Arts Alive!

An Interactive Art tour
Challenge: How to create a tour that…

- Highlights the collection
- Makes the tour memorable
- Encourages visitor engagement and investment
- Reinforces and adds to knowledge base
- Meets grade-level academic requirements
- Considers docent availability and shoestring (or zero) budget
Aha! Moments

*The Whiteness of the Whale* by Sam Francis, 1957, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

*Saint Mary Magdalene*, attributed to Gregor Erhart, German, 16th century, Louvre, Paris
Arts Alive! Tour Overview

Crescent Galleries Permanent Collection: still life, landscapes/seascapes, everyday life, portraits, Biblical/Allegorical

Activities:
- Close-looking
- Using the Senses
- Scavenger hunt
- Compare & Contrast
- Thoughts, emotions
- Storytelling
The Order of Things: Still-Life Gallery

Study in White IV by Scott Fraser
Activity

Study in White IV by Scott Fraser

Materials: White teapot, eggs, cracked eggs, wooden carpenter’s ruler, paper towel, string, large sheet white paper. Additional: scarf, flowers, shell, etc.

Discuss line, color, texture, lighting, shadows of original

Group 1: Replication of original (2 minutes)
Group 2: Reinvention (1 minute)

How did the addition or subtraction of items change the viewers perception and experience of the painting?
Study in White IV
Before leaving The Order of Things Gallery…

- With students facing you, ask them to give the first response that comes to their minds…
  - What color is water?
  - What color is sky?
  - What color are clouds?
Romance with Land & Sea: Landscapes, Seascapes

Compare our common perceptions to:

- What color is the water?
- What color is the sky?
- What color are the clouds?
- What season is it?
- What makes you say that?
- What time of day is it?
- What do you hear?

The Closing of an Autumn Day
by J. Ottis Adams, 1901, American
Activity: Engaging the senses

Art as multi-dimensional

An Engagement of the Royal Navy by Thomas Buttersworth

Discuss history of the battle between the HMS Endymion and the USS President in New York harbor in 1815

Students close their eyes and imagine themselves on one of these ships...what do they see, hear, smell, taste, touch? Encourages engagement of all the senses
Engagement of the Royal Navy by Thomas Buttersworth, 19th century

Sea Battle Sounds
Students are divided into groups and each group is given a black and white close-up enlargement from one of the paintings in this gallery.

- What might the finished artwork look like?
- Find your painting.
- What challenges did you have?
- What surprised you about the actual painting?
Jeanne Avril at the Jardin de Paris
By Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

Exit by Jerry Watson
Family Dining by Catherine Mills Royer

Gee’s Bend by Jacob Lawrence
Of Face and Form: Portraits

Activity: Students hold a pose for thirty seconds to experience what posing for a painted portrait might have been like before cameras

Activity: Compare and Contrast

- Girl with Fruit by Fernand Leger
- Portrait of Daisy by T.C. Steele
Activity: Thought Bubbles

Bet you wish you could be me!

Mom! Mom! Mommy!
Mom! Mommy!
Le Fumeur (The Smoker)
Lithograph, 1964, 24/50
Pablo Picasso
Spanish, (1881-1973)

A Patrician Family
Oil on canvas
Attributed to Jan Verspronck
Dutch, (1597-1662)
“Laughter is worth pursuing. If art is to feed our souls and assist us in encountering our humanity, then a balanced part of our diets should be humor.” Self-described Still Life Rebel Robert C. Jackson
The Gothic Room: 15th-17th centuries
Biblical/Allegorical
Activity: Compare & Contrast

Linenfold panels, c. 1500, carved English oak

The Holy Magdalena attributed to Master of the Mansi Magdalena, Flemish, 16th century

Mary Magdalene attributed to Tiziano Vecellio (Titian), Italian, 16th century
Dan Yeshinsky, well-known storyteller and author, says that a museum is a “house of stories” and ideally what the docent wants is for the “objects to dance past their frames”. “We become part of the object’s ongoing life.”

*The Feast of Belshazzar*
Attributed to Franz Francken the Younger, 17th c. Dutch
Challenges

- Group size
- Logistics
- Student engagement
- Materials
- Number of docents/assistants

Directional Plan for two simultaneous Arts Alive! Tours at Evansville Museum
Three Tips for Surviving the Art Museum
by Joe Queenan

#2 “Never take a tour with a docent. Docents are all blathering idiots who think they missed their calling as stand-ups. They’re the most excruciating human beings on the face of the earth. They’re living proof that people should not be allowed to retire, because in retirement, the pathologically garrulous cease to be merely annoying and become truly dangerous…”
Arts Alive! Tour

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