Top Ten Things to Know Before You Go

School Tours at the National Gallery of Art

Alexander Calder, *Untitled*, 1976, Gift of the Collectors Committee

1. What is the National Gallery of Art?

This is the National Gallery of Art.

National Gallery of Art, West Building (Constitution Avenue entrance)

So is this.

National Gallery of Art, East Building

Located on the National Mall, these two buildings—the neoclassical West Building and the modern East Building—house a collection that includes more than 200,000 works of art…

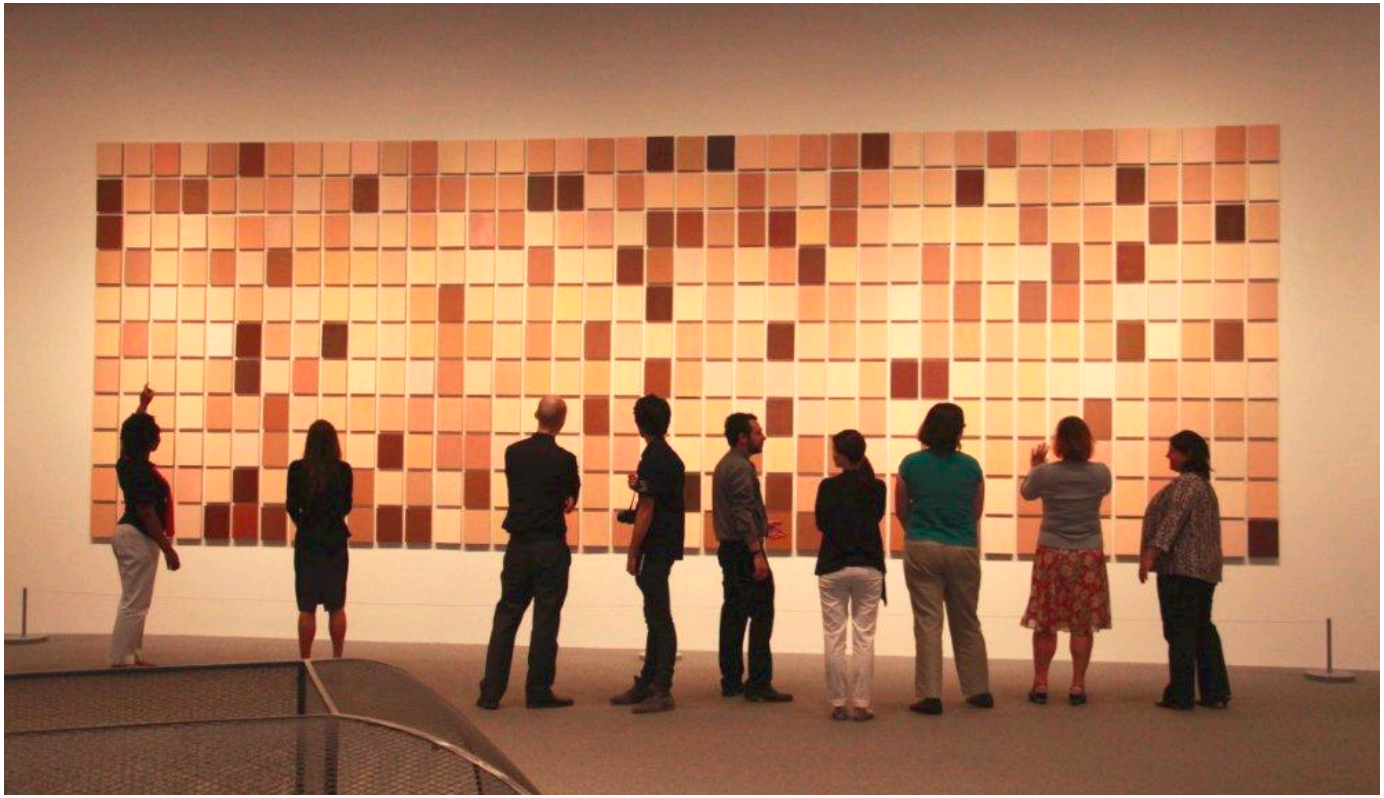
from EARLY RENAISSANCE

Giotto, *Madonna and Child*, probably 1320/1330,
Samuel H. Kress Collection

to modern

Frantisek Kupka, *Localization of Graphic Motifs II*, 1912/1913,
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund and Gift of Jan and Meda Mladek

The National Gallery welcomes more than four million visitors from around the world every year.



Byron Kim, *Synecdoche*, 1991–present, Richard S. Zeisler Fund

Including you.

Welcome to the National Gallery of Art.

2. What’s inside?

Thousands of **original works of art** are on view.

Pablo Picasso, *Madame Picasso*, 1923, Chester Dale Collection © 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/ Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Auguste Rodin, *Bust of a Woman*, 1875, Gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson

Andrea del Sarto, *Head of a Woman*, c. 1515, The Armand Hammer Collection

Julia Margaret Cameron, *The Mountain Nymph, Sweet Liberty*, 1866, New Century Fund

Among them you'll find:

- Paintings
- Sculpture
- Drawings and prints
- Photographs
- Decorative arts

Any one might be ten or *hundreds* of years old.

3. Less is more

Many museum visitors look at a work of art for only about **seven seconds**.

George Bellows, *New York*, 1911, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

Judith Leyster, Self-Portrait, c. 1630,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss

Auguste Renoir, *Pont Neuf, Paris*, 1872,
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Collection

Winslow Homer, *Breezing Up (A Fair Wind),* 1873–1876,
Gift of the W. L. and May T. Mellon Foundation

Willem Claesz Heda, *Banquet Piece with Mince Pie*,
1635, Patrons' Permanent Fund

On a school tour, you'll have the time and space to explore **four to five works of art** for much longer…

4. The art of looking

Press pause.

Edouard Manet, *The Railway*, 1873, Gift of Horace Havemeyer in memory of his mother, Louisine W. Havemeyer

Looking takes time.

Let your eyes wander over the entire surface of a painting.

Walk around a sculpture to view it from all sides.

Richard Serra, *Five Plates, Two Poles*, 1971, Gift of The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation © 2001 Richard Serra

What do you see?

5. Think out loud

Your ideas matter.

Romare Bearden, *Tomorrow I May Be Far Away,* 1967, Paul Mellon Fund ©
Romare Bearden Foundation/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

Share them with your fellow students and teachers.

6. Any questions?

You'll want to know…

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?

Original works of art can be important primary **sources of information** about the past.

Jacques-Louis David, *The Emperor Napoleon in His Study at the Tuileries*, 1812, Samuel H. Kress Collection

But also ask…

Pablo Picasso, *The Tragedy*, 1903, Chester Dale Collection
© 2012 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

- Why?
- I wonder…?
- What if…

You might find that questions generate **new ideas and interpretations.**

7. Try something new

And have fun, too!

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Two Women at a Window*, c. 1655/1660, Widener Collection

There are **many ways** to experience and understand works of art.

On a school tour—or anytime—you might try **creative writing, drawing, or movement** in response to a work of art.

Here's one way…

Strike a pose

Choose a character in a painting or sculpture and recreate his or her pose with your own body. Got it?

Now…

- Imagine how that character might be feeling.
- What might he or she say?

Try this with a group of friends, too—it's called a *tableau vivant*.

Johannes Cornelisz Verspronck, *Andries Stilte as a Standard Bearer,* 1640, Patrons' Permanent Fund

8. Every picture tells a story

In fact, works of art tell many stories…

Jan Steen, *The Dancing Couple*, 1663, Widener Collection

…about artists, history, and society…

…as well as the stories we imagine.

9. Be inspired

Mark Rothko, *Untitled,* 1949, Gift of The Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc.
Copyright © 1997 Christopher Rothko and Kate Rothko Prizel

Be inspired by your visit to the National Gallery to look for, learn about, and **create your own works of art**.

Vincent van Gogh, *Girl in White*, 1890, Chester Dale Collection

10. You're always welcome at the National Gallery of Art.

Wayne Thiebaud, *Cakes*, 1963, Gift in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the National Gallery of Art from the Collectors Committee, the 50th Anniversary Gift Committee, and The Circle, with Additional Support from the Abrams Family in Memory of Harry N. Abrams

We hope you'll want to visit with your friends and family, too.

To find out more...

Leonardo da Vinci, *Ginevra de' Benci*, c. 1474/1478,
Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

…including information about films, concerts, exhibitions, and events for families,

Visit us at:

www.nga.gov

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Wait! One last thing to know before you go…

Please don’t touch the works of art.

Gilbert Stuart, *Catherine Brass Yates (Mrs. Richard Yates),* 1793/1794, Andrew W. Mellon Collection