

School Group Gallery Talks

The Clark's collections connect with many areas of study for all ages and class levels. Gallery talks can enhance student learning in general by helping students develop skills such as observation, analysis, reasoning, and appreciating perspective and ambiguity. Gallery talks also support specific areas of the curriculum as well as state education standards; we tailor each gallery talk in collaboration with classroom teachers. Our approach involves in-depth conversation around a few works of art rather than a tour-like visit with many objects from our collection. Below are some popular themes supported by our collection that enhance typical areas of study. We also offer themes to complement our special exhibitions.

Featured Gallery Talks

Ground/work

Through October 2021

Experience the Clark's first outdoor exhibition featuring six site-specific contemporary art installations scattered throughout the Clark's pastures and hiking trails. Students can consider the relationship between art and nature and the differences and connections between human-made, cultivated, and natural environments.

Viewing these objects involves hiking through somewhat steep terrain that covers a moderate distance. School groups can see this installation on their own or with a Clark educator. Allow 2.5 hours for a guided hike and discussion including all six installations or request a specific engagement and encourage students to wear sturdy attire.

Suggested Themes

Exploring Art

Students will be introduced to a variety of works in the collection and will learn how to think about and talk about art in general. First-time visitors will be introduced to basic concepts such as composition and subject matter and will consider the dynamics of looking carefully. More experienced students can focus on more advanced concepts such as how and why different artists employ different materials and techniques or how an artist uses light. Classes studying photography, drawing and printmaking can arrange to visit our Manton Study Center for Works on Paper. All students will consider how the arts can enrich human understanding. Suitable for all grade levels; each talk will be tailored for each group.

Art and the Language Arts

Looking at works of art offers a wonderful opportunity to think about people—the artists, the subjects in their pictures, their personal stories, and ourselves. Some works of art illustrate specific narratives, while others may offer excellent starting points for students to create their own stories. Students at any grade level can enjoy using works of art to explore different types of writing. Many of our works of art relate to mythology and the classics as well as other literary periods, or to different genres of writing such as poetry and a talk can be tailored to enhance a particular unit of study. Suitable for all grade levels.

Art and Society

Works of art reflect the period in which they were made and can be used as evidence of how people lived and thought about life in different places and times. While the Clark's collection is not encyclopedic, it relates to many different cultures, historical periods and human concerns both universal and idiosyncratic. Younger grades can focus on general themes such as families, communities, diversity and conceptual ideas like change. For older students, a talk can be shaped to explore systems of belief, cultural values, assumptions and even bias. Each talk will be tailored for each group.

French Art and Culture

The Clark is famous for its collection of French Art from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. French Art and Culture gallery talks will focus on these works, France's central position in Western art at the time, and the rapid and radical changes in French and European society during this time period. Depending on their education level, students can discuss the works of art in French or in a mixture of English and French with direction from a French-speaking educator. Best suited for middle and high school grade levels. Each talk will be tailored for each group.

Identity and the United States

Art often conveys personal or national identities and can illustrate particular social customs. The Clark's Henry Morris and Elizabeth H. Burrows Gallery and Lauzon Glass Study Gallery feature silver, glass objects, furnishings, and portraiture from Colonial America and the Federalist period, while the Manton Study Center for Works on Paper allows students to investigate imagery from these times, including nineteenth-century magazine illustrations and early photography. Along with paintings in the permanent collection galleries, these new displays help students consider what life was like in the early days of the United States and reveal evolving ideas about national identity. Each talk will be tailored for each group.

Art and Nature

Inspired by our 140-acre campus as well as our collection, this theme embraces one of the Clark's most treasured relationships: art and nature. Talks can include both an outside experience and a gallery experience and can connect to a variety of topics, including a focus on STEM subjects. View landscape paintings in the galleries to explore the relationship between human beings and the environment and how artists have interacted with the natural world. Learn about the Clark's sustainability efforts and ethics as the Institute grows, and how the three-tiered reflecting pool is part of an advanced water management system. Suitable for all ages and can be tailored to complement a particular area of the curriculum.