Museum Musings

Lotus Flower mixed media (watercolor and pastel)
Carol Porter, 2004

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September 11, 2007
A Word About Museum Musings

As museums preserve the treasures of a culture, they educate, demonstrate the many dimensions of creative expression and inspire. Viewers respond to art through a personal aesthetics and by understanding of an artist’s intent, cultural and technological influences, and historical context. The student artist expresses personal vision, experiments with the elements of art, and explores media, techniques and processes. Whether a future producer of art or one who utilizes and appreciates its aesthetics, all students should experience art — as producer, viewer and critic.

Through the activities in this guide, students are artists, museum visitors, art and book reviewers, and museum curators. They apply creative, evaluative, and analytic skills.

For the purposes of this lesson, all suggestions are focused on animals as the subject of reading, art projects and the art museum visit. Teachers may wish to vary the subject to still life (floral, vegetable or mixed with animals), seascapes or another that relates to a science or health topic that is studied. The assignments might be limited to one particular animal; for example, only horses. Visual arts and classroom teachers are encouraged to collaborate on projects suggested in this guide.

The online guides provided by The Washington Post NIE program suggest activities to use with Post articles and the reproducibles that we have created for you. Many of the suggested activities work together to create interdisciplinary segments of a larger project. Select the ones that are appropriate for the age of your students, time available and curriculum fit.

Lesson: Students who experience art as producers, viewers and evaluators become more well rounded citizens.

Level: Low to high

Subjects: Art, English Language Arts

Related Activity: Mathematics

NIE Online Guide
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Joele Michaud, Shepherd Elementary School, Washington, D.C. Ms. Michaud has received two Washington Post Education Grants and has been a participant in the Phillips Collection Mentor Teacher Program. Visit the Phillips Collection Education site (www.phillipscollection.org/education/museum-shepherd.pdf) to view a project completed with her students.

Send comments about this guide to:
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Read and Write

Animals are a favorite subject of newspaper features and magazine articles. Entire magazines focus on one animal. Many freelancers (writers, artists, photographers) find a market for animal-focused work. Prior to class, select one such article from The Post to read to students or collect articles and short works to give to students who will be grouped by animal.

Before reading the selection(s), ask students to write about an experience they have had with an animal. In this journal, they can select any animal — a pet, one observed outside their homes or in a zoo, or one seen on TV. They can recreate the scene, explain why they have a certain attitude toward the animal, or describe the animal in its setting. Encourage students to share their writings with others.

Read the work you have selected to students or provide the student groups their selections to read.

Discuss

Questions that may lead to discussion might include the following. You may need to define terms for younger students or ask older students to review each term.

• Is the animal wild, domesticated, or feral? Abundant or endangered?

• What new information have they gained about the animal?

• Do the humans in the work share an attitude about a particular animal?

• Has the author kept his/her attitude out of the piece? Give examples to support your answer.

Distinguish news articles from features.

• Is the story about real animals or animals that are given human characteristics (anthropomorphic), or are allegorical, mythic or symbolic?

• What idea is conveyed or what lesson might be learned through the story? Is the story meant to inform, instruct, entertain or inspire?

• Examine photographs or artwork that illustrate the feature article or story. What do the details convey about the animal's habitat? Relation to the environment? Relationship with other animals? Relationship with humans?

Draw or Sculpt

Depending on the age of your students and the art materials and facilities that are available, ask your students to draw or sculpt an animal of their choice. Pencil, pen & ink, watercolors, oil, papier-mâché or clay can be effectively utilized to create a menagerie.

Students might create imaginary animals and habitats that they would later be asked to describe. Students should be able to create an organism whether it adheres to conventional physical properties or not; allow an expressive element in the activity. Teachers at this point could suggest ways of manipulating materials to achieve a more realistic result (for example, ways to pull the clay to create a leg and to push to achieve an eye socket). Art teachers

Caldecott Animals

Flotsam
Wiesner, David
Clarion Books (2006)
Caldecott Medal winner (2007) provides a marinescape from fish-eye to lens-eye.

Gone Wild: An Endangered Animal Alphabet
Walker, David
Walker Books for Young Readers (2006)
2007 Caldecott Medal Honor Book presents 26 endangered animals.

Kitten's First Full Moon
Henkes, Kevin
Gouache and colored pencil illustrations bring to life the story of a kitten that mistakes the moon for a bowl of milk (2005 Caldecott Medal).

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale
Willems, Mo
Hyperion (2004)
A visit to a Laundromat results in unexpected drama in this 2005 Honor Book.

My Friend Rabbit
Rohmann, Eric
Roaring Brook Press (2002); Square Fish (2007)
Rabbit presents a story of patience and loyalty in the midst of trouble (2003 Caldecott Medal).

Noah's Ark
Spier, Peter
Dragonfly Books (1992)
Much awarded picture book (1978 Caldecott Winner) colorfully illustrates the biblical story.

The Ugly Duckling
Anderson, Hans Christian
HarperCollins (1999)
and classroom teachers might collaborate on such a project. “Caldecott Animals” and “About Animals” provide annotated lists of works that may be made available to students to read, to study the artists’ presentation of animals, and to write a review (see the suggested activity “Write a Review” at the end of this guide).

Teachers of younger students could go to the National Geographic Crittercam site (www.nationalgeographic.com/crittercam/kids.html) to download pictures to color. Crittercam provides fascinating footage “taken” by wildlife.

A variation would be to group four to five students to draw or sculpt the same animal. These would then be grouped when displayed; dogs in one grouping, horses in another display, cats of all sizes in another gallery.

Observe

Master Pieces: The Curator’s Game is inspiration for the next activity. When Thomas Hoving was director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he and his associates would examine a section of a larger work of art. They would discuss the artist’s medium, techniques and style; they would speculate on its place in art based on details in this one small portion. They would guess the artist and work. The losers would buy the winner coffee.

As teachers develop students’ awareness of detail in art, they are developing a skill that has universal application. Observation of details carries over to writing, science experiments — and even a career as a detective. The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death, a book of photographs by Corrine May Botz (Monacelli Press, 2004), provides an interesting insight into the use of art in forensic science. Teachers and students who have been intrigued by the miniatures used in the CSI storyline, will appreciate Botz’ photographs of the 18 detailed dollhouse-sized recreations of crime scenes used by the Maryland Medical Examiners Office to train detectives.

“Fireflies,” “Glimpse of the Whole,” and “Puzzle: Three Pears in Paris,” a jigsaw puzzle, are provided to stimulate a similar activity with your students.

Make a copy of “Three Pears in Paris” and cut the pieces. Younger students may each be given a jigsaw puzzle piece. Ask each student to write about his or her piece of the puzzle.

• Where in the puzzle does he think his piece fits? (Corner, middle or side?)

• What details in her puzzle piece are special? (A shape, color, texture, feature?)

• In what style is this work painted? (Realistic, abstract, impressionist?)

• What does the student think the whole picture depicts?

In pairs or groups, they are to talk about the details in their pieces as well as the shape of the puzzle pieces. After writing and talking about their puzzle pieces, holders of corner pieces are asked to put their pieces on a table. Students should work together to determine at which corner each piece is to be placed. Teachers may give the final dimension of the puzzle so students can measure the distance between the corner pieces. Remaining pieces

About Animals

Black Beauty: The Autobiography of a Horse
Sewell, Anna
Scholastic Paperbacks (2003)
Black Beauty narrates his story of strength, suffering and eventual happiness. Sewell’s book, published in 1877 near the end of her life, reveals the harsh treatment of animals at the time and conveys a timeless theme of compassion.

The Call of the Wild
London, Jack
Aerie (1990)
Buck is stolen and taken to the Alaskan gold fields of 1896

Charlotte’s Web
White, E. B.
HarperTrophy (2004); ages 9-12+
A bashful pig and a spider spin a spellbinding story that has touched readers for more than 50 years

Island of the Blue Dolphins
O’Dell, Scott
Yearling (1987); ages 9-12
Based on the true story of a girl who lives alone on an island. Newberry Medal (1961), rich watercolor illustrations and captivating story.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH
O’Brien, Robert C.
Aladdin (1986); ages 9-12
A widowed mouse seeks help for her sick child; receives much more (Newberry Honor).

Shiloh
Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds
Aladdin (2000); ages 8-12
Ethical questions confront Marty when he finds an abused pup (1992 Newbery Medal)
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will be placed using the visual clues. How many students were correct in guessing what the whole image depicted?

“A Glimpse of the Whole” requires that teachers cut the sheet in half or pair students who will divide the sheet down the center. In addition to examining his or her puzzle piece, each student should answer the questions that are provided. The student pair will then combine the information gathered from the pieces to speculate on the possible whole work and to give it a possible title (The best title ... or a possible title ... for this work would be).

Fireflies is provided to show students the complete picture that was used in “A Glimpse of the Whole.”

In addition to the examples in Master Pieces and the Post NIE handouts, teachers have resources on the National Gallery of Art Web site. These are meant for student use, but should be reviewed before assigning them. If it is not possible to take a field trip to a local art gallery or art museum, teachers may use one or more of these for a virtual tour.

• Hide & Seek (www.nga.gov/kids/tissot/tissot1.htm) provides an online activity to practice observation skills. Hide and Seek (1877) by James Jacques Joseph Tissot is used to illustrate the details and textures that an artist includes in his work.

• Watson & the Shark (www.nga.gov/kids/watson/watson1.htm) presents another stimulating activity. It focuses on the details of a John Singleton Copley work that shocked his contemporaries. Based on a true story, this painting is stimulus for a writing and art project. Inside Scoop PDF (www.nga.gov/kids/scoop-watson.pdf) is also available to use with this work.

Visit a Museum

In addition to activities in the classroom, teachers may plan a field trip to a local art gallery or art museum. The Washington Post provides several resources for planning a visit of a class or by students and their families. In Friday’s Weekend section use the “With the Kids” and “On Exhibit” sections. Focus on art spaces, galleries, and museums. Call to arrange a docent- or owner-led tour.

Before students visit the art gallery, teachers may wish to review art terminology. “In the Know” is a beginning point. It defines terms found in handouts in this guide and ones found in wall text.

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About Museums & Art

America’s Art Museums: A Traveler’s Guide to Great Collections Large and Small
Loebl, Suzanne
W.W. Norton & Company (2002)
Concise, informative descriptions of 158 art museums are organized by state.

Master Pieces: The Curator’s Game
Hoving, Thomas
W. W. Norton (2005)
When he was director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for a decade, Thomas Hoving and his contemporaries met to examine details of and identify the larger museum masterpieces. This book, based on the idea, shares 250 color sections of great works, essays and “clues” to help identify visual details.

Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Danziger, Danny
Viking Adult (2007)
A journalist interviews the individuals whose behind-the-scenes jobs keep a major art museum ready for visitors.

National Gallery of Art: Washington
Walker, John
More than 1000 color reproductions of the works of the masters who are exhibited at the National Gallery. Illustrates how one artist influenced another as well as places works in historical, artistic and social context.

www.nga.gov/kids/NGA Kids
National Gallery of Art
Activities and projects to do online and upcoming events for kids

www.phillipscollection.org/html/programs. html
Phillips Collection
Education programs including gallery talks, tours and mentor teacher work
The National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden set among linden trees and circling the fountain/icerink, provides a pleasant setting to orient students and to observe a giant hare, spider and red horse. Teachers might need to explain what a typewriter is before students view Oldenburg’s Typewriter Eraser, Scale X.

In the art museum or gallery, observe several works together.

- Read the label (some call this a “place card” or “wall text”) that gives basic information about the work and the artist. How is this helpful?
- Highlight uses of color, texture and details in the works
- Point out techniques used by the artist(s)
- Ask students for other details that they find interesting.
- Do students like the work? Why or why not?

After demonstrating the process of observing a work of art, teachers should provide students with copies of “My Museum Visit.” “Wall Text & More” is provided for use with a work of each student’s choice.

If the class is visiting an exhibit that was reviewed in The Washington Post, students could be asked to write their own evaluations. Compare what they chose to feature with the Post reviewer’s article. See “Write a Review” below.

Crunch Numbers

Mathematics can be integrated into these suggested activities in several ways.
- Estimate the size of works of art in inches and centimeters. Read the wall text to verify the size.
- Discuss angles and the use of angles to create perspective in art.
- Plan a budget for the field trip to the art gallery or museum. Include transportation, entrance fees, snacks and meals as well as a gift shop purchase.

Read Maps and Diagrams

Skills in reading maps and diagrams can be developed through:
- Planning the route: Determine streets to take to the Metro station, find the closest Metro station or bus stop to the gallery, and use the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Trip Planner Internet site to schedule the time to depart to be on time for the tour.
- Using the museum floor plan: Find the correct floor and room for specific artists, locate the bathrooms, café and bookstore.

Plan a Show

Plan a display for a museum or art gallery. The museum or gallery may exist or it can be one that you create, one that you wish existed. Teachers may wish to use the art from the animal-themed suggested activities to create an exhibit in the school’s display cases, in the classroom or special

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In the Know

Canvas: Strong cloth of hemp, cotton or flax

Color: A hue other than black, white and gray; results from the light they emit or reflect

Computer-generated Art: Image and form generated with a digital tool (used to create, shade and modify the final product)

Oil: Painting medium combining pigment with oil (linseed, most often); may be applied on canvas or wood

Paint: Mixture of a pigment and binder suitable to form a smooth coating for a surface

Palette: The set of colors that an artist uses in his work

Pastel: A drawing crayon made of dried paste, a mix of ground pigments and an oil- or water-based binder.

Pencil: Black or colored material (graphite originally) in a casing; used to create a drawing or sketch

Photograph: Imagery produced with a camera (“writing with light”)

Primary Colors: Core colors from which all other colors are made.

Tempera: Water-based paint made from pigment, binder (such as the white of an egg) and water; opaque water-soluble paint

Texture: Refers to how things might feel if they could be touched

Value: Lightness or darkness of a color or an object

Watercolor: Transparent water-soluble paint
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activities room. A student curator might be selected to organize and coordinate the exhibition: committees could be formed for mounting work, grouping works, hanging and displaying works. In addition, security and dismantling committees might be formed.

Communicate clear expectations in all aspects of the show. Every student should participate in some aspect of the exhibit, including writing the wall text for the works on display.

*Exhibiting Student Art: The Essential Guide for Teachers* (paperback) by David Burton and Terry Barrett would be a valuable resource for teachers who are doing this activity. Burton is a professor of art education at the School of the Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Go Virtual**

Older students might utilize their technology skills to create a PowerPoint program or a virtual gallery tour with rooms for the different displays. This digital exhibit could be placed on the school’s Web site with an invitation to the exhibit.

Gettysburg Cyclorama building

**Go in Circles**

*Post* writer Michael Ruane reports on one of the largest paintings in the country, the Gettysburg Cyclorama. Four stories tall in 14 panels and longer than a football field, the work shows Pickett’s Charge during the July 1863 battle in Gettysburg. Read “Civil War Painting Comes Full Circle” (Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2007) for more information of the work, its restoration and installation in a new building designed specifically for it.

**Write a Review**

Students can play the role of *Washington Post* staffers who review gallery and museum shows. Use *The Post* Weekend “For the Kids” and “On Exhibit” sections, the Sunday Style & Arts section and weekly Style section for models of reviews.

A variation would be to read and review a book about an artist, school of art or famous painting. “A Flowery Tribute, in Words and Paint” (KidsPost, Sunday, August 26, 2007) is provided in this guide as an example of a book review about an art book (*Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose: The Story of a Painting* by Hugh Brewster, Kids Can Press, 2007). If you read the book to your students, discuss the *Post* reviewer’s evaluation (“you’ll know lots,” “paintings are so vibrant”) and ask students to write their own evaluation of the strength or weakness of the book. If the art gallery or museum that you visit has a work by John Singer Sargent, be sure to view it and compare its features with those of *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*.

A book or art show review might include answers to the following questions:

- How does the reviewer describe the show and particular works?
- Does the review compare and contrast works of the same artist or with those of other artists?
- Is the reviewer’s evaluation of the exhibit clear? Does the reader know why he or she would want to attend the exhibit?
- Does the author provide historic context for the work of art and/or artist?
- What phrases and sentence construction allow the reviewer to both criticize and praise an artist’s work or a gallery’s exhibit? Use *Post* models as examples.

On August 24, 2007, Mark Jenkins begins his “On Exhibit” review: “At local art galleries, August is the month for group shows, often grouped thematically. One of the current exhibitions, Project 4’s ‘Useless,’ offers an interesting angle on the gaps between the aesthetic and the practical, and the singular and the mass-produced. Indirectly, it also provides a possible way at looking at some of the other group displays in town.”

“A Day at the Museum” may be used with younger students as an example of writing about a museum. After reading this July 31, 2007, KidsPost reprint, students could write a review of a favorite museum they have visited. This article could also be used before introducing the field trip to a local art gallery or art museum.

Older students should be expected to read reviews in the *Post* Style & Arts section and art criticism. They should be familiar with a more extensive art vocabulary to use in evaluation, comparison and contrast and discussion of works and exhibits.

**Promote**

Invitations, press releases, and print and online advertisements are all used to promote events. If their art exhibit is open to the public, the class may produce invitations to take home, create a Web page to inform the school community, draw posters for the cafeteria and hallways and write a press release to inform the school and local newspapers and radio stations.
This digital painting was created by artist Patterson Clark to celebrate the wonder and science of fireflies. The clock illustrates how often that particular species of firefly turns on the bioluminescence in its abdomen.

The picture is composed of an extreme foreground (the magnified insect), a middle ground (showing a boy and the insect to scale) and a background (the woodland/field habitat of the firefly).

Note the formal similarity between the crescent moon, the watch and the boy’s ear.
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A GLIMPSE OF THE WHOLE

1. The medium of this work is
   _____ Photograph
   _____ Pencil drawing
   _____ Computer-generated
   _____ Watercolor

2. An example of texture is

3. How is color or value used?

4. The distinguishing art element of this piece of the whole work is
   _____ Color
   _____ Line
   _____ Shape
   _____ Texture
   _____ Value

5. The whole work might be an image of

Name

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   _____ Value

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Name
Jigsaw Puzzle: Three Pears in Paris
My Museum Visit

Please answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. What is the name of the museum we are visiting?

2. Who was its founder?

3. When did this museum open?

4. What kind(s) of art subject matter does it contain?

5. About how many works of art are in its collection?

6. From what countries does its art originate?

7. What is your favorite artwork in this museum? State its full title.

8. What artist painted it and when was it painted? If you know, include the style, movement or school of art to which it belongs.

9. In a short paragraph describe your favorite artwork.

10. Explain why this artwork is your favorite.
A Flowery Tribute, in Words and Paint

Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose took shape. (It’s a very famous painting, shown on the cover of the book, and today hangs in London’s Tate Gallery.) If you know nothing about Sargent, you’ll know lots when you finish this 48-page book. It features more than 35 of his paintings and drawings, including his portrait of Kate at age 6, which he gave to her as a sort of make-up gift.

This story is a fictionalized account of how the painting came to be. But the people and events described were real, and the paintings are so vibrant they almost leap off the pages.

Writing a Book Review

Read the KidsPost review of Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose: The Story of a Painting.

Does it include the following information?

1. The title of the book
2. The author of the book
3. Enough information about the content of the book to interest the potential reader
4. A quotation from the book
5. An evaluation of the book
Wall Text & More

1. Wall text (label) provides museum visitors with a quick introduction to the artwork or artifact in front of them. Select one work of art to observe. Copy the wall text information below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium, Date created</th>
<th>Artist’s Name</th>
<th>Country, Birth–Death years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Why did you select this work to observe? Was it the subject of the work, its size, or another quality?

3. Select one detail from the artwork and describe it in a paragraph. Give enough information so your readers know where it appears in the whole and its impact on the whole work.

4. Color, texture, value and space are elements used by artists. Select one of these. In a paragraph tell why it is an important component of this artwork.

5. Do you think the artist conveys a message? Is this a realistic, symbolic, or expressionistic presentation?
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A Day at the Museum

The Very Artful Carle Exhibit
Kids of all ages love Eric Carle, who has written and illustrated more than 70 books. You might still have a copy of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar." It’s his best-known work and has been gobbled up by millions of readers.

Open Wide, Say ‘Aaaah...some’
Sink your teeth into dental hygiene at the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore. Check out George Washington’s choppers (they’re not wood), see how you measure up to a five-foot whale tooth and learn everything there is to know about spit. (Your mouth produces enough each day to fill a 16-ounce soda bottle!) Just don’t try the Iron Jaw stunt of 1950s circus performer Penny Wilson (see model above).

Wisdom From the Dugout
About half of the 40,000 annual visitors to the Yogi Berra Museum & Learning Center are kids. They come to revel in the glory days of the witty former New York Yankees catcher (left) and to learn about sportsmanship, respect and racial tolerance — values as important today as when Berra was playing. The newest exhibit at the Little Falls, New Jersey, museum is “The Bronx Is Burning” based on the book and ESPN film about the eventful summer of 1977, when the Yankees won their first championship in 15 years.

Toys Times Two
If you think your toy chest is stuffed, you’ll be wowed by these collections:

- The Marx Toy Museum in Mundoville, West Virginia, displays the creations of Louis Marx. His toy company, started in 1919, was the world’s largest in the 1950s. Eventually it was bought by a bigger company along with such Marx toys as the Rock’Em Sock’Em Robots above, the museum has a life-size Western town street, a service station and a 1950s-style eating place.

- The Toy Museum at Natural Bridge, Virginia, boasts the largest collection of American childhood memorabilia on display in the world. What’s there: electric trains, dolls, classic games such as Connect Four, an army of action figures, robots and computer toys.

Come Wade in the Water
The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center is a gem on the banks of the Ohio River in Cincinnati. The Underground Railroad was a secret network of people who helped slaves escape in the 19th century. The museum’s location is no accident: In their flight for freedom, many slaves forded the Ohio River, crossing from Kentucky (a slave state) to Ohio (a free state).

- Films and colorful quilts (the one shown above is titled “Harriet Tubman Leading a Family to Freedom,” by Michael Cummings) tell their stories. Step inside an actual slave pen or squish yourself into a crate just like the one Henry Brown shipped himself in from Virginia to Pennsylvania — and freedom — in 1849. Brown spent 26 hours inside his box, see how long you can stand it!

Can You Dig It?
That’s what they want you to do at the Aurora Fossil Museum in Aurora, North Carolina. There are two fossil piles out back, just waiting for you to dig in and see what pieces of the long ago past you can come up with. Staff members will help you identify what you find.

Indoors, there are lots of Pleistocene and Miocene marine fossils on display, including a whale more than 5 million years old. Check out the shark room and have your photograph taken inside the replica C. megalodon jaw (shown at left).

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VIOLANT MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Mention the word “museum” and, around Washington at least, most people will think of the Smithsonian Institution. It’s a fabulous museum.

So is the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York, where Baltimore Orioles legend Cal Ripken Jr. was inducted on Sunday. If you’re ever nearby, ask Dad or Mom to stop in.

There are also lots of lesser-known museums worth a look if your family plans to travel in August. KidsPost’s Marylou Tousignant shares a few here.
Find a World of Art

Many art galleries exhibit works from artists who were born in countries other than the United States. Look for works of art that you like. Read the wall text (labels). Select the work of two artists who were born in two different countries. Complete the labels below.

Smithsonian Unveils Korea Gallery

By Joshua Zumbrun
Washington Post Staff Writer

• Original date of publication: June 9, 2007
Perhaps the most striking image in the National Museum of Natural History’s Korea Gallery, which opened [June 8, 2007], is a nighttime satellite photograph of the Korean peninsula. The southern half of the peninsula is aglow with a web of lights, the cities and roads of South Korea. The northern half is darkness. Except for the lights of Pyongyang, North Korea looks little different today than 5,000 years ago, as if the country has never discovered electricity. …

The exhibit, off a second floor corridor next to the Origins of Western Culture Hall, opens with a colorful display of traditional wedding attire. Around the gallery are ceramics spanning 1,500 years, an exhibit on calligraphy, a brief look at Korean identity and several pieces of contemporary Korean art.

…

With limited space – only 85 objects are on display – several installations will rotate. …
Civil War Painting Comes Full Circle

Gettysburg Cyclorama Gets $11 Million Restoration

It’s hard to take your eyes off the black dog.
He is sitting beside the body of a dead soldier, probably his master, howling in grief. All around are scenes of the Civil War’s famous Battle of Gettysburg — a wounded man being carried on a stretcher, horses galloping, battle smoke drifting across the landscape. But there’s something especially sad about the grieving dog sitting there amid the madness of warfare. And that’s just one tiny section in the gigantic Gettysburg Cyclorama, a century-old oil painting of the 1863 battle in southern Pennsylvania. The painting has been restored and is being hung in a new building designed especially to display the unusual work of art.

The cyclorama requires its own building because it forms a complete circle and is one of the biggest paintings in the country. It’s four stories tall, about 10 feet longer than a football field, and took more than a dozen people to complete.

Pickett’s Charge Lives On

Painted by French artist Paul Philippoteaux and his team in 1883-84, the dramatic work shows Pickett’s Charge, the main Confederate attack on Union forces on the last day of the battle, July 3, 1863.

Gettysburg was the turning point of the Civil War. The defeat of the Confederate army there was the beginning of the end for the southern states’ rebellion.

The cyclorama is 14 separate panels, each weighing 950 pounds. As of today, four of them have been hung in the new National Park Service Visitor Center at Gettysburg National Military Park. The old cyclorama building, where the painting had been displayed since the 1960s, is to be torn down.

A group of art experts under Great Falls art conservator David L. Olin has been working for four years to clean, repair and strengthen the cyclorama. It’s a big job that is costing $11.2 million, in part because the painting is so old and was in pretty bad shape.

The painting won’t go back on public display for another year, although the new visitor center, which resembles a big red barn, is scheduled to open in the spring.

Painting in Circles

Cyclorama paintings were the rage in the mid-to-late 1800s.
Many cities here and in Europe had cyclorama (or panorama) buildings, and the huge paintings, often of epic battles, made the rounds like blockbuster movies. Instead of going to a movie theater on a Friday night, you’d go see the cyclorama.

The paintings were big money-makers and so popular that season tickets were sold. Philippoteaux produced four Gettysburg cycloramas, including himself as a soldier in each one.

Washington was home to at least two so-called Panorama Buildings. One, a large, round structure about five stories tall, was a few blocks from the White House. Cycloramas of Gettysburg and two other Civil War battles, Shiloh and Second Bull Run, were exhibited there in the 1860s and ’90s. Philippoteaux’s Gettysburg cycloramas were, for the most part, considered fairly accurate and emotionally effective.

“It is simply wonderful,” Union General John Gibbon, who had fought in the battle, wrote after seeing one in 1884. “I never before had an idea that the eye could be so deceived by paint [and] canvas.”

— Michael E. Ruane

Workers hoist the first of 14 panels of the cyclorama into place. The full painting, one of the largest in the country, will be on display next year as the showcase of a new complex at Gettysburg National Military Park.
An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Academic Content Standards

This lesson addresses academic content standards of Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

Maryland

**English Language Arts:** Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms, and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose. (Grade 4, Standard 4.0 Writing)

**Social Studies:** Interpret information in maps, charts and graphs (Grade 4, Standard 6, Social Studies Skills and Processes, F. Analyze Social Studies Information)

**Visual Arts:** Create images and forms from observation, memory and imagination (3.0 Creative Expression and Production: Students will demonstrate the ability to organize knowledge and ideas for expression in the production of art.)

**Visual Arts:** Classify artworks by selected factors, including subject matter, style and technique (2.0 Historical, Cultural, and Social Context)

Virginia

**English:** The student will write effective narratives, poems and explanations.
  a. Focus on one aspect of a topic.
  c. Organize writing to convey a central idea.
  e. Utilize elements of style, including word choice and sentence variation.
  (Writing, Grade 4, 4.7)

**English:** The student will develop narrative, expository and informational writings to inform, explain, analyze, or entertain.
  (Writing, Grade 9, 9.6)

**Mathematics:** The student will estimate the conversion of inches and centimeters, yards and meters, and miles and kilometers, using approximate comparisons.
  (Measurement, Grade 4, 4.11)

**Visual Arts:** The student will select a preferred work of art from among others and defend the choice, using appropriate art vocabulary. (4.26)

**Visual Arts:** The student will use the elements of art—line, shape, form, color, value, texture, and space—to express ideas, images, and emotions. (5.3)

Washington, D.C.

**English:** Write interpretations or explanations of a literary or informational text that organize ideas and use evidence from the text as a support. (4W-E.5, Expository Writing)

**Visual Arts:** Each student will understand and apply media technique and process in the creation and production of art (Standard 1, Immediate Techniques and Process)

**Visual Arts:** Each student will use knowledge of structures (the organizational elements and principles, sensory qualities and expressive features) and functions (Standard 2, Structures and Functions)

**Visual Arts:** Each student will reflect upon and assess by analyzing and critiquing the characteristics and merits of his or her work and that of others (Standard 5, Reflecting and Assessing)

**Visual Arts:** Each student will be able to make connections between visual arts, the other content areas, careers and the artist’s role in society (Standard 6, Making Connections)

The Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Content Standards can be found online at http://mdk12.org/mspp/vsc/index.html.

Standards of Learning currently in effect for Virginia Public Schools can be found online at www.pen.k12.va.us/DOE/Superintendent/Sols/home.shtml.

Learning Standards for DCPS are found online at www.k12.dc.us/dcps/Standards/standardsHome.htm.