



Docent-Guided School Tour Descriptions Spring 2020

The tour themes below may include works from any of the different collection areas and exhibitions in the Museum. If you would like your tour to include a specific collection or exhibition, you will be able to make that request in the online tour reservation.

For additional resources, please visit portlandartmuseum.org/learn/educators.

Life and Death Across Cultures: This tour explores death and the afterlife—and their relevance to everyday life—through art. What can we learn about ancient Chinese culture from artworks buried in tombs? How have other cultures responded to death through art? Students will view Chinese art from the Han Dynasty, as well as works from other time periods and cultures.

Narrative in Art: Objects carry stories across time and place. In this thematic tour, students will listen to and tell stories based on objects across collection areas. Multi-modal learning activities will help students explore and create meaning in response to art objects. This tour is open to all ages and can be used to support literacy skills.

Places: This tour considers the power of place to shape an artist’s personal identity, creative process, and worldview. Students will examine how a sense of place influences the artist’s choice of materials and subject matter. This tour may include artwork from the Northwest, Native American, and other collection areas.

Expressing Identity: How do artists explore personal and cultural identity through their work? What do portraits tell us about their subjects as individuals and as members of communities? Can abstract works also express identity? This tour will encourage students to explore these questions while reflecting on their own identities and forms of self-expression. The tour will include a discussion of portraits, as well as other areas of the collection.

Materials and Process: Nature, Technology, and Environment: What can we learn about an object and its creator from the materials the artist chose, the form that it takes, and the way that it was made? Through close-looking, students will explore the ways that the environment and technology influence artists’ choices throughout history.

The Language of Art: 1950 to the Present: What is modern and contemporary art trying to tell us? While the subject matter from earlier centuries of European and American art may seem straightforward, the experiments in abstraction and non-traditional materials that began in the twentieth-century sometimes leave us scratching our heads. This tour introduces students to how artists have used their tools, mediums, and technologies to open up new visual languages. How do these artists use the elements of their artwork to communicate feelings and ideas with viewers? Students will be encouraged to look closely, ask questions, and identify how brushstrokes, text, found objects, video, and other techniques create layers of information to be “read” and discovered by viewers.