

## Tips for looking at art with K–4<sup>th</sup> grade students

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Begin by choosing a theme to connect 4-5 artworks like elements of art, stories, places, animals, etc. Then...

- **Look** – Take the time to look closely with students and ask open-ended questions (younger students may need scaffolding). Ask students to back up their statements by describing what they see in the artwork that makes them say that. Make sure to honor all students' observations.
- **Layer** – Weave information into the conversation when appropriate.
- **Connect** – Connect the artwork to students' lives by asking if a particular work or something about the work might remind them of something they've seen or felt before.
- **Reflect** – Synthesize the ideas covered.

### Suggested works to visit with K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students:

1. Henri Rousseau (French, 1844-1910), *Exotic Landscape*, 1910, oil on canvas (20<sup>th</sup> c. gallery)
2. Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, 1853-1890), *Portrait of a Peasant*, August 1888, oil on canvas (19<sup>th</sup> c. gallery)
3. Constantin Brancusi (Romanian, 1876-1957), *Bird in Space*, 1931, polished bronze (20<sup>th</sup> c. gallery)
4. *Guardian Lion*, Cambodia, 12<sup>th</sup> century, sandstone (Southeast Asian Art gallery)
5. Sculpture Garden

### Tips for engaging students on a self-guided visit (choose no more than one activity per artwork):

- **Look:** Show an image of the artwork you're about to see before you begin and as you lead students through the Museum have them look around to find this work.
- **Memory:** Have students look closely at an artwork for 30 seconds. Then, ask them to turn around so that they are facing away from the artwork. Ask the group what they remember seeing. Students will begin to piece together what they saw with each other's help. Then, have students face the artwork again and ask if there was anything they might have missed.
- **Whip-around:** Go around and ask each student to say the first word that comes to mind when looking at the artwork. Point out similarities in the words and ask students what they see that makes them think of these words.
- **Pair Share:** Have them turn to a partner to discuss what they see and then invite them to share with the group.
- **Compare/Contrast:** Ask them to compare and contrast the artwork in front of them with the last work they saw—What's different? What's similar?
- **Strike a Pose:** Have them pose like figures in a painting or a sculpture.
- **Move:** Have them look at a sculpture and gently move like the sculpture would if it were to come alive.
- **Just Like Me:** Have them point to features that they have that connect to what they see (if looking at an artwork with a figure, have them point to their eyes, nose, ears, etc.).
- **Telescope:** Invite them to discover details in an artwork by making a telescope with their hands and looking through it.
- **Line and Shape Bank:** Throughout the visit, have them collect lines and shapes from different artworks by sketching them on paper. Have them share what they find or extend the activity by having them use their drawings to create a new artwork.
- **Pipe Cleaner Lines and Shapes:** After talking about an artwork, have students recreate its lines or shapes using pipe cleaners (with the ends bent down for safety) or make these lines with their arms (being mindful of each other's space).
- **Senses:** Invite them to experience the garden using their senses.
- **Imagine:** After discussing an artwork, have them close their eyes and imagine what they might hear, feel or see (choose one) if they were inside the artwork.
- **Reflect:** At the end of the visit, reflect by asking what their favorite artwork was and why, and/or what is something they'll always remember about their visit.