

mathaf education - 2014

pre and post-visit guide

for teachers

kindergarten to grade 12

mathaf collection
summary, part 1

متحف mathaf
المتحف العربي arab museum of
للفن الحديث modern art

mathaf.org.qa

Education City, Doha



Dear Educators,

We welcome you to Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. These materials provide a framework for preparing your students to visit the museum's current exhibition of the permanent collection, Summary, Part 1. We also offer suggestions for extending learning after your visit.

Our guided school visits foster learning through engaging students' observational, communication, and critical thinking abilities. Designed by a Mathaf educator to suit your class' needs and interests, our thematic lessons encourage students to look at the world through the eyes of an artist or fannan.

The activities in this resource are intended for diverse classrooms, with different age groups and curriculums. We encourage you to adapt and build upon them in order to meet your objectives.

Table of Contents:

Information about the Current Exhibition

Pre-visit Activities

Post-visit Activities

Thank you for making Mathaf a part of your classroom. We look forward to working with you and your students.

If you have any questions about School Programs at Mathaf, please contact the Education Department at mathaf_education@qm.org.qa or 4402.8897

About the Current Exhibition

This exhibition titled Summary, Part 1, selects works from Mathaf's permanent collection. It features artworks produced during the 20th and 21st centuries by artists from the Arab world and explores the relationships between artists and societies.

- Why do artists create art?
- What historical, social or political events influenced these artists?
- How do relationships with other artists impact practice?
- What materials can artists use to make artworks?
- How do artists use elements of art with different techniques?
- How do artists think about the world around them?

Explore these questions and more with your students.

To learn more about Modern and Contemporary Art in the Arabic region, consider the following sources:

A.M Qattan Foundation <http://www.qattanfoundation.org/>

All Art Now <http://www.allartnow.com/>

Art 21 <http://www.pbs.org/art21/>

Art History <http://arthistoryresources.net/modernism/roots.html>

Barjeel Art Foundation <http://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/>

Beirut Art Center <http://beirutartcenter.org/>

Iraqi Art (Arabic) <http://iraqiart.com/>

Sharjah Art Foundation <http://www.sharjahart.org/>

Smart History <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history-basics>

The Abraj Group <http://www.abraajgroupartprize.com/artworks.php>

Pre-visit Activities

This section describes sample activities you can do with your students before your museum visit. These activities can be modified to suit your curriculum and subject matter. They are organized by themes that are suitable for a range of age groups and introduce basic skills such as observation and talking about art. The artworks described in these activities give students a preview of how some artists in the exhibition work.

Finally, the techniques used in these activities mirror the intensive questioning style that will be used during a guided school visit of the exhibition.

Try the activity that links to the theme you are most interested in or try all four!



Couider Triki, b. 1949, *Le Cirque*, 1983, oil on canvas, 129.3 x 96.5 x 2.3 cm

Couider Triki (b. 1949) is a Tunisian painter and engraver. In this painting he drew many figures; some of them look strange and others look familiar. The painter combined many objects, animals and people that can exist in a real circus and others that exist only in his imagination.

Theme: I am an Observing Fannan

What do artists do? How do artists represent what they see?

Suitable for students of all ages

Students develop their visual literacy skills and practice artistic vocabulary such as line, shape, composition.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see. Then discuss their observations as a group.
- What did they see? Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time.
- Ask students to imagine being inside this painting. What do they see, hear or smell? Why do they say that?
- What adjectives would you use to describe this image?

If students have difficulty with this question, ask them to describe things such as material, color, size, shape, line, texture, composition, etc.

- Spend two minutes describing what the artwork reminds them of.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.
- Discuss what they think the artwork means. The meaning of an artwork is open ended. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.
- The title of this artwork is *Le Cirque*, which means *The Circus* in English. What other objects, animals or people you can see in the circus and did not find in this painting?



Hamed Owais, 1919 – 2012, Peasant Family, 1995, oil on canvas, 99.5 x 80 x 2 cm

Hamed Owais (1912 – 1919) is considered a pioneering Egyptian modern artist. Owais lived and worked in Egypt in a time where social and political life changed a great deal under the leadership of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. He strongly believed that revolutionary ideology of the nation should be reflected in art.

This painting depicts the everyday life of Egyptian peasants. We see a family carrying a shared burden over their shoulders, and tools in their hands. Their powerful figures stride forward together with purpose. It's important that Owais chose to depict peasants and not middle class or rich people. The painting expresses Owais' belief that every individual must contribute to transforming Egypt.

Theme: I am a Storytelling Fannan

What stories do artworks tell us?

Suitable for students of all ages

This visit will examine the narrative qualities of art. Discuss the main idea, mood/tone, character and setting and other relevant storytelling topics. A great choice for language or literature classes.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Explain that an artist, much like a good writer, can create an interesting portrait of characters through subtle clues. To understand a character, one must be observant.

- As a whole group, ask your students to describe the people or characters in this painting.
- What do they look like? Are they young or old? Are they men or women?
- What are their clothes like? How are they posed in the painting? What is their body posture?
- What other details can they observe?

Ask students to draw some conclusions about these characters. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.

- What is the mood of this painting? Why do you think that?
- What are the different characters feeling? How do you know that?
- What else is happening in this painting? When could this be happening?
- Who are these people? Where are they? What are they doing?
- What is the back story of this painting? Why do students think that?



Jafaar Al Deshty, b. 1949, Mussels Raceme, 2000, wood (plant material), 88 x 53 cm

Jafaar Al Deshty (b. 1949) is a Kuwaiti sculptor who is inspired by Kuwait's cultural heritage. His artworks explore themes such as extinction and loss. This sculpture is a cluster of dates, which is an important fruit in the Gulf region. It refers to the importance of nature and beauty.

Theme: I am an Experimental Fannan

What makes something art? What are the limits?

Suitable for students age 12 and older

Explore artistic processes and materials from the 19th century to the present day. Students can experiment with more abstract concepts in art while debating and evaluating the definition of art.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see.
- Spend two minutes describing what the artwork reminds them of.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.

As a group discuss their observations:

- What did they see? Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time.
- What adjectives would they use to describe this image?

If students are stuck, ask them to describe things such as material, color, size, shape, texture, etc.

- What is this object?
- Do they think this art? Why or why not?
- What materials did the artist use? Why did he use these materials?
- What technique did the artist use in making this artwork?
- What materials would you like to use to make a similar artwork? Could you explain the process?
- Can you recreate this artwork using other materials? What are these materials?



Faisal Laibi, b. 1947, *Relationship*, 1989, oil on canvas, 101 x 91 cm

Faisal Laibi (b. 1947) an Iraqi artist who is strongly inspired by folklore and folk heritage of Iraq. He represents a window into society, with a specific look into couple relations. There are many interpretations to his work, some might say that he depicted the way some Arab women are treated by their men which might appear in the woman's posture in the painting as a sign of weakness and humiliation. On the other side the man looks to be strong and has the power and authority. So what do you think?!

Theme: I am a Critical Fannan

How do artists tell us about our changing world?

Suitable for students age 12 and older

Many artists believe modern and contemporary art can be a medium for social change. Students discuss topics such as social issues, politics, identity, and history.

Display the image of the artwork in your classroom so that all students can see it. Without telling students anything about the artwork, ask them to:

- Spend two minutes studying the artwork silently and list what they see.
- Look at the artwork again. List anything about the artwork that they might not have noticed before.

As a group discuss their observations:

- What did they see?
- How are the man and the woman posed in the painting? What does this mean?
- What do the students feel when they look at this artwork? Why do they say that?

Encourage students to describe what is in front of them, and save speculation about what it means for a later time. The meaning of an artwork is open ended. There are no wrong or right answers, but it is important for students to ground their answers in what they see in front of them.

Discuss the meaning of the artwork with students:

- What does the title "Relationship" mean? Why do they think that? There are multiple meanings.
- What is the relationship represented in this painting? Why is it represented that way?
- What is the message of this painting? What do you think the artist wanted to express through this artwork? Why do they think that?
- What is the artist critiquing? Why do they say that?
- What gender do they think the artist is, male or female? Why do they think that?
- What social or political issues matter to you? How would you express your point of view about them?

Post-visit Activities

These activities offer suggestions for reflecting on your visit to the museum, and connecting it back to your classroom. We encourage you to modify these activities to suit your needs.

After the visit, ask your students to think about their experience at the museum. And then try the activity that links to the theme you are most interested in from the following:

I am an Observing Fannan

After your visit, have your students reflect on their experience.

Ask them to draw or describe an artwork that was memorable. Why was it memorable?

What did they learn about art and artists at Mathaf? What new ideas did they learn from their visit?

I am a Storytelling Fannan

How do artists suggest stories in their artworks? Have students choose an artwork and use it as the starting point or inspiration for their own short stories.

I am an Experimental Fannan

- Artists use different materials and techniques in their works. Ask students to make a list of all the materials they remember seeing. For example, marble, wood, canvas, paints and found objects.
- Then, ask them to choose a material they are familiar with to use as the basis of an artwork.
- Have students propose an artwork by making sketches, and write about why they are attracted to this particular material.
- Challenge students to think as purposefully and sensitively about material just as contemporary artists would.
- Give students time to create their artworks, and then have a final discussion about the work. How did the final work change from the original proposal? Why or why not?

I am a Critical Fannan

- How do artists incorporate the issues that they care about into their works?
- How do they use material to express their ideas?
- Encourage students to make an artwork addressing an issue that is important to them, and work like a contemporary artist. They might think of any political or social issue that could be affecting their lives and try to address it in an artwork or just reflect on it.
- Brainstorm issues that they care about. How do they want to speak on that issue? How will they depict that issue visually? How will they make the viewer think deeper about the subject?