

# Our Five Senses!

## Procedures

As with all tours, timing is critical, so please refrain from discussing concepts that are not included in this tour packet. If you are asked by a teacher or student to do so, invite them to return to the galleries after the tour or activity. When the teachers sign up for this tour, they are informed that their students will not see the entire museum.

Although groups can begin at any of the tour stops listed below, all tours should start with a discussion of narrative. Props will be placed at each stop prior to the beginning of the tour. Be sure to give yourself enough time (roughly 9 minutes) to cover all five stops.

It is good to repeat the concepts you've already gone over throughout the tour. You can say things like, "You are using your ears right now to hear my voice" or "You are using your eyes to see right now." Remember a lot of the summer tour participants are young, so you will not need all the information that is listed below; it will be beyond their comprehension. Getting simple concepts across is the key for the young kids! We give you an abundance of information because we want you to feel prepared for anything!

## Rotations

1	2	3
Portrait Gallery- <i>multiple artworks</i>	Still-life Gallery- <i>multiple artworks</i>	Contemporary Hallway- <i>The Merry Boatmen</i>
Still-life Gallery- <i>multiple artworks</i>	Contemporary Hallway- <i>The Merry Boatmen</i>	Abstraction Gallery- <i>As Above So Below</i>
Contemporary Hallway- <i>The Merry Boatmen</i>	Abstraction Gallery- <i>As Above So Below</i>	Landscape Hallway- <i>Bayou Teche</i>
Abstraction Gallery- <i>As Above So Below</i>	Landscape Hallway- <i>Bayou Teche</i>	Portrait Gallery- <i>multiple artworks</i>
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## Props

5 touch bags  
5 smell jars  
Chives  
Honey candy  
Trashcan  
Boombox and cd

## Concept: Touch

				
William C.A. Frerichs, <i>Lizzie Leigh Wier</i> 1864	George Cooke, <i>Portrait of Western Berkeley Thomas and Emily Howard Thomas of Augusta Georgia</i> 1840	Samuel F. B. Morse <i>Mrs. Samuel Thurston, Charleston</i> Undated	Nicola Marshall, <i>Portrait of Thomy King</i> 1870	Matthew Harris Jouett, attributed <i>Portrait of Mrs. Henry Monroe (Lucindia Monrow)</i> c. 1825

### Props:

Five touch bags

### Background on the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Portrait Gallery:

- Many of the paintings in this gallery are from the Antebellum period, meaning “before the war,” referring to the time before the Civil War.
- During this era, Southern plantation owners and merchants profited from fertile land, cheap labor, and prosperous trade.
- A wealthier economy promoted a common focus on the importance of one’s social status.
- Prior to the era of photography, the physical appearance and social status of a person or a family could be forever memorialized in painted form. Thus, portraits became the most popular forms of artwork among those who could afford to pay for them.

### Information on Touch:

- The sense of touch is spread through the whole body.
- Nerve endings in the skin and in other parts of the body send information to the brain.
- There are four kinds of touch sensations that can be identified: *cold*, *heat*, *contact*, and *pain*.
- Hair on the skin increase the sensitivity and can act as an early warning system for the body.
- The fingertips have a greater concentration of nerve endings.

### Interpretive Questions:

1. [Bring out the 5 touch bags and let each of the students feel inside the first bag without peeking. Allow them to search the gallery looking for the first item, giving them a 60 second time limit.]

Alright, time is up! What was inside bag #1 and which painting went along with it? [Looking for *Portrait of Lizzie Leigh Wier* or another picture with a tree.] [Bark is in bag #1.]

2. Repeat for bag #2. [Looking for *Portrait of Western Berkeley Thomas and Emily Howard Thomas of Augusta Georgia*.] [Fox tail (interpreted as a dog tail) is in bag #2.]
3. Repeat for bag #3. [Looking for *Mrs. Samuel Thurston, Charleston*.] [Velvet fabric is in bag #3.]
4. Repeat for bag #4. [Looking for *Portrait of Thomy King*.] [Buttons are in bag #4.]
5. Repeat for bag #5. [Looking for *Portrait of Mrs. Henry Monroe*.] [Lace is in bag #5.]

## **Concept: Smell**



***An Abundance of Fruit***  
Andrew John Henry Way  
c. 1875

### **Props:**

Five smell jars

### **Background Information on the Artwork:**

- Andrew John Henry Way's painting *An Abundance of Fruit* presents a carefully composed placement of highly detailed fruits and vegetable in a natural setting on the ground surrounded by leaves.
- The precision demonstrates why Way was one of the most popular still life artists in Baltimore, Maryland during the nineteenth century.
- He started his professional career as a portrait painter, but turned to still life painting when a well-known artist and colleague complimented him on his technique.
- Way became known as a specialist in painting grapes and oysters, so much so, in fact, that some people called his still life images “portraits” of the objects he painted.
- In *An Abundance of Fruit*, Way has portrayed the varying textures of plump, translucent grapes against a coarse cantaloupe along with soft peaches and shiny pears.
- The thick, yet delicate and horizontally placed collard leaf in the foreground opposes the strong vertical placement of the ceramic vase in the background.
- The flowers sculpted in relief on the vase further demonstrate Way's technical ability.



***Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase***  
Martin Johnson Heade  
c. 1890

#### **Background Information on the Artwork:**

- Martin Johnson Heade painted almost one hundred still-life's of cut flowers, including *Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*.
- Unlike many still-life paintings by artists of the nineteenth century, Heade's flowers do not necessarily project a general sense of abundance or the fragility of life. Rather, images like this painting, with its highly detailed representation of waxy green leaves against thick, silky magnolia petals, soft velvet, and smooth glass, are sensual delights.
- Heade had a great love of nature and painting. While his early career consisted of painting portraits and images of everyday life, aka "genre scenes," he found himself more drawn to portraying landscapes, seascapes, and floral life, often saturating these highly realistic images with a romantic sense of mystery.
- During the last years of his career while living in St. Augustine, Florida, Heade gained an appreciation for the local Cherokee roses and magnolias, such as the ones represented in *Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*.

#### **Information on Smell:**

- Our nose is the organ that we use to smell.
- The inside of our nose is lined with smell **receptors**.
- Smells are made of fumes of various substances.
- The smell receptors react with the **molecules** of these fumes and then send these messages to the brain. Our sense of smell can identify several types of sensations. These are some of the categories: *fruity, earthy, fragrant, mint, chemical, citrus, sweet, and sickening*.
- Smell is also an aide in the ability to taste.
- The sense of smell is sometimes lost for a short time when a person has a cold.
- Dogs have a more sensitive sense of smell than man.

#### **Interpretive Questions:**

1. In addition to being the organ for smell, the nose also cleans the air we breathe and impacts the sound of our voice. We are going to say "still-life" together, but while plugging our noses. Do you hear the difference?

2. Look at *An Abundance of Fruit*, by Andrew John Henry Way. Do you see anything you've eaten before? [Grapes, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, collard greens] If we closed our eyes and imagined the fruit and vegetables in the painting were real, could you imagine what they smell like?
3. [Bring out smell jars #1, #2, and #3.] I want each of you to smell inside this jar, and as you smell it, imagine what fruit or vegetable it might be. Don't say it out loud until everyone gets a chance to smell it. [Repeat with the next two jars.] [Jar #1, Grape; Jar #2, Peach; Jar#3, Pear.]
4. [Move to *Two Magnolia Blossoms in a Glass Vase*.] Who as ever picked a flower to smell it? What do flowers smell like? Do all flowers smell the same? Why? Do magnolias and chrysanthemum's smell the same? [Refer to Elliott Daingerfield's *Chrysanthemums in a Devil Vase*.] Let's find out! [Pull out the smell jars #4 and #5.] [Jar #4, Magnolia; Jar #5, Chrysanthemum.]
5. Can you guess which smell belongs to each flower? Which one do you like better?

## Concept:Sight



***The Merry Boatmen***  
Terry Rowlett  
2000

### Background Information on the Artwork:

Terry Rowlett grew up in rural Arkansas and was influenced by the Christian evangelical South. Joining the army out of high school, he was stationed as a patrol guard in West Germany during the mid-1980s. It was during this time he discovered his talents as an artist. Drawn to the narrative found in Renaissance and Baroque artworks, he created works that expressed these ideals as well as everyday scenes, pop culture, and the mundane.

Rowlett spent his thirties living in Athens, Georgia, where he earned his M.F.A. in painting at the University of Georgia. While most of his themes during these years continued to concentrate on Christianity and the American landscape, he later turned towards themes of wandering. Deciding to take a journey of his own, he later ventured to the Holy Land, hoping to affirm his religious convictions; instead, he witnessed religious prejudice that left him feeling a loss of his convictions. This transformation in belief was incorporated into his artworks with lonely, hooded, and mournful figures, stormy seas, and threatening skies.

### Information on Sight:

- Our sense of sight is all dependent upon our eyes.
- A lens at the front of the eyeball helps to focus images.
- The retina is covered with two types of light sensitive cells that allow us to see color and help us see at night. All of this information is sent to the brain.

- The brain also uses the images from both eyes to create a 3D image. This allows us to perceive depth. Some people are not able to tell red colors from green colors. This is called color blindness.

### Interpretive Questions:

1. We use sight to see the world around us. I'm going to give you clues, and you will work together to find the answers!
  - **Clue #1:** There's a band playing on the boat, but can you tell us which instrument makes the loudest noise? Which one makes a tap-tapping sound? Which ones have strings on them? [Tuba, drum, guitar and violin]
  - **Clue #2:** You can't sneak up on this animal; it can turn its head up to 270°! Can you see where this animal is hiding? [the owl is in the tree]
  - **Clue #3:** You may have one of these at home in your refrigerator. When you blow across the top of it, it can make music! Can you tell us what kind of object that might be? [a jug]
  - **Clue #4:** This animal spends most of its day sleeping, but when it's awake it loves to play and climb! Can you tell us which animal that might be? Where do you see this animal? [a cat]
  - **Clue #5:** How many birds do you see in the painting that are flying? How many are in the trees? Count how many! [7, 5]
  - **Clue #6:** There's a basket of food on the boat. Can you tell us what kind of food it is? What do you think they're going to make with the food? [Bread, wine, cheese, and meat. Sandwiches maybe?]
  - **Clue #7:** It's kind of a windy day. What can you see that has wind blowing through it? [the flag] What sign do you think that is on the flag? [a moon and star]

### Concept: Sound



***As Above So Below***  
Betsy Eby  
2007

#### **Props:**

CD player

Track 1: Erik Satie, *Gymnopedie*

Track 2: Bessie Smith, *Back Water Blues*

Track 3: Harrison Birtwistle, *Panic*



### Background Information on the Artwork:

- Eby's marks suggest bubbles, wings, star clusters, and flight tracers.
- These marks hover between layers of poured wax like elements sealed in a translucent archival record of time, as if captured in ice sheets, or alabaster or fog.
- The painting's ethereal quality and large scale create a visual experience of shifting focus and alternating tangible form with intangible motion, as if observed through a telescope or microscope.
- Herself a pianist, Eby's visual work has several things in common with the classical music she most enjoys.
- The repetition of themes being chief among them, other similarities may be found in the subtle textures and a general concern with "atmosphere" over more discernible subjects.

### Information on Sound:

- Sounds, especially musical sounds, can inspire our **moods**, or create a springboard for ideas.
- Sounds can be pleasant, jarring, repetitive, sad, silly or almost any number of things.
- Our ears allow us to hear the sounds while our **brains** help us interpret their meaning. For example: is this a good sound, a scary sound, a sound I don't know, the sound of a plane? — the list goes on and on.
- Many artists find inspiration in music and many abstract pieces of art can share similar qualities with works of music, whether they are harmonious, dissonant, subtle, or loud.

### Interpretive Questions:

1. I am going to play the song that might match the feeling of Betsy Eby's painting [play track 1 by Erik Satie, *Gymnopédie*] While you listen, explore the artwork. Do you think the music goes along with the painting? Why or why not?
2. [Play track 2] What painting most reminds you of Bessie Smith's song "Back Water Blues"? What aspects of the painting do you hear in the song? [Looking for Radcliffe Bailey, *Untitled*].
3. Next, we're going to listen to a more chaotic song, one with lots of parts, including loud parts and messy parts. [Play track 3] Which painting or paintings do you think it best describes? In what ways? [This song could go with any number of paintings such as the Herb Jacksons or the Brian Rutenberg.]

## Concept: Taste



**Bayou Teche**  
Meyer Straus  
c. 1870

**Props:**

Chives

Honey candy

Trashcan

**Background Information on the Artwork:**

- While the swamp in *Bayou Teche* represents a landscape that truly belongs to the South, it is likely that such a scene is not be found in nature. Born in Germany, Meyer Straus immigrated to the United States and eventually settled in New Orleans from 1869 to 1872, where he established a career as a scenic artist for the area's theaters. *Bayou Teche* is reminiscent of the kinds of theatrical backdrops that Straus must have painted.
- The foreground, or front of the scene, is strongly separated from the background through the use of a hazy atmosphere as well as a small boat in the distance.
- Large oak trees and hanging moss seem to frame the center of the image as if for stage actors.

**Information on Taste:**

- Our sense of taste comes from the taste buds on our tongue. However, the sense of smell also affects our taste.
- With 10,000 taste buds, the tongue is still only able to taste four separate flavors: salty, sweet, sour, and bitter.
- Everything you taste is one or more combinations of these four flavors.
- Not only can your tongue taste, but it also picks up texture and temperature in your food like creamy, crunchy, hot, or dry.
- Your tongue has microscopic hairs that send messages to the brain about how something tastes.

**Interpretive Questions:**

1. What is going on in this painting? Where do you think it is? [Swamp]
2. Do you think there's anything in this painting that we could eat? [What we don't see in the painting: crawfish, frogs, alligators, fish, etc.] There are more things in the swamp that you can eat that aren't meat!
3. Sometimes we put chives in salads, or use it as flavoring. I want everyone to smell the chives. How does it smell? Do you think it tastes the way it smells? Do we have any volunteers to taste the chives? The rule is: once you put something in your mouth, you cannot spit it out!
4. Some edible berries can be found in swamps such as juniper and black currents. Who wants to try a juniper berry? Remember, if you volunteer, you must swallow it. How would you explain the taste to the others? Do you like the taste? Is it sweet, sour, salty, or bitter? Hot or cold? [Repeat with the currents.]
5. A grassy plant called sweet sorghum has high sugar content and it grows in swamps. The seeds of this plant can be used to make molasses. We used this ingredient in a lot of our baking and cooking. Who wants to try a candy made of molasses? [Have the students place their candy wrappers in the trashcan.]
6. Do you know of any flying insects that produce a sweetener that can also be found in swamps? [Looking for bees] What do bees produce? [Honey and beeswax] Have any of you had honey



before? How does it taste? What is the texture like? [Pass out one piece of honey candy to all the students.] The main ingredient in this piece of candy is honey.

### **Sources**

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