NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Reflections on Museum 'Lates' and Their Millennial Visitors

Stina Celine Gjerdingen

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Abstract

There is something happening in museums after hours; there are drinks served to the sound of live music, an offer to experience the art exhibitions in a setting that differs wildly from any regular day at the museum. In Oslo, these experiences come in the shape of the events 'Art Night' at the Astrup Fearnley Museum, and 'Late Night' at the Munch Museums.

Young adults, most of whom belong to the 'millennial generation', seem to be flocking to the scene to partake in this new museum experience. With this thesis, the aim is to reflect on why these events developed to become regular features of these two museum programs, why they appear to be so popular among this demographic, and how these events are utilized in the more everyday contexts of their visitors' lives.

These questions will be answered by looking at 'lates' attendance through theories concerning generation, and identity, as well as their presence in social media networks through the specific medium of Facebook-events. With events of this nature, the museum visit has grown out of its physical space into online worlds that span the time long before and after the actual visit, has become a time and place for identity work, self-representation, a place to obtain, maintain, and display cultural capital, as well as a social arena that blend more seamlessly into the free-time of its visitor. The museum is no longer just a space to *see*, but also a place to *be seen*, a place for the social, and a place for fun. Through 'lates' these two museums have moved into the 21ˢᵗ century and found a niche suited to fill the needs of a new emerging demographic.

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1: **Introducing 'Lates' and Research Question(s)**

Introduction

There is something stirring in museums after dark. The past few years have seen museums in Oslo keeping their exhibitions open for long into the evening, and young adults are seemingly flocking to the scene to experience art exhibitions in a new setting; there are drinks to be had to the sound of live music, creating an atmosphere that seems far removed from the images conjured up by the traditional idea of the museum. Absent during these nights are the families and the hushed masses, quietly observing museum objects, replaced with quite a different crowd.

These new additions to urban museum programs were characterized by Paul Barron and Anna Leask as "night-time thematic events, or 'Lates'" (2017, 474) in their 2017 article on similar events in Scotland, which works just as well as a description for the events that are now being held at art museums in Oslo; 'Late Night' at the Munch Museum and 'Art Night' at the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Contemporary Art. The past few years have seen these two museums redevelop their visitor programs; on offer now are experiences in the museum space that alludes to an offer of something more than your traditional guided tours or accompanying audio guides; something that might attract a broader, more diverse audience (Barron and Leask 2017, 473). They go on to state that these events combine factors of learning in the museum with a more commercial form of entertainment (Barron and Leask 2017, 474), borrowing elements from night-life and leisure activities.

This thesis will focus on these two specific 'lates', which are reoccurring events at these two museums, usually held one Thursday per month. As the word 'lates' suggests, the museums stay open for longer – usually 'till eleven at night; a time that many might not associate with a museum visit. A more elaborate descriptions of the founding and function of these will be given in a later section.

Through the years of being a museum visitor, and then a student of museology, events such as 'Late night' at the Munch Museum and 'Art Night' at the Astrup Fearnley museum for

Contemporary Art has fascinated me in increasing measures. Their presence when leisure activities are advertised seem to only have grown in frequency – there are advertisements for them regularly on Facebook, appearing in quite the same manner as concerts and DJ-sets at the local pubs. Friends and family, especially those whom might not always find the museum an inviting place to visit, seem intrigued by the idea of having a beer right in the middle of an exhibition space. This initial fascination was what first inspired me to have a close look at this phenomenon.

Around the same time as these events started appearing on my Facebook-feed, the word 'millennial' came to my full attention – newspaper articles are written weekly about the habits (oftentimes destructive) and difficulties facing this generation, born roughly between the year 1980 and 2000 (Pendergast 2010, 2), and the stereotypes being made about this generation that I myself by default is a part of are seemingly endless. A quick Google-search on the word 'millennials' in May 2018 derived over 15 million hits; it is clearly a generational term and concept media society today is infatuated by. This is a new generation of adults now coming to their full right, and with them seem to have emerged a market for new ways of utilizing the museum context that Norwegian museums are just now starting to explore.

With the cases of 'Art Night' and 'Late Night', I hope to investigate how these two specific museums perceive this emerging demographic, and consequently developed a new museum experience that seems to appeal to them like no others, and how, as a result, young adults seem to have found a niche suited to them in the museum that was perhaps previously lacking. Through the medium of these events, I also wish to examine how these young adults utilize the museum context during 'lates' for purposes that might be more ambiguous than the traditional aims of a museum visit, and how the museum as an institution of the twenty-first century inhabits potential to become much more than what is confined within the walls of the exhibition. They move into the fleeting realm of social media networks, where a museum visit is much more than just the simple act of going to the museum.

The subject of 'lates', being such as recent development, is to my knowledge not extensively researched by any means, especially not in the context of Norwegian museums. My curiosity surrounding this way of innovating the visitor experiences, that has perhaps unlocked unknown potential in the experience of art exhibitions that has for year laid dormant, while contributing to the understanding and discussion concerning new developments in current museums, further worked as a motivational factor for the work that has resulted in these following chapters.

Research Question(s) and Thesis Structure

The institution of the museum is in many ways in symbiosis with the community and society surrounding it; museums try to cater to their visitors, offering experiences that they believe to be appealing to the masses. At the same time, visitors will have their own agendas, motivations and goals that drive them into the museum, which might differ from the 'traditional' aims of the museum such as education and preservation of collections.

'Lates' are not only interesting solely because of the new formats for museum experience they have enabled, but also as a testament to a new kind of museum norm for behaviour that seem to have developed through them, encouraged by the demographic they are so popular with. What I wish to investigate in this thesis is the societal frames that inspired and perhaps legitimized the development of 'Art Night' and 'Late Night', and how the millennial generation has adopted the museum through these events to fill different role(s) and purposes in the context of their everyday lives. The research question(s) that I will attempt to answer with the analysis and discussion in this thesis are therefore as follows;

> Why did these events develop to become a regular feature in the visitor programs of these two art museums?

> How does the context of 'lates' affect the way in which people perceive and utilize the museum, and why do they appear to be so popular with the millennial generation?

Before explaining my choices for the different theoretical frameworks I have employed to understand and explain the findings (chapter 2), and the different methods I have utilized to gather information and insight (chapter 3), I will in this chapter briefly introduce the societal context of present-day museums, and briefly introduce the two museums these events are held in. The main aspects of what these events are has already been explained, but a later part of this first chapter will furthermore briefly discuss the selection of these two specific events, and the necessary exclusion of other events of similar nature.

In trying to answer the research questions, the analysis and discussion will be divided into three main sections; I will firstly look at societal factors and 'lates' in the context of this day and age, before taking a closer look at the specific museums and their reasoning for hosting 'lates'. Because this phenomenon is such a recent addition in museums, these first two parts will contain some sections that are more descriptive in nature before going into a more analytical mode. A third section will reflect and discuss the more personal and intimate ways

in which the millennial generation utilizes the museum during 'lates', and how this museum function fit into the contexts of their everyday lives. As is wise when discussing all new practices, these reflection and discoveries will be followed by some critical viewpoints as well, which will be explained briefly before 'lates' and its visitors is discussed in a more final summarization. Finally, the thesis will end with a few concluding remarks.

Museums for the Twenty-first Century

Making sense of the role and purposes of the museum in 21st-century is far from an easy task as it seems to grow increasingly ambiguous in nature. Understanding some of these challenges is, however, necessary to contextualize 'lates', and as a beginning step to understand why and how they emerged in the first place. I will in the following section therefore try to create a brief overview of some of the elements making up this changing landscape that has formed the background for the recent development in visitor programs such as 'lates'.

The number of things museums are meant to achieve and produce seem an almost endless list of demands; they should

> change in line with technological advances, conserve works of art, keep catalogues up to date, undertake scholarly activity, monitor and buy contemporary works and increase income from private sources (Foley and McPherson 2000, 164).

They are material places as well as a host for the immaterial, a place for education as well as leisure. The museum is a place that should represent both the past and the present – housing historical objects and keeping the stories they tell, as well as being spaces for the present (Hächler 2015, 351). There is an ambiguity in the basis nature of museums; they must strive to be both past and present at the same time, all the while keeping up with societal change and moving forward into the future. With that, museums moving in new directions to create innovative ways of bringing audiences into the realm of their exhibition spaces should come as no surprise.

Museums will always be shaped by their social and societal context (Macdonald 1992, 158, Black 2012, 1-3), and in a city like Oslo, the largest Norwegian city, that social context includes competition from entertainment venues in a vast variety of shapes and forms where the public can spend their free-time, and "as museum engage in business practice and operate

in a pseudo-market place by attracting customers to visit and by entertaining them whilst in the museum, their role and social purpose has changed" (Foley and McPherson 2000, 162). This is also a society that has evolved out of a technological rebirth, where global interconnectivity and new medias have shifted the ways in which we communicate (Black 2012, 1), and where social media networks has had an immense effect on the nature and behaviour in communities across the western world (Black 2012, 3).

The nature of the museum visitors' free-time has also changed. For most people, the majority of work has gone from being physical labour to mental labour, and leisure time has evolved from being purely about relaxing to becoming an opportunity to expand the understanding of oneself and the world, and is considered a time to immerse oneself in new ideas, spaces, and experiences. (Falk 2009, 41). This is also a time where "everything (…), including leisure, has to be judged by its market value and if it doesn't sell, it is not what is wanted" (Blackshaw 2010, 106).

The museums cannot avoid being influenced and affected by this societal change and growing appetite for more fulfilling leisure activities, which are now tightly interwoven in all aspects of modern life (Stephen 2001, Falk and Dierking 2013, 38). The museum visitors are changing at pace with society, and the way in which they visit museums has therefore also changed:

> much contemporary museum visiting takes place during time which may be described as leisure time, draws upon discretionary income and often occurs with an attendant expectation of a pleasurable experience – the same conditions which, among others, describe the context of many other forms of recreation and amusement (Stephen 2001, 300).

When museums are to an increasing degree competing in this market, where there are more places, ways, and opportunities for leisure than ever before (Falk 2009, 42), having objects on display in the traditional fashion might no longer be enough on its own to keep the institution afloat. Museums that keep evolving in the pace of 21st-century must be a social place, and a place where identity can be constructed, maintained and changed (Rounds 2006, 135), they must be "agents of well-being", be used as "vehicles for social change" and "institutions of social service" (Silverman 2010, 2), and at the end of the day, contemporary museum-goers will use the context of the museum to their own desires and needs, not as dictated or wished for by the museum professionals (Black 2012, 68).

All these aspects form the background for why 'lates' are such an interesting addition to the contemporary museum program, why I wish to research the reasoning behind museums

keeping them on regular rotation in their programs, and why the museum has become so seemingly popular with the millennial generation during these few nightly hours.

The Choice of Museums, and 'Lates' as Case Studies

To establish the setting for the analysis and discussion of 'lates' and their millennial visitors, I feel it necessary to introduce the reader to a few thoughts concerning the choice of 'lates' as case studies, and a short description the two museums in question. There are a few reasons why I chose to focus on these two institutions, and more specifically the event series 'Late Night' (the Munch Museum) and 'Art Night' (Astrup Fearnley), which will be the explained in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, a few practical reasons: these museums are both located in Oslo, which made observations and interviews with staff possible to execute over a longer period. Additionally, having the opportunity to visit the events multiple times to gather observations enabled me to execute a more in-depth analysis of how these events function in their respective museum contexts that could not have been achieved otherwise. Moreover, the repetitive nature of these two events hopefully means that both museums will have had some time to reflect or otherwise gather information on their experiences concerning the introduction of 'lates' into their museum programs.

There are several other events hosted by both museums outside of their normal opening hours, such as openings, vernissages and so on that could technically classify as a 'late' event, but these will not be included as 'lates' in the scope of this research. Several other museums in Oslo have also hosted events of this nature for the past few years (the Norwegian Museum of Science and Technology has a 'late' event called 'SENT' a few times a year, and there have been several other events after regular opening hours at the Cultural History Museum), but these have been excluded due to limitation in time and the scope of a thesis of this size in favour of a more in-depth look. I have also chosen to focus solely on art museums to narrow the scope further. The offers during a 'late' in for instance a science centre will differ quite drastically in form compared to that of the art museum, and limiting the analysis to just one museum type has therefore been beneficial to avoid barely scratching the surface of this large phenomenon.

The Munch Museum and The Astrup Fearnley Museum are two of the largest and most visible art museums in Oslo at present and are therefore competing for and catering to the same local demographic. Although they are both art museums, Astrup Fearnley's contemporary nature and the Munch Museum's monographic, traditional collection creates a divide that sets them apart from one another, which will make for an interesting comparison in the analysis and discussion of these two 'lates'. With these two museums being in close proximity to each other, the people visiting one will also have, at least in a purely practical sense, the opportunity to visit both, and analysing the demographic as one group is therefore justified.

The Museums – A Brief Introduction

To establish the context for these events, this section will briefly introduce the two museums and their aims, to further contextualize these 'lates' and the way they are organized, which will be further described in the pending analysis. This will hopefully help familiarize the reader who might not be native to Oslo with the Munch Museum and the Astrup Fearnley museum.

The Astrup Fearnley Museum of Contemporary Art

The Astrup Fearnley museum is a private museum of contemporary art, celebrating its 25th birthday in 2018. Its collection dates back to the 1960's, with a wide variety of Norwegian and international contemporary artists. The collection is not art historical in composition, but focuses rather on individual artists who have been significant in the development of contemporary art in the past five decades (Astrup Fearnley Museet 2018b).

On the 29th of September 2012 the collection moved into a brad-new museum building at the tip of Tjuvholmen in Oslo, visualized by the world-renowned architect Renzo Piano. The museum itself is separated into three separate sections; surrounding it, the landscape makes up a sculpture park with works from the Selvaag-collection (Astrup Fearnley Museet 2018a), and the indoor exhibition spaces is separated into two separate buildings, one housing the temporary exhibitions, the other the museum's own, private collection, showing works from both national and international contemporary artist ranging from the 1960's till today. The museum's aim is to contribute to the internationalization of the Norwegian art scene through a

continued effort of collaboration and exhibition of international, current artists, as well as being an important actor in the national Norwegian art scene (Astrup Fearnley Museet 2018c).

The Munch Museum

The Munch Museum is for the time being situated at Tøyen in Oslo (it will move to a new location in Bjørvika, the Lambda building currently under construction, in 2020), established to house and exhibit all the works of art left by Edvard Munch as a gift to the county of Oslo after his death in 1944 (the Munch Museum 2018). The museum is tasked with the responsibility of caring for one of the most important contributions to Norwegian cultural heritage; 28 000 works of art, a number of lithographic stones, texts and letters left by the artist, and other personal belongings, making it one of the largest monographic art collections in the world (Munchmuseet 2015, 4), and has from the 1st of May 2010 been governed by the Oslo city council (Munchmuseet 2016, 7).

As many other museums in contemporary society, the Munch Museum has undergone some major changes in the past decade. From 2015, their new mission has been to care for, research, and convey to the public Munch's testimonial gift, alongside the Stenersen collection. They wish to strengthen the interest and knowledgebase concerning Edvard Munch, both locally, nationally, and internationally. They aim to be visible and relevant, both in society and the art world, which they intend to achieve through exhibitions of Munch's art in relation to contemporary and modern art (Munchmuseet 2015, 4-5).

This new vision translated into a new way for structuring exhibitions; an exhibition series of three separate exhibitions a year called *+Munch* kicked off with the *Melgaard + Munch* on 21st of January 2015. An exhibition of this type makes up the entirety of the exhibition space, making the whole museum a space for temporary exhibitions. This new way of displaying Munch art in relation to works of art by different artists, trying to make visible the thematic parallels between the two, generated huge success in generating a new interest for this well-known artist, especially in a new young, contemporary audience (Munchmuseet 2015, 12). This new exhibition format, where the entire museum content is changed at regular intervals created the backdrop from which 'lates' emerged.

Current Research Concerning Evening Events in Museums

Whilst doing the preliminary research for this thesis, new research into the expansion of the museum experience into later hours for an exclusively grown up audience where simultaneously being written and published. Paul Barron and Anna Leask published an article in *Museum Management and Curatorship* (called "Visitor engagement at museums Generation Y and 'Lates' events at the National Museum of Scotland") in the second half of 2017 based on their research on attendance to 'lates' events at the National Museum of Scotland (2017), and there have been a few other articles written on 'lates' in science museums in the UK. These are, however, not concerned with art museums, nor with the Norwegian museums and the Norwegian millennial demographic. Due to the clear similarities in nature between 'lates' in the UK and the events of interest for this dissertation I have nevertheless seen it as beneficial to adopt the usage of the term 'lates' for the purpose of this thesis when referring to the evening events 'Art Night' and 'Late Night'.

With this dissertation, I wish to contribute to this new field of research and try to better understand the apparent appeals of 'lates' for the Norwegian millennial generation. Although the findings might share some similarities to what was found to be the case in Scotland, I am hoping that my method of more in-depth, qualitative interviews can add a new dimension to the already existing research in this field. Instead of solely focusing on the more traditional aims and concerns for the museums that happens during a visit, for instance in terms of factual learning outcomes, I wish to rather try to understand how the museum might impact the visitor's perception and expression of personal identity and group belonging through the medium of 'lates' and how this experience fit into the wider context of their social and cultural lives.

2: **Theoretical Framework**

To understand 'lates', and the role they play within the lives of their visitors, there are mainly two theoretical concepts that will work together to create the theoretical framework. The first part will derive concepts from generational theory, with a main focus on the characteristics of the 'millennial generation', which will be described in more details shortly. This will be supplemented by theories surrounding identity, the concept of 'doing identity work', while briefly touching upon the concepts of cultural capital, and self-representation.

The definitions and characterizations in generational theory when discussing 'the millennial generation' are many, but for the purpose of this thesis I have limited this section of the theory based on the groundwork laid out by Neil Howe and William Strauss in *Millennials Rising: the Next Great generation* (2000), which builds on the original theories concerning generations first developed by Karl Mannheim. Secondly, *Getting to Know the Y Generation* (2010) by Donna Pendergast, whose writing is partially based on the work of the three previously mentioned authors, will be added as a supplement to these to gain a slightly more updated perspective on the societal factors that will have impacted this generation.

The definitions and theories explaining the concept of 'identity' will be limited to the definitions presented by the sociologist Richard Jenkins in *Social Identity* (2008), as well as Jay Rounds' writings on 'doing identity work' concerned with identity as self-representation, and the constant reworking, enactment, and building of identity that happens in relation to the museum experience.

Generational theory is implemented in research throughout a wide array of fields, such as sociology, marketing and communication, product development and media (Pendergast 2010, 8), and when viewed as a supplement to, and in combination with, identity theories, I hope to prove that these ideas can also be a valuable asset in museological research.

The young adults flocking to art museums after nightfall in this urban landscape will, for years to come, make up an important demographic in the museum visiting statistics, that differs from the regular visitors to cultural institutions who "have remained largely white, have been in decline and are getting older" (Black 2012, 15). The world has never seen a generation of adults that have so many possibilities to express their identities – be that through

clothing, hair, attendance to cultural events, and through the very curated, aestheticized extensions of themselves in the online realm, and this new world view will have an impact on how the museums is utilized by its visitors. The theories that will be described in this chapter will create a framework for understanding this new demographic in the context of 'lates'.

Generational Theory and the 'Millennial Generation'

In its broadest, most introductory form "generational theory seeks to understand and characterize cohorts of people according to their membership of a generation, which is objectively assigned according to the year of birth" (Pendergast 2010, 1). Each generation will differ from the one before it, and "each generation brings with them somewhat predictable traits, values and beliefs, along with skills, attributes, capacities, interests, expectations and preferred modus operandi directly attributable to their generational location (Pendergast 2010, 1)". Defining the generational markers for the young adults visiting 'lates' in 2018 will be a useful tool to understand their specific use of the museum space, both in terms of the motivation behind the visit and during the actual stay in the museum. For museums to stand a fighting chance of survival in a rapidly changing society, they must understand the wants and demands of the generations that make up the demographics they work to reach. Understanding the characteristics that sets them apart from the generations before them can be a way of gaining insight into why some groups are absent during a large portion of a museum's opening hours, and an argument for legitimizing the establishment of more 'niche' programs such as 'lates'.

The concepts of generations and generational theory are nothing new – in the mid-20th century Karl Mannheim developed the main features of generational theory, which are still relevant in the 21st century. A generation is defined as "a society-wide peer group, born over a period roughly the same length as the passage from youth to adulthood […] who collectively possess a common persona" (Howe and Strauss 2000, 40). These factors, which further describe the uniqueness of each generation, include concepts such as generational location; a passive category where birth-year determines belonging to a cohort of individuals, generational actuality; the ways in which a generation responds and reacts to social changes in society (Pendergast 2010, 2) and how they are "shaped by events that occur during their formative years of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood" (Twenge and Campbell 2012, 3). The idea is that major shared experiences and common societal conditions will shape how a

generation thinks, their values and their beliefs, and in extension, the criteria essential to meet for a museum to become fascinating enough to warrant a visit.

Thus, every generation has its own 'generational persona'. Although any one individual belonging to a said generation act and think individually, the generational persona consists of factors such as gender roles, politics, religion, and culture that any member have to deal with on some level through the course of their lifetime (Howe and Strauss 2000, 40). A generation is also defined by what they have *not* been exposed to or experienced. For instance, the western generation belonging to the millennial generation, which will be describes in more detail shortly, does not know a world where computer games for entertainment and constant online access are not readily available, just as they have not lived through wars in their home countries that directly threaten their daily lives (Howe and Strauss 2000, 47). The latest link in the long generational chain to have all reached adulthood is the 'millennial generation' (Howe and Strauss 2000, 40), which via my observations seem to make up the majority of visitors attending 'Art Night' and 'Late Night'.

So, what characterizes individuals belonging to the millennial generation? The birth year boundaries for this generation differs slightly depending on literature, but I will operate with the frames that the millennial generation roughly refers to those born between the year 1980 and 2000 (Pendergast 2010, 2, Howe and Strauss 2000, 4). They are the first generation of adults having grown up in a highly technological society with the Internet and cellular devices available to them from a young age – they are 'digital natives' (Twenge and Campbell 2012, 3). These young adults are part of a cultural development where individualism; the desires of the individual self, is on the rise. They also score higher in terms of narcissistic personality traits than previous generations; overconfident with an inflated sense of self (Twenge and Campbell 2012, 5). Compared to generations previous to them, they are overall better educated and more ethnically diverse (Howe and Strauss 2000, 4).

The individuals belonging to the millennial generation are at large in possession of "twenty-first-century skills", such as "information and communication literacy, problem solving, creativity and critical thinking, cross-disciplinary collaborative working, adaptability and multi-tasking" (Black 2012, 1). Their collective traits as a generation have also been defined by many labels; special, sheltered, confident, team-oriented, achieving, pressured, conventional (Howe and Strauss 2000).

Combining generational theory, building on Mannheim's initial theories, and established factors that make up the characteristics of the 'millennial generation', with the concept of identity and "identity work" will make up the basis for the theoretical framework of this dissertation. Generational theory is a broad, socio-cultural theoretical framework, concerned with the larger group (Pendergast 2010, 1), whilst identity theory can be approach on a more micro-level, concerned with the individual. The combination of factors from both will therefore be beneficial when understanding the museums' motivation to reach a new group of visitors, and the more individual wants and needs that exist within this group. While being an individual and expressing individual identity by attending 'lates', all visitors will at the same time have to relate to a larger group. The individual can never separate completely from the group; you cannot *not* belong to a generation, and in some way, shape or form be affected by the characteristics of said group, be that in the form of acceptance or rejection of this group identity (Jenkins 2008, 102-103, Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 387). For instance, although the majority of millennials have a significant online presence, everyone that chooses not to is still connected to this presence in some way – for instance through the stance and active choice to not have a Facebook profile, and thus signal a purposeful rejection from the habit of the majority.

Although generational theory is a concept originally applied to American culture and behaviour, the rapid globalization of the western world through a wide access to the World Wide Web and telecommunication, the generational cohorts defined by, among others, Neil Howe and William Strauss (2000), will be just as relevant when analysing other western cultures (Pendergast 2010, 2) such as the Norwegian.

Identity and Doing 'Identity Work'

> Identity is the human capacity (…) to know 'who's who' (and hence 'what's what') […] a multi-dimensional classification or mapping of the human world and our places in it, as individuals and as members of collectivities. It is a process – identification – not a 'thing' it is not something one can have, or not; it is something that one does (Jenkins 2008, 5)

Such is the basic definition of 'identity' described in Richard Jenkins's book *Social Identity* (2008). The definition of identity can vary depending on context and the material it is applied to, but for the purpose of this dissertation and the analysis that will follow, I will be focusing on the aspects of identity concerning how people go about constructing the frames for the

perception, the outwardly representation, and appearance of an individual 'self', and the constant maintenance and evolvement of these concepts (Rounds 2006). In addition to this, the concepts of group identity and affiliative identity; the notion of "situating the self within the social world and for communicating identity to the intended audience (Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 387)", will also play an essential part in the understanding of millennials' use of museums during 'lates'.

Using identity as a way for understanding museum visitation has been utilized by, to mention a few, John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking in *The Museum Experience Revisited* (2013)¸ and by John Falk in *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (2009), and I will build on these experiences that has already been established in museum research. In his article "Doing Identity work in Museums" (2006) Jay Rounds uses the term 'doing identity work' for the actions individuals take in order to build an image of their identity, both inwardly and outwardly (Rounds 2006, 133), and I will use his work on this as the basis for understanding the millennial identity in the context of 'lates'. Establishing an identity is a complicated, never-ending, and fluctuating process; the individual as the agent constantly formulate intentions and decides for and against interactions and actions, and the world as a contextual structure, both materially (physically) and immaterially (psychologically), is what enables these decisions (Rounds 2006, 137). Simultaneously, identity work means striving to be a part of a larger societal environment whilst at the same time keeping a hold of the individualism that enables a break from the constraints of that construct. The museum can, under the right circumstances, become an arena on which to explore different aspects of personal identity (Rounds 2006, 142), and the museum experience can thus simultaneously construct and signal personal identity (Rounds 2006, 137). If this is done purposefully by the millennials going to museums during 'lates' will be discussed in further detail in chapter 4.

The concept of identity, identity work, and the representation of the self that happens before, during and after visiting 'lates' will also be viewed through the lens of the generational markers for the millennial generation. With the introduction of the online world as a major presence in the lives of everyone living in western society in twenty-first century, new facets in the representation of the 'self' has evolved, with unique possibilities to accurately construct a desired representation of personal identity (Manago and Vaughn 2015, 188). The millennials visiting 'lates' are also shaped by the societal cohort effect – everyone is, in some shape or form, a product of their time and environment, and in this day and age, this is a time

of a global interconnected information economy (Black 2012, 1). The choice of going to the museum, and thus make this a part of their identity, will be affected by said effect.

Part of this 'millennial identity', as will be discussed in the analysis, is participation in more 'highbrow' cultural events that will reflect positively in the display and construction of identity. More precisely, this can be summarized as a desire for 'cultural capital'. This concept was first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu to frame an individual's cultural resources and skills (Hanquinet 2016, 66), and is in rough terms "a set of internalized dispositions that enable people to appreciate artistic and cultural items. (…) People with high cultural capital have *naturally* good taste, which gives them a greater social value and possibly a better position in the social space" (Hanquinet 2016, 67). This is a complex theoretical concept that I will not attempt to further expand on, but being aware of the essence of this concept when discussing the display of identity in museums is a necessity to better understand 'lates' as an instrument in identity-related activities. In this age dominated by digital natives, where life is increasingly aestheticized (Hanquinet 2016, 68), obtaining cultural capital in a very visualized way has become an important aspect to consider when discussing the millennial identity work that happens in the museum. The concept of cultural capital is often used when discussing social mobility, education, and learning (Kisida, Greene, and Bowen 2014, 282), but will in this case be discussed in relation to the self-representation that happens through 'lates'.

The lens of identity-related motivations for museum visitation, alongside the established factors that characterize the demographic in question, can capture "important insight about how visitors make sense of their museum experiences" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 49). In the analysis, the benefits of combining elements from generational theory and identity theory will come to light in the discussion on millennials and their motivations for attending 'lates', and the ways in which the museum is utilized in the context of their lives.

Making sense of the millennial use of the museum will thus be achieved through a patchwork of different theoretical approaches, borrowing from anthropology, sociology as well as museology.

3: **Methodological Frameworks**

Introduction to Methods

Making sense of the function and place of 'lates' in museum programs and the fabric of the lives of the millennials attending them, and the interplay between the two, led to a methodological toolkit for data collection that is an amalgamation of methods borrowed from several different disciplines. Because 'lates' as part of the museum programs in Oslo is a fairly new phenomenon, I could find very little literature on the subject, especially when excluding research on foreign museums. This meant that talking to the ones responsible for 'Art Night' and 'Late Night' would be essential to achieve understanding of the museum's motivations and reasoning for hosting them, and to gain insight in the workings of the more specific natures of these two events. The same can be said for the audiences attending them; they required a voice in this discussion as well, to better ground the theoretical musings in actual experiences. To create a more reflective and nuanced picture of 'lates', information extracted from supporting elements such as their presence on social media (mainly on Facebook) will be used as a key, albeit fragmented, element to visualize the identity work millennials conduct during this kind of museum visitation.

All findings and information given in interviews and through observations will be utilized as illustrations and supporting arguments when discussion the emergence and contemporary function of 'lates' in museums today, and thus the function of these museums in the everyday lives of millennial visitors. Through observations and conversations concerning these events, I also aim to shed some light on the way in which these events, and the museum experience as a whole as a consequence, is not isolated to one specific event, but rather how it inserts itself into an online world, and the lives of the people attending them that might be more expansive and visual compared to a 'traditional' museum visit.

The Semi-Structured Interview as Method

In their book *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing,* on the use of interviews as a qualitative research method, Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann writes:

> At the backdrop to the increasing popularity of qualitative methods stands what may be called a qualitative stance. From this stance, the processes and phenomena of the world are described before theorized, understood before explained, and seen as concrete qualities before abstract quantities. The qualitative stance involves focusing on the cultural, everyday, and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, knowing, acting and ways of understanding ourselves as persons, and it is opposed to "technified" approaches to the study of human lives (2009, 12)

This does, in many ways, capture the essence of why a small selection of in-depth, qualitative interviews and first-hand observations were chosen as the main sources of data for this dissertation. Attending the events themselves is, as a standalone source, not enough to understand the museums motivations for hosting them, nor is it enough to understand their function(s) in people's everyday lives. Rather, hearing thoughts and observations from people responsible for introducing 'lates' to the museum landscape of Oslo, and the experiences of people attending them, in light on my own personal observations and supporting literature, will hopefully bring forth valuable new knowledge and information that will be utilize to analyse the function of 'lates' in the current museum landscape in urban, contemporary society.

In the following sections, I will further detail the ways in which I approached interview as method and the interviewees, as well as the ethical considerations and pitfalls that have been important to stay aware of throughout the process.

Choosing Relevant Interviewees

A few different elements were taken into consideration when selecting who would be relevant, as well as the number of interviews, which will be discussed in the following section.

When deciding on the museum professionals from whom to gather information, the key criteria they had to fill was a first-hand involvement in the planning and/or execution of the events, and therefore an inherent knowledge concerning the key features of 'lates' and their function and place within their respective museum programs. Through conversations with classmates familiar with the Munch Museum and their staff members, I got in contact with

Gitte Skilbred, the leader of the department for communication and marketing, who suggested bringing event coordinator Cecile Hjelm into the conversation as well. At Astrup Fearnley, I contacted the museum directly, who got me in touch with Mathilde Emilie Johnsen, who is responsible for marketing and communication in the museum, and who has been one of the main actors for conceptualizing and establishing 'Art Night'.

Representatives from the two museums provided a voice from one side of the story only, and it was equally as important to find find voices to reflect the experience of 'lates' form the view of the millennial generation. To achieve this, two longer interviews with visitors who had attended several 'lates' in the past were conducted. These both fit into the simple criteria of belonging to the right age group; the millennial generation (roughly, between 20-35). To prevent these two informants being identified, I will refer to them by the fictive names 'Anne' (23 years old) and 'Kari' (21 years old). Anne has a bachelor's degree and is currently working full-time in Oslo. She is not originally from Oslo and has attended events at both the Munch Museum and Astrup Fearnley. Kari is a student currently writing her bachelor's degree, who's also moved to Oslo for this purpose. She has attended only the events at the Munch Museum.

Why In-depth Interviews?

There are both advantages and limitations when choosing a qualitative approach, and doing fewer, more in-depth interviews instead of a quantitative audience survey. There will, for instance, be no broader set of data to determine general trends within this group of visitors. What I hope to be able to achieve instead is a deeper understanding of the thoughts, motivations, and reflections of some. These findings will hopefully be applicable to more anthropological reflections into the case of 'lates' and its position in the workings of the millennial identity and the museum outreach towards this target group.

The thoughts presented by the interviewees will by no means be universal facts, but can rather work as insightful puzzle pieces in the bigger picture of trying to understand the motivation for millennials visiting 'lates', and how that museum experience might fit into their broader life world. The *life world* of millennials is the world which they encounter in everyday life that is "independent of and prior to explanations" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 29) – it is all elements of the perceived world that is taken as a given or taken for granted (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 29, Schutz and Luckmann 1974, 4).

Preparations and Execution

Conversations with staff members at both Astrup Fearnley and the Munch Museum, and with the two museum visitors, were all executed in a semi-structured manner. This meant that I followed an interview guide with prepared questions and themes I wanted to discuss, but when interesting topics arose, or something needed to be clarified or elaborated, I let the interviewee steer the conversation somewhat (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 27). By choosing this method, I wanted to "obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 27). As a preparation for these interviews, all interviewees were given a short description of the project they were contributing to, including general themes and aims, as well as information concerning the role the material they gave would play in this thesis, and their opportunity to withdraw any information they had given me at any time should they feel the urge to do so. This was done in order to make it clear to everyone involved just what they were participating in and contributing their knowledge, meanings and experiences to, according to standard ethical guidelines for this specific method (Pripp 2014, 80 - 83). All interviews were recorded, which was agree upon in advance of all interviews, and the material was transcribed in full afterwards, before the analysis was conducted. The interviews were all reported and conducted within the guidelines of the NSD[1].

Although the approach to conducting the actual interviews were quite similar for all, there are a few distinctions between interviewing museums staff and museum goers I feel the need to emphasize. Firstly, they each represent different sides of the same story, and the prepared questions were therefore of slightly different natures. In conversations with museum staff members, I was more interested in their professional opinions and experiences; the voice closer to that of the museum itself. Their personal lives in this context were of lesser interest. When talking to the visitors, however, their personal experiences concerning 'lates', their perception of the museum during these hours, the context of their lives that led them to the museum and so on would be essential in understanding their role in this whole picture.

Secondly, when presenting the findings in my discussion and analysis I have chosen two slightly different paths when referencing findings from the interviews. As has most likely become apparent already, all three museum staff members will be referred to by their real names and positions at the museum, whilst the museum goers will be given fictional names to keep their identities anonymous. Due to the nature and size of these two museums, making

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[1] NSD is the Norwegian Centre for Research Data

museum staff members anonymous would be of little use as the information given by them could be easily understood to be given by the individual interviewees. Their professional titles will also be an important factor to consider in analysing their answers, which will make giving them fictional names obsolete. Moreover, all three of them are disclosing information on behalf of the institutions they work for and represent, and they all acknowledged this and thus had no objections to being quoted with real names. If desired, they were all given the choice of having sight of all quotes given by them that ended up being used as part of this dissertation.

Concerning the interviewees representing the 'millennial' visitors, I chose to use the information they gave me under fictional names. Since they all met with me as private individuals, talking about their own personal experiences, anonymising them in this final publication and informing them of this choice beforehand hopefully encouraged them to speak more freely about their experiences at the museum and how 'lates' fit into their daily lives (Pripp 2014, 82 - 83). Factors such as their age, what they do on a day-to-day basis (are they students, are they working, are they politically active?) and other factors that make up their identities are, in contrast to the museum staff, of interest here, and talking more openly about these things was hopefully made easier when disclosing information to be quoted under fictional names. I was also hoping to gain some insight into how they perceive the context of their own generation, which would include their friends and peers, which is naturally easier to disclose in this anonymous manner.

Analysing Interviews

As a final stage in working with the material accumulated through the interviews, all interviews were transcribed in full. After having transcribed the material from all interviews, I chose an anthropological approach to loosely theme the content (Öhlander 2014, 275), which became a useful way of organizing the findings and discover similarities and differences in for instance the ways in which the different museums discussed their events.

Because the interviews were all very elaborate, it was necessary to go through the final transcriptions a few times to highlight and extracted the material I found the most interesting and useful to bring forth in the final analysis. Because of the large amount of data accumulated through the hours of interview material, just a small selection would make it as part of the final product that is this thesis. Going through the material in this manner did,

however, guide me in the initial reflections when familiarizing myself with the theme of 'lates'. In doing so, the quotes were divided into four main themes, which will be elaborated shortly.

In the information given by museum staff, I focused on looking for mainly four central themes: the challenges the museum might have previously faced in reaching this specific demographic, their motivations for hosting 'lates', what they said specifically about their visitors, and finally remarks on museum behaviour during 'lates'. Why had they felt the need to keep the museum up for longer, and extend the activities on offer to include for instance alcohol and music? This thematic divided was a useful tool when constructing the analysis, and better understand the answers they gave me and in applying the theoretical framework to their answers.

When interviewing the two visitors, the aim was to hopefully get a deeper insight into how the museum visit was part of their larger *life world.* Dividing this information into strict themes was hence more challenging, and instead I chose to pay attention to anything that could be linked to how the museum visit fit into the context of their lives, their motivations for going to the museum during 'lates' (general interests, fields of studies or work, friends etc.), if they said something about the social aspect of this particular museum setting, and their thoughts on social media usage in conjunction with the museum experience.

Ethical Considerations, Dilemmas and Possible Shortcomings

When working with human subjects, there will always be a horde of ethical dilemmas that should be considered both before, during, and in the transcription, use and analysis of the interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 62). Finding the balance between keeping the integrity of the interviewee, while at the same time asking questions that digs further than just the surface of what is actually interesting (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 174) became one of the biggest challenges while executing the interviews. One means to this end was to keep questions quite general at first, and let the interviewee answer, before going further in-depth if their answers were found lacking or not necessarily thorough enough.

When interviewing someone representing their institution, I also tried to keep in mind the fact that their possibilities to voice possible critical opinions of their own work, and the practices of the museum they work for, might be limited. This is not necessarily true for the two specific institutions I have worked with in these case studies, but still a factor to be wary of.

When using the information given to me by the participants, I strived to keep good research ethics in mind throughout the initial contact, execution and the work that came after. This meant reflecting on the different meanings and interpretations of the collected data that can be used by me as a researcher (Pripp 2014, 81), and how my interpretations might sometimes differ from the intended meaning.

I also feel it important to mention that all interviews have been performed in Norwegian, and for the purpose of this thesis, all quotes have been translated by the author. Every participant has been informed, and when desired, the translations approved. With this, there will always be a chance that I have chosen wordings or formulations that might differ somewhat form the original quote, and there will always be room for errors or subjective interpretations to a certain degree.

Observation as Method

As mentioned briefly in the introduction, observing visitors while attending 'lates' was the starting point for the preliminary stages of this thesis. Reflections made during observations will be used as a supplement to the material gathered from the interviews, which is the main method used for data collection. The ways I have utilized this tool to obtain material will be explained and discussed in the following sections.

Observation – How and Why

Both museums play host for one 'late'-event each month, which meant that I was able to do several separate observations throughout the work with this dissertation. By attending several of these 'lates' at both museums the aim was to make note of some general trends, mainly concerning behaviour and social structures. Question I asked myself during these observations were of the nature 'are people attending in groups, or mostly on their own?' 'Are people using their cell phones, or more specifically, do they appear to use social media such as Snapchat or Instagram?'. I also intended to observe how people interacted with the art; are people spending a long time observing the actual exhibitions, or do they seem more focused on the social interactions? During these observations, I also tried to take note of how the visitors as a crowd appeared; how they were dressed for the occasion, the sound level, groupings and so on.

Because the case studies here involve two different museums, making first-hand observations were a helpful tool in determining how the two events differed from one another in terms of pure practicalities, security measures, bar location and so on, which would be difficult to achieve through interview with museum staff alone.

Reflecting back to the ideas concerning qualitative versus quantitative approaches discussed earlier, the goal with these observations was not to accurately track the time spent by specific individuals in each exhibition hall, or the exact patterns in which people move. This has been done by many before when discussing museum behaviour, and was for instance part of the method applied by Barron and Leask in their analysis of 'lates' in Scotland (Barron and Leask 2017). For the purpose of this thesis, however, the aim with observations was to rather get a more general perception and understanding of the way in which the museum is experienced and used during 'lates'. The intended use of the knowledge gained from this is that by using observations in conjunction with the information given to me by museum staff and museum goers, a more nuanced picture of 'lates' as a phenomenon would emerge, and observation as data collection would thus become a tool to supplement and illustrate both revelations that were made during interviews as well as the theoretical reflections concerning 'lates' in the larger context of contemporary museum programs.

Reflections on My Role as 'The Observer'

Although all observations were conducted as a silent observer, with no direct interaction with other museum goers, being completely neutral and detached in relation to the subject is impossible (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 3). Observations done during 'lates' was of a more ethnographic nature, which involves "being with other people to see how they respond to events as they happen and experiencing for oneself these events and the circumstances that give rise to them" (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 2).

I attended these events mostly as a normal visitor would, and thus, some considerations were important to keep in mind throughout. Firstly, my own role as the observer/researcher. The role one chooses to take during an observation might influence the information received (Pripp and Öhlander 2014). When using observation as method, it is impossible for the researcher to not become a part of what is being observed in one way or another, be it in a social or purely physical fashion (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995, 1-4). Taking notes was a crucial part of this data collection, and to stay as inconspicuous as possible I kept my note taking to my cell phone. A lot of other visitors could be seen using their phones regularly

during all events I attended, and using my own enabled me to more seamlessly blend into the regular museum audience as an observer. By doing so, the aim was that the objects of my observations would stay unaware of the fact that their behaviour was being noted and keep on acting as they normally would.

The picture of why someone visits the museum is endlessly complex, and the amount of time and space in this dissertation will by no means be able to cover the wide array of reasons for museum visiting and behaviour. Observing, taking notes, and trying to cover all the ways in which people act during the span of several hours in the museum is also an impossibly large task to perform as one lone researcher with limited time and resources to subsequently analyse the data collected, and trying to approach this in a quantitative way therefore seemed too daunting for the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I hope to be able to shed some light on factors that contribute to making 'lates' seem popular among young adults in Oslo, and how the museums work to reach this demographic, and their place as a phenomenon in the contemporary museum programs of these two museums.

Social Media Content as Information – Facebook Events

Since both museums actively use Facebook as a way of advertising the lead up to these events, and as a general tool to help them reach a broader demographic, the medium of Facebook-events (created by the museums) will be used as a supporting element in the analysis. With this, the aim is to get an understanding of the functions of 'lates' that reach beyond the timeframe of the events themselves and into the 'before', and how they are intersected into people's personal life in a way that is undoubtfully relatively new for museums.

Using social media as a source for data is a newer field of research, and the frameworks to help structure a methodological approach is therefore challenging to properly classify (Giglietto, Rossi, and Bennato 2012, 149 - 50), but I will in this section make an effort to specify the function Facebook events will serve for the scope of this dissertation. Due to factors such as the massive amount of shared content and the privacy frameworks set up by Facebook to protect their users, doing in-depth analysis of shared content is both time consuming and complex (Giglietto, Rossi, and Bennato 2012, 154). This has led to a more anthropological rather than statistical or quantitative approach to the publicly available

content on these Facebook-events. Information such as the precise number of attendants, who they are and so on will not be considered, but rather the function this specific use of social media can have as part of the whole museum experience of 'lates'; what does it mean to press "going" on a Facebook event, and what can such an action signal about the users of the museum? What language does the museum use when addressing their online audience? This might be data collection of a more ambiguous and unconventional form in museological research, but in the context of this dissertation they can be useful tools to better understand how the experience of 'lates' expand beyond just the experience of the actual exhibition context.

Although potentially useful tools, the amount of material available online is endless, and the risk of drowning in too much information that is impossible to analyse is absolutely something to be aware of when executing this type of data collection (Hyltén-Cavallius 2014, 206-207). I have therefore seen it as necessary to select just a few aspects of social media content produced by the museums, mainly the events connected to Art Night and Late Night published and administrated by the museums themselves and forgo the more obvious choices such as images and selfies posted by visitors.

4: Analysis and Discussion

The findings from interviews and observations will in this chapter be analysed and discussed using the theories presented in chapter 2. Instead of separating the analysis from the discussion, these two aspects will be somewhat interwoven, so that when a new subject is brought up it will be analysed before the findings are subsequently discussed.

The main part of this chapter, which contains the core of the analysis, will be divided into three sections. Firstly, I will attempt to contextualize the concept of 'lates' in its societal context, mainly concerning the societal factors affecting the millennial generation as a potential visitor demographic, to better understand how it fits into the larger lifeworld of millennials in Oslo, while bringing forth arguments for why 'lates' can be seen as a necessary addition to contemporary museum programs. Secondly, a closer look at the specific 'lates' will follow, explaining and discussing the motivations behind them from the viewpoint of the two museums. In this, notes from observations on behaviour will be included to help highlight how the two museums have organized their events somewhat differently, and how this is visualized by the behaviour that occurs in the exhibition spaces. Lastly, a closer look at millennials' relationship with 'lates' will form the final part, and their more intimate and personal experiences will be place in the larger picture of 'lates'. These three parts will be concluded in a final discussion summarizing the findings, where some critical perspectives on 'lates' will be presented, which will aim at creating a nuanced picture of the place these events occupy in contemporary museum programs.

Part I: Contextualizing 'Lates' in the 21st-Century Museum Program

> The challenge for museums is to be relevant to this new social elite, or else face being defined out of its list of leisure activities (Macdonald 1992, 170)

Although this is a statement about the future of museums visitors written more than two and a half decades ago, the sentiment could not be truer in the context of the urban landscape of 2018. In the context of this thesis, and seeing as they make up the largest group visiting museums during 'lates', the millennial generation can be interpreted as a new emerging social elite; they make up roughly 36 per cent of the adult population in Norway (Olsen 2016), and

will for years to come be an important demographic for museums to understand in order to create interesting content that inspire them to return to the museum time after time. To introduce the further analysis of 'lates' and the millennial visitors, I will first discuss some of the societal factors that I will argue have contributed to this recent development in contemporary museum programs.

There is a shift in the grounds on which art museums stand, and for museums to remain valid and relevant in the current world they must "demonstrate their viability and argue their value in new contexts where former values are no longer taken for granted" (Hooper-Greenhill 2000, 11). Purely being concerned with what they are, and what they have traditionally been all about such as their buildings, collections, and exhibitions might no longer be, but they should be equally invested in the more ""imagined" or "perceived" sense of what they are, which resides in the minds of individuals living within their communities who may not regularly use museums" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 80). Additions to museum programs such as 'Art Night' and 'Late Night', where a more traditional 'pure museum experience' of art viewing is merged with factors from the entertainment industry, can be argued to be an attempt at trying to use their collections in ways better suited to this new kind of visitor.

An increasingly competitive landscape of leisure activities and the vast variety of cultural offers that has emerged over the recent years (Falk 2009, 42) demonstrates this pressing need for renewal of the museum institution. The growing population is also stimulating this growing market; Oslo has surpassed one million inhabitants (Stenerud 2018), which means there are more locals now than ever before with the potential to become future museum visitors. The two largest art institutions in the city will open new landmark buildings in 2020, and a whole new section of the city is in massive development in Bjørvika, with new restaurants, cafés, and bars opening their doors with increasing frequency. As is the global trend in western society, "there are more places, ways, and opportunities for leisure than ever before; all competing for a slice of the individual's limited leisure time" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 40).

For many adults belonging to the millennial generation, who are university students or just starting out in the workforce to build their careers, time for leisure will mainly be available during evenings or weekends. This limits their possibilities for museum visitation during regular hours, and the appeal of an event like 'Art Night' or 'Late Night' is evident. The Astrup Fearnley museum has traditionally had one evening a week where the museum stays open for longer, but as Emilie Mathilde Johnsen told me during our conversation, "staying

open late is not necessarily enough in itself, you have to offer something more" (pers. comm., 2018). During evening hours, the nature of the competition in leisure activities differs from that of the daytime, and factors such as "serving a cocktail is an important part of the event to become a provider within the concept of night life, which a lot of the targeted audiences spend time and money on" (pers. comm. Johnsen 2018).

The ways in which people spend their free-time has also changed: "in contrast to the twentieth century, in which the boundaries between work and leisure were firmly drawn, in the knowledge age of the early twenty-first century, work consumption, learning, and leisure are all tightly interwoven" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 38). In the western world, where the most basic physiological needs are met with relative ease, there is a larger focus on satisfying "higher levels" of needs during leisure time; of the spiritual, self-fulfilment, self-realizing nature (Falk 2009, 43, Blackshaw 2010, 8). If free-time is limited, and the desire is to utilize that time in a way that will best fulfil most of these needs, developing new content through the merging of an activity such as going to the art museum with something from the world of commerce (Biehl-Missal and von Lehn 2015, 235) might be a necessary step for the art museum to stay attractive and relevant to this group of visitors. This new nature of free time and leisure is therefore a valid argument for why museums must look outside their own institutions to other venues in their immediate community for inspiration, and in that, also look to what the museums of the future has the potential to become.

Astrup Fearnley found their 'partners in crime' when developing the concept of what 'Art Night' could be in the people who opened a bar in the museum's own café: Vingen bar, who were eager to collaborate with the museum in creating a new kind of event. With this collaboration, the museum could borrow competence the bar had in terms of cocktails and their connections in the music community in Oslo, which made it possible to embellish the art museum experience with a musical element (pers. comm. Johnsen 2018). According to Johnsen, the aim in doing so was to "create a concept which could compete with already established concepts". She went on to say that "we're [the museum] not a bar and we're not a nightclub, but we can borrow successful elements from them, and intertwine them with our core product" (pers. comm., 2018) – the core product here being their contemporary art exhibition. Combining the elements that might be considered common for a 'night out' with what is the core strength of any museum – their object base, and a material representation of the past (Macdonald 1992, 162), enables them to carve out a competitive space for the

museum in the (pop)cultural identity of the urban spaces of the twenty-first century that has already been established by media and the entertainment industry.

Just as Astrup Fearnley, the Munch Museum had made attempts in the past at extending their opening hours without seeing much results, and started thinking of ways to offer something during an evening in the museum that would create an atmosphere that appeared more lively and inviting (pers.comm. Hjelm 2018). When searching for collaborators for the concept that would become 'Late Night', the goal was to "find an association that fit the profile of the museum, and in terms of meeting the targeted visitors; people who had an interest in art and culture (pers.comm., Hjelm. 2018)". As a pilot project, they cooperated with Jaeger, a bar concept already well-established in the night-life scene in Oslo, who offered the museum their musical competence to help establish a new event; with an open bar, a DJ, and the +*Munch*-exhibition. During this event, the museum and their bar stayed open 'till eleven, before people could continue their evening at Jaegers actual abode (pers.comm. Grete Skilbred & Hjelm. 2018).

The appeal of what this sort of hybrid experience could offer reflected in what the representatives for the millennials had to say about their experience of these events as well. Anne said that going to Art Night "is often combined with going out to bars. People go there [the museum], drink a glass of wine" before moving on to a different venue (pers. comm. 2018). Kari made a similar remark; "there are other cosy bars nearby you could visit after [being at the museum]" (pers. comm. 2018). When viewing the museum as a stop along the way on a night out on the town, the image of the museum can be seen as something that is perhaps far removed from the outdated image of the museum as dusty, unmoving and old-fashioned (Brenna 2016, 31), but rather as a place that has a more natural part in the everyday lives of its visitors. Like everything else, museums must evolve in line with the societies and communities they were created for, and the potential that lay in the museum to act as a natural meeting ground for socialization, companionship, and fun should not be underestimated.

There is no denying the fact that the world in which museums of 2018 operates differs quite drastically from the world in which these museums were first founded. The flexibility and mobility in the ways we communicate, be that through constant Internet access or mobile phone connectivity, means that individuals are constantly connected to society as a whole on an unprecedented level (Debbaut 2011, 66). The twenty-first century is an era of experience economy, where lifestyle and branding is on sale instead of products or services (Debbaut 2011, 69), a world where everything can be aestheticized, and personal life, image, and

identity is on constant visualized display (Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 385, Hanquinet 2016, 68), and modern museums have to keep up with this new world view. The millennials, being digital natives used to this way of life, will perhaps feel more at home in a museum that keeps innovative itself in line with this fashion. Instead of resisting change and remained stagnant, museums must "grasp the opportunities offered by our changing society or lose relevance within a generation" (Black 2012, 7). If they do not, they risk losing touch with their visitors.

Part II – Motivational Factors from the Museum Standpoint

George F. Macdonald states that there are three fundamental needs people have that should be filled during a museum visit; intellectual, sacred, and social. The first two have a strong foothold in the traditional roles of the museum: the intellectual need – obtaining knowledge and understanding through exhibited objects and stories – is a main aim for any museum, while the sacred need is tied to the museum as a place of objects with links to the past, to ancestry, and to history (Macdonald 1992, 165). Museum exhibitions are in the traditional sense seen as a display of 'treasures' from a lost time, with potential to be sources for education in science, culture or nature (Moser 2010, 22). The third – the social need – is however not as clear cut, and traditionally seen to be of lesser significance compared to the previous two (Silverman 2010, 3). Although the educational purposes of museums and their sacred natures are broadly accepted concepts, the discussion concerning their social purposes is more ambiguous (Foley and McPherson 2000, 165). The introduction of 'lates', however, can be seen as an apparent development towards the admittance of the museum as a social space.

In conversations with attendees of 'lates', and after hours spent observing people within the exhibition spaces, this seem to an aspect of the museum experience that is just as important for visitors as the objects and learning outcome, and in this specific case, the experience of art. Macdonald goes on to state that

> Social needs, like sacred needs, relate to "being seen" in museums, as well as being able to socialize there. […] it is also very healthy for museums to be perceived by the public as institutions operating in the centre of social life, rather than out on the periphery (1992, 165).

With museums such as the Munch Museum and the Astrup Fearnley Museum pushing their opening hours to stretch outside of what can be considered 'the normal', creating spaces

where there is natural opportunity for conversations and discussion, a move towards a more social visitor experience seem to be on the agenda.

The millennials I interviewed seemed to second the idea of 'lates' as a largely social event; when asked about whether or not she would attend these events on her own, Anne answered that if she were to go to 'Art Night' or 'Late Night' by herself, "it would have been if I just wanted to look at the art, and the only purpose I had [for visiting the museum] was to view the art. And I don't think I'm that interested in art" (pers. comm. 2018). Many who are visiting in groups during 'Art Night' or 'Late Night', perhaps brought to the museum by friends more interested in art than themselves, might share this mindset. If we assume this to be the case, 'lates' can work as an invitation that lower the threshold for those curious of what the museum has to offer, but who are not interested enough in art alone to visit on a regular day. By implementing a clear invitation for the social to be part of the museum experience, 'lates' introduce exhibitions to a broader audience than is perhaps possible on any given day.

The Art Museum as Context

The Astrup Fearnley Museum and the Munch Museum are both art museums, albeit for different periods in time and with different aims. The different natures of these two museums will have an impact on the ways in which these 'lates' are organized, have developed, and consequently how they are experienced by the visitors in question here, which will be discussed in this section. Whilst the Munch Museum has a longstanding tradition as a monographic museum[2], Astrup Fearnley is a museum solely focused on contemporary art. The contemporary art museum is distinguished from the traditional art museum in that it is meant to be a representation of the present day (Badovinac 2011, 38). It should strive to

> dedicate itself to the art of the local space, the local public, and local knowledge, while at the same time it must participate in the global museum of digitalized collections and databases (Badovinac 2011, 43).

Compared to the traditional art museum, who are largely represent a stricter art history of the past, the contemporary art museum has more room to play with informality in order to fully develop its social potential (Badovinac 2011, 44). This informality has, in the case of 'Art Night', manifested itself in a few different ways; bringing drinks into the exhibition in as close contact with the art as possible, and thus merging the concepts of 'going out for a drink'

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[2] A museum showing works of a single artist (English Oxford Living Dictionaries 2018).

with the cultural experience an exhibition offers. As part of the program for the 'Art Night' in the temporary exhibition *Lizzie Fitch/Ryan Trecartin*, there were workshops situated just outside of the exhibition halls, where the adult visitors were given opportunity to create "works of art" of their own, which were thematically linked to the contemporary art inside. Although workshops of this nature are nothing new in the context of the art museum, they are usually aimed at children, so having them be available for adults exclusively in this setting sets out a different tone for the activity and thus the whole museum experience. When a table full of colourful craft material is one of the first things visitors are met with before they enter the exhibition space, the atmosphere can set the tone for a more informal way of experiencing the museum. I dare to argue that some of the appeal 'Art Night' seem to have for the millennial generation is a result of this playfulness – a testimony to the contemporary art museum as a mirror to the present society, as has been described in the previous section; an institution keenly aware of its own timeliness.

Creating a new atmosphere might help combat the image of the art museum as an intimidating space. When "museums inspire a mixture of deference and hostility among all but a privileged and cultivated class: a popular view of 'culture' as a separate form of daily-life-shaping preconceptions concerning what museums are about for many (Prentice, Davies, and Beeho 1997, 45)", there is room for improvement. This coupled with the fact that contemporary art

> created in recent decades flies in the face of public expectations for the comprehensibility, beauty and quality traditionally associated with the fine arts – there appears to be no collective symbolic language for people to follow. From the non-insider's viewpoint, if there is a knowable language of art, it seems like a remote phenomenon that must: (i) be acquired through academic degree in art history, (ii) sounds like 'artspeak', and (iii) remain rather unconvincing. Further, most of what experts have to say about contemporary art is extremely intellectual in tone and often does not address the art work itself, but rather its context (Worts 1995, 185)

Extending the invitation to spend an evening in the museum is perhaps a move to combat this otherness and incomprehensibility of the content of art museums – taking an informal, everyday action such as having a beer into the setting of an art exhibition, merges the traditionally labelled 'highbrow', intimidating event with something associated with fun from the context of everyday life. Paraphrasing what Grete Skilbred at the Munch Museum told me – in the setting created by the more relaxed atmosphere of 'lates', it is perhaps easier to be less frightened by the art and talk about it without the fear of saying something wrong or "stupid".

In the case of the Munch Museum, exploring a playfulness of this kind might be tougher to justify due to the mere fact that the artist whom the museum was founded to represent is the most celebrated and famous artist of Norwegian history. This, over the years of the museum's existence, has created grounds for deep-set connotations for a large percentage of its visitors. This status has thus created a set of expectations; just like with the Mona Lisa at the Louvre, the visitors will primarily expect to see world-renowned paintings by Munch in this setting. As mentioned in chapter two, the museum is under direct orders from the city council, which implements a different set of rules as opposed to a privately-funded institution such as Astrup Fearnley. For years, the museum was perceived as "a place for tourists, where you took people visiting from abroad" (pers. comm. Skilbred 2018). The challenges of bringing a new young, local demographic into the museum as a regular visitor group is therefore perhaps tougher for the Munch Museum, where the direct link with contemporary society is not as clear cut.

The past three years have nonetheless showed a more playful side of the Munch Museum. With a renewed focus on Munch's art in relation to contemporary artists the museum aims to reach a new and more nuanced demographic (Munchmuseet 2015), showing the paintings visitors expect to see in unfamiliar contexts they do not. This new shift aims at showing prominent works by Munch in the context of and alongside other artists – contemporary to Munch as well as new, still living artists (Ekeberg 2015). This new direction for the museum has unfolded through the medium of a singular focus on temporary exhibitions called their *+Munch-series*, with three large exhibitions per year, each of them focusing on Munch in the context of another major artist.

Cecile Hjelm pointed out that through this complete reorganizing, the museum has gone from being "much more traditional, with white walls and 'Munch, Munch, Munch' to something that is more relevant" (pers. comm. 2018), just as they had previously been "very much build to accommodate tourists" (pers. comm. Skilbred. 2018). Along with this rebranding of the entire museum came 'Late Night', a very visible attempt to reach the locals as well as to lower the average age for visitors in general (pers. comm., Skilbred. 2018). This development can be said to have transported the Munch Museum into an era of art museums who "provide a setting for performance (…) where spectators are integrated into a situation of materiality, movement, sound and atmosphere" (Biehl-Missal and von Lehn 2015, 244).

The contexts for the two 'lates', and the ways in which they emerged are, as has been shown through this section, somewhat different, but when it all boils down to it, they are both

working towards the same goal; creating an event that will invite new visitors to their museums, through the alluring ways they have not experienced before, and which might create an experience that appear less intimidating for a crowd that is more accustomed to the atmosphere created by the leisurely aspects of 'lates'. There are, however, some obstacles facing the museums in doing so, which will be analysed and discussed in the following section.

Obstacles for Visiting; Location and Timeframes

When talking about their visitors, representatives from the two museums all pointed out two distinctive factors that has previously worked somewhat against them on a regular basis; their locations and the timeframes for museum visitation created by traditional opening hours. Mathilde Emile Johnsen pointed out that, for the Astrup Fearnley Museum;

> "you need a 'reason to go' to get here. Tjuvholmen is a part of the city with many connotations connected to it, some negative even, with it belonging to the westside of the city, and the targeted demographic might belong to the east. Without intentionally aiming [art night] towards people living in Oslo east, we do see that this is primarily where the culturally invested youth tend to congregate" (pers. comm. 2018)

The locality and architectural presence of museums will have an influence on how they and their collections are perceived by visitors (Moser 2010, 24). For the experience of 'Art Night', that setting is Aker Brygge and Tjuvholmen; an area of the city which is predominantly occupied by restaurants, office buildings, and apartments in higher price ranges, thus not necessarily a place where students with limited means or people not working in the area tend to "accidentally" drop by to visit a museum.

The same point was made by Cecile Hjelm at The Munch Museum; "the difficulty with Tøyen is that you're not in the city centre, and it's not like you just happen to drop in here. You have to make a conscious decision and do some planning to come here" (pers. comm. 2018). When the museum itself is made to be the sole destination for travel in this way, the demands to what they have to offer increases for the visitor to feel the expense of the ticket and travel is justifiable. The initial choice of visiting an art museum will involve some sort of cost/benefit analysis, and for the benefit to justify the expense the goals of the visit set by the individual must be achievable (Rounds 2006, 136). For the average millennial, seeing an exhibition is perhaps not an experience important enough on its own to justify the time, money, and effort it takes visiting the museum, but with the introduction of elements that creates an experience of multiple levels might shift the equation enough to validate the visit. This, coupled with the

fact that the competition for the leisure time of their visitor is steep, offering a program like 'late' can be seen as a justifiable attempt to reach new visitors.

Johnsen also stated that "if we are to reach this demographic [the millennials], we have to be available within the timeframe they have to discover us. Museums suffer under the restraints of opening hours that aren't suited to most people, who are either at work or at school during the day" (pers. comm. 2018). The same sentiment was reflected by the staff at the Munch Museum, who experienced that expanding the opening hours and mainly stay open like on any given day was not enough to draw the locals and the young to the museum. In a city that is, on a global scale, a city of few inhabitants, opening the museum for longer on a daily basis is not an economically feasible goal. Events such as 'Art Night' and 'Late Night' can, however, be a good compromise in reaching the locals who find going to the museum on a regular day too challenging.

The Consequences of Organizational, Practical, and Architectural differences between 'Late Night' and 'Art Night'

Both 'Art Night' and 'Late Night' emerged as part of the regular museum programs quite simultaneously: Late Night at the Munch Museum was first introduced in February of 2016, with an event connected to the exhibition *Mapplethorpe + Munch* (The Munch Museum 2016, Munchmuseet 2016, 18-19)*,* while Astrup Fearnley introduced their first Art Night on the 23rd of June of the same year with the exhibition on Alex Israel (Astrup Fearnley Museet 2016). In this section, the recurring elements of both 'lates' will be described, before highlighting spatial, practical, and architectural differences to shed some light on how these differences affect the way in which audiences experience these events, and how these factors might affect how they utilize the museum spaces to achieve different goals.

Beginning with 'Art Night' at Astrup Fearnley, one clear way it separates itself from 'Late Night' at the Munch Museum is the way in which alcohol is served and enjoyed. Drinks are allowed everywhere in the exhibition space – interacting with the art in a way that is different from a more traditional day at the museum. Just as the "bar-aspect" of the evening is extended into the exhibition, the DJ is usually located in the entrance hall so that the music and the art are in very close proximity to each other – thus transforming the atmosphere in the museums to something that is not achievable during the day. The frequency of guided tours, or possibilities to talk to staff about the art at display, is increased during the event, and staff appear more readily available for audiences to approach. There is also a point to be made

about how the museum greets its audience. During 'Art Night' at Astrup Fearnley, the first thing you, as a visitor, are met with is music and drinks; rows of glasses with already poured beverages ready for purchase greets you even before purchasing a ticket for entrance.

This kind of performance in the museum breaks the norm for what is usually expected in an art gallery, telling the visitor that what happens beyond this point will differ from an ordinary museum experience. By creating something that is unusual in the museum, an aura of exclusivity is for sale. This is something that will be elaborated in a coming section.

At the Munch Museum, what separates 'lates' from the more traditional museum experience is in many ways happening outside of the art exhibition, thus creating a divide between the unusual "bar-element", that is perhaps the most alluring thing about 'lates', and "art experience" that is non-existent at Astrup Fearnley. Although alcohol is served at the bar which is situated in conjunction to the museum store and exhibition entrance, there is no way of blending the two. There are rules against taking drinks into the exhibit, and there are strict security procedures in place before entering that, in effect, work as a separator between the elements that characterizes 'lates' and the actual art exhibition. The actual security measure of having to pass through a metal detector in much the same fashion you would at airport security sets an initial serious tone for entering the museum exhibition, which is perhaps not present at Astrup Fearnley. These difference is perhaps also a testimony to the differences of what the two different museum types can allow for, and how they must each move in slightly different directions while still working towards the same demographic.

Observations of these two 'lates' has given me some grounds to reflect on the consequences of this divide. If a large portion of what the museum advertises to be unique or different about discovering exhibitions during 'lates' is the opportunity to have a drink at the museum, this is much more effective at the Astrup Fearnley. This difference in the actual lay out and regulations (or lack thereof) within the two different 'lates' illuminates interesting sides of audience behaviour and might also be telling of the actual motivations behind millennials visiting museums, which will be discussed in more detail in the final discussion.

Part III – Millennials and 'Lates'

Although the societal frames, the museums' motivations, and the practicalities are all interesting aspects for explaining 'lates', understanding the appeal of these events among the millennial generation, and how they utilize the museum as part of their everyday lives, demand the voices and experiences of visitors as well. Thus, through this final section, a fuller picture of this new museum practice will emerge.

The millennials as a generation are constantly put under scrutiny from media and society; from millionaires telling them that to be able to afford buying a house they simply have to stop buying avocados and fancy coffees (Levin 2017) to studies telling them how the millennials are killing industry after industry (Kaspersen). Personally, I have seen articles in numerous newspapers several times a week over the past couple of years painting the prospects of this generation in a poor light, and it seems undeniable that these factors will have an impact on how they experience the world around them, and in extension, why they find 'lates' to be so appealing. The case of the millennial use of the museum, both in the physical and online realm, will thus be discussed in this coming section.

Many museums have traditionally seen their users as a more homogenous group, and museum programs have reflected this in being more single-minded and less diverse (Macdonald 1992, 163). Now, however, a new generation of museum visitors coming of age in a society that differs wildly from what was the reality not even twenty years ago, is timed perfectly with the emergence of events such as 'Art Night' and 'Late Night'. The mindset of the museum might be changing, a sign that the sector is aware of how it has, in the past, been lacking in offers that reflects the needs of an increasingly heterogenous society (Howe and Strauss 2000, 4).

Times are changing, and compared to their parents' generation, these new museum visitors have

> more temptations to spend money and the desire and need to constantly update technology tools to remain at the edge of their potential dominates many consumer behaviours. (…) Predictions of job losses (…) and house-price slumps marks a shift from an era of stable, robust and confident economic times to a more uncertain financial future. When these impacts are taken together, there is an emphasis on immediacy, short-term satisfaction (Pendergast 2010, 8)

A large portion of the millennials born in the second half of this generation are students; in Oslo, more than 50 per cent of the population over 16 years of age have or are attending some form of University education, with the highest percentile of these conjugating in the age gap

between 20 – 39 years of age (Statistics Norway 15.6.2017). Students are, in general, a group with limited means, so when choosing to spend a chunk of their leisure funds at the museum they might require more to justify this spending. In this day and age, all activity that are leisure-related will involve a series of cost-benefit analysis, where time is an important factor (Falk 2009, 42). By offering the merging of more activities into one; getting to see a new exhibition, socializing with friends, getting a drink or two in a scenic setting, the museum offers their audiences a way of maximising the outcome of their time spent at the museum. This will create an image of the museum as a more worthwhile place to spend time and money for a generation for whom those two things might be limited.

Possibly the clearest way this generation separates itself from the ones previous to them, however, is their ability and affluence towards sharing their participation in cultural events through social media channels, and how they have come to see participation to cultural events of this kind as a way to gain cultural capital, which has become a valuable tool in their identity work and as part of their personal self-representation. These more internal, intimate, and personal goals for visiting 'lates' will be discussed in the following section.

To 'Be Seen' in the Right Place at the Right Time

Having observed two different 'Art Nights' in the same exhibition, *Lizzie Fitch/Ryan Trecartin,* some obvious differences in the visiting crowds appeared that will be analysed in the following section to illuminate one of the functions of 'lates' in the lives of its millennial visitors.

During the first 'Art Night' in the temporary exhibition space at the Astrup Fearnley Museum in March 2018, the crowd appeared more homogenous – as far as I was able to observe, almost everyone apart from a few looked to be under 40, and many seemed to have dressed up for the occasion. There were several girls in high heels, and one particular visitor stood out in a sparkly sequined dress and high heeled, silver boots, which seemed too cold to be appropriate for the weather outside and was clearly meant to fit with the vibe inside. A month later, at 'Art Night' in the same exhibition, the crowd had shifted. The masses looked more heterogenous; many grey heads could be spotted throughout, and larger groups looked to be coming straight to the museum from work. People dressed in outfits like the sequined dress were few and far in between.

When looking at this through the lens of identity, and how "[…] identity has to be performed, and in a context where its significance is apparent" (Rounds 2006, 141), this can tell us something quite interesting about what going to the museum during 'lates' signals for the ones belonging to the millennial generation, and perhaps why this experience has a value for these visitors a regular day at the museum is incapable of offering.

Being seen in the museum during the first event coordinated with a new exhibition creates opportunity for the individual to identify and socially situate themselves within the confines of the (perhaps imagined) 'exclusive elite' (Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 387, Rounds 2006, 142 - 143) who gets to experience the art in this specific fashion for the first time. In the context of the millennial lifeworld, where everything can be displayed, visualized and aestheticized (Hanquinet 2016, 68), performing their identities within the structures defined by this particular museum setting (Rounds 2006, 143), will be a valuable form of self-representation to gain social status. This same feeling of exclusiveness or newness is lessened in the following 'Art Night', and consequently, the millennial attendance pattern has changed. This exclusivity of being seen at the museum, perhaps specifically a museum that is part of the local community and in a space connected to the landscape they and their friends frequent on a regular basis, seem to have emerged with 'Art Night' and 'Late Night'. As Anne pointed out to me during our conversation; "it feels a bit exclusive, being allowed to have a drink at the museum, because you're not usually allowed to do this" (pers. comm. 2018).

In an era where everything you do can be displayed through technology instantaneously to whomever, and for a generation where cultural capital has become a new valuable currency in the maintaining and enactment of an individual identity, the museum can through the medium of 'lates' become a very public arena to perform ones identity, shaped by the atmosphere of the objects (art) on display and the context of the museum (Rounds 2006, 142). This "self-representation is the intentional and tangible component of identity" (Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 387), and by attending 'lates', that identity will borrow elements from and gain the aura of the fashionable, the new, and the exclusive of this event, including you as a visitor in this "inside-crowd".

Going to the museum can send others signals of who you are as a person, what you wish to be associated with, without the apparent need to spell it out loud (Rounds 2006, 142-143). Being able to tell someone, or show them through social media, that you are going to the museum during 'lates' lets the visitor "borrow" the cultural capital of the event already established by the status of the museum as a highbrow establishment, which again help the individual better

their position in the hierarchy of social space (Hanquinet 2016, 67). The museum is a very public space for the 'performance of the self' as it is a space that is specifically designed for displaying and performing meaning; an atmosphere and aura the visitors borrows from to enact their own personal identities (Rounds 2006, 142).

Just as the individual accumulate cultural capital through the participation in a cultural activity that is traditionally "deemed to require aesthetic or intellectual refinement" (Hanquinet 2016, 66), the museum gains something in this process as well; there is an exchange of capital. The visiting millennials are borrowing the aura of the museum context through the participation in a highbrow cultural event ('lates') in order to gain cultural capital to aid in their performances of the self, both in the moment and extended in the digital world. In turn, the museum is gaining something from the aura that this young cultural youth brings with them into the museum; the image of a fashionable, modern place to spend time (and money). This exchange is thus beneficial for both partners; the millennials gain the currency of cultural capital they use in curating the displays of their personal identities, while the museum is reinvented as a youthful, fashionable, and modern arena for experiencing art and socialization within the 'right' crowds.

The phenomenon of the importance of 'being spotted' or 'being seen' in the museum is something both millennial informants had made a note of; although Anne said she did not identify with that group, she did make a point of the fact that "it's not just showing that you're there [at the museum], but also that you're showing off yourself (pers. Comm. 2018)", and that this specific mindset seemed, to her, to set the mood at the museum during these events.

The Museum as Backdrop for Identity Work
With the ideas of 'lates' transforming the museum into a desired place to be spotted for millennials, and the museum giving of an aura of exclusivity during these night time hours, the museum is undoubtedly being used as a backdrop for identity work. Johnsen pointed out that "some guests use the exhibitions as a backdrop to realize themselves, which is also typical for a younger audience group" and that "people prioritize having their picture taken in front of the art with their drink, people make sure to dress up (…) and I believe they find it valuable to communicate this through their channels as part of their identity" (pers. comm. 2018). During 'lates', the artworks and the museum space becomes the props and background material people use to act out their identities (Kozinets, Gretzel, and Dinhopl 2017, 9). For the

visitors going to 'Art Night' or 'Late Night', experiencing their temporary exhibitions with a drink in hand and friends chatting by their sides, their social interactions, and the ways in which they act out their identities takes centre stage, while the exhibition is the stage on which these actions take place.

This is a reflection on the fact that "museums are not simple places for learning about and enjoying art, they have always been contested spaces where we are goaded to realize something about ourselves (Kozinets, Gretzel, and Dinhopl 2017, 10)". For the millennial generation, who have grown up with online technology and a new kind of socialization as second nature, it might no longer be enough to simply *be* in the space – the experience is extended into something more; something entertaining, something educational, something social – something to act out and display.

This was also pointed out by both visitors; Anne said that part of going to the museum was "to show how cultural I am (…) 'Look at me, I'm at the museum at night'. That's the image I want to have, in a way. And that's something I think a lot of the people attending these things want to have as well, even if they perhaps haven't thought about it too much" (pers. comm. 2018). Kari also made a similar remark that when she went to these events she would be "posting something to Insta-story, or send some a snap[3] as a joke, like 'hey-hey, cultural capital'" (pers. comm. 2018). Although they were both slightly ironic when voicing these remarks, there was some seriousness in these statements at the same time. For this generation, when everything can and is being documented online, doing the right thing and being in the right places with the right people has a lot of impact on how you are perceived by your peers.

In discussing the ideas of 'lates' as a desirable place to be seen, one can argue that the notion of the museum as space to be seen is nowhere near exclusive to 'lates'; selfies from large museums around the world, where people use the art as a backdrop in their self-representation, is a known phenomenon that has been well-researched within the museological field. What can be said to be special about 'lates', however, is just how this display of self and identity has reached beyond just posting a picture or 'checking in' to the museum on Facebook. Not only is it a way to experience art in an atmosphere that is perceived as exclusive and young, it has at the same time become a very clear way to display cultural capital and an expression of belonging to a certain group in society that seem to fit

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[3] "Snaps" – the act of sending a picture or text through the medium of the mobile app "Snapchat"

into the 'millennial identity' in ways that will be further described in this coming section.

The Museum Experience Extended; From Exhibition Space to Lifeworld Online

Living in 2018, the presence of social media, be that in the form of Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or some other form of networking site, is constant. For the age bracket of adults between 25 and 34 years of age in Norway, 84 percent use some form of social media daily or almost daily. In younger adults, that number is even higher (nine out of ten) (Statistics Norway 2018). Facebook has become "commonplace in the fabric of everyday social life" (Manago and Vaughn 2015, 188). Since the generational cohort in question here have grown up in a time where being exposed to the activities, and coming and goings of friends and relatives constantly through these channels as second nature, I will try to investigate how the museum utilize this factor in advertising 'lates' as events on their Facebook pages, and how the museum experience has become a tool for identity work that stretch beyond just the physical museum space.

So, in a time where identities online are carefully curated, where users only choose the most flattering photos of themselves, post clever, well thought-out comments, choose social exchanges with care, and make sure to only associate themselves with the appropriate "audio-visual content recycled from other online sources" (Manago and Vaughn 2015, 199), the identity work performed within the museum during 'lates' has expanded to include what happens outside the hours of the actual museum visit. The Astrup Fearnley Museum has, for instance, chosen to exclusively advertise for 'Art Night' with a Facebook-event (pers.comm. Johnsen 2018), and relied on the networks of their visitors to spread the words and attract a larger audience.

Although the notion of selfies and social media usage is not unique to 'lates' – museum attendance in general in the 2000's has in general been heavily overtaken by selfie-takers and so on (Kozinets, Gretzel, and Dinhopl 2017) – 'lates' has in a way that a more traditional museum visit has not introduced elements that might perhaps make this type self-representation even more appealing to digital native such as millennials. Although pressing 'interested' or 'going' on a Facebook-event is not the same as actually attending the museum, the visitor as consumers will with this action "make their identities tangible, or self-presented, by associating themselves with material objects and places (Jensen Schau and Gilly 2003, 385)", the material here being the art exhibition that is on for that specific 'lates', and in extension, the museums at large.

Because of the focus on Social Media usage – especially perhaps in the sphere of the contemporary museum – the events and the museum experience have developed to stretch further in time and locality. The museum visit is no longer confined to the few hours spent at the museum during 'Art Night'/ 'Late Night', but rather takes on a life beyond the museum.

For some, the museum experience starts the moment they see the advertisement for the event, for instance through the medium of a Facebook-event posted by the museum. As the museums advertise their events through social media, they have created a way to visualize the museum visit that is different from a selfie or a picture during the actual visit, and the act of going to the museum is "increasingly mediated by online, digital experiences" which "can occur months or just minutes before initiating a visit" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 174)".

If they then choose to check the 'going'-box on the event page, they inform their friends of their intentions – and even if they might end up choosing to not attend, they will have still told friends of their interest in this specific type of cultural event, and thus, extended the shaping of their personal identity in the online realm to include the museum. So, displaying interest in these events online can be perceived to be a display of appreciation of the artistic and the cultural (Hanquinet 2016, 67), and thus reward them with the same cultural capital as an actual museum visit would give. These events have become a medium through which the museum intersect itself into other spheres – the digital social media world, and into the personal identities millennials display through these networking sites.

With these additions of Facebook-events, going to the museum as an experience has inserted itself as an event on par with that of a concert or a party, with the same language and the same type of advertisement being utilized. 'Lates' has thus become a hybrid experience, somewhat removed from what might be viewed as a traditional way of utilizing the context of the museum and its objects. Through 'lates', the museum becomes a medium of self-expression not just by being an arena for physically having a drink in front of a famous painting, or to be 'spotted' by the right groups, but additionally as a constant, notional arena millennials can choose to seek out and use in their identity-work 24/7 online. This was pointed out by Kari as well:

> "I often see that, if there's a cool event [on Facebook], there is usually a certain group of my friends who're 'interested' or 'going'. That's something I think people put a lot of thought into, to click 'interested' on an event that suits their personalities and their interests. It's rare for someone to update their Facebook statuses or posts pictures. Instead, the event-thing has become a sort of identity marker" (pers. comm. 2018)

This extension of the museum experience into the 'before' a visit is also elevated by the fact that social networking sites, at their cores, meet some very basic human needs; a need for relatedness, connectivity, belonging and acceptance (Manago and Vaughn 2015, 189). 'Lates' as an event that is shared and spread through the network of Facebook-connectivity might also encourage sociality within the museum space during these 'lates'; an unspoken invitation for people to take part in the experience with you if they fill the criteria of belonging to the group already in attendance.

When talking about the meaning of "attending" Facebook-events, the concept of cultural capital is once again a relevant term to revisit. Being in possession of the proper cultural resources and skills is a desirable trait for a generation that is so taken with displaying identity in social media, and as Kari put it: "I make jokes about cultural capital, but it is actually a thing (…) so then I don't mind that people see in their [Facebook] feed that I'm going" (pers. comm. 2018). Displaying museum attendance has an elevated status among millennials, labelling the museum as one of the 'correct' places to hang out during these events. The forum established by Facebook enables a "particular kind of sociality, one that emphasizes personal self-expression, reputation management, and efficient access to expansive networks of social information (…) users project who they are onto screens, strategically presenting a certain shade of the self for an audience" (Manago and Vaughn 2015, 188). Expressing the interest in museum events through social media in this way transforms the museum experience into a valuable currency for obtaining and maintaining cultural capital for urban millennials.

It is not just the millennial visitors going to the museums that does identity work during 'lates' – the museums are in many ways re-shaping their own identities at the same time. There is a concurrency in this way of offering experiences within the museum context that sees the museums trying to move in pace with the rest of society.

People posting images in social media are displaying their own identities; "look at where I am, look what I'm doing, see who I'm with", but through this they are also indirectly, and perhaps unbeknownst to them, shaping the identity for the museum. When someone uses a # (hashtag) on their Instagram-photos connected to the museum or the events themselves or adds a video snippet from the exhibition to their Shapchat-story, they are making choices on behalf of the museums for what's being displayed. The mood, what is being included and excluded, as well as the words the museum goers choose to accompany their visual representation of their museum visits, will ultimately affect how the people viewing these

perceive the museums. This perhaps unintentional symbiosis between the museum and the museum goers is perhaps most visualized during, and as an effect of, 'lates'.

Encouraging Socialization and Companionships in Art Museums Through a New Norm for Museum Behaviour

With an event encouraging social elements such as drinking and enjoying music, some space should be devoted to discussing the role companionship plays for millennials when they decide to attend 'lates', and the frames for behaviour this establish. The social is tightly linked with identity work as part of the museum experience; without anyone to observe it, doing identity work is largely unnecessary. When being in the museum, the visitor will use the museum as a stage and a context, and borrow from the aura of both the room in itself, and the objects on display, to enact their own personal identities, while at the same time being in the company of 'your own' (Rounds 2006, 142). During 'Art Night', especially, this aura feels alive, youthful, and contemporary, which are characteristics it is natural to assume would appeal to millennials.

Stephane Debenedetti (2003) has done research on the role of companionship in the art museum experience, and found that the recreational aspects of visiting an art museum is at large deeply connected to companionship; "the museum *itself* was not seen as entertaining, fun or recreational" (Debenedetti 2003, 56-57), but rather the experience of viewing the exhibit in the company of others. 'Lates' such as 'Art Night' and 'Late Night' can be seen to fill these requirements. The mere fact that they invite you to have a drink, listen to music while viewing the art, or play in the workshop as part of the experience – activities that are without a doubt associated with socialization in other societal functions, are signs of the museum attempting to create a space for recreational socialization.

> […] instead of considering visitors as isolated individuals, art museums should place them within the particular social context they bring to the cultural setting: that of the visitor and any accompanying friends or family members (Debenedetti 2003, 52)

With event such as 'Art Night' and 'Late Night', their social function is very visible – throughout nearly all the events I attended and observed, nearly no one seemed to attend alone, and the ones who were there quite visibly alone seemed to not belong to the millennial generation; perhaps more seasoned museum goers comfortable being on their own in a setting catering to groups rather than individuals. As a consequence of the fact that 'lates' has created

an opportunity for the museum to be an arena to be seen, to gain cultural capital, to socialize with friends and generally have a good time, a new 'norm' for what can be said to be acceptable museum behaviour has developed, specifically moulded by the attending millennials.

In the more specific case of the Munch Museum, where this generation in the past has been largely absent from the museum, a different audience than the one attending 'Late Night' has been the ones to set the previous terms for museum behaviour, that has it the past not appeared inviting or younger visitors. Skilbred pointed out that for them, it was important that there should be time and room for everyone in the museum;

> "it's important to give the retirees their space, the young should have their space, and the kids should have their space, so that (…) their habits don't crash with one another" (pers. comm. Skilbred. 2018)

This coupled by the fact that art can be a difficult subject to talk about freely and with confidence (pers. comm. Skilbred. 2018) has in a way legitimized the creation of a space within the museum experience where this generation is free to act more loosely, and perhaps closer to the frames set by their everyday lives and their peers. A large part of their life world is the visualization of their accumulation of cultural capital, and sharing their experiences on social networks (Black 2012, 69), and creating a space where this appear more acceptable is perhaps key to the success of 'lates' with this group. There is a "need for art museums to refrain from treating the shared aspect of visiting as trivial, secondary or extrinsic to the cultural experience, or even at cross purpose with the museum's educational mission" (Debenedetti 2003, 60), and 'lates' can been seen as a trial to fulfil these requirements in creating an arena that is a desired destinations where these criteria are met.

In the exhibition space, the "spectators are also an important part of the spectacle. The sociality of the art gallery or exhibition hall is invariably marked by the silent (and not so silent) scrutiny of one's fellow visitors, yet museum historians have rarely discussed an important aspect of self-representation and people-watching within the exhibition (Leahy 2012, 117)". With 'lates', there is a space created where millennials feel more likely to meet other visitors similar to themselves and socializing within this setting is perhaps creating a more natural way for them to view an art exhibition.

Part IV – Final Discussion and Critical Perspectives

A large part of today's museum studies concerns itself with the exploration of audience participation, and how to best create offers that reach new groups (Brenna 2016, 31), and as with any new development happening within an established institution time should be set aside to discuss the possible critiques new offers such as 'lates' might face, which is what this section will briefly touch upon. I will not attempt at finding any "right" answers to how this critique should be handled, or if the development of 'lates' is healthy for the institution of the museum, but wish to rather argue the importance of staying critical when new practices emerge.

Finding the balance in offering museum experiences that tries to compete in the realm of commercial offers primarily created for profit and entertainment purposes can be challenging. In focusing on the very social aspects of a visit, on top of the more traditional aims concerning the communication, education or preservation of objects and art, there is a real chance of losing sight of the very basis aim and idea of what museums are and should be (Silverman 2010, 3). Johnsen said that for the Astrup Fearnley museum, 'Art Night' has been part of an "interesting wake-up call. (…) we shouldn't underestimate the importance of having interesting content, and if the art can't be that alone, then you have to be able to play on other factors" (pers. comm. 2018), just as the Munch Museum remained "very concerned with the fact that ['Late Night'] shouldn't stand in the way of the art experience or the art exhibit" (pers. comm. Skilbred 2018).

Although offering experience that might be appealing for millennials in their constant need for maintaining cultural capital as part of their self-expression, going to the museum should still be about the art collections museums were established to house, and thus, the content they should communicate knowledge from and preserve, should remain the main focus of the museum.

In addition to the struggle to remain in the right balance between the traditional and the newer aims for the museum during 'lates', there have been other, more practical, concerns raised about these events becoming regular features in current museums. When there is a large focus on the presence of alcohol as part of the experience, there are real dangers they pose for art and objects.

> The commitment of museum management to the continued provision of these events remains a
> concern, with them occasionally resulting in damage to facilities and exhibits, caused by the

provision of alcohol and behaviour of attendees. An additional concern is that museums will be relegated to a mere venue and that little education or learning will occur, thus moving further away from the purpose of meaningful and sustained engagement with non-traditional visitors (Barron and Leask 2017, 475 - 476)

Although this has not been an issue for any of these two museums as of yet, and the Munch Museum has strict security measures in place to see to it that these dangers are not realized, it is a factor that is worth mentioning and being aware of.

If taking the idea of the formation and performance of identity that might take place in the museum into the equation of why people might attend these events, however, instead of just focusing on education as an important aim for museum visitation, the reasons for why museums wish to continue on with these events seem more validated. Should not art, and the museums that exhibit and house them, be available to people who wish to learn something, both about the art and the history of them, but perhaps also learn something about themselves at the same time?

All the factors mentioned in the parts above; the museum developing new offers in their existing spaces, and the youths creating exposure for the museums through their social media networks, work in symbiosis to create a new image for what the art museum, contemporary as well as monographic, can be. Events of a repeating nature such as 'lates', where the framework for the experience consists of the same recurring elements, can also contribute to the image of the museum as a more inviting place to socialize, that can be visited on a more regular basis. A place to stop by on a night out, not necessarily a destination that requires planning in the way regular visits to the museum in the past has often been perceived to do.

This is perhaps especially true at Astrup Fearnley, where the price for a ticket during 'Art Night' is less than half of a standard ticket; lowering the threshold for buying entrance into this 'highbrow', cultural event, especially for those who might not necessarily be deeply interested in the content of the art museum alone. Giving them a space and a time where getting to know the museum can be done within the familiar social setting of having a drink and being with friends, the art museum, be that in the form of the monographic or the contemporary, will perhaps be perceived as less intimidating.

At the end of the day, it is difficult for a museum not to create an experience that is designed to "first and foremost to fulfil our (the museum's) need and goals. (…) However, most individuals who visit museums come only secondarily to better understand or appreciate art,

history, science, the environment, and so forth. Their true goal in visiting is to satisfy *their* own need and interests, be they intellectual, physical, social, or, most often, come combination of these" (Falk and Dierking 2013, 39). If the millennial need that is filled with a visit to the museum during 'Art Night' or 'Late Night' falls into the category of identity work, experiencing companionship and the accumulation of cultural capital, then depending on who you ask, these might be arguments enough in itself for why these events have a legitimate place in contemporary museums.

5: **Concluding Remarks**

This thesis has been an attempt at understanding how and why 'lates', in the form of 'Art Night' and 'Late Night', have developed over the past few years to become a regular feature in the visitor programs of two major museums in Oslo. By collecting material through interviews, observations, and literature, I have tried to analyse, discuss, and highlight the societal factors which formed the foundation for this development, and the legitimacy this context creates for developing a museum experience that is in many ways a hybrid between the more traditional art exhibition experience and commercial elements borrowed from leisure and entertainment industries.

Perhaps the most noticeable driving force behind this expansion has been a desire from both museums to reach a demographic that has previously been the most challenging group of visitors to reach; the millennials. This generation of young adults, who might be considered a new type of cultural elite in urban societies, demand more from their leisure activities than the generations before them. Through 'lates', these museums have attempted to create a unique offer to stay relevant and competitive in this market. For millennials, leisure time doubles as an arena for realizing oneself, a time for obtaining and maintaining cultural capital, all to the means of self-representation. In turn with this need for self-representation, the museums' offers have shifted to appear more inviting to act as a backdrop for these identity work activities.

These two museums have previously faced obstacles in reaching the demographic classified as belonging to the millennial generation, which has been another factor in the decision to develop 'Art Night' and 'Late Night'. These have become a way for the museum to market themselves as a place to seek out a new cultural experience more than just once, and a way for the museum to compete for their leisure time on par with bars, concerts, and pubs. This demographic is traditionally speaking underrepresented in the museum visitor, but as this event creates a familiar framework of elements that will be the same even as the exhibitions changes, the museum appear more inviting for this demographic.

'Lates' can also be understood as a broadening of the scope the cultural field museums operates in, and an opportunity for the museum content to gain new aspects in terms of experiences. This does not exclude the more traditional aims of developing knowledge,

education, and story-telling through exhibitions, but rather work as a way for the museum to ad sociality as an important tool in the toolkit of all factors contributing to the overall experience of the art museum, while at the same time open for a more leisurely way of exploring art and culture.

It has turned the museum experience from something that is purely about viewing art to being about what *you* as a visitor means in the museum; from a place to see something towards a place to be seen, where the representation of the self has taken centre stage. Through 'lates', the museum visit has merged itself with other arenas of the millennial life-world – attending 'lates' through Facebook-events has become a display of an identity that is carefully curated, where the digital act of 'going' to 'Art Night' or 'Late Night' becomes a way to display the cultural capital museum visiting creates.

'Lates' can act as an example of how a new generation utilizes the museum space in a way that is perhaps unparalleled in the more historic view of museum visitation. Although the notion of the museum as a place to 'be spotted' is nothing new and has been around for as long as the construction of the modern exhibition, it has never been so visible (via social media) and as curated as in the current technological climate. Rather than looking at the distinctive, more detailed, workings of what 'lates' are, more interesting is perhaps the ways in which these events have become a way for the museum to permeate the lives of its visitors in this very modern way.

This is not to say that developments such as this should happen sans critique; art museums are, first and foremost, about the art, and if the aspect of having a drink with friends is the main drive for visitors going, then that should be a concern to be aware of in the continued development of these programs. Visitor numbers are, without a doubt, important for museums struggling in a society where funding is limited and earned revenue is essential, but should nonetheless not be the only driving force behind the creation of innovative, new content. Finding a balance between the elements of entertainment and the more traditional aims of the museum is crucial if 'lates' are to continue being a legitimate facet of visitor programs, and something to be aware of as this development continue in coming years. 'Lates' can, nonetheless, be a medium that enables museums to stay current, and keeps its visitors coming back time after time, which is something that should be valued in a time and place where the museum as an institution faces a wide array of changes and challenges.

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