

Contemporary World Art 2015

Putting Together a Tour

An introduction, transitions, content, questions, and a conclusion connected by a theme are the structural elements of a tour. A clear introduction, strong transitions, and a thoughtful conclusion make any tour more cohesive and help facilitate learning.

Introduction:

Welcome: Good evening, and welcome to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. My name is Ann and I will be your guide for the next hour on this Contemporary World Art Tour.

Who is on the tour: How many of you have been to the museum before? Well, welcome back, and to those of you who are first-time visitors I hope this will be just the first of many visits to the MIA. (Where are you visiting the museum from today?)

Theme, Objectives and Expectations: The theme of this Contemporary World Art tour is Cultural Reflections. On this tour we'll look at seven works of art to discover how traditions and cultural practices from the past inform how artists create in the present.

As we explore the galleries together, it is my hope that this will be a conversation; I would like to hear your thoughts, observations and discoveries.

Logistics: We will be starting on the 3rd floor, walking up two flights of stairs. There is also an elevator just over here. We will gather at the top of the stairway on 3rd floor.

Rules: Before we head up to the 3rd floor, I'd like to remind you that a large part of the museum's mission is preservation and conservation, so please be careful not to touch the art. A general guideline is to stay one foot away.

Conclusion:

A conclusion should review the theme, content, and context of a tour, express gratitude for your visitors' participation, and an invitation to return.

"This concludes this tour of Cultural Reflections in Contemporary World Art. Together we have explored how the past has influenced the present. The past shows up in surprising and refreshing ways – from ancient Cycladic art to Modigliani's *Head of a Woman*, to your grandmother's crocheted potholders to Nick Cave's *Soundsuit* – and reimagined in a completely contemporary form.

I'd like to remind you that the museum is free, and open every day except Monday with the hope that you will come back and explore the collections on your own.

Thank you for taking this journey through the museum with me today."

Working with a Theme

Contemporary World Art

The broader theme of your tour is Contemporary World Art, which includes works of art from the late 60s to the present with a global perspective. You may also include one or two Modern precursors (1900-1969) and/or include historical cultural influences when appropriate. For example a traditional 17th- century Chinese huang-hua-li yoke-back chair from the Wu Reception Hall to illustrate the cultural context for Ai Weiwei's Marble Chair of 2008.



CWA Sub-theme

As you develop your CWA tour, a sub-theme may present itself, such as “Thinking Outside the (Paint) Box: breaking away from paint on canvas” or “Encounter and Exchange: an exploration of how global trends and traditions inform contemporary art.” A sub-theme can add structure and depth to a tour. A good theme unifies the various objects on the tour and directs the focus towards a shared goal for looking and discussing.

Before you begin to organize your tour:

1. Take a walk through the galleries, as you look around consider a general theme, or themes. Choose 10 to 15 objects that work within the theme.
2. Consider the general objectives of theme. How do the objects fit within that theme? Is your theme too restrictive to include a variety of media and artists? Choose 6 to 8 objects from your list that best illustrate your theme.
3. Revise as needed to create a tight cohesive tour.

Transitions:

Transitions are 1- to 2- sentence bridges between each of the objects on your tour. They link objects and ideas and reinforce the theme of the tour. Transitions provide an opportunity to clarify, emphasize, and/or embellish ideas. Transitions are often based on either similar or contrasting ideas. They can be presented in the form of a question, activity, or statement that moves your group towards the next stop on the tour. Comments from your audience can be a great source for transitions if you are open to these opportunities.

Topics and ideas to compare and contrast.

Function Purpose. How is the object used.

Ownership. Who might have used it?

Symbolism. What, if anything, does the object symbolize?

Timeframe. When was it made or used?

Medium. What was it made of/from?

Message/Meaning. What was the artist's intent/message. What is the title of the work?

Formal Elements. What colors, shapes, and forms has the artist chosen to create the work?
How is it decorated or embellished?

Cultural content. How are the cultures similar or different?

Geographical location. Where did it originate or where was it found?

Thematic. How does it relate to the theme?

Examples:

Transition: Picasso, *Baboon and Young to Do Ho Suh, *Some/One**

Theme: "Thinking Outside the (Paint) Box: breaking away from paint on canvas"

We will move from Picasso's playful *Baboon and Young* bronze sculpture constructed from found objects to another work of art, also from metal, and also made of from found objects. But, I think you will find this work has a very different message to send. (Do Ho Suh's *Some/One*)

Phillip Guston, *Bronze* to Frank Stella, *Tahkt-I-Sulayman Variation II*

Theme: "What's My Line: a look at how artists use line"

Through your observations and comments about the strong gestural line and emotional content of *Bronze* by Philip Guston, you have captured the essence of the Abstract Expressionist movement. Now let's go see a painting by Frank Stella and explore what he may, or may not, be expressing through his painting style.

Transition: Yinka Shonibare, *Dressing Down*, 1997 to Magdalene Odundo, *Vessel*, terracotta, 1985

Theme: Cultural Reflections

Yinka Shonibare's *Dressing Down* combines global influences from Europe, Indonesia and Africa. The next artist's work draws from traditional vessels from the Democratic Republic of Congo, but she adds a decidedly contemporary twist. (Magdalene Odundo, *Vessel* from 1985 and *Vessel*, Mangbetu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 20th century pictured.)

