

# Educator's Guide to the Collection



## VISITING NOMA

Self-guided visits enable you to design and lead your own school visit to NOMA. This guide provides information on select works of art, and suggestions for discussions and activities. Each section includes:

- **Artist:** a short biography of the artist or culture
- **Time & Place:** a description of when and where the piece was created
- **Style:** a description and interpretation of the object
- **Fast Facts:** a point of reference to use in front of the object
- **Engage:** suggested discussion questions and gallery games
- **Explore:** suggestions for further exploration of the galleries
- **Vocabulary:** definitions of terms used in the description

### Example tours:

- **Europe Through the Ages:** *Boy Blowing Bubbles, The Age of Bronze, Portrait of Marie Antoinette, Portrait of Mrs. Asher B. Wertheimer, Woman in an Armchair, Gas Stove III*
- **Global Art Adventures:** *The Age of Bronze, Guanyin, Suit of Armor in the Domaru Style, Hopi Kachina Dolls, Three Guardian Figures for Reliquaries*

### Touring suggestions:

- Create a 45 minute tour by selecting 5-6 works of art for your students to visit.
- Split your students into groups of 10 or fewer to ensure maximum interaction.
- Assign a prepared teacher or chaperone to lead each small group.
- Start each group at a different point in the museum.
- Schedule a **free planning visit** 1-2 weeks in advance to locate the objects and map your tour by calling NOMA's Department of Interpretation and Audience Engagement at 504.658.4128.

## MAKE YOUR RESERVATION

**School group visits are FREE during regular museum hours and must be reserved in advance.**

Contact NOMA's Department of Interpretation and Audience Engagement at 504-658-4128 at least 2 weeks ahead to schedule your class visit. Have the following information ready:

- Name of group leader
- Group leader's cell phone number
- Group leader's email address
- School or group name
- School or group's address
- School or group's phone number
- Number of students and adults
- Grade level of students
- Preferred date and time
- Alternate date and time

**To ensure a pleasurable experience for all visitors, please observe the following:**

### **MUSEUM GUIDELINES**

- **Stay with your group and chaperone.**
- **Keep a safe distance of 3 feet** away from works of art and display cases.
- **Touching art, walls, and cases** are not allowed, except at designated “participatory” areas.
- **Running, climbing, and horseplay are not allowed** in the museum.
- **Speak in a normal “inside” voice and silence cell phones.**
- Dispose of trash in proper receptacles.
- Leave items such as lunch sacks, book bags, backpacks, food, drink, gum, and pens on the bus.
- Photographs may be taken in NOMA’s permanent collection galleries. **Flash photography and photography in special exhibitions are not permitted.**

### **SCULPTURE GARDEN GUIDELINES**

**The Sculpture Garden should be considered an outdoor museum.**

- **Stay with your group and chaperone.**
- **Stay on the pathways and mowed lawns.**
- **Touching sculptures is not allowed**, except *Travelin’ Light*.
- **Running, climbing, and horseplay are not allowed.**
- **Respect and do not disturb** plants, wildlife, and insects in the Sculpture Garden.
- **Speak in a normal inside voice and silence cell phones.**
- Dispose of trash in proper receptacles.
- Leave items such as lunch sacks, book bags, backpacks, food, drink, gum, and pens on the bus.
- **Picnicking in the sculpture garden is not allowed.** Picnic areas are located in City Park.
- Service dogs are welcome, but pets are not allowed.

### **CHAPERONE GUIDELINES**

- Each group must have one chaperone per ten students.
- Chaperones must actively supervise student groups at all times.
- Chaperones must be 18 years or older and cannot be students.
- Please put away all cell phones and do not use them while supervising students.

## VISITING THE MUSEUM & SCULPTURE GARDEN

School group visits to NOMA and the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden are free, and **should be arranged in advance**. Contact NOMA's Department of Interpretation and Audience Engagement at [education@noma.org](mailto:education@noma.org) or 504-658-4128 to schedule your visit.

### BUS REIMBURSEMENT

Schools located in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes may qualify for busing reimbursement, generously underwritten by the GPOA Foundation. Visit [www.noma.org/learn](http://www.noma.org/learn) for the bus reimbursement form.

### CHAPERONES

**One chaperone per ten students is required.** Chaperones must actively supervise student groups at **all times**. Chaperones must be 18 years or older. Unruly groups may be asked to leave.

### DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

Students should be dropped off at the front of NOMA or the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden. Buses should proceed to Lelong Avenue to park. Buses should be ready to pick up their students approximately 60 minutes after the scheduled arrival time. Cell phone contact between teachers and bus drivers is highly recommended.

### LATE ARRIVALS

Please notify the Department of Interpretation and Audience Engagement at 504-658-4128 if your group will be delayed unexpectedly. We will do our best to accommodate your group.

### LUNCH FACILITIES

NOMA and the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden **do not have an area for student groups to eat lunch**. However, City Park offers many areas for groups to picnic. Please plan to store lunches on the bus or in one container that can be easily stored in the museum's coat check room.

### GALLERY ACTIVITIES

Please notify the Department of Interpretation and Audience Engagement in advance if you plan to write or sketch in the galleries. Students must have a **hard surface such as a clipboard, and graphite pencils**. Writing and sketching activities must be actively **supervised by chaperones at all times**.

## ABOUT NOMA

### New Orleans Museum of Art

The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) is the largest art museum in the Gulf South region, with a mission *to inspire the love of art; to collect, preserve, exhibit and present excellence in the visual arts; and to educate, challenge and engage a diverse public.* Founded in 1911, the museum expanded in 1970, and again in 1993 to its current size of 130,750 square feet. The museum's permanent collection, which encompasses almost 40,000 objects spanning over 5,000 years, is noted for its strengths in French and American art, photography, and glass, as well as collections of African, Japanese, and Louisiana.



### Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden

In 2003, the Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden opened on a five-acre site adjacent to the museum. Home to over 60 sculptures by 20th- and 21st-century artists, the garden invites visitors to explore meandering footpaths, 150-year-old live oaks, and many other indigenous plants.



### Hours

#### New Orleans Museum of Art

Tuesdays – Thursday: 10 am – 6 pm

Fridays: 10 am – 9 pm

Saturday – Sunday: 11 am – 5 pm

#### Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden

Monday – Friday: 10 am – 6 pm

Saturday – Sunday: 10 am – 5 pm

**NOMA**  
New Orleans Museum of Art





***Madonna and Child with Saints***  
**Tempera and gold leaf on linden wood, c 1340**  
**Follower of Bernardo Daddi, Italian, Florentine,**  
**1312-1348**

**Italian Gallery, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

The Samuel H. Kress Collection, 61.60

**FAST FACTS**

The gold background represents Heaven and would have reflected candlelight in the chapel.

Each saint holds an attribute that would identify him to the public.

**ENGAGE**

How does the shape of the painting indicate its use?

How does the artist use color and shape to create the form of the figures?

**EXPLORE**

Compare the facial features of the figures in this gallery to those in the next. Do you see similarities and differences?

Look for other paintings in this gallery and the next that represent some of the same figures.

**VOCABULARY**

**Humanism:** A philosophy that emphasizes reason and scientific inquiry.

**Polyptych:** An arrangement of four or more panels that are usually hinged and can be folded together.

**Attribute:** An object closely associated with a person that often helps identify him or her.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST:** *Follower of Bernardo Daddi*

*Madonna and Child with Saints* was painted by an artist from the studio of Bernardo Daddi, an early Renaissance artist and the leading Florentine painter of his generation. At that time, a master artist would accept a group of apprentices, or ambitious students, to work in his studio. The master benefited from the help, and his followers learned his techniques by filling in minor parts of paintings or completing small commissions. Since each young artist sought to impress his master, studios were places of both camaraderie and competition.

**TIME AND PLACE:** *14<sup>th</sup> Century, Italy*

The Renaissance was just beginning in Italy around 1340. The educated middle class embraced **humanism** by emphasizing the potential for individual accomplishments in the arts, literature, politics and personal life. Renaissance thinkers decried the Medieval era as the “dark ages,” preferring to draw inspiration from the ancient Greeks and Romans. In these early days of the Renaissance, however, artists like the follower of Bernardo Daddi were also influenced by the earlier Byzantine style (c. 800-1350), which originated in Constantinople and became popular in Western Europe after 1204. Byzantine art typically portrayed religious subjects and featured rich colors, flat figures, and heavy outlines.

**THE ARTWORK:** *Madonna and Child with Saints*

As Christianity prospered in the Byzantine Empire, a standardized style evolved that made saints and other Christian figures easy to identify. Figures typically hold **attributes** and are painted against golden backgrounds that represent the timeless and immortal realm of Heaven. St. Pancras (in red), for example, holds a palm that is a symbol of eternal life. To the right of the Virgin and Child, St. Michael holds an orb and sword, symbols of the victory of Christ’s kingdom.

While drawing from the Byzantine style, this **polyptych** shows the influence of the early Renaissance which favored curvy, more lifelike bodies. Three-dimensional form is emphasized with shadows and highlights on the saints’ faces and the soft folds of drapery that reveal the shape of a body underneath. The use of light and attention to the body’s musculature sets this polyptych apart from the flattened and angular forms of the Byzantine world.



***Homo Bulla: A Boy Blowing Bubbles in a Landscape***  
**Oil on Canvas, circa 1665**  
**Bartholomeus van der Helst, Netherlands, 1613-1670**  
**Dutch Gallery, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

Museum purchase, the Edith Rosenwald Stern Fund by exchange, 95.189

**THE ARTIST:** *Bartholomeus van der Helst*

Van der Helst was born to an innkeeper in Haarlem in the Netherlands, but moved to Amsterdam in 1636 where he remained throughout his career. Amsterdam at this time hosted an influx of painters who brought their individual ideas and styles to the city. Van der Helst distinguished himself from other painters and became the most fashionable and sought after portraitist in the city after the mid-1640s. His subtle combination of formal flattery with a lively naturalism earned him fame that exceeded that of Rembrandt in his day.

**TIME & PLACE:** 1600s, Netherlands

The Netherlands experienced a Golden Age of economic, artistic, and international prosperity during the 1600s. A growing community of merchants made the area commercially strong. The developing economy and growing merchant class encouraged an art market in the Netherlands that differed greatly from other European markets. Patrons in the Netherlands commissioned a variety of works and fueled a thriving commercial art market. Italian patrons hired artists to create ecclesiastical works and in France patrons hired artists to follow the style set by the state-sponsored Academy. But in Northern Europe, artists specialized in specific types of paintings resulting in a variety of subjects and styles.

**THE ARTWORK:** *Homo Bulla: A Boy Blowing Bubbles in a Landscape*

This painting demonstrates the elegant style that made van der Helst the favorite portraitist of Amsterdam's elite patrons. The artist often set his portraits in parks or landscapes. The treatment of the boy's apparel is characteristically luxuriant. Van der Helst was a master at depicting rich textures worn by his sitters.

As might be expected in a Dutch painting, this is not merely a depiction of a young boy blowing bubbles. Following Dutch artistic tradition, van der Helst included symbols within the portrait. The presence of the bubbles indicates a ***momento mori*** with a ***homo bulla*** theme, signifying that human life is as transient as a soap bubble. The ***homo bulla*** theme has a history that reaches back to classical times, and was especially harmonious with Dutch protestant sensibilities. Dutch artists of the 1600s interpreted the theme naturalistically with images of children at play. The ***homo bulla*** theme and discourages material gain and is ironic when portrayed next to the opulent luxury of the boy's clothes.

**FAST FACTS**

Dutch Renaissance Art is characterized by great detail and symbolism. Artists portrayed their subjects with life-like features.

**ENGAGE**

What materials do you think were used to make this boy's clothes?

What is this child doing? Quietly pretend to blow bubbles.

**EXPLORE**

Compare this painting with another portrait in this gallery. Use adjectives to describe the paintings.

**VOCABULARY**

***Memento Mori*:** A Latin phrase that means "remember you will die." In visual art, a ***memento mori*** is usually an object that reminds the viewer of the passing of time.

***Homo Bulla*:** A specific type of ***memento mori*** that depicts children blowing bubbles and conveys to the viewer that life is as fragile as a bubble.



### ***Portrait of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France***

**Oil on Canvas, 1788**

**Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun. France, 1755-1842**

**17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century French Art Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

Museum purchase, Women's Volunteer Committee and Carrie Heiderich Funds, 85.90

#### **THE ARTIST:** Elisabeth Louise Vigée-Lebrun

Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun was one of the most celebrated court portrait artists of the late 18th century. In 1783, she was admitted to the French Royal Academy, a rare honor for a woman at that time. During the course of her long career as a portraitist of the aristocracy, Vigée-Lebrun completed at least twenty-five portraits of Marie Antoinette, whom she counted as one of her life-long friends. In her memoirs, Vigée-Lebrun recalls singing duets with the Queen while painting portraits of her majesty.

#### **TIME & PLACE:** 1788, France

As wife of King Louis XVI, Marie Antoinette reigned as Queen of France from 1774 until her death on the guillotine in 1793. Their marriage united the French Bourbon and Austrian Hapsburg royal families. Rumors of Marie Antoinette's outrageous spending habits, ranging from gambling to shopping, soon led the French public to blame the country's financial troubles on her. Despite her bad relations with the French public, Marie Antoinette became one of Europe's most admired aristocrats for her fashion and courtly manners. She was the great purveyor of French taste, and women of the royal court looked to the Queen to set fashion trends.

#### **THE ARTWORK:** *Portrait of Marie Antoinette, Queen of France*

Vigée-Lebrun strikes a balance between ornate elements of **Rococo** and traditional ideals of **Neoclassicism**. Her painting style was adopted by many of her contemporaries and was used as a safe, transitional style that introduced the passionate ideas of Romanticism to the already popular Rococo style.

Each item in the composition has a symbolic meaning. The color blue is traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary as well as with royalty; thus, Marie Antoinette's blue velvet gown references her royal status and her role as the matriarch of the French church. The velveteen pillow under her feet, her upright position, and her crown are reminders of her elevated status. Several items refer to her husband's and her own royal lineage. The pillow on which her crown rests is embroidered with golden fleur-de-lis, the symbol of the Bourbon dynasty. The leather book that she holds is embossed with both the Bourbon and Hapsburg coats of arms. Vigée-Lebrun portrays Marie Antoinette as the ideal of regal power commanding our attention from her elegant armchair.

#### **FAST FACTS**

Symbols of royalty can be found throughout this painting. Look for the Queen's crown, fancy clothing and the Bourbon fleur-de-lis.

#### **ENGAGE**

Who do you think this lady is? What clues do you see?

How old do you think she is? Her hair is white because it was fashionable to powder your hair. She was in her 30s when this portrait was painted.

#### **EXPLORE**

The painting to the right of Marie Antoinette depicts the Queen and her portraitists. Tell a story of what is happening in that painting.

The Queen's husband, King Louis XVI, can be found in this gallery. What symbols of power do you see in his portrait?

#### **VOCABULARY**

**Rococo:** An elegant and ornate artistic style popular in the 1700s.

**Neoclassicism:** An artistic movement that drew from classical and Renaissance artwork and strived for balance and realism.





## ***The Age of Bronze***

**Bronze, 1879**

**Auguste Rodin, France, 1840-1917**

**Academic Art, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Aage Qvistgaard-Peterson, 64.21

### **THE ARTIST: Auguste Rodin**

Soon after entering the Imperial School of Drawing and Mathematics, Auguste Rodin discovered his affinity for sculpture. He then enrolled in Paris' École des Beaux Art. While visiting Belgium several years later, Rodin was enormously influenced by Flemish art. His travels to Rome and Florence introduced him to works by Michelangelo, who would become another great influence to Rodin. Though the art world praises Rodin's sculptures today, his contemporaries criticized his work. Rodin's realism was a departure from the highly romanticized and decorative sculptures that were most popular with the public. Controversy arose when *The Age of Bronze* was first shown publically and Rodin was accused of creating a cast from a living model. Rodin was aware of the criticism surrounding his work, but refused to change his artistic style.

### **TIME & PLACE: 19th Century, France**

Academic art was the accepted style in France during the 19th century. Art students were expected to preserve the traditional standards of French style and content by referring to historical or mythological subjects. The French Academy encouraged artists to conceal traces of the artist's hand and refrain from developing a personal style.

Between 1853 and 1870 Paris underwent renovations at the request of the Emperor Napoleon III and under the direction of prefect Baron Haussmann. Many old buildings were torn down, avenues were expanded and public parks were created. Many artists were inspired by the new look of the city and by urban life and citizens. **Impressionist** artists adopted the subject of modern life and established exhibitions outside of the accepted Academy, representing contemporary life in a new style that sought to capture the intricacies of light and shadow.

### **THE ARTWORK: *The Age of Bronze***

*The Age of Bronze* was one of Rodin's most significant early works, and the scandal that ensued after its first exhibition established his artistic reputation. It was first shown in Brussels and later in Paris in 1877. Rodin used aspects found in classical statues to create the nude male figure, but he did not exaggerate the figure's musculature as the Greek and Roman sculptors would have done. Critics were suspicious of the sculpture's realism and claimed that Rodin had cast a live model in order to create the mold for the piece, a process frowned upon by sculptors at the time. Though he tried, he was unable to convince his colleagues that their suspicions were misplaced. In 1880, it was cast again in bronze and exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français. The New Orleans sculpture is one of twenty-seven known full-sized bronzes cast during the artist's lifetime.

### **FAST FACTS**

This bronze sculpture is so realistic that many people believed the artist created a mold from a real man rather than clay.

### **ENGAGE**

Stand in the position depicted in this sculpture. How would you pose for a sculpture of yourself?

### **EXPLORE**

Look at the paintings and sculptures on NOMA's second floor. Compare and contrast these works to *The Age of Bronze*? Describe how other artists depict the figure?

### **VOCABULARY**

**Academic Art:** Works by artists who adhere to conventions dictated by national schools of art (academies) which are accepted as an authority.

**Impressionism:** An art movement and style of painting that originated in Paris in the 1860s. Impressionist artists painted everyday subjects and emphasized the momentary effects of sunlight.



***Whisperings of Love***  
**Oil on Canvas, 1889**  
**William-Adolphe Bouguereau, France**  
**Academic Art, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Chapman H. Hyams, 15.6

**THE ARTIST:** William-Adolphe Bouguereau

William-Adolphe Bouguereau was born in France in 1825 to a family of wine and oil merchants. He was intended to take over the family business, but his artistic talent and early classical education influenced his enrollment in the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Bouguereau embraced the Academic ideals of painting highly refined modern adaptations of historical and mythological subjects. He preferred traditional artistic conventions and concentrated his work on the naturalistic yet idealistic portrayal of the female human body. The Academy praised Bouguereau's work for epitomizing traditional taste and refinement. However, avant-garde artists of the time found his work to be stuck in the past. Many people considered him to be the most important French painter of late 19th century; but, as Academic art fell out of style and Impressionism gained acceptance, he became less recognized.

**TIME & PLACE:** 19th Century, France

During the 1800s in France, many artists trained at the Académie des Beaux-Arts. The Académie taught students to portray subjects with an idealistic naturalism that reflected traditional Greek and Roman elements. Highly refined works that did not indicate the hand of the artist were also encouraged. As the preferred style of the time, Academic art began to receive competition from artists who responded to strict adherence to traditional artistic conventions. This reaction marked the beginning of the Modern Art movement.

**FAST FACTS**

French Academic artists looked to classical Greece for inspiration. The young woman in this painting wears a Greek **chiton** and leans on an amphora painted in the Greek geometric style.

**ENGAGE**

What do you think Cupid is whispering into the woman's ear?

**EXPLORE**

Look for other representations of the classical world. What do you see in the painting that identifies it as classical?

**VOCABULARY**

**Chiton:** A gown or tunic worn by men and women in Ancient Greece.

**Amphora:** A tall Greek or Roman jar with two handles and a narrow neck.

**THE ARTWORK:** *Whisperings of Love*

In this painting, Bouguereau portrays a young woman listening to the whispers of a playful Cupid. The woman appears vulnerable in her idealistic beauty, but her large searching eyes and blushing cheeks may indicate her receptiveness to Cupid's murmurs. Bouguereau incorporates Neoclassical elements including the Cupid, the woman's Grecian-style dress, and the **amphora** that symbolizes the woman's purity. *Whisperings of Love* also has an obvious refinement to its finish characteristic of the Academic style, meaning that the brushstrokes are barely noticeable. *Whisperings of Love* embodies the artistic conventions against which avant-garde artists of the time responded. These artists rejected the conservativeness and clichéd sentimentality of the Academic style.



## ***Portrait of Mrs. Asher B. Wertheimer***

**Oil on canvas. 1898**

**John Singer Sargent. Italy, 1856-1925**

**Academic Art Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

Museum purchase in memory of William H. Henderson, 78.3

### **THE ARTIST:** John Singer Sargent

Sargent was born in Florence, Italy to wealthy expatriate American parents. He remained in Tuscany until the age of nineteen, when he left for Paris to study with the academic portraitist, Emile-Auguste Carolus-Durand, from 1874 through 1876. In 1877 he began exhibiting at the Paris Salon, but the scandal created by his *Portrait of Madame X* and a lack of patronage forced Sargent to move to London to seek commissions. By 1897 the artist was a famous figure on the London art scene and the preeminent portraitist of his period.

### **TIME & PLACE:** 19<sup>th</sup> Century London

London became the world's largest city during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and functioned as the capital of the powerful British Empire. Its population grew at an amazing rate throughout the century, setting the city up to be a global capital for politics, finance, and trade. It was unrivaled as the capital of European commerce and culture until the latter part of the century when both Paris and New York City became its greatest competitors. London acquired immense wealth as the century progressed, but within the city were numerous slums that were overcrowded and unsanitary. Life in the slums of London could not have been any more different than life in the upper-class circles within the city, as expressed in the novels of Charles Dickens.

### **THE ARTWORK:** *Portrait of Mrs. Asher B. Wertheimer*

Included in Sargent's list of eager portrait sitters was Asher B. Wertheimer, a wealthy London art dealer, who commissioned the artist to paint a pair of portraits of himself and his wife to commemorate their silver wedding anniversary in 1898. In contrast to Mr. Wertheimer's portrait in a dark suit with a dark background, Mrs. Wertheimer wears a white silk gown with pearls strewn around her neck. Both paintings were shown at the Royal Academy in 1898 and created an enormous sensation. Sargent was commissioned to paint ten more portraits of members of the Wertheimer family, including a second portrait of Mrs. Wertheimer seated at a tea table dressed in black. With the exception of the 1898 New Orleans portrait and two others, the Wertheimer family portraits were bequeathed to the British nation by Asher B. Wertheimer and now hang in the Tate Gallery, London.

### **QUICK POINTS**

John Singer Sargent painted twelve portraits of the Wertheimer family.

### **ENGAGE**

Who do you think this woman is? What kind of person do you think she was?

Observe the clothes, jewelry, and furniture in this painting. What can tell us about this woman?

### **EXPLORE**

Portraits are representations of people and serve as a permanent reminder of the sitter. Look for more portraits in this gallery.

What objects would you want to include in your portrait?

How do people preserve their image today?





### FAST FACTS

Pablo Picasso paints his subjects in an abstract style. Late in his career, he frequently painted his second wife, Jacqueline Roque.

### ENGAGE

Identify the parts of the body seen in this painting.

Do you think this painting shows the figure from the front or from the side? It's actually both.

### EXPLORE

Look for another female figure in this gallery. Modern artists experimented with the elements of art to explore new ways of expression. Identify the parts of the body in both works.

### VOCABULARY

**Cubism:** 20<sup>th</sup> century art movement that is an analytic study in form. Objects are represented from many different points of view simultaneously using overlapping facets.

**Profile:** Viewed from the side.

**Abstract Art:** Imagery which departs from representational accuracy.

### *Woman in an Armchair*

**Oil on Canvas, 1960**

**Pablo Picasso, Spanish, 1881-1973**

**Modern Art Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

Bequest of Victor K. Kiam, 77.299

### THE ARTIST: Pablo Picasso

Pablo Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain. From an early age, Picasso expressed that art was the most important thing in his life. At fourteen, he entered the Academy of Fine Arts in Barcelona, but because of his advanced artistic talents, the Academy had little to offer him. He found inspiration outside of the Academy amongst a group of painters and poets. In 1900, Picasso moved to Paris. He was productive in his early years there, sometimes completing two or three paintings a day, but he struggled financially even though many people liked his work. Although he had mastered drawing with photographic accuracy, Picasso began to develop a variety of personal styles. After discovering African art, he began to incorporate tribal imagery into his paintings freeing himself from European artistic traditions and leading him toward **Cubism**.

Picasso married his second wife, Jacqueline Roque, in 1961 and never left her side until his death in 1973. She cared for him during declining health and his eventual death. Her nurturing enabled the artist to be more productive in his last twenty years than ever before.

### TIME & PLACE: Early 20th Century, France

After the two World Wars, great advances regarding to social reform and economic development took place in Europe. France flourished under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle, who initiated economic measures that revitalized the country. During the 1950s and 1960s, France underwent tough periods as French colonies in Africa and Asia began to claim independence. Wars in French Indochina (present day Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia) and Algeria cost the country lives and money, and made the government unpopular with the people. By the 1960s, much of the French population felt de Gaulle was abusing his presidential powers and demonstrations and strikes were organized during this decade.

### THE ARTWORK: *Woman in an Armchair*

During the last years of his life, Picasso's second wife, Jacqueline Roque, served as his principle model so often that this period (1953-1973) is known as L'Epoque Jacqueline. Roque is depicted seated in an armchair, a common iconographic element in Picasso's paintings. Unlike traditional fleshy female representations, Picasso's women of this period are stark, harsh, and linear, characteristics generally of associated with male portraits, and were considered threatening to traditional beauty. *Woman in an Armchair* pays homage to Roque, whose large, dark eyes and black hair play a dominant role in the composition. Cubist elements reemerged in this painting. The face is seen both in profile and in frontal views, and the palette is reduced to black, white, grays, and browns.





### FAST FACTS

This artist painted common household objects to look like a doodle drawn with marker. He wanted his paintings to differ from the traditionally beautiful paintings he saw in museums.

### ENGAGE

What object do you think is represented in this painting? Hint: you could find it in a kitchen.

What else do you think this painting looks like?

### EXPLORE

Look at other works around this painting. Contemporary artists look for new ways to express ideas, emotions, and other subject matter.

How does this work make you feel? Find an artwork that makes you feel differently.

### VOCABULARY

**Aesthetic:** The branch of philosophy that provides theories relating to the nature of beauty and fine art in accordance with the accepted notions of good taste.

**Fauvism:** Early 20<sup>th</sup> century art style is defined by a use of bright, vivid colors directly from the tube often applied in broad flat areas with undisguised brushstrokes.

### *Gas Stove, III*

Oil on Canvas, 1960

Jean Dubuffet, France, 1901-1985

Modern Art Gallery, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Bequest of Victor K. Kiam, 77.289

### THE ARTIST: Jean Dubuffet

Dubuffet's artistic style and creative preferences position him in a unique place in the history of art. He became active in the French art scene after World War I, but abandoned painting on two separate occasions for commercial endeavors before settling into his career as a painter in 1942. Dubuffet's atypical theories challenged the traditional **aesthetic** of beauty. He believed that art could be anti-cultural, based on creations of children and the insane. These beliefs make it difficult to place his art within one school or movement. Dubuffet called this style "raw art." His work explored ordinary and banal subject matter in a way meant to draw the viewer out of his or her accepted aesthetic responses.

### TIME & PLACE: Early 20th Century, France

Paris was the focal point of the artistic world in the early years of the 20th century, attracting artists from all over the world. At that time, the post-impressionist movement combined with a rising interest in African art resulted in the emergence of several different and new artistic movements, including **fauvism** and **cubism**. Fauve artists such as Henri Matisse explored the expressionistic use of color while Pablo Picasso and George Braque experimented with line and form as they developed the cubist style. Between the two world wars artists continued to explore new ways to express artistic, literary, and cultural themes. World War II caused many artists to find refuge in the United States, and New York soon became the capital of the avant-garde art movements.

### THE ARTWORK: *Gas Stove, III*

In 1962, Dubuffet began a series of drawings and paintings that originated from felt-tipped pen doodles that were stripped of almost all of their associative content. This particular painting, *Gas Stove, III*, is one of seven variants of that theme in the series. Dubuffet wrenches the common object away from its ordinary connotations and presents it as a distorted image locked within the void of a black background. He compartmentalizes the form into odd shaped segments, the outlines of which create what Dubuffet called his "uniform meandering script." *Gas Stove, III* shows an image that is a derivative of a physical stove and endowed with a forceful physical presence that is independent from the original object.



***Suit of Armor in the Domaru Style***  
**Iron, leather, lacquer, silk, and brass**  
**Late 18th Century**  
**Japan. Edo Period, 1603-1867**  
**Japanese Art Gallery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

Gift of J. Aron Charitable Foundation, Inc., 94.940.a,b

**THE ARTIST:** unknown

Japanese craftsmen, skilled in the art of making armor, developed new and updated styles throughout the Edo period. While we cannot know which craftsmen created the suit of armor, it is certain that many contributed to the final costume.

**TIME & PLACE:** Japan, Edo Period, 1603-1867

The period from 1603 until 1867 is known as the **Edo** era, marked by Japan's transition from a feudal society to a more modern one. A rising middle class of merchants and traders created a vibrant culture and fueled a new type of urban culture by popularizing pastimes such as visiting teahouses and bathhouses.

The Edo era was marked by an extended period of peace, one that allowed for a cultural and economic boom. However, underlying Japan's advances was a rigid and conservative social structure in which social classes were strictly ordered and maintained. All foreign relations were cut off and the Japanese people were not allowed to leave the country without the government's permission.

**THE ARTWORK:** *Suit of Armor in the Domaru Style*

Defensive armor evolved from horizontal wood strips held together by leather thongs to armor made from iron. Gradually the style of armor we see here, **domaru** or "body wrap" style, was adopted. Characterized by a close-fitting, one-piece body armor (*do*) from which its name is derived, *domaru* armor is relatively light in weight and more flexible than earlier bulky styles.

Japanese helmets and armor are both functional and decorative, manifesting the moral and spiritual traditions of the samurai. The two crests on the helmet represent a prominent Japanese family. At the center of the helmet is the hammer of *Daikoku*, a deity of good fortune, showing the strength and power of the wearer and his ability to destroy any obstacle. The horn-like protrusions from the helmet are Japanese characters, which read "ka", meaning "possibility." During the peaceful Edo period, armor was used exclusively for ceremonial purposes. Upper class households displayed suits of armor and erected battle standards in their courtyards on the eleventh day of the first month of the year, when the annual tradition of praying for success in all military matters took place.

**ENGAGE**

This suit of armor was created during a time of peace. What purpose do you think it served?

Imagine you are wearing this suit of armor. How do you think it would feel?

**EXPLORE**

Look for other utilitarian objects on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. What other types of costumes can you find?

**VOCABULARY**

**Edo:** ("EH-doh") A period in Japanese history defined by cultural and economic growth and the discontinuation of foreign relations.

**Domaru:** ("DOH-ma-ru") A body-wrap style of armor.



### ***Three Standing Guardian Figures for Reliquaries (Bieri)***

**Wood, bone, 19th-20th century**

**Fang peoples, Gabon, Africa**

**African Art Gallery, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor**

Bequest of Victor Kiam, 77.209, 77.154

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frederick M. Stafford, 79.338

#### **THE ARTIST:** unknown

The artisans who created these sculptures are unknown. In African art, there is no “art for art’s sake.” While objects may hold a decorative or prestigious value, they also have social and spiritual meanings and are often utilitarian.

#### **TIME & PLACE:** Gabonese Republic, 19th-20th Century

The Fang peoples live in the dense rainforests of the Gabonese Republic in Central Africa. The Fang use ancestor worship, Bieri, as a way for men of the village to communicate with ancestors to receive protection for the community. Like many African cultures, the Bieri cult required new male members to undergo initiation rites. Part of the Bieri tradition included paying homage to ancestors whose skulls or bones were stored in reliquary boxes and guarded by a carved wooden sculpture intended to ward off women and children. These reliquaries would have been the center of rituals and sacrifices of the Bieri society.

#### **THE ARTWORK:** *Three Standing Guardian Figures for Reliquaries (Bieri)*

The three Guardian figures include two males and one female. These sculptures are cylindrical in shape with elongated bodies, long arms, and short stumpy legs. Their hair has been carefully carved into braids. The wood shines because it is saturated with palm oil that Bieri cult members rubbed on the sculptures during rituals. The appendage that enables the figures to stand upright would have been attached to the reliquary boxes so the sculptures could sit on top and guard its contents.

The female figure stands out from the two male figures, serving as a symbol of fertility and continuation of the family. The male guardian figures appear imposing next to the softer maternal female figure. The slimmer male figure is NOMA’s rarest Fang artifact and one of the highlights of the African Art collection since its style elegantly diverges from most guardian figures of this culture.

#### **FAST FACTS**

The Fang peoples believed their ancestors were an important part of protecting and continuing village life. They placed the bones of their ancestors in reliquaries and created guardian sculptures to protect them.

#### **ENGAGE**

Do you have any ancestors or relatives that you think are important to your family?

What objects do you use to remind you of your family?

#### **EXPLORE**

The African Art galleries contain art from people who lived in many locations across the African continent. These cultures are different, but share some similarities in religion and communal life.

Find two similar objects created by different cultures.

How might these objects have been used by the cultures that created them?