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Super Museum Sunday more than just football

Thousands flock to museums on annual free day

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Visitors study Greek sculpture at the Telfair Academy during Super Museum Sunday. (Photo by Carl Elmore/Savannah Morning News)

By Corey Dickstein

A hushed chatter echoed off the walls of the Beach Institute's West Gallery as about 30 people admired the African-American cultural center's newest exhibit.

Standing about six feet from the room's northern wall, G. Brown studied Rik Freeman's 2008 painting, "The Ball of the Grit Gal," that featured a black couple in the midst of a lively dance.

View more photos from the event.

Brown was among thousands of people throughout the Coastal Empire to venture to local museums Sunday during the Georgia Historical Society's annual Super Museum Sunday, when more than 40 area museums and cultural centers open their doors free to the public.

"I usually try to take advantage of (Super Museum Sunday)," Brown said. "But this is the only stop I have time for today."

Brown said she visits whenever the Beach Institute, part of the King-Tisdell Cottage Foundation, hosts a new exhibit.

That was part of the reason the foundation chose to open Rik Freeman's exhibit, "The Chittlin Circuit Review," on Super Museum Sunday, said Annette K. Brock, the foundation's board chair.

"We expect a lot more people than usual," Brock said. "Especially with the opening of an exhibit. We just love (Super Museum Sunday). It's a great part of the cultural flair of Savannah."

People also flocked to the Telfair Academy, where almost 850 people had

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already entered only two hours after the museum opened. As many as 3,000 visitors were expected by the end of the day.

"On a typical Sunday, we'll probably have about 100 visitors," said Terry Franz, the museum's front desk manager.

Franz said the Telfair museums - the Academy, the Jepson Center for the Arts and the Owens-Thomas House - participate in event every year.

"It gives the community an opportunity to come to the museums and see what we're all about," she said.

For one couple that recently moved to the area, it was a chance to experience some of Savannah's treasures without having to pay.

Andrew and Taylor Monroe, who moved to Pooler in October, said they visited about five sites. "You get a good idea of what you want to go back and pay to see," Andrew Monroe said.

The couple, Taylor Monroe said, expects to revisit a few of the attractions. "We definitely want to come back to the Harper Fowlkes House," she said. "And the First African Baptist Church was really cool, too."

It was a good way to experience Savannah before settling down to watch the Super Bowl, Andrew Monroe said.

"It's been a really good day," he said. "We had beautiful weather to walk around in and get our exercise before I sit on the couch for four hours to watch football."

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