



Eeva-Katri Ahola

PRODUCING EXPERIENCE IN
MARKETPLACE ENCOUNTERS:

A STUDY OF CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCES
IN ART EXHIBITIONS AND TRADE FAIRS

HELSINKI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS OECOMICAE HELSINGIENSIS

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is concerned with the consumption process in relation to cultural services. More specifically, the aim is to identify the cultural themes through which consumers communicate consumption meanings while visiting exhibitions and thereby shed light on the nature of consumer activeness in the production of meanings for cultural services and related consumption experiences.

In the previous research on consumer encounters with cultural services, the analytical focus has mainly been on the interactions between the service provider and the consumer regarding the locus in which the service provider produces the particular cultural service and the consumer experiences it. The first shortcoming of this view is a predetermined understanding of the consumer's value emphasis. By identifying the core experience and the peripheral experience, this view finalizes what constitutes the most valuable experience and what constitutes the less valuable experience for the consumer beforehand. The second shortcoming is an excessive focus on interaction where the focus of attention in value creation is on the interaction between the consumer and the cultural organization. However, in the context of cultural services, there seem to be manifold interactions occurring in the marketplace that are important in the production of meanings for cultural services and related experiences. The third shortcoming relates to the embedded belief in the division of control. It is understood that through careful planning and organization of the encounters the service provider can gain control over the service delivery. Consumers in turn control their own experiences. However, it is not always possible to control the delivery of a cultural service. For example, the media acts as an important provider of meanings for art exhibitions.

This study aims to provide more understanding of this multi-faceted value creation of cultural services and related experiences. It suggests that value-creation of cultural services occurs in the marketplace through various cultural processes in which different marketplace actors take part. The study aims to increase understanding of this matter from the consumers' point of view and answers the following research questions: how do consumers give meaning to the consumption experience of cultural services in marketplace encounters? What kinds of cultural themes can be identified in the consumption process of exhibitions? In what ways do the cultural themes relate to each other in the consumption process?

A framework has been developed for analysis of the value-creation of cultural services. The theoretical framework draws on the poststructuralist, social constructionist, cultural studies and service marketing approaches. The study suggests that the value of a cultural service and related experiences is not determined beforehand but produced in the marketplace in on-going negotiations in which different actors take part. Service encounters are seen as positions in the marketplace where the struggle for meanings takes place. Consumers are perceived as active agents taking part in the meaning-making occurring in the marketplace.

The methodological approach in this study draws on ethnography. The main data consisted of 23 on-site consumer interviews and 22 visitor essays. They were analyzed with a hermeneutic, iterative approach. Based on the data, four cultural themes through which consumers give meaning to consumption experience of cultural services were identified. These themes were called sensibility, progress, corporality, and fellowship. Each theme consists of several sub-themes which are analyzed in detail. The study suggests that consumers take part in the struggle of meaning of experience in marketplace encounters as aesthetic agents.

Keywords: consumption experience, cultural service, service encounter, struggle, cultural process, art exhibition, trade fair.

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Eeva-Katri Ahola

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
LIST OF TABLES	VI
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 FORMATION OF CONSUMPTION EXPERIENCE IN CULTURAL SERVICES	2
1.2 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY	4
1.3 POSITIONING THE STUDY	4
1.4 EXHIBITIONS AS THE MILIEU OF EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS.....	7
1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY	13
2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS	14
2.1 ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS	14
2.1.1 <i>Poststructuralism</i>	14
2.1.2 <i>Social constructionism</i>	16
2.2 CULTURAL STUDIES APPROACH	17
2.2.1 <i>Cultural processes of meaning production in the marketplace</i>	18
2.2.2 <i>Reception of cultural products</i>	20
2.2.3 <i>Consumer and activeness in experiencing</i>	24
2.3 CULTURAL SERVICE ENCOUNTER	33
2.3.1 <i>Cultural services and experiences – objects of value production</i>	33
2.3.2 <i>From consumer-provider interaction to multifaceted interaction</i>	35
2.3.3 <i>Encounter - site of struggle for control of meanings</i>	36
2.4 FRAMEWORK FOR INVESTIGATING CULTURAL SERVICES IN MARKETPLACE ENCOUNTERS.....	38
3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	39
3.1 ETHNOGRAPHICALLY INFORMED APPROACH.....	39
3.2 RESEARCH PROCESS	41
3.3 MAIN DATA SETS.....	43
3.3.1 <i>Consumer interviews</i>	43
3.3.2 <i>Visitor essays</i>	51
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS.....	56
4 SENSIBILITY THEME: SETTING FREE VARIOUS EMOTIONS	59
4.1 POIGNANCY	60
4.1.1 <i>Emergence of strong emotions</i>	60
4.1.2 <i>Appropriation of emotions</i>	64
4.2 PERPLEXITY.....	65
4.2.1 <i>Astonishment</i>	66
4.2.2 <i>Ambivalence</i>	67
4.3 REFRESHINGNESS.....	69
4.3.1 <i>Accessibility of peace of mind</i>	69
4.3.2 <i>Relaxation</i>	73
4.4 SUMMARY	75
5 PROGRESS THEME: GATHERING OF IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE	78
5.1 CREATIVITY.....	79
5.1.1 <i>Searching for new ideas</i>	79
5.1.2 <i>Inspiration</i>	82
5.2 EXPERTISE.....	84
5.2.1 <i>Collecting knowledge</i>	84
5.2.2 <i>Reflecting and evaluating the quality of objects</i>	88
5.3 SUMMARY	91

6	CORPORALITY THEME: TREKKING IN CHANGING TERRAIN.....	94
6.1	MOVEMENTS	95
6.1.1	<i>Moving around and mapping</i>	95
6.1.2	<i>Territory: Intermingling with other people at an exhibition.....</i>	101
6.2	SENSUALITY	106
6.2.1	<i>Multiple ways to see: dominance of sight.....</i>	106
6.2.2	<i>Background senses.....</i>	111
6.3	SUMMARY	113
7	FELLOWSHIP THEME: CIRCULATING IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.....	117
7.1	CONNECTEDNESS TO PUBLICITY.....	118
7.1.1	<i>Production of a meta-story of the experience in the media</i>	118
7.1.2	<i>Media as marketer of art: Triggering interest.....</i>	121
7.1.3	<i>Media as charm school: Observing model experiences</i>	123
7.2	DIVISIBILITY	126
7.2.1	<i>Expressing and exchanging experiences.....</i>	127
7.2.2	<i>Reaching further back: role of reminiscence.....</i>	130
7.3	SUMMARY	135
8	CONCLUSIONS.....	138
8.1	MAJOR FINDINGS	138
8.1.1	<i>Cultural themes in exhibition consumption.....</i>	138
8.1.2	<i>Consumer agency in exhibition consumption process.....</i>	143
8.2	DISCUSSION OF THE THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS	147
8.3	EVALUATION OF THE STUDY	153
8.4	AREAS OF FURTHER STUDIES	156
8.5	MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS	156
	REFERENCES.....	159
	OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION.....	177
	APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX	179
	APPENDIX 2: ENDNOTES.....	183

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Most popular museums in Finland in 2004.....	10
Table 2. Examples of popular fairs organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation in Helsinki (2004).....	11
Table 3. Examples of studies of the early humanistic approach.	27
Table 4. Examples of research on extraordinary experiences from the communal point of view.....	30
Table 5: Examples of researches using the marketplace negotiation approach.	32
Table 6: Informant demographics at the North Karelia outdoor exhibition.	48
Table 7: Informant demographics at the Habitare interior decoration exhibition.....	50
Table 8. Visitors to Kiasma in 2002 (from July to December).....	52
Table 9. Informant Demographics in visitor essays.....	55
Table 10: Sensibility theme.....	76
Table 11: Progress theme.....	92
Table 12. Corporality theme.....	115
Table 13: Examples of articles about the ‘Resurrection’ exhibition.....	119
Table 14: Fellowship theme.....	136
Table 15. Cultural themes present in the process of exhibition consumption.....	139
Table 16. Comparison of the assumptions of the consumption experience in marketing research.....	153
Table 17: Article data.....	178

1 INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the creation of consumption experiences in the cultural service marketplace and of consumer activeness in the meaning-making of these experiences. Since the beginning of the 1980s, consumer research has shown growing interest in the experiential aspects of consumption. One of the first most influential articles in this area of study has been the article on the hedonistic consumer written by Holbrook and Hirschman in 1982 (*The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun*). In marketing research literature (e.g. Kotler and Armstrong 2004), commercial experiences, namely experiences planned by particular market players, have received attention only quite recently (e.g. Kotler and Armstrong 2004; Poulsson and Kale 2004).

It has even been argued that we are now living in an experience economy, where experiences should be commodified in order to give consumers additional satisfaction (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Moreover, the degree of product processing has become even higher and today the experience sector has become a more visible part of the economic field (Pantzar 1998). Thus, in today's economy, people are buying experiences or promises of them and not just products or services.

Despite the fact that there has been growing interest in the nature of experience in the field of marketing and consumer research, a theoretically sophisticated and empirically well-grounded understanding of what constitutes a 'consumption experience' in the context of cultural services still seems to be lacking. The purpose of this study is to work towards such an understanding. In the chapters and sections that follow, a theoretical framework for analyzing consumption experiences in the context of cultural services is developed. Then the study investigates empirically how consumers give meanings to consumption experiences in the context of cultural services and especially in exhibitions. By identifying the cultural themes through which consumers communicate consumption experiences in the consumption process, the study aims to shed light on the features of consumption experience and the nature of consumer agency in meaning-making occurring in the marketplace. The data consists of consumer interviews and essays that are collected from exhibitions.

The study is divided into three parts. The first part (chapters 1-3) introduces the research topic, presents the research problem and connects the study with previous research. It also presents the theoretical approach as well as the methods and data used. The second

part (chapters 4-7) is based on the empirical analysis. Each chapter analyzes consumer meaning-making of consumption experience as a particular state of experience. The states described are the emotional state, the cognitive state, the bodily state and the social state. Each of the states relates to a particular theme that unfolds in the negotiation. The third part (chapter 8) concludes the study. This part summarizes the key characteristics of the consumption experience and consumer agency in the context of cultural services and discusses the theoretical implications.

1.1 Formation of consumption experience in cultural services

This study is concerned with the consumption process in relation to cultural services. The focus of attention is on the features of consumer experience and the nature of consumer agency in the marketplace of cultural services. More specifically, the study unravels the nature of consumer activeness in the meaning-making of cultural services and related experiences. Carù and Cova (2003) argue that the concept of experience is ill-defined in marketing and that it needs further elaboration. Moreover, a call for incorporating consumer agency in the analysis of markets as social construction has been presented in the previous research (Peñaloza and Venkatesh 2006).

Previous research has understood that the core consumption experience in cultural services is the feeling of pleasure and satisfaction/dissatisfaction that comes from the encountering of a formal cultural product such as art (Laczniak 1980, 125; see also Kotler and Scheff 1997, 191-193¹). The peripheral consumption experience in turn is the satisfaction from the consumption of augmented service products such as cafés or bookstores (Laczniak 1980, 125; see also Kotler and Scheff 1997, 191-193). The first shortcoming with this view is the pre-determined understanding of consumer value emphasis. By identifying the core experience and the peripheral experience, this view finalizes beforehand what constitutes the most valuable experience and what constitutes the lesser valuable experience for consumer.

The second shortcoming is the focus on interactions. In this view presented above, the focus of attention in value creation is on the interaction between the consumer and the cultural organization. However, in the context of cultural services, there seem to be manifold interactions occurring in the marketplace that are important in producing meanings for cultural services and related experiences. For example, the value of a work of art is

created by the interaction of a number of players such as museum curators, art critics and gallery owners through shared opinions, information and shared understandings of art. Hence, an art work is created by the artist but to be acknowledged as art work it needs the acceptance of other actors in the art world such as gallery owners, critics or other artists. The very status of being a work of art, is established through the interactive processes between marketplace actors (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1984; Sevänen 1998; Jyrämä 1999, 1). This study adds to the previous research that the value of a cultural service such as an art exhibition is produced in the marketplace by the interaction of a number of players such as consumers, museum curators, art critics and media through *not necessarily always shared* opinions, shared information, and shared understandings of art.

The third shortcoming of the view relates to the embedded belief in the division of control. In marketing literature, service encounters are defined as the period of time during which a consumer interacts with the service (Normann 1991; Grönroos 2000; Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant and Gutman 1985; Shostack 1985, 243). It is understood that through the careful planning and organization of the encounters, the service provider can gain control over the service delivery. Consumers in turn control their own experiences. However, it is not always possible for the providers to control the delivery of a cultural service. For example, the media acts as an important provider of meanings for art exhibitions. Thus for an exhibition arranger such as an art museum it is more difficult to control the service delivery of particular exhibitions. Also, consumers encounter the representations of exhibitions and the related experiences and give meanings to the exhibitions based on them. They also take part in the battle for control of these meanings with the other marketplace actors.

Previous research on exhibition consumption has notified that there is the emotional state, the cognitive state, the bodily state and the social state present in the consumption (Uusitalo and Ahola 1994; Ahola 1995, Linko 1994; Peñaloza 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003). However, previous research has not discussed how *all* these states are present in experiencing during the process of consumption. Moreover, previous research has focused on one type of exhibitions whereas this study investigates consumption process of different types of exhibitions. In addition, previous research has not regarded consumer experiencing as a battle for meanings in the marketplace. It is this multi-faceted value creation of cultural services and related experiences that this study aims to provide more understanding.

1.2 Objectives of study

The purpose of this study is to identify the cultural themes present in the consumption process of cultural services. By identifying the cultural themes, the study aims to shed light on the features of consumption experiences and unravel the nature of consumer activeness in meaning-making occurring in the marketplace for cultural services.

The research question is the following: *How do consumers give meanings to the consumption experience of cultural services in marketplace encounters?*

The sub-questions are the following:

What kinds of cultural themes can be identified in the consumption process of exhibitions?

In what ways do the cultural themes relate to each other in the consumption process?

By identifying the cultural themes through which consumers communicate the consumption experience in the consumption process, the study aims to contribute to knowledge on the features of consumption experiences and the nature of consumer agency in the meaning-making occurring in the cultural service marketplace. In the following three sections, I will briefly present the theory, data and method used in this study. Then I will describe exhibitions as cultural services. The chapter ends with a presentation of the structure of the study.

1.3 Positioning the study

The study draws on the poststructuralist/social constructionism, cultural studies and marketing in building a theoretical framework for analyzing the negotiation of consumption experiences of cultural services in marketplace encounters. The basic argument presented through the theoretical framework is that the meanings of consumption experiences of cultural services are produced through cultural processes. Moreover, the meanings produced in the cultural processes are constantly on the move and attain their shape in on-going marketplace encounters. Consumers are perceived as agents taking part in the meaning-making that occurs in the marketplace.

Cultural studies and consumer culture approach to cultural services and experiences

In the analysis of the meaning-making of cultural services and related experiences taking place in the marketplace this study draws from the following several earlier sources. In previous literature on consumption sociology, Edgell, Hetherington and Warde (1997) have highlighted four typologies of consumption experience. These are family experiences resulting from family ties, friendship experiences resulting from reciprocal relations within the community, citizenship experiences connected with relations to the state, and consumer experiences linked to exchanges with the market (ref. in Carù and Cova 2003, 276). This study draws on this conceptualization of consumption experience. It is also understood that it is the social relations that shape the experience of consuming (Edgell, Hetherington and Warde 1997, 3). In addition, the experiences are not understood and analyzed as the experiences of a particular individual person but more as a social phenomenon (Carù and Cova 2003; Linko 1998). Moreover, the study regards experiences as not necessarily unforgettable in nature (Carù and Cova 2003).

The ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study are informed by poststructuralism (Derrida 1976; Foucault 1972; cf. Bristor and Fischer 1993, 521; cf. Burr 1997), social constructionism (Berger and Luckman 1967; Gergen 199), the cultural studies approach (Hall, 1980; 1992; du Gay, Hall, Janes and Negus 1997; Morley 1980; Radway 1984; Iser 1978; Jauss 1982; Jensen 1996) and the sociology of art (Bourdieu 1984; Becker 1982; Eskola 1979, 1990, 1998, Linko 1998, Sevänen 1998; Jyrämä 1999). From poststructuralism this study has adopted the assumption that meanings are not stable, but constantly in flux (du Gay et.al. 1997). In this study, it is understood that meanings are important in the value-creation occurring in the marketplace (Peñaloza and Venkatesh 2006). Moreover, it has adopted the idea of intertextuality, namely that cultural artefacts such as cultural services and related consumption experiences do not exist in isolation but in relation to other cultural artefacts and obtain their value in relation to other cultural artefacts (cf. Kristeva 1980; Holt 1997). From social constructionism this study has adopted the central role of language in the production of meanings. The study draws from sociology of art in understanding that the status of art, is established through various interactive processes between different actors in the marketplace (Bourdieu 1984; Becker 1982; Sevänen 1998; Jyrämä 1999).

This study draws on the previous literature of cultural studies in understanding that there are two levels of negotiation on meaning occurring in the marketplace. First, there is a macro type of approach to negotiation. Previous research has conceptualized this as the cultural cycle or circuit of culture. According to du Gay et.al. (1997, 3), the five major cultural processes are representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Taken together, they form a circuit that is called the 'circuit of culture'. Second, there is the consumption-level approach to negotiation on the meanings of cultural services. In this approach, the term 'reception' means meaning-production that originates from the audience (Jensen 1986, 15; Panula 1997, 297). This perspective highlights the subject as the source or producer of meaning and tends to define the reader as the agent who actualizes the meaning potential of the text (e.g. a novel) (Jensen 1986, 15). The theory of aesthetics has provided knowledge for studying the nature of experiences in the area of cultural services. Especially the concepts of aesthetic experience (Kant 1952, 41-44; Kinnunen 1969; Haapala and Pulliainen 1998) and corporality (Merley-Ponty 1962) are considered valuable in analysing consumer experiences.

This study also builds on the consumer culture approach (cf. Arnould and Thompson 2005). As follows, two consumer culture approaches that have influenced this study are introduced (cf. Arnould and Thompson 2005). This study has been influenced by the 'marketplace culture' approach (Arnould and Thompson 2005). This approach addresses features of the marketplace-culture connection by regarding consumers as culture producers. Thus this approach has tackled the ways in which consumers form feelings of social unity and create unique cultural worlds through the consumption interests (e.g. Belk and Costa 1998; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Holt 1995; Celci and Rose and Leigh 1993; Arnould and Price 1993).

Moreover, this study has also been influenced by the approach that emphasizes 'mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers interpretative strategies'. Studies operating in this research domain draw on the symbolic meanings and cultural ideals encoded in popular culture texts and the rhetorical means that are used to make these meanings and ideals appealing to consumers (Stern 1993, Stern 1994; Scott 1994; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Moisander and Eriksson 2006). In this approach, consumers are conceived as interpretative agents whose meaning-creating activities range from those that tacitly grasp the dominant representations of consumer identity and lifestyle ideals presented in advertising and mass media to those that consciously deviate from these ideological instructions (Arnould and

Thompson 2005, 874-875). From marketing literature this study draws on the concept of service encounter (e.g. Normann 1991).

Method and data

Methodologically, this study draws on the ethnography, namely 'market-oriented ethnography' used in consumer culture research (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). In general ethnographic inquiry takes as its central and guiding assumption that any human group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture (Patton 2002, 81). Market-oriented ethnography provides a contextualized understanding of the meanings of product use, namely the use of cultural services that goes further than the individual brand or product attributes to a meaningful behavioural constellation on which service use is based (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). In addition, market-oriented ethnography refers to an ethnographic focus on the behaviour of people constituting a market for a product or service (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, 484). The main data consist of 23 on-site consumer interviews and 22 visitor essays which are analyzed in detail with a hermeneutic, iterative approach (Thompson and Locander and Pollio 1994). This methodology is chosen because it provides tools to analyze exhibition experience from the inside and to develop understanding from the viewpoints of the visitors.

1.4 Exhibitions as the milieu of empirical analysis

In this study, the focus is on consumption that takes place in the milieu of exhibitions. The study takes a response perspective to the data that is composed of two parts: interviews and consumer essays. The interviews and consumer essays are conducted with exhibition visitors. I chose exhibitions as the focus of the empirical analysis because they are an example of a cultural product that already has a socially constructed framework for experiencing (cf. Holt 1995). Moreover, they are an example of the action of "displaying" something that is a common practice in the experience industry (cf. Pine and Gilmore 1999) and phenomena that we meet in our everyday lives in different sites of consumption such as shops, museums and libraries. Moreover, we encounter displaying in particular industries such as the travel industry, which is able to put whole cultures on display. In the following I will briefly review some perspectives of previous research on exhibitions.

The tradition of arranging exhibitions in Finland dates back to the nineteenth century. Agricultural fairs and art exhibitions are perhaps the types of exhibitions that have the longest history in Finland. Agricultural fairs were arranged by agricultural societies. The purpose of these fairs was originally to present to farmers the most modern farming technology and methods (Niemelä 1996, 98-99). The first provincial agricultural fair was held in 1854 in Viipuri and was targeted to professional farmers. Gradually exhibitions grew in size and in the fair held in Oulu in 1883, there were 4,000 visitors and 669 exhibited articles such as animals, hay, seeds, machinery and tools. The older farming fairs usually consisted of separate animal, farming, handicraft, and machinery sections. Exhibiting of one's own products was not very popular among farmers. For this reason exhibitors were attracted to participate by granting them awards for example fine outstanding animals. Nowadays agricultural fairs are places where the professional farming aspect and leisure and fun intermingle. They can be seen as places for promoting the countryside.

Other types of exhibitions with a long tradition in Finland are art and museum exhibitions. For instance, the Finnish Art Association arranged its first art exhibition "Finska Konstföreningens Exposition" (Finnish art association exhibition) in 1847 in Helsinki. The Finnish Art Association had been collecting art works for the purposes of professional art education but the art collection was not on public display. Later on, while visiting in Helsinki, the members of the Finnish Art Association living outside Helsinki started to increasingly request an opportunity for visits to the premises where the art collections of the association were kept. This led to the decision to open these collections to the public in 1863. In the art field there were educational ambitions aiming to improve visitors' 'artistic sense' and to educate people to understand the enriching and inspiring effects of art in life (Levanto 1991, 213). For visitors in turn, exhibitions also served as a way to escape everyday routines, and later on, also as a means of strengthening national identity. Opened in 1882, the Cygnaeus gallery is the oldest art museum in Finland. Its collection consists mainly of Finnish 19th century paintings and sculpture. The museum is owned by the State and administrated by the National Board of Antiques².

The first larger scale national fair, "The First Finnish Fair" was organized in the summer of 1920 in Helsinki by the Union of Finnish Labour. It included several nationalistic, economical, and cultural meanings. Independence from Russia had awakened a need for the creation of independent trade relations. Since this first Finnish Fair had no premises of its own, the event took place on the grounds of Helsinki's Johannes Church, in

surrounding schools and other nearby parks, courtyards and buildings. The organizers of the exhibition included famous Finnish cultural figures such as Carolus Lindberg, Armas Lindgren, Alvar Aalto and Eliel Saarinen. Exhibitor organisations at this fair numbered close to a thousand: 760 Finnish and 218 foreign business and associations. Attendance totalled 120,000. Foreign exhibitors were allowed to bring to the fair only material and merchandise that was lacking in Finland, and such that could be imported under the customs regulations then in force. For instance, a rule was established that luxury goods could not be exhibited, but this stipulation was not honoured (Holopainen 1991, 44-45). The machine, metal and woodworking industries represented the largest group among Finnish exhibitors. Other groups included the paper and printing industries, the food-and-beverage industry, the leather and food-wear industries, the chemical industry, the weaving and clothing industry, the glass, ceramics and construction industries, and various shops and agencies.

During the fair, a range of special programmes suited to every taste was organized in Helsinki. Concerts, theatre performances, motion pictures and sports competitions were arranged to entertain the visitors. Jean Sibelius composed a festival cantata and the programme included poetry readings and speeches. The Finnish Fair Corporation, which was also the main organizer of the First Finnish fair, was established in 1919 to serve the interests of Finnish trade and industry.

In the 21st century, exhibitions are a vibrant part of Finnish culture. For instance, in year 2004 there were 4.8 million visitors to professionally organized museums (organized by state, city, funds or private parties). The number of visits has increased from 2003 by 307,000 visitors. In the often non-professionally organized museums (local/regional museums) there were 700,000 visitors. The most popular types of museums were the following: cultural history museums 40 % of all visitors, art museums 29 % (of all visitors), special museums 26 % and science museums 4 %. The top ten museums in Finland measured by the number of visitors (in year 2004) are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Most popular museums³ in Finland in 2004**(Source: Museoliitto⁴)**

Name of Museum	City	Visitors (Year 2004)
Ateneumin taidemuseo (Ateneum Art Museum)	Helsinki	311 884
Nykytaiteen museo, Kiasma (Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma)	Helsinki	182 015
Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova (historical museum)	Turku	178 986
Turun linna (Turku Castle)	Turku	133 301
Suomen kansallismuseo (The National Museum of Finland)	Helsinki	115 014
Museokeskus Vapriikki (Museum Centre Vapriikki) (in industrial premises)	Tampere	114 370
Designmuseo (Design Museum)	Helsinki	112 233
Linnanmäen museo/Leikkilinna, Suomen lelumuseo (Toy Museum, Leikkilinna) (Amusement Parks)	Helsinki	109 313
Hämeen linna (Häme Castle)	Hämeenlinna	107 555
Olavinlinna (Olavinlinna Castle)	Savonlinna	103 528

The table shows that the Ateneum Art Museum attracted the most visitors. The table above also shows that art museums and historical museums are the most popular museum exhibition destinations among visitors. Visiting fairs is also a rather popular activity in Finland. Table 2 below presents some examples of popular fairs organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation.

Table 2. Examples of popular fairs⁵ organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation in Helsinki (2004).

(Source: The Finnish Fair Corporation, Annual Report 2004, 22)

Name of Exhibition	Visitors (2004)	Exhibition Area (m ²)	Number of exhibitors
Vene 04 Båt (Helsinki International Boat Show 04)	90 799	21 216	344
Matka 2004, Caravan 2004 (Finnish International Travel Fair 2004, Caravan 2004)	73 495*	18399*	1602*
FinnBuild 04 (FinnBuild 04)	49686	20 975	587
Oma Koti 04, Oma Piha 04, OmaMökki 04 (Own Home 04, Own Yard 04, Own Cabin 04)	48 112*	7579*	410*
Skiexpo 2004 (Skiexpo 2004)	45 076	3 904	133
Helsingin kirjamesut 2004 (Helsinki Book Fair 2004)	43 328	4 419	222
Terveys & Kauneus 2004 (Health & Beauty 2004)	33 457	3 740	352
Gastro 2004 (Gastro 2004)	32 082	9 950	296
Lapsi 2004 (Child 2004)	20 287	1 452	142
FinnTec 04 (Finn Teac 04)	18 516	13 518	366
Muoti 1/2004 (Helsinki International Fashion Fair 1/2004)	17 568	7 664	328
Golf 2004 Helsinki, Fillari 04 Helsinki, Kunto 2004 Helsinki (Golf 2004 Helsinki, Bicycle 2004 Helsinki, Fitness 2004 Helsinki)	17 358*	2 913*	141*
Lääkäripäivät 2004 (The Finnish Medical Convention and Exhibition 2004)	16 811	3 906	185
Ruoka 2004 (Helsinki Food Fair 2004)	15 437	1 994	202

*Total number of exhibitions (approximately).

Other examples of exhibitions organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation are the Shoe and Bag Fair (1 and 2, 2004), Trade Days for Wines and Spirits 2004, Fish 2004, Fair for You 45+, DigiExpo 2004 and Mental Health Fair 04. The data show that the most popular exhibitions organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation are the Helsinki International Boat Show and the Finnish International Travel Fair. Moreover, the table shows that the most popular fairs are often connected with leisure activities such as boating, travelling, home-making, skiing, reading and golfing. For the purposes of this study I have collected the data from the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and from Habitare (furnishing and interior decoration) exhibitions organized by the Finnish Fair Corporation. I will discuss data collection in more detail in chapter 3.

In the following I will briefly present earlier studies of exhibitions. I have classified them into four approach categories. These approaches are the profit/utility oriented approach, the response approach, the socio-historical approach and the critical approach. In the profit/utility oriented approach, the focus is on matters concerning participation in trade fairs. Examples of key interest areas are the strategic and financial management of trade fair participation (e.g. Lilien 1983; Waterhouse 1987; Sashi and Perretty 1992; Shoham 1992; Shipley, Egan and Wong 1993; Gopalakrisna, Srinath, Lilien, Williams and Sequeira 1995; Sharland and Balogh 1996) and economic value of exhibitions for cities (Cantell and Virkola 2003).

The response approach includes research relying on cultural studies and the consumer culture approach. In these studies the focus is on socio-cultural interaction between consumers and exhibitions. Examples of the research interests in these investigations are to increase understanding of the different meanings that people give to exhibitions (e.g. Uusitalo and Ahola 1994; Linko 1998; Goulding 2000; Silvanto 2002), to provide information on how visitors perceive exhibitions as a form of service (Uusitalo and Ahola 1994; Ahola 1995), and to unravel the role of consumers as cultural producers in exhibition consumption (Peñaloza 2001).

The third approach for the analysis of exhibitions is the socio-historical approach. The main interest in this approach is to understand the origins of various kinds of exhibitions and their role in different societies and different eras. Examples of these studies are a study on Glasgow's great exhibitions (Kinchin and Kinchin 2001) and world exhibitions (e.g. Smeds 1996). The fourth category of research is the critical approach. The interest in these studies is on unravelling the ways in which for example, Western museums have represented other cultures (Lidchi 1997). They also shed light on the new forms of museological practice of representing cultures of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.

1.5 Structure of the study

Chapter 1. The introductory chapter opens up the theme of the study, the creation and negotiation of the consumption experience of cultural services. In the introductory chapter the research gap and the research question are presented. In the end of the introductory chapter historical data on exhibitions in Finland, including statistical figures concerning exhibition consumption, are presented. Moreover, an overview on the different approaches to research on exhibitions is given.

Chapter 2. This chapter presents the theoretical foundations of the study. The basic argument presented in this chapter is that the meanings produced in the process of consumption are constantly on the move and attain their shape in the on-going marketplace interactions. The value of a cultural service and related experience is not determined beforehand but produced in the marketplace by various actors. Consumers are perceived as active agents taking part in the meaning-making occurring in the marketplace. The service encounter is perceived as a position where the struggle for meanings takes place.

Chapter 3. This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It draws on ethnography, namely market-oriented ethnography. This method is chosen to provide tools for analyzing exhibition experience from the inside and to develop understanding from the viewpoints of the consumers.

Chapters 4-7. These chapters investigate empirically the experience creation in consumer-marketplace interaction from the consumer's point of view. From the consumer data four cultural themes through which consumers communicate their experiences are identified. The themes are called sensibility, progress, corporality, and fellowship. The chapters argue that these themes provide the form for the consumption experience in consumption process of exhibitions.

Chapter 8. This chapter concludes the findings of the study and discusses the relevance of the results. Based on the empirical analysis, it is suggested that the consumption of cultural services is outlined by the four cultural themes. Moreover, it is suggested that consumers as aesthetic agents take part in a struggle over the meaning of experience in the marketplace encounters.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework of the study. Below I shall discuss the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study as well as the theoretical approaches that this study draws on. From poststructuralism I have adopted the assumption that meanings are not stable but constantly in flux. Moreover, I have adopted the idea of intertextuality, namely that cultural artefact such as cultural services and related experiences do not exist in isolation but in relation to other cultural artefacts. From social constructionism I have adopted the central role of language in the production of meanings.

Through the conceptual lens of cultural studies I aim to explain how cultural services and related consumption experiences are made to mean something and especially how consumers produce meanings for them. Moreover, I suggest new understanding to our theoretical knowledge concerning the concept of service encounter in the context of cultural services by viewing it as a position in the marketplace where different actors struggle for the control of meanings. Consumers are perceived as active, interpretative agents participating in the meaning-making. Based on the theoretical discussion that follows, I build a framework for interpreting the consumption process in the cultural services encounters.

2.1 Ontological and epistemological assumptions

In the following, I will discuss the ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study. These assumptions relate to how the nature of the consumption experience of the cultural services is understood in the present study. Moreover, these assumptions relate to how it is possible to receive information about consumption experiences. The basic ontological and epistemological assumptions of this study draw on poststructuralism and social constructionism.

2.1.1 Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism is emphasized in this study as an approach that provides an ontological assumption for the nature of the world and the meanings in particular. Poststructuralism is rooted in the works of Derrida (1976) and Foucault (1972) (cf. Bristor and Fischer 1993,

521; see more in Burr 1997). One fundamental argument of the poststructuralist movement is that meanings carried by language are never fixed, are always open to question, always contestable and always temporary⁶. (Burr 1997, 39; Bristor and Fischer 1993, 521). Following this, meanings of 'experience' can also vary in different languages, in different discourses, and at different times. Moreover, meanings do not exist separate from history. Rather, meanings grow as particular ways of thinking and acting are perceived as objective reality rather than as constructed by the individual subject (Holt 1997, 328).

The meanings of a particular cultural object or action such as exhibitions are formed through a cultural process known as intertextuality: by metaphoric, imagistic and narrative association with other cultural objects and practices that are part of the historically accumulated cultural resources (Holt 1997, 329). The term intertextuality originates from contemporary literary criticism (the notion was introduced by Kristeva, see e.g. Kristeva 1980), where it is understood that literary texts such as novels or poems are not isolated and do refer only to a fictional world (Atkinson and Coffey 1997, 57; see also Still and Worton 1990, 1). Instead, they refer to other texts. Thus, they may include other texts of the same genre (e.g. detective stories) or other kinds of textual products such as advertisements, videos or journalism. Accordingly, it is possible to analyze texts in terms of these intertextual relationships by tracing the dimensions of similarity and difference (Atkinson and Coffey 1997, 57, 108; Oksanen-Ylikoski 2006, 37-38; 109).

In the consumption of cultural services the idea of intertextuality is present in many ways. First consumers may compare different cultural services with each other, for example in the dimension of pleasure. The services can be from the same genre such as exhibitions or from another genre such as in the case of comparing an exhibition with a concert. Thus cultural services do not exist in isolation. Moreover, intertextuality can be present in consumption of cultural services when past experiences are included in the experiencing. While experiencing an exhibition, a consumer is living in different overlapping times and places such as work, family, hobbies, and nation (cf. Lehtonen 1996, 188). Thus intertextuality exists between different experiences.

Also, the meanings of objects and actions are never structured by a single abstracted semiotic system (Holt 1997, 329). Chains of meanings exist as multiple and overlapping resources from which social actors select and combine. Thus meanings of a particular cultural object for a particular individual in a particular context are typically produced through negotiation between or a combination of available discourses. In this study I draw

on the following conceptualizations of the term discourse. “A discourse is a group of statements which provide a language for making about (i.e. a way of representing) a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits other ways in which, the topic can be constructed” (Hall 1992, 291). Thus a discourse does not consist of a single statement, but of several statements which together form what Foucault (1972, 117) calls “a discursive formation” (Lehtonen 2000, 41). Moreover, statements that construct a discourse are regulated by a certain discursive practice (Lehtonen 2000, 41). This practice constructs a group of forceful unspoken historic rules, which in turn determine in a certain social, economic, geographic or linguistic area what can be said, how it can be expressed, who may speak, and where and under which dominant preconditions (Lehtonen 2000, 41-42).

The term discourse refers to spoken and written language (linguists) but also includes other types of semiotic activity (activity that produces meanings) such as visual images (photography, film and video) as well as non-verbal communication e.g. gestures (Fairclough 1995, 54). Thus in this study a discourse is perceived as a representational/semiotic system in and through which meaning for a cultural artefact such as a cultural service and the related consumption experience is produced. These systems constitute the conditions of possibility for meaning making. Consequently, the meanings of any particular object or activity are inherently unstable and contingent since they are dependent on which meaningful linkages are performed (Holt 1997, 329). In this study it is understood that a cultural service is produced in and through different discursive systems. Each discourse produces particular knowledge of a particular cultural service. Examples of the different discourses representing an art exhibition are the discourse of art education (emphasis e.g. on learning and self construction), marketing discourse (emphasis e.g. on exchange and satisfaction), the discourse of art criticism (emphasis e.g. on value and judgement), and media discourse (emphasis e.g. on spectacle).

2.1.2 Social constructionism

In addition to poststructuralism social constructionism is also emphasized in this study⁷. In this study, the constructionist point of view concerning the nature of knowledge and epistemological understanding is closer to the moderate version of constructionism

(Longino 1990, 1993, Heiskala 2000, 199). According to Schwandt (2000, 199), Longino (1990, 1993) argues for a social epistemology in which ideological and value issues tied to socio-cultural practices are interwoven with empirical ones in scientific inquiry. Longino proposes the idea of contextual empiricism. In this line of thought the real world constrains our knowledge construction, while simultaneously the methods used to generate knowledge are intersubjectively agreed in certain contexts such as in different scientific communities. In making this study I rely on a particular intersubjectively agreed method, namely scientific inquiry to generate knowledge from the research object, namely cultural services and consumption experiences.

The justification of an interpretation is based on epistemic norms of internal coherence as well as on correctness based on empirical findings. They form the basis for making an interpretation valid or justified. In this study, the idea of a hermeneutical circle is applied in order to improve the understanding of the research object. For weak holists, interpretations are comparable and revisable for better interpretations (cf. for strong holists it is impossible to deem one interpretation better than another) (Schwandt 2000, 201-202). In some interpretations of social constructionism nature sets limits on the production of meanings (Heiskala 2000, 199). An example of this is that our biological structure (different senses, way of moving) is linked to how we respond to art. This sets limits on our perception. In terms of the scientific goals of the interpretation, this study relays on the postmodernists in understanding interpretation as a continuous deciphering that unravels multiple meanings of cultural services and consumption.

2.2 Cultural studies approach

Cultural studies are an academic discipline that concerns itself with the meanings and practices of everyday life. Especially the Birmingham school⁸ of cultural studies has been interested in how those with the least power negotiate the meanings of a cultural product whether for fun, to produce resistance, or to articulate their own identities (Linko 1998, 29). In general, the centrality of the concept 'meaning' is characteristic of different branches of cultural studies practiced in different parts of the world (Linko 1998, 29). In the following, I will present the key features of how meanings are produced in the marketplace.

2.2.1 Cultural processes of meaning production in the marketplace

This study draws from cultural studies research in understanding that the meanings of cultural services are negotiated at different levels in the marketplace. Meanings are created at the macro level (circle of culture), and at the micro level (level of consumer response). Next I will discuss these two levels of meaning-production.

Processes of meaning-making

The notion of cultural cycle or circuit is a way of identifying the variety of loci or mechanism at which one can explore the cultural processes of meaning production in society (du Gay et al. 1997, 3). Meanings aid people in interpreting the world, in classifying it in meaningful ways, and in making sense of things and events. Apart from the objects of the real world, this also includes those things and events that are not experienced in real life but that have been met in books, movies, dreams and fantasies. In an analysis of the social construction of experiences, it is important to identify the different cultural processes that make particular cultural objects mean something.

There exist processes of meaning-making in which the meanings of cultural services are negotiated. The approach presented by du Gay et al. (1997) analyses the “biography” of a cultural artefact with a theoretical model that is based on the articulation of meaning in a number of different cultural processes. According to du Gay et.al. (1997, 3), the five major cultural processes are representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Taken together, they form a circuit that is called the *circuit of culture*. In the theoretical model du Gay and Hall et al. (1997) have separated the different parts from each other, but in real life these parts overlap. In the following, I will briefly present the key features of production, consumption and representation because they are they are central processes in the theoretical frame of this study.

Production of cultural services and experiences in the marketplace

Production of a cultural artefact, whether it is a car, cultural service or experience of a cultural service, involves not only an understanding of how the object is produced technically, but also how the object is produced culturally; how it is made meaningful, i.e. how it is encoded with particular meanings during the production process performed by its

providers (e.g. du Gay 1997, 4-5). Besides the actual production practices mediation (e.g. advertising, media publicity, marketing) is also an important part of meaning construction in the production sphere of culture. Bourdieu (1984) uses the term cultural intermediaries to refer to a group of workers who play an active role in promoting consumption through attaching particular meanings to products and services. They can be defined as people involved in the provision of symbolic goods and services and are most frequently found in the media, fashion, advertising, and design industries. Their symbolic work is to make products 'meaningful' (du Gay & al. 1997, 62).

Consumption can be understood as production since cultural artefacts are also made to mean during the process of consumption. In cultural studies it is understood that a meaning is not just 'sent' by producers and 'received' passively by consumers. Instead, meanings are actively created and produced during consumption, through which people include these products, services and experiences in their everyday lives (du Gay et. al. 1997, 5). Meaning-making is understood as an ongoing process that does not just end at some predetermined point. While producers of cultural services attempt to encode products with particular meanings and associations (e.g. what kind of art is considered as 'good' art), from the cultural studies point of view it is important to know what these objects gradually come to mean to those who consume them (du Gay & al. 1997, 5, 17-18). Consumers do various things with exhibitions and thus make use of them and give meanings to them. They may consume different exhibitions for therapeutic reasons (for example elaborating a certain repressed emotion or memory), educative reasons (for example increasing one's understanding of a certain type design), or social reasons of for example showing off their competence in art.

The concept of representation is connected with the idea of meaning production and to the fact that meanings do not rise directly from the thing in itself, but from the way in which the object is represented in language, both oral and visual (Lehtonen 1996, 45). Representation means re-presentation, namely making something present again. For example, linguistic presentations are always the outcome of many different choices and following this, representation is presenting somebody or something as something. In addition, representation can also mean 'being representative of something'. People choose words to be representatives or to present certain thoughts and feelings when they want to transmit these to other people. People must rely on a culturally shared understanding of what words or pictures can be signs of certain thoughts and concepts (Lehtonen 1996, 45).

The other people to whom the feelings and thoughts are represented can never make exactly the same interpretation. However, some of the meanings may be shared. The recipient bases his or her interpretation on the representation provided by the other person (Välvirronen 1998, 19-20). Representation is a key process in the cultural circuit (du Gay & al. (1997, 4). Hence, there are many representations in the marketplace of a particular cultural service. When statements concerning a certain subject matter are made inside a certain discourse, we see the subject matter in a certain way. It also restricts the other ways of presenting the subject matter (Hall 1992, 291; Välvirronen 1998).

The concept of representation is complemented by the concept of discourse. Also cultural services such as exhibitions are represented in and through various discourses. For example, consumers may encounter several discourses each of which represents a certain exhibition and the representations may also differ from each other. For example, in the discourses of museology and media the same exhibition may take a different form. The discourse of museology may take a cool, distant and educative approach to the exhibition, while the media discourse may pick up certain details and represent the whole exhibition through them as e.g. as a sensation of some kind. Similarly, trade fairs can be represented through certain details e.g. by presenting the innovations of a particular designer or a company.

Social scientists understand discourse as social practice that includes one's own language, argumentation, and application area. It is important to realize that while studying the consumption experiences of cultural services, theories of aesthetics and sociology provide conceptual tools for the cultural production of cultural services⁹. Thus it is important to realize that these disciplines as discursive constructions have influence on how the nature of art, culture and related consumption is understood at different times and how the present understanding is deeply rooted in the previous understanding of the nature of artistic products. To summarize, in this study it is understood that cultural services and the related consumption experiences are objects of meaning-making that takes place in a market and occurs through cultural processes.

2.2.2 Reception of cultural products

Response is an umbrella term that includes various branches of audience research (Panula 1997, 297). The history of the reception approach can be traced back to around the

beginning of the 1980s (Panula 1997, 297). The approach leans on symbolic interactionism, sociology, psychoanalysis, reception aesthetics, and the reader-response theory as well as uses and gratifications research (Scott 1994; Panula 1997, 297). In addition, the response approach includes the audience research branch of British cultural studies that is sometimes called audience ethnography (e.g. Morley 1980). Common to this movement is that it has explored the role that mass-communicated meanings play in the lives of audiences (Ritson and Elliott 1999, 262).

In consumer culture approach Mick and Buhl (1992), Scott (1994) and Ritson and Elliott (1999) have applied the reader response theory to analysis of the meaning-making process of advertising messages. Even though trade fairs and exhibitions are also regarded as mass-mediated products and forms of mass-communication, investigations using the response approach in the analysis of these cultural products are surprisingly rare in the arena of consumer culture approach.

Consumer struggle for control of meanings

Reader response theory highlights the subject as the source or producer of meaning and tends to define the reader as the *agent* which actualizes the meaning potential of the literary text, although there is a disagreement about the relative autonomy of text and reader among the theorists (Jensen 1986, 15). Both approaches share one central question: *how do people make sense of a cultural product?* (Jensen 1986, 15).

Jensen (1986, 73-78) has introduced three maxims about the reception process. They are the following. First, reception is a socially patterned phenomenon. The reception of mass media is shaped by a variety of social factors. Also, the recipient is partly a product of social structure. This means that the meanings produced by the audience are always connected with the cultural background. Also, the mass media as a phenomenon are always social in nature. This leads to the second maxim of reception, namely that reception makes a difference. This means that even though the audience and mass media are always social in nature, the meanings of a text are not given beforehand. Instead, there are always differences in reception because the recipient is socially patterned, but not necessarily matched to the social patterning of the text (in different readings the receiver resists and not only reproduces the meaning). This leads to the third maxim of reception; reception is constantly in question. *Meaning is a site of struggle*; it defines and redefines social reality. For the recipient, meaning is open to challenge and change depending on the cultural

practice (e.g. in this study consumption practice) in which it is received and applied. In sum, the three maxims are taken as complementary descriptions of the reception process. (Jensen 1986, 78).

In this approach it is understood that the meanings for (literary) texts are produced in the actual *reading process*. Thus meanings are the outcome of interaction between text and reader and not something that hide in the text itself. If the reader produces the meaning for the text, then it is only natural that this meaning has an individual form (Iser 1978; Panula 1997, 298). However, in cultural studies it is understood that the meaning is not merely situated in an individual's consciousness, but also in society and culture. That is why a meaning has both an individual form and a collective form (Panula 1997, 298). It has been argued that reception research balances between two different emphases on the question of meaning-production (Dahlgren 1987, 8; Panula 1997, 299-300). On the one hand, it does not see the audience as a cultural victim without any voice. That is why it emphasizes the active role of the audience in the production of meanings. On the other hand, reception research has not abandoned the concepts of ideology and hegemony. According to media studies, reception is not totally 'free' and it is impossible for the audience to produce just any kind of meanings. Hence, it is necessary to talk about the reproduction, and not only about the production of meanings. Consumers encounter many representations of consumption experiences in the marketplace and interpret or 'read' them through reception process.

What then does it mean to be a reader of the cultural products? Reading involves bringing together textual cues but also having the willingness to be a reader (Scott 1994). In the reading of an exhibition as a text this can mean for example, responding to certain social roles called forth (e.g. identifying with an employee who has poor working conditions), sharing certain problems (occasionally having too much to drink), or adopting a certain identity (being a rebel and misfit in society), or experiencing a mood (boredom, hate, joy, love). Various sociological applications of reader-response theory have investigated the ways in which people use cultural products such as literature and pictorial art to negotiate their own lives or use for example art as equipment for life (Radway 1984; Eskola 1990; Linko 1998). In reader-response theory it is understood that the reading experience becomes a dialogue between a historically situated, intentional author and a culturally informed, self-motivated reader. The meaning of the text is then open to all potential uses and meanings. Text is understood to be mutable; a single correct reading is impossible (Scott 1994; Panula 1997). The meanings that emerged are, however, not symmetrical since the texts or products

have several possible actualizations. The responding process can vary, but not boundlessly (Eskola 1990, 190-193)¹⁰. The meanings of the texts are actualized by readers or cultural consumers in a historical encounter where text has an answer to the questions posed by the readers (Jauss 1982; Eskola 1990, 191). Readers (consumers) fill in the empty slots or gaps (Iser 1978, 169; Mick and Buhl 1992, 318; Lehtonen 2000, 122-123). In the practice of experiencing this means for example that readers “imagine” what e.g. different places or characters in a book look like. For this imaging they bring in previous experiences of their own and also experiences of cultural products such as other books or movies.

It is often understood that cultural services provide people with aesthetic experiences. For example Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) argued that an aesthetic experience, namely the experience of beauty, was possible only if it was free of basic bodily desires, such as appetite. In addition, one needs to be disinterested¹¹. This can occur only if one distinguishes between seeing and hearing, on the one hand, and tasting, touching, and smelling, on the other. This was because the latter group makes it difficult for an individual to be objective (Kant 1952, 41-44; Joy and Sherry 2003, 261). Kant’s ideas of aesthetic experience have greatly affected subsequent analysis of the nature of aesthetic experience and especially analysis from the receiver’s point of view (Pulliainen and Haapala 1998, 128).

Later on, Beardsley (1988) characterizes aesthetic experience with the terms intensity, complexity and coherence. Kinnunen (1969, 104-105) connects aesthetic experience with a person’s world view. It is through aesthetic experience that a person expresses his or her central values. If a person’s world view includes aesthetic values in addition to moral and intellectual values, he or she can interpret some of the experiences as aesthetic experiences. In addition, if in the person’s world view religious values are emphasized then he or she may interpret a particular experience of nature as a religious experience, whereas in the world of an aesthete the experience may take the form of an aesthetic experience (Pulliainen and Haapala 1998, 130).

Within aesthetic theory, especially in phenomenological philosophy, one important theme for the present interests is the role of the body in experiencing. The ideas of embodied experience and corporality have been discussed by for example Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962). Taking the study of perception as his point of departure, Merleau-Ponty recognized that one’s own body (*le corps propre*) is not only a thing, a potential object of study for science, but is also a permanent condition of experience. The development of his

works thus establishes an analysis which recognizes a corporeality of consciousness as much as an intentionality of the body, and so stands in contrast to the Cartesian dualist ontology of mind and body.

2.2.3 Consumer activeness in experiencing

In this section, I will focus on the different ways of understanding the nature of consumption experience in relation to consumer activeness. The discussion below draws on the emerging consumer culture approach (Uusitalo 1979; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Peñaloza, 2000, 2001; Joy, 2001; Pantzar, 2003; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Holt 1995, Holt 1997, Holt 2002; Thompson and Haytko, 1997; Thompson and Troester, 2002; Moisander 2001; Valtonen 2004). This research stream of cultural studies has proliferated during the past twenty years and focused its research interest on cultural analysis of consumption and marketplace phenomena. Examples of the marketplace phenomena discussed are the role of marketers as cultural mediators (e.g. Peñaloza and Gilly 1999), the social uses of advertising (Ritson and Elliott 1999), and socio-cultural production of service encounter (Arnould and Price 1993).

The following description has been influenced by the article of Arnould and Thompson (2005). Moreover, this analysis has been influenced by my own previous article on the same topic (Ahola 2005). The approaches discussed are experiential experience, extraordinary experience and marketplace experience. These frames provide a different perspective to consumer activeness and to the meaning making that occurs in the marketplace.

Experiential experience and solitary consumer agent

The first approach I have called the experiential approach (Hirschman 1986 calls it a form of humanistic inquiry). The notion of experience entered in the field of consumer culture theory with Holbrook and Hirschman's article of the year 1982. The article contrasted the experiential aspects of consumption with the information processing perspective and led to calls for an experiential paradigm in consumer theory. "This experiential perspective is phenomenal in spirit and regards consumption as a primary subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria" (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 132). It has been influenced by psychological

conceptualizations of experience, for example flow experience (Chikszentmihalyi 1990 [1974]) and peak experience (Maslow 1954).

In this frame experience is understood as a subjective, inner kind of phenomena (Hirschman 1984). Experience is also defined as a personally unique event that is associated with significant emotions. The seeking of emotional arousal and experiences has been argued to be the major motivation for consumption of cultural products such as novels, plays, and sporting events (Hirschman 1983). The approach has also emphasized the multisensory and imagery elements of consumption. Multisensory elements refer to the receipt of experience in multiple sensory modalities including tastes, sounds, scents, tactile impressions, and visual images (Hirschman 1983). Based on Hirschman, imaginary elements are, for instance, historic imaginary and fantasy. Historic imagery involves recalling an event that actually did occur in the past. For example, the scent of perfume can evoke a pleasant past episode. In turn, fantasy imagery occurs when the consumer responds by producing a multisensory image not drawn straight from prior experience. Instead of recalling a historic sequence, the consumer produces an imaginary one. This approach also includes the idea that experiences are corporeal in nature.

In meaning-making, the consumer is an active solitary agent (e.g. Uusitalo and Uusitalo 1981; Ritson and Elliott 1999;) who brings to the responding situation his/her experience objective and personal characteristics, feelings, knowledge and life history. According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, 135), the objective of the experience is based on primary process thinking where the task definition is oriented toward hedonic response. This type of consumption focuses on fun, amusement, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment. This type of involvement is a hedonistic reaction involving arousal (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 135). The consumer also brings into the reception process his/her individual differences such as personality, sensation-seeking needs, and creativity (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 133). In experiential consumption, the criteria for evaluating an experience are essentially aesthetic in nature and hinge on an appreciation of the product for its own sake, apart from any utilitarian purpose that it may or may not fulfil (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 138).

In the reception process, the consumer constructs the experience through the interplay between product, aesthetic evaluation criteria, consumer background characteristics, and experiential response system (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 133). The experiential response system consists of cognition and affect. Experiential consumption focuses on

cognitive processes that are more private and even subconscious in nature (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 136). Examples of these are consumption-related fantasies involving pictorial fantasy and daydreams. After the day-dreaming or other more subconscious cognitive activity it is possible for the consumer to experience emotions and feelings such as love, hate, joy, anger, disgust, shame, sympathy etc. The consequences of the experiential consumption appear in the fun that a consumer derives from a product. More precisely, this means the enjoyment that it offers and the resulting feeling of pleasure that it evokes (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982, 138).

The following table gives examples of previous research in the field of the consumer culture theory of studies that have investigated experiences from the experiential point of view. Common to these studies is that they emphasize hedonism, intrinsic and individual experiences as well as emotions as their primary interest areas.

Table 3. Examples of studies of the early humanistic approach.

Published in Journal of Consumer Research.

Author, Year	Title	Framing and problematics of the articles	Conceptualization of experience
Holbrook & Hirschman 1982	The experiential aspects of consumption: consumer fantasies, feelings and fun	Contrasting between information-processing and experiential views	Subjective state of consciousness directed towards fun, enjoyment and pleasure
Unger & Kernan 1983	On the meaning of leisure: An Investigation of some determinants of the subjective experience	Investigating the dimensions of subjective leisure experience	Role of intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom, involvement, arousal, mastery and spontaneity as a determinants of leisure experience
Holbrook & Chestnut & Oliva & Greenleaf 1984	Play as a consumption experience: The Roles of emotions, performance and personality in the enjoyment of games	Experiential phenomena in playful and intrinsically motivated consumption	Enjoyment as an experience and the roles of emotions, performance and personality in its formation
Havlena & Holbrook 1986	The varieties of consumption experience: Comparing two typologies of emotion in consumer behaviour	Emotions in consumption	Consumption experiences springing up from different categories of consumption (e.g. aesthetics, athletics, entertainment, dining)
Thompson & Locander & Pollio 1989	Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology	Presenting existential-phenomenology as a paradigm for studying consumer experience	Experience as lived (being-in-the-world)

Carù & Cova (2003) note in their article that in consumer research, the dominant way to understand experience is to perceive it as a personal occurrence, often with important emotional significance stemming from the consumption of products and services. Later on the humanistic approach has developed towards e.g. analyzing the interplay between consumption experiences and individual life projects (e.g. Mick and Buhl 1992).

Even though pleasure as an outcome of experiencing is often stressed in the earlier writings of this framework, the idea of consumer self-construction is also present in this approach. In this approach self construction means more or less cultivating one's mind either emotionally or cognitively (e.g. Hirschman 1983). I suggest that (metaphorically) the

form of experience in this approach is understood as (turbulence or) a state of fermentation. It is a phenomenon that takes place primarily inside people's minds. Moreover, the approach focuses on the experiences of an individual person.

Extraordinary experience and communal consumer agent

The notion of extraordinary originates from the anthropology of experience that deals with how people actually experience their culture (Bruner 1986, p. 4). The actual notion of extraordinary experience comes from Abrahams (1986, p. 68), who makes a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary experiences in the following way. "On the one hand, there is a flow of activity, and on the other, distinctive marked-out acts and events, all going under the name of experience. Moreover, the very flow of the everyday assures the continuity between routine activities and the more extraordinary ones. We have become aware of the continuities between the ordinary and the 'deeper' or 'higher' events through performed mimetic experiences, which openly imitate (and stylize) everyday acts and interactions".

The concept of extraordinary experience has been applied and further developed in consumer culture theory. It has been used in analyzing the role of rituals and sacred actions in consumer behaviour (Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry 1989), delivering of extraordinary experience (Arnould and Price 1993), skydiving subculture (Celsi, Rose and Leigh 1993), and consumption fantasy (Belk and Costa 1998). According to Arnould and Price (1993), the term extraordinary experience points especially to a sense of newness of perception and process. In their analysis of the nature of extraordinary experience, Arnould and Price (1993) contrast extraordinary experience with flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi 1990 [1974]) and peak experience (Maslow 1954). In the conceptual analysis Arnould and Price (1993) find that the intensity and the relational mode differentiate the experience types from one another. As compared with flow experience, extraordinary experience is activated by unusual events and is characterized by high levels of emotional intensity and experience. Compared with peak experience, extraordinary experience does not involve either superior levels of effort or an independent relational mode. Moreover, extraordinary experience is communal in nature whereas peak and flow experiences are individual in nature.

Consumer activeness centres on consumer relationships with communities. Consumers can often choose freely whether they want to belong to a particular consumption community. However, after becoming part of one they are expected to obey the rules, rituals

and other practices of that particular consumption community at least to some extent and act with allowed by them. If they obey the rules well they are regarded as recognized members of the community. However, if they fail to obey the rules either because they are newcomers and do not know the rules well yet or because they do not prefer all the rules they are regarded as novices or outcasts. The interpersonal interaction, the feeling of communion with other people, namely the *communitas* bond or antistructure, are important elements in the communal type of extraordinary experience (Turner and Turner 1978, 249-252; Belk and Costa 1998). These kinds of *communitas* bonds between people are equal and spontaneous in character and free them from common norms. They also include feelings of linkage, of belonging, and of group devotion to a shared goal (Arnould and Price 1993; Belk and Costa 1998).

Extraordinary experience is at times connected with transitional elements of experiencing. The idea of transitional journeys comes from Turner and Turner (1978) and it is often associated with pilgrims and their way of leaving their homes and departing from their ordinary everyday lives. After separation, pilgrims enter the sacred grounds where they stay and experience the phase of transformation. After the transforming occurrence has been finalized, the pilgrim returns home transformed and is integrated back into his or her community. This is where the idea of alteration is situated in this frame. Turner and Turner (1978, 195-196) calls these phases preliminal, liminal and everything is possible and allowed (Turner and Turner 1978, Selänniemi 1999, 277). These culturally produced time-outs provide liberation, relief and renewal from the normative constraints of everyday life (Turner and Turner 1978, 195-196; Valtonen 2004, 47). In sum, the most important characteristics of extraordinary experience are unusual events such as triggers, emotional intensity and activity, no superior levels of effort, and interpersonal interaction. Arnould and Price (1993) also state that the distinguishing characteristics of extraordinary experience are vague expectations and complex satisfaction. Often the importance of interpersonal interaction separates this approach of the individual frame discussed above. In the following table there are examples of previous research that has emphasized extraordinary experiences.

Table 4. Examples of research on extraordinary experiences from the communal point of view.

Published in Journal of Consumer Research.

Author, Year	Title	Framing and problematics of the articles	Conceptualization of experience
Arnould & Price 1993	River magic: extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter	Delivering of extraordinary experience	Satisfaction and the role of experiential themes (personal growth, self-renewal, communitas and harmony with nature) in its formation
Celsi & Rose & Leigh 1993	An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving	Ethnography of a skydiving subculture	Dramatic, multiact performance; Role of transcendent motivation (flow, communitas, phatic communion) in extraordinary experience
Belk & Costa 1998	The Mountain man myth: A contemporary consuming fantasy	Nostalgic experience, consumption fantasy	Experience as mutually constructed phenomena

I suggest that the social form of extraordinary communal experience can be defined as the production of a village festival where there are a lot of people present to produce an out of the ordinary type of experience (festival). Moreover, everyone is needed in order to carry out the communal experience (producing a festival alone is not possible). After the extraordinary communal experience has taken place the whole community has changed. Often experiences of cultural services are marketed as extraordinary events. Examples of bases for extraordinariness are the superior quality of the artist or the arranging organization. Also, consumers expect some kind of extraordinariness from the cultural services. For example a colleague may explain his or her experience at the concert at work on the following day that ‘it was not anything extraordinary’ and express some kind of disappointment.

Marketplace experience and consumer agent as everyday negotiator

The third approach can be called the marketplace negotiation approach. In previous literature of consumption sociology Edgell and Hetherington and Warde (1997) have highlighted four typologies of consumption experience. These are family experiences resulting from family ties, friendship experiences resulting from reciprocal relations within

community, citizenship experiences connected to relations with the state, and consumer experiences linked to exchanges with the market (Carù and Cova 2003, 276). Hence, this approach emphasizes more the ordinary experiences and everyday negotiation on cultural meanings that are circulating in the marketplace as well as the active roles of different marketplace agents for providing meanings for everyday life (e.g. producers, consumers, media and lawmakers) in the production of meanings. Examples of previous studies on conceptualizing everyday experiences include analyses of consumption practice typologies (Holt 1995), consumer usage of marketplace discourses such as fashion, advertising, health system or global brands (Thompson and Haytko 1997; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Thompson and Troester 2002; Thompson 2004; Thompson and Arsel 2004). Moreover, this approach has been taken in investigations of consumer acculturation of Mexican immigrants to U.S. market culture (Peñaloza 1994) and consumer cultural production processes at different types of marketplace sites such as shopping malls and cafeterias (Sherry 1998) and trade shows and rodeos (Peñaloza 2001). In the following table there are examples of the previous studies in the everyday life negotiator approach.

Table 5: Examples of researches using the marketplace negotiation approach.

Published in Journal of Consumer Research.

Author and year	Title	Framing and problematics of the articles	Conceptualization of experience
Holt 1995	How consumers consume: A typology of consumption practices	What do people do when they consume? Typology of consumption practices.	Consuming as an experience metaphor; practices including accounting, evaluating and appreciating. Other metaphors: integration, classification and play.
Thompson and Haytko 1997	Speaking of fashion: Consumers' uses of fashion discourses and the appropriation of countervailing cultural meanings	How do consumers use fashion discourses?	Consumer experience of fashion through fashion discourses. Transformative relations between macro societal structure (e.g. media) and individual interpretations (reworking of meanings).
Ritson and Elliott 1999	The social uses of Advertising: An ethnographic study of adolescent advertising audiences	Nature of social interactions in advertising consumption in everyday life. Advertising as a cultural product.	Social uses of advertising. Critique of solitary subject in advertising research.
Peñaloza 2001	Consuming the American West: Animating cultural meaning and memory at a stock show and rodeo	Conceptualizing consumers' cultural production at a cattle trade show and rodeo.	Consumption as cultural production at four levels consumer behaviour, situational positioning, subcultural interactions, market interactions.
Thompson and Troester 2002	Consumer value systems in the age of post-modern fragmentation: the case of the natural health micro-culture	Increasing understanding of consumption-oriented micro-cultures and value systems embedded in them.	Usage of micro-cultural frames of reference (e.g. natural health value system) in production of understanding. Experience as culturally and historically constructed.
Thompson and Arsel 2004	The Starbucks brandscape and consumers' (anticorporate) experiences of glocalization	How do global brands structure the expressions of cultural heterogeneity and how do consumers respond to glocalization?	Different ways of experience and use third places, namely individual enjoyment of café flâneurs and communally oriented needs of oppositional localists

This approach typically focuses on the different ways in which consumers respond to the meanings that are circulating in the marketplace. It has also emphasized the role of cultural mediators (e.g. Ritson and Elliott 1999; Muniz and O'Guinn 2001; Peñaloza 2001) in the production of meanings. This approach includes the idea that consumers may accept, reject

or rework the meanings that are circulating in the marketplace (e.g. Thompson and Haytko 1997; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Kozinets 2001; Holt 2002; Thompson and Arsel 2004). Moreover, this approach has been interested in the ways that consumers use different cultural products and structures (e.g. health system) as a basis for negotiating self and their own life. Lately this approach has been increasingly interested in the consumer experiences of resistance and production of countercultural meanings (e.g. Thompson and Troester 2002; Thompson 2004; Thompson and Arsel 2004). I suggest that (metaphorically) the consumer activeness in this approach resembles toil occurring in everyday life. People work persistently to negotiate the different meanings circulating in the marketplace in order to make their lives better whether it is a matter of health issues, adjustment in a new culture or understanding better owns own culture.

In this section I have presented the different ways of understanding consumption experience and assumptions of consumer activeness in the consumption process and meaning-making.

2.3 Cultural service encounter

This study is concerned with the consumption process in relation to cultural¹² services. In this section I will view the cultural service *encounter* through the cultural studies approach. I will especially focus attention on the basic features of meaning production in cultural service encounters. The section suggests that cultural service encounter is a position in the marketplace where the battle between different actors for the meanings of cultural services and related experiences takes place.

2.3.1 Cultural services and experiences – objects of value production

Characteristic qualities of services are intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity, and perishability (Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry 1985, 33; Lovelock 1992, 26-27). For cultural services it follows that it is not possible, for example, for a theatre visitor to see the performance in advance (intangibility). Moreover, it follows that the cultural service is produced in the interaction between the cultural service provider such as a museum and the consumer during the consumer's visit at the museum (inseparability of production and consumption). Moreover, when an exhibition is over it

perishes. A cultural organization such as a museum cannot hold its products “in stock”. However, it can hold on to its loyal visitors by providing satisfying experiences. Moreover, it follows that the quality of a cultural product can vary a great deal (heterogeneity). An example of this is a situation where the quality of a theatre performance is affected because the audience is not interested.

In the previous research on consumer encounters with cultural services, the analytical focus has mainly been on the interactions between the service provider and the consumer on the locus in which the service provider produces the particular cultural service and the consumer experiences it. The first shortcoming of this view is the pre-determined understanding of the consumer’s value emphasis. Previous research on cultural services sees that the core consumption experience in cultural services is the feeling of pleasure, the satisfaction/dissatisfaction that comes from encountering a cultural product such as art exhibition (Lacznia 1980, 124-125 based on Kotler’s product concept, see Kotler and Scheff 1997, 191-196). The peripheral consumption experience in turn is the satisfaction from the consumption of an augmented service product such as a café or bookstore (Lacznia 1980, 125). Cultural service delivery can be defined as a production of immaterial experiences together with the audience. It can be argued that a cultural organization such as a museum provides visitors with a service package that consists of a formal service product and an augmented service product (Lacznia 1980, 125; Ahola 1995, 30-31; Lovelock 1992, 26-27 uses the notions of core and supplementary service in theorizing the nature of services in general).

The formal service is in the case of e.g. an art museum an art exhibition which for instance includes art works that are shown in the exhibition, the hanging and lighting solutions as well as other elements such as exhibition catalogues and guidance. In addition, the art museum provides visitors with the augmented service. The augmented service of a museum is the total package of product features made available to the visitor. For instance, the augmented product includes elements such as ticket buying services parking space, and brochures. Other elements of the augmented product are support services, which are not necessary for the service production but represent additional value. Support services include museum café and shops (Ahola 1995, 30-31). Interactional entities of museum service production such as contact persons, physical resources and working equipment have an important role in service consumption since their service behaviour has an effect on the overall consumption experience¹³.

In identifying the core experience and the peripheral experience, the perception of what constitutes the most valuable experience and what constitutes the less valuable experience for the consumer is finalized beforehand. This study suggests that this may not always be the case and the source of valuable experience may vary. For example, sometimes consumers may enjoy the museum building or services at the cafeteria more than the actual art exhibition.

2.3.2 From consumer-provider interaction to multifaceted interaction

The marketing research approach (Laczniak 1980, 124-125 based on Kotler's product concept, see Kotler and Scheff 1997, 191-196) to cultural services considers that the focus of attention in value creation is quite simply in the interaction between the consumer and the cultural organization. However, it is understood that cultural services have special characteristics as to how the value is created for them in the marketplace. For example, the value of a work of art is created by the interaction of a number of actors, such as museum curators, art critics, collectors and gallery owners through shared opinions, information and shared understandings of art. An art work is created by the artist but to be acknowledged as an art work it needs the acceptance of the other actors in the art world. Thus, the status of a work of art, is established through the interactive processes between different marketplace actors (Bourdieu 1984; Becker 1982; Sevänen 1998; Jyrämä 1999). This study further argues that the related service, namely an art exhibition, is also a creation of the interactive processes that give meaning to the art exhibition. The value of an art exhibition is created in the marketplace by the interaction of a number of players, such as consumers, artists, museum curators, art critics, and the media through not necessarily shared opinions, shared information, and shared understandings of art.

Thus, the present research in the area of marketing does fully capture the nature of cultural services. This is because a cultural service is not created through the service provider and the customer interaction solely but in more complex interactive processes that take place in the marketplace. In practice this means that it is possible to see a representation of the cultural service in the media and even think that now 'I do not need to go to see the exhibition because I have seen it in the media'. Other examples of these are media representations, the representations of critics, or representations of the cultural service

among peers. These observations lead one to call for further analysis of the situations in which the meanings for cultural services produced.

Especially the media is an important actor in cultural markets. It tell us stories of cultural services and the role of mediatisation is important in the marketplace of cultural services. In practice if the media do ignore certain phenomena such as exhibitions in a certain gallery, they are in a sense not part of social reality. Moreover, it follows that if a “short-cut” to public awareness (reaching other people) goes through the media, then the phenomena in question must first be sold to the media.

2.3.3 Encounter - site of struggle for control of meanings

Above it has been noted that the meanings of experience may change and that the value of cultural service and related experience is produced in multifaceted interaction in the marketplace. Thus, the study suggests that the encounter is an important concept in the understanding of the consumption experience of cultural services. However, the third shortcoming of the marketing research based approach on cultural services (Lacznia 1980, 124-125 based on Kotler’s product concept, see Kotler and Scheff 1997; on service encounter see Normann 1991; Grönroos 2000) relates to the embedded belief in the division of control. It is understood that through careful planning and organization of the encounters the service provider can gain control over the service delivery. Consumers in turn control their own experiences. However, it is not always possible to control delivery of a cultural service. For example, the media act as an important provider of meanings for art exhibitions. Also, consumers are active actors in the marketplace in giving meanings to cultural services.

In service marketing theory, service encounters or episodes (moments of truth) are understood as the foundations for customer satisfaction and service quality. Service encounters are where promises of service quality are met or not met. They are understood as the moments of truth for service management (cf. Normann 1991; cf. Grönroos 2000). Service encounters in the broadest sense are defined as the direct interactions between a service firm and its clients (Czepiel, Solomon, Surprenant and Gutman 1985). Shostack (1985, 243) defines a service encounter as “a period of time during which a consumer directly interacts with the service”. According to Bitner (1990, 70), this definition encompasses all aspects of the service firm with which the customer may interact, including its personnel, its physical facilities, and other tangible elements during a given period of

time. To consumers service encounters are an important source of information on conclusions regarding the quality of the service. It is understood that consumer interaction with for example art and design in an exhibition as well as the exhibition building and the personnel of the organization providing cultural services provide consumer knowledge of the service quality.

According to the service marketing approach, service encounters have several characteristics (Shostack 1985, 243). First, a service encounter can take many forms but it is always experienced through one or more of the five senses. In the case of cultural services, one can argue that all the senses are always involved in the service encounter. Second, a service encounter may or may not expose the consumer to the total service. Moreover, a service encounter itself is only one part of any service. The customer attempts to deduce the nature of the unencountered elements from service encounter. This also holds true in the case of cultural services. When a consumer sees an advertisement of the exhibition in the media he or she may look for clues for the nature of the actual service. However, I argue that the consumer also evaluates whether the actual cultural service is similar to the representation of the service in the media that he or she first encountered. Third, service encounters may or may not take place at the point of purchase. Sometimes services are purchased first and encountered later as is the case with e.g. a theatre performance.

Fourth, a service encounter may or may not involve other human beings. The idea of person-to-person interaction is often implicitly present in discussions of the nature of service encounters. According to Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, 102-104; also Shostack 1985, 243-254), there are three general types of service encounters: remote encounters, phone encounters, and face-to-face encounters. A consumer may experience any of these types of encounters separately or a combination of all three in his or her relations with a service firm¹⁴. This study suggests that in the case of cultural services such as exhibitions, face-to-face encounters may not always be so important as in other types of services such as hotels or restaurants. In the case of museums, the face-to-face encounters are many times part of the service taking place in a cafeteria or bookstore. In theatre performances, consumer interaction with other human beings whether they were actors or other visitors is a very important element in the service delivery.

According to services marketing theory, it is from the service encounters that customers build their perceptions of the service (Grönroos 2000, 112; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, 99). In the service encounters, consumers receive a picture of the organization's

service quality (Parasumatra, Zeithaml and Berry 1985). For organizations it is important to know how consumers perceive the value of services (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Perry 1988; Raajpoot 2004; Johnson and Zinkhan 1991; Mattila and Enz 2002; Verhoef, Antonides and de Hoog 2004, 50; Walker 1995)¹⁵.

I agree that in the service encounter, consumers evaluate the quality of cultural services. However, I suggest that encounter is also a site where consumers struggle for the control of meaning. In the encounter they are provided with many kinds of information about the cultural service and related experiences. Consumers also bring their own experiences and knowledge to the encounter. They do not always accept the representations presented to them but strive to reproduce their own meanings of the particular cultural service and related experiences. Therefore it is understood in this study that service encounters are important sites where the struggle for control of meaning of experiences occurs.

2.4 Framework for investigating cultural services in marketplace encounters

This study is concerned with the consumption process in relation to cultural services and experiences. The research is located in the cultural studies tradition and draws on poststructuralism, social constructionism, reader-response theory as well as the sociology of consumption and art. The objective of this study is to identify the key features of how consumers provide meanings to the consumption experiences of cultural services. Through the description, I aim to provide an explanation on how the form of the consumption experience of exhibitions is produced in the marketplace from the consumer point of view. Through the conceptual lens of cultural studies I aim to explain how cultural services are made to mean something and especially how consumers provide and struggle for meanings to the cultural services in marketplace encounters.

The basic theoretical argument presented is that the meanings produced in the process of consumption are constantly on the move and attain their shape in the on-going marketplace interactions. The value of a cultural service and related experience is not determined beforehand but produced in the marketplace by various actors. Consumers are perceived as active agents taking part in the meaning-making occurring in the marketplace. The encounter is perceived as a position where the struggle for meanings takes place. Next I will turn to the data and methods.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I will present the methodological framework of the study for analyzing consumption experiences in the context of cultural services. First, I will present the methodological approach that has informed in this study, namely ethnography. Then I will describe the data and data analysis.

3.1 Ethnographically informed approach

The methodological approach in this study is mainly based on ethnography. Ethnos is a Greek word for a people or cultural group. The study of ethnos then, or ethnography, is “devoted to describing ways of life of humankind..., a social scientific description of people and the cultural basis of their people hood” (Vidich and Lyman 2000 38 in Patton 2002, 81; see also Buttle 1991; Ritson and Elliott 1999). Ethnographic inquiry takes as its central and guiding assumption that any human group of people interacting together for a period of time will evolve a culture. The primary method of ethnographers is participant observation in the tradition of anthropology. This means intensive fieldwork in which the researcher is immersed in the culture under study (Patton 2002, 81). Anthropologists have traditionally studied nonliterate cultures in remote settings. However, modern anthropologists apply ethnographic methods to the study of contemporary society. In the following there are examples of previous use of the ethnographic approach in the consumer culture approach.

- *Thanksgiving rituals (Wallendorf and Arnould 1991)*
- *Consumption practices (Holt 1995), poststructuralist life style (Holt 1997), consumer culture and branding (Holt 2002)*
- *Service delivery of extraordinary experience (Arnould and Price 1993)*
- *Consumption communities: contemporary consumer fantasy (Belk and Costa 1998), Harley-Davidson subculture (Schouten & McAlexander 1995), skydiving subculture (Celsi and Rose and Leigh 1993).*
- *Social uses of advertising (Ritson and Elliott 1999).*
- *Consuming of American West (Penaloza 2001)*
- *Cultural meanings of free time (Valtonen 2004)*

No uniform ethnographic method in fact exists and because of this the specific approach is always dictated by the phenomenon being explored (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Ritson and Elliott 1999, 262). In this study I have been informed by the market-oriented ethnography approach, which is applied in the field of consumer culture approach. This

approach “provides a contextualized understanding of the meanings of product use that goes beyond the individual brand or product attributes to meaningful behavioural constellation in which product or service use is embedded” (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). In addition, market-oriented ethnography refers to an ethnographic focus on the behaviour of people constituting a market for a product or service (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, 484). Moreover ethnography in this approach is not just a form of data collection. It aims to shed light on the ways culture (or microculture) simultaneously constructs and is formulated by people’s behaviours and experiences.

According to Arnould and Wallendorf (1994, 485), four distinctive aspects guide ethnographers’ research practice.

1) Ethnography gives primacy to systematic data collection and recording of human action in natural settings in order to reach the deeply embedded sociocultural patterns of action.

2) Ethnographic research involves extended, experiential participation by the researcher in a specific cultural context. This is referred to as participant observation. Long-term immersion in context increases the likelihood of spontaneously encountering important moments in the ordinary events of consumers’ daily lives. ‘Because ethnographers follow human action as it occurs rather than initiating it, their data collection deploys an evolving sampling plan, takes longer, and is less completely specified by a priori’.

3) Ethnography produces interpretations of behaviours that the persons studied and the intended audience find credible. In everyday life, culture’s mechanisms usually remain unarticulated by participants. People seldom make the systematic connections among their behaviour. People seldom make the systematic connections among their behaviours that are woven into ethnographies as the experience-distant, analytically based, and combatively informed etc interpretations of the researcher. Despite this ethnographers should be able to convince the people studied of their credibility.

4) Ethnography involves incorporating multiple sources of data. Ethnography uses them to generate varying perspectives on the behaviours and contexts of interest. Ethnographic interpretations are expected to account for (or at least acknowledge) the coexistence of divergent perspectives identified in data assembled using different methods within a cultural context.’

Even though I aimed to follow these aspects during my research process, it was in practice difficult to follow them literally. I succeeded best in following aspects one and four. For instance, aspect three was very difficult to fulfil since the exhibitions did not last for a long time. Aspect three was also difficult to follow literally, since I shared the same culture with the participants and found it sometimes difficult to take the expected distance. The methodological strategy used in this study aims at developing a descriptive framework that explains the key features of meaning-making for consumption experience in the context of cultural services. In the following I will describe the main features of the actual ethnographically inspired method used in this study.

3.2 Research process

"Ethnographers are interested in 'the gritty and obscure drama' of everyday life" (Wildshire 1990, 190; Sherry 1998, 8).

The process itself has developed a somewhat similarly to the logic of hermeneutic circle (cf. Thompson and Haytko 1997). My analysis is informed by a specific philosophical and theoretical perspective as well as by the set of concepts introduced above. During the research process, I drew from previous research. I also investigated my own culture and especially exhibition culture. In the broadest sense the culture present in the data is the Finnish culture. The challenging part in researching such a close culture is that the "researcher is both historically and locally situated within the very processes being studied" and her own perceptions about the phenomenon are determined by the culture and language she lives with. Following this she sees the world through the same categories as her respondents. This situation is a likely cause of over-familiarity (Valtonen 2004, 20). A common suggestion concerning this matter is that the researcher should cultivate strangeness and distance (Latour and Woolgar 1986; Holt 1995; Valtonen 2004). I have been well aware of the above mentioned challenges during my research project. Hence, I have chosen to cultivate strangeness through my research framework. From the very start of my research project I have been inspired by the ethnographic research and cultural studies approach. These together have served me as a method of estrangement and opened new perspectives to observe the phenomena under study.

An ethnographical study traditionally requires the researcher to spend a long time, often years in the field, observing the foreign culture, taking notes, and thoroughly familiarizing oneself with the way of life (cf. Van Maanen 1988; Peñaloza 2001; Koivunen 2003, 23). This type of ethnography is not always possible to accomplish (cf. Katila 2000) and in this sense I applied a "loose form" of the method in my study (cf. Willis 1990, 7; Ritson and Elliott 1999, 263). The reasons for applying this type of ethnography were the following. First, this was because the exhibitions and fairs about which I gathered information did not last for years but only for days or weeks. Second, people normally visit exhibitions for a few hours only. As I wanted to study the exhibition visiting behaviour as natural as possible I was more or less limited to interviews and essays as data collection method. However, I collected the data at the exhibition sites. Following this, the exhibition experience is not a memory for the consumer but instead alive 'action' around the

consumer. In addition, as a researcher I to certain extent shared the exhibition experience with the visitor since I also have experienced the same exhibition.

Ethnography is a suitable method for this study because it responds to the limitations of talk (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Rather than merely asking people to comment about what they usually do, think or say as in phenomenological interviews, ethnographers also prefer to observe them doing it. Ethnographers observe everyday events, settings, interactions, conversations, and the uses of objects over time and across specific cases (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). I collected all the primary data (interviews and consumer essays) within the exhibition premises. Hence, I was also able to watch the practices and events that occurred in the exhibition premises. While collecting the data it was possible for me to observe what visitors were doing in the exhibitions, what they were discussing, how they reacted to objects on show, to different noises and to the crowd as well as how visitors and the staff interacted. This contributed to achieving a deeper understanding of visitors' behaviour in the exhibitions.

In addition, I observed the development of interest in experiences during the research process in general. For example I have been paying attention to the following things: How the media write about the exhibitions? How the media writes about experiences (e.g. what kind of services and products are constructed in the texts as 'experiences'). Through these observations, I noticed for example that in books, food, travel, cultural services are increasingly produced as 'experiences' or even extraordinary experiences in different media. In addition I observed how different organizations 'produce' their services in advertisements. Moreover, I observed how the notion of experience has been produced in texts of academia and different disciplines. Finally, I have been very alert to listening to conversations in metro, busses, shops, restaurants and on the street. The main questions in my mind have been, how do people talk about experience in their everyday language. Some of these observations were recorded in field notes and other media and thus became background data sets.

However, observational data do not provide direct access to the perceptions, values, and beliefs of informants (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, 488). In addition, they do not necessarily give any access to the language used. Since market-oriented ethnography aims to explain emic meanings and accounts of consumer behaviour, ethnographers prefer to expand their data sources beyond what can be obtained through observation (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994). Next I will turn to discuss the data sets.

3.3 Main data sets

In a qualitative inquiry, samples are selected purposefully to allow investigation into and understanding of a phenomenon in depth (Patton 2002, 46). Following this information rich-cases are selected. From these cases it is possible to learn to a great deal about the issue under investigation. In this study the aim is to increase understanding on the cultural service encounter from the consumer point of view. The sample that I have selected for this study is based on intensity sampling (Patton 2002, 234). An intensity sample consists of information-rich cases that manifest a phenomenon of interest intensively, but not extremely (Patton 2002, 234). In this study all three exhibitions, namely contemporary art, interior decoration design, and a regional, heritage-related exhibition represent exhibitions where experiencing is intensive in nature. People have opinions and they like to present them.

3.3.1 Consumer interviews

I conducted two rounds of interviews of the exhibition visitors in 1997¹⁶ (see Appendix 1). The first round I conducted at the ‘North Karelia’ outdoor exhibition on June 13 to 15 in Helsinki. I spent all three days of the exhibition in the exhibition area. The North Karelia exhibition is part of the series of provincial fairs held at Senate Square in the City Centre of Helsinki every June. The first fair was held in 1988¹⁷. I gathered the second set of interviews at a large home decoration and furnishing fair, Habitare. The fair is held biannually at the Fair Centre of Helsinki. The dates were September 11 to 14, 1997.

North Karelia outdoor exhibition

The North Karelia outdoor fair “The most beautiful Karelia” – the best of Karelia” was organized by several organizations¹⁸. The fair took place in two separate but close locations, namely in Senate Square and in the Old Harbour. In the Senate Square there were 123 exhibitors presenting the products of the province at 29 stands. The majority of the exhibitors were entrepreneurs selling North Karelian food products and handicrafts as well as various kinds of gift articles. Among the exhibitors were also several organizations, communities and cities promoting themselves. The Arts Council of North Karelia took care of the cultural program that was performed on the large stage in the exhibition area. Senate

Square, which is located in the middle of the old city centre, offers an interesting milieu for organizing outdoor exhibitions and other happenings. Empire-style buildings from the early 19th century by the architect Carl Ludwig Engel surround Senate Square (Wickberg 1981). Around the square we find the Cathedral of Helsinki, the University of Helsinki, and the Government building. For exhibition visitors the site was pleasantly located near the sea, parks and a lively shopping area. During the North Karelian exhibition, the weather was very pleasant; mostly sunshine, except for brief period of rain that lasted for an hour during the second day of the exhibition. The temperature ranged from 22 C° to 30 C° degrees.

Special care was taken in constructing and decorating the exhibition area. The exhibition stands were made of white canvas and they all were externally alike. The most dominating colour in the exhibition was white including the performing stage. A visitor did not meet the Karelian colours (which are black and red) at the exhibition stands, but instead green, yellow and orange, which all served as guiding colours for different exhibition stands. However, there were many black and red banners representing the Karelian colours on the flagpoles at the exhibition area.

In the second exhibition site at Old Harbour (Wanha Satama), exhibitors were mainly small and medium -sized companies as well as some larger state-financed organizations such as University of Joensuu. The Old Harbour exhibition centre is a 10-minute walk from Senate Square. The centre consists of two brick warehouses build in 1897-99. The Finnish architect Elia Heikel designed the warehouses and they are a part of the former harbour and warehouse area of the city. The two Wanha Satama warehouses have a colourful history. They were designed for the use of big merchant firm and from the beginning of the 20th century a railroad travelled between the warehouses and transported herbs and coffee among other things from the harbour. Later on, soldiers together with their horses used the warehouses. For example, a Russian cavalry unit had a stable at the Wanha Satama buildings towards the end of the rule in Finland which lasted from 1809 to 1917. After having been abandoned for some time the Wanha Satama was restored in 1984 and in 1988, Helsinki Fair Ltd. started to hold fairs, exhibitions, seminars, and other events in the premises.

The Karelian exhibition is especially interesting for Finns for many reasons. Karelia as an area is situated on both sides of the border between Finland and Russia and the border has changed many times over the centuries (cf. Torikka 2003). For example, a large part of the province was lost to the Soviet Union in the Second World War and 400.000 Karelians

from those areas were resettled in other parts of Finland. There are many associations all over Finland that keep the Karelian culture alive, and pass on the stories of ancestors. Moreover, Karelia as a region is known for mythical significance (see Peñaloza 2001 on cultural meanings of the West). This is partly because the poems of the Finnish national epos Kalevala originate from the Karelia region. It is also a border area between West and East. The geographical position has added its mark, for example, on the original regional cuisine. In addition, Karelia is also depicted in the paintings of the golden era of Finnish art at the end of the 19th century.

Habitare furnishing fair

This fair took place in the premises of the Finnish Fair Corporation (Suomen Messut), which is a professional fair organizer whose wide range of events held at the Helsinki Fair Centre attracts approximately one million visitors every year. The Finnish Fair Corporation was established in 1919 to serve the interests of Finnish trade and industry (Pulla 1969; Vesikansa 1999). The first fairs were organized in summer 1920. The first furnishing fair was organized in 1927.

The first Helsinki Trade Fair Hall was built along Mannerheim Boulevard in 1935. These premises were located in the Töölö area of Helsinki and they were the largest exhibition facility in the Nordic countries at that time. In February 1979, a new and bigger Helsinki Fair Centre was opened in the Pasila area of Helsinki. Today the Finnish Fair Corporation is a professional and international fair organizer that also rents out conference and exhibition facilities in Finland.

Facts about interviews

A total of 23 on-site interviews were conducted. At the North Karelia fair I conducted 12 interviews and at Habitare 11 interviews. In collecting the sample, I aimed to have equal numbers of adult men and women and I also tried to obtain a wide variety in terms of age. I recruited the informants by approaching them at the exhibition site, briefly describing the study, and asking whether they would be interested in participating in the research. The interviews took place on the benches inside the exhibition area. I encouraged the interviewees to give detailed descriptions of their experiences. In the beginning of the interview I told the interviewees that this is not a formal type of interview and that I prefer

that we just talk about the exhibition. The interviews lasted from half an hour to one hour and were all recorded. In addition to the tapes, I made field notes about the interviews. I transcribed the interviews myself word by word in order to get deeper insight into the data.

Aims of the interviews

At the time of data collection, surveys were the usual approach to gathering customer response and opinions of commercial fairs and other exhibitions. In survey studies, the researcher gives consumers alternative answers and the respondent chooses the one that is closest to his or her perception. I was interested in learning more about exhibition consumers and the meanings they themselves give to their exhibition visits. Consequently, I chose the interview method because I wanted to meet consumers and talk about exhibitions with them. The interviews at the North Karelia outdoor exhibition and the Habitare furniture and interior decoration fair were aimed at increasing understanding of the following questions. *What happens to the consumer at exhibitions? What do exhibitions mean to the consumer? What are the reasons for the visit?* My purpose was to learn to understand more about consumer behaviour in exhibitions. I was also interested in identifying shared meanings related to consumption in these two exhibitions. After collecting the interviews I had a set of cultural texts, namely conversations between me and the interviewees.

Experiencing field interviewing

It was quite challenging to do the interviews in the hectic and noisy exhibition environment with a lot of people strolling by. The interviewer must in a very short time identify and evaluate potential interviewees as well as make decide how to approach them, and if they are willing to be interviewees, then decide how to conduct on the interview. If the first interpretation is wrong, then the interviewer must quickly find new possible directions in order to build up a dialog. With some people the dialogical connection was found and the interview turned into a nice conversation. With other people the connection was not so easy to establish, and the atmosphere in the interview was more formal. Because of the challenges posed by the exhibition environment, as well security of recording process I employed a student assistant for both interview rounds. The task of the assistant was to take care of the recording, so that I as an interviewer and researcher would be able to concentrate on interviewing.

The interviews were loosely structured by theme questions (Appendix 1). During the interviews we discussed themes relating to reasons for coming to the fair/exhibition, hobbies, and opinions about exhibitions arrangements, practices they perform during their exhibition visit, and selected socio-demographic characteristics. Usually fairs last only a certain period of time and most often only for a couple of days. Since I chose to collect the interview data at the actual exhibition premises, it was impossible for me to return to the exhibition after it was closed to collect complementary data.

About informants in interviews

At the North Karelia exhibition I conducted a total of 12 interviews and at the Habitare furnishing fair a total of 11. The number of people interviewed in each of the interview situations varied. This was because a majority of the visitors was accompanied by a friend/friends or a spouse. Consequently, the total number of visitors participating in the interviews at the North Karelia exhibition was 20 persons and at the Habitare furnishing fair 19 persons. The interviewees participated anonymously. I accepted anonymous participation because I noticed that people were not very motivated in taking part in ‘any commercial investigations’ as they called them. Since the visitors participated anonymously, it was impossible for me to carry out complementary data collection by returning to the interviewees later on. The tables below describe the main demographics of the informants interviewed at North Karelia and the Habitare exhibitions.

Table 6: Informant demographics at the North Karelia outdoor exhibition.

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Place of residence	Place of birth	Family	Interviewed
1	33	Female	Biologist	Helsinki	Joensuu (NK)	Single	Alone
2	50	Female	Nurse	Kontiolahti	Kontiolahti (NK)	Married	Alone
3	44	Male	Social worker	Helsinki	Häme	Cohabit	Together 3&4
4	50	Female	Social worker	Helsinki	Helsinki	Cohabit	
5	30	Female	Hair dresser	Helsinki	Helsinki	Engaged	Together 5&6
6	25	Male	Make up artist	Helsinki	Joensuu (NK)	Single	
7	79	Male	Senior citizen	Helsinki	Pohjanmaa	Widow	Alone
8	50	Female	Entrepreneur	Helsinki	North Karelia	Married	Together 8&9
9	50	Male	Entrepreneur	Helsinki	North Karelia	Married	
10	40	Female	Office work	Helsinki	Polvijärvi (NK)	Married	Together 10&11&12&13&14
11	45	Female	Nurse	Vantaa	Polvijärvi (NK)	Married	
12	35	Female	House maker	Helsinki	Polvijärvi	Married	
13	37	Female	Arts and crafts	Helsinki	Helsinki	Single	
14	12	Female	Student	Helsinki	Helsinki		
15	45	Male	Manager	Orimattila	Orimattila	Married	Alone
16	43	Male	Technician	Helsinki	Lahti	Married	Alone
17	27	Male	Engineer	Helsinki	Espoo	Single	Alone
18	18	Female	Baker	Helsinki	Joensuu (NK)	Single	Together 18&19
19	19	Female	Baker	Helsinki	Helsinki	Single	
20	76	Female	Teacher	Helsinki	Espoo	Divorced	Alone

(NK is an abbreviation for North Karelia)

At the North Karelian exhibition the number of persons interviewed was 20, of whom 12 were women and 8 men. Out of all interviewees 16 (80%) possessed personal relationships to North Karelia or the Karelian area (cf. Torikka 2003) in general. In the following, a few of the most frequently mentioned relationships are given. Often the interviewee was born in the North Karelia region or on the Karelian isthmus (the area that was ceded to the Soviet

Union at the Second World War). They also stated that they have relatives living in North Karelia or their relatives were from the Karelian isthmus. Some of the interviewees own property, for example, a summer cottage in North Karelia, or the family had owned a summer residence on the Karelian isthmus before the Second World War. Older interviewees had war experiences.

The Regional Council of North Karelia conducted a small-scale survey investigating visitor satisfaction of the event in the exhibition area (Kauneimmat Karjalasta – tyytyväisyystutkimus 1997). The sample comprised 583 visitors. Women accounted 60% of this sample and men for 40%. The most active visitor groups were people between the ages of 30 and 49 (35%) and after that, people between the ages of 50 and 64 (29%). Occupationally, the most active visitors were blue-collar workers since every third visitor came from this group. The second most active group were office workers with every fifth visitor coming from this group.

According to this survey, the number of visitors who had a personal relationship to Karelia was rather high at this exhibition, since more than half of them had such a relationship to North Karelia or to the Karelia region in general. The estimated number of visitors at the annual province exhibitions was 200.000 persons per day. It is notable, however, that the same people may visit an exhibition many times on the same day. For example, in the morning they come to enjoy morning coffee, at noon for lunch and after a working day they visit the site for a pint of beer¹⁹.

Table 7: Informant demographics at the Habitare interior decoration exhibition

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Place of residence	Family	Interviewed
1	65	Female	Senior Citizen	Helsinki	Widow	Together 1&2
2	35	Female	Office worker	Helsinki	Cohabit	
3	34	Male	Engineer	Järvenpää	Married	Alone
4	82	Male	Doctor/ Docent	Lappeenranta	Divorced	Alone
5	26	Male	Puuseppä	Järvenpää	Cohabit	Together 5&6
6	26	Female	Sales officer	Järvenpää	Cohabit	
7	24	Female	Artesan	Kuopio	Married	Together 7&8
8	24	Female	Artesan	Kuopio	Married	
9	54	Female	Air hostess	Helsinki	Married	Together 9&10
10	56	Male	Property manager	Helsinki	Married	
11	44	Female	Economist	Helsinki	Single	Together 11&12
12	34	Female	Office worker	Helsinki	Single	
13	65	Female	Senior citizen	Helsinki	Married	Together 13&14
14	65	Male	Senior citizen	Helsinki	Married	
15	48	Male	Engineer	Helsinki	Married	Alone
16	40	Female	Nurse	Helsinki	Single	Together 16&17
17	47	Male	Postman	Helsinki		

The number of persons that I interviewed at the Habitare exhibition was 17, of whom 10 were women and 7 men. An interesting observation is that 82% (14) of the interviewees visited the Habitare fair with somebody else. Only approximately one fifth of these interviewed (18%) visited the exhibition alone. All these single visitors were men. A total of 80,793 visitors visited the home decoration and furnishing fair Habitare 1997 (The Finnish Fair Corporation 1997). The total number of exhibitors at the exhibition was 478 and the exhibition comprised 15, 472 sq. m. (The Finnish Fair Corporation 1997).

After collecting the two rounds of interviews, I became interested in themes that describe people's physical reactions when they visit exhibitions. I noticed from the texts that people talk about getting tired, the need for rest, body size, the crowd and difficulties in

seeing. I also became interested in metaphors as analytical devices. They seemed to be helpful in breaking the surface of the text. At that time I started to read more about how the body affects the logic of our thinking (e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1999), the concept of embodied existence (Merleau-Ponty 1962) as well as sociological discussions of consumerist body (Falk 1994). As a result I collected the third set of data.

3.3.2 *Visitor essays*

The gathering of the third set of data was conducted at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 'Kiasma', in autumn 2002.

Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma and its exhibitions in autumn 2002

The Museum of Contemporary Art is an import actor in the contemporary art market of Finland. It was founded in 1990, as part of the Finnish National Gallery. The building was designed by the American architect Steven Holl. The museum defines contemporary art as follows:

"Contemporary art does not lend itself to unambiguous simple definition. It is a process that lives in time, evolving in relation to changes in time and defines itself in front of our very eyes. It can embody widely different expressions and tendencies. Artists may study the traditions of art or react to the world and present their interpretations in many different ways. Being a public institution, the Finnish Museum of Contemporary Art does not wish to commit itself to just some of these manifestations. Therefore, Kiasma's policy is to highlight this multiplicity of voices, presenting different artists and different ways of making art. There are many criteria for selecting artists and artworks for exhibitions. They can include the significance of the work, the artist or the phenomenon to Finnish art or to the development of art in general; topical themes and issues; the high quality of the artist's oeuvre, the determination of which must take into account the artist's viewpoint and environment. Some of the criteria involve factors whose status in the field of art has not yet become established. The multiplicity of voices also means that different people are involved in the formulation of the museum's exhibition programme. The strategy of the museum manifests itself through the visions of the people who work in Kiasma."(<http://www.kiasma.fi>)

The key mission of Kiasma is to make contemporary art known to the public and strengthen its position by active contacts with both artists and the public. The operative strategy of Kiasma is based on the concept of a centre for visual culture. The museum functions as a public meeting place, produces lively, continuous contact between contemporary art and art audiences, and makes contemporary artworks an everyday part of people's lives. Also one special dimension of the Museum of Contemporary Art operations is its contact with the act

of creating art with artists. As part of this goal, the museum recognizes the diversity and plurality of the field of contemporary art. It seeks to support this in all areas, including methods and techniques, as well as strategies and philosophies. Experimentation, process, and happening are important elements of the work of today's artists. (<http://www.kiasma.fi>).

The visitor essay data deals with visitors' response to the following two exhibitions namely "Popcorn and politics – Activists of Art" and "Resurrection". Popcorn and politics - Activists of Art (from 16 February 2002 to 23 February 2003) shed light on the significance of the 1960s as a watershed in contemporary art, in particular the significance and prominence of popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s, but also as a part of today's art. The art works were from Kiasma's own collections from the 1960s onwards. Resurrection (from 14 September 2002 to 5 January 2003) presented Kalervo Palsa's (1947-87) works. The exhibition was based on a donation and deposit collection received by the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma in 1999 from Maj-Lis Pitkänen, a friend and sponsor of Kalervo Palsa and the collection covers most of the work that Kalervo Palsa produced during this lifetime. The exhibition of over 2000 works gave a comprehensive picture of the artist's life works. It included paintings, sketches, and journals that shed light on the background and development of the works. Kalervo Palsa was a controversial artist who transformed the everyday realism of his home municipality Kittilä (in Lapland) into his art. This reality is a combination of poverty, isolation, cold, alcohol and the presence of death. Palsa also painted landscapes of Lapland in the changing colours of the seasons.

During year 2002, a total of 209,000 persons visited the Kiasma museum. Below is a table showing visitor numbers during the second half of the year.

Table 8. Visitors to Kiasma in 2002 (from July to December)

(Source: Visitor statistics of Finnish National Gallery 2002)

Month	Visitors
July	13 133
August	18 573
September	24 655
October	25 566
November	20 576
December	11 567

As you can see from the table above the number of visitors at Kiasma increased between September – November 2002. Part of the increase can be explained by the “Resurrection” exhibition and related media publicity.

Aims of the visitor essays

The main reason for choosing visitor essays as a data collection method was to allow them to tell me more freely about their experiences in an art museum. After collecting the two sets of interviews presented earlier in this chapter there was a need to look deeper into the consumption experience. The interviews are like dialogues between the interviewee and the researcher. Also, I as an interviewer I had an active role in producing the meanings for descriptions of exhibition consumption. Consequently, the interviewees and I together produced meanings for the consumption experiences that are present in the interview data. In the essays consumers are not so tied to my questions and the language that I use.

I collected the essay data as a student sample. This is what Patton (2002, 241-242) calls a convenience sample. Patton (2002, 241-242) argues that convenience samples often lead often to low credibility. I argue that this may not always be the case. I used this sampling to generate textual data that arises from shared cultural background. Cultural themes connected to exhibition visits also ‘come through’ from a student sample. However, a limitation of the student sample was that the majority of the students were of much the same age. Only few middle aged visitors (40-55 years) are present. This may show to some extent in the data so that the emotional experiences of younger respondents are somewhat ‘stronger’ in nature (this can be concluded from for example, the usage of metaphors) compared with the more mature type of response from the older visitors.

Collecting visitor essays

I prepared the data collection by visiting Kiasma on the September 13, 2002. It was the opening day of the “Resurrection” exhibition for invited guests. During the visit, I gathered information about the exhibition premises for the data collection. After visiting Kiasma I made careful plans about the data collection. The date of the actual data collection was 6 November 2002 and the essays were part of the work for the course ‘Marketing of Culture’ that was held at the Helsinki School of Economics during fall 2002. The students taking part in the course were asked to write essays.

I met the student group as well as the lecturing professor in one of the lecturing halls of Kiasma museum. Before visiting the exhibition a representative of Kiasma gave us a short lecture on how marketing is organized at Kiasma. After the lecture, I informed the students that the essays they were going to write are to be part of the data for my PhD research. I also gave the students instructions on how the data collection would be organized. In the instructions, I encouraged the students to wander freely in the exhibitions during the next 1,5 to 2 hours. In addition, I also asked them to make notes about their experiences during the visit to the museum. For taking notes I had prepared a note pad of card board and paper for each student in advance (Appendix.). After approximately two hours I asked the students to return to the lecturing room from the exhibition halls. There they had one hour time to write an essay about their visit to the museum. The topic of the essay was to write about 'What happened to me during my visit to Kiasma?' (In Finnish: Mitä minulle tapahtui Kiasmassa?). I wrote in my notes:

"Some of the students complained that they could not write four pages about their experiences of text. However, after receiving the instructions they started to write. AND they were able to concentrate extremely well; there was a deathlike silence in the room. Only a little rustling from pencils. No more sighs"

A total of 22 essays were returned to me. On December 4 I visited as a lecturer in the Marketing of Culture course and presented the students with the preliminary analysis of the data gathered at Kiasma. During the lecture, we discussed my results and I received important feedback from the students. The following table presents the demographics of the informant students in the data. They also had an opportunity to participate anonymously. I chose this approach because I wanted to avoid the idea that I was giving grades for their descriptions. Most of them participated anonymously. However, I asked the students to mention in their essays their gender and age as background information. I have reported in the following table that all of the informants were students. However, it is clear from the essays that some of the informants also have other occupations.

Table 9. Informant Demographics in visitor essays

Name	Age	Sex	Occupation
1.	23	Female	Student
2.	28	Male	Student
3.	23	Female	Student
4.	23	Female	Student
5.	24	Female	Student
6.	31	Female	Student
7.	23	Female	Student
8.	21	Female	Student
9.	57	Female	Student
10.	32	Female	Student
11.	42	Female	Student
12.	24	Female	Student
13.	25	Male	Student
14.	26	Male	Student
15.	21	Female	Student
16.	29	Female	Student
17.	22	Female	Student
18.	25	Male	Student
19.	36	Female	Student
20.	21	Male	Student
21.	27	Female	Student
22.	27	Female	Student

I typed the hand written data into text processing format. While doing the typing, I made some observations. For example, I noticed that the media were mentioned on several occasions in the data. That made me curious. From the essays I noticed that the “Resurrection” experience had had considerable media visibility. In addition, I noticed that there were references to art museums as places between the real and the imaginary. I wrote in my research notes:

"The material seems to suggest the existence of interstitial speech related to the role of exhibition and fairs. In this speech, exhibitions and fairs are perceived as 'phases' or states or locations between A and B. There is also speech that deals with what already exists. Examine the material to establish how consumers talk about coming to exhibitions. What expressions are used to describe the transition? Do people talk about breaking away? I've noticed before that the texts contain descriptions of transitions; some even use trip metaphors. In the other example, the transition takes places as the person walks to an exhibition and her mind relaxes." (Kiasma)

Next I will turn to the process of analyzing the data.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study the different kinds of texts (interviews and consumer essays) are perceived as cultural data. I analyzed the data by using a hermeneutic, iterative approach (Thompson and Locander and Pollio 1994). There are several challenges in ethnographically informed analysis. 'One of the biggest challenges of ethnographic interpretation is combing data obtained through multiple methods into a credible account' (Denzin 1989; Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, 484). For me it is the theoretical lense that makes the data talk. However, instead of rigorous coding according to the given theoretical constructs, my analytical strategy follows a rather reflective and dialogical process of reading, writing and questioning (Silverman 2000; Eriksson and Koistinen 2005; Valtonen 2004, 176). Next I will describe how it happened in this study.

As described above, the data analyzed is composed of two parts: interviews and consumer essays. This data resulted in a total of 291 transcribed pages. Examples of both types are given in Appendix 1. Instead of looking for differences in the collected data, my interest was in looking for similarities in cultural meanings when consumers talked about experiencing the exhibitions. While looking for similarities in experiencing I of course noticed as well differences. In this research I have used multiple methods in data collection in order to gain access to different realms of experience that may diverge form each other. In addition, I investigated the data differences in speech since language constitutes a primary lens through which reality is constructed (see also Valtonen 2004, 12).

In the analysis I adopted the idea that in researching cultural meanings one cannot ask people directly about them (Holt 1997; Valtonen 2004, 13). Instead, an analyst should be in the data. In searching for these meanings I tried to distance myself as much as possible from the usual ways of understanding exhibition experiences. I tried to bring out otherwise taken-for-granted things that compose meanings in exhibition consumption (cf. Holt 1995, 2; Latour and Woolgar 1986) and to make the familiar odd.

During the data analysis I aimed at finding features of exhibition consumption. In studies researchers have said that there must be a continuous revision of interpretations before researchers grasp more of the text (Thompson and Locander and Pollio 1989). I aimed to the essence by asking questions. Important questions regarding the data were: What are they saying about movement in the exhibitions premises? What kind of expressions are they using? When I noticed a metaphorical expression such as “.. it is good

that here are a lot of people because then the selling personnel does not attack on me and I can walk in peace”. After noticing this kind of expressions I asked myself what is going on here? What does this mean? I have written down the following questions in my research notes:

“Questions for data that have something to do with the role of other people in the exhibitions: Does there exist such phenomenon as shared consumption (in Finnish yhteiskulutus)? What are its characteristics? With whom comes one to exhibitions? How people talk about their exhibition visits? Do they use we or I? How do people consume ‘together’? Is talking an example of this? What this tells about consumption? Do people share the same meanings? Same opinions? What are differences in response? What kind of positive meanings consumers give to other consumers at the exhibition? How about the negative meanings? How important are other people at the exhibition? Do visitors talk about observing other people? Do people talk about other people that are not present at the exhibition? Children? Parents? Friends? What kind of roles have other people played in the process of coming to the exhibition?”

During the analysis I tried to identify issues that seem to have significance in the social construction of consumption experience in exhibitions. I was especially interested in finding cultural clues from the verbs that consumers used. For instance expressions such as ‘taking something with me to another world’, ‘storing something’ or ‘following discussion in the media’ caught my interest. Paying attention to the usage of verbs in the texts led me towards taking a closer look at the practices of the consumers while at the exhibition and also before and after the visit. Moreover, the data revealed generalizations, metaphors (glosses), and unarticulated meanings.

In a hermeneutic, iterative approach the goal of this analytic phase is to gain an etic perspective through the development of a series of cultural themes as e.g. Ritson and Elliott say in their research (1999, 264; also Spradley 1980, 141). Throughout the whole research process, I practiced what I called ‘organizing the data’. During the data analysis I used the idea of archetypal episodes to help to identify and report the cultural themes present in the exhibition consumption. In the previous study archetypal episodes are understood to represent the key organizing principles and local truths in the data (Buttle 1991, Ritson and Elliott 1999). I used intensive case analysis as a tool to focus my attention to exhibition experience (see more in Eriksson and Kovalainen forthcoming). The goal of the data organization was to produce thematic categories that aided me in structuring the different kinds of cultural meanings that were connected to an exhibition visit (see also Ritson and Elliott 1999, 264). The outcome of this phase was an increased understanding of the etic perspective through the development of cultural or interpretative themes (cf. Ritson and Elliott 1999, 264).

In practice I read and reread the interviews and essays in order to find related patterns in the data. I tried to find differences and similar features in the data. For example, I was interested in the intensity of expressions related to the feelings that were present in the different texts or how people referred to different senses. I also used tables as tools to code the data. For example, I coded similar types of expressions concerning the role of eyes in the data. I also kept notes of what I had noticed in the data. In general, I worked extensively on the data by writing. During the data analysis four colleagues read the empirical papers the concerning my findings. I received valuable comments from them for the revision of the text. After several rounds of review and revision through writing, the themes became to be more robust (cf. Ritson and Elliott 1999). Next I will turn to discuss the cultural themes.

4 SENSIBILITY THEME: SETTING FREE VARIOUS EMOTIONS

In this chapter I will describe and analyze the nature of the emotionality that takes place at exhibitions. For the analysis of emotional meanings, I draw on sociology (Ellis and Flaherty 1992). In this perspective emotions are grounded in lived experience and subjectivity that is situated in such a way that the voices in our heads and the feelings in our bodies are connected to political, cultural, and historical contexts. In the analysis I have realized that speaking or writing about experience is always removed from actual “raw” experience, but with the help of careful description I have tried to shrink the distance between the experiencing subjects and their account of lived experience (cf. Ellis and Flaherty 1992, 4). I have also realized that the languages of various cultures and subcultures differ in their capacity to articulate subjective processes such as experiencing emotionality (cf. Ellis and Flaherty 1992, 4). Examples of previous research on emotions in consumer culture approach include an analysis of empathy in advertising response (Stern 1993), empathy and sympathy in consumer responses to television advertising drama (Stern 1994), agapic love in gift giving (Belk and Coon 1993), research on various emotions present in pet ownership (Hirschman 1994), emotional meanings given to special possessions (Price, Arnould and Curaci 2000; Belk 1992), and the nature of passionate consumption (Belk, Ger and Askegaard 2003).

In this chapter, I will focus my attention on the cultural themes of sensibility. This thematic entity unfolds in the analyzed texts through the following three sub-themes. The first sub-theme is poignancy. The second sub-theme of sensibility is perplexity. And the third sub-theme of sensibility is refreshingness. Poignancy and perplexity are connected to the mind-stirring content of the exhibition, whereas refreshingness is connected with different types of enjoyable interactions with the exhibition environment. In the sections below I will describe and analyze these themes in more detail.

4.1 Poignancy

Visitors encounter other people's feelings and life histories as well as various kinds of other themes that come close to their own life history. It is in these interactions that the sub-theme of poignancy unfolds. Poignancy is a theme that is present in consumer interaction with the objects, persons and things that are part of the exhibition content. By poignancy I mean a theme that unfolds when the responding person has encountered something that provokes deep and strong feelings in the visitor. The touching thing whether it is a person, object or ideology, can evoke both positive and negative emotions.

4.1.1 Emergence of strong emotions

Strong emotional meanings are connected with objects, persons and things in exhibition. In the texts collected from Kiasma the most prominent emotions are distress and empathy. The feeling of distress is connected with contemporary art in general, since 'it is always full of distress' or 'it is so difficult to understand'. In some of the texts consumers also connect distress with the Kiasma Contemporary Art Museum 'since it always has ugly art on show'. Also, experiencing the works of Kalervo Palsa bring a feeling of distress into the response.

As the exhibition proceeds, overwhelming anxiety becomes an increasingly menacing feature of it. (Kiasma)

Based on the data it seems that the Kalervo Palsa exhibition has been emotionally a strong or even piercing (often negative) experience for many informants. This can be noticed from the language informants use when they talk about their visit. Especially metaphorical bodily-related expressions articulate the intensity of experiencing. Consumers use expressions such as 'a lump rose in my throat when I entered the exhibition rooms' or 'I do not want the illusion of vomit and all that stuff to stick to my clothes like resin'.

Palsa uses very powerful techniques of expression in his works: strong colours, often very clear-cut and simple forms. The strong colours in particular stop the viewer, or me at least. In Palsa's case, colours did not matter... the subjects were shocking as such. Never before have I viewed art in a museum like this, work by work. Normally you let your eyes coast across the works and then a particular subject stops you and you have a closer look... here every artwork had this stopping effect. The document playing in the background and its sounds heightened the unreal, oppressive feeling. In fact, looking at the pictures made me physically ill. (Kiasma)

In the above excerpt there is also a description of a physical reaction that the encounter with art works produced. Also Csikzentmihalyi and Robinson (1990, 35) have made observations that a physical reaction is present in intensive emotional experiences. Moreover, in previous research on anthropology it is suggested that emotions are produced through e.g. bodily themes when they are contextualized in social relations, and as such they reproduce experiences. For example, in poetry response it is thought that feelings take place inside the imaginary subject of the poem and that emotions in turn take place in the symbolic world between people. That is why emotions are described through corporal themes (Lyon 1995; Knuuttila and Timonen 1999, 221).

Another example of the emotions present in experiencing is empathy. This way of experiencing is connected with the person and life of artist Kalervo Palsa (his works formed one exhibition entity at Kiasma while the data were collected. In the texts, visitors talk about 'his tough life' or 'gloomy life' in 'austere circumstances'.

The exhibition inspired a profound interest in the artist himself and his life, a desire to understand how someone can think like him. (Kiasma)

When talking about the artist some of the visitors use his first name 'Kalervo'. This emphasizes the desire of the consumer to get closer to the artist and understand him better (cf. Linko 1994).

In Palsa's case, the experience was a powerful one: the video provided background – the poor and squalid conditions he lived in, the wretchedness of his life. How withdrawn Kalervo looked in the school photos. Why was Kalervo the only one with the father's surname Palsa? And who was this father of his, from Russia? (Kiasma)

Previous research (Stern 1994) describes empathy and sympathy as follows. In experiencing empathy, the participant is primarily active, affective, and lost in the world of drama or art in general, whereas in sympathy, the spectator is detached, judgmental, and mindful of him/herself. Dramas evoke empathy when they inspire viewers to feel with someone or something (Empathy is the English term used to express the German word *Einfühlung*, an intuitive feeling-into someone else's life). The empathic response is the one in which someone feels as if s/he were a participant in the "posture, motion, and sensations" of someone else. Sympathy, in turn, while also a two-dimensional response, is one in which spectators feel either for or against someone or something. As feeling, sympathy/antipathy is considered a more self-conscious, more intellectual, and less intuitive response than empathy, which is more instinctive and emotionally absorbing (Stern 1994). In the

contemporary art data the dramatic happenings in an artist's life made some visitors experience empathy.

In the texts collected from North Karelia outdoor exhibition, the most notable emotions in the texts are 'enjoyment', 'sadness and longing' as well as 'boredom'. All these emotions centre on meanings of familiarity. For some people North Karelia is a home region whereas it reminds others of rural areas elsewhere in Finland. The emotional talk of enjoying is very characteristic at the North Karelia exhibition.

*What do you think this would give other people in Helsinki?
Well, my very Helsinki-oriented boss was just here, he enjoyed it, relaxing here, feeling good,
the sun was shining and it was nice to come here. (w)²⁰
And eat fish and all that, of course it's important, goodness ! (m)(North Karelia)*

It is especially connected with experiencing the 'different world' that is present in the exhibition. People talk about a 'different world' that has 'its own culture' and 'own characteristic atmosphere'. They also explain that the exhibition serves them as a possibility to enter into this different world. In addition, 'the different' is located in the periphery. To express this, visitors talk about the 'remotest corner of North Karelia' or 'outskirts' and 'noticing that this place is even on the map'.

*What do you think about all these provincial fairs?
They're fun, yes. Especially here in Helsinki.
What makes them fun?
You can enjoy a little country atmosphere.
What does that country atmosphere include? What does it consist of, I mean?
Well maybe it's how people are different... when you look at the people working at the stands
they're more jovial and they really talk in a different manner, and that's like a fresh breeze from
another world. People in Helsinki are so different from people in a corner of North Karelia. Sure
this is a cliché but always being in a hurry and shallowness and pointlessness and running
after everything is pretty important to people here, in my opinion. (North Karelia)*

Another emotion also present in the texts is longing or even bitterness. These feelings are connected with the visitors' or their parents' home region or war time in general (the Second World War). In the texts, visitors talk about the 'dear home region' or 'all that was left behind because of the war'. In the first excerpt that follows, a visitor tells about her home area in North Karelia and the sorrow that she experiences because she cannot live there any longer. In the second one an older man reflects his experiences of war.

I guess you miss Joensuu or North Karelia a little?

In a way yes, but I wouldn't move back, though.

Why?

Well, it is so dreary there, like, and so many are out of a job and just hopeless. Especially people my age, you know, I couldn't get a job there. Having a job is pretty important. (North Karelia)

It was pretty tough all right. I spent the prime of my life there. I wish I had better memories.

Where were you?

Petrozavodsk, (Medvedgorsk) and on the shores of the Dvina Bay. On long range patrols.

They were dangerous those patrols. Well you had to keep an eye out not to run into anything. (North Karelia)

The third emotion present in the North Karelia data is boredom or even disappointment. In some of the interviews consumers report that they have been expecting that the event presenting their home region would be more impressive in nature. Some were even hoping for a spectacle type of event. These people are feeling bored because everything is too familiar to them and 'just like at home'. Some of the visitors describe the happening as 'a regular marketplace'.

How would you describe the atmosphere in this exhibition?

Well; I think it's really peaceful at least (w). It looks like everyone is sitting around like in a square (n). Well, there might be more going on in a square than here (w).

Its pretty peaceful here, the atmosphere (m). (North Karelia)

Some visitors report that a more 'lifting' event would contain more colours and something that is not so 'everyday like' and 'faint'. They relate that they expected more of a 'spectacle' type of event that would contain 'a lot of everything'. Some visitors express their hope for more visuality and say that it would be nice if people would use more North Karelian national costumes because that would bring a 'celebratory feeling' to the event.

In the texts collected from the Habitare furniture fair, the most notable negative emotion that stands out from the texts is to 'feel a bit bored'. This emotion is connected with responding to the objects on show and to the show in general. The feeling of boredom stems from the disappointment of not encountering anything 'new' or 'fascinating' in the exhibition.

What is your overall impression of this exhibition?

I don't think there was anything new here (w). A bit boring (w).

No (m).

What were you looking for? Did you picture what it could be like?

It's not new if you know what you're looking or (m).

So it was somewhat shocking?

Yes, more like that (w).

Something more than just lava lamps (m). (Habitare)

The most notable positive feeling present in interior exhibition is the feeling of ‘delight’ following from encounter with beautiful and otherwise affecting objects. In the texts the feeling of delight is connected with certain classical pieces of furniture such as ‘Pormestari’ furniture (in English: burgermeister) from the thirties or various kinds of design lamps. Also, coming across with well known Finnish interior decoration brands such as Marimekko, Asko and Inno brought a feeling of delight to the text. Moreover, the beautifully designed stands also delight visitors.

*What caught my attention, what always gets my attention is all the lamps and I love the smooth modern ones, chandeliers are terrible in my opinion, I've never liked them. Because they're so showy?
That's right, it's the showiness, but there were some really beautiful, you know, the designer ones, I've got one myself, maybe by Yki Nummi, I think it's eternally beautiful, its totally smooth, you probably know it, I think it's the king of lamps and I always go see them everywhere. (Habitate)*

Linko (1994, 186) noticed that the emotional orientation towards contemporary art contained talk about pleasure and beauty. Holt (1995) has made an observation that also aesthetic responses involve emotional reactions to the artistry and beauty of for example athletic movements in professional sports. Similarly, the above description of contemplation in front of beautiful lamps recalls the contemplation.

4.1.2 Appropriation of emotions

Visitors appropriate the emotional encounter by means of emotional labelling and technology. Based on the data, we can see that an exhibition can also come close to a potential visitor before the actual visit. Many visitors wrote in their essays that they had had preconceptions of the Kalervo Palsa exhibition before actually entering it. Hence, they already had an idea of the emotions that the exhibition could bring forth. The following excerpts are examples of how visitors use emotional labelling²¹.

What was surprising was that the exhibition included more than just the images of death and sexuality that are typical of Palsa. I was thinking how the media is only interested in things that cause a scandal and highlights pictures that reinforce the Palsa myth. Sure everything was just as upsetting as I thought, but it was the breadth of the subjects that caught me by surprise (Kiasma).

A characteristic means of emotional labelling found in the text is that visitors repeat the same emotion many times in the same text (interview or essay) or even across separate texts (repeated in many interviews or essays). In the Kiasma data this particular feeling is

distress, in North Karelia a feeling of happiness and joyfulness. At Habitare there is no particular emotion but in some texts feelings of delight/fascination, boredom and disappointment is repeated. In this way, a particular emotion represents the whole experience. In the following, two visitors talk and repeat the word 'distress'.

Black and white pictures seem so grim. The war images were upsetting like Palsa's. Why is art so disturbing? Maybe it's a way for the artist to unload the content of his subconscious and of course art as such is a reflection of its society. Disturbing art is hard to look at, though, how about some humour, please! (Kiasma)

The first thing that gets your attention is Dennis Oppenheim's marionette Theme for a Major Hit. Cold shivers race through your body, I guess it's not meant to be scary but I can't help being terrified at the blank grey face and the string-controlled movement. I wouldn't want to see it again. I could say the same about the entire exhibition because the whole tour was distressing. (Kiasma)

Another way to appropriate emotions occurs with the aid of technology. Technology increases the feeling of poignancy during experiencing. In the art museum data the videos are produced in the text as artefacts that mediate and intensify visitors' feelings and atmosphere and thus aid visitors to get in closer touch with the exhibition theme or provide visitor a chance to 'slip' deeper in experiencing the particular emotion. While talking about emotions, the consumer is like a poet who is trying to catch certain special moments accurately in a few descriptive words.

It seems that emotional labeling, whether it is done by the media, the organizer or the visitor, produces an emotional image for the entire event. This image is reproduced by consumers when they negotiate the contents of an exhibition. Visitors may also use their previous experiences as a source of emotional labeling.

4.2 Perplexity

Perplexity is present in consumer interaction with objects and persons. This theme is especially present in the data collected from the contemporary art museum²². The meanings related to perplexity are not so much present in the data collected from the Habitare furniture fair and the North Karelia exhibition. The topics of these exhibitions are not found very extraordinary by visitors.

4.2.1 Astonishment

While reading the data, a special characteristic was apparent, namely the number of questions. Examples of the questions are the following: ‘What is contemporary art?’ ‘How should I understand it in a right way?’ ‘Is it necessary to understand contemporary art?’ ‘Why is there so much ugly art on show at the exhibition?’ Through posing questions visitors are trying to make sense of the things that they have encountered.

The principal question remaining at least after the Pop Art section is the old bewilderment at contemporary art: how do you define art? Is everything that is called art art? It must be, at least if 'Nolo veistos' (Embarrassed sculpture) is considered art. I don't get it. Contemporary art is usually difficult to approach and I have to say, though I know it's a cliché, that I DO NOT UNDERSTAND IT, IT IS DIFFICULT. And for my part, visiting contemporary art museums regularly doesn't help at all. I personally don't consider a heap of bottles lying on the floor inspiring, it is not what I consider art and I just get angry when I see something like that in a respected museum. Why waste your time on stuff like that when there is so much art around that is much better? (Kiasma)

In the next excerpt, the visitor in North Karelia exhibition is describing how encountering Dali's art works in Spain had such a strong influence on her that she plans to visit the museum again.

*... I once visited the Dali museum in Spain. That's another one, it's wonderful. So what is so wonderful about it then? Well everyone knows what Dali's paintings and all are like, they're so exciting. You just need to stare at them, his paintings, and you always discover small details, and when we visited there was a room, and in the room was, wait a moment, those lips and something and then you go up the stairs and look around and only then you see that they are like lips and nostrils, there's a painting like that, too. That was interesting, very interesting. Well what did you get from it then?
It left me with the feeling that the man was totally crazy, or is, is he still alive? A complete idiot. But since then I've bought prints of Dali's paintings. Not the real ones, of course.
Why did you go see the exhibition in the first place?
I went simply because I was interested; I've always been interested in Dali. And since our kids' grandparents live close by it was easy, although I didn't see half of it, you'd need a week to see everything, but anyway. And you really have to look at them close. And so many people. And the queues in front of some of the paintings, you know, the time we had to spend there, those couple of hours, were just not enough. No, no.
Was the exhibition something especially memorable to you, too?
Well, I actually went only because the others went, but it was an experience, for sure.
What was your main reaction?
I was a bit amazed! But it's true; you do need to have lots of time when you visit. (North Karelia)*

For sense making one usually needs some kind of rules of interpretation. However, typical to this type of response is that the visitor lacks the norms or rules of interpretation. The art works encountered in the contemporary art museum are often objects that do not belong to

the everyday life of these particular visitors. Visitors use expressions such as ‘wonder’, ‘strange’, ‘being wordless’ or ‘I don’t get it’.

Astonishment is an emotional action through which consumers give meaning to their encounter with something unusual, and in this negotiation, questions are important. Astonishment is like gossiping in that it also justifies the presence of emotions (cf. Koskinen 2000, 138-139). I suggest that besides the emotional part, astonishment has also a distinctive purifying part. I suggest that through astonishment people set borders between the extraordinary and themselves (‘How strange! I am not like that’). Astonishment is like a preliminary stage of curiosity.

4.2.2 Ambivalence

Part of being perplexity is also the toleration of ambivalence. The data bring to light the attitude that some of the informants have towards contemporary art. Characteristic to the ambivalent attitude (‘... but on the other hand..’) is that the experience is simultaneously both pleasant and unpleasant. For art museum visitors it is difficult to tolerate this kind of experience.

Home, religion and country shook me up with its flag symbolism but my opinion of it remained a bit indefinite: I liked it and I didn't like it. (Kiasma)

In the texts it is possible to find examples of the ways of experiencing ambivalence. In the following descriptions visitors report how the whole visit has been a positive incident for them especially because they are fascinated with the extraordinary character of the art works on show. Extraordinary objects activate curiosity in visitors.

Contemporary art – what is it? Odd, curious, difficult to understand, simple things are turned into 'art'. It was my first time in Kiasma and I was surprised positively! The exhibition was interesting; the themes were inspiring, positive, with a lot of room for interpretation and imagination. (Kiasma)

Your imagination is aroused, or unusual shapes, colours and insights do the arousing. On the other hand, when there are paintings and works that look or are 'conventional' art among them, they draw your attention and you feel like looking for something unusual or different in them. Lately I've read a lot about the 60s and I was interested in the 60s works, looking for familiar names and themes. What was also interesting were the sounds and odd visions, like the woman lying on the ground asking for help. Can this sort of thing really be in a museum? (Kiasma)

Also, expressing admiration towards the artist is a way to solve the ambivalence. Holt (1995) talks about out-of-ordinary situations in professional baseball and how these situations induce people to experience awe. Similarly, encountering extraordinary persons may evoke awe.

Right away I saw how versatile an artist Kalervo was – and how extensive the exhibition was. If you didn't know about it, many wouldn't have believed this was the work of the same man. The style, the technique and the atmosphere were very different. (Kiasma)

I knew enough to expect that Palsa's subjects would deal to a large degree with sexuality and death and express wretchedness and depression. But his skill, the whole made up of many pieces, the use of colour, surfaces! Some works were beautiful like children's book illustrations (('Palmu' (Palm tree), 'Odotus' (Waiting), 'Uutta lunta' (Fresh snow)) but only at first glance. His self-portraits really witnessed – according to Palsa's own statement – the progress of making art, improving technique (and not just egotism). (Kiasma)

Also sceptical or even angry voices are present in the text. The following text is an example of talk where consumers question the quality of the works at the exhibition by using expressions such as 'making easy money' or 'just about everybody can do that'. The outcome may also be a feeling of frustration or a negative approach where a possible outcome is frustration.

Many of the works are just baffling, though. I just can't understand what point they are trying to make. But if I spend some time and observe the work itself, I often catch hold of an idea. So the artwork, too, opens up to me in a completely new way, as I'm sure it opens up to others, too. Contemporary art makes me feel stupid. And yet on holidays or when I travel on business I go to exhibitions whenever I can. What makes me feel stupid is that it is so hard to understand this form of art. Sometimes I think to myself why on earth did someone do that - a child could have done it. If it is really bad I burst out with 'dear God', what is that supposed to be! Sometimes I try to fool myself. I play a game with myself. I try to understand the artworks better than I actually do. At least I try to look more interested and knowledgeable. That's what everyone else does, right? I can't let other see that most of the artworks at Kiasma are incomprehensible to me, can I? (Kiasma)

Based on the findings concerning perplexity, I suggest that in exhibition consumption the consumer, while talking about the extraordinary things encountered, is like the tourist travelling to a strange place or even an explorer who is trying to map an unknown territory. The presence of perplexity means that there has been an excess of something in experiencing and that the visitor 'cannot take it all'.

What kind of role do contemporary art exhibitions have in our culture? In contrast to those, largely late-nineteen-century theories, inspired by notions of rationalization, commodification and modernization of culture, it is important to emphasize the tradition within popular culture of transgression, protest, the carnevalisque, and liminal excesses (Featherstone 1991, 22). The popular tradition of carnivals, fairs, and festivals provided

symbolic inversions and transgressions of the official civilizing culture and favored excitement, uncontrolled emotions, and the direct and vulgar grotesque bodily pleasures of food, drink and sexuality (Bakhtin 1968 in Featherstone 1991, 22). These were *liminal places*, where the everyday world was turned upside down and in which the tabooed and fantastic were possible (Featherstone 1991; 22).

Featherstone (1991, 22-23) sees fairs as having a dual role as local markets and sites of pleasure. Fairs were sites where the exchange of commodities took place. In addition to this, they were a site for display of exotic and strange commodities from various parts of the world and a place of festive atmosphere. According to Featherstone (1991, 23), fairs offered spectacular imagery, confusions of boundaries and an immersion in the world of strange sounds, motions, images, people, animals and things. Are contemporary art exhibitions the fairs of postmodern times?

4.3 Refreshingness

In exhibitions consumers also come across the exhibition premises and also the wider environment around it. It is in this type of interaction that the sub-theme of refreshingness unfolds. The theme of refreshingness is present in all three data sets.

4.3.1 Accessibility of peace of mind

Accessibility to peace of mind is connected with exhibition premises. This is especially the case with the architecture of the exhibition premises and also with the surroundings inside these premises. With the help of these, visitors are surrounded by enjoyable and interesting premises as well as an ambience that lifts them away from tensions of everyday life.

In the Kiasma data visitors describe the ‘peacefulness’ and its effect on experiencing. In all of these descriptions the place is described as somehow ‘different from the outside world’. The art museum is described as a place of ‘quiet and calm’ that provides a venue for rest and ‘chances to experience breaks’ from the ‘tense atmosphere of everyday life’.

At four o'clock there will be the second exam in statistics. I think that I would have not been able to spend the hours before the exam better than in here [Kiasma] recharging my head. In there in my head the statistical matters incubate. This is more important, touching and full of experiences... (Kiasma)

I had time to circle around in the second and third floor. I would have stayed even longer if there would have been enough time. Circling around here is calming and good for my mental agility (henkinen vireys). (Kiasma)

Joy and Sherry (2003, 273) have also made a similar type of observations about the feeling of relaxation and peace entering into oneself. In addition, the art museum is described through metaphors such as ‘a place to charge one’s batteries’ or ‘a place that leaves room for one’s thoughts’. The feeling of wide space was also connected with the possibility to think as one wanders around the open space of the museum, as shown in the following excerpts.

Wonderful, bright, space for one’s thoughts, good thoughts for even a longer time than only for today gave Kiasma for me today. (Kiasma)

In addition, the museum is described as ‘a timeless place’ and a place that helps visitors to adapt for a brief moment to this kind of different feeling of time. This has its connection to the liminal places where living seems to become different and often more relaxed in nature as in holiday locations (cf. Selänniemi 1996; cf. Belk and Costa 1998).

I greatly enjoy the idea, easing idea that I can wander alone for one hour and half in this great, airy space. The exhibition of Palsa I have not seen, and the Pop exhibition I saw already in spring, so I walk slowly to the fourth floor. The museum is the kingdom of no hurry. It soon takes a control of me. (Kiasma)

I like this idea of a living room and I could come here to just hang around. (Kiasma)

Moreover, the building is perceived as an art work in itself and seems to be living its own life as a source of pleasant experiences. It can also be the main sight of interest.

I've been to Kiasma before but the reason I visited was not the exhibition alone. Of course it's educational to go and see Palsa's works, for example, but I find the atmosphere at Kiasma so refreshing. The building itself is worth seeing, I think, and even more interesting than the art in it. (Kiasma)

And the architecture of the building is still interesting, I catch myself studying the building from different angles. (Kiasma)

It was interesting to see the building that was discussed so much when it was being built. (Kiasma)

Besides the actual exhibition premises, wider environment are also found to be pleasant in the data collected from the contemporary art museum. The most often mentioned object in this particular role is a window. Visitors like to look out on distant scenes.

After Palsa I concentrated only to enjoy the architecture of Kiasma. It is possible to visit Kiasma only because one wants to observe the building and the sights from its windows and just skip the exhibitions. The building itself is just great but also the stuff inside and the sceneries that one is able to see from the windows. (Kiasma)

The building itself is understood as an object that offers some breaks in between experiencing. Based on the data, taking breaks from experiencing seems to be appreciated by consumers, since the two art exhibitions are quite demanding in the emotional sense. The building itself raised emotions in Finland even before it was built. At the beginning of the 1990s, a cultural struggle over the location of the museum of contemporary art took place. Also, the wider public took part in this debate²³. Based on the data, it seems that in a way the building appropriates visitors and not visa versa. In this particular building many visitors seem to experience the sublime.

In the previous studies art museums have been perceived as metaphors for palaces and libraries (Uusitalo and Ahola 1994). This can also be further elaborated through the idea of liminoid places (Turner and Turner 1978; Belk and Costa 1998; Valtonen 2004). Common to this kind of places is that in them people can experience ‘time-outs’ that provide them with liberation and relief from the normative constraints of everyday life. Moreover exhibitions can also be perceived as third places. These third places are public places where people can put aside the concerns of home and work, namely their first and second places (Oldenburg 1999).

In the North Karelia exhibition, Senate Square and the whole city of Helsinki served as an experiential frame for the event. Matala (2004) has talked about travel portals as a kind of display windows to other cultures (or worlds). In a similar way, regional exhibitions are also display windows on these other worlds. The Helsinki city centre provided for the North Karelia regional exhibition with a festive framing for experiencing another world, namely the countryside and culture of eastern Finland.

Moreover, exhibitions may also be windows on national history and cultural myths. It is pointed out in previous research on consumer culture that historical framing provides an interesting insight for studying consumer culture. For instance, at the stock show, many events and activities are linked to an often romanticized past and to the fact that all cultures have myths; they are important for members in working through complex realities (Peñaloza 2001). The North Karelia exhibition and similar types of regional fairs are like windows on Finnish culture and its myths. Peñaloza (2001, 371) adds ‘The historical sense is relevant for consumer researchers in exploring how consumers use history in reproducing cultural

meanings regarding their heritage and what is important to them as people.’ In the North Karelia exhibition, people had a chance to be proud of their culture and also express meanings such as the character of the Karelian people and their lifestyle, as well as their dramatic history between Eastern and Western Europe.

The Habitare exhibition differed from the other two exhibitions in the sense that the texts collected there contained fewer emotional descriptions connected especially with the exhibition premises. Neither is there talk about the historical background of the exhibition premises. The most notable emotion present in the descriptions of the exhibition premises of Habitare is the feeling of distress, as in the following excerpt. This emotion is connected with how easily the visitor gets around in the exhibition premises. The feeling of distress follows when consumer experience ‘getting lost’ or ‘not seeing anything because there are too many here’.

Well, when people rush back and forth and I'm so little and I always get upset in crowds [angry], when there are so many people and I can't see a thing (w). (Habitare)

In sum, visitors generally like to enjoy exhibition premises, but this is not possible in all cases. The Kiasma building and its immediate surrounding combining a lively city centre and park area and the monument Senate Square are exciting experiential frames from the consumer’s point of view. Habitare in turn seems to be the most rationally oriented exhibition of the three analyzed here. There are also specific historical meanings attached to Habitare’s premises. However, none of the interviewees mentioned the building as such even though the premises e.g. as a site of national ambition increased the export of Finnish goods during the post war era.

Nowadays consumers are increasingly aware of the aestheticization of distribution systems in their daily lives. For instance, not only the interior architecture of the shops and the appearance of the personnel, but also the aesthetics and care of the whole environment are important in the shopping experience (Uusitalo 1998, 226). I add to this that stories and narratives of historical incidents are also parts of the aestheticization of distribution systems. They are a (micro) cultural heritage that needs to be cared for, for example, collected, restored, and circulated via the communications of organizations.

4.3.2 Relaxation

At the exhibition, consumers also interact with cafés, bookstores, restaurants, hallways, and corridors. For the unfolding of relaxation these premises are important. In the texts these premises are described as ‘transitional rooms’ or ‘preparation rooms’ that are needed in stepping in and out of other museum premises. In these spaces, consumers are surrounded with the images of past or future experiences. For instance, visitors go to the cafeteria when they have had ‘enough of the exhibition’ or feel that ‘too much is too much’. Cafés are perceived as a resting place and lingering is a typical action. Visitors seem to resist leaving the exhibition premises too quickly. They feel that it is nice to ‘taste’ the feelings gathered in the exhibition premises. This ‘tasting’ occurs for instance in a museum café. In the texts, the café is also described as a window at the everyday world that is ‘roaming outside’.

I decided to spend the rest of the stay in the museum café. Relaxing and conversing in the café is a very nice way to spend time. And all those goodies...” (Kiasma)

Besides, there's always the status of sitting in an art café. I'd rather be at Café Kiasma than the café in the building next door, because the former makes me sophisticated. (Kiasma)

A similar type of observation is present in the texts collected from fairs where restaurants and cafeterias serve as an important place to rest. At Habitare, a couple told me that after seeing the exhibition they ‘would go to the bar at the exhibition premises, drink some beer and get ready for listening to jazz in another bar located in the city centre’. This activity is again an example of the symbolic cleaning that needs to be done before heading to new types of experiences (cf. Belk and Mehta 1991; Valtonen 2004).

Some of the visitors explain that before seeing the exhibitions they need to have something to eat or otherwise they cannot concentrate on the exhibition. This is why they go to the cafeteria before entering the actual exhibition zones in museums. After eating something they feel more ‘charged’ and ready for the art experience. Bookstores are also places where one can find out more about the artist presented in the exhibitions and thus they provide an opportunity to prolong the art experience. In addition, they also serve as transitional places existing ‘in-between’ in which the visitor enters to spend some time, maybe to buy souvenirs, and to get ready for going home (cf. Selänniemi 1999; Oldenburg 1999).

I plan to take some bread as a souvenir from here. (North Karelia)

After cafe and nice discussion I decided to visit the bookstore. It is one of those places in where I could spend hours. I read different art books, posters, post cards and all the stuff that is there. It is possible to find nice gift ideas there either for myself or friends and relatives And I am not obligated to buy them. It is enough if I sometimes got a chance to observe them. (Kiasma).

Mehta and Belk (1991) have studied the role of artefacts for consumers who have moved from one country to another. They suggest that possessions play an important role in the reconstruction of immigrant identity, and that home interiors contain a wide variety of objects that hold special importance for identity. These objects are significant because they remind people of their pasts – travel experiences, achievements, close relatives and friends – or because the objects are symbols of specific cultures such as religions or ethnic subcultures. Moreover, Mehta and Belk (1991) claim that in such societies that lack formal rites of passage, consumers construct their own rites by “cleansing” themselves from former possessions, undertaking the difficult journey of the physical move, and, after an appropriate liminal time (Turner and Turner 1978), acquiring possessions with new symbolic roles.

Transitional objects or “security blankets” provide comfort for infants separated from their mothers. Similarly adults may gain a sense of security from certain objects. Examples of these are religious objects and object used for preparing food. There are also new sacred sites, including such playful centres as Disneyland. The nostalgic motifs of these centres are designed to convey the visitor into a sacred time by evoking what Durkheim calls nostalgia for paradise (cf. Tuan 1979). Also, an important part of the tourist quest is to bring back a part of the sacred experience, place, and time. The objectified result of this is frequently a photograph or souvenir.

A souvenir may make tangible some otherwise intangible travel experience (Belk 1988). Thus, cherished possessions are not likely to be a random assortment of items that recall our pasts. Just as people pose for family photographs to capture the “good” (joyful) moments of their lives and then selectively edit the best of these into albums, people are also likely to treasure most those possessions associated with pleasant memories. These possessions are likely to contain objects such as newspaper clippings, medals, trophies and certificates representing past accomplishments, reminders of past romances, and souvenirs of enjoyable travel experiences. (Belk 1988). In the case of experiencing exhibitions, postcards, posters, books, brochures and even pastry are ties that keep the person connected to memorable experiences and people part of them.

4.4 Summary

To sum up, this chapter has described how the cultural theme of sensibility is present in exhibition consumption. In this chapter I have described how consumers experience and set free various emotions. From the texts I have identified three thematic entities that construct sensibility, namely poignancy, perplexity, and refreshingness.

Poignancy is constructed, for example, when the visitor interacts with the art works and the artist in art exhibitions, or meets culture and past experiences as in the North Karelian exhibition. Hence, exhibitions and fairs offer visitors a chance to experience various kinds of emotions. Examples of these are empathy and delight as well as negatively oriented feelings such as sadness and distress. Visitors appropriate the exhibition through emotional labelling. Moreover, they use technology for the purpose of appropriation. Through emotional talk persons and objects and even the whole exhibition become marked by consumers.

It can be said that exhibitions have a therapeutic effect on consumers similar to media spectacles such as public weddings or funerals. The Kiasma exhibitions and especially that of Palsa's works momentarily made room for talk about social problems, such as alcoholism, mental health problems or poverty in society. The North Karelia exhibition, in turn, provided an emotional space for going through feelings related to the Second World War and the traumatic evacuations that took place in many families originating from the Karelian isthmus. For older people, the exhibition provided an emotional space to go through feelings of longiness or of taking part in the war as a soldier.

Perplexity is present in interactions where the consumer comes across something unfamiliar. In perplexity, resistance is also present in the responding. Characteristic of this kind of resistance is that visitors do not accept everything at once but want to continue further elaboration and sense making. In the data used the theme of perplexity is especially present in consumer encounter with contemporary art. The perplexity is connected to the task of art to challenge and provoke people.

Refreshingness in an exhibition response is constructed when the consumer encounters certain enjoyable elements in the exhibition environment. In this study there are two sub-themes that construct refreshingness in consumer response. These are accessibility to peace of mind and relaxation. The symbolic meanings of the building and the ambience present in

the exhibition seem to be important for accessibility to peace of mind. In the talk concerning relaxation, visitors sometimes express their need to prolong the experience. The thematic category of refreshingness is connected to general well-being and pleasure of the visitor that may often remain unnoticed whereas poignancy and perplexity are more recognized emotional responses.

Table 10: Sensibility theme

Sensibility	Sub-themes	Topics, themes reflecting the content
	Poignancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with objects and people Emergence of strong emotions Empathy, distress, feeling good/enjoying; boredom Appropriation of emotions - Emotional labelling - Intensification of emotions through technology
	Perplexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with something not encountered before Astonishment - Posing questions; Trying to make sense/find explanation; Absence of rules, norms and other devices of interpretation Ambience - Toleration of uncertainty - Keeping alternatives open - Curiosity, admiration - Anger, frustration
	Refreshingness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with exhibition environment/premises Accessibility of peace of mind - Appreciating premises and ambience - The building as an art work - Freeing oneself: mental room for experiencing Relaxation - Postponing leaving and entering - Performing special activities e.g. buying souvenirs, sitting in the café, resting

In the sensibility account, the ideal experience is the *experience of elevation*. This particular experience may be present when the consumer comes across something beautiful, such as a design object, (in the data for example a certain type of lamp) or touching elements in a life history. Elevating emotions raise consumers above everyday life, and help them to enjoy and experience humanity in a deeper way. The excess type of experience in the sensibility encounter is the *experience of ambivalence*. This type of experience brings to light a divaricated attitude towards the things at the exhibition. An excess of confusion is difficult to tolerate, and following this also curiosity may be activated. The consumer as an agent may also be transferred from the emotional encounter to another type of encounter such as a progression related encounter where the urge to gather ideas and knowledge is central.

5 **PROGRESS THEME: GATHERING OF IDEAS AND KNOWLEDGE**

In this chapter I will describe and analyze the nature of the knowledge creation and cognitive state of experience that is present in exhibition consumption. Previous studies in consumer culture theory that deal with consumer innovativeness and creativity are quite rare. Hirschman (1980) has discussed the relations between innovativeness, novelty seeking, and consumer creativity. According to her definition, innovativeness is mainly about adopting novel products, whether they are ideas, goods, or services. 'On an individual basis, every consumer is, to some extent, an innovator; over the course of our lives all of us adopt some objects or ideas that are new in our perception' (Hirschman 1980, 283). Hirschman also acknowledges the importance of consumer innovativeness for market dynamics.

The basic notion underlying the construct of novelty-seeking appears to be that an individual is activated to seek out novel information through an internal drive or motivating force. Novelty-seeking can be further divided into two types, namely inherent novelty-seeking (the desire to seek out the novel and different) and actualized novelty seeking (an initiation of behaviours intended to acquire new information) (Hirschman 1980, 284). Creativity in turn is 'the ability to engage in productive thinking, namely the capacity to generate novel cognitive content'. Creativity is also required for problem-solving. Consumer creativity in turn is defined as the problem solving capability possessed by an individual that may be applied toward solving consumption-related problems (Hirschman 1980, 285-286). Moreover, Hirschman (1980, 288) proposes that consumer creativity is related to actualized innovativeness. The consumer acts in a innovative fashion when s/he uses a previously adopted product to solve a novel consumption problem (use innovativeness).

Knowledge is understood in this study as socially constructed. Moreover, it is continuously created and reconstructed in social interactions (Foucault 1972). This study is also inspired by the conceptualization of hobbyist knowing (practical knowledge or know-how) (Kotro 2005). In the previous study of Kotro (2005) hobbyist means the presence of the personal interest in product development. For example, the personal perspective and sports background are present in doing sports, talking about sports and turning sports into explicit organizational strategy and producing sports as an argument in marketing communications (Kotro 2005, 133). The knowing in hobbyist activities is defined as an

active knowing, and knowing and practice are intertwined. Moreover, it is like stepping into the frame of doing an activity over and over again. Hence, it is creative and generative in nature, which makes it possible to create something new. (Kotro 2005, 192).

My aim is to add to the above rather generic view more understanding of the social construction of new knowledge and ‘newness’ in the exhibition consumption. In the section I will describe my observations on the presence of creativity, innovativeness and knowledge creation in the process of exhibition consumption.

5.1 Creativity

Creativity related nurturing is an action that is connected to the idea of progress in consumer texts. This cultural theme is present when the consumer interacts with the objects, persons and things in the exhibition. Often creativity is connected to the actual outcome of a creative process for example an object or personal traits of an individual (cf. Csikzentmihalyi 1996). In the following, I will focus my attention on consumer nurturing/fostering of creativity during the process of exhibitions consumption. Nurturing of creativity is constructed through idea search and inspiration. In the sections below I describe this observation further.

5.1.1 Searching for new ideas

The theme of searching for new ideas is strongly present in the texts collected from Habitare furnishing fair. Notable is also that these themes are not present in the data collected from contemporary art exhibition and regional exhibition.

The good ‘new’

In the interviews collected from furnishing fair visitors report that they came into exhibition to ‘look for something new’. While talking about the ‘finding something new’, visitors name the actual material object that they were looking for. Examples of these objects are sofas, kitchen equipment (e.g. sink, refrigerator), and living room textiles such as draperies.

What gave you the idea to visit this exhibition?
The fact that we're going to move at the end of October (n).
Where are you moving?
We're moving to Tampere (w).
How does this exhibition help or does it somehow help you move?

Well, mainly because we're looking for a sofa suite, that's why we're here, we're planning to get a new one and we thought we might get ideas here (m). (Habitare)

Maybe that's why, to keep up-to-date, like. I've had the same furniture in my old home for ages, so that I'd like to see what is the new so-called 'trend'. Is that the word? (Habitare)

Places like this with all the ideas flowing, if you never see anything, everything is just inside your own head and it gets kind of 'lumpy' and places like this are an inspiration when you see something then you, you can apply different things in your head and that way maybe create something new. (Habitare)

Some of the visitors were only able to say that they 'are looking for something new for their home' or 'ideas to renew their home'. In the interviews visitors also describe what they achieve through the new piece of furniture. Based on the data it seems that the idea of renewal has a symbolic connection with people's life. Many of the interviewees are confronting or wanting to confront something new in their life. An example of this is an elderly lady who tells me that the outcome of redecorating one's home has a vitalizing effect on the whole person.

*Why do you think this [interior decoration fair] is needed?
I would think that at least for people like me, then there are those companies that get them. But I'm sure that for ordinary people the same things like for us, that they sort of get ideas themselves, even older people, and even those who have a so-called ready home - you notice that they really long for something new and fresh. It would cheer them up a little, too, to get something new. (Habitare)*

Other occasions in which people are ready to encounter something new are the situations when the family is in a new phase, for example a new family (young couple), or a family in flux, where a member had just moved out or a new member is moving in. Similar situations where reorientation is present are the planning of a new career for example as an entrepreneur or retiring from the current job.

The bad 'new'

In addition to seeking new things, resisting the 'extremely new' is also part of experiencing exhibitions. Based on the data, many visitors at the furniture fair possess conservative tastes. 'Avant-garde and minimalistic' furnishing is not preferred by many of these visitors. Instead, they prefer casual or even older (antique imitations) styles for furnishing their home. This conception of style also seems to be quite established since in redecorating they prefer small changes that are carried out by buying e.g. a new table cloth, curtains, or sofa.

When they talk about themselves they use expressions such as ‘ordinary consumers’ or ‘normal family’, and they want ‘something normal’ for their home.

What are your expectations about this fair?

I at least would say that, for my part, to see, for example, what the new colours are. Because they're so different from what I'm used to. Because I'm such an old-hand at home decorating. What are they, for example?

Well, for example these, what I'd call candy colours, one's a little green and they are really nice, but I guess you'd grow tired of them, I mean I'd prefer something safer, brownish, greenish, when you know that you won't have a chance to change them. So if I bought a new sofa, for example, I wouldn't dare get these new colours. Only because I don't have the money, I mean it would be great to rent one for a while, a different-looking sofa like a candy, if you could then exchange it for an ordinary one. (Habitare)

What is your overall impression of this exhibition? If you were to characterise it in a few words?

Pretty positive, in fact, because there doesn't seem to be any of that wacky stuff there's sometimes been so much of, things seem practical and sensible, things that people would buy, although I haven't really been looking at prices so much, what the price level is, so I can't say anything about it.

What do you mean by wacky?

Well the type of furniture where, for example, people our size won't fit and that would break under us or are so impractical that they are simply useless in a normal family. I guess they were designed by architects and interior designers playing silly games, trying to outdo each other in wackiness. (Habitare)

What is your overall impression of this exhibition? Am I supposed to characterise it in a few words?

At least this is in the end pretty chaotic. An awful lot of, so many new things, like, if you wanted something just normal it would probably be pretty difficult, easier probably to go to a furniture store. (Habitare)

In the search for new ideas, visitors negotiated the meanings between the ‘new’ that is acceptable for self-identity and the new that is perceived to conflict with their idea of a nice home. Linko (1998, 55) noticed in her study that making handicrafts is an important arena for self production, especially for women. She also noticed that while producing handicrafts or art the true private personality of the women taking part in the research had more room to flourish. This type of experience is often longed for by women because in busy everyday life and when taking care of family matters, their true private personality must be put aside. I noticed that for all the persons interviewed, furnishing is an important source of self production. It is a ‘dear hobby’ that helps to express one’s own ideas. The furnishing exhibition provides cultural resources that are useful ingredients to produce the self as one chooses (cf. Holt 2002, 83).

5.1.2 Inspiration

The idea of inspiration is also strongly present in the data collected from the Habitare furnishing fair. But what is inspiration? At one very general level, inspiration is something that causes, provokes, or forces the person to create, namely the catalyst for the creative process (Harvey 1999, xi). The dictionary meaning for inspiration is the following: 1) Drawing in of breath, 2) inspiring; divine influence, esp. that which is thought to prompt poets etc. and under which books of Scripture are held to have been written. 3) thought etc. that is inspired, prompting; sudden brilliant or timely idea. (The Concise Oxford Dictionary).

The first definition literally means an intake of breath. The second definition associates inspiration with the divine as well as truth. The Bible is an example of an inspired text. Also, many artists have drawn on this religious definition of inspiration and argued that that their work contains an essence of truth that comes from 'beyond' them. The third definition of inspiration emphasizes the suddenness and unexpected nature of inspiration. (Harvey 1999, xiii-xiv). In the following I will discuss how inspiration is constructed in consumer texts about exhibitions.

Making idea overviews

During an exhibition visit, the 'new' has not necessarily taken any material shape. In the texts consumers use expressions such as 'to look for something new' or 'I came here to see if there would be something here'. Some of the visitors also spoke about 'broadening of the idea world'. For visitors, exhibitions serve as an important source of ideas. To collect these ideas visitors make 'overviews' of things on show.

How would you describe exhibitions and fairs in general?

Difficult question...

Just with a few words?

Well, they like, they provide you with an overview and general idea of pretty much everything.

You get new ideas, see new colours and shapes and new ways of combining things and maybe an idea of future trends. (Habitare)

What do you expect from this fair?

Usually, big fairs like this only give you a vague general picture but afterwards, when you go to a DIY store or a furniture store or curtain shop, you find the special, different stuff. You get a general idea and trends. (Habitare)

There's really nothing exciting in fabrics, the new stuff is mostly in the shape of furniture and so on, it more than pleased the eye.

Could you give me an example?

It's really difficult to say, I was just so fascinated with the metal and these small, delicate details, these light and pretty things, balanced colours, you know, none of those shocking colours anymore, and we were talking on our way here that our own homes, you know, are pretty colourful, and how we would like a little style and tranquility and so on. (Habitare)

The production of an overview is metaphorically like the first definition for inspiration presented above. It is like taking a breath or drawing in air. Then as soon as an overview is present talk about inspiration begins ‘..I somehow became fascinated by this metal...’. Also the idea of the unexpected is present.

Having creative chaos and the emergence of Eureka experience

An essential part of being creative is to have a great number of ideas (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Some people visiting the furniture fair talk about ‘creative chaos’. Characteristic of this creative chaos is that exhibitions visitors have a lot of ideas in their mind. To describe this, they use metaphoric expressions such as ‘it is still spinning around in my head’ or ‘having a fuzzy overview that focuses at home’. In the following excerpt, a visitor explains that feasible ideas start to develop and take more concrete shape at home.

Yes it does but it sort of like is being processed still, I can't really say yet. But it does make things spin. (Habitare)

You said in the beginning that you are looking for inspiration. Were you inspired? How were you inspired?

Well for now at least, everything is still pretty chaotic, when you see so much at once, but I'm sure an idea will surface later at home, you know, I saw something and how to apply that at home. (Habitare)

I am really expecting ideas and revelations, and something new to try at home. (Habitare)

There is also talk of how ‘creative chaos’ is resolved by consumers. Not all ideas are fuzzy or unclear during the exhibition visit. After reading the interviews, I noticed that one of the most sought after types of experience is the ‘eureka experience’. At the furnishing fair data of this type of experience is described as encountering of especially interesting ideas or solutions that are useful for further development of the home. Momentariness or suddenness is also typical of this type of experience. This brings to mind the third definition of inspiration presented at the beginning of this section.

I suggest that the Eureka type of experience is a consumption experience that provides pleasure for furniture exhibition visitors. In consumer culture theory this type of experience

is often left unnoticed. Moreover, I suggest that consumer innovativeness is a more complex phenomenon than adopting novel products, whether they are ideas, goods, or services. This is especially because consumer innovativeness is connected with self construction.

In sum, new ideas are especially important for those who are moving to a new home, redecorating and repairing their home, planning a business, or studying or working in the interior decoration sector. Hence, interior decoration fairs can be culturally placed between the old and the new in life. People come to the interior decoration exhibitions when they are planning some kind of renewal in their life, whether it is a concrete operation such a moving or a more abstract phenomenon such as moving from one age group to another. In a way it seems that interior decoration fairs have a cultural role as a kind of ‘midwife’ for something new and for renewal in general.

Searching for new ideas and creativity are strongly present in the furnishing exhibition. In the North Karelia exhibition and in the contemporary art exhibition this theme is only vaguely present. For the North Karelia exhibition, one reason for this is probably familiarity. Most of the interviewees were from the Karelia region. It might be difficult to become inspired by something that is very close and familiar. For the case of contemporary art exhibition one reason might be that there were only a few art professionals (one art history student and one designer) among the interviewees. It is also possible for all cases that part of the inspiration came after the actual interview or writing of the essays at the exhibition premises or at home.

5.2 Expertise

Knowledge development is present in consumer interaction with the objects, persons, and things in the exhibition. I found two types of knowledge development activities characteristic to exhibition consumption in the different data sets. These types are 1) collecting knowledge and 2) reflecting knowledge. In the sections below I will describe the observations concerning these activities in more detail.

5.2.1 Collecting knowledge

I have further identified from the data two types of knowledge collecting practices, namely acquiring educational know-how and updating expertise know-how.

Acquiring educational knowledge

This type of knowledge creation is particularly present at the contemporary art museum but is not so important in the data collected from the furnishing and regional exhibition. The new knowledge that is acquired is used to ‘crack the code’ of contemporary art, to learn, and to gain better understanding. In the texts collected at Kiasma, consumers talk about their learning experiences. In the following excerpt a visitor tells about her experience by comparing it ‘to going to school’ and ‘doing homework’. The learning seems to occur through ‘short moments/flashes’ of comprehension. It is like ‘learning to understand gradually’. The new knowledge that is attained from exhibition experience is ‘carried from the museum into the other world’ and maybe later applied for some other purposes in everyday life.

I learned this time, I learned a lot again. A tour of a museum is for me like a lecture in art history or doing my homework, in a positive sense. Every time I try to learn as much as possible, to improve myself so that I can take as much of my experiences as possible and apply it elsewhere in my life. For example, let's say that when I go to the movies I want something much more entertaining, maximal experience without really thinking about what good it will do me later. So I spend a lot of time reading texts and take part in guided tours and so my experience today was quite rational and knowledge-based. (Kiasma)

The idea of acquiring ‘educational knowledge’ is also present in contemporary art exhibition visits when people talk about artist’s diaries. To them diaries are a means to enter the artist’s world. Consumers also say that an artist’s diaries serve them a possibility to hear the ‘artists’s voice’ and this way to get closer to them.

Palsa's diaries in the display cases were especially interesting. It would've liked to leaf through them and read more of them. Sometimes I couldn't finish a passage because I couldn't turn the page. It was good that they had chosen other stuff from the diaries than just rope and margarine. For example, I read about Palsa going skiing. The passages next to the labels that dealt with the work in question were interesting and provided insights to the subject. It was interesting to read what Palsa had wanted to say and express and about his thoughts on the subject. In many cases the description gave meaning to the painting. There could have been more diary passages. (Kiasma)

Moreover, in the contemporary art exhibitions consumers also prefer to read the information signs beside the art works, since they mediate additional information about art works to them. Contemporary art is often described in the consumer texts as difficult and sometimes even as beyond one’s ability to comprehend. This is why the information signs serve an

important role in increasing consumers understanding of contemporary art (cf. Uusitalo and Ahola 1994).

Finally, at the rear of the lower-floor lobby I saw a piece by Jaakko Veijola and Teemu Väättäinen, just looking at it did not provoke any great ideas, but after I had read the text next to the artwork, it was great to look at it from the perspective of the text. It gave me a sense of having insight even though I hadn't discovered the things mentioned in the text on my own. (Kiasma)

My question is answered by the piece 'Artists Dilemma'. Contemporary art is often difficult to understand and remote from daily life. The dilemma does not concern the artist alone but also the viewer. My dilemma continues as I wander to the interesting and somewhat frightening piece entitled 'Trust'. I understand it only after having read the accompanying text, the same as with many other works. I wish I could see art that I can understand without these texts. (Kiasma)

Previous research on art museum experiences has also acknowledged the knowledge-oriented encounter. Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990, 41-44) call it the intellectual dimension. Typical of this dimension is for example a problem-solving orientation, 'cracking the code' or revealing the artist's secret as well understanding the historical contexts of the work. Previous studies have suggested that visitors use their knowledge in social circumstances to show their status and amount of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). Uusitalo and Ahola (1994) have also identified the knowledge orientation as a dimension of art museum visiting. People come to exhibitions in order to learn about art. In the following two excerpts, visitors describe their encounter with art works in the exhibition with the help of diaries and information texts.

In the first room I noticed the showcase containing Palsa's diaries and sketches. Artists' diaries are always interesting because they are very personal in nature and this way they tell often more than the actual art works. (Kiasma)

I liked the texts (diaries) beside the art works. It is interesting to listen to/learn about artists through the texts while experiencing the works."(Kiasma)

Previous research has not discussed the learning of less experienced visitors so much. It is noticeable that in the texts there is a lot of talk about reading an artist's diaries. Visitors in the above excerpts position themselves more like students whose level of cultural knowledge is increased during the museum visit. The texts show that they often recognize the need to become more cultured. When talking about acquiring new knowledge, visitors do not make any critical comments regarding why a mere visit to contemporary exhibitions should make somebody more cultured. In the texts it is taken for granted. It seems that increasing one's level of cultural knowledge is in itself rewarding. It is like achieving

something or collecting some kind of knowledge 'capital' that is possible to take out of exhibitions to the other world. They even seem to have a bad conscience' for not having enough cultural capital, and thus visiting an art exhibition gives them 'relief from a bad conscience'.

Updating expertise know-how

Another type of knowledge development practice is connected with collecting information in order to maintain one's level of knowledge. This talk is especially present in the texts collected from the furnishing exhibition and regional fair, but scarcely present in the data collected from the contemporary art museum. The new knowledge required for updating is acquired by regularly visiting exhibitions and fairs and making longitudinal overviews of the area of interest. The aim is to 'compose a picture of the whole'.

By collecting new information and learning new things, it is possible for a visitor to stay an expert or become an expert in a certain field. This kind of knowledge is related to one's own occupation, hobbies, and general interests of many kinds. Some consumers seem to follow 'progress' in design (e.g. furniture) or art (e.g. certain artist) on a longitudinal basis. Consumers use expressions like 'so we know where we are we are/they are going', 'what has happened', 'line of development', or 'position oneself in a time continuum'. They make analyses (based on their experience) if any changes have occurred compared with last year/visit or even over a period of decades. The following excerpts are example of these:

What influenced your decision to visit this exhibition?

Perhaps it was seeing more or less the current trends and how art has changed in two years, I mean, is there anything new and...

Well, because I want to stay up-to-date and feel that I would miss out on something if I didn't come and we get a lot of foreign interior decoration magazines and stuff at school so I guess I want to compare and see if we're far behind or what, and how.

You mentioned seeing if there's something new, well, is there?

Has anything happened in two years?

Well, I'm a little surprised that in the end, there was so little new

These small, small ideas, here and there, like, but generally speaking, generally speaking there was nothing new really ... (Habitare)

So what is it that interests you about the boat fair?

It is a bit the same... I'm one of these desktop sailors because I've never had a boat of my own and I've gone sailing only once in my friend's boat, but that's precisely what makes me go there, the theoretical approach, not too practical, I'm not really going to buy anything and that's why it is interesting to me as a whole. (Habitare)

Common to consumer orientations in the above excerpts is that the visitors are contemplating developments in a certain field. Sandikci and Holt (1998, 318) argue that 'browsing' in a mall is a serendipitous search and product foreplay that are either pursued separately or intermingled. They also noticed in their research that mall shoppers are more purposeful than for example shoppers at flea markets (Sherry 1990) and focus on a particular category of products. This type of orientation is also present especially at the furnishing fair and regional fair. However, as the above excerpts show, 'browsing' in an exhibition context goes beyond the traditional idea of browsing, which is searching for suitable products for oneself. In the case of exhibitions, part of browsing consists of updating one's expert knowledge.

5.2.2 Reflecting and evaluating the quality of objects

In this section, I will focus on the talk centring on the practice of reflection and evaluation. It unfolds in the texts through two sub-themes, namely making evaluations against the background of one's own taste perception and making evaluations against the background of socially established knowledge such as traditions or folklore.

Evaluating quality against one's own taste

In all of the three different data sets, there is a type of talk that centres around an individual's own taste perception. In the individualistically oriented evaluation, personal liking/not liking is the basis of evaluation. Characteristic to this individual approach is that consumers talk in a straight forward manner and use expressions such as 'I don't like this'. In addition, the analytical approach is missing and the language used contains colourful metaphors and metonyms. In the following, there are examples of this kind of talk where consumers describe their encounter with the exhibition in this critical approach.

How would you describe the current trend in Finnish interior decoration based on this fair or in general?

Well, there is this new trend in interior decoration, at least in furniture, the heavier living room furniture, that they've returned to the 30s and the design of sofas and chairs is not very exciting, they've gone back to ugly, old and bad, I think it's a bad thing, I don't know what it is called - the style, but there was a similar style in the 30s and that's what the style is now and that's not good at all, these 'bedbug' sofas. (Habitare)

In furnishing exhibitions, consumers contrast a strange design by distinguishing between 'ordinary people' and 'strange design'. The 'too' strange or unpractical is not perceived as necessary at the exhibition because visitors identify themselves as 'ordinary consumers' whose taste is focused on more practical, non avant-garde furniture. Some of the visitors even express their feeling of relief or happiness because there is not so much 'strange', 'cold and hard style' furniture present at the exhibition.

Evaluating quality based on traditional and folklore knowledge

Characteristic to this approach are references to more abstract conceptualizations, and the actual evaluation talk is based on more institutionalized conceptualization of taste (cf. Bourdieu 1984). This approach is of minor importance at the contemporary art exhibition and the furnishing fair, but it is more important at the North Karelia regional fair. Characteristic to this kind of approach is that consumers distance themselves from the object. Their own taste is not emphasized as the basis for evaluation. Instead, consumers use more abstract expressions such as 'I am here to evaluate the branch', 'this is not aesthetically unpleasant', 'these do not give the right idea of the sector'. In this kind of response one's own taste is expressed in a more indirect way. This approach is similar to the distant and cool talk about contemporary art engaged in by art experts and men that Linko (1994, 184-185) found in her research (cf. Kant 1952).

What are your expectations concerning this fair?

Well, I didn't actually have any, Finnish trends are pretty conservative and bland, but Danes, for example, they have much more style. They know how to combine coziness with elegance, we have so much of this old sofa and three chairs thing, or just the same, that's about it. How about the Danes then?

They are good, they are good at shaping wood, I mean we sell them a lot of wood for raw material and they turn them into fine pieces of furniture. They often have this elegance and, well, like 'architecturalness' of some kind, at least that's what I think. I've been to fairs in Denmark and I also have Danish furniture, they are in my home in Spain. (Habitare)

Did the fair meet your expectations?

Well yes, more or less.

Ideas for improvement, would you have any?

Better food, they were tasteless, they don't give you a good idea.

What are real traditional foods then?

We would've liked some Karelian meat dishes and...

How about baked foods?

Well they did have Karelian pies - pirogs but not proper ones, greasy and salty, hand-made. (North Karelia)

In this approach, the consumer distances himself/herself from the object of evaluation whether it is contemporary art, Finnish furniture design, or traditional Karelian food. The

basis for the criticism is produced by referring to the knowledge that one has of the sector.

Also, one's own expertise in the branch is a subject of discussion. This is done for instance by referring to one's education, or hobbyist knowledge, for example following developments in the sector for many years. Referring to the rules and norms of a particular culture is especially apparent in the texts collected from the North Karelia regional fair. The people who referred to rules and norms are people who originated from that geographic area. Previous research has identified norms and normative expectations in particular fields of culture (Holt 1995; Jyrämä 1999, Sorjonen 2005).

The 'proper' ways of practicing Karelian culture are in a way guarded by different types of gate keeper associations such as the Regional Council of North Karelia. In the data, consumers describe their awareness of the dominant rules. In the following examples, visitors discuss the nature of the food that is sold at the fair. In these discussions, they often refer to the rules and norms based on their knowledge of tradition (Karelian culture). One type of normative expectation is that the authentic Karelian food is handmade/homemade. In the case of the North Karelia exhibition, visitors contrasted for instance, hand-made products and industrial products. Hand-made products are considered authentic whereas souvenirs and industrially made products are not preferred.

What did you expect from this exhibition, as you decided to come and see it?

Well, something more genuinely North Karelian; I was expecting baked things and so on, but I think they were all factory-made the foods and all, and the handicrafts were not very original either, although some of the things by the younger ones were OK. (North Karelia)

Generally speaking, what kinds of emotions or thoughts did the exhibition provoke in you?

Well, we came to see the North Karelia we know, but on the other hand, this was a bit of a disappointment.

How do you mean?

Well, all this junk, just ordinary souvenir junk.

What would you have preferred to see instead of the junk?

What were your expectations about this fair when you decided to come here?

Well, I guess something a little more original. Something more like handicrafts or something, I think those are sold at every market. (North Karelia)

What about something to take home?

Bagels.

Yeah, bagels, which were not what I thought they would be.

What was wrong with them?

Well, they're not the same one's I've gotten from Polvijärvi, they weren't the same, I think they were a little like them, but no.

What is it about them then, do they taste different?

They taste completely different, dry, like that, not fresh, and they melt in your mouth, too, (the real ones). They have a bit crispier crust and they are really soft. (North Karelia)

The authentic products that the visitors especially miss are handicrafts and grocery products.

At the opposite pole of these products are industrially made food and souvenirs that visitors simply call '

The authentic products that the visitors especially miss are handicrafts and grocery products. At the opposite pole of these products are industrially made food and souvenirs that visitors simply call 'trash'. The above discussion is in a way similar to the struggle about norms and rules for proper practice in the art field. These fields can only exist when there are agents who share the same norms, values, and beliefs (Bourdieu 1984, Jyrämä 1999; Ahola and Jyrämä and Vaitio 2004). Also, the experience industry can be understood as a field that is divided into subfields. Examples of the subfields are the field of art, where the field of contemporary art is a further subfield, food/cooking industry (subfield national/traditional/regional food), and industrial design/handicrafts industry (subfield the furnishing industry).

Also, some of the consumers adopt/learn or are aware of the dominant rules, norms and beliefs of certain fields (e.g. professional or semi professional as in hobbies) through education or practice (e.g. observing others or practicing/doing the core actions of the sector by themselves). For instance, if you your family background is in the North Karelia region, you may have gained information (through relatives, eating or preparing it yourself) about the proper making of certain traditional food. You have knowledge of the rules and norms. The same is true with other industries/fields. If your favourite hobby is collecting contemporary art, for example, you have adopted the norms, values and practices of the particular field. At the regional fair, consumers were more in the position of experts or critics who are evaluating the experience offer.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has described how the cultural theme of progress is present in exhibition consumption. In this chapter I have described how consumers gather ideas and knowledge. Here progress means a mental/cultural movement forward. Visitors strive to achieve progress in different arenas of life. I identified two sub-themes through which consumers communicate progress. These are creativeness and expertise. The sub-theme of creativeness is connected to consumer self construction. New ideas and inspiration are implemented in the consumer's own life. Especially creativeness as a theme is present in the data collected from the furnishing fair.

In the theme of expertise, the main topic is collecting knowledge for various purposes. Visitors may acquire new knowledge because they want to educate themselves and learn to

better understand contemporary art. Moreover, visitors may gather new knowledge because they want to update their knowledge of a certain industry. Another reason to acquire new knowledge is because consumers want to test their own knowledge or even challenge somebody else's knowledge of a particular cultural artefact. A summary of progress themes are presented in table below.

Table 11: Progress theme

Progress	Sub-themes	Topics reflecting themes
	Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with e.g. objects and people - Nurturing creativity and innovations Searching for ideas - Finding new ideas - Searching for change, renewal (home, life) - Getting rid of old (items, thoughts) - Broadening the idea world - Making overviews Inspiration - Creative chaos - Eureka experiences
	Expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with e.g. objects and people Developing expertise Acquiring educational knowledge - Searching new knowledge, reading, concentrating, contemplating - Cracking the code, increasing general knowledge, learning, bringing experiences to the world of everyday life Updating expertise knowledge - Maintenance of expertise, keeping up with the developments, collecting information (longitudinal), composing a picture of the whole, increasing professional or hobby knowledge Reflecting expertise/Evaluating - Making reviews, describing (individual approach, distant approach), contrasting e.g. taste (good/bad, own/others; items, referring to norms e.g. authenticity/handmade as norm/industrial production)

The ideal type of progress experience is the *Eureka experience*. This particular experience happens in a situation of sudden occurrence of insight. The nature of insight may relate to creativity or learning during an exhibition visit. The excess type of progress experience is the *experience of chaos*. This type of experience occurs when a visitor has received too much information and this information is not yet processed. Excess information needs to be 'digested' and following such 'bloating' the consumer as an agent may be transferred from a progress account to an other type of thematic encounter, such as a fellowship account, because sharing with other people may help the visitor to organize the new information and ideas.

6 CORPORALITY THEME: TREKKING IN CHANGING TERRAIN

In this chapter, I will describe and analyze the role of consumer body and sensuous perception in the exhibition consumption experience. In this study, the consumer body is not understood as a passive object. Instead, I perceive the body as the very medium of being. In the investigation of the consumer body in exhibitions, I rely on the conceptualization of Merleau-Ponty (1962) in which he has often utilized the distinction between the physical body (Körper) and the living body (Leib). He points out that it is our living body that first perceives objects, knows its way around in the room kinaesthetically, and senses the sadness in someone's face. This occurs through sensuous perception. (Koivunen 2003, 159). The body is a medium through which the world is perceived (Kalanti 2006, 68). Conquering of the mind/body dichotomy calls for a more inseparable unity of mind and flesh and an understanding of the human body as conscious in itself (Koivunen 2003, 159). For example, in artistic professions the body cannot be treated as a passive object but as the centre of subjectivity, knowledge, and social relationships (Koivunen 2003, 159; Soila-Wadman 2002; Ropo and Parvinen 2002). In the following description of bodily meanings, I also rely on an understanding of body concept originating from tourism studies and emphasizing the social, temporal, and situational meanings of body (Veijola and Jokinen 1994, 6).

In cultural consumer theory it is generally understood that, for example while building a self-image and an identity, consumers engage in continuous processes that subject their bodies to change and discipline (Joy and Venkatesh 1994; Joy and Sherry 2003). Previous research in consumer culture theory has paid attention to consumer body and sensuous perception in experience creation. Joy and Sherry (2003) have discussed somatic experience and how body-related activities inform people in experiencing art. They argue that embodiment can be identified at two levels: the phenomenological and the cognitive unconscious. At the phenomenological level or cognitive level, people are aware of their bodies in their thoughts and actions. At the cognitive unconscious level, sensomotor and other bodily oriented inference mechanisms inform their processes of abstract thought.

Previous research has, for example, investigated the extraordinary individual experience of sky diving. In order to perform well in skydiving, an individual must have special bodily talents and a high level of self-control and discipline (Celci, Rose and Leight 1993). Previous research has also investigated the role of bodily activities in extraordinary

experience in team river rafting. In the extraordinary team experience consumers need not invest so much individual bodily effort, but more teamwork effort instead.

In this study, my attention is directed toward the ordinary or everyday type of bodily experiences. Ordinary bodily²⁴ activities are often put in the background and left unnoticed. Still they are one of the most necessary parts of experience creation in the exhibition milieu. In this chapter I investigate the lived consumer body as text, namely how it is represented in the textual data. In the following I will discuss how bodily related actions are present in the experience creation in an exhibition environment. I will especially focus on how the mobility of the body, territorial questions, and sensuality are negotiated in the text.

6.1 Movements

At exhibitions, visitors encounter the material premises. It is in these types of interaction that the sub-theme of movement unfolds. The idea of taking the exhibition premises into one's possession through particular types of movements and negotiation on territory-related themes is characteristic of talk about movements.

6.1.1 Moving around and mapping

In the data order, being lost, making stops, and resting are emphasized in the appropriation of premises. It is through these activities that consumers take the exhibition area into their possession. Previous research in consumer culture theory has also discussed consumer movements in the exhibition space. Joy and Sherry (2003, 273-274) concentrate in their analysis on consumer preference regarding moving freely in exhibition space. Peñaloza (2001) in turn describes consumer touring of merchandize booths from the observer point of view. In her analysis, she focuses on describing the actual categories of booths (e.g. product categories and consumer meanings related to the products) and describes consumer movement very little.

The data shows that visitors have certain ways of moving around the exhibition premises. These excerpts below are examples of the ways in which visitors describe their ways of taking the exhibition area into one's possession.

When you walk around in the fair, how do you find the most interesting places? There is so much here..

I zigzag through it, you know, and then have an overall look to see what I'm not interested in and what comes along or I don't really read the stands, I mean if I had had less time, I would've just gone to the interesting stuff but then I walked through it and got like a general idea. (Habitare)

When you visit fairs, how do you move around, how do you find what interests you and do you have a clear plan?

Well, we do go through everything, we've developed a certain route at boat fairs so that we walk the aisles in a certain order and then when we see something interesting, we stop and have a closer look. (Habitare)

In the data gathered from exhibitions visitors use metaphorical expressions to describe their mobility in the premises. Examples of the metaphors describing these movements are 'criss-crossing', 'going in order', 'raking' and 'circling' or 'circling around'. It seems that because of the presence of these verbs a special type 'mobility culture' is part of experiencing fairs and exhibitions. 'Raking', 'going in order' and 'circling around' represent the precise ways of experiencing whereas 'circling' and 'criss-crossing' are less exact.

Multiple composition of order

Previous research has pointed out that in art exhibitions people often choose their own trajectories even though designers and curators try to impose on them their suggestions for moving around in an exhibition. This is because from the curator's point of view it is important to learn about art and experience art in a certain way. Without achieving these goals a visit to a museum would be somewhat meaningless. (Joy and Sherry 2003, 273-274). In the data collected from the contemporary art exhibition, many visitors perceive the practice of moving in order an important part of producing the exhibition experience.

I took a brochure from the brochure rack in the lobby with me because I thought it would be really confusing and I hoped the brochure would give some directions, which it did give in the end. (Kiasma)

I moved fairly systematically in the galleries not to miss anything. The display cases in the middle of galleries sometimes disrupted this. ... I remembered even the small details. Even now I'm afraid I may have missed something when I went from the fourth to the fifth floor. The signs telling where the exhibitions continue and which direction to take should be clearer. (Kiasma)

The visitors report that they are afraid that if they do not move around in the exhibition in a certain order they may miss something interesting. One explanation for this might be that the actual exhibition is more interesting for them than merely wandering around in the museum's facilities. Moreover, some of the visitors are rather inexperienced in contemporary art consumers and need guidance.

In the Habitare data, the informants report that they do not make any special plans regarding how to proceed in order to see everything that they wanted to see in the exhibition. However, they report that their aim is to see as much as possible, or at least glance on everything and move around in order. However, some of them admit that in practice seeing everything, in order is 'not possible'. Nevertheless, some informants say that over the years they have developed a special way of moving in the exhibition, and some visitors have the habit of visiting the exhibition site twice in a couple of days.

How do you move around in an exhibition like this? Do you follow a plan and pick out specific things or systematically everything?

We tried going through everything, but when you, but when you knew there was something interesting to see somewhere, you immediately knew that's where you're going and, well, I think that we pretty much tried to go and see everything, it's a different matter, what we saw, we spent more time looking at some products than others, yes I think we saw everywhere at least briefly. (Habitare)

In the North Karelia data, talk about order and systemacy is not present. However, some visitors report that they first walked quickly around the exhibition premises e.g. to see if any acquaintances were present.

Getting lost

The meanings centring around the topic of 'getting lost' in exhibitions has not been discussed in the previous research concerning exhibition consumption in the area of cultural consumer theory (e.g. Peñaloza 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003). In texts collected from the Habitare furnishing fair and contemporary art museum we can find talk about 'getting lost'. According to the data it seems that the cultural meaning of 'getting lost' is close to the idea that the consumer accidentally misses something important. The following excerpts from the Habitare and Kiasma data describe this situation.

In my opinion there should, in the first place, when I think about my son's stand, I mean I could hardly find anything there. There was a guide, whose instructions were totally wrong; you have to take the trouble and find out where everything is, although there are the letters a, b, c and d on the floor, it's easy to get lost here if you start looking for something specific. Otherwise everything was totally OK. (Habitare)

I usually make the rounds one at a time. Not because I am systematic or pedantic but because then there's less "danger of getting lost" and I won't miss parts of the fair. (Kiasma)

Based on the data, it seems that 'getting lost' is like losing the track of movement. Exhibition visitors are like tourists who want to see all the interesting places. In addition, the

Kiasma building represents an (architectural) art work for some visitors. Following this, visitors must have the ability and knowledge to read the building as well. This means especially the codes of architecture. The idea of reading the building and forming a mental map of the building is present especially in the texts in such expressions as 'danger of getting lost' or 'rambling' when the visitors were talking about the building itself.

The aim not to fall off the track of movement reminds also the idea present in the 'moving pavement' that was in use in the World exhibition in Paris in year 1900. According to Kalanti (2006, 42) this pavement was 3,5 kilometres in length and there were alternatives of speeds available. This track took visitors through the exhibition just like objects on the assembly line. For visitors the track made a movie type of experience of the city possible because visitors were distanced from the physical movement of walking. Moreover, it was possible to see sceneries from the track as long as one stayed on it. If one stepped out of it then the feeling of movement was turned into different type, that of walking.

Based on the texts it seems that getting lost might in some cases also reflect the lack of knowledge concerning contemporary art. Following this, part of the 'getting lost' is transferred to the building. Museum is perceived as an art work and the visitor needs information to understand the encounter with the art and the building. Another meaning that is linked to the idea of getting lost is the fact that consumers feel irritated when they cannot find their way in the exhibition. In the North Karelia data, getting lost is not an important feature. One reason for this is probably that the premises (Senate Square) are small in size and well known for most of the interviewees. Moreover, the frame of experiencing (some interviewees said that the place resample a regular marketplace) is familiar. Everybody knows how to move in a 'marketplace'.

Joy and Sherry (2003) have noticed that art museum visitors expressed resistance towards the curator guidance of movements in museum space. Based on my analysis this is partly true. If visitors emphasize the 'wandering' part of museum experience then they do not want to be guided so much during their museum visit. However, if the visitors emphasize experiencing the actual art works and learning art as well as 'seeing as much as possible' then they to some extent prefer to experience 'in order' and need some guidance in doing this.

Stopping

In the Kiasma and Habitare exhibitions visitors say that every time they see something interesting they stop and watch more closely. I have named these ‘interest stops’.

*What did you do during your visit to the fair? Were you able to locate all the interesting stands and events at this fair?
We just wandered around.
When one of us has been especially keen on seeing something, then we've stopped and filled out these raffle forms and we didn't plan ahead in anyway. (Habitare)*

However, while moving in the exhibition premises the crowd moving around sometimes influences how visitors are able to move around in the servicescape. A visitor is also sometimes forced to make unwanted stops. In some of the excerpts visitors describe their movement in the exhibition area by the expression ‘following the crowd’ and making ‘obligatory stops’. It seems to be rather irritating for visitors ‘just follow the crowd’ and lose the chance for independent continuous movement. In some of the excerpts, visitors tell how they took shortcuts because there were so many other visitors.

*How do you move around in the hall over there? Do you follow a plan and pick out specific things or systematically everything?
Well, right now we had the first hall, we went next to the wall and started from there... except that since there seemed to be so many people here we sort of passed the area by (mn).
(Habitare)*

Another important part along the continuous movement in the exhibition space is the making of resting breaks. In Habitare texts visitors tell how they stop and sit on the benches, have a break to enjoy ice cream or simply to watch people stroll by. It seems that the additional services such as café have an important role also as places of rest.

Yeah and then there was this event, in addition to the theme that they have here, you sit and maybe eat and there are several different, I guess, elements there. (Habitare)

*Didn't anything bother you about the fair as a whole?
No, there was nothing like that, when the place is so big and roomy and you can sit down for a while when you want. (Habitare)*

The role of stops varies between different exhibitions. For instance, in Habitare it seems possible to have breaks either by sitting in the benches or visiting restaurants. Visiting restaurants is also possible in the end and in the beginning of the visit. However, it seems that in art museum the breaks are made most often in the beginning or in the end of the visit. One reason for this is the architecture of the building that ‘forces’ visitors to act this way. Visitors do not report that they had been sitting on the benches situated in the museum halls.

In addition, having breaks had more substantial role (reported more often) in the art museum than it did in *Habitare* or North Karelia texts. It seems that visitors searched counterbalance for order and concentration in the relaxation that occurred in the café. The café and other similar resting places are an important part of the experience production. Cafés seem to be places for ‘after exhibition’ activities.

Saving energy with the help of exhibition design

Design has an important role for visitors because it saves them from unnecessary movements and too early fatigue (too low energy). In this section fatigue seems to be result of excess amount of movement. Good design saves scarce energy resources in the continuous movement around exhibition premises. Designing thematic entities is important for the production of pleasurable experiences. This brings ‘order’ in experiencing. Visitors especially prefer grouping objects and using signs. In *Habitare* visitors appreciated thematic entities because these help them to grasp the nature of whole exhibition.

*What is your overall impression of this fair?
What we'd like is a little more grouping, although we did get the feeling and talked about it, too, that in some places it was a bit of a muddle and especially the AE hall or whatever it is on the other side over there, it was pretty dispersed, like you'd expect textiles to be in one place together and certain types of furniture in a certain corner. (Habitare)*

The exhibition was nicely divided into different rooms, which prevented the variety from becoming a mess. (Kiasma)

Thematic entities are also important in the contemporary art museum as the above excerpt shows. In *Kiasma* the chronological entities helped visitors to concentrate better on art and offered them a way to get to know the artist, Kalervo Palsa better (from earlier age to his death). Joy and Sherry (2003, 273) have made an observation that art museums offer visitors freeness from relentless pace of everyday life and chronological time. My observation is that even though visitors wish freeness from one time system (e.g. working hours) they simultaneously wish to be connected to some other time system (e.g. personal history). It is difficult for consumer to get out of temporal system (cf. Valtonen 2004).

Information signs placed in the exhibition premises are also important. Mostly this is because visitors want to avoid unnecessary walking around in big exhibition halls. In addition, they wanted to see as much as possible as easily as possible. For visitors it is confusing to find odd objects in ‘wrong’ places in the exhibition hall they have entered.

Well, the way it is, if possible, they could organize it more, so that it wouldn't be so random, it was pretty unfortunate with textiles and rugs, for example, amidst the toilet fittings. (Habitare)

Do you have any suggestions for improving the general appearance?

How would you describe these exhibitions and fairs, for example, comparing them to other events? Is there some particular way, maybe a metaphor?

I really can't, I haven't thought of it like that but I think it is nice to be in a place with a lot of people, a lot going and so. Being social in general.

What is it, when there are lots of people around, what does do you get from it?

Damn nice to see different kinds of people and I don't know how, like I said, to think of it like that, what the point is, but at least I really enjoy being here. (North Karelia)

It is noticeable from the excerpts that an overly 'difficult' building or other localities can cause stress for the visitors. Visitors prefer easiness and like to be entertained, not troubled. It seems that visitors are trying to avoid fatigue and keep their bodies alert for experiencing. Of course is not possible for visitors to achieve endless alertness.

6.1.2 Territory: Intermingling with other people at an exhibition

In exhibitions, one encounters other people; one is surrounded by them and mingles with them. It is in these interactions that the sub-theme of territory unfolds. Visitors emphasized that they get good vibrations from other people, as well as, as for example by observing them from distance.

Getting vibrations

This theme is present in all three data sets. In the North Karelia data people talk about mingling and 'getting good vibrations from the people around'. The position that the consumers take/have in mingling is similar to the celebration position. By vibrations consumers mean good emotional 'vibrations' that make them feel good and help them to get into the right mood. These mystical vibes seem to travel between people. People are like mirrors that reflect the good feeling around. Visitors describe how they are able to 'read' from the bodily gestures and facial expressions whether other people are in a 'good mood' or share the same kind of 'relaxed, open-minded and positively oriented attitude' that is a valued cultural characteristic in the Karelia region. In that region being social, talkative and easy going is highly valued.

How would you describe the atmosphere here?

It's just so happy and nice and like I just said, the Karelians are wonderful people, so happy and open. (North Karelia)

What other events are you interested in?

Well, for instance, boar fairs. Events at the Fair Centre.

What brings you to the Fair Centre?

Several events that have to do with an interesting theme, you get all that. A lot of information and there's always enthusiasts. It's usually the atmosphere.

What is the atmosphere like?

I don't know how to describe it; it's what the enthusiasts make it, just like it is here.

You mentioned the enthusiasts under the same roof, how important is that? What role do the other people play in the event?

Usually, if information is what you want, that's what you get, you can ask people, find the kind of folks who want to answer. (Habitare)

People also prefer to 'hang around with and among other people'. Characteristic of this is that people can be relaxed and choose whether they want to stay somewhat away from the crowd or actively make contact.

What makes it a wonderful event?

That you can just be. (North Karelia)

Other people can also serve as ornamentation at an exhibition. In the following there are examples of this kind of talk where visitors explain the importance of other people in 'filling the place' but not in being an object of active interaction. This applies both to other visitors in the exhibition area as well as to the serving personnel. The good manners of other people are part of an enjoyable exhibition experience.

In my opinion, in the case of events like this, it's always good if there are a lot of people because it would be pretty miserable walking around by yourself, seeing people and some of the other visitors, but I'm not interested in them, I'm more interested in the fair than the people, just because of my job, I see enough of people in my job without having to come here to find company, I'm just interested in what they have here. (Habitare)

No, I think it is pretty peaceful and so on here, the crowd here, I think it is pretty positive, the people have a little class. Don't you think? Yes, no, there are no, it is very peaceful here, well-behaved people, the kind that like places like this. (Habitare)

Uusitalo (1998, 220) says that consumption is also a structuring force in that it intermingles with production, especially in the service sector. Consumers who stroll in shopping malls or exhibitions are an integral part of the consumption experience of the other consumers. The above observation concerning exhibitions supports this suggestion.

Observing

In all data sets people describe how they observe other visitors from a distance. People observe how other people move in the exhibition space and sometimes they even listen to what they are saying.

What have you done here at the exhibition?

We just came, saw a few of our bosses (w). We're observing people.

What are you observing about them?

People we know in general and it's fun watching people (m). How they behave and what they're like (m).

We know so many people here and there are a lot who don't necessarily realize we're here; we start chatting the moment they see us (w).

Voyeurism (m). (North Karelia)

It's also fun watching the people who visit Kiasma. (Kiasma)

I came here. This is, like, a great place to hang around.

Why is that? There's music and you can watch people. [These two young girls were sitting on the stairs of the Helsinki Cathedral during the interviews] (North Karelia)

Besides other consumers, the personnel are also an object of observation. The general observation is that there are quite a few remarks about the personnel. This is an important observation because service marketing literature emphasizes the encounter with sales people or personnel.

What about the other people here, in general? How do they affect the atmosphere?

There seem to be so few of them now, people. It bothered me a little when, or struck the eye when the people at these stands, they usually just sit, bored-looking on the sofa and don't, like they usually do when you go into a shop - they immediately come up to you and ask what you want, but there, they mostly just chatted or talked to each other. (Habitare)

In some of the texts visitors also describe how they themselves feel that they are observed from a distance by other people. This reflects the idea of social gaze that is constructed in social spaces such as public beaches or museums. People look at each other and know they are being looked at themselves²⁵ (Veijola and Jokinen 1994, 137-138). In the following excerpt there is a description of a situation where a visitor needs to pretend that s/he understands more of contemporary art than she actually does and how she is afraid that other people will notice her lack of knowledge.

Sometimes I try to fool myself. I play a game with myself. I try to understand the artworks better than I actually do. At least I try to look more interested and knowledgeable. That's what everyone else does, right? I can't let others see that most of the artworks at Kiasma are incomprehensible to me, can I? (Kiasma)

If you see somebody standing in the front of these peculiar works looking very concentrated your first thought is that they're playing at being a cultural person or somehow naive. (Kiasma)

The visitor (above) defines the more ‘experienced’ skilled art consumers as distant snobs. Even though he tries ‘to understand’ contemporary art he feels that he is left outside and that he is unable to fully grasp what is going on in the situation that he is observing. Based on the data, it seems that the motivation behind observation, in the case of contemporary art, is lack of knowledge and feeling of insecurity. People like to observe other people in order to learn something from their behaviour. In the case of being observed, the main point is to hide one’s incompetence.

Demanding one’s own space for experiencing

The question of territory is also part of the thematic category concerning lingeringness. The need to have optimal space serves the feeling of lingeringness. Altman and Chemers (1984, 120-124) say that territories also exist in different city spaces. Characteristic to these territories is that people do not necessarily like to let other people into their own territory, and that people like to protect the borders of that territory. The territorial borders are dynamic and often invisible in nature. Territorial struggle is produced through negotiation. In the Kiasma data the more experienced visitors are not so interested in observing other people at the exhibition. Rather, they seem to notice the visitors around them when they are distracted from encountering art works. In the data this is especially present when they talk about the noise that ‘the less experienced art museum visitors are producing’.

The only bad thing was the din in the lobby. It wasn't there now but especially on Friday evenings, when it's free, it has been annoying. A certain calm is part of museum visits and I hope the new young people (and older people, too, of course) visiting Kiasma will understand this. I personally am pretty strict in this respect. I want to see the exhibition in peace and quiet. (Kiasma)

Also the ‘loud babble’ that guides make may sometimes disturb the art experience. This is because then ‘it is impossible to make your own interpretations of the art work’. In addition, some visitors said that it is irritating if other visitors review and discuss interpretations and critics that they have read from the media. In addition, general gossiping in the exhibition halls of art museum seems to be totally irritating. Also, some visitors report that the habitus of other potential visitors was disturbing as in the following excerpts from the Habitare exhibition.

How would you describe exhibitions and fairs in general?

Disturbing (m).

I think there are too many people always. If it's in any way possible, it's a good idea to go when the professionals and VIPs are there, then it's pleasant (w).

Why is that?

Because of all these disgusting hippies, I don't mean you. You know, designer types... Overly competent people (m). (Habitare)

Was there something that disturbed you here at this fair?

No, no there wasn't, a few drunks passed me just there.

... and what's more about what we just talked about, that what was the most unpleasant thing, it's the bars there, they get too much, you know, too much space, and there were a lot of people, drunken people, that's not so nice, not a good thing, that's the downside of this.

(Habitare)

As we can see from the excerpt above the feeling of having too many people around often provokes anxiety and frustration in visitors. Visitors also mention that the excessive number of people around is annoying because 'then you must follow the crowd' and do not have an opportunity 'to step out of the flow of people'. On the other hand, for some visitors, the presence of others is insignificant, since they prefer to experience the fair by themselves.

Has something bothered you here?

All these crowds, like I said, simply too many people. (Habitare)

There aren't so many people at this time of the day; it's not so crowded. At the weekend, then it can be, if there are too many people, it's disturbing when you can't move forward and it's also hot. (Habitare)

For some visitors it was completely disturbing that there were a lot of other people at the exhibition. These people seemed to be happy with the 'caucus' that is formed of a spouse or one or two close friends. Characteristic of some of these people was that they explain in the interview that they are looking for information in the exhibition and are not so interested in the atmosphere and other people.

I don't think it's all that important; it's nicer to walk at your own pace and look around. (Habitare)

I don't think it's at all important. We just get on by ourselves here, looking at all the stuff (Habitare)

Sometimes other visitors are like shields against overly eager sales people and provide those visitors who prefer to be on their own an opportunity to 'wander around in peace'.

Or the only good thing about them is when the people working at the stands leave you alone and don't come asking questions as soon as they spot you, I'm the kind that likes to have a look and take my time and if I'm interested, I'll ask, but pushiness, that's not, you know. (Habitare)

The presence of other people is important to a certain extent. Fellow visitors help a person to get into the 'mood' and free themselves from the outside world. However, people also need private physical space for experiencing. This need seems to be strongest in the art museum but also visitors at the furnishing fair find it important for creation of pleasant experience. In these exhibitions people like to have room to experience 'in peace'. At the North Karelia exhibition, the need for room is the smallest and visitors liked to encounter other visitors and 'be close'. However, in general too many people can cause fatigue.

6.2 Sensuality

Sensuality is strongly present in exhibition consumption. In this section I will describe how consumer negotiation of sensuality occurs in exhibition consumption.

6.2.1 *Multiple ways to see: dominance of sight*

Exhibitions are visual places. Based on the data, it can be said that sight is the dominant sense in Habitare and Kiasma exhibitions. Visitors widely used expressions such as 'to see' or 'to watch' as synonyms for the verb 'to experience' or otherwise describe some part of the exhibition experience by means of verbs connected with seeing. The following excerpts are examples of the metaphorical usage of verbs 'to see' or 'to watch'. In the first examples, visitor 'see something interesting' in the exhibition. In these excerpts 'excess' and 'seeing a particular world of commodities' is produced with the help of the word seeing.

On the whole, I got more out of Kiasma than I did the first time and it met my expectations by provoking emotions and thought from one extreme to the other, but then that's what I expected it to do, in fact. At first I walked very slowly but then got numbed by the flow of images and started seeing only the most interesting ones. Maybe Palsa would need and deserve another visit. (Kiasma)

What inspired you to visit here?

Well, I'm interested because of the line I work in, especially water and bathroom related stuff, that sector, that's what I really came to see. (Habitare)

In the following excerpt, the visitor is talking about making the first impression while encountering the exhibition hall. In the description, the visitor is standing on the threshold of the exhibition hall and gets an overview of the exhibition. The verb 'seeing' is also used when visitors talk about the intensity of their experiencing.

When the sliding door opened, I got a lump in my throat. I knew what to expect beforehand but a quick glance around the gallery told that none of the works were likely to alleviate the initial shock. (Kiasma)

Palsa's expressive techniques are very powerful: strong colors, often simple shapes. The strong colors especially have a way of stopping the viewer, me at least. In Palsa's case the colors themselves were irrelevant... his subjects themselves stop you. Normally you let your gaze roam forward, across the works and a particular subject catches your eye. Now every work has that stopping effect. (Kiasma)

Another way of using the expressions related to the 'eyes and seeing' is to use the expression of to 'glance' at or 'to make overviews'. In the following excerpt, the visitor describes for the interviewer that his major goal in visiting the exhibition was to make an overview of the Finnish furniture branch.

*Are you interested in a particular product/product group?
No. I just came to get a general overview and, well, interested in that I'm waiting for Finns to take more interest in wood and especially plywood and its potential. (Habitare)*

Kiasma visitors also use the expression of 'picture overload'. This kind of situation is encountered by accelerating their walking pace and only checking the most interesting aspects with the 'fast-forward' mode.

At that stage you started feeling the number of things you had seen.... In other words, I had had enough of experiences for one day and just walked through the rest. (Kiasma)

*What is your general impression of the fair?
Well, it is pretty mind-numbing, you know, there are so many furniture manufacturers and it just somehow makes you numb. Of course, I myself didn't come to check them out really, but I have to say that interior design provides pretty elegant surroundings, you know. (Habitare)*

Another style of seeing that I have identified from the text is voyeurism. Consumers enjoy looking into the artist's life as in the following excerpt. However, voyeurism as a type of experiencing may also find its target in other visitors.

A video of taking down Getsemane was hidden inside red partitions. It's somehow enchanting; I stay and watch it for a long while. Perhaps I'm fascinated with the voyeurism, seeing something private about the artist, what he has written about in his diaries. I wonder if the woman on the video is Maj-Lis? (Kiasma)

Or observing the real contemporary art freaks who can meditate in front of some gas mask hanging from the ceiling for half an hour at a time, almost as if they were in a trance. (Kiasma)

In addition to the above described metaphorical expressions concerning the dominance of seeing, consumers also talk on a more practical level about responding to the visual elements of the exhibition. The appearance of exhibition stands is frequent topic of

discussion at the Habitare and North Karelia exhibitions. For visitors to Habitare, the appearances and design of exhibition stands serve an important role as 'eye catchers'. In the following excerpts from the Habitare fair, there are descriptions of how flower compositions attracted visitors to an entire stand. Consumers also enjoy the 'beauty' of the actual stands. Design with flowers and light colours are especially valued by consumers. Visitors also explain that they find small surprises in the stand design very pleasing.

Well, I guess I was fascinated by how some of them had made their stand using, like, a lie, so that you couldn't see the furniture at other stands and they wouldn't catch your eye, but that they had been sectioned off from each other. And we noticed that quite a few had paid attention to the way their stand looked, and it was pretty neat to see that there were, you know, a few important well-chosen and things that were justified in being there and not just millions of them. (Habitare)

*What do you think of the appearance of these stands?
Some of them were really great and mostly these stylish, plain things were great, but when there are all kinds of junk all over the place, at least I don't like the way they look. (Habitare)*

Consumers complain about obstacles to vision. Examples of these are an 'overly small widescreen' or a 'chair missing around the video' as well as 'other people standing in front of an interesting object'. In the North Karelia outdoor exhibition, some people perceived the stands to be dull and that there were no surprising elements present in the exhibition design.

*On the other hand, these stands don't seem to be particularly appealing, the way they look.
What would you do with them?
Well, probably something that has to do more with this kind of thing, I don't really know the culture [a make-up artist by profession and with the comment tries to insinuate that she doesn't know much about the work of window dressers].
How about in general?
OK, well, the thing is, the approach is very, you know, brochure style, or everyone has the same huts and the signs would be different if you made it a little differently. This is to a great extent based on either having something to buy or then you take a bagful of brochures. (North Karelia)*

Distribution of brochures and other goods from identical stands is not perceived as interesting from the consumer point of view. Some of the visitors even find this "unaesthetic".

In general, the excerpts above represent the hierarchical system of different senses and the dominance of sight in exhibition consumption. In this respect the way of experiencing exhibitions reminds a tourist's way of experiencing. The tourist experience is often described with the concept of tourist gaze or the idea of ocular-centrism (Urry 1990, 1995; Selännemi 1996). The sensory organization in general is dependent on the cultural and social order. The link between sensory organization and social order is also the basis on which the senses are hierarchical and can be divided into 'higher' and 'lower' ones. In the

Western tradition the higher position are granted to the distant senses (sight and hearing) and especially to sight. Common to the approaches emphasizing seeing and hearing as primary senses is the idea of evaluating from a distance. The contact senses (touch, smell and taste) are granted a lower status (Falk 1994, 10). In my data sets the dominance of sight is less overriding in the North Karelia outdoor exhibition. In the other two data sets other senses suppressed to a high degree. At least they are not extensively present in the text.

Rupturing dominance of sight

Traditional food from the North Karelia region in its many forms is perceived as one of the major attractions for visitors to the exhibition. Schmitt (1999, 64) talks about sense marketing that aims to appeal to the senses with the objective of creating sensory experiences through sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell. This ‘sense marketing’ provides an opportunity to differentiate between companies and products, to motivate consumers, and to add value to products. For the interviewees special kinds of food represent the whole culture. One typical example of the traditional Karelian food is a pastry called the Karelian pie or pirog.

Are you interested in some particular product, product group or service or what ever they are presenting here?

Well, in general, the snacks, you know.

Food, in other words, what about the food?

Well, because it comes from the other side of the border, so to speak, because it says sultsina over there, you know, you just have to try a sultsina. (North Karelia)

What did you expect from the fair?

Well, what I, they have all kinds of delicacies here, Karelian pirogs [pies], good food, fried vendace [a small freshwater fish]. (North Karelia)

Are you interested in a specific product or product group?

Well, especially these pastries.

Why is that?

Well, because we're from Karelia.

In general, Karelian food is also perceived as exotic even though it is of Finnish origin. Some visitors connected Karelian food with holidays. This particular informant originates from Western Finland, namely from Häme region where muikku (vendace) is also valued very much.

Well of course it is important, if you think of the fried vendace, for example, what he said he had had, well I don't think he goes to some supermarket to get them, so there's also that...

The vacuum-packed stuff, hardly, it's hard to believe it would be very good. So if you are looking for fresh things, it is the flavor and so on that you rarely get or maybe 15 years ago the last time, you know. Old memories and I mean something you've never tasted before. (North Karelia)

Tasting food is an important part of the exhibition experience at the North Karelia fair. Many of the informants are expecting more taste samples and feel disappointed because of the lack of them. In addition, consumers have also planned to take food home with them. In a sense food is a kind of souvenir for consumers.

What did you expect from this fair?

Let's say what it turned out they had, it was pretty much what I expected - to have a chance to try the local food. (North Karelia)

What would you like to have more and what less?

More food to sample, definitely. (North Karelia)

Now that you're leaving here, did this event make an impression? Will you think about it at home?

Well I thought I'd buy a loaf of bread, rye bread, and eat it in the beginning of next week, during that time at least, and I'm sure I'll talk about the fair with others who've been here.

Also, the quality of food is important to consumers. One major dimension of food quality is the authentic character of the food. In the following excerpt there is a description of the characteristics of authentic food.

What is it then that one can buy and give to you?

Well, it varies. Genuine local, Karelian traditional, it's a bit different from going to Stockmann's to get it. You can buy local rye flour, it's always a bit different. (North Karelia)

Visitors emphasize that tasty Karelian food such as the real Karelian pirog 'should be more salty and greasy' as well as handmade. Some of the food sold in the marketplace is called as 'caricature of authentic food' and this kind of 'food' should be thrown out of the exhibition. In the following there is a description of good authentic food. The 'bagels' that this lady has bought disappoint her, because they are not like those she is used to buying in her home village at Polvijärvi (in the North Karelia region).

Did you buy anything else except poems?

No and then food.

What about something to take home?

Bagels.

Yeah, bagels, which were not what I thought they would be.

What was wrong with them?

Well, they're not the same one's I've gotten in Polvijärvi, they weren't the same, I think they were a little like them but no.

What is it about them then, do they taste different?

They taste completely different, dry, like that, not fresh, and they melt in your mouth, too, [(the real ones)]. They have a bit crispier crust and they are really soft. These are crumbly, like they were stale. (North Karelia)

Veijola and Jokinen (1994, 134) argue that Holy Communion (breaking bread) and for example the Pork Fest in Spain have a common the idea of making the invisible visible. At church, people taste the wine and bread and at the Pork Fest they taste the meat and wine. Hence, the mythical and spiritual are experienced concretely and sensually. In church, it is religion and religious community, and at Pork Fest the national spirit and human bond that is made visible through food. I suggest that a similar kind of phenomena occurs at the North Karelia exhibition through eating Karelian food such as pirogs and other pastries. It is through the food that the Karelian 'spirit' becomes visible. At the North Karelia exhibition, an important part of experiencing is realization of the regional spirit and a human bond.

At Habitare, food is present in discussions of pleasant exhibition memories. Usually these memories originate from childhood. For example one visitor explains that her father used to buy her 'metrilakritsaa' (liquorice strings) or ice cream when she visited indoor and house exhibitions with her father. In the Kiasma texts, consumers talk spontaneously about the role of the café has as a part of the exhibition experience and appreciate the good food and pastry that are served there.

6.2.2 Background senses

In the following I will discuss the role of tasting, hearing, smelling, and touching in experiencing exhibitions. Tasting, smelling and touching represent the more carnally oriented side of the experience (cf. Shilling 1993). The data show the role of all these senses is minor compared with sight and visual experiencing. In the following excerpt, there is an example of the role of odour and smells, and how a nice smell is noticed and committed to memory.

*Do you have something particular in mind?
A lot of things, I'm sure, but there's a boat there and then there was a curious bellows they used to blow air into a fire and they were cooking something.
Somewhere close to the boat, you mean?
Somewhere there, yeah, I don't remember exactly. Maybe over there somewhere.
And you were watching it?
Well I didn't stop to watch. But it smelled pretty good. (North Karelia)*

In all of the exhibition milieus sound is understood as more like wallpaper. Alasuutari (1993) has used the metaphor of 'wallpaper' in describing the role of radio in everyday life. In his study people perceived that radio is important as a 'background' for example when they pursued their everyday activities. In the interviews of the present study, some visitors responded that they enjoyed much of the folk music sounds in the North Karelia exhibition, because 'it lifts the spirit up' in the exhibition arena. In the excerpt from Kiasma data a visitor tells how sound and image combine to provide an interesting experience.

Esko Tirrinen's painting Morning is dreamlike, dreamy. While I was looking at it some annoying lady doll was blabbering away. (Kiasma)

However, in the Kiasma data, there are also visitors who complain about the loud babble in the halls that disturbs their concentration. Joy and Sherry (2003, 275) have made a similar type of observation of curator presentations.

In the following excerpts visitors from North Karelia exhibition miss the 'buzz of conversation' that they perceive to be an important part of Karelian culture and an enjoyable ambient element. Previous research has noticed that in some cultures and professions, the hearing is an important element (cf. Koivunen 2003).

Is there something about North Karelian or Karelian culture they didn't have here or something they should've had more?

Well, Karelian people are really talkative, there's not much of that here. Not even at the stands there. I didn't stop to talk because where I bought this food they were very busy and you couldn't really do that. (North Karelia)

I sure like to look around here and listen to people talk and they meet people from North Karelia, I'm sure this is very important for many, seeing people they know (f).

What about all the hubbub?

It's not disturbing for others (f).

At least I enjoy a little hubbub (m).

Why do you enjoy hubbub?

Because it's so quiet at home (m).

It's like a nice balance?!

Well, yes, and you can't have the radio on so loud (m). (North Karelia)

The sense of touch is seldom present in consumer texts collected from three exhibitions. In the data gathered from Kiasma, touching is mentioned only once. In that case a visitor is talking about an art work which is an example of how touching is 'bad' because it soils the artworks and wears them out. In previous studies touching has been connected with cognition. The combination of these helps the art consumer to understand art more profoundly (Joy and Sherry 2003). In the data collected from North Karelia, none of the

consumers talk about touching something at the actual exhibition site. At Habitare, there are only a few interviews where touching is present in the texts. In all cases the encounter is constructed as an extraordinary happening.

And we were thinking again about the different stands, what tricks they use to make people remember them and Marimekko's was wonderful, there was much more light than anywhere else and then there was this stand and we can't really remember whose it was but it had sand on the floor...!

When you walked around there you got this 'aha' experience that hey, there's sand on the floor here, you felt like taking your shoes off and walking around...! (Habitare)

The horseshow, in the sense that my mother has been really interested in horses and then I was like, crazy about horses and at least I had a chance to touch one for the first time. It was the hall, I've never seen horses in a place like it, when they ride them in a hall and jump - it was just great. (North Karelia)

In sum, after analyzing the three sets of data, I conclude that seeing as a sense is present in most of the texts. In the North Karelia data taste is also present because of the central role of food in the exhibition and the culture presented. The other senses seem to be of secondary importance. I find this an important observation since the books on experiential marketing (e.g. Schmitt 1999) seem to stress that experience producers should pay more attention to the multi-sensory character of exhibition services. However, I argue that there seems to be a culturally produced 'hierarchy' concerning the role of senses in the consumption of experience products. The primary role of seeing in exhibition consumption is rather obvious because of the characteristics of exhibitions (e.g. staging something). Moreover, the dominating role of seeing is also present in speech since there are many different ways to classify seeing²⁶. There seem to be many words for this familiar way of experiencing but not many words for less familiar experiencing. This observation is similar of the well know example of the Eskimos, who have many words for describing different types of snow (Hall 1997, 22-23) and Finns many words for describing the sounds of water.

6.3 Summary

This chapter has described how the cultural theme of corporality is present in exhibition consumption. Above I have described how visitors 'trek' in the varied area of the exhibition premises. From the texts I have identified two thematic entities that construct the theme of corporality. These thematic entities are movement and sensuality.

In the exhibition consumption visitors appropriate the area through action that I call mapping movements. Characteristic to mapping activity is that it is usually done on foot.

Moreover, it is also characteristic that the rhythm is a composition of being in flow, making stops, avoiding getting lost, and resting. Moreover, in mapping action visitors negotiate their territory with other visitors in the same premises. The key topic in territorial negotiation is the appropriate distance between the experiencing individual and other people. How close are other people allowed to come? Other people are appreciated when they help the visitor to get into a good mood. However, visitors also wish to have own room for experiencing, and following this, visitors like to have some distance from other people. Too many people close to the experiencing individual can cause fatigue. Examples of these are that people run out of fresh air in the exhibitions premises or that the presence of other people makes the temperature at the premises increase.

Sensuality unfolds in the text through hierarchical structure and different types of motion. Seeing is the dominant sense in exhibitions. Other senses are often suppressed in the background. Movement is also present in sensuality. A visitor's gaze moves around in the exhibition in several different ways. Moreover, the hierarchy of senses fluctuates. This happens when other senses take a more central position in experiencing. The content of the theme of corporality is presented in the table below.

Based on the analysis, I propose the term of *corporeal touch* (kehollinen tuntuma) for increasing our understanding of the bodily encounter in different environments. In the exhibition context, corporeal touch is constructed of mapping movements and the use of different senses. Corporeal touch has often been neglected in studies that discuss exhibitions. I suggest that it is through corporeal touch that the visitor is connects with the exhibition environment. Moreover, the corporeal touch varies from person to person depending on their familiarity with different environments. It is also important that experiencing is easy.

Table 12. Corporality theme

Corporality	Sub-themes	Topics and themes reflecting the content
	Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interaction with material objects in exhibitions Moving around and mapping - Order - Getting lost, stopping, resting - Saving energy Territory - Getting good/bad feelings from people around - Other people as ornamentation and object of observation - Own space
	Sensuality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In interaction with material objects, people Dominance of sight/vision - A wide variety of ways to describe seeing; especially of moving the gaze/eye - Visuality important (talk about the appearance of exhibition stands and premises) Background senses - Talk about other senses rare

In the corporality account, the ideal type of bodily experience is the experience of *vigilance*. *experience* (valppaus). Characteristic of this particular experience is that all the senses are alert and open, and the body feels stimulated. This particular experience can be present throughout the visit, but high vigilance is often difficult to sustain. The vigilance type of experience comes close to the idea of trekking. In this kind of activity a physically alert human moves outdoor and conquers constantly changing environments.

However, the excess of corporeal experience, namely the excessive trekking, leads to the *experience of fatigue*. This type of experience occurs when the visitor has exhausted his senses or body. Exhaustion can occur in exhibitions because of an overly long journey in the premises, too many people being present, too little fresh air, too hot a temperature, as well as too many things to see. The experience of exhausting one's physical powers needs to be prevented and consequently the consumer as an agent is transferred from a corporality encounter to another type of experience such as relaxation, during which visitors are able to

restore their equilibrium merely by sitting in a transitorial space such as a café from where it is possible to slowly transfer to other locations either inside the actual exhibition premises or leave the premises.

7 FELLOWSHIP THEME: CIRCULATING IN DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

In this chapter I will describe and analyze how the social state of experience, namely community and communitarian meanings are present in exhibition consumption. Previous research on consumer culture has paid attention to communal meanings in consumption. Examples of the topics present in these studies include the following. First there has been a discussion of the concepts of 'community'. Examples of these are consumption subculture (Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Kozinets 2001), brand community (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001), and consumption microculture (Thompson and Troester 2002) and the role of communities in creating co-operative consumer cultures. Second, the previous studies in consumer culture approach have discussed the role of mass media in the facilitation of the particular consumption cultures such as Star Trek (Kozinets 2001), natural health (Thompson and Troester 2002), Harley-Davidson (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), and the role of media in the enculturation of a dramatic worldview in high-risk leisure (Celci, Rose and Leigh 1993).

However, there are two particular types of discussions missing from the previous literature on the consumer culture approach. First, I have noticed a lack of discussion focusing on how the media are present in the circulation of meanings of artistically oriented products, and how consumers perceive the role of the media in experiencing this particular type of products. Moreover, I have noticed that there are rather few analyses that discuss the role of sharing artistic experiences with peers and fellow visitors. By sharing I mean the exchange of experience-related stories in face to face interaction.

Previous research discussing experience sharing in consumer culture theory can be divided into two categories. The first category discusses sharing as part of everyday practices. These studies include, for example, sharing of advertising experiences (Ritson and Elliott 1999) and sharing of fashion brand experiences (Elliott and Leonard 2004). The second category of sharing consists of studies where the sharing takes place in a specific, arranged space. Examples of studies of social sharing are the sharing of a consuming fantasy in a campsite with the help of special language that has its roots in history and tradition (Belk and Costa 1998), or sharing taking place in brand clubs situated for example in particular club premises or in a computer-mediated environment (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001).

I add to previous studies my findings concerning the role of the media in the promotion of artistically oriented products. Moreover, I add to the previous research my findings relating to divisibility of the experiences. The thematic entity of fellowship unfolds in the data through the following two themes.

The first theme is called connectedness to publicity. This theme unfolds further in the texts through two sub-themes, namely 1) the media as marketer of art: triggering interest through making a fuss and 2) the media as charm school: observing model experiences. The second sub-theme of fellowship is called divisibility and it consists of the sub-themes of sharing by immediate expressing and exchanging of experiences and reaching further back: the role of memories. In the next section I will discuss this observation in more detail.

7.1 Connectedness to publicity

People come across stories about experiences (or experiences related offerings) in the media. In this section I will first present an empirical example of how an experience-related meta-story is produced in the media. I will then discuss the meanings that are present in consumer texts concerning the role of publicity and the media in experience creation in the marketplace. The empirical observations are based mainly on the data collected from Kiasma. Based on the analysis, I suggest that the media are an important element in experience production in the marketplace. It is in this type of interaction that the themes of media fuss and model experiences unfold. From the consumer point of view, the media are produced both as a promoter of exhibition services and as a provider of model experiences of cultural services for people.

7.1.1 Production of a meta-story of the experience in the media

In the following description I base my analysis on the article headings. This is because people do not always read all the articles but only glance at the headings. The table presented below depicts the construction of the meta-story of the 'Resurrection' exhibition. This is exhibition from which the consumer essays were collected in autumn 2002.²⁷

Table 13: Examples of articles about the ‘Resurrection’ exhibition

No.	Date	Newspaper	Title	Topic/Text type/author
1	13.6.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kalervo Palsan laaja näyttely syksyllä Kiasmassa. (Extensive autumn exhibition of Kalervo Palsa's art at Kiasma)	Coming exhibitions
2	9/2002	Kuukausiliite (HS monthly insert)	Iloa ahdistuksesta Joy from distress	Helena Savela on Palsa
3	9/2002	Kuukausiliite (HS monthly insert)	Paha Palsa (Bad Palsa)	Panu Rätty on Palsa's art and life
4	9.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kalervo Palsa tulee nyt Kiasmaan (Kalervo Palsa comes now to Kiasma)	This week: Palsa
5	10.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Eroottisia kuvia: Japani ja Palsa (Erotic pictures: Japan and Palsa)	Marja-Terttu Kiviranta for the exhibition
6	11.9.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Palsa palaa rikospaikalle (Palsa returns to crime scene)	Samuli Isola on Palsa exhibition
7	15.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	'He eivät näe köyttä kaulassani' (‘They do not see the rope around my neck’)	Marja-Terttu Kiviranta for the Palsa exhibition
8	18.9.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Lapsiperheitä varoitetaan Kiasman Palsa-näyttelystä (Families with small children are warned about Kiasmas Palsa exhibition)	Tuomas Manninen on age limits to exhibition
9	6.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kiasman Palsa ei sovi lapsille (Kiasma's Palsa doesn't suit for children)	Public opinion
10	16.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Palsa töissä kolkko näkemys yhteiskunnasta (A cheerless view in Palsas's works of society)	Public opinion
11	16.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Palsa päiväkirjojen kautta (Palsa through diaries)	M-T. Kiviranta on tv program
12	16.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Palsa latalutui päiväkirjalleen (Palsa energized himself by writing his diary)	Linnavuori on tv program
13	18.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Abbakin auttoi koko Ruotsia (Abba helped all of Sweden)	News about public demonstrations concerning more positive attitude towards art in state budget
14	20.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	'Kalervo Palsan taide on rehellistä ' (Kalervo Palsa's art is honest)	M-T. Kiviranta on visitor performance in Kiasma
15	25.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Myytin takana (Behind the myth)	Column by Vesa-Pekka Koljonen
16	28.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Moraalioppaina Palsa ja Pasolini (Palsa and Pasolini as moral guides)	Kanavalla/Timo Peltonen
17	30.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Nykytaide on elämys (Contemporary art is an experience)	Public opinion

In the following I will describe the nature of the meta-story of the Kalervo Palsa exhibition. The meta-story begins in June 2002, when there is a short article in the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat announcing that an intensive Kalervo Palsa exhibition will be held at Kiasma in the autumn. The heading of this article is the following: *'Extensive Kalervo Palsa exhibition is coming to Kiasma in the autumn'*. The next articles appear in Helsingin Sanomat's monthly insert at the beginning of September. These articles are entitled *'Joy from distress'* and *'Bad Palsa'*. After these articles there is an article that is entitled *'Kalervo Palsa comes to Kiasma'* on the 9th of September. Following that on the 11th of September, there is an article in Ilta-Sanomat an article entitled *'Palsa Returns to the Crime Scene'* and on the 15th of September an article *'They do not see the Rope around my Neck'*. On the 18th of September Ilta-Sanomat publishes an article entitled *'Families with small children Warned about Kiasma's Palsa exhibition'*.

This article is followed by an article in Helsingin Sanomat on the 6th of October entitled *'Kiasma's Palsa exhibition does not suit for children'*. On the 16th of October there is an article *'There is a cheerless view of society in Palsa's works'*. On the same day there is also another article in Helsingin Sanomat with the following heading *'Palsa through diaries'* and in Ilta-Sanomat *'Palsa energized by diary writing'*. Then on the 20th of October there is an article entitled *'Kalervo Palsa's art is honest'*. This was followed by an article in Helsingin Sanomat on the 25th of October headed *'Behind the myth'*. On the 28th of October there is an article entitled *'Palsa and Pasolini as moral guides'*. The last article is in Ilta-Sanomat and it is dated the 30th of October. The article is entitled *'Contemporary art is an experience'*.

By meta-story I mean a narrative developing gradually and which consists of several stories following each other. In addition, each of the stories adds meanings on the construction of 'meta-narrative'. The meta-story present in the case of the Resurrection exhibition is similar to other experiential narratives produced in the media. Narratives attached to this kind of programs typically follow the logic of "proper pleasure" presented by Aristotle (cf. Sumiala-Seppänen 2001). Proper pleasure consists, according to Aristotle, of pity and fear followed by catharsis (Aristotelea 1997; see Hiltunen 2002, 6).

The construction of the story of the Kiasma exhibition can be divided into the following sections. First, there is the beginning of the story. In this particular case the article from June *'Extensive Kalervo Palsa exhibition comes to Kiasma in autumn'* starts the story of the Kalervo Palsa exhibition. This is a kind of warning or advertising phase for the event.

Following the beginning of the narrative comes the first phase of the middle part. The middle can be divided into three different phases. The first phase is a combination of articles 2-7. In the titles of these articles the main topic deals with something bad, evil, or even threatening. The second phase of the middle section is a combination of articles 8-9. These two articles centre on a warning and protecting children from the bad and frightening influences of Palsa's works. Following this section comes the last part of the middle section. This section is a combination of articles 10-12/13. These articles turn their interest to the artist view of society and his diaries. These articles are also the end of the middle part. Following this comes the end part of the story. This is a combination of articles 14-17. In these the titles centre on honesty, artist myth, morality, and art experience. In the case of the Resurrection meta-narrative, the fear and pity can be identified in the beginning and the middle of the meta-story. The catharsis part comes at the end where there the talk centres on morality.

7.1.2 Media as marketer of art: Triggering interest

In this section I will discuss the meanings that consumers give to the presence of media in the promotion of the 'Resurrection' exhibition arranged at the Kiasma art museum. The metastory that I have presented in the following is connected with my data, which consists of consumer essays. In these essays, informants report that they have followed the media publicity concerning the exhibition and they also mention some of the particular articles.

Becoming aware of the exhibition

In the data visitors refer to media either directly by naming specific media by name or indirectly by using expressions such as 'publicity' or 'I have heard comments about it before'. In the following excerpt a visitor mentions that the particular exhibition has been present in different media.

I've been following discussion of the exhibition in different media and that's why Palsa's exhibition was the most interesting of what was on at the museum right now. (Kiasma)

In the texts people also mention the types of the media they have been following. Mainly they talk about particular newspapers and magazines. Television is also mentioned as a site

of experience promotion. People do not generally mention any names of critics or other art specialists who write in the media.

Visitors also describe how they followed the media publicity²⁸ over a long period. In the data they used such expressions as 'I have been following the discussions in the media' or 'I have followed discussions in the media throughout the autumn'. Visitors also say that they become aware of the entire art exhibition through the media. In the following there are examples of this kind of talk. Based on the data, they follow discussions in different kinds of media namely TV, newspapers, and magazines.

First I went to the top floor of the place since I had seen the Popcorn and politics exhibition in the lower floors. Besides, over the last few months K. Palsa has become gradually more interesting to me because I have read and heard various comments about him. (Kiasma)

At least I felt that there's been so much about him in Iltasanomat and Helsingin Sanomat and also on TV and they've gotten me interested. (Kiasma)

It seems that in this particular exhibition, visitors have been receiving information about the exhibition from multiple sources. Thus, media has been an important 'seller', 'promoter', or 'marketer' of the exhibition.

Provoking interest

Consumers describe the way of production of meanings in the media as 'making a fuss', which makes the exhibition more interesting to them. Media feeds the consumer imagination by attaching meanings related to anxiety, fantasy, and drama to descriptions of exhibitions.

I went up to the fifth floor and decided to have a look at Palsa's works, which have caused such a stir. (Kiasma)

The Palsa exhibition had received the most media attention. It seemed it was almost a must to visit it. (Kiasma)

When I had a chance to freely wander in the house, I went straight to the fourth and fifth floor to check the exhibition of Kalervo Palsa. I have been following the discussion going on in media about the exhibition and that is why it interested me the most." (Kiasma)

We decided that the three of us would first go see Kalervo Palsa because each of us had heard something about it previously. (Kiasma)

The media have a role in forming consumer preconceptions of the experience 'offering'. The following excerpts are examples of how consumers react to an experience offering

based on their preconceptions. In the following, the excerpts are example of how the preconceptions that are formed through the media are met by consumers. Some of the visitors do not even want to visit the Palsa exhibition because of the negative preconceptions they have formed through media. Visitors also mention that the preconceptions formed by media are strengthened during the actual visit to the exhibition.

When I entered the exhibition I had a preconceived idea of Kalervo Palsa since I had read the article in the Helsingin Sanomat montly insert. (Kiasma)

I'd read about Kalervo Palsa in the Helsingin Sanomat monthly insert so I knew something about his life. (Kiasma)

In sum, visitor's talk about media publicity typically mentions that this type of 'promotion' has helped them to focus attention on this particular exhibition²⁹. In previous research on visiting art exhibitions it has been noted that the media are the most important source of impetus for consumers to visit exhibitions (Ahola 1995, 102). In the art market, media publicity is important for reputation building both for galleries and artists (Jyrämä 1999; Laitinen-Laiho 2001). Also, Jallinoja (1997) has argued that publicity is an important tool for measuring someone's success in the art field. Moreover, publicity may also have an effect on pricing. Laitinen-Laiho (2003, 116) speculates that after the Resurrection exhibition the prices of Kalervo Palsa's paintings may have risen significantly.

7.1.3 Media as charm school: Observing model experiences

The media provide 'model experiences' for consumers. Ideal model experiences are presented in art reviews and general descriptions of exhibitions. Different kinds of articles may contain facts about the exhibition and also descriptions in which writers tell about their own experiences at the exhibition. Model experiences also show how items in the exhibition are to be discussed. In the following, I will describe the findings concerning the particular types of model experiences in more detail and show how the media could be linked to a charm school that teaches the 'correct' way to react and behave at exhibitions.

Getting instructions for experiencing

Based on the analysis, the media seems to serve as an instruction source for visitors. Consumers have received advance information about the artist's diaries through the media.

It is significant that many visitors talk about the artist's diaries. In the texts, visitors say that their interest in reading the diaries arose from articles published in newspapers and magazines.

I've read articles about Palsa and I thought I'd like to read his diaries – and here they are. It seems good and useful to get into a Palsa feeling before going to the exhibition. (Kiasma)

Visitors also refer to other persons' experiences presented by the media. The following passage is an example of a mediated experience. In the excerpt below, a consumer responds to the columnist's experience, which has been published in a free-of-charge newspaper. In the excerpt, the visitor reviews the columnist's feelings and perceptions of the artist. In addition, she translates that she has read into her own life and personality.

I thought about Jaakko Heinimäki's Metro column last week where he made the excellent point that Palsa is not repulsive but brilliant in his honesty. He dares to be, dares to portray what all of us sometimes think. The only difference is that there is no light. Life like that is hard but honest. A person cannot survive that. I could be like that myself but you have to think positively to live. (Kiasma)

Also, some of the paintings have been presented and interpreted by the media in advance. Visitors explain that they have become familiar with the art works through the media. They also add that it is nice to see the actual works after first seeing them in the media.

As I said, I read about it in Helsingin Sanomat. It was great to see them for yourself, what they are really like. (Kiasma)

I followed the discussion related to the exhibition in various media and so it was the Palsa exhibition that interested me the most of what is now on at the museum. I was expecting that Palsa's works might even be disturbing, though I haven't usually reacted very strongly to even the 'wildest' art. (Kiasma)

In the Palsa exhibition, I concentrated mainly on the artist's own writing on his works because I wanted to expand my knowledge of him as a person. The picture I got from the media was certainly confirmed by the exhibition. As a whole, Palsa's art is just magnificent, especially his use of color appealed to me. Some have questioned in the media whether Palsa's work is art at all, but having seen the exhibition, I personally can say that yes, it is. Palsa is a great artist. His works portray his life and thoughts very convincingly. They give a clear idea of what went on in his head. I would gladly hang his works, though not nearly all of them, on my own wall, too. (Kiasma)

The above described way of introducing people to the artist from a particular point of view is similar to the media's enculturation of dramatic worldviews (Celci, Rose and Leight (1993, 3-4). They argue that people begin their enculturation to a particular worldview at the time they hear the first story, and that it is through the mass media that consumers construct their affective and cognitive expectations. They also talk about a 'card catalogue of possible behaviours'. By this they mean that the content of the media provides concrete images of

possible behaviour Celci, Rose and Leight (1993, 3-4). Moreover, the instructed experience is similar to also a tourist's experience of seeing scenes through a frame such as a hotel window or computer screen (Urry 1990, 100). In the case of the Resurrection (Palsa) exhibition, the frame is provided by a newspaper article, TV, or a computer screen.

Resisting hegemonic emotions

The media provide 'model emotions' regarding the kind of emotions one should experience. By these model emotions I mean certain emotions that are produced to be the 'right emotions' or even hegemonic emotions (cf. Arnould and Thompson 2005). In the case of the 'Resurrection' exhibition, anxiety/distress is produced in the media as a hegemonic type of emotion. This can be noticed in table 13 above as well as in the visitors' talk centring on distress and anxiety. Moreover, descriptions of atmospheric elements concerning art experience have been presented in the media. The following passage shows that the art in this particular exhibition has been described as shocking in the media.

I was prepared for Palsa's art, which could be shocking although I don't usually react strongly even to the most 'extreme' art. In the exhibition, I mainly concentrated on what the artist had written about his work because I wanted to know more about him. The exhibition confirmed the picture I had gotten of him from the media. (Kiasma)

This excerpt shows the role that the media have in the marketing of cultural services. The media have the power to represent artists, art in general, and art-related services in certain ways. Consumers follow media representations and read them with the help of different interpretative strategies (cf. Hirschman and Thompson 1997; Hall 1980). However, even though anxiety/distress is produced as the 'right' emotion for experiencing the exhibition, it is significant in the above excerpt that visitors do not automatically reproduce meanings circulating in the media, but also criticize their often one-sided perspective.

I have described above how consumers follow discussions and stories in the media. I suggest that the role of the media in experience creation is that of provider of 'previews'. Editors and art critics have an important role in producing meanings for cultural services and experiences related to them. Critics, marketers, advertisers, designers, and various other experts can be understood as "new cultural intermediaries" (Bourdieu 1984; McCracken 1986; du Gay et. al. 1997). Producing and circulating symbolic forms, goods and services, these knowledge workers play a critical role in connecting production to consumption. On

the one hand, they shape products and services to existing market expectations, thus feeding the preferences and practices of consumers back into the design and marketing processes. On the other hand, they also function as important shapers of expectations and taste, provoking and giving birth to new wants, needs, and consumption-oriented lifestyles.

In postmodern culture, consumers are also active producers of meanings and sometimes it is said that they have adopted an artistic attitude in the production of their identities. Mick and Buhl (1992) profile the way in which consumers' life themes and life projects shape their reading of advertisements. Consumers bend advertisements to fit their life circumstances instead of feeling a pressure to conform to a specific ideological representation. The visitors studied were surprisingly keen on reproducing the meanings that had been circulating in the media. One explanation for this may be that their basic knowledge on art is limited. Another explanation is that the artist whose works were on show has created controversial meanings, for example concerning whether he is actually an artist. This may force visitors to rely more on public opinion.

7.2 Divisibility

Besides meeting public stories of the experience in the marketplace, visitors come across a more private type of experiences stories. It is in these interactions that different types of face-to-face sharing takes place. For human beings it is not only important to understand something but also to share the experiences with somebody else. This is sometimes called the hermeneutic side of (aesthetic) experience (Haapala 2004). This aspect of experiences is constructed from intermingled meanings through the social life and history of an individual combined with the history of the entire society, including its culture and norms. People in same culture have an opportunity to find similarities in experiences of for example everyday life, even though the particular person has a unique life as such. Shared cultural background or even human values have an effect on a person's capability to understand other people's experiences. Often this understanding is constructed through face-to-face communication.

In these interactions, the history of an individual and his or her personal capabilities (e.g. empathy) has a role in the activity of sharing the experience. Sometimes, experiences are still in process so that other people do not understand what the person is experiencing, either because the experiences are such that they cannot be told or because the person lacks

the performative or narrative resources or simply because the vocabulary is lacking (Bruner 1986, 6-7).

It is possible to encounter these situations in everyday life as we are talking to others about an experience. We sometimes realize when we speak that our account does not fully encompass all that we thought and felt during the particular experience (Bruner 1986, 7). Moreover, it may be difficult for someone who has not experienced a particular type of, for example a very enjoyable or traumatic experience to understand what the other person means with all his or her words. It is common cultural knowledge that people with a similar history share 'something'. Also, a group of people who, for example, have seen the same movie can feel connected. Hence, the meanings related to a particular experience obtain more substance. Private discussions are understood in this study as social spaces where meanings of experience (e.g. art) are negotiated through instant exchange and expression of opinions. In the sections below I will further describe the findings concerning divisibility of experiences.

7.2.1 Expressing and exchanging experiences

In exhibition consumption, experience sharing is important. In my data, people expressed their need to tell about their experience and share it with other people. The sharing is done with different persons with whom people 'analyze', 'contemplate', 'discuss', 'exchange ideas', and 'report' experiences. It is here that the private stories of experiences are produced and negotiated. The particular experience does not stay inside a person's head but is put into words describing feelings and the words turn out to be sentences that are in turn part of dialogues between people. Hence, experience-related meanings move from the audience to the marketplace.

Immediate opinions

This type of sharing takes place of exhibition premises. In the following there is an example of the practice concerning exchanging and discussing about experiences. A common feature found in the texts is that people prefer to visit exhibitions together with somebody else and not alone. People also report how they enjoyed exchanging opinions on what they saw in the exhibition premises with their peers.

Usually I don't visit exhibitions alone, so being here alone was a little strange. I'm used to discussing my own view and listening to other people's interpretations. (Kiasma)

*How important is the presence of other people who think alike at these exhibitions?
I've never thought about it at all. On the other hand, it's important to me that Johanna more or less thinks the same way, you know, that we're interested in the same style of furniture, I mean if I had come here with someone else whose likes are completely different, it would feel like you cannot discuss much and comment when you know your opinions will clash. (Habitare)*

Yeah, it is nice when there are different kinds of people and of course you don't about everyone's opinion, but it is great to have someone to share this with. (Habitare)

Peers also include 'security' in experiencing. People report how they prefer to go through the whole exhibition with a group of peers. They enter the exhibition together, 'conquer' it together, and reflect on it together.

The first thing that stopped us was E. W.'s "Embarrassing Sculpture". A friend and I laughed at this unusual interactive art experience. No visitor at the exhibition will shove a bouquet of flowers in his pants for one minute or especially ask an attendant to take a Polaroid photo of it and send it to the artist to be signed for one hundred euros. (Habitare)

Usually visitors talk with friends and spouses about their experience as described above. However, sharing can also occur with strangers. In the North Karelia exhibition part of the 'fun' was in talking with strangers or 'chitchatting'.

*How important is the presence of other people at events like this?
It means everything, of course.
It's a success when there are a lot of people. There need to be more people and different kinds of people, too.
So social contact is important?
Yes and it means a lot that people chat with complete strangers. That's what's different from normal - you can just start talking to people.
Yes! You don't start conversations on the bus coming home from work. You don't often do that on an ordinary day. That's why events like this are important and in fact, I think there should be more of them. (Habitare)*

*How important is meeting or the presence of other people at exhibitions like this?
Of course it's part of the atmosphere, you can discuss and chat if you share an interest.
You mean with complete strangers?
Especially with strangers, that's precisely why I came here alone to get some distance with all the noise when the kids are around.
So what is okay to talk about with strangers?
Just about anything, when you find something you can talk forever, that's nothing. (Habitare)*

Experiencing with peers is similar to team-work. Arnould and Price (1993) have made an observation on river rafting trips that participants on these trips are like pilgrims. The pilgrimage incorporates three essential features, namely separation, transition, and reintegration. The exhibition 'pilgrims' leave their daily lives and enter, the phase of transition. Finally they return home transformed, and are reintegrated with normal daily life.

In the transitional phase of a rite of passage, one of the most common activities is stripping of markers of rank and status. Participants perceive themselves in their basic, common humanity. During the transitional phase, participants carry out shared performances, and these performances, produce a special type of connection between people. (Arnould and Price 1993, 27).

In the process of exhibition consumption, ‘the stripping of status’ is more like being able to leave ‘the world’ outside and concentrate on encountering the exhibition with a peer³⁰. The performances people share together centre mainly on discussing (arguing, exchanging, memorizing) the exhibition and life in general. There may also be ‘visits’ that are made together, for example to the museum bookstore, café or restaurants at the exhibition site.

Reflecting

Sharing an experience does not always stop when a person leaves the actual exhibition site. Discussing afterwards about the experience with a peer is an important way of keeping it alive.

Do events like this have any lasting effect?

Yes, they do, at least some of them, and you can think back, when you start thinking back, the experiences start to come back, like I said, that you can't remember anything but when you start thinking back, there's so many of them you'll always remember (n).

But of course there are those that you don't remember about, I can't recall anything from there, there was nothing there...

It just made a stronger impression on the other person... (Habitare)

Yeah, if it was, you know, good and interesting, like a shared experience, it can really be special, like a concert or something, so... (Habitare)

Sometimes I've gone just because there were like-minded people, someone notices something and then you talk about it afterward. (Habitare)

In the following excerpt the visitor describes how she goes through the furniture fair exhibition afterwards. In this excerpt, a visitor describes the experience as a kind of digesting process in which she goes over the experience. In the exhibition she collects meanings and at home she has time to ‘digest’ all the impressions that are collected in the exhibition. Afterwards she also likes to complete her experience with a friend.

That's what I mean, you mull it over later on, just like a good film, a play or art exhibition, you collect the influences and then start to think about them, you know, that was pretty good and do you remember. It is more like afterward, at least I'm the kind that if I read a book or something, then I chew it over like a cow and a little like that, that's how it seems to go. (Habitare).

Sharing practices also occur afterwards, e.g. at the workplace where people report about their experience to their colleagues.

When you leave this exhibition, will you talk about this afterward at all or will it just stay here? No, usually we always comment about it then and if something comes to mind, you know, something was good and something else bad, so we talk about it together. It stays in your mind. Yeah, and we tell people about it on Monday at work. (Habitare)

Now that you're leaving the exhibition, do you think it was a memorable event? Will you think about it at home and so on?

Well, I thought I'd still buy some bread, a loaf of rye, and eat it during the week, at least that long, and I'll certainly exchange views with others who have visited here. (North Karelia)

This observation is similar to that of Ritson and Elliott (1999, 265) when they noticed that ads are part of talk in everyday social interactions. According to them, ads are used in a phatic type of speech that exists as precursor to other more important social interactions. This particular type of speech is used to open and maintain everyday discursive relationships. Other examples are television programs (Lull 1980, 203). Characteristic to this type of speech is that all participants are familiar with the subject matter and can therefore take part in the discussion. In the case of exhibition consumption, exhibition experiences are often a source of discussion topics at workplaces.

7.2.2 Reaching further back: role of reminiscence

Reminiscence is present when consumers talk about pleasant memories connected with previous exhibition visits. By talking about past experiences in exhibitions consumers connect them with their own culture, their family, and different phases of their life. Engaging in reminiscence is especially present in the interviews collected from the North Karelia exhibition and the Habitare fair. Reminiscence is produced by two types of action, namely talk of circumstances (contextualizing/telling about the setting, for example when it happened and how it is connected with the informant) and unfolding of/telling mini-stories about important experiences in the interview dialogues.

Different circumstances of memorable experiences

The most often mentioned experience contexts are childhood, journeys abroad, and hobbies. The following excerpts are examples of the ways in which consumers remember their visits to exhibitions as a child or young person. According to the data, the role of family is a rather important basis of stimulus for starting the habit of visiting exhibitions and fairs. Visiting exhibitions and fairs has not always been pure pleasure for the children (nowadays adults), as you can observe from the expressions used.

Anything recent? You go to art exhibitions or something, anything that has made an impression?

Well, a stamp exhibition when I was a little boy, but that's almost fifty years ago now, and these recent exhibitions, this is the latest one this one.

The stamp show made an impression?

I guess I wasn't asked if I wanted to go but they were pretty pictures then and with sharp eyes you saw the beauty in the little pictures.

Even though consumption of art and other cultural services had not always been pleasant as a child, some of the visitors express their gratitude to their parents, who took them to exhibitions.

It's unbelievable how much you miss and don't see (and not just Kiasma!) if you don't begin somewhere. I know I'm quite different because of my family background. Although I also sometimes used to hate going to museums and art exhibitions as a kid, I'm now thankful that I was brought along. As naive as it may sound, being artistically active has made me more cultivated. (Kiasma)

Some informants also explain that school has had a role in educating them as art consumers, even though it was sometimes difficult to find visits to art exhibitions interesting.

I began my tour in Kiasma with an open mind and curious, despite the fact that from my angle it was the museum that had to prove itself because on the first visit before this I made a quick fifteen minute tour and left disappointed and somehow impatient with the confusing and complicated building. My quick impatience may have been caused by the fact that I was 18 years old, just out of school and from another locality and more interested in the entertainment the city had to offer and in getting something to eat...(Kiasma)

Another consumption circumstance to which exhibition experiences are connected is the arena of hobbies. Also, these memories are predominantly pleasant in nature. In the following text a visitor tells about his previous contacts to exhibitions and his hobby of collecting art.

I visit especially art exhibitions very frequently.

What do the art exhibitions give you?

Well they do in the sense that I like to buy art when I can. But I've mostly bought Finnish art and sure they are very interesting, it is gratifying to look at them. (Habitare)

Exhibition visits are also connected with journeys abroad. These memories are also pleasant in nature. In the following excerpt a visitor compares his visits to Kiasma with his visits to museums abroad. He claims that the exhibitions that he has visited abroad have been more enjoyable than the Kiasma exhibitions.

After the Porsimo family my attention was drawn to the video room where there were disturbing images and background sounds were playing. I started thinking about who would want to stay there getting upset longer than a minute. I thought about my earlier visits to Kiasma and that there has always been a lot of 'disturbing' art on display at Kiasma. This time, the prize for the ugliest art was competed for by the artists Markus Heikkerö and the boxoffice hit Kalervo Palsa. Their topics are 80 per cent disgusting, I think. Is it because I know so little about contemporary art or is it because there always just happened to be disturbing and ugly art at Kiasma when I've visited there. Works full of blood, sadism and porn? I visited the Tate in London and anxiety and ugliness weren't the most obvious images! (Kiasma)

Not all exhibition experiences are pleasant as the following excerpt shows. In the data a frequently mentioned example of unpleasant past exhibition experiences are dog shows. Some of the informants explained that they could not understand the reasoning behind the standards used to judge the dogs. In addition, some of the informants reported that they perceived that the animals are in some way mistreated by being brought to exhibitions.

Can you remember your first exhibition sometime in the past?

Maybe in your childhood? Anything, doesn't have to be a fair.

I also remember dog shows from my childhood.

What do you remember of the dog shows?

I remember how this exhibitor kept yanking at them and making them stand in certain positions and so on, how important it was that the dog stood a certain way, I mean how the tail was and so.

Is it a positive or a negative memory? Or does it involve something like that?

I can't remember, but it did amaze me that they were so particular... I was really interested in dogs but I wondered if the quality criteria are so important.

How old were you?

I was well under ten. (Habitare)

Most people could recall their past exhibition experiences. In all three data sets there is only one person for whom it was difficult to recall any past exhibition experiences.

Do you remember your first exhibition or fair?

Just any exhibition? Wonder what could it be... I haven't tried to remember them especially.

How about recently, is there something?

Something especially good? Can't remember any. Maybe I'm so dull, maybe I'm too much of an engineer type to see them like that. (Habitare)

In sum, there are several circumstances in people's life with which exhibitions are connected. Especially childhood visits with either one's own family or school were described in the texts. Other memorable circumstances regarding experience of exhibitions are journeys abroad as well as hobbies.

Mini-stories about memorable exhibition experiences

Sometimes what I have called mini-stories about memorable exhibition experiences seems to unfold during the interview dialogues. In most of these mini stories consumers tell with whom they went to an exhibition and what good happened there or followed from the visit. Examples of the 'good' outcomes are "finding a new hobby" for oneself or for the whole family. Another less frequent type of mini-story is a reflection concerning historical time periods.

In the following excerpt there is a mini-story about finding a new hobby for the whole family. In the excerpt the visitor names the setting of this happening and the precise date on which the memorable visit took place. He also reports to me that touching and seeing all the horse equipment was very fascinating. At the end of the mini-story comes the happy ending, which in this case was finding a new hobby for the whole family.

What are your memories?

A horse show seven years ago (1990).

Was it the encounter between you and the horses?

Yes, no no, it just started then, all that. But when you look at these fairs in general... nothing really has stuck to my mind. Can't really remember anything special.

What happened at the horse show seven years ago?

The same as always, that is...

No, no, I mean your...

It was the first one where you could handle brushes and stuff, you wouldn't think that a 48-year-old man, it was great walking around, because you get to see the riding equipment, they were all in a single pile and there aren't many riding stores in Helsinki, well, there are about eight, nine, but you have to go from one to the other, they were all there together.

And you never buy them often, when you see something it'll last for along while.

Magnificent horses...

Well yes, exactly, that was the main thing.

You went with the children?

Yes, yes... Well, yeah, but see what happened was that it began when I agreed to take an introductory course for the kids' sake but after the fifth class I suggested that we'll keep at it and from then on we've been crazy about it.

You found a new hobby?

Yes, the point is, it's the whole family's hobby. (Habitare)

In the following excerpt an informant explains how seeing one particular art exhibition in her youth touched her so much that she continued to visit art exhibitions later on.

I have to say that good exhibition experiences, I think it was in the sixties or seventies when they had the Ars exhibition, maybe it was Ars 69 or something like that, I'm not sure, but I remember it as the best most wonderful exhibition.

Why exactly?

It just was the modern things, new and different and of course the age I was, it made an impression on me because of my young age and so, and it has been an inspiration to me, I've gone to quite a few exhibitions since. (Habitare)

In the following excerpt there are examples of mini-stories concerning childhood visits to exhibitions. In these descriptions the informants tell about their trips to fascinating exhibitions. They also describe what elements made the experience most captivating for a child. Examples of the most attention-catching elements are eating ice cream or candy, getting presents, or watching trilling demonstrations.

Can you remember your earliest exhibition experience?

Well, a place where you get something good, what the exhibition, I can't remember at all, I must've been so little, but it was always just this general din, things like that and you got nice things that in the end were completely useless.

What, for example?

Well, toys and a piece of jewelry or something and then ice cream and soda and so on, it has always been what interested me than the event itself. (Habitare)

The following two excerpts are examples of mini-stories reflecting historical time periods. In the first excerpt below visitors tell how by visiting exhibitions they have learned to understand better the time in which they are currently living. In addition, exhibitions help them to understand historical change in home decoration better.

Do you remember your earliest experience of a fair from your childhood or long time ago? It must be twenty years, I haven't been here at the interior fair in years, I'm sure it's twenty years, no, it's more like thirty years, I'm over forty, when we came the whole family or with some friends, that's what I remembered earlier, it was nice to see that this fair really does tell something of the times, I think it's pretty neat (w).

What does it tell you?

Well, the way people's... fashion and how the bedroom changes, becomes more daring and all that, the same things stay at least in home decoration, I don't believe that an ordinary person really has to check i out, you have to choose between what's practical and comfortable mainly, and then change the little things, not many people can just go and redo their home all at once (w).

On the other hand it is pretty interesting capital to have followed the changes of style at events like this for, like, twenty years. (m)

Yes, sure you remember it when you see a piece of furniture that this was the sixties or the seventies, you do remember them (w).

I've no memories from childhood, I guess I never went anywhere, but when I go to the Design Museum and walk through the so-called historical department, I can see how, I mean, how my own life has changed exactly along with the decades, and the objects are pretty familiar (m). (Habitare)

Different types of exhibitions seem to serve as a medium for stocktaking of one's own life and family history. Belk (1988) has studied the relation between possessions and extended

self. He sees that consumer possessions are a major contributor to and reflection of consumer identities and adds that the accumulation of possessions provide us with a sense of the past and tells us who we are, where we have come from, and perhaps where we are going. Moreover, (material) possessions are a handy means of storing the memories and feelings that attach our sense of past. Belk (1988) also adds that social institutions such as museums follow a similar type of process in selecting retaining aesthetic, scientific, and historical cultural artefacts. He calls this ‘chronicling our cultures’ and argues that this chronicling usually focuses on successes rather than failures. In line with Belk (1988), I suggest that exhibitions serve as a site of personal chronicling.

7.3 Summary

In sum, this chapter has explored fellowship as a cultural theme through which consumers communicate their exhibition consumption. Above I have described how people circulate in different communities when they follow public stories of experiences as well as produce more private stories of their own consumption experiences.

Media publicity produces public stories of consumption experiences. These stories build on one another, transform in time, and sometimes constitute what I call ‘meta-stories’ of experiences. In the beginning of this chapter I provided an example of an art-related meta-story. These public stories have two roles for the audience. First, they trigger people’s interest in particular experiences that are represented in the media. Moreover, these public stories provide people with model experiences. Through following media publicity, people have the opportunity to be connected with larger and remote communities and to experience belongingness.

Divisibility of experience was also an important feature. People expressed that part of experiencing is also an urge to tell about their experience and share it with other people. This sharing is done with different persons and groups, with whom people analyze, discuss, and exchange ideas about experiences. It is here that the private stories of experiences are produced and negotiated. Production of private stories can take place in the actual exhibition premises or it can take place afterwards, for example at home or at the workplace. This I call immediate production of private stories. In addition to this immediate production of private stories, there is a more time-consuming production of private stories. This is the act of reminiscence. In the production of private stories about the experiences, people connect

nearby communities such as family, groups of friends or colleagues at work. Based on the analysis, it seems that besides the circulation of meanings in the marketplace, people also circulate mentally and even physically in different communities when they follow up public stories of experiences in media and produce their own stories of experiences in more private type of discussions.

Table 14: Fellowship theme

Fellowship	Sub themes	Topics reflecting themes
	Connectedness to (media) publicity	Interaction with public stories: Consumer identification with remote communities Media as marketer of art - Triggering interest Media as charm school/etiquette school - Model experiences
	Divisibility	Interaction with friend/spouse, strangers, fellow workers Consumer identification with nearby communities Sharing -Immediate exchange of experiences by analyzing, criticizing, exchanging, talking about them - Gradual production: Reminiscence - Describing different contexts: Childhood, journeys, family; Pleasant/unpleasant visits in exhibitions - Telling mini stories of old exhibition memories - Naming visiting outcomes: e.g. what ‘good’ happened in the exhibition/followed from the visit

The ideal type of experience in the fellowship theme is the *experience of receiving/getting support*. In this type of experience people can share their experiences with the friends or relatives. Their support is needed, for example in a situation where one is afraid of something and other people can help in overcoming fear. In exhibition consumption this may be the case when the art on display is too difficult or moving. Support experience is also present in media consumption. One can receive guidance for art consumption through the media.

The excess type of experience in the fellowship theme is the *experience of (extreme) fuss*. This type of experience occurs when people have been discussing something too much

and with too much enthusiasm. An excess of fuss, gossiping and talking may effect the consumer so that consumer as an agent is transferred from the fellowship encounter to other types of encounters such as corporality in which there is physical action and the negotiation of experiential distance from other people. Moreover, consumer as an agent can also move from the fellowship related experience to the progress related experience to search for information about the actual nature of the activities. Moreover, the focus of experience negotiation may be transferred to a sensibility related experience where experiencing deep feelings is the constructing element.

8 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I will discuss the findings and how they answer the research question, their relevance for the cultural consumer approach and service marketing theory, as well as the managerial implications of this work.

8.1 Major findings

The purpose of this study was to analyze *how consumers give meanings to the consumption experience of cultural services in marketplace encounters*. By identifying the cultural themes through which consumers communicate a consumption experience in the consumption process, the study has aimed to shed light on the features of the consumption experience and the nature of consumer agency in meaning-making occurring in the marketplace. The data consisted of consumer interviews and essays that were collected from exhibitions. Methodologically, this study has been influenced by ethnographical research. The analysis of the data was based on the hermeneutical approach.

The theoretical argument presented has been that the meanings produced in the process of consumption are constantly in flux and attain their shape in on-going marketplace interactions. The value of a cultural service and related experience is not determined beforehand but produced in the marketplace by various actors. Consumers are perceived as active agents taking part in meaning-making occurring in the marketplace. The encounter is perceived as a site where the struggle for meanings takes place. In the consumption process, consumers seize the meanings circulating in the marketplace and communicate these meanings through cultural themes. From the empirical data I have identified four cultural themes through which consumers communicate the meanings of consumption experience in the exhibitions. In the following I will proceed to elaborate the major empirical findings.

8.1.1 *Cultural themes in exhibition consumption*

The first sub-question asked the following: *what kinds of cultural themes can be identified in the consumption process of exhibitions?* Table 15 below introduces the content of the

themes. Following the table each of the four themes is briefly presented. The description of themes will provide a perspective on what activities are emphasized.

Table 15. Cultural themes present in the process of exhibition consumption

Theme	Sub-themes
Sensibility	Poignancy Perplexity Refreshingness
Progress	Creativity Expertise
Corporality	Movement Sensuality
Fellowship	Connectedness to publicity Divisibility

Sensibility

The first cultural theme identified is called sensibility. This theme revolves around the three sub-themes, namely poignancy, perplexity and refreshingness. Poignancy is constructed when a visitor interacts with the art works, the artist’s life history, a particular culture (e.g. Karelian) and his or her own past experiences and these interactions make the person feel closeness and poignancy. Hence, exhibitions and fairs offer visitors a chance to experience different kinds of emotions. Examples of these are empathy and delight as well as negative feelings such as sadness and distress. Through experiencing these feelings, consumers have a chance to encounter other people’s life, enter into other cultures, and maybe even understand their own life better.

Visitors appropriate the exhibition through emotional labelling. Moreover, they use technology for the purpose of appropriation. By emotional talk persons and objects and even the whole exhibition are marked by consumers. It can be said that exhibitions have a therapeutic type of effect on consumers similar to the effect of media spectacles such as public weddings or funerals. Exhibitions momentarily allow talk about social problems such as alcoholism, mental problems or poverty in society. Moreover, they may provide emotional space for going through difficult feelings that are usually repressed. Thus, they

are places where consumers can set free various emotions. Perplexity as a sub-theme is present in interactions where a consumer comes across something that is not familiar to him or her. It can also include resistance in responding. In the data, perplexity is especially present in interaction with contemporary art and avant-garde furnishing design.

Refreshingness in the exhibition is constructed when a consumer encounters certain enlivening and enjoyable elements in the exhibition environment. Accessibility of peace of mind and relaxation are sub-themes of refreshingness. These themes show that the symbolic meanings of the buildings and its environment are very important for consumers. The premises aid visitors to purify themselves from the matters of the outside world and help them to concentrate in the content of exhibition.

Progress

The second cultural theme identified is the theme of progress. This theme refers to a mental/cultural movement forward. Based on the data, the visitors strive to achieve progress in different fields of life for example, in private life or working life. The theme of progress revolves around two sub-themes, namely nurturing of creativity as well as developing and evaluating expertise. Nurturing creativity is constructed when a visitor interacts with inspiring objects and themes at the show. New ideas and inspiration are implemented in the consumer's own life. After collecting a number of ideas, creative chaos may occur. From the creative chaos a few ideas are then crystallized into a form that can be further implemented in the consumer's own life, for example in the form of home decoration. Occasionally, the Eureka-experience may occur.

Developing and evaluating expertise is constructed when a visitor interacts with an interesting piece of knowledge at the exhibition. Developing and evaluating knowledge is practiced because the consumer wants to maintain or increase his or her knowledge level or even challenge somebody else's knowledge. Moreover, part of this activity is also the evaluation of the quality of a more public or traditional type of knowledge presented for visitors at the exhibition. An example of this kind of knowledge is the knowledge of producing traditional food or the progress of a particular industry such as the furnishing industry.

Progress as a cultural theme was especially present in the data collected from the furnishing fair. New furnishing ideas served as the symbol of a progressive movement in the consumers' life. From the service marketing point of view, the pleasure potential connected

with the progress theme is for example, in the Eureka type experiences. It is through this liminal type of experience that consumers can experience the idea of progress in practice.

Corporality

The third cultural theme revolves around corporality. This theme consists of two thematic entities, namely movement and sensuality. Through movements people appropriate the area. Moreover, through mapping movements they negotiate their territory with other visitors who are in the same premises. The key topic in territorial negotiation is the appropriate distance between the experiencing individual and other people. How close can other people be allowed to come? Other people are appreciated when they help the visitor to get into a good mood. However, visitors also wish to have their own room for experiencing, and following this, they like to have some distance to other people. Having too many people too close can cause fatigue in the experiencing individual. Examples of these are running out of fresh air in the exhibitions premises, or because of the presence of other people, the temperature in the premises rises too high.

Part of corporality is also the interplay of different senses. The senses typically have a hierarchical structure (dominance of sight). Seeing is the dominant sense in exhibitions. The gaze moves around in the exhibition in several different ways. Other senses are often suppressed in the background. The hierarchy of senses can also change. This happens when other senses play a more central role in experiencing. The pleasure potential of corporality is in the experience of feeling well and easiness.

Based on the analysis, I propose the term *corporeal touch* (in Finnish: kehollinen tuntuma) for increasing our understanding of the bodily encounter in diverse environments. In the exhibition context corporeal touch is constructed from mapping movements and different senses. Based on my findings, I suggest that it is through corporeal touch that the visitor is connected with the exhibition environment. Moreover, corporeal touch varies from person to person, depending on their familiarity with different environments as well as their awareness of their own bodies.

Fellowship

The fourth negotiation centres on fellowship. This theme unfolds through two themes, namely consumer connections to media publicity and divisibility of experiences in private

discussions. Media publicity produces public stories of experiences. The public stories have two functions for the audience. First, they trigger people's interest in particular experiences that are represented in the media. Moreover, these public stories provide people with model examples of experiences. In particular, model experiences are provided for art experiences. All experience-related markets are very fragmented, and new forms of experiences proliferate rapidly. For instance, different genres of music such as 'metal' have been fragmented into many subcategories such as speed, love, black, gothic, and trash and in this process of proliferation cultural mediators are important for providing stories to the public of what is happening in a particular field of music. By following up media publicity, people have the opportunity to be connected with the broader remote type of communities and experience belongingness with them.

Divisibility and sharing of experiences in a more private type of discussions is another theme that I have identified. The sharing is done with different parties (persons or groups) with whom people analyze, discuss and exchange ideas about their experiences. It is here that the private stories of experiences are produced and negotiated. The production of private stories can take place in the actual exhibition premises or it can take place afterwards, for example, at home or the workplace. This has been called the immediate production of private stories. In addition to this immediate production of private stories, there is a slower type of production of private stories. This is reminiscence. In the production of private stories of experiences, people connect with near-by communities such as family, groups of friends or colleagues at work.

Based on the analysis, it seems that apart from the circulation of meanings in the marketplace, consumers also circulate between different communities when they follow public stories of experiences in the media and produce their own stories of experiences in a more private type of discussions. Both of these themes concern participation. You need to belong to certain "circles", namely communities, in order to receive relevant information or produce it yourself. From the service marketing point of view, the pleasure potential connected with the fellowship theme is for example, in the experience of taking part in developing a metastory.

In sum, the cultural themes presented above describe how consumers give meanings to exhibition experiences during the process of consumption. The four cultural themes identified in the data show how the nature of experience is not only tied to a particular moment but changes constantly during the process of consumption. The four themes

identified provide a perspective for understanding how cultural service experiences are created in the various encounters in the marketplace. In particular, they provide a perspective for understanding experience creation as action performed by the consumers.

8.1.2 Consumer agency in exhibition consumption process

The second research question asked is *in what ways do the cultural themes relate to each other in the consumption process?* Based on the empirical analysis, I argue that the profound object of cultural negotiation concerning consumption experience is the theme of wellness. By wellness I mean mental and corporal prosperity. This negotiation of wellness takes place in the four cultural themes that I have described above. These themes are sensibility, progress, corporality, and fellowship. Based on the analysis, I further suggest that experience is a continuum. The continuum always has ends. This experience can be an ideal (in a positive sense) type of experience, but also an excessive (in a negative sense) type of experience. In the following I will discuss the negotiation of wellness in different themes. Thus based on the empirical analysis I suggest that in exhibition consumption, the particular agency present is the aesthetic agency. In the following I will describe the nature of the aesthetic agency by discussing the actions performed, objects appreciated and aesthetic knowledge created by the aesthetic agents in exhibition consumption. Thus, in order to understand consumption experiences and their production in the marketplace better, it is essential to understand the nature of aesthetic agency.

Actions performed by aesthetic agents

In the sensibility, theme the ideal emotional experience is the *experience of elevation*. This particular experience may be present when the consumer meets something beautiful such as a design object (in the data a certain type of lamp) or touching elements connected with his or her life history. Elevated experiences raise consumers above everyday life and help them to enjoy and experience humanity in a deeper way. The excess type of experience in the sensibility negotiation is the *experience of ambivalence*. This type of experience brings to light the divaricated attitude towards things in the exhibition. An excess of astonishment is difficult to tolerate, and following this, curiosity may be activated and aesthetic agency transferred from an emotional encounter to another type of encounter, such as a progress encounter, where the urge to gather ideas and knowledge is central.

In the progress theme, the ideal type of experience is the *eureka experience*. This particular experience happens in a situation of sudden occurrence of insight. The nature of insight may relate to creativity or learning during exhibition visit. The excess type of experience is the *experience of chaos*. This type of experience occurs when the visitor has received too much information and this information is not yet processed. Excess information needs to be 'digested' and consequently, because of this 'bloat' the consumer may be transferred from a progress encounter to another type of marketplace encounter such as fellowship encounter in which sharing with other people may help the visitor to organize the new information and ideas.

In the corporality theme, the ideal type of bodily experience is the *experience of vigilance*. In this experience, all the senses are typically alert and open, and the body feels alive. This particular experience can be present during the whole visit, but often it is impossible to maintain the vigilance during the whole visit. The experience of vigilance comes close to the metaphor of trekking. In this kind of activity a lively human being moves about outdoors and invariably conquers changing environments. The excess type of experience in the corporality encounter is the *experience of fatigue*. This type of experience occurs when the visitor has exhausted his or her senses or body. Exhaustion can occur at exhibitions because of an overly long journey in the premises, too many people, or too little fresh air to breathe, or too hot a temperature, or too much to watch. The experience of exhausting one's physical powers needs to be removed, and consequently, the aesthetic agent may be transferred from the bodily encounter to another type of encounter such as emotional encounter of relaxation, in which just sitting in transitorial rooms such as cafeterias helps the visitor to get back in to balance.

The ideal type of experience in the fellowship encounter is the experience of *support*. In this type of experience a person can share his or her experiences with those nearby. The support experience is needed, for example, in a situation where one is afraid of something and other people overcome this fear. In exhibition consumption this may happen when the art on show is too poignant. Support experience is also provided by the media, where one can receive guidance for art consumption. The excess type of experience in the fellowship encounter is the experience of (extreme) *fuss*. This type of experience occurs when people have discussed something too much and with too much enthusiasm. An excess of fuss, gossiping and talking around may influence the agency so that it is transferred from the fellowship encounter to other types of marketplace encounters such as the bodily encounter,

in which physical action and the negotiation of experiential distance from other people is a constructing element. Moreover, a transfer from a fellowship encounter to a progress encounter can take place in a search for information about the actual nature of things. Moreover, the focus of experience negotiation may be transferred to the sensibility encounter where experiencing deep feelings is a constructing element.

Key objects of appreciation

In the consumer meaning-making of experiences various cultural values play a key role. In the sensibility theme, *freeness* or freedom is the cultural value that is appreciated by the aesthetic agent. Freeness as a value is appreciated in two ways. First the interaction with cultural products, for example, art or design makes the aesthetic agent free from everyday life and able to concentrate, for example, on something beautiful or otherwise interesting. Moreover, freeness is also appreciated in the sense that the aesthetic agent feels free and able to experience different kind of feelings ranging from positive to negative than in everyday life. Finally, freeness is present in the sensibility theme in the sense that the aesthetic agent wants to be free to depart if the interaction with the exhibition is not fascinating. Examples of the appreciation of freeness present in the data are the following: The freeness of from time limits (business outside art museum ambience), freeness of the surrounding culture (at North Karelia the freeness from big city culture), freeness from past experiences (hanging in transitional rooms) and the freeness from concentration (Habitare).

In the progress theme the key cultural value appreciated is *newness*. This cultural value is appreciated because in order to progress one needs something new. New ideas and inspiration are implemented in a consumer's own life. In the data at hand this arena of progress was especially present at the furnishing fair. New furnishing ideas serve as a symbol of progress in consumers' life. Newness is also present in the evaluation of things around. When practicing evaluation, aesthetic agents are like critics who assess the quality of newness. Examples of the appreciation of newness are the following: learning new (new ways of understanding contemporary art at Kiasma), meeting new tastes of food (at North Karelia), and looking for new ideas (Habitare).

In the corporality account the key cultural value is *corporal touch or bodily feeling*. Corporal touch as a cultural value is appreciated by the aesthetic agent because part of experiencing in exhibitions is the production of a bodily relationship to the environment around. This relationship will be formed gradually during the visit. Corporeal touch is a

similar type of phenomena to, for example, having a grip on a hammer when you are driving in a nail. Corporal touch is appreciated because through it the aesthetic agent grasps the environment. Examples of the appreciation of corporal touch are the following: following the “track” in order to avoid getting lost (Kiasma), contact with the environment with all senses (North Karelia), and the urge to have room around (Habitare).

In the fellowship account the key cultural value is *participation*. The appreciation of participation as a cultural value is noticeable in the experience-related meta-stories. Aesthetic agents appreciate being a part of the unfolding stories. They follow public stories and add their own stories about experiences to them. Moreover, it seems that besides the circulation of stories in the marketplace, people also circulate between different communities by following various public stories of experiences in media and producing their own stories of experiences in various private type of discussions. Examples of the appreciation of participation are the following: enjoying the participation in the creation of a metastory by following up public discussions (Kiasma) and enjoying the co-production of consumption experience (North Karelia, Habitare and Kiasma).

Aesthetic knowledge created

In common to all forms of knowledge, ‘movement’ is in some way typically present in all types of knowledge in exhibition consumption. In the sensibility theme, the knowledge created is ascending in nature. Metaphorically, this type of knowledge is like air that lifts people higher and away from everyday life. In the progression theme, the knowledge present is scattered around in the environment and must be gathered for later purposes. Examples of these purposes are self-fulfilment in form of home decoration and other artistic hobbies. In corporality theme the aesthetic knowledge created is seizing in nature. With the help of their body, consumers grab hold of the environment. In the fellowship theme, the movement describing knowledge is circulation. Meta-stories of experiences evolve and circulate in communities. Consumers follow the public stories produced by media and add to the public stories their own private stories about what is happening.

8.2 Discussion of the theoretical implications

Above I have developed a theoretical framework for analyzing encounters of cultural services and related experiences. Moreover, I have applied the framework that I have developed for the empirical analysis of consumption experiences in exhibitions.

What are the key features of consumption experiences in the context of cultural services? This study argues that there seem to be manifold interactions occurring in the marketplace that are important in the production of meanings for cultural services and related experiences. Moreover, the value of experience is not determined beforehand but in cultural processes such as the process of consumption. In addition, it is not always possible to control the delivery of a cultural service. For example, the media acts as an important provider of meanings for art exhibitions.

This study adds insights into the cultural production of cultural services by suggesting that cultural services encounters and related consumption experiences are sites of social struggle for meaning. Previous research on the sociology of art has mainly suggested that for example, the value of a work of art is created by the interaction of a number of players, such as museum curators, art critics and gallery owners *through shared opinions, information and shared understandings of art*. Hence, an art work is created by the artist but to be acknowledged as an art work it needs the acceptance of other actors in the art world such as gallery owners, critics or other artists. The very status of work of art is established through these interactive processes (Bourdieu 1984; Becker 1982; Sevänen 1998 Jyrämä 1999). This study adds to the previous research that the value of a cultural service such as an art exhibition is created in the marketplace by the interaction of a number of players, such as consumers, museum curators, art critics and media through not always shared opinions, shared information, and shared understandings of art.

This study adds insights into the consumer experience of cultural services by unravelling the nature of consumer interaction with a particular type of cultural services, namely exhibitions. Previous research on exhibitions in the area of consumer culture has shown that there is an emotional state, a cognitive state, a bodily state and a social state present in the exhibition consumption (Uusitalo and Ahola 1994; Ahola 1995, Linko 1994; Penalosa 2001; Joy and Sherry 2003). However, previous research has not quite discussed how *all* the states are present in experiencing during the process of consumption. Moreover,

previous research has often focused on one type of exhibition whereas this study investigated consumption process present in different types of exhibitions. In addition, previous research has not regarded consumer experiencing of cultural services as a struggle for meaning in the marketplace. This study adds to the previous research on exhibitions by the identification and further analysis of the cultural themes cantering on sensibility, progress, corporality, and fellowship. These cultural themes together provide with form the consumption experience in the marketplace of exhibitions. Consumers struggle for control of the meanings of cultural services and related experiences. They seize the meanings circulating in the marketplace with their practices of consumption, namely setting free various emotions, gathering ideas and knowledge, trekking in changing terrain and circulating in diverse communities. Furthermore, this study adds to the previous literature (Joy and Sherry 2003) a new conceptualization of corporality, namely that of *corporeal touch* though which it is possible to explain how people experience their physical surroundings and strive for wellness and balance in experiencing. Previous literature has regarded consumers as active agents and cultural producers in the marketplace (Belk and Costa 1998; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Holt 1995; Celci and Rose and Leigh 1993; Arnould and Price 1993; Stern 1993; Stern 1994; Scott 1994; Ritson and Elliott 1999; Peñaloza 1994 and 2001). This study adds to the previous research by unravelling further the nature of consumer activity. By identifying the key features of consumer activity in the meaning-making processes the study suggests that consumers themselves are aesthetic agents who stay and move in the various ends of experience continuums.

This study has provided insights into consumer response to cultural services. Previous research in consumer culture theory has noted that the meanings of a particular cultural object or action are always constructed through a cultural process called intertextuality (Holt 1997, 329). This claim also holds true in the construction of consumption experiences. In this study I have investigated aesthetic agency in consumer response. Above I have described the nature of aesthetic agency by discussing the actions performed, objects appreciated and aesthetic knowledge created by the aesthetic agents in exhibition consumption. I argue that there is an aesthetic agency that makes intertextual connections. Consumers compare different cultural services with each other e.g. in the dimension of pleasure. The services can be from the same genre such as two exhibitions that the visitor has seen or the comparison can occur between different genres such as in the case of comparing an exhibition with a concert. Moreover, intertextuality can be present in the

consumption of cultural services in the form of bringing in past experiences of any kind to the process of experiencing an exhibition. Hence, experiences originating from the different dimensions of a person's life such as family, work, or hobbies are sources from which elements are brought from intertextuality to fill the empty slots in the exhibition narratives.

As a result of the analysis, this study suggests that there is an ongoing and multilevel production of meanings on experiences in the consumption of cultural services. The first level of negotiation occurs inside a thematic entity. These thematic entities are sensibility, progress, corporeality, and fellowship. In every thematic entity there exists a continuum and points of an ideal experience and excess type of experience. The negotiation, namely production of meanings, happens along this continuum. An excess type of experience is difficult to tolerate and this may lead to a situation in which the consumer is transferred from a particular encounter to another type of encounter. This is an example of the second type of negotiation that occurs between different states of being. The third level of negotiation occurs when the consumer is negotiating between the present experience and his or her expectations or negotiating between the present experience and the post consumption experiences. The fourth type of negotiation occurs when the consumer is comparing the particular experience with his or her other experiences of cultural services. Moreover, it can be suggested that the particular type of knowledge circulating in the marketplace of cultural services is fundamentally aesthetic knowledge.

In previous literature on consumption sociology Edgell, Hetherington and Warde (1997) have highlighted four typologies of consumption experience. These are family experiences resulting from family ties, friendship experiences resulting from reciprocal relations within community, citizenship experiences connected to relations with the state, and consumer experiences linked to exchanges with the market. The study adds to Edgell, Hetherington and Warde (1997) by unravelling the consumer experiences in the context of cultural services. This study suggests that consumption experiences are constructed in the on-going processes of meaning-making in the marketplace. The cultural themes identified in the process of consumption are sensibility, progression, corporality and fellowship. It is argued that these themes provide the form for the consumption experience in cultural service consumption.

In services marketing theory, it is from the service encounters that customers build their perceptions of the service (Gröönroos 2000, 112; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, 99). In the service encounters, consumers receive a picture of the organization's service quality (e.g.

Grönroos 1982; Parasumatran, Zeithaml and Berry 1985). For organizations it is important to know how consumers perceive the value of services. Each service encounter affects the customer's overall satisfaction and the willingness to use the organization's services again and report a positive experience (Johnson and Zinkhan 1991). This study adds to service marketing theory that the service encounter is also a site where consumers struggle for control of meaning. In the encounter they are provided many with kinds of information about the cultural service and related experiences. Consumers also bring their own experiences and knowledge to the encounter. They do not always submit the representations presented to them, but strive to reproduce their own meanings of the particular cultural service and related experiences. Hence, the encounters are important sites where the struggle for control of meaning occurs.

In this study I have followed the idea presented by Valtonen (2004, 166) according to which research questions apart from being curious questions are also political questions. In general, the question of the politics of doing research has aroused interest in previous research (Moisander 2001, Meriläinen 2002, Valtonen 2004, Oksanen-Ylikoski 2006). In earlier cultural research focusing on consumption experiences, the political dimensions have touched on, or example, gender in reader response (Radway 1984) and consumer subjectivity in green consumption (Moisander 2001) as well as role of ethnicity in marketing (Peñaloza 1994; Peñaloza and Gilly 1999). Previous research in marketing has often been interested in consumer experiences because marketers have needed the information about consumers in order to control them better. The purpose of this study has been to unravel the nature of meaning-making as a negotiation or struggle for control of meanings between different marketplace actors. In doing so, the study has aimed to extend the understanding concerning power of meanings in the cultural service marketplace. The study shows that there are different parties struggling for power and the control of meanings. Moreover, the study shows that consumers also have the power to produce meanings for cultural services and related consumption experiences.

In the area of consumer culture approach it has been suggested that there is an overemphasis on extraordinary experiences and that this is somewhat problematic for the development of the theory (Carù and Cova 2003). Partly this may be because these types of experiences interest marketers. This remark leads us to focus our attention on the different types of experiences and more specifically on those experiences that are included as topics of analysis but also on those that are excluded from these analyses. What kinds of

experiences are marginalized in the analyses of consumption in the consumer culture approach? Why are they marginalized?

This study suggests that one such excluded consumption experience is bodily wellness in experiencing cultural services since most attention goes to analysis of more mental types of experiences. Moreover, in the analyses of cultural services the negative experiences are often ignored. At a more general level, this study suggests that there are some elements in the conventional experience that are left unexplained in the predominant conceptualizations of experiences in consumer culture theory. The exhibition experience is an example of an experience where conventional experience also plays a significant role. Other examples of conventional experiences are visits to a local supermarket, clothing shop, hair salon, or commuting by metro or bus as well as a visit to a local pub. In this type of experience, the mode of experiencing is typically already familiar. It may be more tempting to explore experiences that are more 'exotic' in nature and not so close to the experiencing person. All these ways of experiencing are familiar to us. In sum, I suggest that the conceptual space between conventional experience and extraordinary experience leaves room for new studies and conceptualizations.

This research adds to the marketing research by investigation of the assumptions of consumption experience. In marketing management research (e.g. Kotler and Armstrong 2004; Grönroos 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner 2003) experiences are included as part of a transaction. In product marketing the key idea is that the consumer has a need or problem and marketing provides an answer. The product marketing approach leads producers to think about products and services on three levels (Kotler and Armstrong 2004, 279). Each of these levels adds more value. The most basic level is the core benefit, which deals with what the customer is actually buying. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 279), on the second level, product planners must turn the core benefit into an actual product. They need to develop product features, design, a quality level, a brand name, and packaging, as well as other attributes to deliver the core benefit. Lastly, product planners must build an augmented product around the core benefit and actual product by offering additional consumer services and benefits. Kotler and Armstrong (2004, 280) state the following: consumers see products as complex bundles of benefits that satisfy their needs. When developing a product, marketers must first identify the core consumer needs the product will satisfy. They must then design the actual product and find the ways to augment it in order to create the bundle of benefits that will provide the most satisfying consumer experience. In sum, this study

suggests that the key assumption in product marketing is that the consumer has needs and seeks satisfaction for these needs by buying and consuming the product. Product experience is defined as satisfying or not satisfying depending on how well the customer needs are met during the consumption experience. *This study suggests that, metaphorically, experiencing can be described as a 'transit hall 'through which the consumer must pass in order to satisfy the needs or benefits sought from the product.*

The services marketing approach has emphasized the role of experiences in more distinct ways than product marketing. In the simplest terms, services are deeds, processes, and performances (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, 3). This study suggests that the key assumptions relating to experience/experiencing in services marketing are the following. The consumer has needs and thus seeks satisfaction of these needs by buying the service. This assumption is similar to product marketing. However, in services marketing continual interaction between consumer and service provider is emphasized. It is in these encounters that the service experience is gradually produced. *Thus, this study suggests that metaphorically a service experience can be described as 'path of control points' where consumer and service provider encounter each other.* The service provider must perform as well as possible at all the control points in order for the consumer to gain maximum satisfaction. The consumer in turn evaluates the actions of the service provider at the control points, and if the customer is in a good mood, he or she is likely to be more willing to participate in the service production process.

In the table below I have collected the usual assumptions of consumption experience in marketing research. I add to this my view on experiences. This study suggests that in experience-based marketing a key feature is the activity of aiding the consumer to find something unknown, unnoticed or new. For example, art often challenges and provokes people. Consequently, they may feel unsatisfied because their needs are not immediately met. However, by being provoked, art consumers sometimes confront new ideas or feelings that they were unable to recognize before. In this process the marketer of experiences is a guide that leads and assists consumers. The unnoticed or new can be found in various experiences. Often these matters can be found in everyday experiences and routines. An example of everyday experiences is the taking of a walk (e.g. Carù and Cova 2003). This can be modified into quiet meditative walk that you want to take by yourself or group walking that is sometimes called an 'idea walk' and practiced at work. Sometimes walking is a form of sport that is done with poles in your hands and called Nordic walking (Shove

and Pantzar 2005). *In experience-based marketing it can be understood that consumers are explorers that throw themselves into different types of experiences and enjoy the unexpected that they confront. The metaphor for experiencing is discovery.* This is because each interaction in the marketplace can be a potential source of finding something new. This also includes the finding of a new angle in more familiar things.

Table 16. Comparison of the assumptions of the consumption experience in marketing research

	Product	Service	Experience marketing
Core in experience	Satisfying needs/benefits	Satisfying needs	Assisting in finding and encountering something new, unknown or unnoticed
Consumer	Buyer	Evaluator	Explorer
Producer	Manufacturer	Provider	Guide
Metaphor of experiencing	Transit hall	Path of control points	Discovery

8.3 Evaluation of the study

This research has been qualitative in nature. The term qualitative implies an emphasis on the qualities of entities and on processes and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2003, 8). Thus, this study has tried to emphasize the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, namely the exhibition experience, as well as the situational requirements that shape the inquiry (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2003, 8). Moreover, it has sought a better understanding of how consumption experience in exhibitions is created and given meaning by visitors. The quality of academic research is traditionally evaluated in terms of validity, reliability and generalizability (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 23).

In this study *validity* commonly refers to the accuracy of the representations and generalizations made by the researcher, namely how true the claims made are in the study

and how precise is the interpretation (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 24). However, in doing cultural research, this kind of understanding of validity is problematical. This is because in cultural research it is understood that knowledge is never value-free and that it is quite impossible for any method to discover the ultimate truth of the matters in social interaction (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 24). In this study I used multiple methods, multiple modes of data collection and multiple empirical materials and perspectives to improve the validity. By means of multiple materials and methods I have sought to add rigor, breadth, richness and depth to the research (cf. Denzin and Lincoln 2003, 8; Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 25). In the course of the study, I continuously asked several informants for their reflections on my findings. The interviewees and essay writers participated anonymously in the study. Hence, I had to frequently discuss my findings concerning exhibition visiting with several acquaintances how they see them. By doing this I wanted to test whether the findings are part of people's everyday knowledge of exhibition visiting.

In addition, I keenly followed the media and observed how they represented exhibition consumptions and exhibition in general. In addition, I also carefully listened to conversations concerning exhibition visiting at work, at exhibitions and other such places. Here I was especially interested in what kind of expressions people use and how the cultural themes that I had identified were present in those conversations. On the basis of these dialogues and discussions, it was possible to reflect the study throughout the process. This increased the validity of the study. Moreover, to improve the validity of the research I conducted a new round of interviews in Helsinki Fair Centre. The interviews were collected in the Helsinki International Boat Show arranged in Helsinki Fair Centre (10.-18.2.2007). In there I interviewed 19 visitors and the total amount of interviews was 10. The interviews were used to control that the findings of the research are valid. No weaknesses were found.

Moreover, my own experiences on visiting different exhibitions helped me to increase the validity of this research. Based on my own experiences, the interviews were a success: the interviewees provided important knowledge on exhibition consumption. Moreover, the validity of the research was improved by examining the existing research on exhibition consumption as well as the nature of cultural services and applying these to the data. I then attempted to create a versatile picture of the process of exhibition consumption and how consumers communicate its meanings.

Concerning the validity, I drew on the view that the validity of research is something to be decided by the audience of the research reports (cf. Moisander and Valtonen 2006,

26). It is the community of scholars who evaluate the interpretations produced by this study. It is also said that research that problematizes taken-for-granted ideas and attempts to offer new perspectives to consumers, policy-makers and marketers seems 'valid' (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 26). In this study I have tried to fulfil this requirement by providing knowledge on exhibition consumption as a process comprising four cultural themes through which consumers communicate their experiences. The knowledge provided by this research will help organizations providing exhibition services to better meet the needs of visitors.

Reliability usually refers to the degree to which the findings of a study are independent of the accidental circumstances of their production (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 27). In order to meet the demand for reliability, I have conducted the overall practice of doing research in a systematic and rigorous manner (cf. Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 27). In practice this means that I have carefully recorded and transcribed the interviews as well as transcribed the consumer essays. Moreover, while writing the final report, my objective has been to make the research procedures as transparent as possible by discussing the theoretical standpoint and the methodological choices in a detailed manner as well as by justifying the choices that I have made. It is also said that the researcher must be careful when dealing with a language that is not one's own (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 28). In this research the data was in Finnish and the report is written in English. In order to minimize errors in translations a professional translator was consulted several times regarding the accuracy of the language.

In terms of *generalization*, cultural analysis is concerned with understanding and interpreting the historically specific rules and conventions that structure the production of meanings in particular historical contexts (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 28). Often the rules and conventions are rather well known to the members of the same culture. Thus, in many cases generalization of the findings is not the problem. Instead, the challenge is to understand and interpret taken-for-granted but poorly understood cultural practices (Moisander and Valtonen 2006, 27). In this study, I rely on the idea of naturalistic generalization (e.g. Stake 1995, 42). In this approach to generalization, the research phenomenon is described with a sufficient descriptive narrative so that the readers may be able to notice particular happenings in their own life and thus draw conclusions. For example, in terms of exhibition visiting it is important to notice that the consumer body is often rather unnoticed when planning exhibitions. Conceptualizations of the consumer body in exhibition culture may prompt consumers to connect their experiences of not feeling well

or getting tired at exhibitions. This may help them to understand their dislike for visiting exhibitions.

8.4 Areas of further studies

Areas of further studies touch upon consumer culture theory, the marketing research approach investigating cultural services, services marketing and network marketing, as well as design management. In the field of consumer culture theory, one could theoretically develop each cultural theme further, namely sensibility, progress, corporality, and fellowship. One interesting direction would be to investigate whether these themes are present in the consumption of other cultural services and products. In addition, an interesting topic for future studies is to investigate how the themes that this study has identified are negotiated by other marketplace actors such as critics and curators in the field of contemporary art.

In future studies one could place more attention on the ethical dimension in the consumption of cultural products and services. The following questions are of particular interest. What kind of moral problems are connected with experience-based society? Which role has the moral consumer agency in experience production? In the marketing research approach an interesting future topic could be analysis of art as brand. Moreover, an important future topic of investigation would be the critical analysis of the marketing concepts for the analysis of cultural services as well as further development of these concepts. Moreover, an interesting theme for further analysis is the role of consumers as knowledge providers in network marketing. In design management an interesting area where the results of this study can be applied and further investigated is the design and management of services and experiences. Moreover, the role of media in the marketing of cultural services is an important area of further research.

8.5 Managerial implications

This study has raised a number of important matters of particular consideration for managers in the experience economy markets as well as markets that are closely related to experiences as a source of economic value. The first implication concerns the commodification of experiences. Based on the analysis, I suggest that the key in the

processes of commodification is in an understanding of the cultural nature of the experience potential. In this study, I have identified four cultural themes that are present in the consumption process of cultural services. Each one of these themes includes a particular type of potential for experience offering. Moreover, I suggest that it is not necessary that these 'experience potentiality entities' are of equal importance in the actual experience offering. It can be that in various experience offerings these potentiality entities are 'weighted' differently. At the moment emotional and knowledge-related responses are emphasized at art exhibitions. The dimension of knowledge is emphasized in furniture and interior decoration fair. This study suggests that in the production of exhibitions of contemporary art, it might be useful to emphasize also the corporeal aspect. This aspect could be taken into account in the design of exhibitions and also in the architecture of the buildings. Hence, there are more places of rest and breaks for the people visiting the premises. An example of this kind of architecture is to place a (small) cafeteria in between the exhibitions as it is done in the building of Fundació Miró in Barcelona. There visitors can momentarily step out of the exhibition, have coffee, converse with a friend, and come then come back to the exhibition.

The third matter that I want to point out is the interplay between corporeal aspects and the functionality in the experience offering. This can be called sense design. One important dimension of sense design is directing consumer movement and well-being at exhibitions or other servicescapes. Especially the distances in the servicescape, guiding of audiences and their movement, and taking care of the right temperatures. Based on the analysis it seems that overly long distances are not preferred. In crowded places such as exhibitions or restaurants, signs play an important role because visitors want to find their way quickly around. In addition, signs can be an important image tool for service companies.

In addition to designing movement and well-being, the design of views, soundscapes or even odorscapes is also important. In view design, the (potential) views from e.g. restaurant tables are carefully considered. The tables could be priced on the basis of views. Moreover, it is thus possible to avoid situations where customers sitting at a particular table are forced to look simultaneously at other customers visiting restrooms. In designing soundscapes for experience-based offerings one can connect different soundworlds into particular tables at the restaurant or exhibition stands.

Another matter of importance that has emerged as a result of this study is the realization that it is important to distinguish between the actual experiencing and experience

as a final outcome. This distinction is also important for the purposes of experience-based product development. Part of the experiencing that takes place at exhibitions is rather conventional in nature. In addition, for some people the entire visit to an exhibition can be conventional in nature. This type of experiencing is similar because of its everyday nature to a visit to a local grocery store or a journey to work by metro. Moreover, experiencing gradually becomes more everyday no matter how extraordinary the offering originally was, because people easily become used to things. This is why it is important to offer breaks with 'miniature high points'. In everyday talk we often hear about these incidents 'That really made my day!' or 'That was really the high point of the day!' The fourth matter of importance is to perceive consumers as negotiators based on their individual orientations in exhibitions. Examples of negotiator positions would be the sensibility, progress, corporeal, and fellowship orientations. The different negotiator positions or roles would also serve as the basis for segmentation of cultural services. For example persons stressing corporeal orientation (e.g. having space and silence around) enjoy different things in the exhibition compared with visitors who value communal features (e.g. discussions with a friend about experiences at the exhibition).

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Table 17: Article data

No.	Date	Newspaper	Title
1	13.6.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kalervo Palsan laaja näyttely syksyllä Kiasmassa (Extensive autumn exhibition of Kalervo Palsa's art at Kiasma)
2	9/2002	Kuukausiliite (HS monthly insert)	Iloa ahdistuksesta Joy from distress
3	9/2002	Kuukausiliite (HS monthly insert)	Paha Palsa (Bad Palsa)
4	9.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kalervo Palsa tulee nyt Kiasmaan (Kalervo Palsa comes now to Kiasma)
5	10.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Eroottisia kuvia: Japani ja Palsa (Erotic pictures: Japan and Palsa)
6	11.9.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Palsa palaa rikospaikalle (Palsa returns to crime scene)
7	15.9.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	'He eivät näe köyttä kaulassani' ('They do not see the rope around my neck')
8	18.9.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Lapsiperheitä varoitetaan Kiasman Palsa-näyttelystä (Families with small children are warned about Kiasmas Palsa exhibition)
9	6.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Kiasman Palsa ei sovi lapsille (Kiasma's Palsa doesn't suit for children)
10	16.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Palsa töissä kolkko näkemys yhteiskunnasta (A cheerless view in Palsas's works of society)
11	16.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Palsa päiväkirjojen kautta (Palsa through diaries)
12	16.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Palsa latalutui päiväkirjalleen (Palsa energized himself by writing his diary)
13	18.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Abbakin auttoi koko Ruotsia (Abba helped all of Sweden)
14	20.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	'Kalervo Palsan taide on rehellistä ' (Kalervo Palsa's art is honest)
15	25.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Myytiin takana (Behind the myth)
16	28.10.2002	Helsingin Sanomat	Moraalioppaina Palsa ja Pasolini (Palsa and Pasolini as moral guides)
17	30.10.2002	Ilta-Sanomat	Nykytaide on elämys (Contemporary art is an experience)

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

Interview questions (in English)

1. North Karelia provincial exhibition

Did you come here on purpose or by coincidence?

What gave you the idea to visit this exhibition?

Do you visit other exhibitions?

How would you describe this kind of trade fair or exhibition?

What other similar events are there?

What kinds of hobbies you have?

What does the word 'Karelia' bring to mind?

What did you expect from this exhibition?

Are you interested in a particular product or product group?

Have you bought something here?

How did you find all the interesting stands in the exhibition?

In what basis do you find a particular stand or other place interesting in this exhibition?

What emotions or thoughts did this exhibition provoke?

How would you describe the atmosphere at this exhibition?

How important do you find the presence of other people at this exhibition?

How long have you been here?

Did the fair meet your expectations?

What kinds of things that are not here could be exhibited here?

What additional things, people, products could be here?

What is missing in your opinion?

What is your general opinion of these provincial fairs?

How do you feel that Karelia and Karelian culture fit in the street scene of Helsinki? Now or in general?

How do you see the future of the countryside?

What do you think this would give to other people in Helsinki?

Do you remember your first exhibition experience?

How do exhibitions affect your life? Do you remember them afterwards?

Example of the interview text from North Karelia provincial exhibition:

What do you think about all these provincial fairs?

They're fun, yes. Especially here in Helsinki?

What makes them fun?

You can enjoy a little country atmosphere.

What does that country atmosphere include? What does it consist of, I mean?

Well maybe it's how people are different... when you look at the people working at the stands they're more jovial and they really talk in a different manner, and that's like a fresh breeze from another world. People in Helsinki are so different from people in a corner of North Karelia. Sure this is a cliché but always being in a hurry and shallowness and pointlessness and running after everything is pretty important to people here, in my opinion.

2. Visitor interviews in Habitare:

Did you come here on purpose or by coincidence?

What gave you the idea to visit this exhibition?

How often you visit exhibitions annually?

How about other exhibitions art or pet or? /

How would you describe this kind of trade fairs or exhibitions?

Do you have hobbies that you are especially interested in?

Who made the decision to visit here?

What does the term interior decoration bring to mind?

What are your expectations about this fair?

Are you interested in a particular product or product group?

What have you been doing during your visit?

How do you find all the interesting stands or events at this exhibition?

What is your fundamental principle in interior decoration?

How important do you find the presence of other people at this exhibition?

How long have you been here?

Was something bothering you here?

Did the exhibition meet your expectations?

Any ideas for improvement? Any new services?

How do you feel about interior decoration fairs in general?
How do you see the future of Finnish interior decoration based on this fair?
Do you read interior decoration magazines?
Do you remember your first exhibition experience?
How the exhibitions affect your life? Do you remember them afterwards?

Example of the interview text from Habitare:

What influenced your decision to visit this exhibition?
Perhaps it was seeing more or less the current trends and how art has changed in two years, I mean, is there anything new and...
Well, because I want to stay up-to-date and feel that I would miss out on something if I didn't come and we get a lot of foreign interior decoration magazines and stuff at school so I guess I want to compare and see if we're far behind or what, and how.
You mentioned seeing if there's something new, well, is there?
Has anything happened in two years?
Well, I'm a little surprised that in the end, there was so little new
These small, small ideas, here and there, like, but generally speaking, generally speaking there was nothing new really ...

Essay task in the contemporary art museum, Kiasma:

Information on the 'note pad' that I prepared beforehand for each informant (visitor essays, Kiasma):

Be, experience and move as you wish in the Kiasma museum
Make notes about your experience
You can for example write about:
How an object drew you towards it/made you distance yourself from something
What kind of feelings did you experience?
How did you move about in Kiasma?
Please, return to the lecture room at 12 o'clock.

Example of the visitor essay text from Kiasma data:

Many of the works are just baffling, though. I just can't understand what point they are trying to make. But if I spend some time and observe the work itself, I often catch hold of an idea. So the artwork, too, opens up to me in a completely new way, as I'm sure it opens up to others, too. Contemporary art makes me feel stupid. And yet on holidays or when I travel on business I go to exhibitions whenever I can. What makes me feel stupid is that it is so hard to understand this form of art. Sometimes I think to myself why on earth did someone do that - a child could have done it. If it is really bad I burst out with 'dear God', what is that supposed to be! Sometimes I try to fool myself. I play a game with myself. I try to understand the artworks better than I actually do. At least I try to look more interested and knowledgeable. That's what everyone else does, right? I can't let other see that most of the artworks at Kiasma are incomprehensible to me, can I?

APPENDIX 2: ENDNOTES

¹ Kotler and Scheff (1997, 192-193) identify three layers in product offering, namely core product, expected product and augmented product.

² The Cygnaeus Gallery grew out of the art collection bequeathed by Professor Fredrik Cygnaeus (1807-1881) to the Finnish nation. The collection at the time of donation consisted of about 200 works. The museum is located in Cygnaeus' summer villa in Kaivopuisto Park, which is one of the few wooden buildings in downtown Helsinki. Source: <http://www.nba.fi/en/gygnaeusgallery>.

³ The names of the exhibitions in English are in parentheses. The fairs in the table were selected on basis of the number of visitors amounts (above 15,000 visitors/fair).

⁴ <http://www.museoliitto.fi/viestimille/tilastot.htm>

⁵ The names of the exhibitions in English are in parentheses.

⁶ Theories in the social sciences and humanities which postulate structures are known as 'structuralist'. The structuralist revolution that conquered the social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s demonstrated that meanings are relationally constructed (Holt 1997, 328). The most influential figures in the structuralist movement were Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Levy-Strauss. The basic assumption of the structural approach is that meaning is an emergent property of systematic relations of difference. (Holt 1997, 328; Douglas and Isherwood 1979; Mick 1986). Structuralism proffers culture as a closed, idealist and often universal system of meanings that has direct symmetric relation to people and objects in the world (Holt 1997, 328). It differs in this from the poststructuralist thinking.

⁷ In the following I will present the basic assumptions of social constructionism based on Burr (1997, -5-7) that are relevant in this study. Moreover, I will discuss the role of these assumptions in this research. In social constructionism it is understood that language is an essential pre-condition for thought (Burr 1997, 6-7). This study relies on this assumption and agrees that language provides us with the categories needed to talk about different experiences. Language also affects how people in different cultures understand the term experience. Moreover, language provides us with the terms for different experiential actions. By focusing on interactions between people, and seeing them as actively producing knowledge that we take for granted, it becomes clear that language also has more roles than those of mere self-expressions. The use of language is understood as a form of action. This is a different view from that of traditional psychology, in which language has been regarded as a passive vehicle for thoughts and emotions. (Burr 1997, 6-7). This study relies on this assumption of language as a form of social action and considers language as an action by which experiences take shape. For example, when interviewees told me about their exhibition experiences, the experiences obtained their shape. Disciplines such as traditional psychology have sought explanations of social phenomena inside the person, for example by hypothesizing the existence of attitudes, motivations and emotions. Sociology in turn has traditionally countered this by focusing its interest on social structures. However, social constructionism regards social practices as the main focus of enquiry (Burr 1997, 7). In sum, explanations can be found neither in the individual psyche nor in the social structures alone, but more or less in the interactive processes that take place routinely between people (Burr 1997, 7-8). In this study the assumption is that without social interaction there are no experiences.

Burr (1997, 8) argues that most traditional forms of psychology and sociology have put forward explanations in terms of static entities, such as personality traits or economic structures. Social constructionists in turn focus their attention on the dynamics of social interaction. The emphasis is thus more on process than structures. The aim of social inquiry has moved from questions about the nature of people or society towards consideration of how certain phenomena or forms of knowledge are achieved by people in interaction. Knowledge is therefore seen not as something that a person has (or does not have), but as something that people create together (Burr 1997, 8). The processual nature of social construction is present in this study in an understanding of the social construction of meanings. In this study it is not understood that the consumption experience is a static structure. Instead, it is understood that it is an object in an ongoing negotiation of different types of meanings. According to constructionist thinking, it is not possible for scientific disciplines to discover the 'true' nature of people and social life. Instead, it is essential to turn the attention to a historical study of the emergence of current forms of social life, and to the social practices by which they are created (Burr 1997, 6). This study agrees with this assumption and it is understood that knowledge is culturally constructed and historically situated. This is especially important in understanding the role of experiences in today's society. The socially constructed term 'experience' today carries different meanings than for example some decades ago. I learned this in a very profound way when I was giving a presentation and an older member of the audience told me that he thought that perception of the term 'experience' has changed radically over the decades. According to him, experience (in Finnish: *elämys*) used to be something very extraordinary (he also showed this by lifting his hand high and waved it around). He added that nowadays it has become more common and part of everyday life.

⁸ In the Birmingham school of cultural studies there are two schools of thought, 'culturalism', which focuses its interest in researching lifestyles, and the 'structuralist-semiotic' approach, which emphasizes the concept of hegemony in the analysis and its role in the production of meanings in society (cf. Linko 1998).

⁹ Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy in which the study of sensory or sensori-emotional values that are sometimes called judgments of sentiment or taste is an important area of interest. The term aesthetics comes from the Greek "aisthetike" and was later coined by Baumgarten to mean "the science of how things are known via the senses. The word "aesthetics" may mean 1) the study of the aesthetic (all the aesthetic phenomena), 2) the study of the perception (of such phenomena), 3) the study of art (as a specific expression of what is perceived as aesthetic (for more see *Aesthetica* 1759/1758). Since the beginning of the 1990s, there have been discussions in sociology concerning the role of experience in society. Experience (in German: *das Erlebnis*) has been understood as the driving force of the whole society (e.g. Schulze 1992; Pantzar 1998). Interest has also been focused on increasing the role of aesthetization in everyday life (Featherstone 1991; Uusitalo 1998, 1999). Moreover, in the sociology of place (Urry 1990; 1995) as well as in tourism research (Veijola and Jokinen 1994; Selänniemi 1996; Matala 2004), there has been increasing interest in analyzing the cultural construction of aesthetically oriented experiences of different places and spaces. In addition to these perspectives, sociological research on aesthetically oriented experiences has discussed the social nature of art experiences (Bourdieu 1984, 1985) as well as the reception of art and literature (e.g. Eskola 1979, 1998) and visual arts, fiction and museums (Linko 1994, 1998) in people's lives. These studies (Eskola 1998; Linko 1998) have focused on analyzing the nature of people's longing for authentic experiences as well as the nature of emotional experiences in art reception. Hence, these studies have provided knowledge about the role of cultural products and services in people's lives.

¹⁰ It is important to note there that the interpretations of reader response theory differ to some extent in different literatures. For instance, Eskola (1990, 190-193) talks about the Konstanz school of reception aesthetics that originally concentrated on the analysis of literature response. The best-known representatives of this school are Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser. Characteristic of this school of thought is the examination of literature as a dialectic process between production and response. The text does not have stable meanings but the dialectic process between production and reading determines that meanings cannot be produced in an arbitrary manner. Meanings can also be understood to exist only in readers and that the text in itself does not play a determining role in meaning production. The American Stanley Fish (1980) is an example of this approach (Eskola, 1990, 203; Sulkunen 2003, 159).

¹¹ Aesthetic theories date back to the reasoning of the Greek philosophers and truth, virtue and beauty have been the three insuperable values of Western thought. The concept of beauty is closely connected with the other two, since the meaning of beauty is often determined in relation to these values. The traditional ways to understand beauty can be divided into four categories. These are beauty as mathematical relations, beauty as brightness, beauty as good and beauty as a source of pleasure (Haapala and Pulliainen 1998).

¹² The concept of culture carries diverse meanings. It can be said that one conceptualization of culture may refer to only a small group of people whereas another one refers to mankind as whole (Häyrynen 2006, 21). In the following, I shall focus on the notion of “cultural” and discuss how this term relates to the notion of culture. I shall also discuss how cultural is understood in this study. In the Oxford English Dictionary the word cultural relates to 1) culture of the mind, manners, etc. 2) civilization or 3) culture of plants, or of fish, etc. The term ‘culture’ has historically meant different things. The original meaning of culture has been to take care of or cultivate crops and animals in agriculture. Later on, during the era of the Enlightenment, the term culture came to mean the process of human development, namely civilization. During the era of Romanticism and the rise of nationalism, the term came to mean more the specific and diverse cultures of different nations and peoples (Williams 1986 [1961]; du Gay et al. 1997). Through the concept of culture, it was possible to describe the way of life of particular groups, peoples, nations and periods. This meaning of culture is still active when the word culture is used to refer to the particular and distinctive way of life of a particular social group or period. In the nineteenth century, the term acquired a narrower meaning, referring to intellectual refinement associated with the arts, philosophy and learning. It is this particular meaning of culture that is present today when the word culture is connected with ‘high art’ as compared with more popular type of culture or mass culture (Williams 1986 [1961]; du Gay et al. 1997, 11-12; Häyrynen 2006). This definition of culture is present in this study as the focus of the analysis, namely cultural services. The everyday understanding of the notion “culture” behind cultural services comes close to that of civilizing and cultivation of one’s mind by consuming high culture such as opera and art exhibitions. However, I suggest that nowadays the category of cultural services may be broader. For example, experience-related services such as nature tourism may well fall under the category of cultural services.

¹³ The friendliness of the contact persons working in the ticket office, wardrobe, cafeteria and bookstore all facilitate the formation of a good overall image of the art museum. Also, enjoyable surroundings for art, such as the museum building and its surroundings leave a mark on the overall consumption experience (see e.g. Bitner 1992). In addition, the visual appearance of a museum’s logo, the colors selected for printing material and banners outside the building, and the museum’s website affect all the overall consumption experience.

¹⁴ The face-to-face encounters occur between an employee and a customer in direct contact. In these encounters verbal and nonverbal behaviours are important determinants of quality. In addition, tangible cues such as costumes or uniforms and other elements of service such as equipment, information brochures and the physical setting of the service. In face-to-face encounters the

customer also plays a role in creating service for himself or herself through his or her own behaviour during the interaction. Remote encounters occur without any direct human contact (e.g. ATMs). In the remote encounters the tangible evidence of the service and the quality of the technical processes and systems become the primary bases for judging quality. In phone encounters, the customer interacts with the organization by phone. In these encounters the tone of voice, employee knowledge, and effectiveness in taking care of customer matters turn out to be central criteria for judging quality in these encounters (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, 102-104; Shostack 1985, 243-254).

¹⁵ For example the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry 1985; Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Perry 1988) explains service encounter quality (how an organization performs in the eyes of the customer) in terms of tangible, reliable, assuring, empathetic, and responsive dimensions (e.g. Raajpoot 2004). Each service encounter affects the customer's overall satisfaction and the willingness to use the organization's services again and report a positive experience (Johnson and Zinkhan 1991). It also has been stressed that consumer moods during the service delivery have an impact on the consumer's overall evaluation of the service encounter (e.g. Mattila and Enz 2002). For the service organizations in turn, each encounter presents an opportunity to prove its potential as a service provider and to increase customer loyalty (Zeithaml and Bitner 2003, 100). Many positive experiences add up to a composite image of high quality, whereas several negative interactions will lead to the opposite effect.

Previous research has shown that even though the average performance of the service provider during the encounter in a service delivery is important, it is also essential to provide some peak performances for the formation of consumer satisfaction (Verhoef, Antonides and de Hoog (2004, 50; Walker 1995). This means that managers of the service encounters should not only manage the overall performance of the service encounter but provide some positive peak experiences as well. Price, Arnould and Tierney (1995, 83) have extended the understanding of service encounters by considering three "dimensions of "the moments of truth" when the customer interacts with the service provider". They argue that these relationship dimensions are temporal duration, affective or emotional content, and the spatial proximity of the service provider and the customer.

The service marketing approach emphasizes that consumers spend time in evaluating services. Evaluating services is considered to be more time consuming than choosing and evaluating products. This is because services are intangible and nonstandardized and because consumption is closely intertwined with production. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003, 36-37) divide the stages of consumer decision making and evaluation of services into following five categories: 1) need recognition, 2) information search, 3) evaluation of alternatives, 4) purchase and consumption, and 5) post purchase evaluation. The process of buying a service is understood to begin when the consumer recognizes that he or she has a need or want. Another similar way is to classify the formation of service into four groups by timing (classification of consumer experiences): 1) anticipated consumption (including search behaviour), 2) the actual purchase of the good or service, 3) consumption experiences, and 4) remembered consumption (experiences that are relived over a period of days, months or years and perhaps retold to others) (Arnould and Price and Zinkham, 2002, 347; Walker 1995). It is said in the previous literature that the goal of the artist is to broaden human experience (e.g. Kotler and Scheff 1997, 16). Sometimes the artist must take the audience through a period of uncomfortable experiences of purification and astonishment or even disgust in order to reach the goal of broadening human experience. This leads to the fact that in the marketing of cultural services immediate satisfaction may not always be the ultimate goal.

¹⁶ To improve the validity of the research I conducted a round of interviews in Helsinki Fair Centre in 2007. The interviews were collected in the Helsinki International Boat Show arranged in Helsinki Fair Centre (10.-18.2.2007). In there I interviewed 19 visitors and the total amount of interviews was 10.

¹⁷ Telephone conversation (29.8.2006) with information officer Maarit Roschier, City of Helsinki.

¹⁸ Rural Advisory Center of North Karelia, the Regional Council of North Karelia, North Karelia Chamber of Commerce as well as the culture boards of North Karelia and the City of Helsinki.

¹⁹ Telephone conversation (29.8.2006) with information officer Maarit Roschier, city of Helsinki.

²⁰ A couple was interviewed. The sayings of the man/husband are marked with (m) and the woman/wife with (w).

²¹ Even though this activity is present in all three sets of data, the following examples are from Kiasma. This is because the activity is especially present in the Kiasma data. One reason for the significant presence of this sub-theme is that the Kalervo Palsa exhibition was strongly promoted in articles in Helsingin Sanomat (the main newspaper in Finland) and other media belonging to the same company while data were collected. In this way people had a chance to find out more about the emotions that the exhibitions might bring forth. There is also talk about finding information about the particular exhibition in the other two sets of data, but the emotions are not mentioned so clearly in these texts.

²² In general the reason for this might be that both exhibitions had only familiar objects on show. At the Habitare exhibition there was nothing extremely avant-garde on show and most of the furniture and other interior decoration objects were practical and quite conservative or even traditional in nature. In the case of the North Karelia exhibition, the region as such was familiar to informants and many of them originate from that area. For Finns in general, Karelia as a region is known for its mythical meanings (see more Peñaloza 2001 on cultural meanings of the West).

²³ There were discussions concerning the suitability of the coexistence of the Kiasma building and the immediate adjoining statue of Marshal, Carl-Gustav Mannerheim (Mannerheim was the military leader in the Finnish Civil War of 1918 and commander-in-chief of the Finnish forces in the war against the Soviet Union (1939-1944). He has been perceived as a national symbol of Finland's valour against a much stronger enemy as well as the country's will for independence. The debate on locations rapidly took on symbolic dimensions and active opponents of the building claimed that the "honour of Mannerheim" would somehow be threatened if the new building were placed close to his statue (Uusitalo and Ahola 1994, 7-8).

²⁴ In this study I understand 'bodily' and 'corporeal' as synonyms.

²⁵ A sublime gaze in turn takes place in loneliness, nature. It is spoiled when shared with other people. (Veijola and Jokinen 1994, 138).

²⁶ For marketers, an interesting possibility with senses might be a situation in which one tries to determine what kind of 'names' consumers have for different types of hearing, tasting, smelling, or touching.

²⁷ See more about data collection in methodology chapter. The media data were collected by administrative officers of the Central Art Archive in Helsinki.

²⁸ The exhibition 'Comeback' presenting Kalervo Palsa's art was in the Kiasma Art Museum from September 14, 2002 to January 1, 2003. The first comprehensive story of the exhibition appeared on the culture pages of Helsingin Sanomat on September 15, 2002. This one page article (1) represented the exhibition as follows. The article was organized around four themes 1) representation of the artist, his life history, what kind of person he was, how he looked, what persons were closest to him, his art, 2) description of the exhibition: what kind of art works were at the exhibition and how they ended up at Kiasma, 3) how to experience the exhibition.

²⁹ In the Habitare exhibition and the North Karelia outdoor exhibition data some of the interviewees also discussed how they had found out about the exhibitions. They mentioned that they had found out about the event from the media. The main sources of information were newspapers and radio advertising. Also, other types of promotion such as free tickets and invitation cards were mentioned in the texts.

³⁰ Previous studies have found that mobile phones can become symbolic polluters of free time (Valtonen 2004, 108-111). I see that in the case of exhibition consumption, mobile phones are an example of the 'status markers' that people should be stripped of when entering the exhibition. They connect people to everyday life (e.g. stressful work life, busy family life), and hence, they may disturb actual concentration on experiencing.

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Kirjakauppa
Runeberginkatu 14-16
00100 Helsinki
Puh. (09) 4313 8310, fax (09) 495 617
Sähköposti: kykirja@ky.hse.fi

Helsingin kauppakorkeakoulu
Julkaisutoimittaja
PL 1210
00101 Helsinki
Puh. (09) 4313 8579, fax (09) 4313 8305
Sähköposti: julkaisu@hse.fi

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