwork are read in the presence of the work itself. The sound inside our heads showing us memorable details expands the resonance of the exhibit and makes the objects come alive. Consider what Danny has to say:

Everybody has their own style when they go to a museum. I like to look around first, think about what I saw, and then go about reading the labels or the short descriptions. If I'm really tuned in, I'll read through the catalogues and texts provided. The tape recording is better, because I can listen and then stop and then think about what I heard and what I see. I like to move close to the paintings or move away from them. The audio guide lets you do that. It guides you away from what you have just seen to something else, but you can always go back to something you have seen before. This to and fro movement is actually a learning experience [table 2, no. 20].

This “to-ing” and “fro-ing” conveys the essence of the epigraph to this article, for peripatetic (auto)didacticism is the *homo narrans*'s preferred mode of knowing. Bodily practices stored in movement, sound, and the flesh spark countermemories that disrupt official memories (Stoller 1997). Danny uses the event schema to describe his trip to museums and the process of experiencing art. The actions he takes are self-propelled movements, and the freedom of action (he mentions reading the labels if he wants to) arises from a lack of impediments to motion. The use of the audiotape facilitates moving in and out of specially bounded space (around paintings and sculptures) and illustrates the in-out orientation that is typical of the container schema.

### Gustation and Olfaction: Virtual Body Explorations, Image Schemata, and Conceptual Integration

Taste and smell are chemical senses. Before one can taste something, it must be dissolved on the tongue; in other words, it must be transformed before it can be absorbed in the body. With smell, the item's airborne odor particles are lodged and dissolved in the cilia in the nose (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994). Thus, in smelling and tasting an object, the subject/object distinction cannot be maintained, which partly explains why taste and smell are historically considered lower senses. In this section, four participants—Jennifer, an interior designer; Kate, a computer analyst; Peter, a local manager; and Lucinda, Peter's wife and a schoolteacher—discuss their gustatory and olfactory understandings of art.

Taste with an uppercase *T* is as an aesthetic evaluation, which is often defined in terms of cultivating the eye, in contrast to taste, with a lowercase *t*, which refers to the sensations of the palate. Korsmeyer (1999) makes a critical distinction between Taste as aesthetic discernment and taste as sensory pleasure. Her contention is that taste holds little in-

terest to philosophers because of its lowly and bodily orientation.

For Kant, judging something to be beautiful is a subjective experience, but there are judgments about beauty (Taste) that transcend individual perceptions, especially if they are based on the purging of desire. Cognition elevates aesthetic experiences from the level of sensation to that of evaluation and rationality. For Bourdieu (1984), on the other hand, taste and Taste are linked but learned through the habitus of different social classes. Thus, unlike Kant, who speaks of a universal definition of beauty, Bourdieu argues that beauty is linked with a particular class—in this instance, the dominant class (Holt 1999).

According to Kant, smell is “taste at a distance” (quoted in Korsmeyer 1999, p. 58), the least important of the senses, except when used to identify toxins. Its dissolvability and lack of form make odors recognizable. Smells are communicated to the limbic system before any form of cognition occurs, so an odor has an effect before it is recognized. The meaning given to various odors is culturally defined, and, hence, varies across cultures. Since odors can be neither contained nor controlled, smell is delegated to the realm of the emotional and the irrational. On the other hand, shared odors promote sociality, for, as Howes (1991) suggests, olfaction rituals cultivate communion.

Still lifes of animals, fruits, and flowers celebrate the lower senses of taste, smell, and touch, but their subject matter—generally deemed trivial—has prevented still lifes from receiving the recognition accorded narrative and mythical paintings (Korsmeyer 1999). In the *Mexican Modern Art* exhibit, the overwhelming presence of fruit and flowers in Diego Rivera's works that were exhibited drew attention to the uncommon senses. By focusing on taste and smell, we once again underscore the importance of virtual body explorations in the apprehension of the aesthetic. Consider what Jennifer, an interior designer, has to say about Rivera's painting, the *Calla Lily Vendor*:

I loved the painting of the woman with the lilies by Diego Rivera. The thick stalks and beautifully formed flowers dominate the sensuousness of the woman. They are larger than life [table 2, no. 21]. The stems are long and bulbous and end in a trumpet-like white flower with a thick yellow stamen. The flowers look like well-formed lips—like the lips of the woman in the picture, except they are several times bigger. There are bunches of them, and they are bound together by cord as well as gathered in her hands. She is dwarfed in comparison to the flowers.

Jennifer applies her virtual body to the viewing of Rivera's picture. She backgrounds vision and foregrounds touch and smell when describing the lilies. The references to the length, the trumpet-like flower, and the thick yellow stamens draw attention to the texture and feel of the flower (which she already views as larger than life) and, by association, to the smell of a fully formed lily. The woman carrying the flowers becomes the background as well. How-

ever, Jennifer brings the woman back into the foreground when she describes the shape of the flower as being similar to the lips of the woman—yet the size of the lily is several times larger. The sensation of touch is summoned both in reference to the lips of the woman and the shape of the flower (that resembles the lips). Finally, the woman recedes into the background because of the large bunches of flowers that she holds in her hand.

In order to fully grasp what Jennifer says, this passage must be read aloud, for only then can one appreciate her choice of words and their potential for communicating a heightened sensory understanding: “long and trumpet-like” evoke long syllables and elongated images, whereas “bulbous and thick” are short sounds and more suitable for conveying roundedness. The lilies themselves summon olfactory associations because their trumpet-like shape and thick yellow stamen allow Jennifer to mentally bury her face into the heart of the flower in order to smell and touch it. Korsmeyer (1999) suggests that flowers in a painting beckon a viewer to do just that. So if we fine-tune our hearing when we read and write the way Salvaggio (1999, p. 4) urges us to do (sound carries thought along very specific conduits), we can discern the presence of the body—touch and smell in particular—in Jennifer's description.

Through taste and smell, external elements are imbibed and ingested into the body and, depending on their intensity, they can dramatically affect bodily moods and responses. The lighting on a painting can evoke the sense of smell, which, in turn, can evoke the sense of taste, and so on. The term *synesthesia* (grasping an object using all the senses simultaneously) conveys the importance of such intersensory links within the body (Beck 1978). Our field notes of July 15 suggest that this happens when artists use color and light in unusual ways to capture the attention of viewers:

Tom and I were walking through the permanent collections of modern art. He suddenly came to a full stop in front of a still-life of flowers, and uttered “Oh!” while exhaling deeply. I looked at him questioningly, and he said “do you notice that the light on the flowers (lilac pink colored peonies) makes them come right out of the painting towards you? I can smell these flowers” [table 2, no. 22].

Tom's visceral reaction to the colors (vision) in the still life (*Flowers*) evokes comments made by other participants (Nancy and Jennifer). The light on the peonies in the still life seemingly animated the flowers, releasing a scent that Tom could smell. As Korsmeyer (1999) notes, the scent of a blossom is a gratuity of nature and requires no human invention, but, in this instance, the shading and light caused the flower to emerge from the canvas, compelling the viewer to smell its fragrance.

Once again, in Tom's description of the continuous process of bodily involvement (using each of the human senses), Merleau-Ponty's reference to the virtual body is apparent. Seeing leads to smelling, and the flower's jumping out of the picture suggests the potential for touching. In addition,

the cognitive unconscious level is also tapped into through Tom's choice of metaphors. Tom uses the container schema when he refers to the flowers jumping out of the frame and toward him. The painting becomes the container in this instance, and the flower leaves such a frame and moves toward Tom. The reference to the smell of the flower also uses the in-out orientation because smells cannot be contained.

Kate, the computer analyst, notes:

The aesthetic experience has to do with the ability to sense acutely. So if you're sensing only through one sense, you get only a fifth of the experience, and so on. For me, the smell of the museum is important. There is that wonderful smell in the old pavilion of the museum. I love that. There is also a wonderful aroma in the café, even if the food does not taste as good (she laughs and notes that now there are gourmet cooks). There is also the sound of footsteps on the marble floor, and in some galleries the wooden floor creaks. The climate, the ambience, and the mood—all these are important to me.

Kate sums it up well: if you use only one of the senses, you acquire only one-fifth of the aesthetic experience (container schema). In synesthesia, however, several of the senses are included, and, hence, a more holistic appreciation is possible.

Ingesting art is akin to eating food. When taste is used in the sense of eating, the artwork becomes more immediate because taste is incorporated into the body. Audiences become aware of their bodies and of their relation to space, because the subject/object dichotomy favored in optical vision breaks down into intimate processes of chewing and ingesting. Although artworks that can be tasted and smelled have not, at least until now, been displayed at this museum, connections between art and gustatory experiences have become part and parcel of its offerings. During this study, the museum café and bistro offered Mexican food to complement the Mexican art exhibit. Consider what Peter, a local manager, and his wife Lucinda, a schoolteacher, have to say. Peter states:

Eating a Mexican-style lunch was sort of the culmination of the visit. The smell, the taste, and the textures were so good. I savored this meal . . . because it gave me a chance to absorb what I'd seen [see table 2, no. 23]. Lucinda and I talked a lot about this visit. Usually, we go right home after spending time in the museum and go about our daily business. This was extra time—to exchange ideas on what we saw. Eating Mexican food soon after seeing the exhibit seemed to make these objects and paintings go inside the body. I particularly noticed the colors of the food—the sharp reds of the salsa, the chocolate brown of the mushy beans, the corn yellow of the tortillas topped with coriander leaves, and the bright green of the salads.

Eating a Mexican meal right after the exhibit heightened Peter's enjoyment not only of the food but of the artworks

themselves, because the act of eating made it seem as though he were ingesting the paintings from the exhibit. Here, the body as container schema is quite clear with the in-out orientation used to describe the process of ingestion, which, in turn, evokes the seeing-as-understanding and tasting-as-knowing metaphors. When we asked Peter specifically about the taste of the food, he noted:

It was good food. These chefs at the café are specially trained, even though Mexican food is not their forte. But they understand food preparation and what food means. I took time to think about what I was eating as well, in relation to what I had seen of the culture. It seemed to put all the pieces together and reminded me of the time I was in Mexico City. The odor of tortillas and beans is different there, and I distinctly recall walking through poorer neighborhoods where the food smells wafted from behind paper-thin walls [table 2, no. 24]. It is hard to forget such things, and it came back like a flash to me [table 2, no. 25].

Savoring and ingesting Mexican food right after the exhibit also triggered Peter's corporeal memories of a trip to Mexico. What is folded into the body's viscous surface through smell, taste, sight, hearing, and touch is unfolded through various triggers. In each of these instances, the body remembers, in bits and pieces of sensation, in flashbacks from which Peter is able to assemble a story. What was not consciously registered at the moment of olfactory permeation in Mexico, and perhaps only partially recognized while viewing pictures and ingesting food in the museum, is now firmly etched in memory through the storytelling process. Peter needed time to reflect on what he had just experienced. He noticed the vivid colors of the food—the reds, yellows, greens, and chocolate brown—all reminiscent of warm climates and of the exhibit he had just experienced. As he bit into his food, Peter dredged up a memory of walking through a poor neighborhood in Mexico City, recalling the smells of tortillas and beans (he contrasts this with the smell of tortillas and beans in the museum café). This thought can be extended to include a more complex idea: the odor of the tortillas, which by now had been assimilated by his body, would rekindle the differences between the rich and the poor in Mexico, as well as between richer nations like Canada (where he is from) and poorer nations like Mexico. Such a complex understanding is built on the basic container schema (body as container) and odors as elements that are uncontainable yet have the power (force schema) to transform an individual's thoughts. However, the container schemata do not capture Peter's experience adequately. For this, the process of conceptual blending is essential because only through elaboration and composition can we understand that Peter was referring to the odor of poverty. Peter's flashback, which is literally a gut reaction and not a developed thought, evokes, to some degree, Gershorn's (1998) observation about the peristaltic reflex of the gut.

The organizer of the art and gustatory series at the museum corroborated Peter's observations: the paintings had

more impact when they were reinforced by the tastes and smells of their country of origin. As another of our participants noted, "It all came back—the pictures, the smells, and the tastes." Synesthesia generates a holistic experience, for the sum is greater than the parts.

### **CHEWING, THINKING, AND GUT REACTIONS: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In Kantian thought, the essence of human beings is their capacity to reason. Since every individual is equally equipped with mental capacities such as perception, imagination, understanding, reason, will, memory, and feelings, the reasoning process is also universal. In an external observable world of objects, there are definite mental activities and processes that contribute to judgments individuals make about them. Although Kant recognized the importance of individual sensations and perceptions, he argued that shared experiences are possible only when a subjective experience (the reproductive imagination) is subject to an objective principle (the productive function of imagination). Understanding generates judgments that are conveyed to reason, which then establishes the actions to be taken, based on sober judgment. Judgment then gives orders to will, which is independent of the other faculties, but it may be swayed by feelings and reason. Ultimately, reason alone knows what is best for society (Lakoff and Johnson 1999, pp. 410–414).

By emphasizing the role of somatic experience in aesthetic appreciation, like Howes (1991) and Stoller (1997), we critique the Kantian notion of practical reason (purely cognitive), arguing that perception and imagination coexist and are thoroughly embodied. Kant may have recognized the importance of sensations and the perceptions that derive from them, but he contended that reason had to be divorced from feelings, which required the elimination of the body. We, on the other hand, begin with the premise that the body represents the root of all thinking—not just the process of thinking bodily—and informs the logic of thinking, because the world is primarily accessed through the body. We move Kant's argument forward by suggesting that reason divorced from the body is inconceivable. We use Merleau-Ponty's related concepts of the intentional arc, maximal grip, and the virtual body to describe the ways in which individuals experience art. As Merleau-Ponty so aptly notes, the ability to perceive anything at all is an acquired bodily skill, for the intentional arc and skill acquisition begin at an early age. Skillful action is motivated by the maximum grip, which enables the body to develop an ongoing equilibrium with the environment and achieve an optimal body-environment relationship.

The initial motivation for skill acquisition seems to be goal achievement, but, as skill learning progresses, there need not be any explicit goal at all, for mastery does not require a mental representation of its goal. Similarly, the ability to act does not necessarily require detachment: one

can be engrossed in the process (flow) and simply perform what has to be done—a direct response to a familiar gestalt. Thus, perception and skill acquisition require an active body, for not only does the body move to complete a good gestalt in any domain, but involvement and practice tend to improve what counts as a good gestalt in that domain.

Perception is both a physiological and intellectual judgment, for perceiving an object requires grasping the object as a whole as well as in terms of its parts. It is also closely linked with imagination, for it is through virtual body enactments that creative projections are possible and an individual's skill acquisition improves. Although one acquires knowledge primarily through the eye and the act of seeing, many participants found themselves in situations where seeing allowed them to engage in other sensations—touch, taste, and smell. The order in which these sensations are experienced depends on the stimuli in question. For instance, at the moment when seeing becomes touching, the latter becomes the figure, and seeing becomes the background. Tom's experience of smelling the flowers (because they jumped out at him from beyond the frame) illustrates how virtual body explorations allow for vision to be replaced by smell as the flower approached him and took him by joyful surprise. Thus, a body-dependent order of presentation provides constraints on how an object or event is perceived.

Every sensation can then be potentially summoned by viewers whose virtual body allows them to participate—body part by body part—in all of the sensations. Such a learning process is exemplified by viewers such as Nancy, who describes how her understanding of art has changed since her initial experience with the Mona Lisa at the Louvre (maximal grip and intentional arc). Recognizing that the person in the picture was watching her as she moved away was an early initiation into art history. Later, her virtual body explorations of *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale* disrupted the bodily stasis she had achieved over the years, because coming to terms with this picture required greater involvement. The image caused great consternation because the sensations she felt were rather frightening, and they caused her to think not only about the artist's vision but also about the dialectical relationship between what is in and outside of the frame. Such a deviation from bodily equilibrium could only be resolved through greater skill acquisition (knowledge of art).

Sheila, on the other hand, being a curator and knowledgeable about museum art, was able to articulate that the theatrical presentation of the Baroque miniatures made her feel as if she was right there, in the Baroque period. She underwent virtual body enactments, which were enhanced by walking around to grasp the architecture as a whole, then peering into a window of a miniature to grasp what went on inside it. As a curator, she marveled at this experience, because she knew from experience how difficult it is to summon up such an experience through the placement and presentation of art and artifacts. In addition, Christine's description of how she was moved by the Baroque exhibit is a good example of how flow happens within a viewing

experience. Her discussion of the simulation of moving clouds behind the Baroque models, the high ceilings provided by the old pavilion, and the space around each model that enabled her to walk around and to peer in to the buildings as she moved from room to room provides an illustration of how she was caught up in the process. For Nancy, Sheila, and Christine, imagination is steeped in embodied perception and is kindled by their bodies, although Sheila has greater expertise in art than either Nancy or Christine. It is not, as Kant suggests, a higher-order activity divorced from the body.

Existential phenomenology, however, has its limitations because it explains only what happens at the conscious level and does not allow us entry into the unconscious world of individuals. The vast majority of concepts operate automatically and unreflectively. For a deeper understanding of how our conceptual systems operate, we turn to Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) concept of image schemata and Fauconnier and Turner's (2002) concept of conceptual blending. A more fundamental form of embodiment is expressed through the language participants used—primarily in their choice of metaphors. We argued that metaphors serve as vehicles for moving less-than-conscious thought into the realm of consciousness, where they can be analyzed and understood more fully. Here we depend primarily on Lakoff and Johnson's work: the conceptualization of abstract concepts based on bodily inference mechanisms, primarily sensorimotor forms. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) propose that metaphors hold the key to unlocking the deeper processes of embodiment at the cognitive unconscious level. Further, they argue that all aspects of thinking and reasoning are based on neural and sensorimotor processing. They go so far as to say that our brains and bodies determine both the structure and properties of the categories and concepts we create. They acknowledge that, while phenomenological reflection helps (Merleau-Ponty is the exemplar) reveal the feel and structure of experience, we need to somehow empirically understand how the cognitive unconscious operates. We can tap into this process by using metaphors.

While Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) theory of embodiment is crucial to our argument, we modified it to accommodate more complex forms of reasoning evident in our data. While these authors contend that image schemata enable individuals to make the projections and metaphorical mappings across domains, there are multiple instances in which preexisting conceptual maps per se may be inadequate to express what is going on. In such a context, something more is taking place, namely, conceptual blending (Fauconnier and Turner 2002). Here we are moving away from the conceptual two-space model (source and target domain) to a multispace model that includes a generic and a blended space.

Conceptual integration networks also build on basic notions of embodiment, such as the force, container, and balance schemata. Fauconnier and Turner (2002, p. 389) reinforce Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of embodiment by stating that our ability for conceptual integration (bringing

two things together mentally in multiple ways) is possible because of the ways in which our neural processes have evolved. Our neural networks, in turn, work and change through interactions with the environment—physical, social, cultural, and moral. Thus, they are not, and should not be, viewed as independent entities that shape our reasoning processes. Thus, conceptual integration networks are learned within cultural contexts, so people who share a culture live in the blend specified by that culture. But diachrony is built into synchrony; in other words, the blend has the potential for innovation and change, creating newer blends. Focusing on image schemata or even conceptual metaphors alone, as Lakoff and Johnson (1999) do, is thus insufficient to explain what is going on. We need to understand more clearly how cultures shape, elaborate, and construct new blends.

To further explain how aesthetic experiences are embodied, we must consider the architecture of the brain and of the neural structure. Merleau-Ponty recognizes the importance of the brain structure—he calls it the “*déjà Monté*” (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1999). However, while he implicitly recognizes the importance of the body, he does not really specify the importance of body structure in the phenomenology of perception. While we acknowledge the importance of neural structure and processing, we do not attempt to provide a neurophysiological explanation. It is beyond the scope of this analysis.

Finally, during our interviews we also noted that many of the participants' metaphorical projections involved emotions. In particular, recall the observations of Nancy, who is so powerfully moved by viewing Kahlo's *The Suicide of Dorothy Hale*. She begins with a reference to being frightened by the sight of blood that overflows from the painting to the frame. Then, she modifies her overall feelings and says, “I felt a tremendous sadness over the loss of a person's life . . . as if life is slipping through your hands and you can't grasp it.” Here she moves from a discrete emotion—fear, to describing the felt quality of fear—tremendous sadness. It is definitely a part of the quality that defines Nancy's experience. We argued that the body is implicated in these affective states through the language used to express them, for emotional language clearly draws on the same image schemata, or primary metaphors, used in other contexts. These metaphors not only reflect emotional states but also serve to construct them. In this context, Dewey's comment on how affective contours shape aesthetic experience is worth pondering. Finally, it is important to note that the viewers who use more abstract language to express their aesthetic encounters are no less embodied than their counterparts who use language that is less complex and more emotional.

In recognizing and probing the interconnection of the physical and communicative body (O'Neill 1985), consumer researchers have begun to culturally reclaim embodiment as a foundational concern. The inquiry into physical pleasure and pain as they pertain to identity development and emotional maturation has been launched by researchers interested in lived worlds and historicized selves (Celsi et al.

1993; Thompson and Hirschman 1995) but has stopped short of plumbing the full, systematic, and agentic use of the body's sensory potential for grasping experience. Falk (1994) has explored the introjective and distinctive logics of consumption implicated in people's projects of self-construction, claiming that the need for individuation and fulfillment is driven by the pursuit of completion. In our present study, we have described and analyzed the ways in which art kindles the proprioceptive, interoceptive, and exteroceptive senses, irrespective of personal projects. In contemplating the contemporary experience economy, the kind of infrastructural understanding we have pursued here of the metaphysical construct that Falk (1994) calls the consuming body is a requisite first step.

We believe that our investigation provides guidelines for documenting and interpreting the consumer's sense and practices of embodiment, which challenge our field's convention of simply including sensory data in descriptions and field note excerpts. In much of the most interesting work on sensation to date, informant insight is epiphenomenal to autoethnographic interpretation of consumption settings. Even in recent contextual work treating the same venue as our own—museum and gallery experience—consumer experience is treated largely tangentially to the art world dynamics involved in the creation of ritual space. However attuned to the cognitive and the visual, this work only hints at the sensual mechanics consumers employ in the presence of art. We have replaced the emic cart behind the etic horse, which should encourage consumer researchers into experience, most of whom have been concerned with theatricality (chiefly with blocking), and whose orientation has largely been design centered and managerial, to focus more precisely on embodiment per se, rather than emplacement.

Understanding strategies used to induce engagement with experiential objects is of interest to consumer research, but it mostly whets the appetite for an emic account of engagement. Our investigation is a corrective to the producer's perspective of consumption that dominates the discourse of experience. We have shown how research on the sensual creation of meaning can add dimensionality to existing research on the mere recovery of meaning, becoming, in turn, a springboard for more detailed exploration of embodied apprehension. Consumers have always lived in an experience economy. Consumer researchers have just begun to understand the sensuous negotiation that life demands.

Prospecting in the experience-rich field of art has allowed us to discover physical mechanisms of awareness that consumers draw on not merely to negotiate but to cocreate their phenomenal worlds. Such activity operates across the entire range of consumer experience. Understanding the carnal cornerstones of consumption constitutes, in turn, a necessary first step in developing a cultural poetics of desire, a cultural erotics that will return the discipline to its roots. Grasping holistically the ways in which consumers interact with the stuff of the marketplace—whether such stuff be material or ethereal—must bring researchers inexorably back to the

body. We hope that our exploration of the somatic nature of consumption experience encourages this return migration.

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