

The Bright Beneath: The Luminous Art of Shih Chieh Huang
National Museum of Natural History
Summative Evaluation, Exhibition Visitors

May 2012

Abstract:

The *Bright Beneath* exhibition team requested OP&A conduct a summative evaluation to inform future use of the Ocean Focus Gallery, a section of the Ocean Hall permanent exhibition. The study team employed multiple methods—observations, quantitative surveys, and qualitative interviews—to determine who the visitors to Bright Beneath were, what they did, how much time they spent in the exhibit, and how did the visit to *Bright Beneath* affected them and their visit in to the Ocean Hall.

Most visitors to *Bright Beneath* had positive experiences—many were moved aesthetically, emotionally, philosophically, and intellectually. The exhibition was particularly successful with those who were especially satisfied with “being moved by beauty” and “feeling a sense of awe and wonder”—these experiences correlated with a higher frequency of stops and more time spent in the exhibit. Furthermore, visitors who saw *Bright Beneath* had richer experiences in the Ocean Hall, reporting a higher number of satisfying experiences and spent more time in the Hall. It is possible that presenting a broader variety of opportunities, as was accomplished by adding an art exhibit, might help generate longer stays and favorable ratings.