

TEACHER WELCOME PACKAGE

Richmond Art Gallery School Art Program



Preparing for your Gallery Visit

INTRODUCTION

The Richmond Art Gallery's *School Art Program* is designed to enable individuals to engage with contemporary art, to explore new and challenging ideas, and to integrate new discoveries into their own art work. Our *School Art Program Workshops* complement the exhibitions to help develop visual literacy and educate visitors about contemporary art practices.

The resources offered in this guide are devised in conjunction with the *School Art Program Workshops*. Please take the time to review this package with your students to get the most out of your gallery visit. The suggested activities augment and support your students visit to the gallery, regardless of the exhibition or workshop they are participating in.

You are welcome to preview the exhibition on your own, but all school group tours must be booked ahead of time (including self-guided visits with secondary students or adult groups).

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your visit to the Richmond Art Gallery. We look forward to seeing you in the Gallery!

Contact:

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Richmond Art Gallery

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BOOKING PREPARATIONS

Booking your workshop:

- ◆ Review the Gallery's School Art Program brochure to see what exhibitions are coming, and what dates the Gallery will be open. Brochures are mailed out to schools in Richmond, Delta and Vancouver at the beginning of the school year, or you may view them online at <http://www.richmondartgallery.org/workshops.php>
- ◆ Contact the School Art Program Coordinator, Melanie Devoy, to book your workshop. Melanie will send a fax confirmation to your school to confirm the time, date, and cost of your workshop.
- ◆ The art studio is a small classroom that cannot accommodate more than 30 - 35 children. Please do not combine classes as it compromises program quality and student experience.

Preparing For Your Visit

- ◆ **Prepare your students.** Please be sure to go over gallery etiquette and do a pre-visit activity in the classroom. A Teacher's Guide is available on our website, and is another great way to get the most from your gallery experience both before and after the visit.
- ◆ **Free parking is available** anywhere within the Richmond Cultural Centre and Arenas parking lots , located off of Granville Avenue. In case of limited parking, you may also park at the Richmond Centre Mall located across the street from the Gallery.
- ◆ **Please arrive 5-10 minutes before your session** to make your payment at the Cultural Centre front desk. The instructor will meet you outside the Gallery doors **at the start time** of your scheduled workshop to review the Gallery Rules with your class and lead them in.
- ◆ **Nametags** for students are encouraged.
- ◆ Student discipline during your visit is the responsibility of the teacher and adult supervisors. Adults are to remain with the students **at all times**.
- ◆ The Richmond Art Gallery is a small gallery that does not require extra chaperones with teachers. Parents may join the tour and workshop, however, **please note there is limited space in the art classroom**. We recommend that parents only accompany students on the tour, with a **maximum of 5** parents joining students in the workshop.
- ◆ Washrooms are located in the Cultural Centre rotunda (behind the front desk), and there is one unisex stall located within the art studio.

After Your Visit: Picking Up Student Works

- ◆ Many artworks take time to dry, especially paintings and prints. Please discuss arrangements with the Instructor sometime during your workshop regarding the procedure for picking up the students' projects.

GALLERY ETIQUETTE

Remind students that appropriate behaviour is expected in the Art Gallery. Each artwork is an original piece of art that it is our job to display AND protect. It is important for **all** visitors to remember these rules of the Gallery:

- ◆ **Touch with your eyes only.** Please stay at least 12 inches away from the artwork. This includes works on the walls and any sculptural works on the floor.
- ◆ **Walk, don't run to the art.** Please be respectful of the Gallery space and very careful around the artworks. Most artworks are very fragile.
- ◆ **Quiet voices.** The Gallery is a public space, please keep voices low in respect of others who work in and visit the Gallery.
- ◆ **No food or drink** is permitted in the Gallery.

To ensure that everyone enjoys their Art Gallery experience, please pass on the following requests for Chaperones:

- ◆ **No photography in the Gallery please. Artwork is copyrighted** by the artist and may not be photographed. Photos are permitted in the art classroom only.
- ◆ **Please leave younger siblings at home.** Toddlers and younger siblings cannot be accommodated on the tours and workshops. Siblings can distract our attention, as well as disrupt students' concentration.
- ◆ **Please turn off your cell phone.** A ringing phone or a phone conversation is very distracting during the tour and workshop demonstration.
- ◆ **Be a Role Model.** It is important for the children to see you paying attention when the Classroom Teacher and Art Instructor are talking. Modeling good behaviour by listening to and following the Gallery Rules promotes the students to do the same.
- ◆ **Focus on the students.** Avoid the temptation to socialize with other parents/chaperones or to discuss your student's progress with the Teacher. Background conversations during the tour and workshop are very distracting to the students. As a chaperone, your role is to stay focused on the students and keep them engaged with the activities at hand.
- ◆ **Artist at work – please do not disturb.** Art is a learning process, with no 'right' or 'wrong' way to create. The hands-on workshop is designed to encourage exploration of new ideas, materials, and techniques. Please allow this process to flourish by allowing students make their own creative decisions.

Thank you for all your help in making the students' Richmond Art Gallery experiences a fun and educational time for everyone!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For many students (and adults), visiting an art gallery is a new experience. The questions below are some of the most common asked of gallery staff.

Teachers, please go over these questions with your student groups.



WHAT KIND OF GALLERY IS THIS?

The Richmond Art Gallery is a **non-profit organization**, which means we are not in the business of selling art. We are the City of Richmond's public art gallery whose mandate is to exhibit **local, national and international contemporary art** for visitor's enjoyment as well as educating the public about contemporary cultural practices.

WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY ART?

Contemporary art is a term used to describe **art of the present era**. Contemporary means "of the times", so the artwork often comments on **current issues and ideas** or is made with **new and innovative materials or techniques**.

WHY IS THAT CONSIDERED ART?

Some contemporary artists use materials and techniques in ways we do not normally consider as "art". However, today's artists respond to the world they live in, just like the artists 500 years ago responded to their world through paintings or sculpture. This is also what makes contemporary art so exciting, it reflects upon what is happening right now to reveal new images or new ways of thinking.

WHAT IS THAT?

Sometimes we cannot immediately understand what the artist is trying to communicate because we have not explored the subject in that way before. The best way to enjoy the art is to slow down, relax and be open to ideas. (*Isn't this what we ask children to do when confronted with something new?*). Ask questions like "what do I see?" or "why are these materials being used?" while looking at an artwork. Don't worry that you do not "get it", take your time to explore and uncover clues at your own pace.

IS THAT ARTIST STILL ALIVE?

Children often ask this question, as most of the artists they study are from history. The Richmond Art Gallery only **shows works from living artists** who are currently active in their professional practice.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE SO CAREFUL IN AN ART GALLERY?

Touching artworks often damages it, as fingers will leave oils and dirt on the artwork that eats away at it over time. By walking too close to artworks on the walls or floor, we may accidentally knock the work or cause it to fall. Please help us preserve the art!

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Looking at Art

Practice looking at artworks with your students through reproductions in books or on the internet. Use the following questions to get students comfortable talking about art.

Describing What I See – Subjective:

- Describe what you see in the artwork.
- What is the subject matter? (animals, people, buildings, etc.)
- What type of art is it? (painting, sculpture, etc)
- What does it remind you of?
- Describe how you feel about the artwork.
- What do others see and how does this compare with what you see?

Analyzing the Structure:

- What materials were used to make this artwork?
- How did the artist use these materials?
- Describe the elements and principles of art used in this artwork –
 - Elements: Colours, Lines, Shapes or Forms, Texture, Use of Space, Value
 - Principles: Balance, Emphasis, Proportion, Movement, Variety, Unity
- How do the elements and principles of art work together with the materials the artist used?
- Do the techniques used contribute to the meaning of the artwork?

Analyzing the Cultural Content:

- Can you tell what time period the piece was made or is referring to?
- Can you tell what culture the piece belongs to?
- Describe what the artwork reveals about the culture / time period.
- Describe any influences the artist may have had, or what you think the artist was inspired by.

Analyzing Contemporary Context:

- Have any images or parts of the work been re-contextualized or appropriated?
- Describe the meaning the work has today, in relation to current events.

What is An Art Gallery?

Discuss the role of art and an art gallery with your students.

- What does art look like?
- What subjects can art be about?
- Of what materials can art be made?
- How is art displayed?
- What function does an art gallery have within a community?
- What do people do at an Art Gallery?

If students have any questions about the Art Gallery, have them write their questions down so they can ask on their visit to the gallery.