

DES MOINES ART CENTER

Educators Guide Permanent Collection Tours 2009-10 Des Moines Art Center

Created Fall 2009
By Jennifer Cooley
Museum Education Manager

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.

Table of Contents	Page
1. Information about the CD-ROM	2
2. Goals for student tours	2
3. Rules of the Des Moines Art Center	2
4. Understanding labels	3
5. Descriptions and questions relating to each color image on the CD-ROM	3
6. Quick post-visit follow-up worksheet	10
7. Suggested art activities related to artworks on the CD-ROM	11

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 →	Alex Katz American born 1927	← Nationality and Lifetime
Title and Date → of artwork	<i>Ada's Garden</i> , 2000 Oil 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; 2000.23	← Museum I.D. number: <i>Ada's Garden</i> was the 23 rd work of art added to the Art Center's Permanent Collections in 2000

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 Albers

Title: *Study for Homage to the Square*

Date: 1967

Materials: Oil on masonite

Dimensions: 32 x 32 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the bequest of Edith King and William W. Pearson, 1984.9

Joseph was born in Germany but moved to the United States in 1933. He was a teacher as well as an artist. Joseph used the square in many paintings and created a series of paintings (like a series of books) based on the square. With each painting he used a different combination of colors, in this painting he used shades of green and blue, in others he used shades of yellow, brown, red, or orange, just to name a few colors. He was very interested in the way the squares interacted with each other in the painting and how the viewer interacted with the squares.

- The definition of homage is to show special honor or respect. How do you think Joseph shows homage to the square in this painting? Why do you think he selected squares for his paintings rather than other shapes, such as triangles, ovals, or rectangles?
- Joseph selected the colors for each square very carefully. Describe the color of each square, what descriptive words can you use? Why do you think Joseph used the lightest color of green for the smallest square?
- Notice the placement of all the squares, why do you think he didn't place the square in the center of the painting? What makes you say that?

*Art project associated with this artist, see page 11

Image 2

Artist: Joseph Cornell

Title: *Habitat Group for a Shooting Gallery*

Date: 1973

Materials: Mixed Media

Dimensions: 15 1/2 x 11 1/8 x 4 1/4 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1975.27

Joseph is best known for box constructions he called assemblages. Assemblage is similar to collage but instead of creating two-dimensional objects, like a flat collage, he created three-dimensional objects, like this box or a sculpture. He lived in New York City and was a self-taught artist, meaning he didn't attend an art school. He used ordinary materials, such as stamps, wood, magazines, broken glass, sand, and other materials to create his box constructions. During the time in which this box was created, World War II was taking place so there was a lot of violence shown in the news.

Additional teaching opportunity: Google Joseph Cornell and look at his other box constructions with your students. How are they the same or different from *Habitat Group for a Shooting Gallery*? What other materials did he use?

- Joseph often used birds in his box constructions. Why do you think he was interested in birds? What makes you say that? What if the birds were doves (symbol of freedom), how would that change the way you look at this artwork?
- What different emotions do you feel while looking at this artwork? Remember that this was created during World War II, might that have affected Joseph? What makes you say that?
- Does this remind you of a video or arcade game? What is similar and what is different?

*Art project associated with this artist, see page 12

Image 3

Artist: Richard Diebenkorn

Title: *The Table*

Date: 1956-57

Materials: Oil on canvas mounted on panel

Dimensions: 30 x 27 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of James S. and Dorothy Schramm, Burlington, 1961.49

Richard grew up in northern California, near San Francisco, and while he lived in different places throughout his life, he eventually settled in southern California, near Los Angeles. Ever since Richard began to paint he liked to create artworks in a series (like a series of books). In the series from which this painting is from, he was interested in landscapes and still-life paintings (paintings of objects sitting on a table). In this painting, Richard painted the table itself in front of a window, with a view to the outside.

- While the main focus of this painting is the table, what else do you see in this artwork? Why do you think Richard included other items in the painting?
- Look closely at the way Richard painted this painting, especially the brushstrokes. Describe the brushstrokes; as an example are they smooth, jagged, thick, controlled, rough, or thick or something else? Why do you think he selected the colors used in this painting? What makes you say that?
- Think about your house, what one item would you select to paint? Why did you select that item? Why do you think Richard painted a table?

Image 4

Artist: Marsden Hartley

Title: *Mont Saint Victoire*

Date: 1927

Materials: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 31 3/4 x 39 1/4 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bohlen, 1958.63

Marsden Hartley was born in Maine and he greatly admired that state, in fact he wished to be known as “the painter from Maine”. During his life he traveled to Europe, specifically France. It was during this time spent in France that he created a series of paintings (like a series of books) that highlights the mountain Saint Victoire. Marsden worked with and learned from fellow artists during his stay in Europe which he liked, but he struggled to find a balance between what his artist friends were creating and how he wanted to create his artwork.

Additional teaching opportunity: Marsden was influenced by Paul Cézanne, who also painted the Saint Victoire Mountain. Google Paul Cézanne and find some of these paintings. Have your students compare and contrast Marsden’s and Paul’s paintings. Which do they like better and why? Can they see how Paul influenced Marsden’s way of painting?

- Describe this painting, what else is in this painting beside the mountain? Is this a very high mountain? How can you tell?
- Describe the colors used in this painting. Why do you think Marsden selected these colors? What do the colors tell you about the time of day or season of the year? What makes you say that?
- Look closely at the way Marsden painted this painting, especially the brushstrokes. Describe the brushstrokes. Why do you think Marsden didn’t blend the brushstrokes or colors together?

Image 5

Artist: Eva Hesse

Title: *Untitled*

Date: 1970

Materials: Fiberglass on wire mesh, and latex and cloth on wire

Dimensions: Overall, 90 7/8 x 147 5/8 x 42 1/2 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1988.6.a-d

Eva moved to the United States from Germany as a young child with her parents. As she grew older she was determined to become an artist that was taken seriously in the art community. She used unusual materials for her artwork, such as fiberglass and latex, both of which can be dangerous to work with. Fiberglass is made from extremely fine fibers of glass that can be applied around an object – a mold – to create very interesting textures, colors, and shapes. Latex is a type of rubber. Eva liked that the fiberglass and latex captured evidence of her hands working with the materials verses being machine made and looking perfectly formed.

- Look closely and describe the rectangles. How did Eva make each of the four rectangles different? How would it change the sculpture if each rectangle were the same?
- While this work was being completed, Eva had many surgeries. In what ways could this artwork be about the human body? Why do you say that?
- This artwork hangs on the wall, yet it also comes away from the wall and invades your space. Can this artwork be a sculpture if it’s attached to the wall? Why or why not?

Image 6

Artist: Alex Katz

Title: *Ada's Garden*

Date: 2000

Materials: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 120 x 240 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center; 2000.23

Alex was born in New York. When he began his art career, he realized that he was different because he liked to paint landscapes and people, when most of his artist friends were painting abstract images. As Alex progressed in his career, he created larger and larger paintings; this painting is 120 x 240 inches (10 x 20 feet). In this painting, Alex depicts (shows) a party. The woman at the center of the painting is Ada, Alex's wife; there are people both in front and behind her.

- Why do you think Alex made this painting so large? What if he made the painting smaller, like 30 x 40 inches (2 x 4 feet)? Even with the large size, Alex does not show the feet of the people at the party. Why do you think he didn't include the entire body of the people?
- Look closely at all the people at the party and describe what they are doing. Do you think this is a lively party or calm party? What makes you say that? Why do you think Ada is standing alone?
- What kind of feelings do you get from this painting? Why do you think Alex used black for the background? How would this painting be different if he used blue or yellow as the background color?

Image 7

Artist: Maya Lin

Title: *Rock Field*

Date: 1997

Materials: Glass

Dimensions: Variable Dimensions

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1999.2.a-.ss

Maya was born in Ohio and she earned degrees both in art and architecture from Yale University. Her artwork tries to find a balance between art, architecture, and the earth. In *Rock Field*, Maya created 45 blown glass forms which are randomly arranged on the floor. Described simply, glass is made by heating sand and other natural materials to very high temperatures until it turns into a thick liquid. At that point, glass can be molded, blown, or shaped into different forms and color can be added.

Additional teaching opportunity: When Maya was 21, she won the design competition for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Ask what the students know about this memorial then Google the memorial to find out more. How does this memorial connect art, architecture, and the earth?

- Why do you think she created this sculpture out of glass? What do you think of while looking at the glass forms? Does glass connect art, architecture, and the earth? Why do you say that?
- Why do you think she didn't color the glass? How would the artwork look if the glass was black, red, or blue?
- Maya didn't tell the Art Center how to place the glass forms on the floor. Why do you think she didn't create a strict placement layout?

Image 8

Artist: Richard Long

Title: *Ocean Circle*

Date: 1996

Materials: Connecticut blue slate

Dimensions: Diameter 12 feet

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen Pray Maytag Madsen Sculpture Acquisition Fund, 1999.1

Richard was born in Bristol, England and continues to work and live in that area. His artwork is very connected to the earth and nature. He often takes walks outside to understand the landscape of a particular area. While on these walks he collects natural materials, such as sticks, rocks, or flowers. Sometimes he makes his artworks outside; because these artworks are not permanent he takes photographs of them to show to other people. Other sculptures are made inside and are more permanent, like this one.

- Why do you think Richard wanted these stones placed in a circle? How is a circle connected to the earth and nature? How would this sculpture look different if it were in the shape of a triangle or square?
- The name, or title, of this artwork is *Ocean Circle*. Why do you think he chose that name for this artwork? What name would you give this artwork?
- This sculpture is created with a specific kind of stone called Connecticut blue slate. Why do you think he used this stone? How would this sculpture look if the stone were not laid flat, but placed upright on their edges?

Image 9

Artist: Brice Marden

Title: *Range*

Date: 1970

Materials: Three panels, beeswax and oil on canvas

Dimensions: Overall 60 1/2 x 105 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1996.1

Brice was born just outside of New York City, which is where he now lives. He once said that his paintings begin "with some vague color idea; a memory of a space...a color I think I have seen." The colors of this painting were influenced by the Western landscape maybe due to the fact that as a teenager Brice thought of joining a rodeo. For this painting Brice mixed his paint with beeswax, which gives the artwork a slightly translucent or see-through look. This paint mixture allowed him to carefully place the paint on the canvas to show that this artwork was hand-painted.

- Look closely at the colors, why do you think these colors remind Brice of the Western landscape? What makes you say that? What colors make you think of the landscape of the Midwest, where you live?
- Describe how this artwork would look different if the panels were stacked on top of each other, rather than side-by-side. Why do you say that?

Image 10

Artist: Juan Muñoz

Title: *Piggyback (Left)*

Date: 1996

Materials: Bronze

Dimensions: 71 x 24 x 22 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the Ellen Pray Maytag Madsen Sculpture Fund, 1997.7

Juan was born in Madrid, Spain; he is the second of seven children. His artwork almost always involves the human figure or people. He uses his artwork to tell stories, although he often doesn't share the story with others. He once stated, "I build...sculptures because I do not know any other way to explain to myself what it is that troubles me." In this sculpture a man is giving a piggyback ride to another man. The man receiving the ride is not wearing shoes or socks.

- This sculpture is slightly smaller than life size. Why do you think Juan made it smaller than the average adult? What if he made this sculpture eight feet tall, how would it look different?
- After looking at the sculpture, describe what you think is happening with the two men. What makes you say that?

Quick post-visit follow-up worksheet

This worksheet can be done in the students' homeroom or art classroom.

1. Which artwork did you want to know more about? What more do you want to know?

2. Which artwork surprised, impressed, or disappointed you? Why did you pick those artworks?

Surprised _____

Impressed _____

Disappointed _____

3. Remember an artwork you did not talk about on your tour. List at least five things you remember about that artwork.

① _____

② _____

③ _____

④ _____

⑤ _____

4. Draw an artwork that you really liked in the space below. It could be one you talked about on your tour or an artwork you saw while you were walking through the galleries. Why did you pick this artwork?

Suggested Art Activities

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

Image 1

Artist: Joseph Albers

Title: *Study for Homage to the Square*

Date: 1967

Materials: Oil on masonite

Dimensions: 32 x 32 inches

Credit Line: Des Moines Art Center Permanent Collections; Purchased with funds from the bequest of Edith King and William W. Pearson, 1984.9

Homage to a Shape

Materials Needed:

- Pencils
- Rulers
- Markers, crayons, or paints/brushes, multiple colors
- Paper

Directions:

1. After viewing and discussing Joseph's artwork, have the students think about what shape they want to repeat.
2. Have the students think about 4 colors they want to use, as the teacher you can discuss the color wheel and have the students use complementary colors, colors with the same hue, etc.
3. Have the students carefully measure with their ruler and draw their shapes on the paper with a pencil. The shapes can be drawn inside of each other, touching one side of the original shape, etc.
4. Once the shapes are drawn, the students can color in their shapes with their pre-determined color selections.
5. This project can be done multiple times using different shapes and colors.

Discussion:

- Have the students look at their classmates' artworks. Talk about the similarities and differences.
- Have the students talk about the differences in colors and shapes, what do they like best and why? Have them compare their artwork to Joseph's, do they better appreciate Joseph's artwork after completing their own?
- What would they title their artwork?

Image 2

Artist: Joseph Cornell

Title: *Habitat Group for a Shooting Gallery*

Date: 1973

Materials: Mixed Media

Dimensions: 15 1/2 x 11 1/8 x 4 1/4 inches

Credit Line: Purchased with funds from the Coffin Fine Arts Trust; Nathan Emory Coffin Collection of the Des Moines Art Center, 1975.27

Cornell Boxes

Materials Needed:

- Boxes, any size
- Magazines, newspapers, old photographs, stamps, etc. to be cut
- Mixed paper to be cut
- Scraps of mixed materials
- Glue – glue stick, tacky glue, hot glue
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Paint/brushes, multiple colors

Directions:

1. After viewing and discussing Joseph's artwork, encourage the students to bring in materials from their homes, something without value to be added to their artwork.
2. Have the students select a box with which to work. The students can then create a collage/assemblage using the classroom provided materials or materials from home inside of the box.
3. The students should also decorate/color the outside of their box as part of the artwork.

Discussion:

- Have the students look at their classmates' artworks. Talk about the similarities and differences.
- Have the students explain to their classmates why they selected the materials they used. Do any of the materials have a personal significance to them? If so, ask them to explain.