

## Cleaver Family

*I think it's been interesting to watch that sort of graduation from Art Sparks into the other realms—like when I took the girls to the Native American exhibit and they did the scavenger hunt. It was Wallis and her friend Leah, and they had such a good time going upstairs to the upper galleries. – June Cleaver*

The Cleavers made their first visit to The Speed Art Museum roughly seven years ago, in 2004. June remembers that their first visit corresponded with the start of The Speed Art Museum's *MadCap* puppet show programs. At the time, June's mother was working as a docent at The Speed Art Museum. As a result, June became involved with the museum and later became a member. June recalls her initial motivation for joining the museum was a desire to get involved with art through volunteering. Through that involvement, she was introduced to Art Sparks. The Cleavers took their daughter Wallis (then three years old), to Art Sparks shortly thereafter. June recalls Wallis loving the space: "She just loved Art Sparks... grabbing and touching everything and the puppet show was so fascinating to her." After that first visit, June says she and Wallis (now 10) became frequent visitors. That trend continued after the Cleavers adopted their second daughter, Theodora (now seven years old).



Cleaver Family (from left): Wallis, Ward, June, and Theodora.

Both June and Ward Cleaver work full-time—June as a commodity analyst and Ward as a communications consultant and business owner. Both children were adopted from China and Ward, June, and Wallis share fond and vivid memories of their trip to China to adopt Theodora. Outside of visits to the art museum, the Cleavers enjoy visiting the science center, the zoo, and local parks. They also enjoy swimming and attending Louisville Bats baseball games.

For this study, the Cleaver family made two accompanied visits to The Speed Art Museum, and three like-site visits to the Frazier International History Museum, the Kentucky Center for African-American Heritage, and the Kentucky Center for the Arts. No clear visit patterns emerged during the study in regards to how the Cleavers structured their Speed Art Museum visits. On the first visit, they spent time in Art Sparks first and then visited the galleries whereas on their second visit, they started in the galleries and then spent some time in Art Sparks before visiting one more gallery on their way out of the museum. On both visits, both parents accompanied their two children. Similarly, both June and Ward were present at all three of the like-site visits. Two of the visits (to the Frazier International History Museum and the Kentucky Center for African-American Heritage) were similar in nature in that they were centered on participatory experiences, whereas the other visit (at the Kentucky Center for the Arts for a dance performance) was more focused on observing and listening.

### Visits to The Speed Art Museum Galleries

While in the galleries, Wallis and Theodora appeared to drive the visit. Theodora had tons of energy and ran around the galleries, fleeing from one artwork or activity to the next. (The

Speed Art Museum has a number of interactive stations throughout galleries and exhibitions.) Wallis spent a lot of her time with Ward, often pulling him to different works or activities and frequently asking him to join her in what she was doing at that moment. When Ward and June mentioned visiting the Egyptian gallery during one of the visits, both girls protested lightly. With strong encouraging and convincing from their parents, however, the girls finally went. June and Ward tried to spark interest and curiosity in visiting the galleries by explaining how cool and important the topics were. Once in the galleries, Ward often read some of the labels aloud to the girls, interpreting some of the more challenging pieces. During another visit, the girls participated in a scavenger hunt and seemed to enjoy searching for and locating the objects on the list. While the girls engaged in the scavenger hunt, Ward and June walked around on their own, looking at art and reading some of the labels. During both visits, the girls sometimes moved forward and ahead of their parents at a much quicker pace, but they never wandered too far and always stopped to wait for their parents, who took their time viewing the art. Both girls tried to lead their parents toward Art Sparks throughout their time in the galleries.

### **Visits to Art Sparks**

During the beginning of a visit to Art Sparks, the Cleavers usually spent the first few minutes getting a lay of the land, with each family member setting out to see what there was to do and what looked like fun. Overall, the Cleavers explored and discovered in a very unstructured pattern. Sometimes each person worked individually, sometimes they worked together as a family, sometimes one child worked with one parent or both, and sometimes the children worked together while June and Ward worked together. Every combination of parent-child and child-child interaction was observed and it always seemed to happen naturally and organically. However, it did appear that there was a slight tendency for Theodora to want to work with Ward and for Wallis to work with June. This may have something to do with the ages of the children, as June tends to help Wallis with more advanced activities, like creating a mobile out of wire. During one of their visits to Art Sparks, all of the Cleavers sat down and built a structure together using shapes. The family worked well together as a team, offering positive reinforcement and supporting each other's efforts. For example, even when pieces of the building fell down, the entire family worked together to reassemble and rebuild the structure. All of the Cleavers appeared to have a great ability to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. When a goal was achieved, there was joy and a sense of accomplishment. Overall, the girls always seemed lively while in Art Sparks.

### **Visits to Like Sites**

During the Cleavers' visits to the Frazier International History Museum and the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage, Theodora entered the new spaces with excitement and anticipation. Once in the more interactive spaces, she would run off on her own before eventually joining her sister. Once together, the two worked together or close by each other. June gave a lot of instruction during the first interactive visit but less on the third visit. One explanation for the shift in behavior is that by the third visit June may have felt less anxious about being observed by the research assistant. During both visits, June and Ward kept together and sometimes lagged behind the children, taking more time to read the labels and look at the exhibits. The children appeared to enjoy reading the labels as well as interacting with the various items in the spaces. Both children spent a lot of time asking questions, were very inquisitive, and often seemed impatient while waiting on a response. It was almost as if, in

their excitement, they were trying to take it all in at once. The dance performance at the Kentucky Center for the Arts was a more muted affair—the whole family was very attentive during the first few performances and toward the end the two girls started to present signs of restlessness with one moving into the theatre aisle to sit and watch the performance and the other being held by her father.

### **Motivation & Values**

A deep appreciation for art is at the core of the Cleavers' visitations to The Speed Art Museum and Art Sparks. June says that making art is "one of the most important contributions mankind can make" and that spending time with children in a surrounding where there is art is "so important to society." The Speed and Art Sparks are one of the few places where June feels like she can surround herself and her family with art. She describes Art Sparks as an "anchor" from which her children have grown. She describes the process as a "graduation" from Art Sparks into "other realms" (galleries and exhibitions), emphasizing the importance of that graduation to Wallis's and Theodora's development. In short, June encourages the same art appreciation in her children that she grew up with as a child.

When reflecting on their motivation for visiting the three like-site venues, June emphasized "subject matter" and "interest" as being the number one motivations for attending the dance performance. June explained that one of her daughters was interested in dancing so she and Ward wanted to support that interest and curiosity. In addition, June reemphasized the importance of exposing the girls to all forms of culture, including dance. The Frazier Museum of International History Museum was also primarily selected out of a motivation to expose the children to culture, also because it was something new as most of the family had never been there before. June further explained why exposing the children to new places is so important, saying that it is directly linked with "good behavior" and "increased awareness:"

*We think it is important to expose the children to different environments so that they can learn to behave and not be so rambunctious and to respect the property of others. The change of venue and knowing that these places exist is also helpful as it increases the children's awareness. It is important to broaden their awareness about what is going on in the world. We want them to learn about the ways in which other people live.*

The Cleavers' motivation for the visit to the Kentucky Center for African American Heritage tied in with the girls' formal education, as one of the children was studying Egypt in school and June and Ward thought visiting the center would be a good way to tie in with that lesson and support her learning of that subject.

When asked about what they enjoyed most about the like-site visits, June perceived that Theodora liked the dancing the most, as evidenced by her "watching it so intensely." Wallis, on the other hand, enjoyed the Egyptian history at the Kentucky Center for African-American Heritage as "she had done it before and already had an understanding of it." It is unclear what the Cleavers enjoyed most about their visits to The Speed Art Museum, as they were not available for the post-visit interviews and, therefore, the information was not collected.

**Shared Characteristics—Art Museum & Like Sites**

When asked about the shared characteristics between The Speed Art Museum and the three like-site venues, June mostly discussed the differences instead, noting that Art Sparks is unique in that the children can always engage in interactive activities. At the other spaces, however, the focus was more on watching and observing but not touching. June noted that while in Art Sparks Theodora and Wallis are “more energetic” because they can participate. “When there is no interaction,” she explained, “they are not as interested and it is harder to hold their attention when there is nothing that involves them.” While not stating the similarities explicitly, it seems that the Cleavers selected the like sites for the purpose of exposing their children to new experiences in culture and arts, which corresponds with one of the motivations for bringing the girls to The Speed.

**Connections & Effect of Participation in the Study**

Overall, the Cleavers say that they are still regular visitors to The Speed Art Museum and that the girls still enjoy spending time in Art Sparks. While they are visiting the galleries more, June says that those spaces still are not as compelling as Art Sparks.

**VISIT PATTERNS**

	<b>The Speed Art Museum</b>	<b>Like-Sites</b>
<b>Average time spent</b>	137 minutes (Entire visit) 54 minutes (Art Sparks)	104 minutes
<b>Timing of visits</b>	The family visited once on a Friday morning and once on a Sunday afternoon.	Offsite visit one took place on a weekend on a Sunday afternoon and visits two and three took place on a weekday; visit one in the evening and visit three in mid-afternoon.
<b>Order of visits</b>	On the first visit, the Cleavers went to Art Sparks first and then visited the galleries. On their second visit, the Cleavers started in the galleries, then spent some time in Art Sparks, and then visited one more gallery before leaving.	Visit one and three are very interactive with the children and parents actively involving themselves with the environment. Visit three is more passive as they watch a series of dance performances.

**Snapshot**

**TWO VISITS TO THE SPEED ART MUSEUM**

**Visit 1**

April 2009  
1 hr 45 min.

**Visit 2**

No photograph available  
January 2010  
3 hrs 18 min.

**TO LIKE SITES**

**Frazier International History Museum**

August 2009  
2 hours



**Kentucky Center for the Arts (Community Dance Program)**

March 2010  
1 hour 55 min.



**Kentucky Center for African American Heritage**

April 2010  
1 hour 18 min.

No photograph available