



Exploring Encounters:

A Study of Two Family Guides Prepared for the Exhibition

Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian

at the National Museum of the American Indian



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Office of Policy and Analysis

Smithsonian Institution

PREFACE

The Office of Policy & Analysis was pleased to conduct this study comparing two family guides prepared for the exhibition *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian* at the National Museum of the American Indian. The exhibition was simultaneously presented at the museum building on the National Mall in Washington DC (Mall) and at the George Gustav Heye Center in New York City (GGHC), the museum's New York branch. The exhibition featured paintings by Fritz Scholder (1937-2005).

The study is much more than a comparison of two approaches; it provides insights into family experiences at the museum just as the museum is embarking on a major effort to make the Mall museum more family-friendly.

The study was conceived by Clare Cuddy, Education Director at NMAI. Vilma Ortiz-Sanchez, an educator on the staff of NMAI, recruited the participants as they entered the museum. Whitney Klotz, an OP&A intern, skillfully conducted the interviews and transcribed them. Andrew Pekarik, a program analyst in OP&A, conducted some interviews, analyzed the data, and prepared this report. I thank them all for their skillful work.

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BACKGROUND

Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian, an exhibition at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), opened simultaneously in Washington at the NMAI building on the National Mall (Mall) (November 1, 2008 – August 16, 2009) and in New York City at the George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC), the museum’s New York branch (November 1, 2008 – May 17, 2009). The exhibition featured paintings by Fritz Scholder (1937-2005).

Two different family guides were prepared for the exhibition, one by educators on the Mall in Washington and one by educators at GGHC. The guides were conceived and produced separately and distributed at the locations where they were generated. Both guides were 8 ½” x 11” format on thick paper stock with bright colors. The GGHC guide was beige and consisted of four sides (two-panel folded), and the Mall guide was white and consisted of six sides (three-panel fold out). See pages 7 through 11.

The GGHC guide cover introduced the subject and the guide. The other three pages each focused on three broad principles: COLOR, PORTRAITS, and TECHNIQUE. Each of these principles was presented together with challenges, questions, relevant quotations from Scholder, and “key words” with their definitions. Two of the pages, COLOR and PORTRAITS, also included blank spaces for coloring or drawing.

The Mall guide cover presented “How to use this guide” and noted that the back cover contained biographical information on Fritz Scholder. Each of the remaining four sides presented one painting along with prompts – FIND, READ, LOOK, TALK, COMPARE – that presented comments or questions for each of the four artworks.

STUDY

The Office of Policy and Analysis was asked by Clare Cuddy, Education Director at NMAI, to conduct a comparative study of the two family guides using the Mall version of the exhibition as the study platform (since the GGHC guide did not reference specific works, it could be used at the Mall without disadvantage). The aim of the study was to determine which brochure was considered more useful, and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each brochure from visitors' perspectives.

According to educators at the Mall, the goals of their guide were to encourage intergenerational groups (i.e., adults visiting with children ages 5-12) to:

1. Focus on artworks within the exhibit
2. Observe, analyze and discuss their observations among their group
3. Extend the experience beyond the Museum walls. Provide appropriate information and context about Native cultures and support the Museum's main messages
4. Stimulate curiosity and inquiry and discussion
5. Model techniques for adults to engage young people in museums
6. Create a fun, engaging experience that will encourage return visits

According to educators at GGHC, the goals of their guide were to use examination of Scholder's paintings to better understand the concepts of:

1. color,
2. portraits, and
3. techniques

METHOD

Twenty-one interviews were conducted with intergenerational groups visiting the Scholder exhibition at the Mall in November, 2008, and January, February, and March of 2009.¹ Since such groups are not numerous at the Mall, most interviews were conducted on weekends, when there were more visitors.

Groups entering the museum were approached by a staff member and asked to participate in the study. The guides were distributed according to the ages of the child(ren), since the Mall guide was aimed at ages seven and over. Six groups were given the GGHC guide only, 11 were given the Mall guide only, and four groups were given both guides. As the participants left the exhibition an interviewer talked with them at the exhibition exit.

The interviewer asked how (and if) they used the guide, what they liked and didn't like about it, and what could have been improved. They also asked if they generally visit art exhibitions, if they had used guides before in exhibitions, how often they visit as a group, and what would be most helpful for them. The interviews were not structured, but followed the responses of the respondents as far as possible. Interviews (which averaged nine minutes in length) were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for this report.

PARTICIPANTS

Participating groups varied in size from two to five. Altogether the interviews included the responses of 26 adults, 3 teens, and 36 children. The adults were predominantly female (18 of 26), while the teens and children were more evenly balanced (16 boys; 20 girls). The average age of the children was 7.2; the median age was 7 (4 were ages 2 or 3; 10 ages 4-6; 15 ages 7-9; 7 ages 10-12).

¹ Interviews were conducted until the study team felt that responses had become repetitive and little was being gained from additional interviews.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Both family guides were very successful for the groups we interviewed. Nearly all used the guide they were given, appreciated its features, and felt that it enhanced the visit. Adults seem to have benefited as much from the guides as the children did, and they greatly appreciated the way that these guides aided their interactions with the children.

Neither guide was markedly superior to the other overall. Each had strengths and weaknesses and were more or less suitable to a particular group because of the diversity of ages, backgrounds, and interests within the group.

- The Mall guide was most notable for its FIND activity, simple layout, and the quality of its questions. It was used both by adults and children, both separately and together. It made these visitors think and compare interpretations.
- The GGHC guide was most notable for its sections on color and portraits, its color wheel, its keyword terms, and its self-portrait activity. It communicated ideas about art effectively.

Of the six stated intentions for Mall guide, all were met except for one: “Provide appropriate information and context about Native cultures and support the Museum’s main messages.”

Similarly the GGHC did engage at least some visitors with each of the three key topics – color, portraits, and techniques. The section on color seemed to have the strongest impact on these visitors, and the section on technique the weakest.

Neither guide was particularly effective for the interviewed groups in communicating ideas about the artist, his biography (other than his mixed heritage), his motivations and intentions, or the context within which he worked. Most of what these visitors knew about the artist appeared to have been picked up from the video, and no one seemed to have learned anything about Indians through the use of the guides.

The detailed findings offer many potentially useful insights to educators who want to create more family guides and children's activities in the future, including some interesting suggestions.

The greatest value of this study may lie in the perspective that it provides for a better understanding of adults visiting the museum with children. We learn from these participating groups the reasons why they came, how they visit with their children, what they like about other museums with programs for children, etc. These observations are likely to be particularly useful for Mall staff as they consider what to do in the future to make the museum more attractive for children. For example, a few points worth noting include:

- The desirability of a first-floor location. A number of families wouldn't have gone to the third floor if they hadn't been directed to do so as part of this study.
- Expectations for simple family guides and activities that groups have developed as a result of visiting other museums in the area.
- The importance of publicly available listings of available activities and in-person programs.
- Children in these groups had extremely limited ideas about Indians – based primarily on school projects and films (especially Pocahontas).
- Although looking at art in this museum was a surprise to some, the guides made it fun.
- Visitors with children enter the museum looking for helpful materials to take with them on their visit.
- The abstract, sometimes disturbing nature of the art was not a barrier to most groups, provided that they were given help through the guides.
- The children in these groups were sometimes surprisingly articulate for their ages, and the adults who accompanied them – parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and godparents – were extremely attentive to the children and wanted to make the visit as meaningful as possible for them.
- There are many ways to engage and satisfy intergenerational groups beyond hands-on activities. While some children (especially very young ones) were more drawn to active physical engagement, intellectual and emotional connections were also be very powerful, and benefitted from facilitation by the museum.

RECOMMENDATION

The museum should create multiple family guides and bring-along activities for the building overall and for some or all of the permanent exhibitions.

- These guides should be directed at various ages and may range from simple scavenger hunts (for younger children) to sophisticated combinations of question-based observation, inquiry, and information (for older children and the adults who are with them).
- Appropriate writing instruments (and perhaps a clipboard) should be provided when guides include drawing activities.

THE GGHC GUIDE

FRITZ SCHOLDER



indian
not indian

LOOKING AT
FRITZ SCHOLDER
Family Guide for
*Fritz Scholder: Indian/
Not Indian*

Welcome to the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian! This activity guide is designed for you and your family to use together as you explore the works of Fritz Scholder on display in this exhibition. On view in both our New York [through May 17, 2009] and Washington, D.C. [through August 16, 2009], museums, the exhibition features paintings, prints, and bronze sculptures spanning Scholder's career.

"In today's world, love, art, and magic are greatly needed."
– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder [1937–2005] was one of the most successful and controversial Indian artists of the twentieth century. Scholder was a painter and a sculptor, and he worked with many different materials. His artwork was based on his travels, his interest in other cultures, and his own life. Scholder used bright colors and powerful brushstrokes to depict Indians as they had never before been seen in art. In his use of **COLOR, PORTRAITS, and TECHNIQUE**, Scholder challenged what it meant to be an Indian artist. As you walk through this exhibition, use the activities in this guide to learn more about the colors, portraits, and techniques that made Scholder famous.



Smithsonian
National Museum of the American Indian

Above, left to right: *Self Portrait at 28*, 1965. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder. *Scholder painting Television Indian*, 1974. Scottsdale, Arizona. Photo by Dan Cirillo, courtesy PBS and KAET TV, Phoenix, coordinated by the Roswell Museum and Art Center from its Fritz Scholder Special Collection.

LET'S TALK ABOUT PORTRAITS!

"Hopefully, I have helped young Indian painters to feel free to paint as they wish."
– Fritz Scholder

Before the Institute of American Indian Arts was founded in 1962, Indian artists were encouraged to paint neat, precise pictures of Native American community scenes, or of plants and animals. But Fritz Scholder wanted to change this. By painting what they saw around them, he and his students set out to show Indians as real people in the modern world.

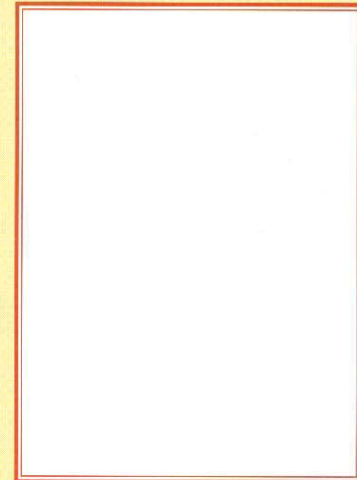
Many of Fritz Scholder's works are **PORTRAITS**. A portrait is a work of art that shows a particular person, usually focusing on the face or head and shoulders.

LOOK. As you walk through the exhibition, look at the paintings.

How many figures do you see in each painting?
Do Scholder's portraits focus on the face?
If not, what do they focus on?

Every year, often on his birthday, Scholder painted a **SELF-PORTRAIT**. A self-portrait is a work of art in which the artist uses himself as the subject.

FIND one of Scholder's self-portraits.
Why do you think artists create self-portraits?
What details did Scholder include in the painting? His glasses? A pet? Books?
Why do you think details are important in portraits?



MAKE your own self-portrait.

Think about what details you want to include.
A hat? A pet? A favorite food?

Do you want to put anything in the background?
Think of details that express you.

KEY WORDS

PORTRAIT: a work of art showing at least one person

SELF-PORTRAIT: a work of art in which the artist uses him- or herself as the subject

LET'S TALK ABOUT COLOR!

"I enjoy placing one color next to another to see what happens. Color relationships present a challenge and help me to get a painting under way."

– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder's works have been described as celebrations of color. The brightness of a color is called that color's **INTENSITY**. A color has full intensity when the artist does not mix it with white or black.



WHAT do you notice about the colors that Scholder uses? Are they bright or dull?

Do you think Scholder mixed his colors with white or black?

Another way to make colors appear brighter in a painting is to place **COMPLEMENTARY COLORS** [colors found directly opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green] side by side.

FIND a painting in which Scholder put complementary colors next to each other.

Why do you think he did this?

Scholder began teaching at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1964. He began using the landscape colors of the American Southwest in his paintings. The colors of the Southwest stayed with him, forming his **PALETTE**.

NAME some of the colors that are repeated throughout Scholder's work.

FILL IN the artist's palette with the names of the colors you see in Scholder's paintings.

KEY WORDS

INTENSITY: a color's brightness

COMPLEMENTARY COLORS: found opposite each other on the color wheel, such as red and green

PALETTE: the different colors an artist uses in his work. An artist's palette is also a surface used to mix paints.

LET'S TALK ABOUT TECHNIQUE!

"Paint drips, it smears, it smudges, it has great color, it flows in many different ways depending on its canvas or [the] paper that you're painting on."

– Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder liked to have fun while he was painting. He would experiment with the paint, making it drip, flow, and smear.



American Portrait, No. 46.
1982.
Oil on canvas.
Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder

LOOK closely at one of Scholder's paintings.

Is the paint smooth or thick? Does it have **TEXTURE**? How do you think Scholder created that texture?

Can you find a painting that uses dripping paint? How do these touches show motion and action?

One of Scholder's favorite **TECHNIQUES** was to show different layers of paint.

LOOK carefully at the outlines of Scholder's figures.

Can you see the color of the paint underneath the top layer? Where else on the canvas do you see this color?



American Indian.
1970s.
Oil on canvas.
Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma, Norman. Purchase, Richard H. and Adeline J. Fleischer Collection, 1996. 1996.017.132

To find out more, visit our website:
www.AmericanIndian.si.edu/exhibitions/scholder




And read the book:
Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian

Edited by Lowery Stokes Sims with Truman T. Lowe [Ho-Chunk] and Paul Chaat Smith [Comanche]. Published by the National Museum of the American Indian in association with Prestel Publishing

All paintings in this guide © 2008 Estate of Fritz Scholder
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THE MALL GUIDE

Lets talk about...

FRITZ  **SCHOLDER**
indian not indian

A Guide for Young People 7 and Up

Welcome to the National Museum of the American Indian
Use this guide to help you explore and learn from the exciting exhibition *Fritz Scholder: Indian/Not Indian*.

How to use this guide
This guide provides parents and children with background information, questions, and suggestions to help focus on a few of the pieces in this exhibit. First, read the biographical information on the back. Then, open the guide and:

- find** the artwork pictured.
- read** the background information in this guide.
- look** at the piece as a whole, and then the colors, texture, and other small details.
- talk** about what you see and how it makes you think and feel.
- compare** the piece to others in the exhibit.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN
EDUCATION OFFICE

▶ **find** this painting


▶ **read**
Indian No. 1 is the first painting Scholder did in the Indian series. People were not used to seeing Native Americans painted in this style. Scholder was an abstract expressionist painter, which means that he didn't try to make his subjects look realistic. By painting Indians in a different way from other artists, he hoped to make people look at Native people in a new way.

▶ **look**

- Does this painting look like other pictures you have seen of Native Americans?
- How is it the same?
- How is it different?
- Are the colors in this painting realistic?
- Are they what you would expect to see?
- What word do you see on the painting?

▶ **compare**
Try to identify other paintings from the Indian series as you walk through this gallery. Throughout the museum, you will see many other portraits of Indians done by other artists.

- How are they different from Scholder's Indians?



Indian No. 1, 1967
Oil on canvas
Collection of Loren and Anne Klieve

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

This is one of a group of paintings called the American Portrait series. All the figures in this series are alone and mysterious. Many of them have similar details, like things that look like wings.

➤ **look**

- Do you see something that looks like a wing?
- Does the figure have a face?
- Do you think the figure in this painting is human or non-human?
- A man or a woman?
- An Indian or a non-Indian?

➤ **talk**

- If you had to make up a story about it, what would it be?
- Why do you think Scholder painted in series?
- Why would he want to paint the same subject many times?



American Portrait No. 15, 1981
Oil on Canvas
Collection of the National Museum of the American Indian

➤ **compare**

Some of Scholder's sculptures are similar to his paintings. Try to find a sculpture that looks like or reminds you of this painting.

"Color is what makes painting." —Fritz Scholder

"It's a celebration of the paint as it drips and smears." —Fritz Scholder

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

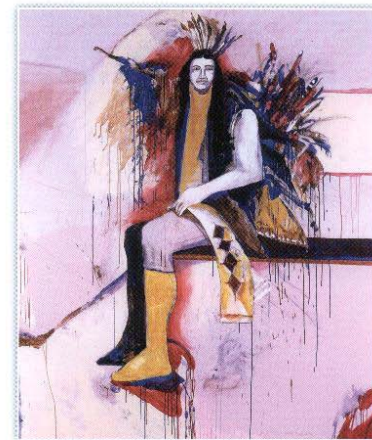
Fritz Scholder liked to work with more than a paintbrush to create his art. In many of his paintings, you can see drips and smears of paint and areas where paint has been wiped or scraped away to show the background colors.

➤ **look** closely at *White Indian*.

- Can you see where Scholder dripped paint?
- Can you see where he might have scraped away paint?
- What colors are showing through other colors?
- What color do you think he put on the canvas first?

➤ **talk**

- Do you like the way paint is dripped in this painting? Why?
- Imagine the same painting without any drips or smears. Would you like it better?
- Do you think it would be as interesting if it was painted without any drips or smears?
- Why do you think Scholder called this painting *White Indian*?



White Indian, 1997
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder

➤ **compare**

As you go through the exhibit, try to find other paintings that have drips and smears of paint.

➤ **find** this painting

➤ **read**

Scholder was an abstract artist, which means that he did not try to paint things exactly as they are. Scholder created this painting when he lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was inspired by the Southwest landscape with its red rocks, blue skies, pink and purple sunsets, and green trees. This painting gives you an idea of how he saw the landscape of New Mexico.

➤ **look** at the photograph of New Mexico at the bottom of this page.

- Can you see similarities to the painting?
- Can you see some of the same colors?
- Can you see the bands of color?

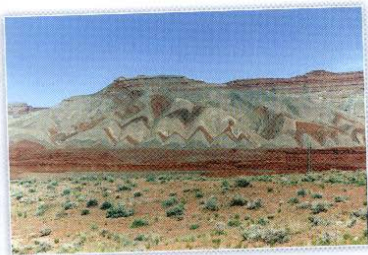
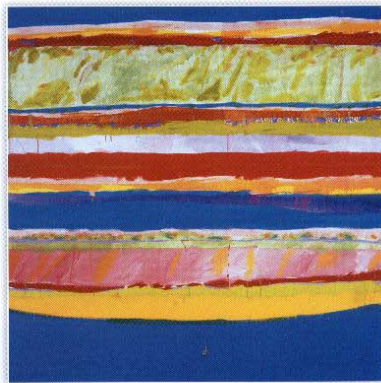


Photo courtesy of photographer James Gordon, 2004



New Mexico No. 1, 1964
Oil on canvas
Collection of the Estate of Fritz Scholder

➤ **talk**

If you were going to paint a picture of where you live, what colors and shapes would you use? Why?

➤ **compare**

Scholder used the colors of the Southwest over and over again in his work. As you go through the exhibit, try to find the colors used in this work in other paintings.

"All kids draw. I never stopped." —Fritz Scholder

Fritz Scholder said he always knew he wanted to be an artist. He didn't think he would be known as a Native American artist, but that is how people think about him today.

Like many people, Scholder came from a multi-racial family. His paternal grandmother was a member of the Luiseño tribe of California's Mission Indians. Scholder often said he did not consider himself an Indian. He grew up in the Midwest where he attended public schools with mostly white students.

Scholder said that he never wanted to paint Indians, but he became famous for a group of paintings called the Indian series that he created when he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico. People began to identify him as a Native American artist.

His style was different from what people expected of an Indian artist. He used bright bold colors and distorted images. Some of his work shocked people.

Throughout his life, he painted and sculpted many subjects other than Native Americans, including everything from dogs and cats to skulls, and he continued to say that he was not really Native. People still argue about whether Scholder and his art were Indian or not Indian.



Fritz Scholder in Taos, New Mexico, 1997.
Photo by Meridel Rubenstein

DETAILED FINDINGS

USE OF THE GUIDES

Both experienced and inexperienced users

At one extreme participants included experienced users of family guides who look for them as soon as they enter a museum, and at the other extreme those who had never used a family guide before.

Not appropriate for all groups

Two of the 21 groups did not use the guides they were given. Some adults were not interested in this kind of directed activity, and some children are not suited to this type of engagement, either because of age, temperament, or tiredness. *“We normally skip over the family guide. I know I do with my son [because] we’re going at four-year-old speed.”*

Need to read ahead

The adults realized that these guides were meant for them, to help them enhance the experience of the children, but some adults needed time to review the guide before they could effectively use it. *“I read the guide beforehand, because a five-year-old boy’s attention span using the guide while doing it – at least his personality – would not have worked. So I read it to see what the main points were.”* *“I think something like this would be more successful if we had dealt with this even before we came...because then we could have set it up more.”*

THE MALL FAMILY GUIDE

FIND-READ-LOOK-TALK-COMPARE – a layout for multi-taskers

The Mall guide provided five directions for each image in a simple, direct layout that some adults found very useful: *“It’s a very easy to use step-by-step guide and it’s easy to glance at when I’m multi-tasking. I can have one of them looking for something, one of them reading it, or they can be doing it together if I’m distracted with a third child, so they’re still getting something out of it even if I can’t attend to their looking at it.”*

FIND - The scavenger hunt

Although both guides had a FIND activity, it was general in the GGHC guide (e.g., “Find one of Scholder’s self-portraits”) and part of a larger theme. In the Mall guide it was specific (e.g., “Find this painting”) and created a kind of “scavenger hunt” that was especially engaging for younger children and those less interested in art. The challenge of the hunt was made greater by the rather complex layout of the exhibition design. As one child said, [Boy age 5]: *“For me it was sort of like a scavenger hunt and a maze.”* Some children made the hunt into a game. [Boy age 9]: *“I liked being able to try to find the paintings before my brother did.”* A number of groups were familiar with scavenger hunts in museums, and several mentioned the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore in this regard.

FIND - Some only hunt

The success of the FIND activity sometimes worked against the larger aims of the guide. *“She [i.e., girl age 7] did engage in this [by looking for the four paintings], which was great, but I think the fact that it was ‘these are the five paintings to look for’ was like a treasure hunt, and [it was] ‘Alright, one-two-three-four-five. We’re done. Let’s move on to the next thing.’...She wasn’t even looking at it. It was like she was scanning for where’s the next thing that I’m supposed to find.”* *“We got more excited about looking for the pictures rather than thinking about comparing and contrasting.”*

FIND - Encourages moving fast

The FIND activity sped up the visit for some. *“The kids enjoyed going around and looking for them...[but I] didn’t have a [chance to] stop and really read anything because they went through it so fast. We didn’t know anything about him because we went straight to the pictures.”* *“The FIND – they liked that. Unfortunately it makes them want to run around the gallery looking for stuff.”* [Girl age 7]: *“We found all of the paintings – lickety-split.”*

FIND - The benefit of focusing on a few

"We tended to look for these pictures only...and didn't pay as much attention to some of the other paintings, but we looked at these four in much more depth than we would have looked at any of the paintings [without it]. ..I'd rather look at four paintings in-depth and really think about what we're seeing instead of walking by 25-30 paintings and not really think about any of them. And for a couple of them...we looked at the paintings that were in that same area and compared and contrasted them too with the questions, so it made us look at those paintings a little more."

READ - Reading aloud

Some adults read to the children, and others had the children read this to them. [Girl age 7] *"I liked reading it out loud because I really like reading, and reading is pretty much my talent. And also reading a little bit bores me, but I like it when I have a friend with me [to read to]."*

READ - Definition of abstraction

This explanation, "he did not try to paint things exactly as they are," (which occurs twice in the guide) was helpful to adults, too. *"He did not try to paint things exactly as they are.' That's a very good explanation of why does he have color on his face, why does he have two different eyes."*

LOOK - Focuses attention

The questions helped visitors look closely. *"I liked the 'Look' parts, when it asked you questions: Do you see this? And then do you see that? It draws your attention to things that you may not see and makes you look for it."*

LOOK - Affects later experiences

For some visitors these questions had an impact beyond the paintings they were addressing. *"The prompting questions were great, and then I had this in my mind and used it later just to talk to them without sitting down and going through it word by word with the kids." "We used this information here about asking 'Is there something that looks like a wing?' 'Does it have a face?' And then we found a sculpture later that mimics this a lot. We talked about that, too, and compared them."*

TALK - Multiple perspectives

The use of questions to generate discussion enabled groups to share different views. *"It was very good, because [we were] actually having discussions between everybody regardless of what age we are, and how each of us interpreted the pictures differently."*

TALK - Notice even more

Talking invites new insights. *“Sometimes you would just look at it, and then as you look, talk about it as a family. You see things that you might not have seen in it before. If you’re just walking through and you look, you would think, ‘Oh, that’s nice.’ But when you start talking and following this guide and it gives you – without telling you ‘Okay. This is so-and-so’ – it lets you be interpretive and see in your own mind what you think it might be. It doesn’t answer exactly, but it lets you lead into it with your imagination of what this could be and how this could be represented here. So I thought the talk about it especially was good.”*

TALK - For adults less familiar with art

“It gives parents something to talk about. I wouldn’t have been creative enough with the questioning...I wouldn’t have thought to ask all these questions, because I don’t know enough about art to do that.”

COMPARE - A new experience

“She [i.e., girl age 7] just hasn’t had to do anything like that before. I think it was the first time she was exposed to that idea [of comparing] and trying to find similarities between things that weren’t right next to each other.”

COMPARE - The New Mexico photograph

“It was neat to have the juxtaposition of the painting [New Mexico No. 1] and the actual photograph, which she [i.e., girl age 7] thought looked like a painting although it was actually a photograph.”

THE IMAGES

Perhaps empowered by the questions in the guide, participants sometimes expressed very personal interpretations.

THE IMAGES - Indian No. 1

[Girl age 9]: *“I like this one best because the Indian is shown in a different way than how they really look. He has green hair. And it reminds me of what they live on, grass and plants.”*

THE IMAGES - White Indian

“We didn’t understand why this picture doesn’t match the painting. He’s not white in the painting, because we couldn’t answer the question, ‘Why would he call it a White Indian?’ ...He doesn’t have a white face and arm in the painting...It’s more of a brown tan...”

THE IMAGES - American Portrait No. 15

"I didn't get this one at all. It was outside of me. I wouldn't even have known it belonged within an American Indian display. I didn't get it at all. It didn't look human. It looked kind of like an angel, but didn't....I wasn't sure if it had been vandalized or if that was what the artist did, but it looks like that is what the artist did. I thought somebody came by with a pencil and messed it up."

THE IMAGES - New Mexico No. 1

[Girl age 11]: *[This one is my favorite] because it's imaginary sort of. He's taking that cause it's real and making it kind of in his own imagery."*

OTHER - Challenges the mind

[Aunt]: *"Do you think any of the questions were too hard or too easy?"* [Girl, age 7]: *"No. I think they were in the middle, so it was kind of challenging to me. My brain had to really work."*

OTHER - Useful later at home

"We'll probably talk about this later on today when we get home, maybe over dinner something, so it's nice to have [the guide] and to also have the pictures to refer back to. I don't think that we're done with this yet. Moving through the exhibit she [girl age 7] was really focused on read, look at the painting, and then move on to the next."

OTHER - Useful for looking at art elsewhere

"It is definitely a guide for giving you a better way to understand and look at art...I know some of the things from having read that guide that I could look at in other paintings – use of color, motion, shadows – so that would help me beyond just being able to find my way through these paintings."

THE GGHC FAMILY GUIDE

COLOR- PORTRAITS-TECHNIQUE – suits a range of ages

The Color section was especially popular with very young children. Older ones also engaged with Portraits. Technique received the fewest comments. *“She’s two, so we talked about the colors, but portrait and technique are a little above where we’re at.”*

COLOR - favorite colors

For the youngest children adults were inspired by the guide to just call attention to colors. In some cases they made this an interest learning activity. *“He talked about what colors he [i.e., boy age 4] liked and what colors he saw more than other colors. ...We have one of those art sketch games at home and it goes through the colors and he knows his colors and some of the more artistic ones, like sky blue and magenta...He’s into colors...I’m using color in his life to express himself and make a statement, but others who aren’t artistically inclined might not really know – like my husband....Especially in an exhibit where color means so much and the colors actually are giving you the feelings that the artist was trying to interpret.”*

COLOR – intensity

Slightly older children discussed the brightness of colors. *“The first question, ‘Does he use dull colors or bright colors?’ – that was good because then they [i.e., girl age 3 and girl age 6] set out looking to do something, so that was helpful.”* *“It was great because it tied into the artist’s style and so at least he [i.e. boy age 5] could come away with ‘Did he use bright colors?’ And he said ‘bright.’ ‘Did he use colors that were sort of the same or very different?’ and he said ‘very different.’ And so those basic things he got.”*

COLOR - complementary colors and the color wheel

Slightly older children were very drawn to the idea of complementary colors and the color wheel. *“I liked the fact that they had the color wheel there, really, because when they talk about complementary colors you can see and the kids can see what that means. I really liked that.”* *“[Mother]: My son [age 6] had a lot of thoughts about the complementary colors. Matthew, do you want to tell her? [Boy]: We found all of the opposite colors....Why did it have to be these certain colors? Why did it have to be these bright colors?...[Father]: If you combine all those colors together, I think you can come up with black. If you take opposite colors and combine them, you can come up with black...It’s like if you take orange and blue and mix them together you get black. [Boy]: Like if you put the orange and the blue and you mix them, you have a black.”*

COLOR - Filling in the palette

None of the participants did this activity in the guide, and although one participant considered doing it later at home with her six-year-old boy, she didn't think it would be possible, *"This we can't do because it says 'that you see in the painting,' but you can make a self-portrait."* But her husband suggested pulling up a Scholder painting on the internet and doing the palette activity. The boy wasn't keen on this and suggested an alternative he preferred, *"You have to draw one of the paintings and then you."*

PORTRAITS - Finding self-portraits

"[My five-year-old daughter] liked finding the self-portraits...Plus the guide knows what's coming up, so the self-portrait part, that was helpful for that. It told you there was going to be more than one...The self-portraits were helpful because they could see that's who he was." [Boy, age 6]: *"Daddy found the self-portrait, but then I found a self-portrait."*

PORTRAITS - Trouble finding self-portraits

One participant complained about the difficulty of finding the self-portraits and suggested that the guide should have included photos of them. *"Give the adults some suggestions on which portraits would be good to do these exercises for...If it followed the actual order of the paintings, so that mabe it had miniatures of some of the paintings and then said 'look' and tried to guide you to start looking at different paintings...Otherwise the only other way to potentially do it is just to read the entire guide before going in and the children would never have enough staying power [for that]."*

PORTRAITS - Self-portrait activity

A few participants did this. *"The whole self-portrait activity I thought was really good [five-year-old boy shows interviewer his self-portrait]. Everywhere we go we draw what we see, so that was a good component of it..."*

TECHNIQUE

Although none of the participants mentioned this section directly, several used the keyword "texture." *"As we were going through I really did ask them all these questions, to notice the texture, the complementary colors, what colors did they notice in all the paintings. So it gave me something to really get more involved and into the paintings with the kids."*

KEYWORDS

Although none of the participants specifically noted the keywords feature, there was a tendency for GGHC guide interviewees to spontaneously use the terms “complementary colors,” “palette,” “intensity,” “self-portrait,” “texture” and “technique” much more than Mall guide users, who were more likely to use the words “abstract” and “dripping.”

OTHER - Teaches about art

“It helped me sort of guide something because usually when come I’m sort of unfocused. It was a good focus point to teach two or three key points about art.”

OTHER - Relates to outside art classes

“We’re really into art. They [girls ages 6 and 8] love art and they love to paint. They take art classes. So it was a good way to make what they’re doing real and to see. It was interesting to see his texture and everything didn’t have to be perfect and there were some big splotches of paint and drips...and it’s good to see that art can be whatever you want it to be and it doesn’t all have to be perfect.”

COMPARISON OF THE TWO GUIDES

Four of the groups had both guides. Although the Mall guide was directed at older children, its scavenger hunt feature appealed strongly to the youngest members of these groups, while the adults used the GGHC guide to talk about color with young children. One group successfully used the GGHC guide for the older child and the Mall guide for the younger.

BOTH GUIDES

Asking Questions enhances meaning

[Girl]: “There were some questions and we tried to answer them in there.” [Mother]: And they got more interested in the pictures when we did that. They were like, ‘Ohhh!’ You know, it was starting to register for them. So they could make more meaning out of

the pictures rather than it just being pictures for them to look at. And they have their best attention spans today [even though] we're on day six of seeing museums."

Questions should neither be too open-ended nor too directed

Experienced family guide users highlighted the questions as useful features of both guides, but especially with the Mall guide. *"Many times [the questions in art museum family guides] are so open-ended that it's hard to engage the children in the conversation because the parent is trying to come up with the questions. This one was directed enough that when the girls were reading the questions, they started answering after 30 seconds or so...but the questions were open-ended enough that everyone could express what they saw and it would be different, but they were directed enough that you could actually talk about the differences that we saw in the painting."*

ADULT AND CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

An opportunity for communication

"I think this is very helpful for families as a whole because they have difficulty talking with each other and this stimulates the conversation. I've noticed that people who sit and watch television all the time, they don't talk to each other. But families who sit and play board games or card games or something, they interact. It's not always about the game; it just kind of evolves." "I like how you make people interact with each other, talking about the paintings."

Taking turns as leader

"Each of us did one of the [four] paintings [in the Mall guide] and then the last one we shared between the three of us, so each of us took [the guide] and asked the questions. We each took a turn being the leader, being the discussion leader."

Following the child

"I follow her [girl age 2], because I can come without her. When I come with her, it's for her." "It depends on what strikes their interest at that moment...I'm all for going with the child's interest. This is just exposing them and seeing what gets them excited. That's what my goal is."

Slowing the child

"I guide in some [exhibitions] but I also know what my son's [age4] interests are, so I kind of let him guide along what he wants to see, and then I slow him down so that we can actually take the time to absorb what he wants to see."

Multi-level discussion

"Jonathan [teenager] read through it and then, first of all, we left the discussion to the younger ones [ages 9 and 12], and then, as they finished, we [adult and three teens] moved on to discuss the more intellectual side, which I think worked quite well, because it showed how everybody's views are different, and how each of us actually interpreted what the artist was thinking when he was painting them."

Build an appreciation

"One of the things that we're trying to do is build an appreciation within her for museums, and we always debate as a family whether it is best to come and just breeze through and grasp what we can all grasp in a period of time where we have a learning

opportunity. [Because of the guide] we stopped and look at five or six paintings...but we will all leave here with a greater appreciation for not only the artist, but some of the techniques and the concepts that he uses."

Making the visit memorable

"I love art, but if I don't understand it or know what I'm looking for, I'm not going to appreciate it as much. So if you help people by saying, 'Okay, why did he use the color red in this picture?' or 'Why is he dripping?' That got you caught up in the picture, so then you appreciate it and you'll remember that picture and you'll remember the artist, too, because you remembered why he did this picture."

INDIANS

Discussions in these groups focused on art rather than on Indians, except for observations on the mixed heritage of Scholder. When asked specifically about Indians, some participants talked about school and personal interest in Indians.

Fritz Scholder

"I thought that he either didn't like his own face or he didn't like the face of the Indian as it was changing...The way they've changed from their own heritage into the modern age, and I got the impression that he, the artist, didn't actually like the changes that were happening." "His mother was White and his father was American Indian...There was a question about why he wrote the word 'Indian' on the paintings, but I couldn't find out why...I think he was sort of torn between whether he felt like he was part of the American Indian culture...or like he didn't belong." "I would have loved an answer of why the word Indian was on the painting. I think we can come up with our own ideas about it, but it's kind of nice to also hear what the artist was thinking about."

Scholder's influences

"I liked his paintings a lot. They seemed like Francis Bacon's for one thing, and I understand some of the problems that he's dealing with because - I'm not Indian but friends of mine are - I know that alcoholism is a real problem in the Pine Ridge reservation."

The exhibition title Indian/Not Indian

"The title Indian/Not Indian captured my attention because I'm part Native American, but I wasn't brought up on the reservation but I heard some stories growing up, and it was part of my culture but not a central part of my culture, so that subtitle has really got me thinking about what parts of myself identify with being Indian and what parts not Indian. It gave me a starting point to start thinking about some identity questions for myself and then also just how it applies to my children."

School projects involving Indian themes

"We had to make an Indian shirt [for Thanksgiving] and look up what the name meant in Indian...I forgot which language it was, but there's a whole bunch of different ones. I didn't even realize there were different Indian languages until I started to look it up...So we picked a random name for her. We picked Wacheewi. I can't remember what language that was, but it means dancing, dancing girl. I wrote it on the t-shirt."

Pocahontas

"We were looking for Pocahontas [in the museum] because of the movie. There was one Pocahontas and she [i.e., girl age 5] picked it out. She found it. That was the one she wanted to take a picture with and I didn't realize it was Pocahontas until I read [the label] next to her. I don't know how she picked it out, but she's like, 'I want this one!' She still doesn't read."

Indians are all gone

"She [girl age 7] doesn't have a whole lot of experience with American Indians, because when we were talking about the pictures...she thought they were all gone. We had to talk about that they're still here. So it was interesting to figure out what she did and didn't know before she walked into the exhibit....This is the first time we've been here. This [guide] would probably be better after going through ... and getting a sense of what's going on with Native American culture in general, before coming here and asking questions like 'How would you compare it to the past?'...because she didn't really have a frame of reference to compare it to."

REASONS FOR VISITING NMAI ON THE MALL

An alternative to the National Museum of American History

"[We visited here] because the American History [museum] wasn't open."

Drawn by hands-on

"I've wanted to come to this museum. I love Native American history and art and we heard at the Castle today that the food is great here, and they said this was a nice museum for kids – that there's hands-on activities on some level. That was part of the reason why we came today, was so we could do some hands-on things. We'll go to places if we know there's a scavenger hunt or something like that in the museum to make it more interactive, more interesting for them...So far it's been great. The man who was talking about the boats – I think the kids [ages 5, 7, and 10] really enjoyed that...These [children] spend a lot of time in the woods and they could really identify with the materials and they could sort of even imagine doing it themselves. I could even picture her trying to make some of the stuff. So he brought it to life for us.....At the history museum today we spent four hours in the Spark Lab."

Came to make bracelets

"We wanted to do the bracelet weaving. I looked up different things because I wasn't sure what she [age 7] would want to go to, so we started at the Botanical Gardens and then she decided she wanted to see the dinosaurs so we went to the Natural History Museum, and then I brought up the gems...[she] didn't care for the gem part. It was boring. That really didn't float her boat, and so she asked, 'Isn't there an activity or something that we can do?' so we came here to do the engaging activity because she likes craft things and sewing and finding scraps of paper and buttons and things to make pictures. So I figured this would be right up her alley, and she really enjoyed that and the beading. That definitely connected with her. And the paintings – I was surprised because she really liked the colors a lot...If I asked her just in general 'Are there other pictures you like?' she could point them out, so she definitely was engaged."

Curiosity

"I picked this one because the last time I visited this was only being built and I wanted to see it. It's beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful."

Interest in Indians

"I'm from Idaho. We're not far from a reservation and so we like to come here to this museum. It's one of our favorites." "It's good to know about their culture because they were here first. It's interesting to see how everything evolved and how it started with them, and how the history is."

Proximity

"We primarily came here to see the Capitol and I took out my GPS to see what was nearby because we still had some extra time and this came up, so we came here without any expectations or knowing what we were going to be doing, so when this [guide] came up, it was like, 'Well here we go!' something we can do."

A favorite

"We're kind of wandering around today and she [age 6] wanted to come look at the arrowheads and some of the drawers and stuff....when we come down to museums this is one that's in our frequent circuit."

The architecture

"I really liked the architecture of the building. It's very creative. I like the contemporary feel of it. I am surprised that you don't have much on display. We're used to more jam-packed [museums]."

Child's choice

"When [relatives from out of town] come in each one of them takes a turn to pick a museum and it was her [age 7] turn. [Interviewer: Why did you pick this museum?] [Girl]: Because Indians are kind of cool. [Interviewer: What's cool about them?] [Girl]: All their makeup and stuff."

VISITING THE SCHOLDER EXHIBITION

Might not have found it

"We didn't even see it at the end of the hall." "[If we hadn't been directed here] we may not have known it was here....Maybe we wouldn't have been able to get up to the third floor."

Might not have gone to the third floor

"We're already tired and we're looking to go back to the hotel...I probably wouldn't have come up here with the kids, even though I like art a lot. I probably wouldn't have come up to the third floor with the kids, because I figure we only have about an hour or so before we fall apart." "[If we hadn't been directed here we wouldn't have seen it because] we probably would have stayed primarily on the first floor. We wouldn't have been attracted to this particular artist."

Seeing an art exhibit in this museum

"It's a whole different type of exhibit than we expected to see here." "We're only here for two days and I'm really glad that I have a chance to see an art museum...We were at the Air and Space next door and then we were at Natural History a couple of days ago...so I'm glad to see some art and I liked it a lot."

OPINIONS ABOUT SCHOLDER'S ART

Abstract

"They were not the typical depictions of Indians...A lot of times you see a realistic impression of Indians more. This didn't seem very realistic, it just seemed more like a Picasso twist to it. He had his own twist to it...I'm not a person that's into abstract art or modern art. I'm more of a person that's into realism and, of course, the neo-classicals, but, right now, at this moment in time, I truly enjoyed him for the way that he actually depicted Indian life in a non-traditional format...There's always your traditional clichés on American Indians, which he decided to go out and break and it was refreshing in the way he did it....They were meant sometimes to disturb, sometimes to enthrall, but mostly they basically got you to think, which is obviously what he wanted you to do." [Girl age 11]: "It was very interesting – all the paintings with the Indians. It wasn't a painting you would normally see of an Indian. It was more abstract."

Disturbing

"I don't like his art. ..I want to see it more lifelike...My opinion is that his style was almost disturbing with the splatters and the digs and the drips and the contorted abstractions...I didn't feel warmed looking at his work." "She [age 6] said something like 'It was the scary part,' and on a lot of his sculptures and paintings the faces would either be deformed or skeletons." "We have some Native American art in our house. [Girl age 10]: It's really beautiful. [Mother]: I always thought you guys thought [this exhibit] was a little scary. [Girl]: At first I did, but then I got used to it."

Dark works at the end

"When we got to the end where it was like vampires and monsters, we were kind of over it." "He [age4] liked the vibrancy of different colors and one of his other comments [was] 'Oooh, that's scary.' So he really showed emotion at the art, and he felt good about 'bright' and 'pretty.' He used those kind of words." [Girl age 7]: "We also saw two vampires kissing, two fallen angels. I think it actually looked more like biting than kissing. I'm gonna have nightmares tonight." [Boy age 10]: "I liked the painting of a vampire, and it says that he painted that because he was obsessed with vampires ever since he was a kid and kept a wooden stick right by his bed."

The sculpture

"[Boy age 9]: I liked the ones that were sort of mixed up, the ones that aren't complete, that aren't looking like real things and are sort of stretched and that kind of stuff." [Teen]: "I like more sculptures than anything else, but I like texture paintings...I thought some of the textures he had in his paintings were really cool."

Liked the colors

"I like the colors." [Girl age 8]: I loved his colors. It was bright, very cool....[Girl age 6]: I liked a lot of the colors too. Cause it looked like he used thick paint, cause I saw a lot of texture and you could see the drips on it....[Girl age 8]: I like all the colors he used because maybe there would be a bright and a dark color together and the light color would bring the dark color out – it would be very pretty."

Liked the portraits

"He [age 9] liked the portraits and to discover, find out what they mean, the meaning of them – why the artist painted them."

Traditional vs. non-traditional

"I didn't like the ones that had the skeleton images and [were] sort of obscure. I liked the more traditional, just Indian portrait ones. Those are nice. [My daughter, age 5, wanted to have her picture taken by] the ones with the Indians and the very bright colors."

CHILDREN AT THE MUSEUM

Walters Art Museum

“They have a lot of family programs all the time, like little sets of cards that you get and it will lead you around and look for this and learn about [it]. It pulls out something in particular, because it can be overwhelming when there’s so many things. Kids don’t know what to focus on. There’s a wealth of information and artifacts and things like that. They have programs for kids all the time – special things on weekends, family tours, festivals...” “We’re going there for a set class. It’s free and it’s once a month and they read them a story and then we go to specific pieces of art and then we do a craft that’s related to that somehow.”

Baltimore Museum of Art

“They have sketch kits that you can have, and so you could sketch while you’re walking through the museum.” “We’ve used all the different things they have there. [They have] the costumes. They have an auditory program. They have one with drawing. We’ve done all that.” “We used [a family guide] at the Baltimore Museum of Art. That’s the one where we had the experience with them giving us a clipboard and crayons and Matthew would like to copy the picture. That was actually kind of fun.” “They have a room with tactile things that they could do and that was the best because it really got her [girl age 2] thinking. There was some sculpture there, some Matisse sculptures, so we saw those and then she got to go play with that – something she could touch and hold onto.”

Video stations at the Mall

“He’s a four-year-old and what I’ve noticed through all the Smithsonians so far is that he loves those touch-screens. He absolutely loves to sit there and go through all of the things, even though he’s not really reading them, he’s noticing things about it and wants me to see and explain this. I think that’s absolutely awesome. We’ve been loving these little computer talks all the way around [the museum]. They’ve been so entertaining to him and it gives me enough time to stop and look at this other stuff.”

Costumed interpreters

“[At Williamsburg] you always have people dressed in period costumes. Do you do that here? Have actors walking around and period costumes and interacting with people? Because sometimes the kids learn. Like that lady with the weaving [in the museum]. Even though that’s nice, if she doesn’t sit down and say, ‘Well this weaving came from my village which is located in Guatemala,’ kind of have like a spiel to actually get the people pulled into what she’s doing, then people are just like, ‘Oh that’s nice.’ But

sometimes when people interact with you and they're dressed in their period costume, then you might say, 'Well why are you wearing that' and they might learn more."

Older children and art museums

"We're starting to go to more art-type museums...As the children [ages 3 and 6] are getting older they have a little more staying power for museums. We used to do more science museums and children's museums, but we're starting to do more art museums....It used to be that if we went to an art museum, after ten minutes they'd be done, because they weren't able to touch things, they weren't able to run around. ...Now they don't necessarily have to touch everything, they don't have to run around everywhere, they're able to actually attend more to what's being presented without feeling like they have to get in there and interact with it."

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Fewer, shorter questions, and shorter texts

“It depends on who your target is. If you’re doing pre-school, shorter questions...Two questions instead of five....and two sentences if you’re targeting preschool. If you’re targeting first through third [grade], these are nice.” “

Word games

“For older kids there could be a word search or word chart, like a crossword, where some of the key points that you getting at [in the GGHC guide] come across....maybe ten words to come away with, because that’s a good vocabulary builder.”

Details search

“Maybe have one page of [photos] of miniatures, and not include the ‘find, read, look, talk’ stuff, but just an extra section towards the back: ‘find these’ or, in the front: ‘look for these.’ Even if it is just a component....We went to the Walters yesterday and did something similar and she [girl age 7] found all these really miniscule things in the ancient art.”

Multiple versions

“If you have a couple of different versions of this guide...if you had three different guides with four paintings in each...then if we come again in the next couple of weeks, ‘Oh, we’ve already done this guide, but hey, here’s another one that we can do.’”

Laminated cards

“Some of the other museums we’ve been to have laminated little cards that the kids can carry with them to find this thing.”

Include directions for the parents

“We’d find the painting and then I’d say, ‘Okay. Tell me what you see in the painting’ first before reading anything, and then we’d read about it. That might be a fun thing to include as direction for the parents going through...I find that more engaging, but some parents might not.”

Questions about the artist

“At the beginning, when you walk in, there’s all this information, but the kids didn’t want to stay and wait and do any of that. If there were questions they would have to figure out about him...that would be nice.”

A worksheet for the child

"[Father]: Would you have like to have your own piece of paper that you could scribble on and do that kind of stuff? [Boy age 9]: Probably. [Father]: His own worksheet rather than something that the family shared. A single piece of paper and a pencil."

Move artist information to the front

"Start off with it, rather than having the explanation at the back, because that's the last thing, and it should be the first thing."

Provide drawing instruments

"We weren't able to do any of the activities [in the GGHC guide] because we didn't have crayons. We have been to another museum where they actually gave us a clipboard and crayons and my son sat down and did the picture that they asked us to do."

Mark the paintings that are in the guide

"On the [labels] by the paintings you could have a special symbol saying this is the time to open up your guide."

Hands-on activities

"Maybe have them experiment and see if they can paint like Scholder, or...have something like colors sand and they could make a display of the [New] Mexican landscape."

Do it on wall-labels

"The pictures were what got us interested in the guide....Have little interpretations like this underneath each picture. That way the kids could actually go through and interpret it for themselves....like 'what mood was this picture trying to create.'"

A guide for adults

"You do have people that are coming in here who are 65 years old, worked all their lives, and are more interested in art and into intellect and culture than some other folks, and you have to have something for them. Maybe something that would not only give you a historical perspective of the artist himself, but also give you some of the critiques from art critics as to how the artist performed. ...You need something intellectual, not just something for five-year-olds or ten-year-olds, even though you may need that, too."

Allow an exit from the disturbing part

"If you're putting together an exhibit like this again where there is sort of the scary part at the end, have a quick exit – the opportunity to skip this part for small children [like her 7-year-old daughter]."