

Portland Museum of Art – School Tour Themes

Animal Stories *Preschools and PreK groups only*

Designed for our youngest learners, ages 3-5 years, this tour introduces children to the museum. Utilizing children's books such as *Calico Jungle* by Maine artist Dahlov Ipcar, we use literacy and movement to observe, describe, and compare and contrast three animal-themed artworks. Please note this tour is limited to 24 students per visit.

Art and Society *Recommended for Middle and High School*

Explore artworks influenced and inspired by social and political events, and the power that visual imagery has to communicate important messages. What strategies do artists use to convey ideas about social change and awareness? How do artists respond to changes in society, environment, politics, and current events? Can art influence social change?

How Did They?

This tour focuses on materials and process. How does an artist's choice of material and process impact the meaning of an artwork? How do artists communicate ideas through their material? Learn about the ways various artworks were created and the types of media used. The primary artwork focus of this tour is contemporary art.

Learning to Look with Visual Thinking Strategies

Our Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) tours are the most open-ended, inquiry-based tours we offer. VTS is a method of facilitated discussion that focuses on students looking at and talking about works of art. The docent role shifts from information provider to discussion facilitator. VTS asks students, as a group, to utilize their existing visual and cognitive skills as well as previous life experiences and knowledge to slow down and carefully investigate and interpret works of art. VTS, a tested and proven method, encourages the practice of critical-thinking skills that are essential to success in subjects across the school curriculum. Please note that this style of tour does not deliver art historical information but rather requires the students make meaning on their own terms. For more information about VTS, visit vtshome.org.

Peggy L. Osher Art Study and Collection Committee Conference Room *High School groups only*

Want a closer look? High School groups can book a visit to the where groups can take a close look at works not currently on view. For more information on a visit to the Art Study Room, contact curatorial@portlandmuseum.org

Picturing Maine

Maine has long been a place that attracts artists. In this tour, students learn about the rich legacy of art in Maine and the many artists from the past and present who have found inspiration here. View artworks inspired by Maine's landscapes and seascapes, and explore Maine's identity in terms of art and culture. If you are studying the life and work of a specific artist or region, let us know and we can design a custom tour to meet your needs.

PMA Highlights

Looking for a general overview of the PMA collection? This tour introduces ways of examining and interpreting artworks from many times, places, and perspectives. Students explore formal elements of art such as composition, line, color, texture, and media, as well as concept and process, through an introduction of our collection highlights.

PMA Now

Is a specific temporary exhibition of interest? Let us take your group on a tour of one of them.

Seeing Each Other

What kinds of choices do artists make when depicting people and characters? How do artists represent mood or aura? Are portraits accurate? What role does portraiture play in the 21st century? Students respond to visual clues and gather information to explore these questions along with concepts of identity, narrative, and storytelling.

Seeing Through Sketching

Sharpen and hone observation skills through a series of independent and partnered sketching games and prompts. Activities support close looking and experimentation rather than representation or drawing accuracy, so no experience is necessary. All materials are provided. Please note we can incorporate sketching into any of the tours, but this tour focuses on sketching as a way of looking closely.