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# Art on the move: The role of joint attention in visitors' encounters with artworks

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### Abstract

Most visitors arrive at museums and navigate their way through the galleries as part of a group, a constellation requiring them to oscillate their attention between their companions and the curated exhibition. This paper focuses on two examples of videotaped data collected at an art museum in the UK to explore the ways in which visitors achieve joint attention with their companions in front of a painting. The analysis draws on interaction analysis and foregrounds the ways in which pairs of visitors achieve joint attention, especially when there is distance between them and they are not attending the same artwork. The findings contribute to a better understanding of attention as a resource for meaning making in the museum and complement the line of research exploring how visitors negotiate and make meaning in and through social interaction.

## Keywords

Museum; Visitor; Social interaction; Embodiment; Joint attention

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