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Museum's space and participation practices of exhibition visitors²

Museum space is generally considered as an environment completely neutral for art objects. However, such an amorphous treatment of space in a museum stands in a stark contrast with the results of the proxemic analyses, which point to the social dimension of every space.

The aim of the article is to characterize the impact of museum space, perceived as social space, on the reception process of works of art. Based on the results of the public exhibition of Julian Antoniszczak works at MNK, the existence of exhibition space areas that facilitate the perception of art (aesthetic-petal) and having the opposite character (aesthetic-fugal) was pointed out. This identification of areas of the exhibition later became the basis for the typology of museum viewers. The established typology proves that those categories of viewers differ in way of perception of art, forms of behavior in a museum, as well as socio-demographic characteristics.

Key words: museum space, social space, aesthetic-fugal and aesthetic-petal space, museum audience, Julian Antoniszczak (Antonisz)

1. Introduction

Museum space is usually seen as a neutral environment, which should enable deep contemplation of works of art. It is meant to form a natural background for communing with the sacred art, and thanks to that art can be in the center of attention of the recipient. This amorphous treatment of museum space is in line with the idea of the museum as a temple of art – its walls obviously isolate a space, but its role should be completely subordinated to what is inside. The exhibited

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works are to be a dominant. The same situation occurs in the case of a temple, where a religious sacrum becomes the obvious dominant (Hani 2006). The only deviations from these rules appear when the frames of a museum space itself (architecture of the building) are an autonomous work of art, but even in this situation exhibition space is composed in such a way that artistic objects are dominant elements, capable of attracting a recipient's attention more than anything else. The most outstanding museums of contemporary designs by renowned architects, including Guggenheim museum in Bilbao by Frank O. Gehre, the Guggenheim Museum in New York by Frank Lloyd Wright and the Denver Art Museum by Daniel Libeskind may serve as examples here. Their fascinating exterior bodies inside become neutral exposition spaces, completely subordinated to works of art exhibited there. This logic composition and functioning of the museum seems to be obvious, because it is a result of the very idea of an art museum and is accepted both by its creators, as well as by museum workers and the museum visitors.

From this perspective, however, the fact that no environment is completely neutral is underestimated. As already pointed by E. Hall, each space, even regardless of any intents, is a source of proxemic stimuli interactively affecting the relationship between the individual and the material and social surrounding (Hall 1990). It becomes an active factor in shaping social behavior. These general proxemic thesis of E. Hall were also confirmed in works in the field of geography and architecture psychology (Appleton 1996; Tuan 1977; Bańka 2016).

You can therefore believe that the museum space, both by itself, as well as due to the existence also of others in this space and the location of artistic objects, is not a neutral environment, but becomes an active social space. The consequence of this fact should be recognition that behaviors of people in museum area are shaped not only by the requirements of aesthetic contemplation and the perception process of artistic works placed inside. They are also shaped by the way of constructing museum space and by the presence of other participants. This means that the behavior of the audience at the museum can not be analyzed only in the context of relations between a work of art and a recipient, in which saturation with artistic and aesthetic values of a work of art is considered in the context of the preparation and aesthetic sensitivity of a receiver that determines his or her possibility of perception of works of art. It is necessary to broaden the perspective of the factors related to the same exhibition space, which may significantly affect the way of perceiving a work of art. This causes that in the face of a particular work of art located in a particular place, visitors exhibit behaviors that are not only an expression of pure aesthetic contemplation of works of art, but full-fledged social activities, shaped by social rules and the rules of the space in which they are located. And that impact of space on the behaviors of the receiving audience of the museum is the main focus of this discussion.

Of course, the issue of museum space has already been undertaken by researchers. It is a subject of constant reflection in the field of museum architecture (Pabich 2007; Migliore, Servetto 2007; Tzortzi 2015) as well as of museum analyses related to the principles of composing exhibition space (Mariani-Rousset 2008). This issue was also present in studies devoted to the behavior of museum audience. In this context, it is worth pointing out mainly research of A.W. Melton and E. Robinson, who, studying the behavior of an audience, pointed not only to the existence of trends in the audience's behavior in a museum (e.g. moving to the right when visiting), but also proved the existence of hot and cold zones of an exposure (Melton 1935; Melton 1936). Noteworthy is also the analysis of the behavior of the public in museum exhibition space, conducted by E. Verona and M. Lavasseur on the occasion of the exhibition "Les vacances en France". Research on ways of moving around in exhibition space allowed the authors to distinguish four types of visitors (ant, grasshopper, butterfly and fish), which then were linked to the strategies of sightseeing (Veron, Lavasseur 1983). A comprehensive study of customer behavior in the space of an art gallery, taking into account not only the aesthetic and social, but also psychosomatic context of the reception process of works of art and the museum, was also carried out in the framework of the project *eMotion-mapping museum experience*. The obtained results allowed to construct a holistic relationship between a work of art, a curator of a museum and a recipient. These relationships were based on the analysis of an individual way of creating aesthetic experience (as well as stories about it), with emphasis on the museum space and a number of social and psychological variables (Trondle *et al.* 2012; Tschacher *et al.* 2012). All of these studies and analyses indicate that, apart from other factors, the museum space also affects the process of perception of art. Thus, they prove that space should not be ignored in studies of behavior of the museum's audience. It should be noted, however, that space itself was treated in the mentioned research as a static environmental factor, in which the process of perception is carried out. Meanwhile, the impact of the exhibition space is not a static factor, but dynamic, and in various ways can it affect the perception of art understood as a social activity.

2. The concept of the research

The aim of the research project was an empirical analysis of the impact of the museum space on the perception process of works of art. This problem was considered in two aspects. Firstly, it was analyzed how the composition of the exhibition space in the museum may influence the reception behavior of the museum's audience. The focus here was on differences in various areas in exhibition space due to their ability to facilitate or obstruct aesthetic contemplation of the observed works

of art. In the analysis of this aspect, at the starting point, the concept of E. Hall was referred to (and the concept of H. Osmond evoked by E. Hall) of the division of a semi-permanent space on sociopetal space and sociofugal space (Hall 1990: 108–111). Sociopetal space, according to the plan of the mentioned researchers, is a space conducive to social networking, while sociofugal space has the opposite impact, making it difficult to establish and maintain social interaction. Taking into account the fact that in the analysis of the behavior of the public in the museum not the creation of social relations is crucial, but the process of perception of works of art (interaction with a work of art), to describe the diversity of museum space, similarly created categories of space were used: aesthetic-petal and aesthetic-fugal. Aesthetic-petal space is here defined as a space conducive to contemplation of aesthetic works of art. It was also assumed that the aesthetic-petal space will manifest itself with more frequent and longer time of staying the audience in the museum, and the resulting higher level of aesthetic satisfaction of customers. While the aesthetic-fugal space is perceived here as a space which makes a profound aesthetic experience of a work of art difficult or even impossible, and this will be accompanied by a more rare tendency of viewers to remain in it, and a shorter time of being inside. The proposed categories of aesthetic-petal and aesthetic-fugal space are somewhat consistent with the previously invoked concept of hot and cold zones of exposure by A.W. Melton and E. Robinson.

Within the second aspect of the analysis of the impact of the museum space on the process of perception of works of art, the scope of the typological diversity of behavior of a receiver was considered, which is a consequence of the impact of a museum space on art viewers. In this respect, the problem in the limelight is how customers deal with aesthetic-petal and aesthetic-fugal space and how they respond to it while touring around museum exhibition. Significant in this respect was also whether all recipients exhibit a similar sensitivity to petal or fugal character of a space. And if not, what kind of features present the recipient sensitive to this type of museum space, and whether sensitivity to the diverse nature of space has an impact on the assessment of a museum exhibition? An anticipated end result of analysis should be the typology of consumers, illustrating the diversity of their behavior and attitudes towards the experience of a museum, which is a consequence of their sensitivity to a petal or fugal nature of the exhibition space.

The concept of the study formulated in that way deliberately avoids the introduction into the area of consideration the issue of aesthetic and artistic value of observed objects. This is done on purpose, which, of course, does not mean undermining the significance of the works of art and their impact on the process of reception of art by the museum audience. On the contrary, being aware of the dominant influence of these variables on the perception of art, it was considered that to be able to show the presence of other factors affecting the reception of art,

it is necessary to omit the aesthetic criterion. Undoubtedly helpful in this operation was the fact that an empirical study was conducted during the biographical exhibition of one artist, whose works are part of one original artistic trend. As a result, the exhibition was largely homogeneous in nature. It also evoked quite similar, positive reactions among the public³. In addition, it must be emphasized that the unit of analysis was the behaviors of viewers in selected sectors of the exhibition, and not in the face of individual works. All of these contexts of the test situation make that the observed trends in the behavior of the respondents can be explained by reference to the characteristics of museum space.

An empirical study was conducted on 13–21 April and 17–19 May 2013 during the exhibition “Antonisz: Technology for me is a kind of art” at National Museum in Krakow⁴ (April–August 2013), presenting the work of Julian Antoniszczak (Antonisz, 1941–1987), a prominent avant-garde artist; director, screenwriter, composer, creator of the unique animation techniques – non-camera technique. The exhibition of his most famous non-camera films (displayed on the TV screens and on screens suspended and wall), personally built devices for the production of films (pantographs, animographs, sonographs), original filmstrips, journals, “ideas notebooks” scenarios etc.

The whole exhibition was located in three rooms (Fig. 1). The first one was a hall on the first floor of the museum (sector 1), in which there were two projection screens and a TV monitor. In the second room there were four television monitors (sector 2). Third, the most ample room was, for the needs of the research, divided into several sectors, and it included: a projection screen (sector 3), showcases with the equipment to produce films, tapes, journals, scripts and ideas notebooks and the projection screen (sector 4), a complex of suspended screens, TV monitor and showcase exhibits (sector 5), a separate space with a projector (sector 6), a separate space with showcases and pico projections (sector 7). It should also be noted that the films were presented continuously, without interruption, which gave viewers the opportunity to start viewing at any time, without waiting for the start of emissions.

³ In the completed empirical study the described exhibition was recognized as an important artistic Cracow's event by over 79% of the respondents. The attractiveness of the presentation of works recognized by 87% of the respondents, the usefulness of materials about the artist and works was positively assessed by more than 82% of the respondents, and the use of space for the exhibition of the museum was recognized as an attractive by 81% of the respondents.

⁴ The empirical research was conducted by a research team composed of: the Author and Anna Karwińska (Cracow University of Economics) as well as Dorota Jędruch and Anna Walczyk (both from National Museum in Krakow). The team was supported by the students of CUE: K. Jakubek, J. Szałkowska, E. Undas. At the same time the author wishes to thank the Directorate of National Museum in Krakow for enabling implementation of empirical research during the exhibition, as well as Maria Grzywacz (MNK), who was a valuable source of information about the various details related to the preparation of the exhibition.

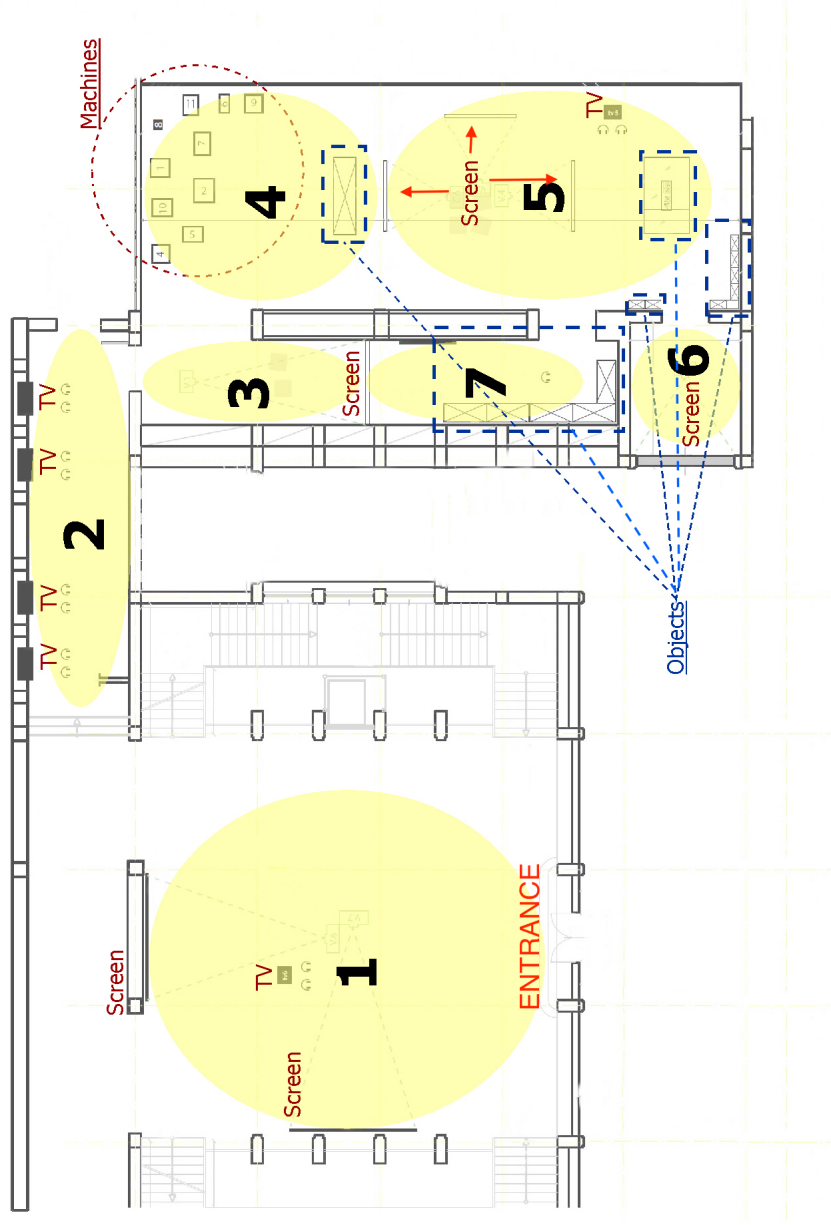


Fig. 1. Plan of the exhibition „Antonisz: Technika jest dla mnie rodzajem sztuki”

Source: Own work on the basis of MNK materials.

The survey was conducted on the basis of two related techniques: direct observation and individual structured interview. In the first phase of the exhibition, visitors were monitored with particular emphasis on how they moved around in the exhibition space as well as on time spent watching individual objects, and globally for its individual areas and the entire exhibition. In the second phase of the study, after the end of exhibition tour, the observed visitors were asked to participate in the interview questionnaire, during which opinions on the exhibition, on attitudes towards art and self-assessment of competence in this field, as well as information on more general cultural activities related to museum institutions were collected. The scope of information were complemented by the demographic variables of respondents.

Sampling for research was based on the principles of a random interval sample. Among the visitors to the exhibition in the indicated period of the study, individuals subjected to observation were chosen randomly. Depending on the number of visitors, sampling interval was two (low frequency), five (average) or ten (high level). The use of dynamic sampling interval resulted from the need to preserve the comfort of the audience during the visit of the exhibition; care was taken at the same time that at the exhibition area there were no more than two observers at the same time. Sample size in both phases of the study varied. 124 respondents underwent observation (representing approx. 5% of the total audience of the exhibition), while 92 respondents took part in the interview questionnaire. The difference in numbers was due to the fact that some of the respondents undergoing observation while visiting the exhibition did not agree to take part in a later interview.

3. Aesthetic-petal and aesthetic-fugal space

The analysis of the collected empirical data was carried out in two stages. The first phase focused on the problem of diversity of exhibition space due to its aesthetic-petal or aesthetic-fugal character. In the second stage, the focus was on the typologization of recipients of the exhibition and their in-depth characteristics. By these measures it was possible not only to identify specific areas of the exhibition, but also determine the consequences of the diverse nature of space to analyze the behavior of the museum public.

Two indicators were taken as the criteria for identifying aesthetic-petal or aesthetic-fugal character of the space. The first one was the fact of stopping the viewer in a given exhibition area in order to see exposed objects of exhibition or displayed movies. In this case we were interested if the exhibition visitor stops in the sector in order to see the exhibits, or goes on without stopping, and

therefore has no opportunity to learn from the exhibits located there or from the presented films. The frequency characteristics of individual sectors of the exhibition was as follows:

Tab. 1. Frequency characteristics of individual sectors of the exhibition

Sector of exhibition	Number of respondents visiting particular sector (N = 124)	Percentage of respondents visiting particular sector (%)
Sector 1	87	70,2
Sector 2	107	86,3
Sector 3	91	73,4
Sector 4	123	99,2
Sector 5	123	99,2
Sector 6	95	76,6
Sector 7	113	91,1

Source: Own elaboration.

The analysis of the obtained results allows to notice that each of the sectors is characterized by a different level of attendance. This is due to the fact that most viewers (57%) did not visit the exhibition as a whole, but applied the selection of exhibits and exhibition space. It should be noted that no sector of the exhibition was visited by all visitors, although the turnout in sectors 4 and 5 was fully satisfying. In this context, it is worth noting that sectors 1, 3 and 6 were characterized by a relatively low turnout, only approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ of visitors to the exhibition took note of the exhibits located there. It is a very important conclusion, because it indicates clearly a differentiated treatment for different sectors of the exhibition by visitors. Moreover, it should be emphasized that the less-visited sectors were of a varied nature (sector 1 was “transitional” and the sectors 3 and 6 had clearly distinguished areas); they were not adjacent to each other and did not constitute a final sector of the exhibition where visitors might have had a feeling of weariness or fatigue by the exposition. In addition, in the relatively most often omitted sector 1, the film “Jak działa jamniczek” (“How a Sausage Dog Works”) was presented, one of the most popular and well-known works of Julian Antoniszczak.

Given these circumstances it is clear that the various sectors of the exhibition revealed a varying ability to attract visitors. And because a viewer who does not visit a particular sector is not driven by an aesthetic value of presented exhibits (because he does not look at them) at the very moment, it can be concluded that the character of exhibition space has primary impact on his choices. The turnout analysis allows therefore to admit that the spaces of sectors 1, 3 and 6 have features of aesthetic-fugal space, and spaces of the most visited sectors (sectors 4 and 5) are of an aesthetic-petal space character. The rest of the sectors can be considered neutral.

The second indicator in the study allowing for identification of aesthetic-petal and aesthetic-fugal character of exposure space was an average time spent on aesthetic contemplation of objects placed or films watched in a given sector of the exhibition. However, the time spent in a given sector during the analysis was relativized against assessing the time necessary to get acquainted with the exposition (column 2 tab. 2)⁵. And as the average real time of visiting the whole exhibition (51 min. 45 sec.) was significantly lower than the assessed time (115 min.), basing on these ratios a correction parameter was calculated, which modified the estimation of time for visiting of each sector (column 3 tab. 2). All these were necessary because the time spent in each sector of the exhibition, enabling to get acquainted with the entire exposure, was different due to the varying number of items placed in each sector, and, above all, due to different duration of the films. The factor obtained as a result of the calculation (column 5 tab. 2) should oscillate close to 1 in a situation when visitors familiarized themselves with all the exhibits / films in a given sector at a medium pace, specific for the averaged rate of exploring for the whole audience throughout the exhibition. A value less than 1 indicates that the viewers visited the exhibition sector relatively quickly and stayed relatively shorter in the space of the sector, which may result from an aesthetic-fugal nature of the sector. While the value above 1 indicates trends for a deep contemplation of the works exhibited in the analyzed sector and a longer stay in it, which may indicate an aesthetic-petal nature of its space.

Tab. 2. Length of the visit to the exhibition and its various sectors

Sector of exhibition	Estimated time of visiting particular sector	Estimated time after correction	Average real time of visiting particular sector	Coefficient
1	2	3	4	5
Sector 1	24 min.	10:48 min.	7:10 min.	0,66
Sector 2	30 min.	13:30 min.	12:45 min.	0,94
Sector 3	6 min.	2:42 min.	5:15 min.	1,94
Sector 4	12 min.	5:24 min.	8:40 min.	1,60
Sector 5	28 min.	12:36 min.	11:40 min.	0,94
Sector 6	9 min.	4:03 min.	5:25 min.	1,38
Sector 7	6 min.	2:42 min.	6:15 min.	2,31
All exhibition	115 min.	51:45 min.	51:45 min.	

Source: Own elaboration.

An analysis of the results carried out on the basis of the constructed coefficient shows that only sector 1 has distinct features of an aesthetic-fugal space. Sectors 2,

⁵ Estimating the time of visiting took into account, in the case of films, a nominal emission time, and in the case of other exhibits, the time needed to read the description and look at the exhibits in showcases.

5 and 6 can be considered as neutral spaces. Other features of the sectors are of aesthetic-petal character, wherein manifested most strongly in sector 7.

An overall analysis of the two mentioned indicators of space does not allow for a fully unambiguous interpretation. The obtained indications (tab. 3) were confirmed to only a limited extent – this concerns primarily sector 1, which was of an aesthetic-fugal character, sector 4, of aesthetic-petal character of space, and sector 2 with space of a clearly neutral nature. For other sectors the issue is not that clear. Indications concerning sector 3 are inconsistent, which makes explicit qualification of its space difficult. On one hand, the space of sector 3 was not encouraging to explore, on the other hand, those who already got there were spending inside relatively more time than in the neutral sectors. With regard to sector 5 and 6 this contradiction does not occur, which leads to the conclusion that they have, however, the nature of rather aesthetic-petal space (sector 5) and rather aesthetic-fugal (sector 6). Sector 7 because of strong positive indications stemming from the analysis of visiting time can be considered a sector with aesthetic-petal space.

Tab. 3. The nature of the various sectors

Sector of exhibition	Frequency analysis	Time spent analysis	The nature of space of particular sector
Sector 1	–	–	aesthetic-fugal
Sector 2	0	0	neutral
Sector 3	–	+	contradictory
Sector 4	+	+	aesthetic-petal
Sector 5	+	0	rather aesthetic-petal
Sector 6	–	0	rather aesthetic-fugal
Sector 7	0	++	aesthetic-petal

Source: Own elaboration.

The interpretation of the results can clearly indicate the difference of behavior of visitors in the various sectors of the museum exhibition. One of the factors that may explain the observed differences is the character of the space. It is worth noting that the area identified as a space clearly aesthetic-petal (sector 4), thus facilitating a contact with the work and its contemplation is a space with a compact and clearly marked boundaries. Moreover, it was a space where traditional exhibits were combined with a multimedia presentation. On the other hand, the space clearly identified as an aesthetic-fugal space (sector 1), was characterized by openness, lack of clear boundaries, “transitiveness”, and moreover it contained only multimedia exhibits. And even though it is this space where Antonisz’ most famous works were placed, it does not change the fact that many visitors missed this sector, and the rest spent relatively little time inside.

In this context, it is worth paying attention to another issue. A common feature of all spaces which have been found in the study as aesthetic-petal (sectors 4,5 and 7) is the presence of the traditional exhibits. In other sectors, only multimedia exhibits were present. This could attest to the fact that aesthetic-petal character of a museum space is dependent to some degree on the presentation of exhibits and it is made easier by the traditional exhibits. Perhaps therefore traditional exhibits have a greater ability to focus and sustain attention of viewers than multimedia exhibits, which could be explained, at least in part, by referring to the concept of M. McLuhan of hot and cold channels (1995). It should be emphasized that, as a result of the realized survey, 42% of respondents obviously preferred exploring the traditional objects, while focus on multimedia presentations was visible only for 5% of the observed, and 53% did not express through their behavior any preferences in this respect.

4. Typology of receiver behaviors

Differentiation of the exhibition space due to its aesthetic-petal or aesthetic-fugal character had a significant impact on the behavior of visitors in the museum space. It should be emphasized that the reactions of the audience to the nature of the exhibition space were not homogeneous and that the diversity appearing in this respect allowed, as a result, to build a typology of visitors, by their sensitivity to aesthetic-petal or aesthetic-fugal nature of the exhibition space.

The analysis of behavior of museum visitors in different sectors of the exhibition allowed to distinguish four categories of viewers: the conscientious viewer, the sensitive viewer, the selective viewer and the distracted viewer. The categories differ not only by sensitivity to the aesthetic dimension of the exhibition space; we can also assign them a different way of perception of art, different forms of behavior in a museum space, as well as different socio-demographic characteristics.

A conscientious type of a viewer is the type most common in the study (43%) and it is characterized, above all, by systematic and thorough familiarization with all the artefacts of the exhibition presenting the works of Antonisz. People associated with this type visited conscientiously all the sectors of the exhibition, regardless of the nature of each space. It can therefore be concluded that they were insensitive to the aesthetic-fugal nature of the sectors 1 and 6. Persons associated with this type, in an orderly manner seeped through the whole show, and then, after seeing the entire exhibition, some of them even returned to some exhibits for a more detailed view. Generally, however, they showed a deep interest in the entire exhibition and showed particular interest or a lack of interest in any individual object. A conscientious viewer visited the museum predominately during the weekend, and visited the exhibition in the company of other people, with whom

he often exchanged comments on viewing the presentation or exhibition. Among conscientious viewers we can relatively more often meet people in the middle age (36–50 years), as well as people with higher education or undergraduates, as well as people living in a relationship and having children. It should also be noted that a conscientious viewer spent on average more time exploring the exhibition (63 min.) than the entire tested audience (51.5 min.).

The sensitive viewer type (28%) is primarily characterized by sensitivity to the aesthetic character of individual sectors of the exhibition. This type of recipient systematically omitted sectors that have been identified (by the analysis of the turnout) as having the aesthetic-fugal character (sectors 1, 3 and 6). During the tour around the exhibition, this type of viewer focused primarily on his chosen exhibits and presentations which aroused his deep interest. Other objects however, were observed very briefly or were completely omitted. In the exhibition area he or she moved in a fairly orderly way, sometimes returning to the facilities already seen. A sensitive viewer visited the exhibition mostly in the company of others and devoted a relatively short time to see the exhibition (approximately 42 min). Men prevailed among the viewers of this type, the elderly (over 65 years), working people, with higher education, living in a relationship but childless.

The distracted type of a viewer (10% of respondents) in terms of relation to the nature of the exhibition space is very similar to the sensitive viewer type. People belonging to this type during the visit in the exhibition ignored sector 1 (identified as an aesthetic-petal space), but in the course of further exploring the exhibition showed no susceptibility to an aesthetic-fugal character of other sectors. These facts suggest that perhaps in the case of this type of viewer the basis for his behavior was not sensitivity to the nature of space, but the lack of sufficient concentration at the time of entry to the exhibition area, which caused accidental omission of a part of the exhibition. Sector 1 was in fact located in a part of the museum lobby and maybe some viewers walked past it, not realizing that they already were in the exhibition area. The correctness of this interpretation – and ultimately distinguishing the type of a sensitive and distracted viewer – is convincing, because of different characteristics of the spectators assigned to this type.

The distracted viewer is primarily a young spectator (35 years old), who does not have a family, with higher undergraduate education, having the status of a student, or a working person. Apart from sector 1, which they missed, he or she carefully and intently watched all the exhibits, moved around the exhibition according to the exhibition plan or according to their own plan, often returning to the facilities already seen. Most often they visited the exhibition alone and devoted relatively the greatest amount of time (64 min.) to the visit.

The selective viewer (19% of respondents) did not tour the whole exhibition, but also showed no sensitivity to the aesthetic-fugal nature of particular sectors.

Alone they selected both sectors, as well as individual objects, to which they devoted relatively much attention. He or she was moving steadily forward, not returning to exhibits already seen. Their presence at the show lasted a relatively short time (on average just 35 min.), he or she visited the exhibition most often alone, and was not a weekend spectator. The selective viewer is mostly a person with secondary education, at the age of 50, single, often a pensioner.

The proposed typology of visitors to the Antonisz' exhibition is characterized through the above-indicated different shape of recipients' practices and differences in socio-demographic characteristics. Additionally, one may still note that different types of viewers have carried out different assessments of the exhibition (tab. 4), which also shows the cognitive importance of separate types of viewers. Analyzing their assessment of the exhibition, it is worth noting the generally high level of exhibition recipient's satisfaction, and, related to this, very good assessment of the whole exhibition. However, special attention should be given to the fact that the most positive assessment of various aspects of the exhibition are usually formulated by the distracted spectator, and that the selective viewer is the most critical. But, it must be emphasized that the critical approach of the latter does not apply to the assessment of the use of exhibition space. It is very important because, as pointed out earlier in the carried out analysis, he or she is insensitive to the nature of exhibition space. Meanwhile, in relation to this aspect of the evaluation, the sensitive viewer was the most critical, who, as can be judged, felt the impact of the various sectors of the exhibition to the greatest extent.

Tab. 4. Evaluation of selected aspects of the exhibition works of Antonisz

Type of viewer	Conscientious viewer	Sensitive viewer	Distracted viewer	Selective viewer	Sample N = 124
Assessment of the exhibition of Antonisz works – very good	71%	79%	92%	61%	74%
Assessment of the exhibition significance as a cultural event – very good + good	82%	88%	100%	50%	79%
Assessment of the exposition of works – very good + good	82%	92%	100%	83%	87%
Assessment of the use of exhibition space – very good + good	78%	75%	83%	94%	81%
Evaluation of the usefulness of information materials – very good + good	76%	88%	92%	83%	82%

Source: Own elaboration.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of behaviors of the audience of the exhibition devoted to the work of Julian Antoniszczak and the constructed typology of audience, clearly show that museum space does not have a neutral character, but it is a factor that can shape the perception of art and affect its quality. The distinguished four categories of viewers: the conscientious viewer, the sensitive viewer, the selective viewer and the distracted viewer and connected with them different forms of behavior in a museum space clearly show that the museum space is not only important factor, but it is also a factor that dynamically influences the visitors. It means, it should be analyzed as one of the factors active affecting the course of the visit to a museum, when it is regarded as a special form of social interaction (in a H. Blummer's sense). A visit to the museum and contact with museum objects creates a situation in which two types of social interaction may appear: interaction with museum object (a work of art, and through it with the creator of the work) and interaction with other recipients. It is worth noting that each of these forms of social interaction may be dependent on the nature of the museum space.

However, it is stressed that the impact of space on the audience and on the process of perception of art does not have a universal character, and this means that susceptibility to the effects of space on individual consumers of art may vary. Moreover, the collected empirical evidence indicates that sensitivity to the nature of space can be associated with the selected socio-demographic characteristics of the visitors as well as with the social characteristics of the situation and perception acts of museum objects, which gives the museum features specific to social space. It also causes that aesthetic-petality and aesthetic-fugality of a space, as well as categories of sociopetality and sociofugality of space by E. Hall, should be treated as variables of a social nature. Confirmation of this fact, however, means that it would be advisable to further deepen the reflection on museum space. Reflection, which is not limited to the analysis of the impact of a space on the social museum practices, but which would allow to analyze the interactive effects of all actors: viewers, museum objects and attributes of separated space. This would allow for a better understanding of the rules of a social dynamics of this field. One needs to be aware, however, that this type of reflection requires a much more technologically advanced research tools (e.g. recorders of motion), which would allow to conduct a non-invasive simultaneous observation of the behavior of all visitors present in the exhibition space.

Analyzing the results one must also be aware that they have been obtained in time of quite a special cultural event. The work of Julian Antoniszczak, an avant-garde artist, is not widely known, and the organized exhibition was visited mainly

by people actively and regularly participating in cultural and museum life⁶. It was therefore an important cultural event, but targeted to a specific audience, as evidenced by the overall turnout of the analyzed exhibition. This causes that interpreting the results needs to be done with an awareness of the limited generalizability of its conclusions. Undoubtedly, the socio-demographic characteristics of the different types of viewers is a characteristic for the audience of this particular exhibition. In the case of testing the audience on the occasion of another cultural event, a socio-demographic characteristics may take a slightly different shape. However, one can believe that both the typology of the audience, and above all the criteria of its construction are universal, because they indicate the spatial context of social behavior in a museum. Undoubtedly, the results of research both by A.W. Melton and E. Robinson, E. Veron and M. Lasseur, as well as M. Trondle may be invoked to support this belief.

The obtained empirical material and its interpretation may be used in at least two ways. Firstly, they can be considered in the context of social research on museum audience. It is then a modest contribution to a continuation of the rich tradition of research on museum, initiated by F. Kimbel, and in Poland by H. Winiecka, T. Gołaszewski or J. Mikułowski Pomorski. The proposed characteristics cannot be understood however in a static perspective, describing a piece of a social reality, but in a dynamic perspective, which allows to capture the interactive social process of perception of art in a museum environment. Secondly, the conclusions drawn can be used as evidence in the design of exhibition space. It is above all to realize the impact of a particular way of constructing space on the social behavior of the museum public. The exhibition space should of course be subordinated to the sacred works of art and the logic of aesthetic experience, but also one need to be aware that the concentration of the recipient on the work of art and the opportunity to live the aesthetic experience is conditioned by the nature of a surrounding space.

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⁶ Among people participating in the study, up to 79% take part in a cultural event at least once a month, 62% at least once a month visit a museum or art gallery and 69% at least once a quarter goes to National Museum in Krakow.

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