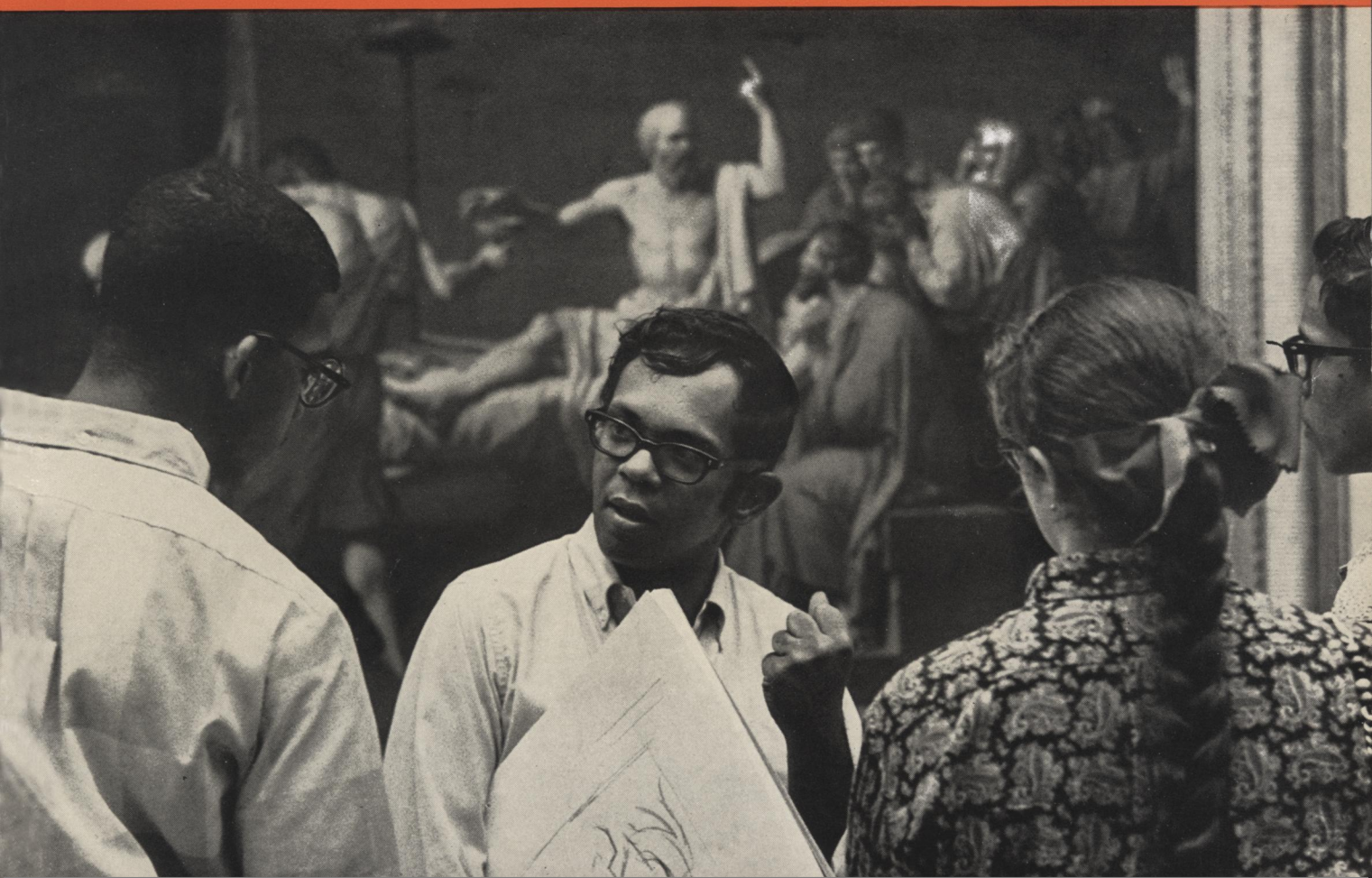


DECEMBER 1968

The Metropolitan Museum of Art BULLETIN



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In Search of Human Contact

HARRY S. PARKER III *Chairman of the Education Department*

IF THE ONLY ENDURING purposes of a museum were to buy, store, and protect, surely the Metropolitan Museum could best function in a bank vault sealed off from human contact. One certainly would not allow a lot of school children to come in and browse around the objects. Assets comparable to those of General Motors would not be set out where any madman could take a razor to several million dollars' worth of canvas. But they are. What could be a single-minded concentration on *things* is constantly tempered with other interests. Call them utilitarian – the employment of art for the inspiration, pleasure, and education of people.

The idea of using art scares many people today, but the founders of the Metropolitan Museum saw this purpose clearly and stated it in the Charter: “The Metropolitan Museum of Art is to be located in the city of New York, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining in said city a museum and library of art, of encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts, and the application of arts to manufacture and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction and recreation.” The notion of using art to accomplish broad social aims is, then, not a new one. The Museum was conceived as relevant to the needs of New York's citizens, improving their taste and their surroundings, and refreshing their spirits.

Today the Victorian sense of public responsibility is undergoing a healthy revival, and new uses of the Museum for the benefit of society at large are being explored. This decision forces a complete re-examination of standard museum practices. It means that a museum can no longer sit passively to count its blessings and receive its visitors. It means, instead, attempting to manage the museum experience so that the visitor takes away certain attitudes, insights, and information. It means, in addition, not restricting the use of the museum to the audience inside the physical building, but promoting its ideas and principles to as large an audience as possible. It means going where

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*The photographs for this Bulletin,
except as noted, were taken by
Michael Fredericks, Jr.*



Some of the steps in the production of material for the high school pilot program: research, recording

the people whose taste and knowledge you want to affect congregate. One such place is the American high school, and it is to this forum in which values are formed and ideals are communicated that the Museum's Department of Education has been addressing a large part of its effort this year.

The articles in this issue of the *Bulletin* present various aspects of our effort to reach the high school student. We attack American students in mass by feeding curriculum materials into the classroom and creating museum orientation films. And we concentrate on affecting the few who care enough to devote a summer to art history seminars or studio sessions. We work in that area where viewer meets object, and human contact becomes the basic purpose of the object's preservation.

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music for the filmstrip's soundtrack, shipping it to the schools, and testing it in the classroom

In its reluctance to place any importance on art education in the general curriculum, the secondary education establishment in America has been derelict. Only one out of ten students studies art at any point in his high school education. He is seldom the best student, as art is a low-priority item on the college admissions officer's list. The art teacher is unfairly ranked near the bottom of the faculty totem pole. Art appreciation is a minor adjunct to the studio course. Art history is hardly taught at all: there are probably not more than a dozen high schools in the country today offering such courses. The interest in art that has been nurtured through elementary school comes to an abrupt halt in secondary schools, and relatively few students sustain their interest across this desert on the way to college and a lifelong appreciation of art.

We felt the Museum had a stake in continuing art education through the high school years and plotted our demand for equal time in the secondary school curriculum.

We learned that some schools have begun to recognize the deficiency, and experimentation in so-called humanities courses is widespread. Curriculum designers have had their

problems, and team teaching (where music, art, and English teachers join forces) has complicated the issue on occasion, but the movement toward beefing up the humanities program is most desirable. Equally promising, it seemed, was the growing breadth of the social studies curriculum. Every high school student takes American history, civilization, government, whatever the title employed; and, increasingly, history teachers are turning to original sources and documents where the feeling of closeness to the past is far greater than it is in the abstract theories of the textbook. Helping students and teachers to utilize the visual document as an original source would require real effort, but to indulge in a little McLuhanism, all of us are becoming more and more sensitive to communication through visual means – the average high school graduate today has spent more hours watching television than attending school.

The basic idea of the project was to relate art and history, to show how the past can be studied through the most vivid documents that civilization leaves behind. At the same time the students would learn the history of culture, to complement their knowledge of

*Right-hand photograph
by Lew Merrim*

the history of economics, politics, or diplomacy. Art is used here to make man aware of his past.

There was risk capital involved in this venture, and we were fortunate to secure the enthusiasm and support of three agencies—one public, the New York State Council on the Arts; one corporate, the Geigy Chemical Corporation; and one private, Arthur K. Watson. This troika, unusual in the history of funding, helped us to frame a project whereby the Museum would produce materials to be evaluated in pilot schools of varying types throughout the country. Thirteen secondary schools scattered through five states in the eastern half of the United States were selected to become our partners in experimentation. Urban, suburban, rural, public, and private schools from Mobile, Alabama, to Lakeville, Connecticut, were included to assure diverse opinions.

Most school libraries lack even the standard art texts, and we had to make sure these were available. So we began by sending to each classroom a small library of books and magazines on American art in which the teacher could assign reading and the individual student pursue his own enthusiasms. We then prepared sound filmstrips, a kind of poor man's movie, by which an illustrated presentation with narration could be economically produced in quantity.

The filmstrip content paralleled the standard divisions of the American history one-year course. For the time of the Revolution, we examined the works of John Singleton Copley as the testament of a man whose personal indecision as to political loyalty was typical of a large class of colonists unsure whether to stay with the Tories or join the revolt. His portrait commissions of the 1760s—from Samuel Adams to Thomas Flucker, the last English governor of Massachusetts—indicate acceptance by both political factions. Copley's withdrawal to England and rejection of the style of his American paintings say something about the effect of the rebellion on one man's life. Later in the year, we surveyed the country's romanticizing of the frontier as it was reinforced by the paintings of nineteenth-century artists, and in the third filmstrip com-

pared the discovery of the city by artists at the beginning of the twentieth century to the effects of mass immigration and urbanization. Additional information on each of these subjects was offered in a teacher's manual, which supplemented the script of the filmstrip with considerable detail on each object and a bibliography to facilitate further research.

The pace of the narration was fast—geared to the student's capacity for absorption of visual material. We tried to keep the message or point of view as direct as possible, and always preserved the teacher's option to embroider and enrich the experience with more details about the pictures than could ever be fitted into a script.

Educational materials are successful only when they work under classroom conditions, so in order to find out how well ours passed the test, we asked for teacher and student evaluations. The teachers wanted us to include more questions, to be suggestive rather than didactic, to lead from the facts at hand to historical themes of more general application. The students asked for fewer portraits, more preparatory sketches, more humor, and a still faster tempo. Their response was the basis for our reworking the presentation.

Filmstrips are familiar to teachers and easily adaptable to existing classroom facilities. None would be so dramatic, however, as the arrival in a high school of an entire exhibition sent out by The Metropolitan Museum of Art—PTA meetings could be called and local newspapers alerted to the event. Our special contribution would be exhibitions, the form of communication most familiar to museums, but little known as an educational medium in the schools.

Learning from exhibitions is different from learning by lecture, by book, or by film. An exhibition just stands there passively; it is the student who examines it closely or not so closely. It may take him a minute or an hour, but the effect is cumulative as he discovers new things in it over a period of time. Some museums have tried to send traveling exhibitions out to the schools—usually a set of framed reproductions. The most handsome picture often finds its way to the principal's

George Segal in his studio, working on his silkscreen for the high school exhibition



office; the rest get separated from their labels and hung unevenly down the darkest corridor. We wanted to control the look of the exhibition and still arrive at a format that was easy to assemble, light in weight for shipment, and relatively impervious to the between-class rush down the halls. A new firm in New York, Museum Planning, Inc., designed folding screens made up of hinged aluminum panels with retractable legs. In only ten minutes, sixty running feet of exhibition space can be assembled in almost any school location. Photographs or reproductions can be mounted on the panels; labels and written information can be silkscreened directly onto the surface. Of course, if you can silkscreen labels you can silkscreen art: the technique we used is a multiple original process—like a lithograph, an etching, or an engraving—so it is possible to create a limited edition of identical exhibitions. We can, therefore, lend original art, in a format that fits the requirements of school use.

With Rosa Esman of Tanglewood Press we were able to convince Richard Anuszkiewicz, Helen Frankenthaler, Adolph Gottlieb, Nicholas Krushenick, Roy Lichtenstein, and George Segal—six of the most important artists working in New York today—to create original art for our aluminum format. The artists were challenged by the unusual process of printing on aluminum as well as by the concept of reaching out to a teen-age audience in high schools all over the country. In addition, they submitted to taped interviews, which were combined with photographs of the artists in their studios to produce a filmstrip that could be circulated with the exhibition.

Students from the classes that had participated in our pilot program were brought to

New York City in the spring to confront the objects that they had been studying in reproduction. Would this final experience, possible only in the Museum itself, be stronger and more vivid for the months of preparation in the classroom? Would it help to have been trained to view the object of art as intimately related to all aspects of history? We think it did. We are convinced that the power of a work of art to affect a human being is directly related to the preparation and education of the person for such an experience. Museums do have the ability to affect the quality of human contact with art.

The educational effort still to be made is enormous. The people to be reached range in age from preschoolers to senior citizens and in previous art awareness from the ghetto fifth grader to the graduate student in the history of art. If we must make sure that the preschooler is initially intrigued, we must make equally sure that the scholar gains access to long-buried factual information. The college student must come to know art in the original, with all the subtleties of color, condition, and detail that can never be reproduced in the second-hand slide. The general visitor must learn the questions to ask himself about a work of art if we are not to have another generation of uncomfortable, dazed beholders wondering what is supposed to happen when one looks at Rembrandt. Helping people get the most out of works of art is a challenge for which education is the answer. This long-neglected aspect of the Museum's role requires the commitment not only of the Museum's resources, but those of society at large. For society loses, each day that art's power to affect men's minds and awareness of themselves is wasted.

Like It Was with *Like It Is*

ELIZABETH FRERE AND ROBIN JONES

IT'S BEEN DESCRIBED as "groovy," "cool," "a fifteen-minute commercial for the Met," and "an hors d'oeuvre to whet the visual appetite."

If any of that is true, then we succeeded in at least one objective: breaking the tradition of the standard classroom documentary to present The Metropolitan Museum of Art in a way that would be exciting and relevant to young students.

What is now a fifteen-minute color film, called *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Like It Is*, began with a lot of enthusiasm and a bare minimum of experience. Between the first discussions and the last session with the movieola, all of us learned a lot.

And what we learned is the subject of this report, assembled for the guidance of anyone considering a venture such as ours. Speaking of *Like It Is*, Allon Schoener, Visual Arts Director of the New York State Council on the Arts, which underwrote the project, said, "Apart from the imagination brought to bear here, the equipment required is available to anyone. Any museum could do the same sort of thing."

Overture

Perhaps the best preface for such a report is to present the credentials that would qualify

us for creating a presentation this important for an institution as important as The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Frankly, just about zero.

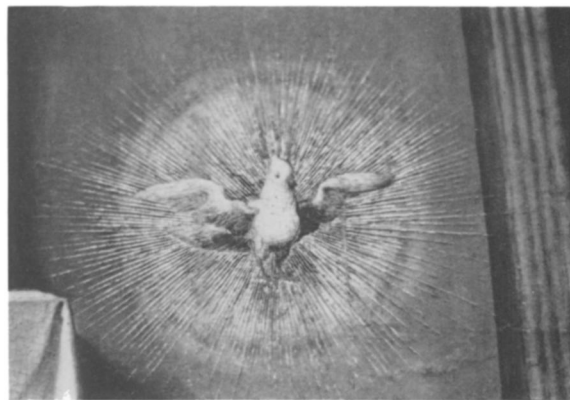
Both of us, basically, are professional writers. While we are rather ardent—or perhaps active—photographers, the relevant word had to be amateur. Our involvement began when Harry Parker, Chairman of the Metropolitan's Education Department, saw several slide presentations we had created out of our travels. (We had become interested in the possibilities of combining slides with a sound track made up of music, commentary, and on-location sound effects.) Parker had been struggling with a problem whose solution seemed to be audio-visual: finding a way to make a visit to the Metropolitan more meaningful to the thousands of students who were streaming into the Museum every week during the school year. His question, after he'd seen these shows of ours, was could we give him some sort of presentation, an orientation really, that students could see as soon as they entered? Or even better, before they arrived?

Sketching Out the Goals

The ground rules were settled early and easily. Hopefully, such a presentation would survey



Illustrations for this article were taken from slides made by the authors for Like It Is



the contents of the Museum and teach the viewer the basics of how to look at a work of art. The least tangible aim was perhaps the most important of all: to show the Museum as a happy place that gives pleasure and joy to people through beautiful objects. We would have succeeded if the students, when the film was over, felt they couldn't wait to get out of auditorium and look at what they'd just seen on the screen, to experience all of it personally.

The tone of the show was to be fresh, lively, and upbeat (even startlingly so, from an "official" point of view, if necessary), for we wanted to take the cold chill of institutionalism off the Museum. Since so many students would be seeing the Museum for the first time, it was important that it meet them in a way that was neither condescending nor remote.

And that, in turn, led us to a preliminary decision that was to become the most decisive in terms of actual technique: to eliminate a spoken narrative.

All three of us found repellent the thought of that predictable baritone narrator, crooning his way through the classic classroom documentary. So we decided to see if we could do without him. Let the sequence of pictures, plus the right kind of music, tell the story. This is supposed to be a visual statement about visual experiences and how to use your eyes: let's start with the film itself. And besides, we thought, this is the first generation of youngsters raised on television. Visually, they're so much more alert. And this way we'll draw them into the film quickly and hold them. Also, without narrator, the visual content will

be free to adjust itself to each viewer's educational background and level.

Oddly enough, we were right.

Or at least, the ground rules held up and helped guide us through some murky moments later on. The very lack of narration, we were to discover, forced us to assess every photograph not only for its own value, but how it contributed to the movement of the purely visual plot. While creating maddening problems of editing, we found that this technique can produce a strong, involving statement.

There was one other decision worth noting. It was Harry Parker's specific request that we photograph everything ourselves. He had two reasons. While a wealth of lecture slides already existed, one of the show's major themes was to be people, so it was essential to photograph people actually in the Museum, actually looking at art. The second reason for our doing our own shooting was more subtle. On the basis of other things we had done, it was Parker's feeling that, between us, we had a certain point of view in our photography, and that such a point of view would bring an added—and desirable—unity to the presentation.

Making It Happen: The Technicalities

So much for theory. Now we had to go and make it happen.

Like It Is was originally conceived as a slide presentation. We felt that pacing, variety, and even surprise were essential if we were going



to be entertaining. So we decided to alternate between the usual, straight projection of slides and the special effects achieved by using a dissolve unit. Thus the original show called for three Kodak Carousel units, two of them linked through the dissolve unit and the third operated separately. By the time the show was finally in its approved form, we were faced with a formidable problem. Although everyone was pleased with the edited presentation, our show was going to call for major investment in special equipment—complicated lenses and programing units—for projecting it in an auditorium. (Originally we changed each slide manually, taking cues from the sound track for pressing the advance button.) Conversion to film, however, would cost less than that new equipment, while giving us the enormous added advantage of being able to send prints of the film to schools for viewing before a tour of the Museum.

Low cost was possible through the newly developed “computafilm” technique invented by The Presentation Center Inc. (18 East 48 Street, New York, N. Y. 10017). They converted our assortment of slides into a 16mm sound movie. Key to their process is a specially designed optical system that has been under development for some three years; with a patent pending, its characteristics are virtually classified. However, the point is that The Presentation Center can turn 35mm transparencies into 16mm motion-picture film of acceptable quality, and do it at a fraction of the cost heretofore associated with animation stand filming.

The Presentation Center handled all the details of the process of conversion. Other than handing over the slides themselves, numbered in sequence, plus a “script” that correlated our music selections to the slides, we had very little to do, manually or technically. We viewed the work in progress at various stages and judged things like proper synchronization, correct dissolve sequence, and color quality.

We have only one regret about converting slides to film and that is that we hadn’t known in the beginning that we’d end up on 16mm film. The proportions of the image projected by 16mm film differ from those of 35mm film; vertical photographs on 35mm cannot be adapted to 16mm without first being enlarged, so the 35mm image expands to reach the left- and right-hand margins of the 16mm frame, and then cropped, since the now-enlarged slide has grown in height as well as width. In most cases we were able to salvage our 35mm verticals—or return to the Museum and rephotograph the object horizontally. What all this means, really, is a warning: if you’re thinking about converting to film, photograph everything horizontally.

Initially, we were worried about photographing with available light. Yet that seemed the only way to take pictures of people in the Museum. The keynote was to be people enjoying and responding. Catching them off guard would be impossible if we used flashbulbs, whereas fast film and a telephoto lens (and a little fast footwork) seemed the obvious solution. Which it was, thanks to the sensitivity of high-speed Ektachrome (ASA 160). Our first step was to test various films in a variety of light situations. We recommend this film testing to anyone else, since light situations can differ greatly within any museum. An afternoon of such testing not only tests the film but teaches the photographers quite a lot.

Going to Work in the Museum

One misconception that was promptly dispelled was that we’d have trouble photographing people being themselves. Even though we were trying to be as unobtrusive as possible,

we assumed that someone would notice us at work. Hardly. We leave it to the sociologists to comment on a basic truth we discovered: weekend crowds were such that individuals seemed to close their minds to their fellow visitors, ignore the crush, and concentrate totally on the art objects. Thus we were peering through the rangefinders at people not only wholly absorbed in art, but totally oblivious to photographers. Nothing could have been easier for us.

We were equally unprepared for another discovery and, paradoxically, it related to the very theme of the show itself: visual perception. For many years both of us had prowled around, felt at home in, and thought we knew every corner of the Museum. We were even a bit smug about being Museum People, having gallery-pounded from Budapest to Santa Fe. Yet we had never carried cameras through the front doors of the Metropolitan and had never looked at a work of art there in terms of photographing it. And any alert photographer looks at any potential object with an enormously heightened sense of that object's meaning, design, and – for lack of a better word – presence. Thus came the pleasant shock of discovering unexpected content in pieces we had thought we knew well.

Wonderfully enough, it never occurred to Harry Parker to tell us what to photograph, and certainly we assumed that we'd simply go in, photograph what seemed worth photographing, and start shaping a show out of that. Later, we would realize we hadn't represented a certain period or area, and would return for the omissions. We also learned that a great art treasure is not necessarily photogenic – at least outside a studio with batteries of lights. (There's an Elizabethan bed we eventually gave up on. We substituted a Louis XV chaise longue.)

It's at this point that it becomes difficult to tell anyone else how we worked. Simple-minded as it may sound, we just decided that the contents of the Museum itself would tell us what to do. On the first of our dozen extended weekend expeditions, we shot anything that seemed valid as a contribution to what we sensed would be the show's "narra-

tive," such as people entering and leaving the building, interesting people studying beautiful objects.

As we began accumulating color transparencies, our shooting became proportionately less random and more selective, and we soon realized that the easiest aspect of the enterprise was the actual photographing. After all, no great skill is required to produce an acceptable color photograph of an art object that is reasonably well lit and nailed down. Unlike shooting the Houses of Parliament on your vacation, you're not apt to run out of film, it won't rain, no large bus will materialize between you and it, and you're not due somewhere else in fifteen minutes.

Editing: Here Be Dragons

It became clear that the real work in this project would be finding and presenting a story line without benefit of narration: creating sequences, or a series of sequences, that would hang together and communicate some sense of organic logic. We were looking for a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Two things helped us. First, we did have a "plot." Very early on, we had settled with Harry Parker that the show would re-create what we thought was the new visitor's impression of the Museum. First would come an awareness of other people; then an awareness of people with objects; and finally an awareness of objects alone. That was the profile, the graph line, of the show.

Also helping us was the knowledge that music could be used to move the narrative along by aurally completing what was being "said" visually on the screen; music could give the audience a point of view and comment editorially on the visual material, thus helping clarify it further; or comment *against* the visuals, creating tension or irony. (Of that, more later.)

Altogether we took approximately one thousand photographs, and we began editing as soon as the first roll of film was developed. And we never stopped throwing out, rearranging, taking out some more. Then we

started editing all over again and mostly kept throwing away.

One of the last Museum officials to view the show as it reached the final stages was George Trescher, in charge of the rooth Anniversary Committee. Because we knew him to be a professional's pro and an acute, sensitive critic, we waited until we felt we had honed our content to the barest, most shining simplicity. After seeing the run-through, George gently uttered the words we'll pass on to anyone else attempting this sort of thing. He said: "If I had my way, all life would be a one-act play. Everything in this world can be cut." We went through the show once more, and dropped sixty slides; after our egos recovered, we wondered why we thought the excised slides had ever contributed anything. The moral here is for the photographer to cut, cut, cut. Sleep on it, cut some more, and then call in someone who's never seen it before. And then *really* start editing.

Two hundred and twenty-six slides survived the many stages of editing. (That means, roughly, using one slide out of every four, which in professional terms is a very respectable batting average. Many "waste" shots were of acceptable quality but were eliminated for various reasons of content. These may be used elsewhere by the Museum, which owns them all.) A few examples might help to illustrate some of the kinds of pitfalls we ran into – and perhaps how to sidestep them.

As we suggested earlier, we felt that if we took enough good pictures, something, somehow, would emerge. We did and it did. We noticed that if we sorted by subject matter, we had a collection of "women," and another of "men," and another of "animals," and another of "plants." What happened with three of those "plants" slides dramatizes the problem presented by the lack of narration: any slide or group of slides can really be put almost anywhere in the show. The problem is figuring out just where.

As we were sorting and editing, we were confronted with three transparencies, all depicting an aspect of a staircase by Grinling Gibbons. The first was a shot that established the staircase from a distance, with a visitor



studying it. Then we went in for a medium close-up of the staircase itself; and finally, a very tight close-up of a detail: an ear of corn. Those three seemed a logical way to begin a series of slides about “plants.” And somehow we thought the “plants” sequence would follow naturally after a five-slide statement on doors, archways, and ceilings.

But when it was all put together on screen, the doors and arches looked excruciatingly lifeless. Out they went. And the only Gibbons slide that seemed right was the close-up shot.



But that was carved wood and seemed wrong too, since all our other plants and flowers were in two dimensions and the corn was in three. So much, it seemed, for Mr. Gibbons.

In the meantime, the opening sequence for the whole show was beginning to solidify. We would enter the building, notice all sorts of people, and then look at people absorbed in works of art. It occurred to us that we could use the Gibbons sequence not in terms of “plants” but in terms of a visitor, eying the staircase and then the corn. It would become a comment on the act of viewing an object, not on the object itself. So we reinstated the sequence of three slides, moved it up to the beginning, and there it now resides.

Overstatement and misstatement caused trouble on what we thought would be a strong, logical sequence. The obvious closing seemed to be, simply, to leave the Museum, showing what everybody sees in leaving; and, if possible, suggest nonverbally that the visitor has been given a heightened sense of perception

because of the visit. So we relentlessly photographed people milling about in the Great Hall, struggling into coats, studying jewelry at the gift counter, surveying volumes in the book store, trooping out into the light, going down the stairs. Once this section was put in context with all the other sequences, we realized that we had labored too long to say a simple thing. With no narration to distract the viewer’s attention, he would instinctively concentrate much more on every picture, so fewer were needed to make the point.

So we put aside perhaps ninety per cent of that series. But something was still wrong. The show was now about to end and we were hoping we would have given our viewers a tremendous desire to go and experience the Museum for themselves. And yet here we were, “walking” them out the front door and down the steps, ending the visit.

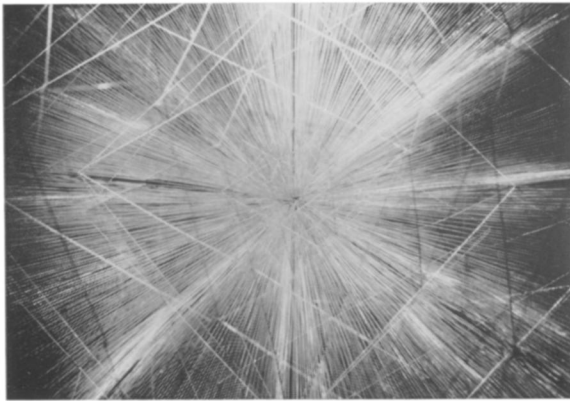
If we eliminated the shots that showed people leaving the building and kept only the final slides that showed details of the exterior façade, we completely changed the effect. Now it was not the visitor but the camera – our narrator – that was going outside, to look back at the building itself, thus symbolically summing up everything inside. We rephotographed these exterior details with a wide-angle lens: the results were consciously dramatic and slightly distorted. They succeed, we think, in creating the feeling that the viewer has been given new eyes with which to take that last look at the Museum.

While it was easy enough for us to get very

good shots of people moving through galleries, ascending stairs, coping with children, or whatever, we soon realized we were on our way to establishing a major collection of the backs of people looking at works of art. For variety's sake, if nothing else, we needed to see faces *and* the work of art at the same time. To get what we wanted, we would have to put the photographer on the other side of the object; thus the visitor would be looking at it – and into the camera.

And total strangers obviously wouldn't and

problem. Among the photographs our shooting sessions produced was an extraordinarily effective photograph of one of our models gazing at the Rospigliosi Cup. It was a very tight close-up, with this glorious, glowing object filling the screen, almost edge to edge. Very much out of focus, but nonetheless recognizable, was an enraptured face. And the photograph worked quite well in the sequence that now rounds out the introductory section of the film. But you won't see this photograph. Here's why.



couldn't react naturally in a situation as awkward as that. The only solution was to violate our rule of faking nothing, and to use willing friends as models. To our surprise, they were far more willing than we thought they would have been. We also learned to use as many different faces as possible – rather than the same few faces looking at many different things. Otherwise, we would have inadvertently established a dominant character that the audience would become interested in, rather than the art. (We picked our models in terms of faces and gave them a definite part to dress for: the miniskirt, the tweeds and turtleneck, and so on.)

Since our friends could be posed as needed, we were able to create a sequence of close-ups of objects under the gaze of viewers. Because this section gave us a visual transition from emphasizing people to focusing on objects, it was one of the most essential sequences of the show.

To return to the example of an editing

The editing was proceeding very nicely elsewhere and we knew that we had an exciting situation in a later sequence: using the dissolve unit as we projected successively tighter close-ups of a Waterford chandelier until, in fact, we seemed to pass through the crystal pendants, by purposely going out of focus. And this in turn would dissolve into a close-up of Lippold's *Variation within a Sphere*, #10: *The Sun*, a dazzlement of gold wires. So far so good, but moving on gracefully from that shot was proving difficult. The effect of the Lippold itself was so stunning and total that anything else seemed anticlimactic: other contemporary sculpture didn't seem to fit with it. Shots of other glittery objects were all silver or crystal, not golden, and therefore colder in tone. And then we remembered the Rospigliosi Cup. It was perfect. But there was that human being in it, and the narrative had now moved into the part of the show that was absolutely objects-only. While it was painful to toss out the original shot, it was simple to

go back to the Museum and photograph the cup itself, without human interest.

One last example can suggest what's surely the deepest pitfall of all: photographs that are successful as photographs but don't contribute to – or even work against – the narrative.

By now you've gathered that the opening minutes of *Like It Is* show all sorts of people in the Museum in different situations and settings, and that this section closes after it has depicted those visitors becoming increasingly engaged with and involved in the objects. And, indeed, objects are made to dominate so much that the viewers start to fade, literally, from focus.

We noticed that we had a number of shots of people resting in the Museum, being exhausted, even sleeping. What a perfect way, we thought, to round out the introductory sequence. In recognizing the lot of the footsore visitor, this would humanize the institution by letting the Museum say "It *is* tiring, isn't it?" And to top it off, we would show a bronze of a sleeping cupid. Even the works of art must rest.

Here we really outsmarted ourselves, for four minutes after the show began, we brought the opening sequence to such a close that it was hard to get the narrative started again. Our little gesture of completion was inherently too strong. We realized this when we sensed that something wasn't quite right with the end of the introduction: it wasn't flowing on into the following sequences. Nor could we put this section at the very end of the show, because by then it would be too late to reintroduce "people," thereby interrupting the movement of thought that was to carry the viewer outside to look at the façade.

By now, as we'd studied the light trays and the battalions of slides in front of us, we'd learned to think in terms of "It's not that we need *more* slides. We just have six too many of something. Which are they?" We suddenly knew that amusing as our "sleepy people" section was, it was working against the narrative. It had to go, and in the process we realized that there's a point at which you must stop savoring the aesthetic value of a photograph and begin wondering about how it helps move the story along.

Music: The Wordless Narrator

Perhaps it's because music is such an integral part of *Like It Is* that it's also the hardest to verbalize. All we can say is, follow your instincts and don't be afraid to be intuitive. It also helps to know all kinds of music and to have access to a large library of LPs.

A nonverbal presentation automatically places a premium on the relation between the visual and the aural. For example's sake, picture in your mind's eye the Winged Victory of Samothrace, and imagine you're hearing the opening bars of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It's a powerful combination. In fact, Beethoven acts as a filter, both intellectual and emotional, highlighting certain very definite qualities of the sculpture. Then "hear" your favorite Chopin étude. Suddenly you're seeing quite a different work of art; your attention is being focused on new emotional relationships.

The opening section of *Like It Is* runs four minutes. Succeeding it is a section of three and a half minutes in which we look at art objects in considerable detail. The first two objects are, in fact, rooms: the Hall of Armor and the Blumenthal Patio. We close this part of the film with an examination of the Badminton Sarcophagus, and we'll close this discussion of music with the musical "treatment" of these three subjects.

The first twenty seconds of the show were critical if we were going to let our young viewers know that this was not the show they probably thought they'd have to sit through. So it was an obvious solution to settle on some contemporary, swinging music. We hoped, in fact, it would come as a pleasant shock that the Museum even *knew* such music existed, let alone that the Museum would use it on behalf of their student guests.

Something bright, vital, and upbeat would also communicate one of the introduction's main themes: this Museum is a place where a lot of people have a lot of fun. A number of recordings were reviewed and perhaps it's not coincidental that we settled on something by The 18th Century Concepts, a group that specialized in applying a baroque instrumentation to pop songs. This gave us exactly what

we wanted: a combination, musically, of the old and the new. The music is an updated version of an English music-hall ditty from World War I. Judicious splicing extended it to cover the time needed for all the slides of that section. (We didn't want to introduce a second piece of music that would break the mood.) Bumptious and perky as it was, four minutes is a lot of time to spend on a simple melody, so a change of pace was definitely in order for the next piece of music, which would introduce the Hall of Armor. And we wanted the whole section to be a strong contrast to the opening.

In the knights' section, we settled down for a relatively extended look at a series of objects, all related to medieval warfare. The choice of music here was an unusual work by J.-B. Lully, composed solely for the kettle drum. It is a military march. Nothing but a stately tattoo, it instantly sets a mood of menace and suspense. Adding its dark quality to the photographs created, we think, a fairly frightening combination. It's consciously melodramatic and if it conjures up scenes of jousts and Agincourt, so much the better.

To relieve this impression of violence, we next go to another room, one of great tranquility and serenity: the Blumenthal Patio. A natural choice of music would be something Spanish, and that in turn suggested a guitar. However, the room's openness and simplicity seemed to call for something less agitated than a Spanish guitar; something more measured and calm. The answer was a solo lute performing an Elizabethan song. Historically the choice was not inaccurate, and emotionally it fit the personality of the room very well.

The final chapter in this series was the Badminton Sarcophagus. The choice of music was narrowed down by several considerations. First: the two previous sections had set a pattern we didn't want to break, i.e., the use of a solo instrument. Second: the sarcophagus was Roman and thus did not immediately suggest an instrument that would be historically accurate (or pleasant to the ear). Third: therefore, the determining factors should be our own feelings toward the object and what we wanted to emphasize about it.

Having decided *that*, the rest was fairly sim-

ple. Enormously convoluted, the high-relief surface of the sarcophagus is largely sylvan in subject matter. Whereas medium close-ups would have conveyed an unfortunate feeling of busyness, we chose to show the intricacies of the carvings in a series of close-ups that only heightened the sense of flowing line. And these close-ups were being projected on the dissolve unit, which meant we were melting from one detail to another in a way that seemed most agreeable.

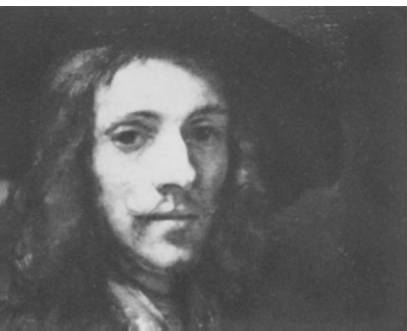
So, by the process of elimination, we worked out a definition of what the music would have to be. We were looking for a solo instrument, and the sylvan subject matter suggested a shepherd's flute; and while we wanted a melody that was simple, open, and transparent, it should be a long, flowing melody. Fortunately we were able to find something that qualified. It's an old English folk song called "I Know My Love," performed on the recorder. In this case, there is absolutely no historical connection between the music and what it is underscoring, and the ultrasensitive viewer may be thrown off in the first few seconds trying to relate a folk song on a recorder to a Roman sarcophagus. But all we can say is that it does work.

This last example of music also exemplifies something alluded to earlier, and that is consciously establishing tension (or lack of obvious relationship) between the object and the music. While not advised as a steady diet, such tension does make the viewer assume that there is in fact a relationship and will prompt him to find it. Such tension, or irony, literally underscores not so much a particular historical fact but the editor's (or photographer's) personal point of view toward it.

The Toughest Critics in Town

Eventually, all was finished. The slides were converted into a movie . . . we faced our first audiences. And now, torn between the desire to appear modest and devotion to journalistic truth, we have to admit that *Like It Is* is a hit. Or at least that's what the Museum tells us. Three of the most gratifying comments from our young critics are these:





Many museums seem cold, but this brief picture actually gave an air of warmth about the Museum as it should be.

and

I liked the part with the people, because that's what a museum is, people. Without people, it is not a museum and does not fulfill its purpose.

Finally:

I thought that this short introduction was excellent, especially on a school trip when time is limited, necessitating a cursory examination of the Museum. I think the lack of narrative helped to create an atmosphere in which the observer is credited with enough intelligence to understand it without a lengthy explanation.

But not all students like all parts of the movie. Nor, perhaps, should they, if you believe that teen-agers are works-in-progress and respond unpredictably to what you thought was really quite predictable. Our favorite comment tends to be this one, quoted exactly as received; the student was passing judgment on a concerto by C. P. E. Bach used during one section of the film. Said he: "The harpsichorde has got to go," and then added: "The rest of the film was pretty good."

The Advantages of Not Being The Metropolitan Museum of Art

At this point the thought does occur that someone else might think the Metropolitan Museum would be a better resource for such a show than any other, smaller institution.

While it's true that the Metropolitan does offer riches beyond the photographer's dreams of avarice, it also has some disadvantages to visual narrators such as we are. Or to put it

this way, smaller collections offer their own advantages.

For instance.

Simply by being smaller, smaller museums don't require that the photographer record such a staggering range of cultures, media, and objects as the Metropolitan does. For us, it would be a relief to try surveying a museum one-third the size of the Metropolitan. Within a smaller perimeter, such a survey would become less of a paraphrase, and more of an inventory.

By the same token, fifteen minutes on the screen would give you the chance to look more closely at the individual works of art.

In our case, we had only fifteen minutes in which to meet two goals that are almost mutually exclusive: to suggest the contents of the Museum and to study a few objects in detail. To do one, obviously, leaves less time for the other. To apply those two goals to a smaller collection, then, would be much easier.

In the long run, the size of a museum is less important than its quality. Assuming that your camera is in focus, the beauty of the object will shine through. If you can communicate your own feeling toward the object, that beauty will shine more brightly for your audience. The best advice about how to project your own feeling is simply to have fun and like what you're doing. As advice goes, ours is neither very technical nor very aesthetic. But if *Like It Is* succeeds the way we wanted it to, it succeeds—we now realize—because we did love what we were doing.

NOTE

The Metropolitan Museum of Art: Like It Is, as well as *The Museum Hero* (see pages 225 to 229), are available for rental through the Education Department of the Museum. The fee for each is \$7.

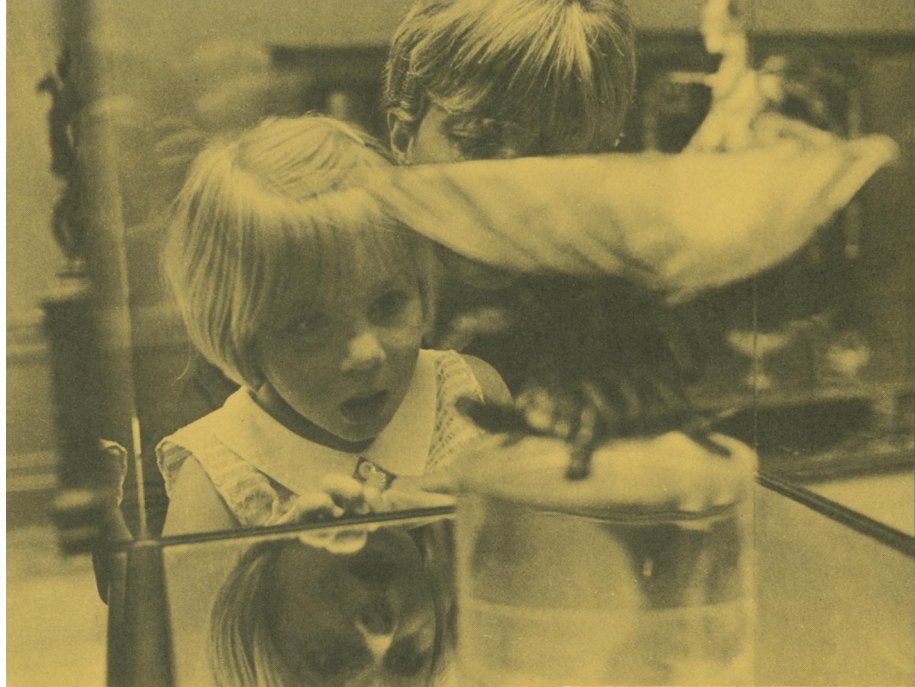


A Minitour

An Hour in the Museum with a Young Child

SARAH WHITEMORE

Museum Volunteer Committee

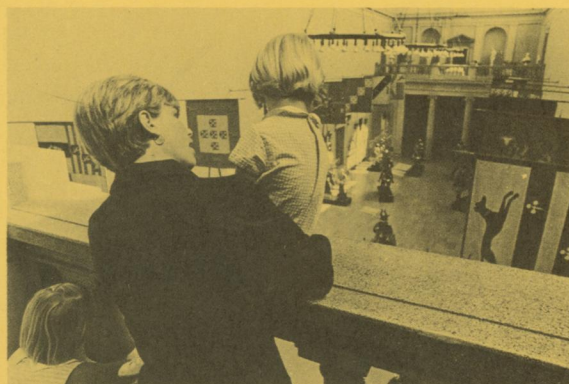
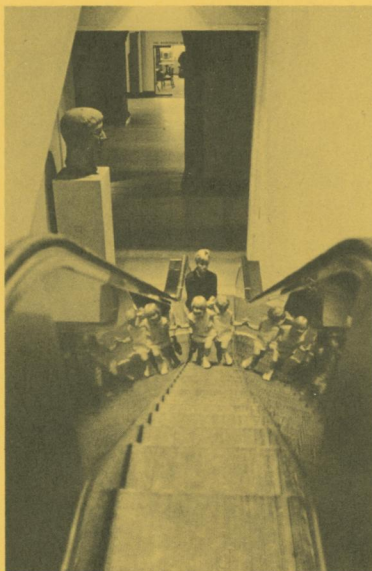


A PARENT, UNCLE, GRANDPARENT – or anyone who has tried it – knows the frustration of bringing a preschool child with him to the Museum and leaving with a sense of less than mutual fulfillment. A child's natural inclination to touch, climb, run, and shout is magnified by the sheer size of the building, the fascinating textures, and the rich diversity of the objects in the collection. Although some children may be awed by the grandeur, most seem to be stimulated to kinetic investigation.

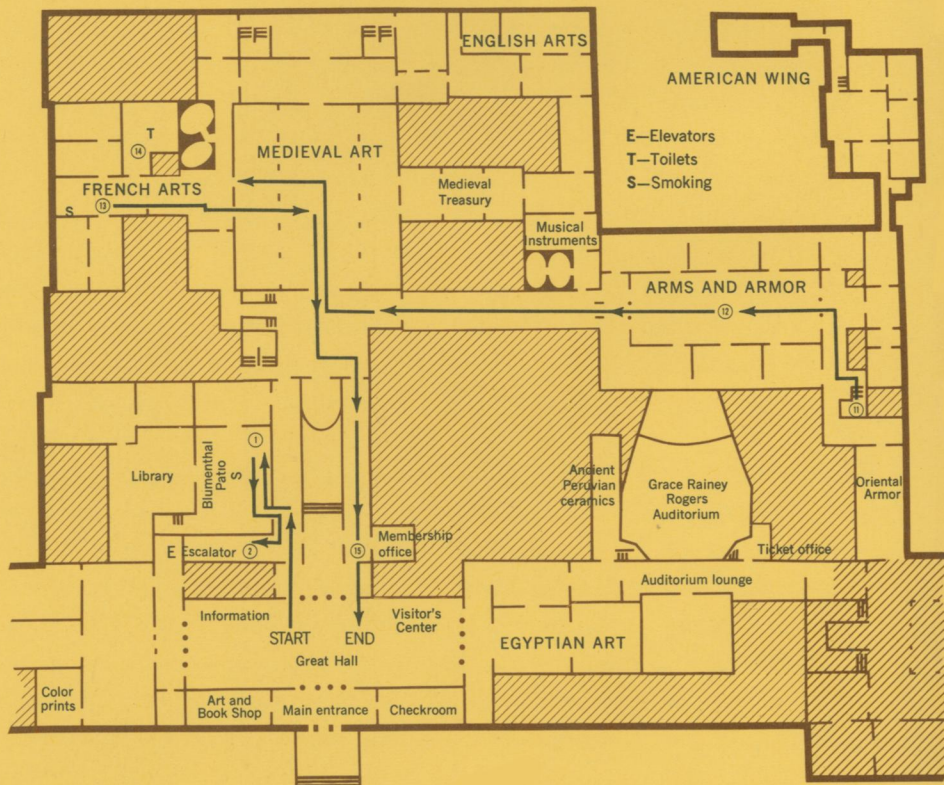
The key to a successful visit with a young child is to encourage his interest in areas where he can participate – mechanical as well as artistic. He may well find a water bubbler, a fountain, or the escalator as intriguing as a glistening knight on horseback. The game of peek-a-boo can be played on a sophisticated plane by peering between the slots in the elegant balustrades on the balcony or through the several mysterious openings of an ancient temple. A display case that has a mirrored bottom creates surprise and delight when the child suddenly sees himself. Imitating, another favorite form of activity, can be tried with any of the statues – the big golden statue of the archer and the Degas dancers on the balcony are dramatic challenges to any energetic child.

The following visit was conceived as a half-hour to one-hour circle tour through varied parts of the collection, designed to appeal to the adult as well as the child. (It assumes that you have already explored the Junior Museum, which always features an exhibition created especially for children, filled with intriguing devices such as push buttons, earphones, and peepholes.) Don't be surprised if the child responds to the beauty about him and makes his own stops along the way. The objects that arrest a small child's attention are part of the endless fascination that children offer adults.

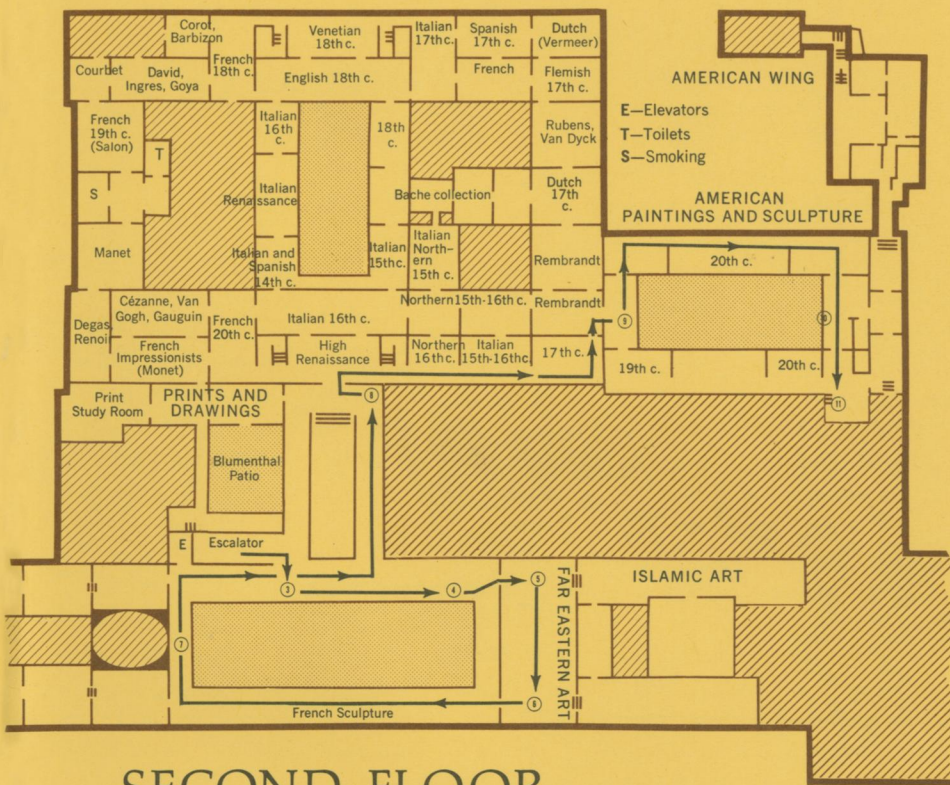
*Photographs:
Michael Fredericks, Jr.*



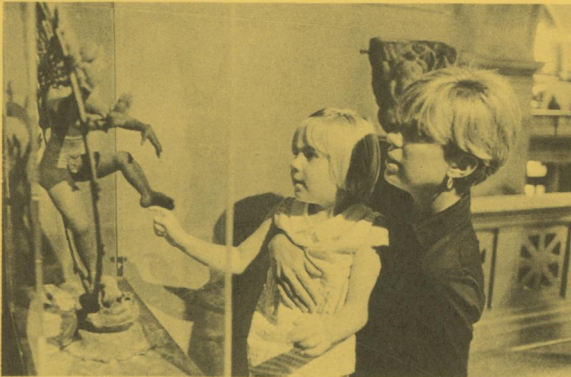
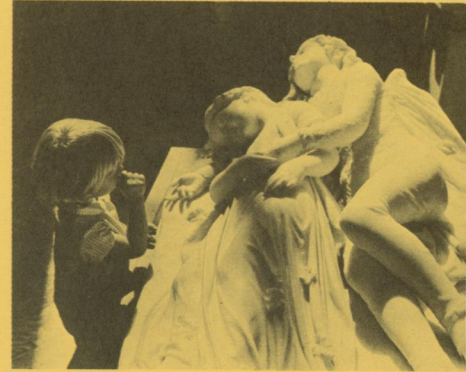
MAIN FLOOR



EUROPEAN PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURE



SECOND FLOOR



Starting in the Great Hall, go to the Blumenthal Patio, where the first attraction for children is the fountain (1). It makes a fine noise and is so high that it seems very special and mysterious. From there to the escalator (2). What child doesn't like an escalator? This whisks you up to the second-floor balcony (3), where one (a small one) can peer through the balustrade and see the moving crowds in the Great Hall below. An even better view can be had from a grown-up's arms.

If you walk along the balcony toward the Far East galleries there is a fine statue of Siva (4), a god portrayed with many arms and hands – most intriguing to a four- or five-year-old. In the Chinese Sculpture Gallery (5), a peek into the temple (6) from several directions is distracting and different.

Go out the door to the right of the temple and continue straight along this side of the balcony. The dramatic sculpture in this area with its curving forms and often impressive scale is a real rouser. Among others, there is Bourdelle's large golden archer straining at his bow, a series of delicately poised dancers by Degas (7), and a sleek black panther.

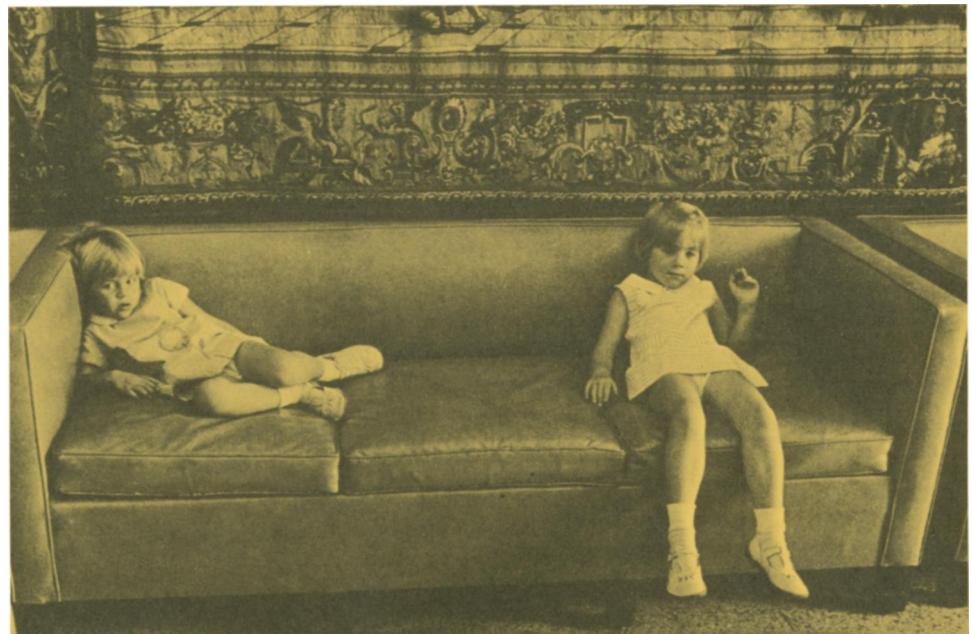
From the balcony go to the top of the main staircase. There is another fine fountain (8) with a bubbling pool at just the right level for little ones. There is a guard in that vicinity, too, and he can be as much of an attraction as the water.

To get to the next point of interest, enter the

paintings galleries, turn right, stroll through sections of the Renaissance galleries and into a room filled with Rembrandts, and finally out onto the balcony (9) over the hall of the knights. Lift the child up and enjoy his excitement when he sees all those horses, the shining armor, and the colorful banners. To get down to the knights turn left or right (left through the rooms of American twentieth-century art seems to have more appeal), and go around the balcony. There you'll come across *Babes in the Wood* (10), a sentimental sculpture of endless fascination for the young, which depicts two children who had gone astray in a forest and lie dead in each others' arms.

Go down the staircase (11) and into the Equestrian Court (12). When everyone has had enough of the charging horses, walk out past the Northern Renaissance period rooms and into the medieval galleries. On the far side of the huge Medieval Sculpture Court, in the French arts area, there are two leather couches (13), almost never occupied, where children can rest and mother can have a cigarette. Right there, too, are the rest rooms (14) – an inevitable part of every child's visit.

From here, one can take a direct route to the main entrance by returning through the medieval galleries and heading for Fifth Avenue. If you keep to the left of the main staircase, the last attraction appears outside the Membership Office – the water fountain (15)!



Shooting *The* *Museum* *Hero*

RITA MARAN

*Assistant for Special Projects,
Education Department*



ON A QUIET AFTERNOON last July, a Museum guard watched in amazement as two sinister-looking young men, dressed gangland-1920s-style, streaked across the floor of the Chinese Sculpture Gallery. In hot pursuit raced two armed men. One was armed with a gun. The other was armed with a camera.

The gun was a toy. The camera wasn't.

Suddenly a sharp order came from the rear of the gallery: "Cut!"

The action stopped abruptly. The young men involved in the "chase" relaxed. So did the guard. He knew that the others were actually a cameraman and two actors at work making an unprecedented film for the Museum.

The movie, *The Museum Hero*, was written by Alfonso Sanchez, Jr., a nineteen-year-old film maker, and filmed by him with the assistance of a versatile crew of actors/





prop men/jacks-of-all-trades. Mr. Sanchez and his crew whizzed in and out of galleries to create their twelve-minute filmed fantasy centering around a museum director's dream of a museum robbery. They were not one whit fazed by the awesome works of art surrounding them, nor by a movie actor named Thomas Hoving (typecast on the spot for the role of Museum director).

Earlier this year the film maker and his crew had attended the Education Department's seminars "Movies for Teen-agers by Teen-agers," conducted by film consultant Rodger Larson and sponsored by the New York State Council on the Arts. Mr. Larson discussed film making with several thousand teen-agers from all communities of New York City during the Saturday sessions in the Museum's auditoriums. He and a Museum jury also reviewed original movies submitted by some of the youngsters. Those whose films were judged most promising were invited to submit new scripts and to compete for a production subsidy offered through the Education Department by the Council. The jury then studied an impressive array of well-conceived scripts, from which Mr. Sanchez's was chosen for production. The concluding phase of the program was the awarding of the Council's grant, providing him with the consultation services of film maker Jaime Barrios of Young Filmmakers' Foundation, as well as all necessities – cameras, lights, film, laboratory facilities – to transform his story treatment into a movie.

The Museum Hero will be made available to public and private schools, and it is hoped that this film will open the Museum's doors a little wider in invitation and welcome to the thousands of students who see it. We anticipate that new sources of artistic creativity will be uncovered or stimulated as a result of a movie that, in spirit, breaks down formerly intimidating walls.



Film maker Sanchez: "I can only make the movie when the ideas and the script come from me . . . if somebody asked me to make his ideas into a movie, I wouldn't do it."

"We started making movies in 1966, after some professional producer filmed our ball game in the park, and then gave us the cameras so we could do some shooting of each other."

"'The Museum Hero' was done with a script, and has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A couple of years ago, I just went out with a camera and shot anything, and made up the story later."



"Let's go, boys. Ven por aquí. This is serious, no fooling now. You've just been chased . . . you're falling . . . hard!"

"I used to watch a lot of Al Capone shows and Westerns on TV. One of the movies I made was called 'Mister Law, Mister Villain, and Mister Geronimo.'

"I'm not interested in serious violence . . . I've been through it awake and even in my dreams, and it's out of my movies already. Except for funny scenes, like in 'The Museum Hero.'"

"After 'The Museum Hero,' I'd like to make a movie about my own childhood. I'd act in it, too. And show other kids how to stay out of messes."





Old Masters- New Apprentices

BLYTHE BOHNEN *High School Lecturer*

WHAT ABOUT Jaime Rivera, who has taught himself to make magnificent portraits by copying Clairol ads, but whose pentecostal parents feel that the devil has taken hold of him because he does nothing but draw all day? Who somehow got hold of a book on Michelangelo and soaked up every page of it, but whose mind otherwise is a vacuum about art?

What about Otis Crawford, who signs his work "Otis, the one great artist," whose work radiates a penetrating and versatile, perhaps major, talent, but whose art education consists of one elective a year in high school?

What about Luisa Martínez, who got an "excellent, very talented" critique on the art trial test she sent for, but whose family was unable to finance more than the course at a neighborhood "art school" where she copied Technicolor calendar landscapes and portraits of saucer-eyed children?

Does the Metropolitan have anything to do with these young artists-to-be? With the art school resources of New York City available, the Museum need not enter the professional

field. Indeed, with the present plant this would be impossible. Still, we wondered if our collections could play a significant role in a studio course for underprivileged teen-agers.

As part of a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and with the help of a generous friend of the Museum, the Education Department held a small pilot class this past summer to see in what ways the Museum could implement its charter goal of "developing the study of the fine arts" with serious high school students from deprived areas. Jaime, Otis, and Luisa were three of a class of thirteen chosen from public and parochial schools and community centers on the basis of their past work. None of them had been to a museum more than once.

The small size of the class was a deliberate choice based on the assumption that "exposure to culture" on a broad basis, though necessary and good, remains a tenuous, usually superficial means of relating kids of the ghettos to the culture that is strongly enclosed by and identified with the sophisticated white

establishment. “Exposure” fails because it does not establish any *personal* connection between the “white” culture and the minority group and therefore allows no feeling of personal claim or involvement. We wanted to offer the students a chance to establish an intimate rapport with the Museum’s collections, and by such intense work, claim this culture as their own right. This personal contact is a real investment in the future because it reaches the students on a level that continues to operate long after they leave the program.

The class met for eight weeks in a classroom at the Loyola School on Park Avenue at Eighty-third Street to work from the model, still life, or imagination. The students were introduced to the Museum’s galleries and encouraged to spend time here, observing and sketching, or in group discussion.

For the first week, the students worked on their own. They had to get comfortable and we wanted to get acquainted with their ways of working. It was clear that any routine that was developed in the Museum would be an outgrowth of the premises the instructors explored in class. Bosley Latimer, who had been teaching an art workshop at Harlem Teams for Self Help, Inc., for four years, evolved an approach that seemed valid on any terms, but especially for the kids we were working with. The teachers try, first of all, to find out how the student sees things. Does he always key up colors? Does he insist on the outline of objects, or does he use areas of tone? Is the flat pattern in his work insistent, or does he seem most concerned with solidity and volume? Once a student’s propensities are understood, the teacher can begin to help him discover the formal consequences of his vision. Luisa Janáček always juxtaposed brilliant colors, substituting oranges and purples for the browns and grays before her. She needed to study how one color affects another adjacent to it, what colors attract the eye in a composition. Her friend, Luisa Martínez, turned her back on a colorful still life and drew the dirty brushes and turpentine cans spread over a studio worktable. She saw light and tone: the quality of metal surfaces, transparent bottles, oily rags, the polished tabletop. She needed

to study control of tones, to pay attention to the edges of her brushstrokes, and to learn which color mixtures recede, which advance. Although there were lessons everyone in the class had to master for his general knowledge and experience, the individual student and individual growth provided the direction of the course.

After a week we began to know the students as people: Victor, Amelia, Jesus D. and Jesus G., Otis, Luisa M. and Luisa J., Charles, Albert, Arnold, Jaime, James, and Dexter.

By the end of that week we had also seen that their intellectualization was lower and their commitment higher than we might have guessed. Thus, the many analytical exercises we had planned in the galleries were not possible until intellectual ground had been laid. For example, the directive “make a sketch/diagram of the basic composition of this Titian” presupposed that they understood what “composition” is. They did not. Nor had they developed the skill of sketching quickly and minimally, recording just structural essentials. With the exception of Luisa J., none of them had thought or verbalized about what they were doing. Their work was entirely intuitive, their decisions unconsciously made. Composition, balance, design, harmony, rhythm, tension, spatial relationship – none of these concepts existed in their minds. In most cases, even the bare terms were not recognized.

So each concept had to be introduced through the presentation of a lesson, followed by several practice periods with individual criticism. We tried to develop several compositional basics: how the eye can be *directed* around a painting; how its *speed* and *time pat-*



terns can be controlled; how a painting can be *related* to its edges. The concept of rhythm was exploited with rapid figure studies that served at the same time as a lesson in developing sketching style.

As we investigated these concepts in the studio, we inaugurated visits to the Museum. A lesson in foreshortening was held in the Arms and Armor gallery where you can get wonderful head-on views of the lances, or, from its balcony, look down on the knights. Perspective and spatial relationship became exciting realities.

The class's first real exposure to analysis of a specific painting was a lecture delivered by Mr. Latimer on the sequence of forms and the rhythms in the composition of *The Death of Socrates* by the eighteenth-century French painter Jacques-Louis David. From then on *The Death of Socrates* became *the* reference point of the summer. Mere mention of this painting was sufficient evidence to silence all opposition in an argument over aesthetics.

Often, we would suggest a different painting to each student to be looked at carefully. Luisa J. did a sketch of Van Gogh's *Cypresses* showing eye movement around the canvas. To her surprise, she discovered that the textural strokes were mainly what led the eye. This was a great help in bringing her to an awareness of the meaningful use of texture, which in her work was merely a filling in of areas. (As could be expected, Luisa later took tremendously to a Matisse in the summer loan show.) But letting the kids wander at random through the collection, "digging" artists they liked, proved more successful. And their choices gave us an indication of what each held as an ideal. Sometimes this was a shock: Albert's first favorite was an undistinguished and sentimental Salon painting. His teachers were secretly aghast. What could he see in *that* of all the paintings in the Museum? He told us he liked the large round basin. A week later he came on his own to firmer ground: Cézannes that were a mature version of his own little patches of tone and color.

Comparing their preferences to each student's productions was fascinating. Sometimes

their own talents ran counter to their expressed choices, a clue to confusion and inconsistencies in their work. Sometimes it was helpful in assisting us to guide the student in a direction she desired but didn't yet know. Luisa Martínez, who is virtually inarticulate about art, said that she liked Cézannes because she felt she could put her hand around his apples. Space. Volume. Soon she was coordinating her tonal proclivities with this new interest, in still lifes of her own.

Jesus Galindo sympathized with not one or two artists, but a whole genre. On his first trip to the Metropolitan, he worked for two and a half hours on a study of a Hubert Robert. A few days later, he quietly rebelled against the large quick drawings the class was doing, politely requested tiny brushes, and started in on a landscape that took him three weeks to complete.

Explaining *why* they liked x or y, often not for the obvious reasons, was especially important for the students. For, in identifying their feelings, they began, in rough form, to isolate and understand the elements of art.

In the studio, this knowledge of artists was of great help in communication. "Do you remember in that Degas you liked how the floor was handled? Well, you could use diagonal boards to move the eye into *your* painting, too." "Art talk" became more comfortable as the term progressed. By the third week, students were cheerfully insulting each other by comparing their work to that of unpopular painters. "Well," Luisa J. declared, "it's encouraging to me to know that there are some pretty crummy paintings in this Museum. Like that Monet, for instance. . . ." While art historians can love everything, it is important for art students to dislike as well as to admire, and issue such challenges to artists of the past.

By choosing their soulmates through history the kids also strengthened their own identities as artists. The discovery in the Museum of precedents for tastes only timidly articulated before, gave to many students the security of belonging to a tradition, the courage to give expression to their visual fantasies, and made irrelevant the questions often put to



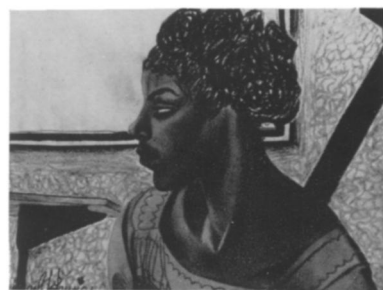
them by their peers: “Are you a weirdo if you paint and draw?” “Aren’t artists nuts?” At the Whitney Museum, Dexter really went for one painter. “Hey, man, he’s really good!” In fact, his style resembled Dexter’s. Jaime stopped short before a Baziotes – “His painting is just like mine! Except I used green here instead of blue.”

In choosing their own activities in the Museum, the students went beyond the painting galleries. After the quick drawing exercises in class, many of them would spend the afternoon sketching the sculpture. Rodin and Carpeaux were the favorites. Although they were

assimilating a lot unconsciously about selection, rhythm, and so forth, they were just using the pieces as substitute models, in the old tradition of plaster casts. Amelia drew in the period rooms. Victor used the Great Hall for architectural details and perspective studies.

Once begun, this process of drawing on tradition to forge an identity could extend beyond the Metropolitan not only to other museums, but to works available only in reproduction.

James cried, “The artist – he should know how to draw *everything!*” and was given a paperback about Leonardo da Vinci. Soon he



arrived in class with pages of hands, shrubbery, and water reflections captured in Central Park. And, later, after one scorching weekend in late July, studies of water rhythms gushing from an open hydrant appeared.

During the summer the question arose of what the exact value of sketching in the galleries was. We eventually found that sketching often fixed a fleeting visual insight. Albert's careful study of the Géricault nude undoubtedly set firmly in his mind the use of color as well as tone for modeling.

But, Amelia objected, the paintings were another person's interpretation and she wanted to do her own. James pointed out that paintings were "from one point of view" while in sketching the sculpture "you could walk all around." In the beginning they viewed the paintings purely as a source of subject matter. The growth to another way of looking in which they could learn something from them took varying amounts of time. Luisa commented after the exercise on eye movement with an early Italian Madonna and Child, "I never liked all those religious paintings: the same faces, the same expressions. Now I can see that there are other things to look for in them."

The kids took to the Museum differently. Initially, most of them seemed not particularly curious, rather passive. They were, naturally, overwhelmed by the magnitude of the place. On his first visit, Jesus de León looked doubtfully at his new sportshirt and freshly ironed chinos and sighed, "Gee, I can't go in there like this!" Apparently he thought that a suit and tie were the only proper attire. But by the fourth week Albert and Victor were dashing off to go sketching with a casual "See you in the studio later." Even shy Luisa Martínez, who at first was too nervous to draw a Cézanne unless one of us went with her, the last week the program was in session said, "I used to mind everyone staring, but now I don't care." She knew she belonged as much or more than anyone else.

A few, Victor, Amelia, and Otis, were afraid of compromising their originality; they didn't want to look at anyone's work, in class or in the Museum, and didn't. And Jesus D. got

enough inspiration from his first two-and-a-half-hour drawing to set him going on three lovely landscapes in oil. He will not, he says, want to return to the galleries until he has exhausted all his own inventions on this theme.

Those who most conspicuously liked working in the Museum seemed to be those students who were most confident of their own talents, and thought of themselves securely as artists. Far from fearing a loss of identity, they were certain that their vision could absorb all the past to project it in a new form into the future. As James studied Ingres in the galleries and Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael in books, he said thoughtfully, "Well, that's how painters painted *then*. It is different now." *He* is the difference now. Jesus announced one day at lunch, "Everything I learned, I got from the paintings—all the paintings." He is equally excited by El Greco and the contemporary light sculptures he saw at the Whitney. Jesus even stopped coming to class the last two weeks, because he felt he would learn more in the galleries.

We discovered that our most effective teaching method was a flexible personal approach to the course. Individualized attention is the key, we think, not just for instructing "underprivileged" kids, but for the "ordinary" student as well, who traditionally feels uncomfortable about a gallery course.

This is understandable, for in the depersonalized herding of groups from one masterpiece to another, too often hundreds of years of fierce personal experience recorded in the paintings become lumped into one often bitter pill labeled "culture." On group visits to the Museum, the teacher ought to point out things of particular use for each student in each painting, once his painterly inclinations have been discerned. "Ellen, look at the handling of color here—this bright red is made important by all the duller colors set around it, isn't it?" Reference to the same work might highlight a different aspect for another individual: "Do you see, Peter, how overlapping the forms gives an illusion of depth?"

The class closed with the close of summer. As we looked at the pile of work completed, we were surprised at how much, how varied,

OPPOSITE :

Some of the work done by the class. The first and second pictures in the middle column are copies of paintings in the Museum—a Ruisdael landscape and a Géricault nude



and how good it was. At the students' request, the class had been extended from the original three-hour morning session to include a three-hour afternoon period as well. Six of the kids went downtown to still another class run by Mr. Latimer from five to seven o'clock each evening. Many worked at home as best they could, on weekends sketching their parents, vistas from apartment windows, views from the roof tops, and studies in Central Park. Their enthusiasm and diligence was documented. On the last day of class, a visitor appeared. The two Luisas volunteered to show him around the Museum. An hour later when they arrived in the studio, having "covered" every exhibition hall, Luisa J. was visibly shaken. She said Luisa M. had attracted an *audience* as she lectured on – what else? – The Death of Socrates!

The depth and concentration of the all-day eight-week session changed the kids from gifted youngsters with secret dreams to students sure of their talents, with ambition, and the determination to fulfill themselves.

Jesus de León is changing from a general to an academic diploma program in high school. Luisa J. will be taking equivalent courses in summer school so she can qualify for entrance requirements at Pratt Institute in 1970. Jaime is being tutored extra hours after school, Victor making plans for study at a community college. Albert just passed a special late exam and is entering the High School of Music and Art. Dexter is now enrolled at the School of Visual Arts on a scholarship. All of them are continuing their studies with Mr. Latimer in the evenings.

We feel satisfied that we have found a new and vibrant means of opening up the wealth of the Museum's collections to serious art students of high school age.

Now that we have worked with some of these students, we see how enthusiastic and devoted the kids are, how much such a program matters. We have more than the real but immeasurable personality development to show for the summer session. We have stacks of drawings, and kids enrolled in professional schools, and tested procedures to offer teachers elsewhere.

Art History for Pre-College Students: A Museum Seminar

At what age should young people be encouraged to begin a serious study of works of art? Perhaps it is symptomatic of our traditionally lopsided veneration of the printed word that American colleges expect high school seniors to have at least a nodding acquaintance with the poetry of such diverse writers as Donne, Shelley, T. S. Eliot, Frost, and Dylan Thomas, while at the same time remaining almost totally ignorant of the works of El Greco, Rembrandt, Manet, Degas, and other great masters of the visual arts. Yet each of the 100,000 high school students who visit the Museum every year is expected somehow to "appreciate" within the space of a few hours – and usually without any preparation – an almost overwhelming array of powerfully expressive masterpieces by artists he has never heard of and may not hear of again until his last year or two in college. But should young people have to wait until their twenties to learn how to use their eyes or how to study a vital part of their own cultural heritage? Surely not. Yet what can be done to fill this curious gap in our educational system? What sort of contribution can the art museum make toward the aesthetic development of young people?

As a partial answer to these questions, the Museum's Education Department decided to offer during the summer a special course entitled *Backgrounds of Modern Art*, designed for pre-college students interested in the history and appreciation of art. Unlike the Museum's earlier programs for young people, *Backgrounds of Modern Art* was to be limited to a small enrollment and conducted as a seminar, where both teacher and students could participate in free and open discussions. Letters describing the course, along with application forms, were sent out to more than two hundred and fifty principals of public, private, and parochial schools in the greater New York City metropolitan area. After a careful screening, thirty-six outstanding students were selected and divided into two sections. One, which I taught, met in the morning, and the other, taught by Linda Lovell, staff

lecturer, met in the afternoon. Class sessions were each two hours in length, three per week – a total of nine sessions. Students were expected, however, to spend at least an equivalent amount of time in the galleries and the Museum Library, where the Periodical Room was stocked with shelves of books on reserve. Three paperback textbooks were also provided for each student, two for outside reading during the course, the third to be explored in the months ahead, as a sort of continuing dialogue with ideas merely touched on but not fully developed during the summer.

Several of the thirty-six students enrolled in *Backgrounds of Modern Art* still had one more year of high school ahead of them, but the others had just graduated and were looking forward to continuing their study of art in college. Nearly all had received some kind of formal art instruction in high school, but those without it did not seem particularly handicapped – at least after the first sessions – because such instruction had been studio-oriented, with little or no emphasis on the study of works of art. A few members of the class had been exposed to some art history in brief introductory courses, but these seem to have been little more than superficial surveys.

The Education Department's seminar, on the other hand, concentrated mainly on a relatively small number of paintings by leading artists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that could be found in the Museum's own collections, as well as in those of the Frick and the Museum of Modern Art. Consequently, one of the important differences between *Backgrounds of Modern Art* and most college art history courses was the daily opportunity it offered students to study original works rather than reproductions. To be sure, slides were used during parts of the seminar, but more than half of each class period was held in the galleries, where discussions could take place in the actual presence of paintings and sculptures. As a means of pointing up these discussions, all students were required to write analytical papers on two

paintings of their choice – an assignment that most agreed had made them look intensively for the first time at original works of art. Most members of the class also cited as particularly stimulating a special visit to the Print Department's study room, where fine impressions of aquatints by Goya, lithographs by Daumier, and original prints by great artists in other media, along with drawings by such masters of modern art as Ingres, Delacroix, Degas, Manet, and Matisse, were placed on tables for close inspection. Studying these drawings and prints "behind the scenes" was far more exciting than if they had been glassed and framed and put on display in the galleries.

In a museum with collections as extensive and diverse as those of the Metropolitan, it is not only tempting but often very useful for teacher and students to make occasional digressions into other arts and historical periods than those under immediate scrutiny. Consider, for instance, the kind of background necessary for an appreciation of Jacques-Louis David's *The Death of Socrates*, the first painting discussed during the seminar. To most young people in this psychedelic, multimedia age, a neo-classical picture of this sort must seem steeped in empty rhetoric and melodramatic posturing – unless they have had at least some introduction to the ancient classical world that David admired so much. Fortunately, the Museum has a fine collection of Greek and Roman antiquities that can be visited on the way to the painting galleries. But to understand the polemic significance of *The Death of Socrates*, it is also necessary for the student to be acquainted with the elegant but frivolous world of the rococo that David opposed when he painted this austere moral picture on the eve of the French Revolution. During the first day of the seminar, therefore, students also visited the Museum's French period rooms, where paintings by Boucher and other artists of the second half of the eighteenth century are hung in appropriate architectural settings, together with furniture and decorative arts of the same era. Finally, on leaving these galleries for the paintings upstairs, the class saw two more reminders of the world David was to reject: Boucher's *Toilet of Venus*, painted for Mme de Pompadour, and,

directly beneath it, a superb commode made in 1784 for Marie Antoinette, whose execution David himself was to help bring about just nine years later.

In the painting galleries alone, all sorts of interesting comparisons are possible, which would be less effective if attempted by slides in a classroom. Only a short distance from *The Death of Socrates*, the student can again find a link to the classical past in *The Rape of the Sabines*, by the seventeenth-century painter Nicolas Poussin, whom David admired above all other French artists. In the same gallery with the *Socrates*, portraits by David can be compared with several by his Spanish contemporary Goya and with others by Ingres, who succeeded David as champion of the classically oriented Academy of the Fine Arts. There, too, are several paintings by Ingres's archenemy, Eugène Delacroix, whose passionate literary romanticism is wonderfully expressed in *The Abduction of Rebecca*.

In the questionnaire filled in by students at the conclusion of the course, much importance was attached to the fact that the class discussions, as well as most of the outside study assignments, took place in the physical presence of the works of art themselves. Many students felt strongly, however, that the seminar should have lasted four weeks rather than three. All enjoyed this opportunity to study in a museum. Indeed, about a third of the students in both sections returned for an extra, informal session the first week after the seminar had been terminated, and eight showed up again for another meeting toward the end of August. Several also expressed an interest in volunteer work at the Visitors' Center during the coming summer, and one student inquired about the possibility of working at the Museum while attending evening sessions at college in Brooklyn.

No tuition was charged for the seminar. Expenses involved were covered by funds from a grant to the Education Department by the New York State Council on the Arts for the development of a pilot high school program.

THOMAS M. FOLDS
Dean of Education

Teaching the Teacher

Not surprisingly, the Junior Museum has been oriented almost exclusively toward children. Within the scope of the Metropolitan's collections, Junior Museum exhibitions are planned with children's questions, interests, and enthusiasms foremost in mind. Gallery talks are offered on their favorite subjects as well as on topics they study in school. Film showings, art entertainments, archaeology lectures seek to present serious aspects of art history in ways that are easily understood, lively, and fun. Activities such as last year's Rag Tapestry Workshop and the ever-popular Studio Hours cater to youngsters who especially enjoy creating with materials. For young people with practical curiosity, a new course, *Our Museum: A Key to How It Works*, is being given this year, with lecture-discussions, gallery tours, and glimpses behind the scenes. The Junior Museum Library, with its wide-ranging collection of art books on open shelves, provides an inviting place for children to browse as well as to find answers to specific questions.

While our primary concern remains focused on children, developments within the schools and within the Museum move us to join the high school and adult divisions of the Education Department in devoting more time and thought to working with teachers.

In recent years, changes in the school curriculum have resulted in a new emphasis on art appreciation, archaeology, and the humanities. Teachers are turning to us for help in presenting these subjects, for which they often lack both background and experience. The Museum's resources for providing such help are impressive. The collections, covering five thousand years and many cultures, are of course freely available; the significance of these works of art, however, is not self-evident to the uninitiated. Participating in the Museum's program of adult lectures and recorded tours can be helpful. Bringing their students for staff-conducted tours can be helpful. For a small rental fee, teachers may borrow slides for classroom use (the Slide Library contains nearly a quarter of a million slides). The impressive resources of the Museum Library are available to teachers for their own research. Books, pamphlets, post cards, and other reproductions may be purchased at an educational discount from the Art and Book Shop. A wealth of material goes to those teachers of American history who are participating in the program described on pages 205 to 210. An

in-service course for New York City teachers has been offered each semester for the last eight years. Still, more specific, more convenient assistance to more teachers is needed.

Concurrently, the pressure on the Museum for gallery guidance for school classes leaps ahead of our capacity to provide it. In spite of the fact that the New York City Board of Education has assigned three teachers to assist our sizable staff, last year we were able to guide only thirty-seven per cent of visiting classes on the elementary and junior high school level, and nineteen per cent on the high school level. Unguided groups tend to mill aimlessly through the building, creating crowded and noisy conditions disturbing to all who are trying to use the galleries seriously. Teachers who know the Museum's collections well are able to plan visits that are quite as skillfully prepared, motivated, and conducted as those offered by our own staff. Such teachers, however, are rare. As an educational service as well as in self-defense, we clearly need to develop materials and techniques to enable many more teachers to guide their own classes effectively.

Some beginnings have been made. The number of in-service courses offered each semester has jumped from one to five. All are open to New York City teachers who may offer them for salary increment credit. Three are led by the teachers assigned to us by the Board of Education: a survey of the collections of the Museum, given in two sections, is taught by Arra T. Mazor and Marian Halperin from four to five-thirty on Tuesdays, and *The New Art: From the Ashcan School to the Environmental Structures* is taught by Janet Saleh Dickson on Tuesdays from four to five-forty.

In an effort to reach suburban teachers, an eight-session Teachers' Workshop on the Use of the Museum was given by Lois Mendelson on Wednesdays from four-thirty to six during May and June. At least two communities, one in New Jersey and the other in Westchester, gave in-service credit to teachers attending.

These four courses all have in common the fact that they survey the collections in whole or in part through gallery talks or slide lectures, and seek to relate these collections to the school curriculum through discussion and individual projects.

A fifth in-service course, *Field Research in the Social*

Studies, will introduce the Museum collections in a different way. To be offered for the first time this spring, this workshop course is being taught by Melanie Yaggy of the high school division of the Education Department and by George Calvert, a teacher at Intermediate School 117 in Manhattan, both of whom attended a seminar on the subject at the New York State Historical Association in Cooperstown last summer. Hazel Hertzberg, of Columbia University's Teachers College, who directed the summer seminar, is serving as consultant. By using a camera, making slides, and interviewing with the aid of a tape recorder, each teacher develops his own documentation for a topic of his choice. He also learns to consider the art object as a social and historical document, and to evaluate exhibition content and techniques.

Particularly pleasing, inasmuch as it reaches graduate students in art education, many of whom will become teachers of teachers, is a new course offered this fall by Teachers College in collaboration with the Museum. Taught by Professor William Mahoney and other members of the Teachers College faculty and by the Chairman of the Education Department and curators from the Museum staff, this three-point course, entitled Art Museums as an Educational Resource, is meeting here on Tuesdays from five-ten to six-fifty. The approach was proposed by the Education Department and developed in a series of conferences with Professor Mahoney and others: the students will learn how various departments of the Museum organize objects into exhibitions, and will be encouraged to devise their own ways of using the collections to meet specific classroom needs. They then will test their plans with visiting school groups.

We expect that all of these courses will develop a body of teachers who know how to use the Museum well. How-

ever, as there are nearly sixty thousand teachers in the New York City public school system alone, even six courses every semester can never reach them all.

In an attempt to give immediate, specific help, in January the Education Department established a consultation service, suggested and organized by Roberta Paine. Every weekday during the school year (holidays excepted), a member of our professional lecturing staff is available from three to five to help teachers who plan to guide their own classes. A slip announcing the service and urging the teacher to take advantage of it is included with every confirmation of an appointment for a Museum visit. Although the number who have come is so far somewhat disappointing, those who do are enthusiastic, and we hope they will help spread the word.

The Museum lecturers are currently preparing written outlines of suggested tours on the subjects most often requested by teachers, for use in the consultation service as well as independently. Each will be tried out first in mimeographed form and then, when we are satisfied that it works, will be printed. The Visitors' Center will also find these outlines useful in their counseling of individuals as well as unexpected groups.

Looking ahead to the outstanding exhibitions and events now being planned to celebrate the Museum's one-hundredth anniversary, we are certain that our attendance will soar. The materials and techniques we are developing now will be ready in time to help teachers and students take full advantage of the unusual opportunities the centennial year will offer.

LOUISE CONDIT
Associate in charge of the Junior Museum

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