

DES MOINES ART CENTER

Educators Guide Permanent Collection Tours 2008-09 Des Moines Art Center

Created Fall 2008
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Information and images included with this guide may not be manipulated or used in any other format.

Disclaimer

Not all of these artworks will be covered on your tour or will be on public view at the time of your tour.

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Information about this CD-ROM

- Each building image and artwork listed in this Word document corresponds to a color image also found on this CD-ROM.
- Artist name, title of artwork, year the artwork was created, materials of artwork, and dimensions of the artwork are listed. This information is followed by the credit line (a credit line tells how the artwork became part of the Art Center's collections).
- A brief description of the building or artwork is provided, followed by questions.

Goals for Student Tours

- Introduce students to art museums
- Help students make sense of art by engaging in discussion about art
- Create inspiring connections between art and life
- Teach visual analysis
- Foster and promote creativity
- Encourage on-going participation with the Des Moines Art Center

Rules of the Des Moines Art Center

- No touching the art, pedestals, or walls
- Stay on the grey carpet in the galleries
- Watch out for toe lines on the floor – some are wood, some are metal
- Stay with your group and use low voices
- Leave large bags and coats in the coat room or on the bus
- Only pencils can be used, no pens
- No gum, food, or drinks
- No photography of any kind
- Guards, dressed in black shirts and khaki pants, are posted in every gallery
- Please turn off cell phones for the duration of the tour

Understanding Labels

Each artwork at the Des Moines Art Center, or any art museum, has a label next to it. The label provides important information about the artwork.

Name of Artist →	Frank Stella	American	born 1936	← Nationality and Lifetime
Title and Date → of artwork	<i>Union Pacific</i> , 1960			
	Aluminum paint on canvas			← What the artwork is made from
How or from → whom the museum acquired the work	Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1976.62			← Museum I.D. number: <i>Union Pacific</i> was the 62 nd work of art added to the Art Center's Permanent Collections in 1976

Architects of the Des Moines Art Center

Building Image 1 - Eliel Saarinen

This building opened in 1948. The outside is covered in Lannon stone (a form of limestone). Originally, the U-shaped building contained a lobby, galleries, auditorium, and studio classrooms. Everything except for the auditorium is still in its original location.

Building Image 2 - I.M. Pei

In 1968 the first addition was added to the Art Center. It is made out of concrete that has a rough finish created from a technique called bushhammering. I.M. Pei designed a building that enclosed Saarinen's U-shaped building. This wing holds large paintings and sculptures. In addition, the auditorium was moved to the lower level of this structure.

Building Image 3 - Richard Meier

In 1985 the second addition was added to the Art Center. This addition was added to the north part of Saarinen's building. The outside is covered in white porcelain-coated metal panels. This addition added much needed gallery space as well as storage space for artwork not on public view.

Select Artwork from the Des Moines Art Center's Permanent Collections

Image 1

Artist: Joseph Beuys

Title: *Energie Plan for the Westman*

Date: 1974

Materials: Chalk on slate

Dimensions: 48 x 95 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Florence Call and Gardner Cowles Foundation, 1974.20

Joseph Beuys lived in Germany where he taught sculpture classes at a university. He believed that art could not be separated from everyday life and he began to give lectures on this topic that he called "social sculpture." These social sculpture lectures involved audience participation and while Joseph lectured he wrote text and created drawings and diagrams on a chalkboard. During his first visit to the United States he gave a lecture at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and that is where this artwork was created.

- Do any of your teachers have chalkboards in their classrooms? Sometime teachers have whiteboards and use markers instead of chalk. Do you think chalkboards or whiteboards would be more fun to use? What makes you say that?
- Describe what Joseph drew on the chalkboard. Based on the drawings and words, what topics do you think he addressed in the lecture?
- Do you believe that art is important to everyday life? What makes you say that?
- When your teachers write and draw on their whiteboards, do you consider that art? How is Joseph's chalkboard artwork different from what your teachers produce? How is it the same?

Image 2

Artist: Louise Bourgeois

Title: *The Blind Leading the Blind*

Date: 1947-49

Materials: Wood and paint

Dimensions: 74 x 96 x 18 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1989.4

Even as an adult, Louise Bourgeois was very influenced by her childhood and her parents. Louise's father was very strict and her mother was calm and nurturing. Her family owned a tapestry business and she remembered that part of the machinery used to keep the fabric in order looked like a comb. She also remembered visiting her father in the hospital and how the beds were lined up in a row on both sides of a large room. Louise created many different versions of this sculpture and gave them the same title but painted them different colors and gave them different amounts of legs.

- Do you think the title is important to this artwork? What makes you say that? Some people think the title is related to a passage stating when "the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." What do you think this statement means? Do you think it is important to this artwork? Why or why not?
- Louise described this color as "anti-art." What do you think she meant by calling the color pink "anti-art"? How do you feel about the color pink? How would this artwork look if it were painted red, black, or purple?
- Are you influenced by your parents or other adults in your family? What events do you remember? Could you turn any of these events into an artwork? What would your artwork look like?

Image 3

Artist: Mary Cassatt

Title: *Nicolle and Her Mother*

Date: c. 1900

Materials: Pastel on paper

Dimensions: 25 1/8 x 20 3/4 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1966.21

Mary Cassatt was an artist during a time when there were not many female artists. She gained the respect of her male artist colleagues, especially Edgar Degas. Edgar was the one who suggested that Mary use pastels, instead of paint, and create artwork based on the theme of mothers and their children. Once in a while, Mary created artwork for a commission, which means someone paid her to create a specific artwork. The people in this artwork, Nicolle who is being held by her Mother, were neighbors of Mary's while she lived in France.

Additional teaching opportunity: Google Edgar Degas and find the artworks in which he portrays females. Ask your students to compare and contrast Mary's artwork to Edgar's artwork. Do they like pastels or paint better and why?

- Describe the body positions of both the mother and child. What kind of feelings or emotions does that make you think of? Nicolle is being held in her mother's arms, but yet you can't see both of her arms. Why do you think Mary didn't draw in both of the mother's arms?
- Why do you think the two figures are not looking at each other? How would this artwork look if the two figures were staring at each other?
- Describe the way Mary used the pastels, a chalk-like art material. Notice the different ways she created the background, clothing, and faces of the figures.

Image 4

Artist: Tony Cragg

Title: *Untitled (Conch Shell)*

Date: 1988

Material: Steel

Dimensions: 43 x 87 x 79 inches

Weight: approximately 1.5 tons

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 2000.1

Before going to college to be an artist, Tony Cragg worked as a lab technician for two years. From that experience he came to sculpture through science and the process of observing that nature is connected to everything, even man-made items. Tony is also interested in the materials that he uses to create his artwork, like recyclable plastic, or wood, or the heaviest metals or stone. This sculpture is made out of steel, which if heated to high temperatures become a liquid. The liquid steel is poured into molds (an ice cube tray is a mold), cooled, and then welded together.

- Look at the sculpture, what do you think the large shape is? What makes you say that? (For help, re-read the title of this artwork.) Now look under the large shape, what is sticking out? Ask if anyone in class plays a musical instrument. Does that help figuring out what is sticking out from under the large shape? Can the students tell what type of musical instruments fit in the cases?
- Remember that Tony believes that nature is connected to everything; what connections can be drawn between the shell and the musical instrument cases? (Think of both music and protection.)
- Normally, steel is a shiny silver color. Why do you think Tony chose to change the color of the metal? What makes you say that?

Image 5

Artist: Tom Friedman

Title: *Untitled*

Date: 2000

Materials: Cut out ink line on paper, mono-filament

Dimensions: 30 x 39 x 1/8 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen Pray Maytag Madsen Sculpture Fund, 2000.4

This untitled work illustrates Tom Friedman's signature method of art making—obsessive, laborious, and humorous. Tom uses ordinary materials, such as toothpaste, toilet paper, Styrofoam, toothpicks, and Lifesavers, and manipulates them to produce objects that are beautiful yet conceptually complex. Tom created this sculpture by projecting images from popular advertising on heavy paper, tracing the image with black ink, cutting out the white space, and then suspending the object from the ceiling.

Additional teaching opportunity: Google other artworks by Tom Friedman and show your students. Have the students talk about Tom's use of materials. Have they ever thought of making a sculpture out of garbage bags or other household materials?

- If Tom cut out the white space and hung it from the ceiling, why do you still see white in the image? What if the wall was painted purple, how would that change the artwork? What if the wall were painted black? Why is a white wall important to this artwork?
- What images do you see in the artwork? What kind of advertisements do you think the images came from? What makes you say that? What advertisement images would you use?
- Why do you think this artwork doesn't have a title (name)? What would you title this artwork and why?

Image 6

Artist: Frederick Carl Frieseke

Title: *The Hour of Tea*

Date: c. 1916

Materials: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 37 5/8 x 55 5/8 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Florence Carpenter, 1941.11

Frederick Carl Frieseke was born in Michigan and became interested in the Impressionists, especially Claude Monet. Frederick even traveled to France and bought property near Claude Monet's home. Try using this mnemonic device to remember the Impressionists approach to artwork, it's the word ELBOW: E=every day life, L=light, B=brush strokes, O=outdoor painting, W=weather and atmosphere.

Additional teaching opportunity: Google Claude Monet's artwork and compare it to Frederick's painting. What is different and what is the same?

- Discuss the different parts of the mnemonic device – ELBOW. Have the students identify parts of the painting that relate to each letter. What details do they mention and why?
- What do you think the woman in the chair is looking at? What makes you say that? What is the group eating and drinking? How can you tell?
- What season is depicted in this painting? How can you tell? How would it be different if the painting took place in the fall season? What makes you say that?

Image 7

Artist: Robert Mangold

Title: *Circle Painting No. 5*

Date: 1973

Materials: Acrylic and pencil on canvas

Dimensions: 72 inches in diameter

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 1933.18

While in art school, Robert Mangold worked as a guard at The Museum of Modern Art in New York. There he was exposed to many different artists and artworks which helped him think about the way he wanted to create art. In this series of paintings, of which there are seven *Circle Paintings*, Robert was concentrating on creating different shapes for the canvas with geometric shapes drawn onto the surface of the painting. Robert was not only interested in the shape of the canvas but also the color of the paint saying, "Sometimes you want the painting to look very bright...and sometimes you want it to be very somber."

- Often paintings are rectangular in shape, but Robert's painting is a circle. Why do you think he chose to create a round painting?
- What do you notice about the different shapes, both the circle and the square? When you first looked at the painting, did you notice that it was not a perfect square? Why do you think he made the square open on two sides?
- Re-read Robert's quote about his choice of paint color and look at the paint color of this artwork. Do you think this color is "very bright" or "very somber"? What makes you say that? Why do you think Robert selected this color?

Image 8

Artist: Henry Moore

Title: *Seated Woman (Thin Neck)*

Date: 1961

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: 64 inches high

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1964.1

The reclining female figure was a recurrent subject for Henry Moore. As an official War Artist during World War II, he became fascinated with the sleeping and resting Londoners, mostly women and children, taking shelter in the London Underground tunnels. Much of his sculpture, including *Seated Woman*, were inspired by these wartime sketches. Henry felt that the head was the most significant part of this sculpture. It "gives the rest a certain human poise and meaning, and it's because I think the head is so important that I often reduce it in size to make the rest more monumental."

Additional teaching opportunity: Google Henry Moore's other sculptures then compare and contrast his other sculptures to this one.

- Why do you think Henry thought the head was the most important part of his sculptures? What if Henry made the head of *Seated Woman* three times larger than it is? What if he made the head three times smaller than it is?
- What if this sculpture were placed on the floor and not on the white pedestal? How would that change the way you look at this artwork?

Image 9

Artist: Kenneth Noland

Title: *Whirl*

Date: 1960

Materials: Acrylic on canvas

Dimensions: 70 ¾ x 69 ½ inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1974.79

Before creating this painting, Kenneth visited a friend's art studio and saw her painting on canvas spread on the floor (canvas is a thick fabric). He, in turn, began to create paintings on canvas spread on the floor. This painting method allowed him to approach the canvas from every side and gave him the opportunity to create paintings like *Whirl*. He began the painting by creating the orange circle in the middle of the canvas and then added the other colorful rings.

Additional teaching opportunity: Look back at *Circle Painting No. 5* by Robert Mangold.

Have your students discuss the two artworks by comparing and contrasting. Which do they like better and why? Which artist do they think put more work or thought into his painting and why?

- Look closely and describe the rings of paint in this artwork. What is different about the blue ring from the other rings? Why do you think he left one edge of the blue ring rough instead of creating a smooth edge like the other rings? Do you get a sense of movement from the blue ring? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Kenneth created a circle painting on a square canvas rather than a rectangular canvas? How would this painting look if it was painted on a circular canvas?
- Why do you think Kenneth selected these five colors (orange, white, green, black, and blue)? What if he used brown for the outside ring? How would that change the way you think about the movement of that ring?

Image 10

Artist: Susan Rothenberg

Title: *Untitled*

Date: 1979

Materials: Acrylic and flashe on paper

Dimensions: 36 1/2 x 36 5/8 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Gardner and Florence Cowles Foundation, 1979.10

Susan Rothenberg selected horses as her primary subject because horses were “powerful. I wanted a powerful image to be working with.” When she began painting horses she painted them in profile (a view of the side of an object). After a couple of years she started to paint the horses from the front which allowed her to create a sense of movement. Regardless of which way she painted the image, she still only used loose and expressive brushstrokes to create the outline or outer edges of the horses.

- Why do you think she placed the horses so close to the left edge of the painting? Why do you think she painted the horses in black, white, and blue?
- Did Susan create a sense of movement in this painting? How can you tell these horses are running toward you?
- Do you think a bird or hippopotamus portrays the same powerful feeling as a horse? What other animals portray the same powerful feeling as horses?

Image 11

Artist: Frank Stella

Title: *Union Pacific*

Date: 1960

Materials: Aluminum paint on canvas

Dimensions: 77 ½ x 149 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1976.62

Frank Stella is a very inventive artist and often created artwork in series, moving from painting bars of colors to painting with all black. *Union Pacific* is part of a series called "Aluminum Paintings". In this series Frank changed the shape of the canvas, which has been notched at the lower corners and top center, straying from the traditional rectangle. He painted the bars of colors with a large paintbrush (like the kind used to paint buildings), and evenly spaced the lines to create space between them. The lines between the grey paint are actually the raw canvas.

Additional teaching opportunity: Look back at *Circle Painting No. 5* by Robert Mangold.

Which shaped canvas do your students like better and why? What are some similarities and differences between the two artworks?

- Do you think the notches in the canvas are important to this artwork? What makes you say that? What do you think came first, the notches or the painted lines? What makes you say that?
- The title of this artwork is *Union Pacific*, what else could this title relate to? Do you see any connections to the rail road?

Suggested Art Activities

These art activities are related to artworks in this Educators Guide. The activities can be tailored for all ages.

Image 5

Artist: Tom Friedman

Title: *Untitled*

Date: 2000

Materials: Cut out ink line on paper, mono-filament

Dimensions: 30 x 39 x 1/8 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen Pray Maytag Madsen Sculpture Fund, 2000.4

Tom Friedman Artwork

Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Markers or crayons, multiple colors
- Paint, multiple colors, and brushes
- Paper

Directions:

1. After viewing and discussing Tom's artwork, have the students think about what designs, letters, symbols, shapes, etc. they want to draw on their paper.
2. Have the students draw their shapes on the paper with a pencil and then trace over the pencil lines with markers or crayons. Or the students can draw directly onto the paper with the marker or crayons. The students should leave white space in their drawing.
3. Once the students are done drawing, have them color in the white spaces with markers, crayons, or paint.

Discussion:

- Have the students look at their classmates' artworks. Talk about the similarities and differences.
- Compare their artwork to Tom's *Untitled* piece. What do they now think about the white background?
- What would they title their artwork?

Image 6

Artist: Frederick Carl Frieseke

Title: *The Hour of Tea*

Date: c. 1916

Materials: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 37 5/8 x 55 5/8 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Florence Carpenter, 1941. 11

Impressionistic Artworks

Materials Needed:

- Paint, multiple colors
- Brushes, multiple sizes
- Pencils
- Paper

Directions:

4. After viewing and discussing Frederick's artwork and discussing ELBOW, have the students think about the landscape around their home, school, favorite vacation spot, etc.
5. Have the students sketch their landscape. What elements are they including – people, buildings, trees, flowers, or other things?
6. Once the sketch is finished the students can begin to put paint on paper while thinking about the parts of ELBOW.

Discussion:

- Have the students look at their classmates' artworks. Talk about the similarities and differences.
- Can they find evidence of ELBOW in each others artworks?
- Why did the students select that specific landscape, paint choices, brush strokes, etc?

Additional Teaching Opportunity:

- If you discussed Monet in class, have the students compare and contrast their artwork to Monet's in addition to Frederick's.

Image 7

Artist: Robert Mangold

Title: *Circle Painting No. 5*

Date: 1973

Materials: Acrylic and pencil on canvas

Dimensions: 72 inches in diameter

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center

Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Edmundson Art Foundation, Inc., 1933.18

Image 11

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Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1976.62

Shaped Artworks

Materials Needed:

- Paint, multiple colors
- Brushes, multiple sizes
- Colored pencils
- Paper, to be cut into triangles, circles, squares, rectangles, and other shapes

Directions:

1. After viewing and discussing Robert and Frank's artworks, have the students think about what shape they want to cut their paper into.
2. Have the students think if they want to cover the paper with paint and then draw a geometric shape or create a paint pattern based on the shape of the paper or come combination thereof.
3. Have the students think about what colors they want to use and what brushes they want to use.

Discussion:

- Have the students look at their classmates' artworks. Talk about the use of shapes – was there a popular shape for the paper? What shape was drawn the most?
- Why did the students choose the specific colors, were they trying to suggest a mood with their paint choice?