

Exhibition & museum attendance figures 2010

Japanese old master tops the attendance tree

In Tokyo and Kyoto, Hasegawa Tohaku pulls in the crowds, as does Abe Lincoln in Washington, DC

Forecasting exhibition attendance is an unpredictable science. Who would have thought that the six-foot-high plaster model of a statue of Abraham Lincoln would attract 9,290 visitors a day to the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC? "Designing the Lincoln Memorial" lacked the magic words "treasures", "impressionism" or "gold" in the title and yet it attracted 2.9m visitors in total, putting it third overall in *The Art Newspaper's* 17th annual survey of attendance figures. The show, marking the bicentenary of Lincoln's birth, was free to visit, but then so is strolling down the National Mall to admire Daniel Chester French's finished sculpture of the 16th US President.

The survey of 2010 exhibitions is more international than ever, featuring for the first time figures from several Brazilian and Korean venues. Two shows by women artists, Rebecca Horn and Regina Silveira, plus another of Islamic art, each attracted just short of 7,000 visitors a day to Rio de Janeiro's Centro Cultural Banco do Brazil. These figures, again for free exhibitions, placed the bank foundation's venue into the top 15 worldwide.

Japanese museums retain the top spots in the exhibition survey. The Tokyo National Museum's show of work by Hasegawa Tohaku (1539-1610) on the artist's 400th anniversary, which included his masterpiece *Pine Trees*, attracted more than 12,000 daily visitors. That was around 2,000 visitors a day more than the museum's then record-breaking Leonardo exhibition of 2007. Post-impressionist paintings from the Musée d'Orsay put the National Art Center Tokyo in runner-up position. Almost 11,000 visitors a day went to see works by Cézanne, Van Gogh and others on the Japanese leg of a world tour that also included Canberra and San Francisco. Van Gogh's work on their own attracted more than 8,400 visitors a day to Tokyo's National Art Center, a purpose-built blockbuster mill boasting 14,000 sq. metres of exhibition space. This means Japan is still the home of blockbusters, even when the Nara National Museum's annual exhibition of Shoso-in Treasures (23 October-11 November 2010), which attracted 14,533 daily visitors, is excluded. We have omitted these extraordinary "temple shows" from the survey this year as visiting for many is more of an act of religious veneration than art appreciation.

Turning to total museum attendance, there was almost no



Hasegawa Tohaku's homegrown masterpiece, *Pine Trees*, and, below, Van Gogh's 1887 self-portrait, which travelled from Paris to Tokyo

change at the top. The Louvre in Paris remains first among equals, based on an estimated figure of 8.5m visitors, the same as the previous two years. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, weathered the recession, attracting 326,000 more vis-

itors than last year, while cutting back on its exhibition budget by 39%. The decision of Thomas Campbell, the director of the Met, to bring forward its in-house Picasso show paid dividends. It finished eighth worldwide, and second in New York.

As canny was staging a show of its Tutankhamun artefacts to coincide with the travelling King Tut blockbuster near Times Square, diverting 2,890 people a day uptown to Fifth Avenue. But New York's Museum of Modern Art still organised nine

of the city's top ten shows, including Marina Abramovic's one-woman performance. She attracted 7,120 a day.

Parisians flocked to the Pinacothèque's "L'Age d'Or" show featuring Rembrandts and Vermeers lent by Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum: 5,738 a day to be precise. The heavily advertised show ranked higher than the Grand Palais' shows of work by Turner, Renoir, and Christian Boltanski's installation in its nave for Monumenta.

Van Gogh's paintings and letters at London's Royal Academy of Arts returned the institution to the top of that city's exhibition attendance league. The National Gallery in London's surprise hit was a free show of Ed Kienholz and Nancy Reddin Kienholz's atmospheric installation of a Dutch red-light district, *The Hoerengracht*, which attracted 2,400 visitors a day.

There was no Banksy effect this year, which gave the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in the west of England its moment in



Methodology

All figures were calculated automatically by our database, which computes the number of days an exhibition was open using the following formula: total number of days between start date and end date, divided by seven, multiplied by the number of days per week the institution is open, minus exceptional closures. As this formula can produce fractions (divisions of seven), all figures are out by a potential margin of 2%. As the same margin applies uniformly to all averages given, the list represents a fair comparison, however. All data used was supplied by the institutions concerned. Many institutions have one ticket for the entire museum and cannot provide individual attendance for temporary exhibitions. Some institutions offer a number of exhibitions for a single ticket: these are shown as one entry. Institutions with more than one building were asked to provide separate total museum attendance figures for each venue. These venues are marked with an asterisk (*). Institutions that could not provide separate figures were excluded from this portion of the survey.

the spotlight in 2009. Instead, the University of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology deserves a mention. Post-refurbishment, its visitor figures trebled to a record-breaking 1.04m a year, showing that scholarship and popularity are not mutually exclusive.

Other high achievers on the other side of the world were Brisbane's adjoining Queensland Gallery of Art and Gallery of Modern Art. They presented six of Australia's ten most visited shows. "Masterpieces of Paris", an exhibition of post-impressionist paintings from the Musée d'Orsay, on show at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, prevented the Brisbane institutions from getting a clean sweep of the nation's top five shows.

We are grateful to the museums and organisations who have taken part in this survey. The Brazilian Institute of Museums and the Korean National Museum provided extensive visitor figures for the first time. Sadly, the Garage Centre for Contemporary Art, Moscow, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Dallas Museum of Art, which all ranked highly last year, were among those unable to provide statistics in time to be included. The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, could only provide its overall visitor figures for 2010. ■

Javier Pes and Emily Sharpe

Figures compiled by Helen Stoilas with Eliza Apperly, Alessandro Botta, Rob Curran, James Hobbs, Maureen Marozeau, Giovanna Paternò and Bonnie Rosenberg

THE TOP 30 EXHIBITIONS

Daily	Total	Exhibition	Venue	City	Dates
12,116	292,526	Hasegawa Tohaku	Tokyo National Museum	Tokyo	23 Feb-22 Mar
10,757	777,551	Post-Impressionism: from the Musée d'Orsay	National Art Center Tokyo	Tokyo	26 May-16 Aug
9,290	2,926,232	Designing the Lincoln Memorial	National Gallery of Art	Washington	12 Feb 09-4 Apr
9,098	244,347	Hasegawa Tohaku	Kyoto National Museum	Kyoto	10 Apr-9 May
8,436	595,346	Van Gogh: the Adventure of Becoming an Artist	National Art Center Tokyo	Tokyo	1 Oct-20 Dec
8,073	749,638	The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture	Museum of Modern Art	New York	1 Aug-1 Nov
7,873	755,850	Harmony and Integrity: Yongzheng Emperor	National Palace Museum	Taipei	7 Oct 09-10 Jan
7,380	703,256	Picasso in the Metropolitan Museum of Art	Metropolitan Museum of Art	New York	27 Apr-15 Aug
7,120	561,471	Marina Abramovic: the Artist is Present	Museum of Modern Art	New York	14 Mar-31 May
7,011	644,975	Falnama: the Book of Omens	Freer and Sackler Galleries	Washington	24 Oct 09-24 Jan
6,971	602,524	Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913-17	Museum of Modern Art	New York	15 Jul-11 Oct
6,859	535,000	29th Bienal de São Paulo	Pavilhão Cicillio Matarazzo	São Paulo	19 Sep-12 Dec
6,825	445,598	Islam	Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil	Rio	12 Oct-26 Dec
6,802	477,106	Regina Silveira: Shadow Line	Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil	Rio	12 Oct 09-3 Jan
6,716	313,756	Rebecca Horn	Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil	Rio	21 May-18 Jul
6,630	682,867	India: the Art of the Temple	Shanghai Museum	Shanghai	5 Aug-15 Nov
6,469	616,411	Hans Memling	Galleria degli Uffizi	Florence	22 Jun-10 Oct
5,910	492,196	William Kentridge: Five Themes	Museum of Modern Art	New York	24 Feb-17 May
5,739	412,379	Henri Cartier-Bresson: the Modern Century	Museum of Modern Art	New York	11 Apr-28 Jun
5,738	700,000	The Golden Age in Holland	Pinacothèque	Paris	7 Oct 09-7 Feb
5,602	144,843	Crown and Diadem Ornament of Baekje	Gongju National Museum	Gongju	18 Sep-17 Oct
5,585	58,242	13th Japan Media Arts Festival	National Art Center Tokyo	Tokyo	3-14 Feb
5,339	455,322	Turner and the Masters	Grand Palais	Paris	24 Feb-24 May
5,200	810,511	Tim Burton	Museum of Modern Art	New York	22 Nov 09-26 Apr
5,110	582,577	Caravaggio	Scuderie del Quirinale	Rome	20 Feb-13 Jun
5,071	331,087	Renoir: Tradition and Innovation	National Art Center Tokyo	Tokyo	20 Jan-5 Apr
5,036	397,101	Bauhaus 1919-33: Workshops for Modernity	Museum of Modern Art	New York	8 Nov 09-25 Jan
4,873	384,269	Gabriel Orozco	Museum of Modern Art	New York	13 Dec 09-1 Mar
4,803	428,821	Renoir in the 20th Century	Grand Palais	Paris	23 Sep 09-4 Jan
4,785	411,475	The Real Van Gogh: the Artist and His Letters	Royal Academy of Arts	London	23 Jan-18 Apr

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