



DOCENT HANDBOOK

2024

MAM Education Team

Missoula Art Museum (MAM)

Docent Handbook

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MAM Education Team Contacts

Kay Grissom-Kiely, Curator of Education,
kay@missoulaartmuseum.org

Janaína Vieira-Marques, Educator and Outreach
Coordinator, janaina@missoulaartmuseum.org

Section 1: What are docents?

The word “docent” comes from the Latin word “docere,” meaning “to teach.” Many museums have docent programs to provide visitors with a quality art experience. A few museums, similar in size and scope to MAM, are linked below:

- [Yellowstone Art Museum](#)
- [Portland Art Museum](#)
- [Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art](#)

As a docent, you will be a steward of MAM by providing facilitation between museum visitors and the art on display.

How to become a docent:

- Enjoy talking about art with children, adults, and special populations.
- Complete the volunteer application and return to the Education Team
- Attend at least one scheduled MAM Docent Training, although attending more than one means more practice.
- Shadow at least one tour given by an Education Team member.

- Be shadowed and evaluated by a member of the Education Team
- No prior art or art history knowledge is required to become a docent. MAM welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and professional backgrounds.

Requirements:

- Attend monthly docent meetings.
- Attend MAM docent training to refresh understanding of exhibitions and MAM interpretive strategies and guidelines.
- Represent MAM's mission and Radical Welcome philosophy with integrity.

NOTE: This position can involve standing for up to an hour, walking up 2+ flights of stairs (we have an elevator as well), and moving throughout the museum. Accommodation may be arranged.

MAM is conveniently located downtown near the bus transfer center. Volunteer RSVP Members receive 2 hours of free parking using a digital pass. This is a program with Missoula Aging Services. Visit <https://missoulaagingservices.org/volunteer/rsvp-volunteer-program/> for more information.

Benefits:

- Receive training from MAM's Education Team and Senior Curator (Kay Grissom-Kiely, Janaína, and Brandon Reintjes)
- Gain knowledge about contemporary art and culture, including the American West, Contemporary American Indian Art, and Montana Modernism.
- Learn MAM's interpretive philosophy that expands upon Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), incorporating the inquiry method of observation and interpretation.
- Discover simple techniques to promote self-discovery and self-engagement
- Build community with other MAM docents, MAM staff, and visitors
- Increase comfort level with discussing contemporary art
- Perform self-guided research on MAM exhibitions and MAM Collection based on personal interest
- 10% discount on MAM merchandise
- One-year membership to MAM for six volunteer hours (includes trainings)

Ways to be involved:

There are a variety of ways to be involved as a Docent at MAM and they don't all involve leading tours for community and school groups!

- Research
- Classroom support
- Training and leading tours for the docent community

Section 2: WHY do museums have docents?

Research studies show that “students who attended a school tour demonstrated stronger critical-thinking skills, displayed higher levels of tolerance, had more historical empathy, and developed a taste for being a cultural consumer in the future.”

*Jay Greene, Univ. of Arkansas, 21st Century Chair of Education Reform

During the school year, MAM provides tours to student groups in and around the Missoula area, including nearby Tribal and rural communities. During the summer months, camp groups visit for tours every afternoon. Docents are critical to these programs, as well as our Creative Aging Program, providing tours to elderly people. MAM responds to requests for tours from businesses, cultural groups, University of Montana classes, and early childhood groups all year long. Docents play a fundamental role in supporting MAM's goal of providing accessible, engaging educational experiences. By facilitating discussions during tours, MAM docents create lasting connections between all visitors and contemporary art.

Interpretation at MAM includes:

- A preference for artist experiences, voices, and insights, as close to the source as possible.
- A preference for direct, object-based learning augmented by questions or information.
- First-person stories and quotes allow intimate connections rather than third-person or objective description. Additionally, first-person perspectives provide an opportunity to present the stories of traditionally underrepresented historical groups in an impactful way.
- Concise text on introductory or explanatory panels, labels, and guides using common language and appropriate art and education vocabulary when necessary.
- Questions to guide self-discovery, individual perspectives, peak experiences, and self-actualization, as well as to prompt user-generated content, to decentralize museum authority and invite visitors to be active, responsive, and reflective.
- Visitor Engagement Security Officers who circulate regularly to talk with visitors about what they are seeing, feeling, or experiencing
- Universal/accessible design,
 - including text, using short sentences, column breaks, and large, contrasting fonts, as well as multisensory methods of educating visitors and communicating main ideas, dual language text (when necessary or appropriate)

- o a variety of platforms, strategies, and modalities to provide access to engagement, including unobtrusive, easy to use digital interpretation or audio guides when called for.

MAM's Radical Welcome:

Radical Welcome is a group of strategies meant to remove barriers to entry and engagement for everyone. MAM invites people of all backgrounds, abilities, and interests to engage with contemporary art, foster their creativity, build community, and catalyze civic engagement. Free admission at MAM is a gift to the people of Missoula County, surrounding communities, and the rural state of Montana. We believe free admission is the best way to make great works of contemporary art democratically available to all. In addition to free admission, MAM offers funding for bus transportation to Tribal and rural communities for most of its education programs. Schools visit from the Flathead Indian Reservation and communities in Mineral and Sanders County to the north of Missoula, the Bitterroot Valley and Granite County to the south. MAM shows respect towards indigenous cultures that reside in Montana by amplifying American Indian voices.

MAM's Tribal Acknowledgment Statement:

Written in conjunction with Tribal leaders, MAM's acknowledgment statement is read aloud during all education programs:

“MAM sits on the ancestral territories of the Salish and Pend O’reille peoples and we respect the indigenous stewards of this land. MAM acknowledges their rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Montana and to the work of MAM”. We honor our ongoing connections and relationships to these communities past, present, and future. ”

Free Community Programming

MAM’s education programs are almost always FREE, just like the museum itself. In recognition of the diverse landscape and populations in our greater community and the regions that we serve, MAM goes beyond the exhibition of contemporary art to actively invite special populations and groups to the museum. MAM strategically offers educational initiatives and programs that welcome diverse audiences and better serve under-resourced families, rural and Tribal populations, and those with special needs. MAM reaches out to the community to invite viewers to engage with contemporary artwork that is relevant to audiences today—and supports them in that engagement.

Section 3: Language Guidelines and Educational Philosophy

MAM’s Educational Philosophy

MAM’s educational focus is to empower audiences of all ages and abilities to engage with contemporary art and artists. MAM’s education team strongly believes that engaging with contemporary art can open a unique and accessible pathway to learning about current issues and ideas of our time. MAM

implements an innovative approach to help audiences connect with contemporary art—using methods of observation and interpretation. Our interpretive strategy is inquiry-based and preferences self-engagement and self-discovery.

MAM employs a variety of platforms, strategies, and modalities (including kinesthetic and auditory) to provide access to engagement. We use open-ended questions (those that cannot be answered with a yes or no) to support a culture of self-discovery, curiosity, and wonder. We remove obstacles to engagement by using common language, and we use appropriate art education vocabulary when the context calls for it. MAM asks the viewer, “What do you notice?” and “What do you wonder?” to help them look closely and make personal connections with art. MAM believes that engaging with art is a life skill. If a museum visit can foster a connection between contemporary art and individuals, people will feel empowered to engage with art anytime, anywhere!

MAM Language Guidelines

At MAM we strive to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of our visitors and students. As a cultural institution, we believe that we must be at the forefront of respectful language-use when communicating with all visitors. Modeling respectful and inclusive language is one way to welcome everyone into the experience of engaging with art. Discussing art without making value judgements is a powerful and gentle teaching tool. Below are some tips and ideas to consider when engaging with students.

Using gender neutral and inclusive pronouns:

- As stewards of the museum, we cannot assume the age, gender, race, sexuality or ability of our guests.
- A gender neutral or gender inclusive pronoun is a pronoun which does not associate a gender with the individual who is being addressed
- When addressing a group of guests, use pronouns such as: friend(s), guest(s), folks or you/you all.
 - Exclusive Example: Did *you guys* enjoy your visit to the museum?
 - Inclusive Example: Did *you folks* enjoy your visit to the Museum?
- When addressing an individual, group of individuals, or when referring to an individual, use pronouns such as: they, them or theirs.
 - Exclusive Example: *She brought up an interesting point about this art installation!*
 - Inclusive Example: *They brought up an interesting point about this art installation!*
- Unless an individual specifically requests to be addressed with specific gender pronouns, **never** assume their gender when engaging in conversation.
- Try not to refer to “us” or “them” when speaking about a group. Since there is no way of knowing who is in your group, if you assume that certain races, genders,

identities or heritages are or are not in your group this can make people feel excluded.

- Exclusive Example: The white bison is sacred to *them*.
- Inclusive Example: *Many American Indian tribes* consider the white bison to be sacred.

Acknowledging historic native land and the indigenous or tribal affiliations of exhibiting artists:

- MAM staff will read MAM's acknowledgement statement prior to the beginning of each tour:

MAM is situated on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Séliš (Salish or "Flathead") and Q'łispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille) peoples. MAM is committed to respecting the indigenous stewards of the land it occupies. Their rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Montana and to the work of MAM. We honor our ongoing connections and relationships to these communities past, present, and future. "

- Please refer to your docent training on each exhibition on how to acknowledge the artist's affiliations. Examples include but are not limited to: Native American, Indigenous persons, or American Indian. If Tribal guests or students request a different label to be sure to honor

that. De-colonization means that everyone is entitled to choose their own descriptors.

- It is important to acknowledge any and all Tribal affiliations of our exhibiting artists. Remember, the United States of America occupies what were originally Tribal lands. In recognizing this, you are acknowledging the complex history of our country and those that were/and are still here before European contact.
- At MAM we have one gallery dedicated to exhibiting contemporary American Indian artists. This gallery is the Lynda M. Frost Gallery which is on the second floor.
- Many of our guests, especially students, identify as Indigenous, Native American, or American Indian. When introducing artists exhibiting in the Frost Gallery or elsewhere, be sure to mention which tribe the artists are affiliated with. MAM staff will always provide you with the affiliations each artist prefers, and the proper pronunciation. It is a sign of respect to name these. If it feels right, invite guests to share their tribal affiliations. Never pressure anyone to share.
- If an exhibiting artist has a connection with a particular reservation, feel free to share this information. MAM will

provide maps so you can share this geographical reference with guests.

Using inclusive, non-judgmental language when speaking to visitors:

Many people feel intimidated in museums. We never want to shame anyone or make them feel like outsiders. One way to ensure we do this is to meet folks where they are.

- As educational advocates for our guests, we must recognize that visitors bring a wide range of ability and understanding to MAM. Being inclusive means addressing the needs and concerns of each guest. It is up to us to meet them where they are, with kindness and without judgement.
- Ask open-ended questions (questions that cannot be answered with yes or no) to each group/guest so that each individual visitor can experience our exhibitions in their own time and through their own lens. *Do not assume that our guests' understanding of an exhibition is the same as our own.*
 - Inclusive Example: What do you notice in this exhibition? What do you wonder about it?
- Always use positive re-enforcement when acknowledging an idea, or answering a question.
 - Exclusive Example: Your ideas on this exhibition are wrong.

- Inclusive Example: Thank you for your ideas and answer to my question. Contemporary art is often open to multiple interpretations. The artist was thinking about this certain aspect surrounding the presentation of their work. Would you like to have more context on this work? (refer to Gallery Card/Self-Guided Tour and/or artist's/curator's statements)
- We always want to keep both art and guests safe during tours. When correcting behavior, always use positive phrasing. For example, if a student is standing too close to an artwork you might say, "Remember, we always want to stay arms distance from the art," and extend your arm by way of example. Negative phrasing would be, "Don't stand so close to the art." or "Move away from the art."

Empowerment and voice:

We want visitors to feel empowered to make their own meaning of the art they see at MAM. We also want to offer context and background. It's a balance.

- Act as the "guide on the side, not the sage on the stage" to facilitate rather than lecture.
- Use open-ended questions to help guests come to their own conclusions. Rather than sharing our opinions,

preferences, or judgements ("I like this!") invite them to share theirs. As Docents, your opinions carry weight and can exert subtle pressure to agree. This can get in the way of visitors having their own experience.

- Paraphrases what the person has voiced during the conversation. It gives you a certainty of what you heard but also reinforces that you are validating people's perspective.
- Use conditional language when the observer is stating something that is not accurate. Example: For you this person might be dead while lying on the floor. As opposed to: You said that the person is dead because she is lying on the floor.

Another example about gender identity: "Anna" you have mentioned that for you this figure might be a woman and she might be dead as oppose as to sleeping.

- Link thoughts between participants, to make the experience inclusive and to build up knowledge. Example: "Anna" mentioned that the brush strokes make

her feel agitated building up on “Mario” comments about texture and gesture in the composition.

- Support the audience’s thought process and critical thinking by asking: What do you see that makes you think of it? It also can be an opportunity for building up knowledge about the work. “Mario” you have mentioned that this figure seems lonely.
- Deliver content in digestible chunks at the end of the conversation, to add more information about the artwork.
- Preference the artist’s voice, if possible, by reading quotes that MAM has provided or that have been researched.

Accents, Dialects, Speech Patterns:

- Please be mindful that our many visitors come to us at the museum with various accents, dialects, and speech abilities. As teachers and volunteers, we don’t mimic accents, dialects, and speech abilities in casual conversation or as a joke.
- Remember, if students or members of tour groups are purposefully mimicking accents, dialects, and speech abilities, it is our job to correct this. Correcting this

keeps the space safe. It's not easy to do this in the moment. MAM will provide training to help Docents develop these skills.

Making mistakes, checking in, and giving feedback:

- As educators, we are always learning. Becoming more sensitive in our use of language takes time and practice. If you feel that you have made a mistake or have questions concerning the use of language when speaking to guests, please feel free to check in with MAM staff. It is always good to debrief after tours. This will help you address any concerns surrounding language!
- When giving peer feedback we want to use the same strategies of neutral and respectful language-use as we do with our visitors. Don't forget that all of our guests, staff members and volunteers bring varying degrees of ability and insight to MAM. Be kind when correcting language-use. We are all learning together.
- When someone says something, you find problematic or offensive, let that be the beginning of the conversation, not the end. MAM staff are always available to provide support in these instances.

Section 4: HOW do docents plan a tour?

The Inquiry Method

MAM staff and MAM docents utilize the Inquiry Method when leading tours. Conversation and discussion activate engagement for viewers of all ages. To facilitate this dynamic, be the guide on the side, not the sage on the stage. A good rule of thumb is that the participants should talk *more* than the Docent.

When discussing artworks with students/viewers:

- The open-ended questions (cannot be answered with yes or no).
- 15-minute limit on discussion with one work of art
- Save targeted, relevant, factual content for middle or end of the conversation. Use your learning goals to determine what content you choose to include.
- Engage through multiple modalities (make sounds, write words, take the pose or expression, sketch, draw in the air with your finger, close eyes and imagine...)
- The Inquiry Method helps us make personal connections with artworks and trust our own abilities for de-coding and making meaning. It should inspire divergent thinking (many different ideas) rather than supply one “answer” for the artwork.

Example

What do you notice?

The noticing slows down the looking and stops us from jumping straight to interpretation. It can be gently guided if you want to plant a seed for them to notice something, such as animals, or the materials the artist used, or it can be wide open. This question can be answered in so many ways that it is accessible by everyone. It is a joyful process of discovery!

What is going on in this composition/ painting/ printing?

This question is still open to interpretation and still inclusive to all perceptions and abilities and starts framing the artwork expanding vocabulary, giving the audience a clue of what the primary medium is being used by the artist.

The first two questions are always the same and allow time for close looking and building understanding (visual de-coding). They also support the creative behavior of curiosity and allow us to really get to know a work of art, to settle in.

What do you wonder?

I would recommend this question to be used at the end if there is a space for it, because it prompts the audience to ask questions.

What more can we find?

The third question points towards your learning goals which might be related to theme, formal elements, technique, or artistic behaviors. Always use the word “might” because this cues folks that we are not looking for one right answer but rather are building meaning together.

After the third question give 2-3 carefully chosen bits of content or background

“Now that you know does it make you think any differently/what more can we discover about the artwork?”

Use these starters, or any other question that points towards your learning goal.

Why are open-ended questions solid gold in the classroom?

- Allow for multiple right answers
- Cannot be answered with yes or no
- Require students to infer or imagine
- Encourage students to back up assertions with evidence (What makes you say that?)
- Lead students to explore a larger theme
- Facilitate personal connection with artwork
- Build confidence in abilities to de-code artwork

- Provide a hook for future academic learning
- Engage critical thinking skills (see Blooms taxonomy)
- Build community as students learn from one another through listening
- Creates a student-led discussion

Key words and phrases to deepen learning:

- Can you say more about that?
- What makes you say that?
- Would anyone else like to build on that idea?
- Does anyone else have a completely *different* idea?
- Why **might** the artist have.... (the word might implies inference / multiple “right” answers)
- Front load using a thumbs up, down, or sideways to allow students to express themselves silently while others are talking (cuts down on repetition of the same idea and engages those who aren’t speaking)
- Refrain from enthusiastic value judgements and praise (great idea! I love that! You’re doing great.) Neutrality keeps the conversation flowing and the channels open to *all* ideas. And they don’t need praise. This is fun and enjoyable.
- While we do want participants to make their own meaning, we don’t want anyone to leave the discussion with misinformation. Gently correct if necessary. For example: I can see how you might think this is a drawing but actually it’s a print, which uses a different process – cue teachable moment)

Blank Tour Example

Learning Goals:

What do we want students learn/experience on the tour?

- Students will be able to make a personal connection with the art.
- Students will be immersed in a deep looking experience through open discussion and different sensory modalities.
- Students will learn some art vocabulary and some information about artist's creative process.
- Students will feel empowered by this experience and want to engage with art again in the future.

Inquiry Questions:

Open-ended questions to facilitate close looking. Provide a minimum of 2-3 minutes of independent looking before beginning discussion.

1. What do we notice/What do we wonder? (discovery, silent looking, sketching, making lists...)

Gather and share. (wait time, don't call on the same person twice, boy/girl, recap what they say to validate, don't be too excited over any one answer, multiple "right" answers...)

2. Deepen looking with a more personally focused question and a different modality using another sense besides visual/verbal.
3. Share content/art vocabulary here. Ex: This artist considers her bird a symbol. Can anyone tell me what a symbol is? (Share definition if they don't quite get it)
4. 4th question of your choice, but should have a reflective quality. Ex: Now that we've discussed how this artist used animals as symbols, would anyone like to share an animal that they would include in their own art? Why would you pick that animal? What about that animal's traits or appearance do you find symbolic?

You have permission to:

- Not know everything! Don't speculate or assume if you don't know an answer. It's great to model, "I would have to research that and get back to you."
- Be assertive, when necessary, especially if students are getting rowdy, too close to the artwork, or not paying attention. "I need all eyes on me." "Everybody freeze." Keeping art and visitors safe is essential. This is your responsibility.

- Use “clean” materials such as scavenger hunts, model magic, pipe cleaners, etc... to provide sensory experiences in the galleries.
- Join with a friend to co-lead a tour or shadow a more experienced Docent until you feel ready to go solo.
- ASK QUESTIONS! We have the same learning objectives for our Docents. We want you to feel enriched by the experience of leading tours at MAM.

DOCENT OBSERVATION FORM EXAMPLE

Before guiding solo, Docents must have attended one training and shadowed one tour led by MAM staff. The feedback provided here is meant to help Docents deliver MAM’s interpretive strategy and Radical Welcome. Docents represent MAM and are expected to present a welcoming and inclusive tour that is responsive to the needs of each group.

INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

In observing MAM’s interpretive strategy, Docents:

- Allow students to look independently FIRST.
- Use open ended questions.

- Give content only after students have noticed and wondered.
- Create space for students to talk at least half the time if not more.
- Docents are facilitating an experience be the “guide on the side” not the “sage on the stage”
- Choose facts to share that are true, relevant, developmentally appropriate, and rich.
- Incorporate multi-modal activities where appropriate: sound, movement, sketching, partner work, etc...
- Refrain from sharing your opinion. Instead solicit theirs!

EXHIBITION AND ARTIST CONTENT AND CONTEXT

To extend respect to artists, preference the artist’s voice, and model best practices in the fields of art and museum education, Docents:

- Use respectful, specific and appropriate terms such as artist, gallery, exhibition, materials, self-portrait, retrospective... (you teach them as you speak)
- Prepare or adhere to appropriate learning goals (we will provide)
- Use quotes if they are available and credit the artist.

INCLUSIVITY AND SENSITIVITY

To extend the Radical Welcome to all groups, Docents:

- Phrase corrections positively-tell them what TO do instead of what NOT to do.
- Adhere to Language Guidelines. Especially refrain from using words like “us” and “them”
- Refrain from making value judgements about the art (good, bad, like, favorite)
- There is no need to give a compliment to their comments, just restate them.

SAFETY AND RESPECT FOR COLLEAGUES

Maintaining a level of professionalism and with a goal to keeping both students and artwork safe, Docents:

- Enter each gallery as a group and stay together between galleries.
- Always remain vigilant and correct immediately if students are too close to the artwork (arm’s length away)
- Keep your attention to the whole group.
- When having a whole group conversation gather them together first
- Be on time to switch galleries and be on time to return to the classroom.

MAM’S TOUR BOOKING PROTOCOL

There are many ways to book a tour at MAM!

In order to provide a high-quality, interactive experience, we keep tour size to a maximum of 12 students with one Docent (tour guide). This helps us keep both students and artwork safe and allows for plenty of time to interact through discussion and activities! If you have a larger class, we will invite you to designate smaller groups for your tour. If your class is younger than 3rd grade, we will try to designate even smaller tour groups of 8 children maximum.

Tours may be requested via email to Educator and Outreach Coordinator, Janaína Vieira-Marques:

janaina@missoulaartmuseum.org

At this time, we are unable to provide stand-alone tours of art-making. If folks are interested in hands on artmaking, please refer them to our free and low-cost options.

Scholarships are always available.

More details can be found on the MAM website or in the newsletter.

Section 5: Overview of MAM's Education Programs + Logistics + Emergency Protocols

MAM serves over one thousand students every year through Docent-led tours!

Fifth Grade Art Experience

This year marks MAM's 38th Annual FGAE! This signature education program invites every public and private elementary school in Missoula County and beyond within a 70-mile radius to participate at no charge. FGAE serves an average of 50 fifth grade classes each year. Students are introduced to the Missoula Art Museum and to the educational offerings at the Missoula Public Library. For many students, this is their first time visiting any museum, and for others it is their first visit to a contemporary art museum. For the distance learning version of FGAE we will not be visiting the library.

FGAE provides an opportunity for a broad cross-section of Western Montana's youth to experience contemporary art in an interactive and creative way; through open-ended questions and discussion, and a hands-on art project taught by professional, practicing artists. Every student leaves the museum with their own original work of art. This exemplary program has served nearly 50,000 youth since its inception.

All Art Guides/Docents who work with the student groups leading tours in the exhibitions are knowledgeable about MAM's art exhibitions and artists. They are trained by MAM's Education staff in an innovative approach to connecting with art — an interpretive philosophy which involves asking

open-ended questions to encourage curiosity, close looking, discussion, and reflection. While Art Guides/Docents do provide content and context, these interactive strategies allow students to form their own personal connection with the artwork first. Art guides may also offer a variety of activities to support engaging with the art such as movement or sound activities, sketching, or partner work.

FGAE provides students with an introduction to contemporary art and artists, a connection with their "home" museum, and quality art education experiences, through looking and making. Inquiry-based gallery activities encourage the creative process and promote a culture of self-discovery that has become the core of MAM's education programs. The open-ended structure provides multiple entry points so that ALL learners can access the artwork and contribute to the discussion.

ARTreach

Each summer, our team works tirelessly to engage under-resourced populations through MAM's ARTreach program that engages a dozen non-profit summer camps, serving close to 600 low-income children. Designed after the FGAE, campers and their counselors come to MAM for an afternoon contemporary art experience. Campers are greeted by MAM educators with a Radical Welcome and introduction to MAM's history and architecture before and taking an inquiry-based tour through the art exhibition of focus, led by Docents and education staff. Following the exhibition tour, campers create an original piece of art using an art technique inspired by the art and artist on view. In the education

classroom, campers create their artwork while working with MAM's professional Teaching Artists.

This program provides an opportunity for a diverse cross-section of Missoula's youth and kids from surrounding rural communities and the Flathead Nation to experience contemporary art in an interactive and creative way; through open-ended interpretation, and a hands-on art project taught by professional, practicing artists. Every student is given a sketchbook and learns to begin the habit of developing ideas through sketching and each student leaves with their own original work of art. Students receive Family Passes to share with a promise to return to MAM. In its fourth year, this project has reached over 2,500 youth and broadens MAM's partnerships with diverse array of social service agencies serving primarily under-resourced families.

Art in the Moment

This program aims to provide therapeutic benefits of processing emotions and sparking associations and memories for elders experiencing memory loss. This program creates a comforting art-viewing and art-making space for those in the early stages of dementia and their caregivers while fostering a dementia-friendly learning community that brings caregivers and those with dementia together in a creative and relaxed environment. Participants view and interact with artwork on display in small groups, with guidance by a MAM Teaching Artist, education staff, and volunteers. After experiencing art in the galleries, participants work to create original art of their own in the education classroom. This program is offered on

the first Monday of the warmer Montana months and breaks from February through March. Participants and caretakers join the community as well as individuals from memory care units located in residential retirement communities. MAM developed this program in response to our community's growing geriatrics population. Partners include Dementia-Friendly Missoula, The Springs Memory Care Facility, The Village Memory Care Facility, Missoula Aging Services, the Missoula Public Library's Memory Café, and the Montana Geriatrics Education Foundation.

Security

MAM employs Visitor Engagement and Security Officers (VESOs) to enforce security procedures in the gallery. However, MAM docents should still be aware of MAM's general safety guidelines.

Guidelines in the Galleries

- No food or beverages, including water, in the galleries. Docents may notice tour attendees, especially adult chaperones, bringing water bottles and coffee into gallery spaces. If MAM staff does not notice, please ask your tour group to leave food and drinks at the front desk. Food and drinks **are** allowed in the classroom.
- No running, roughhousing, or walking backwards in the galleries. MAM staff will remind students of these rules before the tour, but it is always helpful to correct this behavior when it happens during a tour.
- Stay together as a group. At MAM, students form a "caterpillar line" when walking from gallery to gallery. By

maintaining a single file line, docents ensure that students do not wander away or bump into an artwork.

- No yelling while visiting MAM. Students will often use raised voices out of joy and enthusiasm during their tours. Docents may gently encourage students to use an “inside voice” so as not to disturb other visitors.
- No touching the art or walls. If an art work is interactive or MAM docents have a special activity for students to try out in the galleries (sketching, kinetic learning modalities, etc), make sure to verbalize that those interactions are specific to a certain art work or gallery and are not museum-wide.
- Students must be always accompanied. Most tours will have an adult chaperone—if a student in your group needs to use the restroom, get water, take a break, etc., it is okay for Docents to ask the tour chaperone to accompany the student away from the group.
- If an artwork is damaged during your tour, let MAM staff know as soon as possible.
- When in doubt, ask for help! A VESO will always be at the front desk and, most likely, also circulating through MAM galleries. If docents are unsure or feel uncomfortable enforcing a specific policy, VESOs and other MAM staff can assist as needed.

Scheduling Tours

Currently, MAM primarily uses Calendly to schedule docents for tours. Docents will receive an invitation to access MAM's

signups on Calendly. Docents must have a Gmail-associated address to view and edit the calendar.

Tour Cancellations

School groups sometimes need to cancel or reschedule their visits to MAM. MAM staff will alert Docents as soon as possible, in the event of a cancellation.

Docents should call MAM's front desk at (406) 728-0447 or email Janaína (janaina@missoulaartmuseum.org) if they need to miss a scheduled tour for any reason. The more advance notice, the more likely it is that another Docent will be able to cover that tour.

Audiences

People from all over come to MAM to learn about the rich culture this region has to offer. Expect to see lots of different audiences as a Docent!

Modifications and Accommodations

All public areas of the Museum, including the entrance, galleries, the classrooms, and the information lounge are ADA accessible. This means wheelchairs can access all floors, galleries, restrooms, and the classroom.

The Education Team will provide training so that Docents are able to make accommodations and modifications as needed for each specific group. Sometimes we will know about these in advance, and sometimes we will need to be flexible in the moment. To begin to familiarize yourself with this language, accommodations are changes made to the delivery of material.

For example, a visitor with low vision might enjoy a verbal description of an artwork. **Modifications are changes made in the content delivered**, for example, an early childhood tour might be given less detailed background and context than an adult tour due to a difference in developmental understanding and attention span.

Some ways Docents might make accommodations could be taking the elevator, moving slowly, offering stools, speaking slowly, clearly, and loudly, making sure to face the participants when speaking. Using multiple modalities such as sound, movement, or sketching, are also accommodating because they offer different ways of accessing understanding. Thinking about physical space and how that can support, or hinder engagement falls in this category.

Other ways Docents might make modifications could be planning fewer stops on a tour, choosing exhibitions for tour stops that don't have fragile work or nudity, thinking about age-appropriate vocabulary and art terms, choosing appropriate content and amount of content to share falls in this category.

Emergency Protocols

There is a **first aid kit** in the classroom, under the sink, as well as at the front desk. If a student requires first aid while you are in the galleries on a tour, please send the teacher or chaperone with the student while you remain with the group.

While guiding a tour you are responsible for the safety of **your group**. There may be a teacher or chaperone with you, but you should be tracking the number of people in your group and be aware if anyone has left your group to go to the restroom or the classroom. **If an emergency should arise, you will hear an announcement from MAM staff. You are responsible for leading your group to safety.**

If evacuation is called for remain calm and gather your group together. Perform a headcount. Move in an orderly caterpillar towards the nearest exit. Assign a teacher or volunteer to bring up the rear of the caterpillar. The elevator may not be working in the event of an emergency. If you have a disabled person on your tour who cannot exit via the stairs have another adult wait with that person while you lead the group towards the nearest exit. At a Docent Training MAM staff will review the exit routes and the assembly area so that you know where they are.

Once you have exited the building go immediately to the **assembly area: Art Park across Pine Street in front of Adventure Cycling**. Perform a headcount and keep your group together until the all clear is sounded by MAM staff. Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so.

Section 6: MAM's History and Collection

MAM is situated on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Séliš (Salish or “Flathead”) and Qlispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d’Oreille) peoples. MAM is committed to respecting the indigenous stewards of the land it occupies. Their rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Montana and to the work of MAM. We honor our ongoing connections and relationships to these communities past, present, and future. “

Mission:

MAM serves the public by engaging audiences and artists in the exploration of contemporary art relevant to the community, state and region.

- MAM Board of Directors, 2008

History:

Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM is emerging as the leading contemporary art museum in the Intermountain West. MAM is a spectacular attraction in the heart of Missoula's historic downtown: a fully accessible, free, public museum that boasts eight exhibition spaces (including the outdoor Art Park), a library, a classroom, and an inviting information lounge.

1903

Missoula Free Public library built with a \$12,500 grant from Andrew Carnegie, designed by architect A.J. Gibson.

1912

Carnegie granted \$9,000 for the construction of the second floor, designed by Gibson's assistant Ole Bakke.

1972

Festival of the Arts was held in Missoula with over 10,000 people attending.

1973

Missoula Festival of the Arts Committee petitions Missoula City Council to establish a civic center in the defunct library building.

1974

The Missoula City Council agreed to lease the building at \$1 a year and allotted \$25,000 for repairs to the building. Architect William Fox designed the remodel. The Missoula County Commissioners grant a permissive Mill Levy to fund the operation.

1975

Missoula Art Museum opened March 15, with the exhibition "Native Funk and Flash," which reflected the hip, avant-garde culture of the 1970's.

1987

Missoula Art Museum begins to collect art and is awarded accreditation by American Association of Museums.

1989

MAM endowment is established.

1995

MAM reformed from a county agency to a 501(c)3. Interior remodel conducted.

1998

Architectural Assessment conducted by architect Jim McDonald: MAM Board decides to remodel and expand Carnegie Library building.

2001

City of Missoula, Missoula County and Missoula Redevelopment Agency pledge support to MAM's remodel and expansion.

2003

MAM launches Renaissance Renovation and Renewal Campaign. Architect Warren Hampton, OZ Architects is selected.

2005

Construction commences for 21 months. \$5.3 million capital campaign proceeds successfully.

2006

The successful new building design seamlessly fuses the 100-year-old Carnegie Library building with a contemporary addition, creating the ideal environment for exhibiting, celebrating, and preserving MAM's growing contemporary art collection.

2007

In response to the Kresge Challenge, MAM completes its capital campaign on January 3!

2015

MAM celebrates its 40th anniversary.

2017

The museum expands its footprint outdoors with the dedication of the newly constructed Art Park.

Lynda M. Frost Gallery

In 2006, as MAM was wrapping up a major expansion and renovation, Executive Director Laura Millin met with Tribal elders and numerous Indian artists from throughout the region to ask for their thoughts about the creation of a gallery dedicated solely to contemporary American Indian art. With their input, the Lynda M. Frost gallery was dedicated to honor the creative cultural contributions of American Indian people to contemporary art, and to ensure that American Indian artists will always have a place to celebrate that contribution. This gallery is MAM's commitment to American Indian artists, and to presenting their work in a way that is educational and respectful. Just a few of the artists MAM has exhibited over the past few years include Rick Bartow, James Lavadour, Dwayne Wilcox, Kevin Red Star, Donna Loos, Angela Babby, Marie Watt, and Wendy Red Star. In the words of celebrated

Salish-Kootenai artist Corky Clairmont, “The real Indians did not die out sometime in the 1850s. By exhibiting contemporary Indian Art, you have to recognize that Indians are alive and active participants in life today.”

Permanent Collection

MAM’s Permanent Collection includes nearly 1,600 artworks by more than 500 artists working in media ranging from painting and sculpture to music and time-based installations. With an emphasis on contemporary art, MAM also collects historic works, archival materials, and ethnographic objects vital to this place.

After MAM transformed to an independent non-profit, then called the Art Museum of Missoula, in 1995, gifts to the Collection dramatically increased. In the mid-2000s, growing an exceptional and regionally distinct collection was a major strategic focus in programming and was the impetus for a building renovation and expansion that was completed in 2005. That same year, an enthusiastic community donated more artworks to MAM than ever before.

Over the next decade, MAM's state-of-the-art, climate-controlled storage vault filled with extraordinary singular objects, such as Ursula Von Rydingsvard's *Poskubana* and Rick Bartow's *Rider V* as well as significant collections, including 39 of the most exquisite pieces from the nationally regarded Willem and Diane Volkersz Contemporary American Folk Art Collection and 300 Hmong textiles. Additionally, planned donors have identified extensive

collections of artworks, books, and archival materials destined for MAM. To advance the Collection into a new era of growth and access, MAM is developing solutions for expanded, forward-thinking, collaborative resources, starting with the *MAM CARES* project funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Rooted in MAM programming, the Collection has evolved to reflect exhibitions and artists of this community, in particular. Two signature areas distinguish the MAM Collection: works by contemporary American Indian artists and Montana Modernists.

- **Contemporary American Indian Art Collection**

MAM established its Contemporary American Indian Art Collection in 1997 with a gift of two prints by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith from the Rutgers Center for Innovative Print and Paper. The Collection has grown to more than 250 works, reputedly one of the largest collections of its kind in the northern Plains. At the core of the collection are artists from tribes in Montana, such as Smith (Salish-Kootenai, Métis-Cree, Shoshone-Bannock), Corwin Clairmont (Salish-Kootenai), Neil Parsons (Southern Pikuni), Ernie Pepion (Blackfeet), and Susan Stewart (Crow).

Additionally, acquisitions by Joe Feddersen (Colville), Chris Pappan (Osage, Kaw, Cheyenne River Sioux), Sara Siestreem (Hanis Coos), Melanie Yazzie (Navajo), and many others from throughout the central and western

United States represent MAM's expanding commitment and service to the wider region.

- **Montana Modernists**

Artists such as Frances Senska, Rudy & Lela Autio, and Robert & Gennie DeWeese were the state's first wave of modernists who, as educators and activists, created Montana's premier spaces for contemporary art and encouraged creative exchanges that allowed the arts to flourish in an otherwise expansive, isolated region. MAM's commitment to celebrating and preserving the legacy of Modernism is evident in holdings by these artists and others, including Aden Arnold (1901-1973), Maxine Blackmer (1915-2005), Freeman Butts (1928-1998), James Dew (1922-2012), Walter Hook (1919-1989), Branson Stevenson (1901-1989), and Jessie Wilber (1912-1989).

Section 7: Resources and Reading List

Below are resources in a variety of topic areas and delivery systems: books, podcasts, websites, links and images. These can be dipped into at your leisure to deepen your knowledge base.

MUSEUM EDUCATION (Current Issues)

- **Radical Welcome**

Use [this link](#) to the strategic plan of the **Institute of Contemporary Art Boston** for a deeper understanding of the Radical Welcome idea. The Radical Welcome is democracy in action, making art available and accessible to everyone through free admission, outreach and elevating the voices of artists from previously marginalized groups:

https://www.icaboston.org/sites/default/files/ICA_StrategicPlan_final.pdf

For Freedoms is another organization with a mission in line with the Radical Welcome. MAM is a partner in this initiative.

[Here](#) is a New York Times article about the initiative:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/12/lens/norman-rockwell-paintings-hank-willis-thomas-emily-schur-for-freedoms.html>

And here is their [website](#):

<https://forfreedoms.org/>

- **Decolonization and non-neutrality**

Use these resources to get a better understanding of what it means to de-colonize a museum and to accept that

institutional choices carry weight – can never be “neutral.”. MAM is on board and actively looking for ways to embody both of these themes. Some examples of this are collecting and exhibiting works by contemporary American Indian Artists, hosting events like Indian Country Conversations which center on indigenous issues activated by exhibitions and exhibiting artists, and *the Love Letters to the Collection* exhibition which aims to gather scholarship from a wide range of stakeholders, not just “experts.”

This podcast, [Drawing a Dialogue](#), has two episodes that unpack decolonization and offer a wealth of examples and supporting research:

[Episode 26: History of Art Museums and Museum Education](#) and [Episode 27: Decolonizing Museums](#)

La Tanya Autry and Mike Murawski [initiated](#) the hashtag #museumsarenotneutral. They are leaders in the movement to elevate underrepresented voices in museum:

<https://artstuffmatters.wordpress.com/2017/10/15/changing-the-things-i-cannot-accept-museums-are-not-neutral/>

On Instagram, follow LaTanya Autry's handle [@artstuffmatters](#)

MUSEUM EDUCATION / ART EDUCATION (Pedagogy and Best Practices)

- [Olivia Gude](#) is one of the leaders in the field of arts integrated teaching practices
- [Teaching in the Art Museum](#) by Rika Burnham and Elliot Kai-Kee

- Rika Burnham's [website](#) allows you to follow real time conversations with museum educators as they question and debate best practices:
- [Museum Gallery Activities](#) by Sharon Vatsky

ART AND ARTISTS

- Information about current exhibiting artists are on MAM's [website](#)
- [Art 21](#) is a PBS series with in depth documentaries about many contemporary artists.
- Art 21 also has a tab specifically on [Teaching with Contemporary Art](#) which might be of interest and value to explore.
- [The Art Book](#), a more contemporary take on art history

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN INDIAN ART AND CULTURE

- [Native Knowledge 360](#) is a site built by the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.
- [Montana Office of Public Instruction Teacher Learning Hub](#). This site and all its courses are free to anyone. You do not have to be a teacher. Just create an account and log in. The Indian Education courses are particularly substantive and powerful and were created by the Montana tribes.
- [Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All](#). Montana is the only state in the country to have constitutionally mandated Indian Education for All. Here is the page with the Seven Essential Understandings Curriculum and other materials developed by the tribes.
- [Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women \(MMIW\)](#). This is an important issue facing Tribal communities.

Montana Modernists

- [This essay](#) in the Journal of Modern Craft by MAM's Senior Curator, Brandon Reintjes, explains the origin of Modern art in Montana: what the art looked like and who the major players were. It's a great introduction.