

## Shelburne Family

*I just like that they were exposed to a lot of stuff, all the time. And rather it is the more sophisticated art upstairs or more interactive things downstairs in Art Sparks, it's just that exposure. And they develop a love for culture. That's what I was after. – Hera Shelburne*

The Shelburne family made their first visit to The Speed Art Museum in 2002, when the children, Ares and Athena (now 10 and 8 years old), were just two years and few months old, respectively. Hera explained that the combination of just “wanting to get out” and being a practicing artist prompted her to take the children to The Speed. From the very first visit, they became frequent visitors. Hera says they came often because it was “guaranteed fun for the children.”

Both Hera and Zeus, the father, have backgrounds in architecture and have worked professionally in that field. A self-described artist, Hera says she enjoys visiting art museums and taking her children to them during their leisure time. On the two visits made during the week to The Speed Art Museum, Hera took the children to the museum alone; on the weekend visit, Zeus took the children alone. While Hera does not talk specifically about who traditionally visits The Speed Museum, from the patterns seen in this study, it is possible that Hera and Zeus prefer to take turns taking the children on outings rather than going as an entire family. Other ways the Shelburnes enjoy spending their time together outside of the art museum include visiting libraries, historical sites, and museums; taking walks; and playing board games.

For this study, the Shelburne family made three accompanied visits to The Speed Art Museum, and three like-site visits to the Frazier International History Museum, Gallrein Farms Pumpkin Patch, and the Undercroft at the Cathedral of the Assumption. On each visit, Hera took the children without Zeus due to conflicts with his work schedule. Decisions about where to go for the like-site visits appear to have been determined democratically, although Ares appears to have indicated a great interest in going to the pumpkin patch and the lecture at the cathedral.

### Visits to The Speed Art Museum

During the preliminary interview, Hera said that they always visit the exhibitions and sculpture court during a visit, even if they are primarily there to spend time in Art Sparks, and that the length of time spent in the galleries depends on the children's moods that day. Despite her initial assessment of her family's visitations to the permanent collections, during the three visits



Shelburne Family (from left): Ares, Athena, and Hera.

observed for this study, the Shelburnes visited the galleries only once, attending a special exhibition about photography. While in the exhibition, the family split apart at times and came together at others. For the most part, Athena explored the photographs by herself while Ares and Hera stayed closer together, discussing a few of the more well-known portraits. Ares, who often displays a high depth of knowledge about and interest in history, discussed some historical facts associated with people like Winston Churchill. The family stayed in the gallery for roughly fifteen minutes.

### **Visits to Art Sparks**

Overall, the Shelburnes spend the great majority of their time in Art Sparks. When the children visited with their father, the pattern alternated between creating and playing individually and creating and playing together. In general, both children are likely to approach or join an activity and then leave it quickly, flittering from one exhibit to the next. Athena is slightly more likely to follow this pattern than her brother, who at times will sit and focus on one activity, whether it is drawing, building, or painting. Both children appear to enjoy pretending and using their imaginations and were often observed making up stories and enacting imaginary scenes. When deciding what to see and do, both children make suggestions, which in most instances are accepted and agreed upon by the group. Socially, the children spend more time interacting with each other and/or other children than with their parents. In most instances, Hera and Zeus tend to observe their children rather than engage directly, offering suggestions and feedback when needed and/or requested. On a few occasions, Zeus and/or Hera joined in and directly participated in activities; however, this happened less frequently. Neither Ares nor Athena seem shy about interacting with other children in Art Sparks and are often observed playing and talking with other kids.

### **Visits to Like Sites**

During their like-site visits, Hera was supportive and took more of an observer/supporter role as the children visited each venue. Ares often took the lead in suggesting when to move forward or engage with an object. He was particularly interested in the guns on display at the Frazier International History Museum. Ares was able to identify a significant number of guns which appeared to be a passion. Hera indicated that her "mistake" was "discouraging" his interest. Athena and Ares were both very hands-on in the petting zoo Gallrein Farms and took their time describing what they were seeing. The children were confident and appeared able to work separately while still interacting with each other on a verbal level. The lecture at the Undercroft at the Cathedral of the Assumption appeared to be very important to Ares who indicated his interest in archeology (which was the subject of the lecture). He joined in with the question-and-answer sessions at the end and approached the speaker after the event was over.

### **Motivation & Values**

During the preliminary interview, both the children and Hera were able to recall vivid memories of The Speed Art Museum, and the Art Sparks family gallery in particular. The children remembered playing with the dance exhibit, walking through the harmonic corridor and crawling through a tunnel-like object with other children. Ares recalled being afraid of the

artwork in the galleries, calling it “weird and scary.” During her children’s early years, Hera appreciated Planet Preschool (an early learning area within Art Sparks) in particular because she always “felt safe” there and could “always keep up” with the children. She added that there “were always really great things to do.”

Hera says that visits to The Speed allow the children to learn something new and engage in new experiences. She describes this process as “exposure,” saying that it leads to the development of an appreciation for art and culture. Hera says the family also enjoys having opportunities to dress up and pretend, saying that by thinking about and feeling what it was like to live in different times and places, you start to consider multiple perspectives. When asked to describe the relationship between Art Sparks and the permanent collection, Ares used the metaphor of “cheese and crackers,” explaining how you have “all the boring stuff [galleries] and then all the good stuff [Art Sparks],” but that both are important and go together: “they aren’t really good alone, but they go great together.” Hera says that it is evident that The Speed is trying to draw connections between the galleries and Art Sparks, especially with the Dutch paintings, and those connections are important.

When asked what she and her children enjoyed most during their visits to The Speed, Hera said the children especially enjoy building and sculpting in Art Sparks. As an architect, Hera says it is “great to see them organizing and thinking their way through new creations—it is neat because it sits within my love of architecture and it’s comfortable and fits with my experience and expertise.” In addition to building, Hera says they also enjoy painting and creating in general. While the family did not visit this exhibition during one of their accompanied visits, Hera says the children often talk about a special exhibition that featured the work of an Austrian artist. She suggests that the exhibition might have had a greater impact as it was interactive and actually “reacted” as you moved around the space.

The like-site visits seem to have been motivated by three criteria: 1) family tradition, 2) personal interests, and 3) “exposure.” Hera explained how family traditions, like visiting the pumpkin patch, are important because they provide the family with meaningful anchors and “perspective on time.” Similar to her motivation for visiting The Speed Art Museum, Hera says it is important for her children to be “exposed” to new experiences, saying “I want to show them all kinds of ways of being in the world or being part of the world and finding your place within it.”

When asked about what she and children enjoyed most about their visits to the like sites, Hera said that Ares most likely enjoyed the lecture most because it fit with his interests in Greek history and archaeology. Ares has considered future careers in archaeology and history, so the visit to the Frazier International History Museum and attending the lecture at the cathedral really targeted those interests. Hera said it is more difficult to identify what was most enjoyable for Athena, but that in general she enjoys reading and visiting new places.

### Shared Characteristics—Art Museum & Like Sites

A shared characteristic between visits to The Speed Art Museum and the like sites is that all provide “exposure to what is out there.” Hera says that by visiting these places, the children develop an understanding of the world and what is “valued and what is not.” Hera says a significant difference between The Speed and the like sites is that The Speed is “much broader” in that you can attend to varying subjects, like politics, history, and economics, as well as engage in arts and crafts.

### Connections & Effect of Participation in the Study

When thinking about the effects of participating in the study, Hera says she now thinks more about why she chooses experiences for her children: “I know it is a good way to learn but it is good to think about and verbalize it.” She said that it also made her reflect on her own childhood and in the process she became more aware of how her parents and grandparents encouraged their families to travel and get out and experience the world. Finally, Hera says that they really appreciated the membership to the museum.

## VISIT PATTERNS

	The Speed Art Museum	Like Sites
<b>Average time spent</b>	108 minutes (Entire visit) 93 minutes (Art Sparks)	93 minutes
<b>Timing of visits</b>	All of their visits were made in the afternoon, usually around 1 or 2 pm. The day of visit varied each time. They made visits on a Sunday, a Wednesday, and a Thursday.	All visits were made during the weekday and the times were all different from lunch to afternoon to late afternoon.
<b>Order of visits</b>	On two occasions, the family visited only Art Sparks. On the other visit, they attended a special exhibition first and then spent the rest of their time in Art Sparks. During two of their visits to Art Sparks, the family made use of the hands-on art studio.	All three visits were varied and eclectic representing the diversity of the family’s interests.

## Snapshot

### THREE VISITS TO THE SPEED ART MUSEUM

#### Visit 1



February 2009  
1 hour 53 min.

#### Visit 2



April 2010  
2 hrs 13 min.  
*Yousuf Karsh photography*

#### Visit 3



April 2010  
1 hour 19 min.

### 3 VISITS TO "LIKE SITES"

#### Frazier International History Museum

No photograph available

April 2009

#### Gallrein Farms Pumpkin Patch

No photograph available

October 2009

#### The Undercroft at the Cathedral of the Assumption

No photograph available

November 2009