

## **“HOW ARE WE DOING?”**

### **Community Survey July 2003**

#### **Introduction & Methodology**

Seattle Art Museum conducted a confidential “How are we Doing?” survey during July 2003. The survey served as a way to assess SAM’s progress, through the eyes of the community. Individuals were asked to evaluate how SAM is doing with the Wallace Initiative: Deepening the Dialogue efforts, since last surveyed 2001-2002. The expectation was that this survey would not only provide an assessment of how SAM is doing but additional and clarifying information to assist in identifying ways to better engage, sustain and outreach to diverse ethnic audiences.

To get a representative and random sample, 2200 individuals who are part of the SAM Community Network E-news list serve were invited to participate in the survey as well as individuals who happened upon the survey while visiting SAM’s website (25). An online survey provider service, Zoomerang, with software capabilities to collect and tabulate results was used. SAM along with feedback from the community designed the survey questions. Those in the community network group were mailed a postcard at the beginning of the month and those in the network group with e-mail addresses (700) were also sent a reminder email closer to the submittal of survey deadline date. Participants were encouraged to visit SAM’s Community web page link and read the “Report to the Community” and/or complete the survey. An incentive and a token of appreciation for filling out the survey were offered (free membership first 20, discounted membership or a free poster). A total of 150 individuals completed surveys. The vast majority of which were completed on-line (10 filled out paper surveys). Many of the individuals from the diverse communities, who participated in the previous research in 2001 an 2002, are part of this network group.

Previous research conducted between October 2001 and June 2002 by PRR and LORD Cultural Resources Planning and Management Inc, focused primarily on learning more about the demographics of the Museums’ current visitors and members, and develop a better understanding of their motivations, expectations and behaviors, along with non-visitors perceptions and participation barriers. The information gathered from this recent survey will be assessed with previous research information to analyze and continue to develop effective strategies for participation and broadening SAM’s audience.

#### **Key Findings of the Survey**

- The respondents represented a diverse audience: 14% Asian American; 25% Black/African American; 13% Hispanic/Latino/Spanish/Mexican; 34% White; and 13% other/not listed.
- 61% of the respondents indicated they visited the museum more in the past two years than in previous years due to more engaging exhibitions, special invites received from SAM and more engaging programs and events.
- The top three areas respondents saw SAM improve greatly: diversity of exhibitions, community outreach efforts and marketing efforts to diverse communities.
- 70% indicated some or great change in their perception of SAM, in the past two years.
- The community’s perception of SAM as an elitist and unwelcoming place had changed to welcoming (69%), educational (68%) and community-oriented (43%) and engaging (42%).
- This change in perception was due to SAM’s efforts to increase accessibility and diversity of outreach and exhibitions.