Tour Toolkit

Developing an Inclusive Tour

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MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUE OF ART, MINNEAPOLIS

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the Tour Toolkit for developing an inclusive tour. Inclusion is a form of empowerment; through inclusion, value is given to all voices. One way to value our visitors' voices is to create opportunities for participation and the exchange of ideas while exploring art together on a tour. Whether you have been guiding tours for 5 years or 25 years, using suggestions and techniques from this toolkit will help you provide a more inclusive tour experience, where all participants are invited to take part in building on the meaning of the art.

Overview

The toolkit was compiled using best practices recorded on tour observations and through discussions with more than 150 guides and docents during a two-year period. When asked "what makes a successful tour?" the overwhelming majority of guides and docents answered "participation from visitors" or "a high level of engagement." In observing tours with high levels of engagement, where everyone on the tour participated in some manner, common elements and approaches emerged. This is not to say that these were "cookie-cutter" tours; rather, that guides and docents who have diverse touring styles used similar techniques to engage their groups.

As you prepare your tours, reflect on what inclusion means to you. In what circumstances or events in your life have you felt excluded, rather than included? How did that make you feel? How did you feel when you were offered opportunities to participate or to give voice to your ideas and opinions?

To become truly inclusive in our approach is an ongoing journey. Cecile Shellman, a museum consultant for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) initiatives, rightly states:

> *"[I]nclusiveness isn't something we can just prepare an extended checklist to measure—something standard across all museums—and then, having checked everything off the list, we're suddenly inclusive! No: the whole point of being inclusive is that it is other-centered. It's visitor-centered ...Inclusion isn't about you; it's about them. And there are so many kinds of people and museum visitors and truth seekers in the world that we many never 100 percent adequately serve one, much less all."*[1]

Why is this important to museums?

We're Free.
Everyone is welcome.
Always.
(Mia billboard, 2019)

Providing a more inclusive experience to visitors is a goal not only for Mia, but for museums around the world. To remain relevant in our 21st-century world, we must actively foster meaningful dialogues and experiences in our spaces to connect to people's lives today.

The Tour Toolkit reflects best practices as well as current research in the field. As we train new classes of docents and guides, we offer more focus on and practice of facilitation techniques to encourage all voices on tours. Our volunteer corps is predominantly white, as is our education staff, so it is imperative that we also continue to cover topics that help grow our cultural fluency. As the demographics of our communities change, conscious and consistent efforts to include all visitors in discussion and exploration of our collection are necessary for the museum's future and to maintain its cultural relevance.

NOTES

1. Cecile Shellman, *A Totally Inclusive Museum*, American Alliance of Museums, February 20, 2019

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Policy

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Policy

Mia is committed to championing policies and practices that value diversity, foster equity, and empower an accessible and inclusive environment. Our strength lies in the diversity among the broad range of people who contribute their time and talents to Mia. We consider inclusion and accessibility a driver of institutional excellence and seek out a diversity of participation, thought, and action. It is our aim, therefore, that our employees, trustees, interns, and volunteers reflect and embrace these core values.

Definitions

Inclusion: While diversity always exists in social systems, inclusion and equity must be fostered. At Mia, we do this by cultivating an environment where people feel supported, listened to, and are able to do their personal best. As a museum with a global collection, it is Mia's mission and responsibility to ensure that our employees, trustees, interns, and volunteers demonstrate cultural competence, and that our collections and programming reflect and respond to diverse needs, interests, and cultures of our communities here in Minneapolis and beyond.

Diversity: At Mia, diversity is defined as the characteristics and attributes that make each of us unique at the individual or group level. Diversity has many dimensions, including but not limited to gender identity and expression, race, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and age; as well as cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, life experiences, skills, thoughts, perspectives, and ideas.

Equity: Equity involves acknowledging diversity, celebrating what makes us unique, and working together to eliminate barriers that prevent participation of all people and communities. Building equity requires that we seek an understanding of the underlying causes of disparities within our society, and that we strive to address and overcome them in order to fulfill our commitment to provide equal opportunities in our employment and other practices.

Accessibility: An accessible museum is one that is inclusive of, and makes accommodations for, people with all types of disabilities. At Mia, we are committed to creating accessible environments throughout the institution's physical building and in our practices, and to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources. We believe these commitments strengthen the institution for everyone: employees, trustees, interns, volunteers, and visitors.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Framework

We strive to demonstrate leadership by modeling excellence and best practices for inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. Mia has a deep belief in the power of human creativity and the opportunities for connection and learning that exist when cultures and communities come together in collaboration and understanding. By recognizing and engaging the wisdom, knowledge, and creativity found within every community, we can begin to weave the complex history of our shared cultural heritage.

Accessibility and Inclusion

Mia aims to make its exhibitions and programs accessible to all visitors. To gain familiarity with the services and amenities available to visitors with

disabilities, and to welcome visitors of all abilities, visit the museum website's Accessibility and Inclusion page.

Acknowledgments

As a Mia docent or guide, you are integral to the success of our mission:

The Minneapolis Institute of Art enriches the community by collecting, preserving, and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world's diverse cultures.

Through guided tours and Art Cart facilitations, you help people realize the continued relevance of art in our lives today. We want to engage our visitors and instill a desire to return and explore more. Through developing an inclusive tour, one in which all voices are valued, you foster connections between the visitors and the art. Mia is committed to providing free access to our collections and welcoming all in our community to this space. Thank you for your service to Mia and for taking this journey together!

Tour Preparation

In this section, we explore how a tour comes together, but with an inclusive lens in mind. Everyone researches and prepares tours in different ways. Thinking of each key step with an inclusive lens helps lead to more engagement on the tour. This toolkit is meant to provide practical ideas, so when you do see some technique or strategy you have not tried or perhaps used in a long time, we encourage you to incorporate it into your tour. We all learn through challenging ourselves to break from established habits or modes of thinking.

Confirmation of tour details

If you are assigned lead guide or lead docent on a tour, you are responsible for contacting the school or person who reserved the tour to confirm all details. This step is crucial for learning of any mobility needs within the group (e.g., one student in need of elevator access), any special requests (e.g., We want to see van Gogh's Olive Trees), and confirming the number of people attending. For school tours, the school receives the general Mia tour guidelines with the tour confirmation. For your reference, form letter templates for lead docents and lead guides are posted on the volunteer website. Search for "lead docent" or "lead guide" to quickly find these templates.

To help visitors prepare for their tour, we have additional support materials developed by School and Teacher Learning. These are available on the museum's website.

First, Mia offers three Social Narratives designed for members of the neurodiverse community. Intended to increase comfort while visiting the museum, these illustrated documents are useful tools for anyone planning a trip to Mia. You'll find versions for guided school groups, families, and adults and teens. Each is available electronically and by request at Mia's Third Avenue entrance. A list of sensory friendly spaces in Mia is also provided.

Second, "Your Trip to Mia" is a video in English, Somali, and Spanish (scroll to the bottom of the page to find the videos). The video walks students and chaperones through the experience of visiting Mia as a group and provides museum rules so that everyone knows the expectations before they arrive. Separate documents outlining group guidelines and responsibilities are also available on the same page.

At least one week before the scheduled tour, the lead should send important information to the other docents or guides, so all can fully prepare. Gaining knowledge of your group before they arrive is an essential step to providing a welcoming experience. If you are touring a large group with multiple docents or guides assigned, leave time after walking your route to check in with one another before the tour.

> **Tip:** For school tours, check out the website of the school from which the group comes, so you learn of any school mascots or value statements that you could incorporate on the tour or mention in your welcome. The kids appreciate those references!

Developing a theme

A theme is a connecting thread you weave through your tour. For your audience, a theme provides a framework to the tour, assisting them in processing the information received and their own impressions of the artworks. In effect, you are creating a lens through which to view the art and imbuing the art with additional meaning.

Themes can be broad or focused. For example, the Art Adventure sets have very broad themes, such as Amazing Animals in Art or Cultural Reflections in Art, allowing you to substitute other works more easily if a work in the set goes off view. Themes also can be focused. For example, you might think of a broad topic such as Nature. For an adult tour, a focused theme might be how the natural world inspired 20th-century artists. For a tour with younger students on that same topic, a theme could be focused on insects, perhaps titled "Crawling with Bugs," where you could look at the symbolism of insects in art as well as materials used (such as silk and dye).

Having a focus to your tour is an important part of developing an inclusive experience. Everyone is entering into the tour with a unique set of personal expectations, and a theme helps create a shared expectation, such as "Today we'll be exploring how modern artists were inspired by the natural world." At each stop, visitors will think of ways to make connections to that theme; following the visit, the theme helps visitors recall the group's discussion and object information.

In developing a theme, some docents or guides first think of the artworks they would like to include, then try to find a common thread between those works. Others think first of the theme, then find the art to fit within

it. No matter which way you develop your tour, keep the theme focused and clear for setting that shared expectation.

Tip: Docents and guides recommend sharing ideas of themes with each other, especially creative approaches to the collection. For example, one docent used a theme of "blue" on her tour, not only in thinking of color, but also other ways in which that word is defined or understood. Ideas for tour themes are posted on the volunteers' website, under Research Resources/Tour Topics and Themes/Shared Tour Outlines as well as in Tour Descriptions.

Choice of Artworks

Unless groups comes with very specific lists of what they wish to see, selecting objects and cultural resources for your tour is a chance to incorporate a diversity of artists, materials, and eras to provide more of a global group experience and exposure to many artistic voices in Mia's collection.

> **Tip:** Jaclyn Roessel, president and founder of Grownup Navajo, suggests decolonizing museum practices through the language used to describe the cultural material of non-Anglo cultures. As she states, "Terms like *artifact* and *object* contribute to the erasure of the indigenous histories. Using community-centered terms like *belonging* and *cultural resource* acknowledge the ownership and value these items have within indigenous communities that still exist today." [1] In discussing this practice, guides and docents also suggest being specific when speaking about an artwork from a non-Anglo culture. Use the artwork's title and specifically reference the culture to which it belongs.

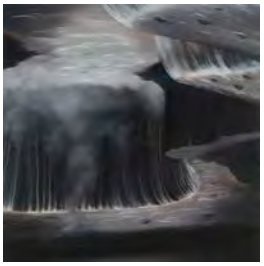
Taking the example of the adult tour with a theme on how 20th-century artists were influenced by the natural world, here is a diverse list of objects and belongings in our collection that fit within the theme:

Figure 1

George Morrison, 1919–2000, *Collage IX: Landscape*, 1974, wood, The Francis E. Andrews Fund, © Estate of George Morrison / Briand Morrison View in Mia's collection

Louis Majorelle, 1859–1926, Chicorée style buffet, 1902, black walnut, The Modernism Collection, Gift of Norwest Bank Minnesota View in Mia's collection

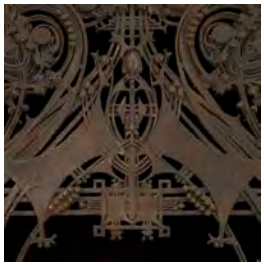
Helena Hernmarck, 1941, *Four Tulips*, 1999, wool, Gift of Helena M. Hernmarck ©1999 Helena Hernmarck View in Mia's collection



John Snyder, United States, 1956, *Niagara Falls* (detail), 1993, oil and glitter on paper, Gift of Donald McNeil and Emily Galusha in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, © 1993 John Snyder View in Mia's collection

Gustaf Edolf Fjaestad, 1868–1948, *Winter Landscape* (detail), 1908, oil on canvas, The Christina N. and Swan J. Turnblad Memorial Fund View in Mia's collection

Kamisaka Sekka, 1866–1942, Screen with four fans (detail), 1920s–30s, ink, color, and gold on silk, Gift of the Clark Center for Japanese Art & Culture View in Mia's collection



Louis Henri Sullivan; Designer: George Grant Elmslie; Caster: Jerry Bonnette,1869–1952, *Cast of teller's wicket* (detail), 1967 (designed 1908), bronze, Gift of Roger G. Kennedy View in Mia's collection

Djunmal, *Bark Painting with Suns, Fish and Plants* (detail), 20th century, Gift in memory of Nucy Meech from her children Laurie, Christopher, Charlie and Julie View in Mia's collection

Fukami Sueharu, Japan, 1947, *Dances with Waves*, 1977, semi-porcelain, Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark, © Fukami Sueharu View in Mia's collection

Empress Dowager Cixi, China, 1835–1908, *Good Fortune and Longevity* (detail), 1902, ink and color on silk, Gift of Yang and Helen H. Wang View in Mia's collection

For the example of the student-tour theme focused on insects, here is a diverse list of choices within the collection:

Figure 11

Kanbe Tomoyuki, 1975, *The Foundation of Light* (detail), 2006, gold leaf and color on paper, Gift of Willard and Elizabeth Clark, © Kanbe Tomoyuki View in Mia's collection

Henri Matisse, 1869–1954, *Boy with Butterfly Net* (detail), 1907, oil on canvas, The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund © Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York View in Mia's collection

China, Robe (silk with butterflies), 19th century, silk, The John R. Van Derlip Fund View in Mia's collection

Vincent van Gogh, 1853–90, *Olive Trees* (detail), 1889, oil on canvas, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund View in Mia's collection

China, Cricket Catching Net, 19th century, copper, Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton View in Mia's collection

Dakhóta, Cradle board cover, 1880, hide, quills, beads, ribbon, sequins, cloth, The Driscoll Art Accessions Endowment Fund View in Mia's collection

Abraham Mignon, 1640–1679, *Still Life with Fruits, Foliage and Insects* (detail), 1669, oil on canvas, Gift of Bruce B. Dayton View in Mia's collection

Japan, *Bonten, the Creator* (detail), 10th century, Japanese cypress wood, Mary Griggs Burke Collection, Gift of the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation View in Mia's collection

Leonora Carrington, 1917–2011, *Dear Diary—Never Since We Left Prague* (detail), 1955, oil on canvas, Bequest of Maxine and Kalman S. Goldenberg, © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York View in Mia's collection

Nicola di Maestro Antonio (di Ancona), 1472 – 1510, *Madonna and Child Enthroned* (detail), 1490, tempera and oil on panel, The John R. Van Derlip Fund View in Mia's collection

Limit the number of artworks on the tour. For a one-hour tour, featuring six to eight artworks is preferred. This number allows time for observation and

discussion at each stop. If too many objects or belongings are included, the tour becomes more of a monologue, with the docent's or guide's voice dominating. Have a couple of extra artworks in mind for backups if you are unable to get to certain stops.

> **Tip:** If you have a group of younger students, and the artwork is high in a case or wall, reconsider your choice. Sit on the ground to be at the level of students to be sure the work of art is visible.

> **Tip:** Some kids (and chaperones) are uncomfortable with nudity, so be aware of the other artworks in the gallery next to your choice and your planned route.

NOTES

1. Jaclyn Roessel, *Restoring Indigenous Perspectives*, Museum, July-August 2019.

Key ideas

Artworks are complex, with many features you could focus on, such as the artist's inspiration, materials and methods, subject matter, meaning, use, and cultural context. On a tour, let the theme guide your choice of one to three key ideas to explore in each artwork. Visitors find tours more meaningful when they have a voice in discussion, so concentrate on questions that encourage participation and connect to the chosen key ideas. An overload of information, no matter how interesting, limits discussion.

Route planning

If you are an Art Adventure guide, you receive an assigned route for your tour. Remember to select substitutes that fit well within your route (e.g., if a slot for a substitute falls between two stops within second floor galleries, choose a substitute on the second floor between those stops).

For other tours, once you have a proposed list of artworks, plan a viable route. Try to avoid circling back on your route. If it is a large tour group with multiple docents or guides assigned, check in with one another so routes do not collide at certain stops.

> **Tip:** Work in a couple quick stops, especially if you have a long walk between artworks on your tour. These quick stops may not always connect to your theme, but they help re-engage groups or visitors who are disinterested. This is a good tactic to keep a group engaged, especially if you are touring a school group.

Most important, walk your route before your tour to check all artworks are still on view. Be aware of the locations of elevators, restrooms, and water fountains within your route to support any accessibility or other needs of your group.

Transitions

Transitions on a tour help link back to the theme, keeping the framework present in visitors' minds. Keep transitions simple to signal the expectation for the group to move. For example, if you are moving from Louis Majorelle's "Chicorée" style buffet (fig. 2) to Helena Hernmarck, *Four Tulips* (fig. 3), focusing on the theme of inspired natural forms, here are some options to transition:

- Now that we've seen inspired natural forms in this furniture, let's see how nature influences the work of a textile artist.
- We've observed the plant forms in Majorelle's buffet, and next we'll see how a contemporary artist weaves in floral shapes.
- Let's now jump from wood to wool, to see how impressions of nature are captured in a textile.

Louis Majorelle, 1859–1926, Chicorée style buffet, 1902, black walnut, The Modernism Collection, Gift of Norwest Bank Minnesota View in Mia's collection

Helena Hernmarck, 1941, *Four Tulips*, 1999, wool, Gift of Helena M. Hernmarck ©1999 Helena Hernmarck View in Mia's collection

Developing questions

Spend time developing questions, especially questions that support the exploration of key ideas for the artwork. Plan to have two to three questions or activities per stop. When you develop a great question, keep it for future tours!

When developing questions, avoid making assumptions about visitors and their lives. For example, questions connected to travel or vacation experiences assume that all visitors have enough money and free time to take a vacation. Be cautious of making assumptions about family and homes as well, especially when leading school tours. For example, while looking at the Cream of Wheat advertisement in Philip R. Goodwin's *A "Bear" Chance* (View in Mia's collection) (fig. 21), you might ask: "What kind of breakfast did your mom or dad make you this

Figure 21

Philip R. Goodwin, 1882–1935, *A 'Bear' Chance*, 1907, oil on canvas, Gift of the National Biscuit Company View in Mia's collection

morning?" With that question, you assume that the child was able to eat breakfast, eat at home, and that a parent takes care of the child.

An easy fix for these types of questions is to turn them to opinion questions. For example, instead of asking "How many of you have been to Rome or Venice?" ask "How many of you would enjoy a trip to Rome or Venice?" Those visitors who have traveled may choose to speak of their experiences, but at the same time, those who have not may share an opinion in the discussion. For the previous example, ask instead: "If you could choose what you have for breakfast, what would it be?"

Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions accommodate the divergent perspectives of your tour group. To encourage learners to make observations or to generate ideas, open-ended questions must have several appropriate answers, such as "How would you describe this person?" If you ask a question that has a brief and predictable answer, the question is close-ended, such as "Who is this person?" Closed-ended questions often ask visitors to recall factual information; they do not stimulate reflective thinking. Open-ended questions encourage multiple answers, involving more of your group and leading to greater engagement during the tour.

An inquiry strategy outlined in The Great Books Foundation training manual [1] has been adapted for discussing works of art using three basic categories of questions: description, interpretation, and association.

Description questions

Descriptive questions can be answered by looking at the work of art. They often involve the subject matter or the visual elements, such as color, line, or shape.

These questions and appropriate follow-up questions encourage tour participants to make observations and support them with visual evidence. Some descriptive questions encourage viewers to describe the subject or action of an artwork, while others ask the viewers to analyze or describe how the elements are organized within the artwork.

Examples

- How would you describe the figures in this work?
- Describe the animals you see.
- If you could touch this sculpture, how might it feel? What about the texture makes you say that?
- What do you think the weather is like in this scene? What in the picture makes you think so?

Figure 22

Gustave Courbet, 1819–77, *Deer in the Forest*, 1868, oil on canvas, Gift of James J. Hill View in Mia's collection

Interpretation questions

Interpretive questions help tour participants explore the meanings of artworks. They require viewers to offer opinions that can be upheld by observable evidence. These questions offer the possibility for divergent opinions so you should remain open to all responses.

Examples

- How do you think the artist felt about this woman? What do you see that makes you say that? Why do you think the artist chose to place her in the back of this scene?
- Why do you think the artist left so many open spaces in the sculpture? Why might the artist have chosen wood instead of stone or metal?
- How do you think the artist feels about New York City? What do you see that makes you say "noisy and fast"?

Association questions

Associative questions ask viewers to consider to what extent an artist's viewpoint or a work of art has application to their own opinions, lives, and/or times. Associative questions can be fun and provocative and help people relate artworks to everyday life. However, avoid overusing this type of question since they can get group members (especially young visitors) far away from the artwork itself. Typically, you ask these after the artwork has been thoroughly explored and various interpretations have been discussed. However, sometimes an associative question at the start of discussion can help spark a discussion (e.g., What about this Chinese Reception Hall is similar to living rooms today? What is different?).

Examples

- If you could take this sculpture with you, where would you display it? Why?
- What do you like most about this painting? Least? Why?
- If you lived in this house, what kinds of activities would you do in this room?
- What kind of animal would you choose to represent you?

NOTES

1. Training Manual, Great Books Foundation

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

VTS, developed by Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen, is another method of inquiry that allows people to fully explore a work of art. VTS encourages close looking and critical thinking. Use VTS with artworks that are narrative and open to multiple interpretations. For artworks with a specific cultural meaning, avoid using VTS.

Many guides and docents use VTS during school or youth tours, but it also an effective strategy to use at the start of adult or multigenerational tours. The series of questions (What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?) allows all people to focus on various details and encourages more discoveries, supported through impartial paraphrasing by the docent/guide. Used at the start of a tour to encourage observations, VTS helps unify the group and gets more voices into the tour.

VTS works best with artworks the visitors have not seen before; for Art Adventure tours, VTS is best used at any substitutes that are narrative and open to multiple interpretations.

Inquiry inviting nonverbal responses

Participation encompasses more than voicing a response. Though open-ended questions create opportunities for discussion, not all visitors will be comfortable with voicing their ideas, so some opportunities should be presented on the tour for nonverbal participation. For example, English language learners on your tour may not be able to completely follow all questions and responses. If the tour only allows for verbal participation, they will begin to disengage. For Art Adventure tours, remember that not all students easily recall and communicate the information that was shared in the classroom. A chance to participate in a nonverbal manner is inclusive and often re-engages visitors.

Tip: Quick-opinion questions can be answered with a thumbs up/thumbs down or show of hands. Ask follow-up questions after such a nonverbal opportunity, though, as those who may have developed an opinion could be interested in supporting it (e.g., Using a show of hands, which do you think was more difficult to make—Majorelle's buffet or Hernmarck's weaving? Why?).

Tip: To include more of your group, consider adding opportunities for all to respond through simple movements. For example, ask visitors to make a shape they see in an artwork with their hands or strike a pose seen within the art.

Comparison and contrast

Consider incorporating opportunities for your group to compare and contrast during the tour, either with artworks on the tour (e.g., How does the color here compare to the last painting we saw?) or with an artwork close by the selected art (e.g., What are some similarities in all these ceramic figures? What are some differences?). This type of question allows visitors to make connections that could illuminate information you may then share about the artist or culture.

China, Tomb retinue, 8th century, white earthenware with three-color lead glaze, The Ethel Morrison Van Derlip Fund View in Mia's collection

Props

Props can be used to breathe life into a static artwork, perhaps through touching materials used to make it, hearing music associated with it, seeing the technique used to create it, or looking at it in a contextual photograph. Good props enhance understanding of the art and artist. Props may also better accommodate visitors of all ages who prefer hands-on experiences. Activating our senses reinforces learning on a tour.

Some docents and guides are comfortable using an iPad or tablet on their tour, with all supporting contextual information at their fingertips. While it is convenient to use an iPad or tablet, use it sparingly at tour stops to keep your group focused and engaged with the artwork rather than the technology.

Once you have your choice of artworks, check out prop possibilities in the Tour Office. If you have not used props before on a tour, try adding one for your next tour. For Art Adventure sets, we have folders with contextual photos and other materials supporting discussion on your route.

> **Tip:** If you don't like to carry props on your tour, consider what students can touch in the museum, such as stair railings to feel metal, a wall or floor to feel marble, or an interactive map to activate that sense of touch. Look at what other artworks are in the gallery, too, to help support the context of what you are discussing. For example, if you are looking at Japanese teaware, include a quick stop at the teahouse to offer visitors a better understanding of the context in which the wares would be used.

Experiential activities

As with props, experiential activities activate other senses. After choosing your artworks for the tour, consider providing a couple opportunities for movement and sound activities. Experiential activities do not need to be complicated. As mentioned, they can be as simple as having students strike a pose they see reflected in an artwork. Following are some examples of activities observed or shared.

- Students are fascinated by all the objects on Nick Cave's *Soundsuit* (View in Mia's collection) (fig. 23). Have each student focus on one part of the soundsuit and think of what that part would sound like. Then at the count of three, have everyone voice their sound.

- Set up a tableau for a multi-figure narrative work, such as Gerrit van Honthorst's *The Denial of St. Peter* (View in Mia's collection) (fig. 24). The rest of the group may act as "directors," having the actors reflect what is happening in the painting. Kids especially love to get involved in setting the scene.

- At van Gogh's *Olive Trees* (View in Mia's collection) (fig. 14), have the students think of what insects, creatures, or sounds (e.g., wind through the leaves) may have been present in the summer landscape as he was painting. Have a sound for each element and assign students to each sound. Then at the count of three, have a chorus. That brings the painting to life!

Figure 23

Nick Cave, 1959, *Soundsuit*, 2010, metal, wood, plastic, pigments, cotton and acrylic fibers, Gift of funds from Alida Messinger, © Nick Cave and Jack Shainman Gallery, NY View in Mia's collection

Gerrit van Honthorst, 1592–1656, *The Denial of St. Peter* (detail), 1623, oil on canvas, The Putnam Dana McMillan Fund View in Mia's collection

Vincent van Gogh, 1853–90, *Olive Trees* (detail), 1889, oil on canvas, The William Hood Dunwoody Fund View in Mia's collection

Pre and Post-tour reflections

As a final note on preparing, leave time for your own reflections before and after your tour. Pre-tour reflection questions help focus your expectations. Post-tour reflections, especially debriefing with other docents or guides, help identify the aspects of your tour that went very well and those areas you want to improve. See the section on Reflection at the end of the toolkit.

Welcoming Visitors

Your introduction is vital in setting the stage for an inclusive tour. Language matters. The choices you make in the questions you initially ask your group and how you address your group reverberate through the tour. This section is divided between tour types, looking first at best practices in welcoming school or youth groups, then at best practices for welcoming adult or multigenerational groups. An inclusive language guide is included at the end of this toolkit in Appendix A.

Welcoming School or Youth Tours

- Move to a quiet space for your introduction, so the whole group is better able to focus and hear what is said. Introduce yourself and, if comfortable, include your preferred pronouns (e.g., she/her/hers) within your introduction.
- Before moving to another floor, ask the group (including chaperones) if anyone has need of an elevator. If someone does need to use the elevator, try to bring the whole group that way instead of separating.
- Spend time at the start setting the expectations for behavior by letting the students create a list of shared expectations and museum rules. This sets a

conversational tone of the tour and lets the students know you will listen to their responses. If they do not cover all the rules, add any additional points in positive language. Framing the rules as "dos" rather than "don'ts" is a positive way to share expectations, such as "Do walk, do stay with the group, do use indoor voices, and do stay a foot away from the art."

- Visitors sense if you are friendly and accessible from your words, facial expressions, and body language. Smile and show your sense of humor. A tour is a fun activity!

- Establish good eye contact and voice level with the group. Check that everyone can hear you, even at the back of the group. Norms for eye contact vary. If you do not get eye contact back from some students, that is all right.

- Use inclusive language (all, everybody, everyone, you all, friends, students, second-graders, etc.) and avoid gender binaries (e.g., boys/girls).

- Clearly convey the theme of the tour. For Art Adventure tours, when the students have received information about the theme in their classroom, ask them to share what they remember about the theme at the start of the tour. Set a common expectation for what you will be exploring together at Mia.

- Reach out to the chaperones in your group, welcoming them to Mia as well as noting how they will help you with group management during the tour. Directly ask them for help in keeping the group together, walking safely through the galleries, and staying a foot away from the art. If you have multiple chaperones, assign them to stations at various parts of the group, with one or two acting as the "caboose" at the end to keep all students together. Some docents and guides also make a point of checking back in with the chaperones mid-tour to let them know if more proactive help is needed with group management or thank them for keeping the group moving safely.

- If the students arrive with legible name tags, use their names. Using names at the start helps you develop rapport with the group and drive more engagement during the tour. If you have a concern of mispronouncing any names, ask the students how to pronounce their names at the start of the tour and ask to be corrected if you mispronounce names later. (For more on the importance of names to foster inclusion, see this article link.)

- At the start, mention that you hope to hear their opinions, questions, and ideas throughout the tour. No one has all the answers, including you! Art offers itself to multiple observations, interpretations, and viewpoints.
- For tours with younger students (preschool to first grade), adapt your expectations and realize that this experience may be their first visit to a museum. The tour should focus on **exploration** rather than **information**.

Welcoming Adult or Multigenerational Tours

- Visitors sense if you are friendly and accessible from your words, facial expressions, and body language. Smile and show your sense of humor. A tour is a fun activity!
- Introduce yourself, and if comfortable, include your preferred pronouns (e.g., she/her/hers) within your introduction.
- Ask icebreakers: “What brings you to the museum today?” or “What type of art do you enjoy?” Avoid asking the question “Where are you from?” as this is a form of microaggression, especially when asked of people of color.

(For more on the negative impact of this simple question, visit this video link or article link.)

- Establish good eye contact and voice level with the group. Check that everyone can hear you, even at the back of the group. Norms for eye contact vary. If you do not get eye contact back from some visitors, that is all right.
- Use inclusive language (all, everybody, everyone, you all, folks, etc.) and avoid gender binaries (e.g., boys/girls, ladies/gentlemen).
- Clearly convey the theme of the tour. Set the shared expectation of what you will be exploring together.
- For public tours, confirm that the tour lasts one hour, but note that visitors always are free to leave the tour at any point.
- Do not assume your audience knows the rules of the museum, regardless of age. Briefly state the rules, such as keeping one-foot away from art and display cases. It is far more considerate to explain a rule before visitors have made a mistake than having to tell them after the fact.
- Always ask if anyone in the group needs to use the elevator before moving between floors. If someone does need to use the elevator, try to bring the whole group that way instead of separating.
- For adult groups, you could also offer the use of gallery stools to allow people to be more comfortable for the duration of the tour.
- At the start, mention that you hope to hear their opinions, questions, and ideas throughout the tour. No one has all the answers, including you! Art offers itself to multiple observations, interpretations, and viewpoints.

School or Youth Tours

Now that you have welcomed the group, it's time to put your tour preparation into action! Guides and docents have commented, I only have one hour! What can I accomplish on a tour? The answer is simple. Incite a desire in those students to return again, with their families and friends. Value their observations and empower their voices to make them feel welcome in this space.

School tour groups are the most diverse groups coming to Mia, better reflecting the demographics of our community. With school tours, the opportunity exists to establish a connection with our next generation, those who will be the future stewards of the museum.

Ideally, your tour contact will inform you in advance of any necessary accommodations within your group so you can plan accordingly to support any needs on the tour. If your tour has children on the autism spectrum, for example, we have visual cards developed in coordination with Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) to support communication with all students and encourage their participation on the tour.

> **Tip:** On a general note, keep children seated on the floor whenever possible. Being seated redirects the focus of the

group to your facilitation of the discussion and leads to higher engagement levels.

Cultural fluency

Before you start a tour, remind yourself that the group brings their specific experiences and wisdom with them. Every tour is a learning opportunity, not only for the students, but also for you. Docents and guides who achieve lots of engagement on tours often exercise cultural humility, freeing up the discussion to the group and remaining open to all perspectives expressed.

Through the tour, use the names of the students (if they have name tags). While some names will be unfamiliar or new to you, they are not unfamiliar to the students. Don't be embarrassed or feel bad if you mispronounce a name; it happens to us all. Just apologize and try to correct your pronunciation. It's worth the effort. Using everyone's name during discussion makes the students feel as if they belong in this space with their class.

> **Tip:** For quiet middle school or high school groups, try using the students' names at first in casual ways, rather like an icebreaker of sorts. For example, "If we would all look at this painting from back where Taylor is standing, let's see if we can see the brushstrokes." After using names in such ways, students tend to warm up to being in the group and offering ideas.

On the tour, it's wonderful to provide exposure to art that connects to students' cultural backgrounds. However, avoid expectations that students know about artworks from their respective cultures. For example, do not direct questions about a Somali work of art solely to Somali students. Instead, allow the entire group to respond to questions.

When presenting a work by an unidentified artist, specifically identify the cultural group from which the belonging originates. Continue to reference the culture's name in discussion, and avoid the use of "these people" or any terms that signify the culture as the "Other" in your facilitation. For example, here is how you could introduce a drum made by an unidentified artist: "The Kundu drum was made by an artist of the Iatmul people. The Iatmul live in Papua New Guinea and use hand drums to accompany clan songs performed at important community events." If uncertain of the pronunciation of a culture's name, check with IPE staff or your colleagues, as well as look online for pronunciation guides. Several volunteers have worked on great pronunciation guides, posted on the volunteer website for your use, under Peer Sharing/Pronunciation Guides.

As we become a more gender-fluid culture, we should use more inclusive and non-binary terms, such as "students," "you all," or "second-graders." Avoid using "boys and girls" and asking gendered questions, such as directing questions only to girls or boys in the group (e.g., How many of you girls would like to dress up like this? How many of you boys like to go fishing?).

Acknowledgment of biases or preferences

Docents and guides actively working to engage the entire group are also gaining awareness of their own biases or preferences. We are all human, and we all have biases, both explicit and implicit. Acknowledgment of that statement is one of the first steps to develop an inclusive tour. Perhaps you identify with the students who process information quickly and are first to raise their hands at each stop. Perhaps you call on those students repeatedly because you dread silence or a sense of disengagement in a group.

Implicit biases are harder to identify as they are hidden to the conscious mind. In observations, implicit biases may sometimes be seen when docents or guides repeatedly pass over students of color or girls who have their hands raised with the rest of the group. To work on identifying implicit biases, check out Harvard's Project Implicit. At the end of the tour, a reflection on who participated in your group may also help you identify and disrupt patterns of unintentional bias. (See the Reflection section at the end of the toolkit for examples of post-tour reflection questions.)

Theme and transitions

The theme is the framework holding the tour together and sets the common connection between the artworks you include. As you are touring, touch back to your theme through the information given, the questions asked, and the transitions. When the theme is kept alive through the tour, it keeps the framework present in the participants' minds.

Transitions link artworks and ideas to reinforce the theme of the tour. Transitions provide an opportunity to clarify, emphasize, and/or embellish ideas. Transitions can be presented in the form of a question, activity, or statement in order to move your group towards the next stop on the tour. (For examples, see the section on Transitions in Tour Preparation.)

Vocabulary level

Use age-appropriate vocabulary when speaking with your group. Whenever possible, simplify your word choices with school groups. If you use any unfamiliar terms (e.g., terracotta, bronze, literati, mudras), explain the meaning when you introduce the material or term. This also helps support any English language learners in your group and makes the tour more accessible to all learners.

Inquiry

On an inquiry-based tour, all visitors have an opportunity to observe, form opinions, and develop an understanding of the art. Inquiry teaching, or instruction through questions, encourages museum visitors to really look at and engage with artworks. Inquiry activates curiosity. Questions invite visitors to discover more about artworks, analyze artists' intentions, examine their own responses and attitudes, and share with others. Questions spark curiosity and engagement. It is not enough to simply hear information about art; people remember best when they have helped to construct the meaning. Before moving to questions about the art, allow students some time to *look* at the art.

Being able to answer questions and talk about art empowers both children and adults. As a guide, you play the role of facilitator, and facilitation is a dynamic process. By asking questions and leading discussions on your tours, you involve visitors in the learning process. By encouraging visitors to generate their own ideas and construct meaning on their own, you help them develop skills they can use to become independent learners in the museum.

There are other good reasons to use inquiry on your tours. If you begin your tour with thoughtful open-ended questions, you learn a lot about your group—attitudinally, intellectually, visually, and verbally. The use of inquiry creates an atmosphere of trust because it demonstrates that you are genuinely interested in what the group thinks.

As mentioned in the section on Tour Preparation, participation encompasses more than voicing a response. While open-ended questions create opportunities for discussion, not all visitors will be comfortable with voicing their ideas, so inquiry inviting nonverbal participation (e.g., answering with thumbs up/down) also should be presented on the tour.

Tip: Remember, chaperones are part of your group. While you want the focus for discussion to be with the kids, you could use the chaperones to assist in holding your iPad or perhaps ask them to answer a simple question from their vantage point. Seeing the adults engaged can help drive more engagement with the students. It also may help keep the chaperones attentive to the group's needs!

Scaffold questions

Inquiry will be most successful if you scaffold your questions on the tour, moving from simple to more complex questions. Begin with basic observation (description) questions or exercises that encourage visitors to look closely (e.g., Describe what you see, or What's going on in this picture?).

> **Tip:** If the group is quiet even for basic questions, be more specific with the descriptive question (e.g., Where do you notice the artist's brushstrokes? What color do you notice most?). Or work in an associative question that just requires a nonverbal thumbs up/down response (e.g., How many of you want to wear this Soundsuit?) Thumbs up if you do and thumbs down if you don't.). Those types of opinion questions then give a lead-in to a follow-up question (e.g., Would someone share why they would want to wear it? Would someone share why they would not want to wear it?).

Take multiple answers. Follow up on some responses with a question that asks students to back up their responses with evidence from the artwork itself (e.g., What about his expression makes you say he is sad? What do you see that makes you say that?). This can often be further followed up with a question that asks them to think about their explanations (e.g., Why might the artist have painted this way?). By scaffolding questions, you encourage tour participants to look, explain, and generate ideas.

To learn more about scaffolding as an instructional technique, see this link.

Wait time

We all process information at different rates. An inclusive tour builds in wait time, allowing students to look at the art and construct some meaning

in response to the question asked. It's good to remind ourselves of our own familiarity with the art, and how, when seeing it for the first time, we needed more time to visually understand it. Put yourself in the shoes of a first-time visitor. Wait until more than one or two students have their hands raised. Building in wait time allows for more students to participate, and it also helps prevent you from answering your own question if you tend to jump in when there is silence.

Accept multiple answers

If you encourage multiple answers with your open-ended questions, then leave enough time on your tour to hear from the students. Avoid shutting down the discussion after receiving one answer in order to convey one of your key ideas about the artwork.

Be active in facilitation, making an effort to hear from all in the group during the tour. Move away from any dominant classroom dynamic within the group, such as when two or three students continually participate in discussion.

> **Tip:** When you have one or two students dominating the conversation, ask "Who haven't we heard from?" or "Who hasn't had a turn yet?" It takes effort to break away from an established classroom dynamic, but the effort is worthwhile when seeing the level of engagement rise within the whole group.

Paraphrase

An important part of inquiry-based learning is actively demonstrating you heard and understood responses to questions. Paraphrase responses you receive to fuel more participation. Paraphrasing also allows all members of the group to hear the response and is a dynamic expression of your engagement with the group. It lets you make connections between

observations from the visitors. For example, “So you feel that the man is sad, too, but you believe that he is sad because of the dark colors the artist used.” When paraphrasing, position yourself to the side of the art and face the group, so all can hear what you are saying.

Pair share

Pair-share or small group discussion opportunities are often effective strategies for improving levels of engagement in large or quiet groups. Like the nonverbal responses, this technique allows for the entire group to participate. Time spent in discussion with peers may jumpstart conversation or reinforce the relevancy or value of ideas expressed.

Tip: Work in pair-share moments when you have a mixed-age school group, such as second and fourth-graders. These can be quick opportunities; for example, “What type of animal would you want representing you on your water bottle? Share your idea with your elbow buddy.” Typically, older students dominate the discussion, so after a pair-share opportunity is completed, you can direct questions to the younger students, asking them to share ideas from their conversations.

Props and experiential activities

Providing an opportunity to touch a material, listen to music, or watch a video enlivens the tour as well as accommodates different learning styles (e.g., one child may learn more through touch). Experiential activities also activate other senses and provide a more holistic sensory experience on the tour.

> **Tip:** If you are using an iPad or tablet, be sure to display it in a way in which your entire group may see the image or video.

Tip: Use a flashlight to point out details in the artwork. Allow visitors to use the flashlight, too. If you have one student who is not participating, ask them to assist you by shining the flashlight at the artwork. It is a way for the student to participate in a nonverbal manner. Small flashlights are available in the Tour Office for your use.

Challenges using props

Props will do little but distract your group without careful planning. Consider these questions before using the prop: Will they all get to touch the prop? How should they take turns? What should they do when it's not their turn? How should they treat the prop? At the end of the discussion, don't forget to ask for the props back!

Review the following points to prevent group management challenges from undermining the benefits of props:

1. Decide what information about the object the prop best illustrates. Present the prop in conjunction with information about the object or to help answer a question about the object.

2. Provide structure for the group's interactions with the prop. Clearly communicate your expectations to keep students focused on the activity. For a material prop, you could pass the prop around the group, allowing students to touch it.

> **Tip:** If you do this, give the group a question to consider while they are waiting their turn to hold the prop and one to consider after they have held the prop. (e.g., How do you think it is going to feel? How did the feel of it surprise you?) Encourage the group to be ready for discussion when the prop finishes circulating.

If the group has trouble passing the prop quickly and taking turns, here are other ways in which to use a material prop:

- Ask a single visitor to come forward and describe how it feels to the whole group.

- Hold the prop yourself and walk it around for the group to touch or look at closely.
- Ask one of your chaperones to display the prop to the group while you facilitate the discussion. (Tip: This also can be a good way to re-engage distracted or disinterested chaperones, by giving them a specific active role.)
- Hold the prop to illustrate relevant parts of the discussion. Then give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation or tour.

  Link the experience with the prop to the rest of the discussion. After the group has explored the prop in some fashion, refer to the experience as you continue the discussion.

Balance information and inquiry

Ultimately, it is up to each docent or guide to determine the balance between information and inquiry on a tour. A well-balanced tour offers information that supports visitors' comments and encourages further observations and questions; the visitors' observations should inform the facts given during the tour.

Most often, information is best given after visitors have been allowed time to observe and discuss the work of art. You will be surprised at how much visitors will be able to tell you about artworks and cultures by what they observe. Children are more likely to learn if they have invested their own

time, energy, and thoughts in the discussion. However, if an artwork is open to cultural misinterpretation, introduce some relevant information at the beginning of the discussion. For example, to avoid misinterpretation, you might begin a discussion of the Kongo Power Figure with, “This nail figure is valued for the good power it brings to the community. What about this figure looks powerful to you?”

By balancing inquiry and information based on the group’s interest and observations, you continually challenge deeper looking and meaning.

Conclusion

A tour conclusion briefly sums up the purpose and theme of a tour. “Today we looked at art about animals from all over the world—all of them amazing. We discovered that no matter where you live, animals play an important part in the lives of humans.” Students often enjoy reflecting on their favorite artworks; you might even consider asking one last question: “What was your favorite artwork today?” or “What would you come back to see again?”

A conclusion also can encourage participants to return. You could ask, “What art would you like to show your family or friends who are not here today?” Thank the group for visiting Mia and invite them back. Hand out Family Day cards as a way to invite a return visit. Connect one last time with the chaperones and invite them to return with their children.

> **Tip:** Give the Family Day cards to the chaperones to distribute at the end of the tour. To encourage feedback on tours, also hand out a K-12 School Tour Feedback form to one of the chaperones.

Tips for successful inquiry on tours

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage multiple responses. Scaffold and vary the types of questions through the tour.
- Integrate opportunities into your tour for nonverbal participation.
- Ask follow-up questions that encourage even closer looking and invite individuals to support their observations with visual evidence in the artwork.
- Ask questions that are appropriate for the group (consider age, experience with looking at art, language skills, etc.).
- Avoid run-on questions, or questions that ask more than one at a time (e.g., What kinds of colors do you notice, and what shapes are in the painting?).
- Avoid asking “yes or no” questions. These types of questions stop a discussion as soon as the responses are given.
- Avoid asking questions that begin with “Can you…” or “Who can… ” These types of questions automatically set participants up to fail if they “cannot.”
- Embrace moments of silence. Allow people time to observe, process, and respond.
- Listen to responses and treat all serious responses as equal even if you think some are not the “right” answers.

- Paraphrase when appropriate.
- Ask “Who haven’t we heard from?” or “Who hasn’t had a turn yet?” to encourage more participation.
- Be flexible enough to let participants’ responses determine how the discussion of an artwork will unfold.
- Practice using the phrase “Yes…AND” to validate the response and promote further discussion.
- If a comment or response is unclear, clarify with the visitor by saying, “Tell me more about that.”

Adult or Multigenerational Tours

Now that you have welcomed the group, it is time to put your tour preparation into action! If you are giving a public tour, you may have a disparate group of people, perhaps some families with children, tourists, or small groups of friends. You face the challenge of unifying that disparate group into a cohesive whole who feel comfortable sharing their thoughts with all.

> **Tip:** Adult or multigenerational groups typically have no name tags, so spending a minute to introduce yourself by name and inviting the group to offer their names in a quick introduction starts to coalesce the group for your tour.

Cultural fluency

Before you start a tour, remind yourself that the group brings their specific experiences and wisdom with them. Every tour is a learning opportunity, not only for the visitors, but also for you. Taking a moment to share that thought with the group sets the stage for the conversation to come. Docents and guides who achieve lots of engagement on tours often exercise cultural humility, freeing up the discussion to the group and remaining open to all perspectives expressed.

On the tour, it's wonderful to provide exposure to a diverse set of artworks and cultures. However, avoid expectations that visitors know about the art from their perceived respective cultures. For example, do not direct questions about Chinese art solely to visitors you perceive as Chinese. Instead, allow all in the group to respond to questions.

As we become a more gender-fluid culture, we should use more inclusive and non-binary terms, such as “students,” “you all,” or “everyone.” Avoid using gender binaries (e.g., ladies and gentlemen) and asking gendered questions, such as directing questions only to women or men in the group (e.g., How many of you ladies would like to dress up like this? How many of you men like to go fishing in a boat like this one?).

When presenting a work by an unidentified artist, specifically identify the cultural group from which the belonging originates. Continue to reference the culture’s name in discussion, and avoid the use of “these people” or any terms that signify the culture as the “Other” in your facilitation. For example, here is how you could introduce a drum made by an unidentified artist: “The Kundu drum was made by an artist of the Iatmul people. The Iatmul live in Papua New Guinea and use hand drums to accompany clan songs performed at important community events.” If uncertain of the pronunciation of a culture’s name, check with IPE staff or your colleagues, as well as look online for pronunciation guides. Several volunteers have worked on great pronunciation guides, posted on the volunteer website, under Peer Sharing/Pronunciation Guides. To work on identifying implicit biases, check out Harvard’s Project Implicit.

Acknowledgment of biases or preferences

Docents and guides actively working to engage the entire group are also gaining awareness of their own biases or preferences. We are all human, and we all have biases, both explicit and implicit. Acknowledgment of that statement is one of the first steps to developing an inclusive tour. Perhaps you identify with the visitors who process information quickly and are first to raise their hands at each stop or offer an answer. Perhaps you continue to allow the same people to respond repeatedly because you dread silence or a sense of disengagement in a group.

Implicit biases are harder to identify as they are hidden to the conscious mind. In observations, implicit biases may sometimes be seen when docents or guides repeatedly pass over people of color, young people, or women who have their hands raised with the rest of the group. To work on identifying implicit biases, check out Harvard’s Project Implicit. At the end of the tour, a reflection on who participated in your group may also help you identify and disrupt patterns of unintentional bias. (See the Reflection

section for some post-tour reflection questions.)

Knowledge of your group

Ideally, your tour contact will inform you in advance of any necessary accommodations within your group so you can plan accordingly to support any needs on the adult private tour. However, for a public tour, you have to be flexible and best accommodate any needs as the tour starts. You often will have a multigenerational tour, so you will need to adapt techniques and questions to engage both younger and older visitors.

Theme and transitions

The theme is the framework holding the tour together and sets the common connection between the artworks you include. As you are touring, touch back to your theme through the information given, the questions asked, and the transitions. When the theme is kept alive through the tour, it keeps the framework present in the participants' minds.

Transitions link artworks and ideas to reinforce the theme of the tour. Transitions provide an opportunity to clarify, emphasize, and/or embellish ideas. Transitions can be presented in the form of a question, activity, or statement in order to move your group towards the next stop on the tour. (For examples, see the section on Transitions in Tour Preparation.)

Vocabulary level

Be aware of your vocabulary level and the language needs of your group. If you have a multigenerational group or visitors who are English language learners, simplify your word choices. For all tours, if you use any terms that may be unfamiliar to visitors (e.g., terracotta, literati, mudras), explain the meaning when you introduce the material or term to the group. This also helps make the tour more accessible to all visitors.

Inquiry

On an inquiry-based tour, all visitors have an opportunity to observe, form opinions, and develop an understanding of the art. Inquiry teaching, or instruction through questions, encourages museum visitors to really look at and engage with artworks. Inquiry activates curiosity. Questions invite visitors to discover more about artworks, analyze artists' intentions, examine their own responses and attitudes, and share with others. Questions spark curiosity and engagement. It is not enough to simply hear information about art; people remember best when they have helped to construct the meaning. Before moving to questions about the art, allow the visitors time to look at the art.

Being able to answer questions and talk about art empowers both children and adults. As a guide, you play the role of facilitator, and facilitation is a dynamic process. By asking questions and leading discussions on your tours, you involve visitors in the learning process. By encouraging visitors to generate their own ideas and construct meaning on their own, you help them develop skills they can use to become independent learners in the museum.

There are other good reasons to use inquiry on your tours. If you begin your tour with thoughtful open-ended questions, you learn a lot about your group—attitudinally, intellectually, visually, and verbally. The use of inquiry creates an atmosphere of trust because it demonstrates that you are genuinely interested in what the group thinks.

As mentioned in the section on Tour Preparation, participation encompasses more than voicing a response. While open-ended questions create opportunities for discussion, not all visitors will be comfortable with voicing their ideas, so inquiry inviting nonverbal participation (e.g., answering with thumbs up/down or a movement) also should be presented on the tour.

Scaffold questions

Inquiry will be most successful if you scaffold your questions. Begin with basic observation questions or exercises that encourage visitors to look closely (e.g., Describe what you see. What's going on in this picture?). Take multiple answers, then follow up responses with a question that asks them to support their responses with evidence from the artwork itself (e.g., What about his expression makes you say he is sad? What do you see that makes you say that?). This can often be further followed up with a question that asks them to think about their explanations (e.g., Why might the artist have painted this way?). By scaffolding questions, you encourage tour participants to look, explain, and generate ideas.

Tip: When you have a group that ranges in age and size, ask those who are tall what detail they first notice from their vantage point, then ask those who are short what detail they first notice. This is a strategy to keep the kids or younger people involved on the tour. The whole group is often surprised at the details someone notices from a height of three feet versus six feet!

Tip: On public tours, scaffold your approach with the tour stops. The first couple of stops could be a mix of quick, simple descriptive and associative questions to put the group at ease in offering their thoughts and ideas. Reiterate that there are "no wrong answers" on the tour to put people at ease.

To learn more about scaffolding as an instructional technique, see this link.

Wait time

We all process information at different rates. An inclusive tour builds in wait time, allowing visitors to look at the art and construct some meaning in response to the question asked. It's good to remind ourselves of our own familiarity with the art, and how, when seeing it for the first time, we needed more time to visually understand it (e.g., we needed more time to see that second cat in the Bonnard painting!). Wait until more than one or two people have their hands raised. Building in wait time allows for more visitors to participate, and it also helps prevent you from answering your own question if you tend to jump in when there is silence.

Accept multiple answers

If you encourage multiple answers with your open-ended questions, then leave enough time on your tour to hear from your group. Avoid shutting down the discussion after receiving one answer in order to have enough time to convey one of your key ideas about the artwork.

Be active in facilitation, making an effort to hear from all in the group during the tour. When you have one to three people dominating the conversation, move away from that dynamic by asking “Who haven’t we heard from?” or “Who hasn’t had a turn yet?” If the timing allows, use a pair-share opportunity, then ask some visitors who haven’t spoken to share their thoughts. It takes effort to break away from dominant speakers, but the effort is worthwhile in the level of engagement developed with the entire group.

Paraphrase

An important part of inquiry-based learning is actively demonstrating that you heard and understood responses to questions. Paraphrase responses you receive. Paraphrasing allows all in the group to hear the response and is a dynamic expression of your engagement. It also lets you make connections between observations from the visitors. For example, “So you feel that the man is sad, too, but you believe that he is sad because of the dark colors the artist used.” When paraphrasing, position yourself to the side of the art and face the group, so all can hear what you are saying.

Pair share

Pair-share or small group opportunities are especially effective with improving levels of engagement in large or quiet groups. Time spent in discussion with peers may jumpstart conversation or reinforce the relevancy/value of ideas expressed. Like the nonverbal responses, this technique allows for the entire group to participate.

Tip: On public tours, let the visitors become more relaxed in the space and with the group dynamic before attempting a pair-share opportunity.

Props and experiential activities

Providing an opportunity to touch a material, listen to music, or watch a video enlivens the tour as well as accommodates different learning styles (e.g., one person may learn more through touch). Experiential activities also activate other senses and provide a more holistic sensory experience on the tour.

> **Tip:** If you are using an iPad or tablet, be sure to display it in a way in which your entire group may see the image or video.

Tip: Use a flashlight to point out details in the artwork. Allow visitors to use the flashlight, too. If you have a person who is not participating, ask them to assist you by shining the flashlight at the artwork. It is a way for that person to participate in a nonverbal manner. A small box of flashlights are available in the Tour Office for your use.

Challenges using props

Props may just distract your group without careful planning. Consider these questions: Will all get to touch the prop? How should they take turns? What should they do when it's not their turn? How should they treat the prop? Consider the following points to prevent challenges from undermining the benefits of props:

1. Decide what information about the object the prop best illustrates. Present the prop in conjunction with information about the object or to help answer a question about the object.

2. Provide structure for the group's interactions with the prop. There are a number of ways to use props.

    - For a material prop, pass the prop around, allowing people to touch it. If you do this, give the group a question to consider while they are waiting their turn to hold the prop and one to consider after they have held the prop. ("How do you think it is going to feel?" "How did the feel of it surprise you?") Encourage the group to be ready for discussion when the prop finishes circulating.

    - Ask a single visitor to come forward and describe how it feels to the whole group.

    - Hold the prop yourself and walk it around for the group to touch or look at closely.

    - Ask someone in the group to display the prop while you facilitate the discussion.

    - Hold the prop to illustrate relevant parts of the discussion. Then give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation or tour.

At the end of the discussion, don't forget to ask for the props back! After the group has explored the prop in some fashion, refer to the experience as you continue the discussion.

Balance information and inquiry

Ultimately, it is up to each docent or guide to determine the balance between information and inquiry on a tour. A well-balanced tour offers information that supports visitors' comments and encourages further observations and questions; the visitors' observations should inform the facts given during the tour.

Most often, information is best given after visitors have been allowed time to observe and discuss the work of art. You will be surprised at how much visitors will be able to tell you about objects and cultures by what they observe. People are more likely to learn if they have invested their own

time, energy, and thoughts in the discussion. However, if an object is open to cultural misinterpretation, introduce some relevant information at the beginning of the discussion. For example, to avoid misinterpretation, you might begin a discussion of the Kongo Power Figure with, “This nail figure is valued for the good power it brings to the community. What about this figure looks powerful to you?”

By balancing inquiry and information based on the group’s interest and observations, you continually challenge deeper looking and meaning.

Conclusion

A tour conclusion briefly sums up the purpose and theme of a tour. “Today we looked at art about animals from all over the world—all of them amazing. We discovered that no matter where you live, animals play an important part in the lives of humans.” People often enjoy reflecting on their favorite artworks; you might even consider asking one last question: “What was your favorite artwork we saw today?” or “What would you come back to see again?”

A conclusion also can encourage participants to return. Thank the group for visiting Mia and invite them back. Mention the activities available on Family Days as well as our monthly book and public tours. Give a tour participant a Tour Feedback Form, and mention that you are open to hearing comments and suggestions to further improve the visitor experience.

Tips for successful inquiry on tours

- Ask open-ended questions that encourage multiple responses. Scaffold and vary the types of questions through the tour.
- Integrate opportunities on your tour for nonverbal participation.
- Ask follow-up questions that encourage even closer looking, and invite individuals to support their observations with evidence.
- Ask questions that are appropriate for the group (consider age, experience with looking at art, language skills, etc.).
- Avoid run-on questions, or questions that ask more than one at a time (e.g., What kinds of colors do you notice and what shapes are in the painting?).
- Avoid asking “yes or no” questions. These types of questions stop a discussion as soon as the responses are given.
- Avoid asking questions that begin with “Can you…” or “Who can… ” These types of questions automatically set participants up to fail if they “cannot.”
- Embrace moments of silence. Allow people time to observe, process, and respond.
- Listen to responses and treat all responses as equal even if you think some are not the “right” answers. Remember that art has multiple interpretations.

- Paraphrase when appropriate.
- Practice using the phrase “Yes…AND…” (such as “yes, AND what else do you notice about the figure?) to validate a response and promote discussion.
- If a comment or response is unclear, clarify by saying “Tell me more about that.”
- Ask “Who haven’t we heard from?” or “Who hasn’t had a turn yet?” to encourage more participation.
- Be flexible enough to let participants’ responses determine how the discussion of an artwork will unfold.

Troubleshooting on a Tour

Even if you have the best preparation, you will run into various challenges on your tours. This section of the Tour Toolkit provides some possible options for action when you encounter certain challenges.

Visitors touch the art

Occasionally you may see a visitor touching objects on your tour or in the galleries. If this happens on your tour, just reiterate the one-foot rule with the whole group and be sure to model that rule yourself.

For visitors who are not on your tour, alert any security guards in the vicinity to the problem, or if you feel comfortable, you may politely ask the person not to touch. If it is a very young child touching the art, approach the accompanying adult rather than the child.

At the start of a school tour, offer a brief explanation of why it is important not to touch. This can be a proactive strategy as you then will be able to refer back to the points that were made within the tour introduction. Depending upon the age of your group, you might consider the following approaches:

- Ask them what happens when someone presses their hands against a windowpane. (We leave fingerprints.) Why is that? (There is moisture and oil in our skin.) Have them feel their own fingertips. Briefly explain the oils in our skin can damage the art.
- Ask visitors if they can think of something they have that is worn because of use. (The arm of a chair or a stuffed animal, perhaps.) Explain that surfaces break down when they are constantly touched. Have visitors imagine how many people go through the museum each day (hundreds). What would happen to the art if everyone touched it?

- Discuss why we have museums. (To preserve works of art that are important to us.) Invite visitors to help preserve our treasures because we want to protect the art, so future generations will be able to enjoy it someday.

Procedure for an unruly or oppositional group

Effective group management is a key aspect of a successful school tour. Every group will have its own dynamic. You learn quickly to read that dynamic and adjust group management as the tour progresses. If you have a group that remains unruly or oppositional, endangering themselves and the artworks, you should take the following action:

- Reach out to the tour chaperones for help in communicating expectations for behavior. **(Refer to the Mia Guidelines on the Chaperone Badges.)**
- If group remains unruly, move to an area without as much art, have the group sit, and find a guard to repeat the expectations for behavior. Tell the group that behavior must change for the tour to continue, or the group will return to the first floor of the Target Atrium.
- If behavior doesn't change, return the group to first floor of the Target Atrium and wait with them until they leave.

A pre-tour video is now available in three languages (English, Spanish, and Somali) on the Mia website. Many classes will have watched the video before visiting, helping better set expectations for the tour.

Triggering trauma

Viewing an artwork or participating in discussion may trigger a traumatic moment or life experience for a visitor.

When this happens, it is important to support how the visitor feels at that moment. While the emotion or thought the visitor has about the art may not link to the stated meaning of the art or artist's intent, avoid correcting any emotional response. Remember that art is interpreted in many

different ways. Acknowledge the visitor's comments and thank the person for sharing their thoughts.

If this happens during a school tour, paraphrase the response as best you can, then ask a new question about the artwork to shift the conversation. Be sure to communicate the episode to the teacher or ask a chaperone to communicate what happened to the classroom teacher if you are unable to connect following the tour.

Answering difficult questions

At times, visitors will ask questions that are difficult to answer. If it is merely a question concerning a certain fact about the artist or artwork you may not know, just acknowledge by saying "I don't know." Ask the group if anyone else would have an answer or thought on the question. No one has all the answers when it comes to art!

Visitors also may ask questions about the provenance of an artwork, such as "Where did this come from? How did the museum happen to get this artwork?" You especially may receive these questions when discussing art with a funerary context, such as the Coffin and Cartonnage of Lady Tashat or the Nayarit House Group. Those are hard questions to accurately answer for many artworks. As stated on the Mia website, the Minneapolis Institute of Art is committed to conducting research on works in its permanent collection as an integral part of its mission. The museum welcomes any information that may further clarify the provenance of artworks in its collection, and it follows all established guidelines for the ethical collection and purchase of artworks.

However, it is right to acknowledge that collecting art during the time of American and European colonialism resulted in many artworks entering into museum collections from countries or cultures who did not have the power to retain their cultural heritage. An example would be the bronze objects from the Benin Kingdom on display in our African art galleries. Some cultures today seek the return of objects that were looted or secured during times of oppression for their country or people. This is not an issue Mia is alone in facing, as it impacts all encyclopedic museums in our country and Europe. Currently, we have no calls for return of any artworks in Mia's collection, but if such a request is made, the museum is committed to an ethical and careful examination of any claims.

Encountering racist or prejudiced comments

When discussing art, you may encounter comments from a visitor that strike you as racist or prejudiced, perhaps in the dismissal of the artist or their work or as a statement of what the visitor values. You may want to ask for clarification, to ensure that the meaning was clear. You could do that by asking , “Tell me more about that … .” If it becomes clear that the comment was motivated by racism or other prejudices, do not enter into a direct repudiation or confrontation with the visitor.

As Nam Provost, Mia’s Diversity and Inclusion manager, advises, you will be unable to change any opinion held by that person in a short exchange on a tour. However, you must consider the “truth in the room.” You do not want that person’s expression to be the last statement heard by other people in the tour group. So you can simply respond to that person’s comment by saying, “That is not what I have found” or “That has not been my experience,” and then move on to another question or artwork.

As always, reach out to staff for support with any issues or challenges you encounter in the galleries. We all learn through such experiences!

Reflection

Reflection is a powerful tool for learning, especially when it is consistently practiced. Often we have a tendency to either concentrate on the positive or the negative aspects of a tour. In reality, a tour will have both. Give yourself permission to try new strategies or techniques but understand that most of what you try will not be an immediate success. You may need more practice to integrate strategies or tips into your tours. Practice a growth mindset, not only in your own work but in the expectations you hold for each tour group. Each group will have its own dynamics and behaviors, but all visitors within the group are capable of participating and being impacted by your tour.

Pre-tour reflection

As you walk your tour route before your group arrives, reflect on your expectations for the tour. Here are some questions to consider:

- How does it feel to be excluded, versus included?
- What things can I do to help everyone feel welcome in this space?
- What expectations do I have for participation on this tour?
- How will I encourage visitors to share their thoughts and opinions?
- What technique should I use to jumpstart conversation if the group is quiet at the start?
- What one thing today do I want to improve in my touring style or on my tours?
- What important points do I want to convey about the theme?
- What quick stops could I make along the route that would interest the group?

Post-tour reflection

Once you have reached the end of your tour, leave a few minutes to reflect and debrief, ideally with your colleagues who were also part of the same tour (if a school tour) or touring at the same time. Here are some questions to consider:

- How did the tour go?
- What things did I do to create a sense of welcome?
- What did I do that made the tour successful?
- What were challenges I faced on the tour?
- What would I have done differently on the tour?
- Thinking about the new strategy or tip I used on the tour, how did it go?
- Were there techniques I used that sparked more participation or interest?
- How many in my group participated in some way?

Appendices

Appendix A: Inclusive Language Guide [1] [2]

Instead of...	Use...	Why?
Boys/Girls	Students, you all, friends, everyone, everybody, second-graders, students' names (if they have name tags)	• Gender neutral • Avoids assumption of child's gender
Ladies/Gentlemen	You all, everyone, everybody, folks, people, esteemed guests or visitors	• Gender neutral • Avoids assumptions of adult visitor's gender
Mom/Dad/Parents	Adult/Grownup/Chaperone	• Gender neutral • Avoids assumption there is a legal or genetic relationship • Not everyone with a child identifies as a parent
Son/Daughter	Child/Children	• Gender neutral • Avoids assumption that a person is a parent of a child
He/She	They	• Gender neutral • Don't get hung up on grammar. While awkward in writing, "they" sounds natural in most spoken situations. • Only use gendered pronouns if you know the person's gender (do not assume gender from appearance)
You guys	You all, folks, friends, everyone, everybody, or use names (if visitors have name tags)	• Gender neutral • While "you guys" is a term that Midwesterners think of as gender-neutral, not all our visitors are from the Midwest.
Family resemblance	Nothing; never share such observations with visitors	• You may see a resemblance where there is none. • On the opposite spectrum, avoid assuming a child is adopted if you do not see a resemblance. Children may visit with adults other than their parents.
Your house/yard/home	The place you live or reference the way we live today (e.g., Does this French salon look like the rooms we have today?) or include a common reference for the group, such as school rooms/ outside recess space	• Avoids assumptions of wealth and privilege. Not all visitors live in a detached house with a yard. • Avoids assuming a person has a home. Some children on school tours may be homeless.
Questions about vacation or travel experiences (e.g., "How many of you have been to Rome or Venice?" or "Tell me how you felt when you saw an ocean for the first time.")	Phrasing that avoids assumptions or offers options for opinion (e.g., change "How many of you have been to Rome or Venice?" to "How many of you would enjoy a trip to Rome or Venice?")	• Avoids assumptions of wealth and privilege. • Not all children will have travel vacations with their families. Focus questions on what visitors hope to experience in the future.
"These people" or terms which signify the "Other" when discussing artworks by unidentified artists	The name of the culture from which the artwork originates. Continue to reference the culture's name in discussion.	• Many artworks with a colonial context were collected without record of artists' names. • Specifically naming the cultural group in discussion respects the creative origin of the art and supports better understanding of its cultural context.

NOTES

This guide also merges information from two sources. Many thanks to these authors and their important work on this topic:

1. Mac Buff, Beyond Bathrooms: Including all Genders through Language, *Viewfinder*, March 6, 2019.
2. Margaret Middleton, Including the 21st Century Family, *The Incluseum*, July 7, 2014.

Appendix B: Additional Reading

Publications and Websites

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Case Studies in Museum Diversity, January 22, 2018

Disability and Inclusion, Resources for Museum Studies Programs, Art Beyond Sight

Facing Change: A New Report from the American Alliance of Museums' Working Group on DEAI, May 2018

National Geographic special issue, Gender Revolution Guide, January 2017

The Glossary of Education Reform

Harvard University, Project Implicit

The Incluseum

The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum

John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience Revisited*, 2016

Museum as Site for Social Action (MASS Action)

National Art Education Association, Museum Education Division, Viewfinder

Nina Simon, The Participatory Museum, 2010

Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education (includes Artful Thinking)

Training Manual, Great Books Foundation

Articles

Veronica Alvarez, Good Teaching is Good Teaching: English Learners and Museums, *Viewfinder*, March 2019.

Lucija Andre, Tracy Durksen, and Monique L. Volman, Museums as avenues of learning for children: a decade of research, *Learning Environments Research*, April 2017.

Eduardo Briceño, Growth Mindset for a More Peaceful, Empathetic World, *Common Threads*.

Mac Buff, Beyond Bathrooms: Including all Genders through Language, *Viewfinder*, March 6, 2019.

Jackie Delamatre, Questioning the Questioning Of Questions, *Art Museum Teaching: A Forum for Reflecting on Practice*, January 23, 2015.

Roxane Gay, Peculiar Benefits, *The Rumpus*, May 2012.

Rose Kinsley, Margaret Middleton, and Porchia Moore, (Re)Frame: The Case for New Language in the 21st Century Museum, *The Incluseum*, Spring 2016.

Amelia (Amy) Kraehe and Laura Evans, "That Depends on How You Define It": Reflections on Inclusivity Language as a Flashpoint in Museum Staff and Docent Development, *Viewfinder*, March 6, 2019.

Margaret Middleton, Including the 21st Century Family, *The Incluseum*, July 7, 2014.

Corey Mitchell, A teacher mispronouncing a student's name can have a lasting impact, *Education Week, PBS NewsHour*, May 16, 2016.

Jaclyn Roessel, *Restoring Indigenous Perspectives*, Museum, July-August 2019.

Cecile Shellman, A Totally Inclusive Museum, *American Alliance of Museums*, February 20, 2019.

Carly Syms, The Importance of Scaffolding, Storytelling, and the Visitor Experience (Case Study: The National Civil Rights Museum), *Museum Hack*, June 7, 2017.

Christina Zdanowicz, No, Where Are You *Really* From?, *CNN*, August 2017.

Contributors

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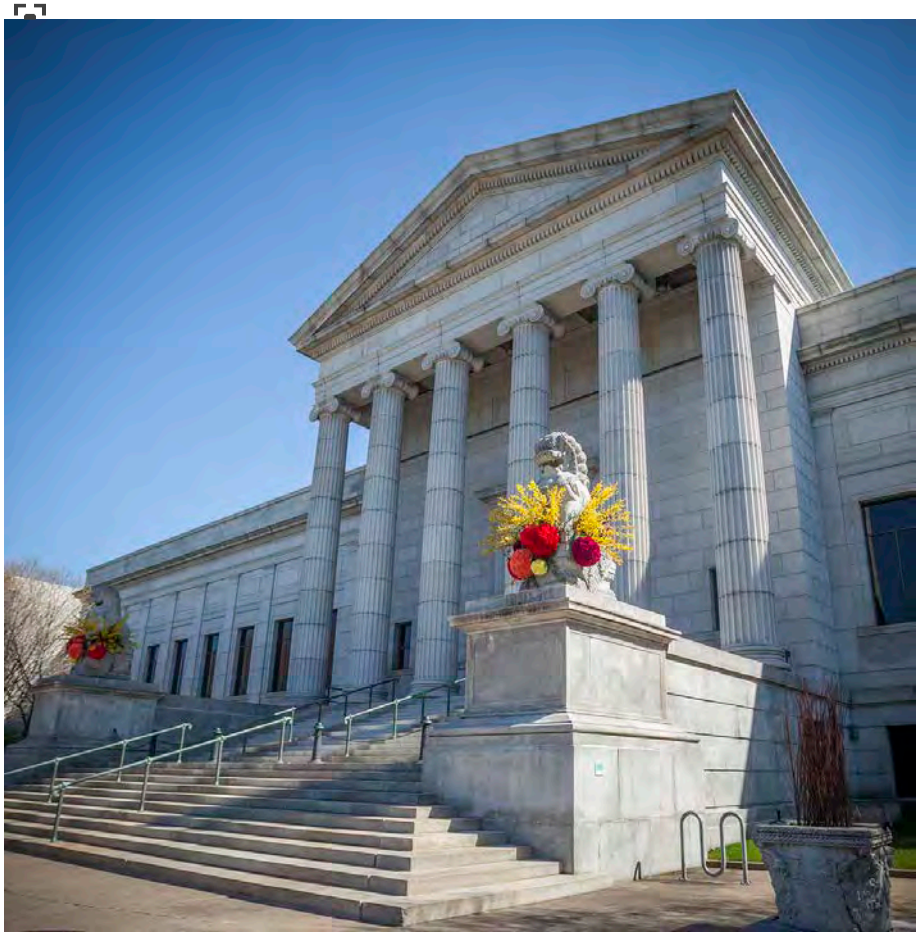
Mia Volunteers

The 328 docents and guides at the Minneapolis Institute of Art are enthusiastic about their love of art, their service to the museum, and connecting to all visitors in the galleries. This toolkit is dedicated to these volunteers and the important work they do.

About



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