Integrating Art Across the Curriculum at SCMA

Teaching Arts Luncheon
September 15, 2017
Today’s Plan

Intro: *Why?*
What is the value of teaching with art for college learning across disciplines?

Teaching opportunities at SCMA
An overview of the spaces and resources available

Concrete examples
Faculty colleagues share their experiences

Q&A
Ask us anything!
Every NYT Front Page since 1852
(compiled by Josh Begley)

https://vimeo.com/204951759
Visual Literacy

“Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyze the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials.”

Visual Literacy

Clip from *Visual Literacy: Rethinking the Role of Arts in Education*

Yale Center for British Art (Producer: Cyra Levenson, Director: Lisa Molomot)
Object-based Pedagogy

Teaching that uses a concrete object as the basis for deep inquiry, expansive student-driven discussion, and shared meaning making.
Why Art?

It can resonate for a person emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually.
Why Art?

It provides a concrete focus for discussion, but embodies layers of abstract ideas.
Why Art?

It can provide a key level of ambiguity to open up dialogue based in multiple interpretations.
### Why the Museum?

| New context, new rules | • Moving outside of the classroom can create a different professor-student dynamic.  
| | • Students may be less reliant on the professor having all the answers, and more willing to search for answers themselves. |

![Image of a museum setting with students engaged in discussion](image-url)
Why the Museum?

Authenticity and Materiality

- The presence of a real thing from a different place and time sharpens and holds students’ attention.

- Physical objects spark memories and emotions that can solidify learning.
Why the Museum?

Museum Literacy

• The Museum as an institution can be read and analyzed critically.

• Objects can be considered within the context of institutional interpretation. Their presentation and display can raise questions about value and cultural ownership.
Teaching and Learning Opportunities at Smith College Museum of Art
Collections Galleries
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Collections Galleries
Special Exhibitions
Special Exhibitions
Teaching Gallery
Teaching Gallery
Teaching Gallery
Teaching Gallery
Teaching Gallery
The museum-based components and assignments:

- **Engaged students' critical thinking and sensory memory.** They learned to identify, read, and understand objects and images in order to successfully relate and communicate concepts acquired in the course.
- **Helped develop students’ reflection, critical analysis and synthesis abilities.** Students were encouraged to take initiative, make decisions, and they participated intellectually, creatively, emotionally, and socially in class as a result.

- Bruno Grazioli, Italian Studies (ITL 200: Italian Design and World Culture)
Museum classroom
Object storage visits
Activating museum spaces
Teaching in the Cunningham Center for Prints, Drawings and Photographs

What do we offer:

- Great comprehensive Collection
- Class and student support
- Student programs
- Individual research and study space
- Community Access

and lot’s more
Flexibility and choice
Flexibility and choice
Some voices:

• I have found that a trip to the Cunningham Center is a highlight each semester, one that students routinely point to in their course evaluations. Spending time viewing prints and other works of art in an intimate and lovely setting brings to life the history we study in the classroom.

• Especially in a world saturated with digital images, the opportunity to encounter objects from the real world—and to practice “deep looking” facilitated by the museum staff—is a breath of fresh air and an invaluable learning opportunity.

• Marnie Anderson  - Associate History Professor
Dynamic interactive classes
Some voices:

• For the past five years, I’ve taken students in my first year seminar, *Re-Membering Marie Antoinette*, to examine a series of 24 prints, *Le Monument du Costume*. By studying up close the details and the artistry of the prints, students can better imagine Marie Antoinette’s daily life, as well as the social rituals and the material culture that shaped the days of the French aristocracy.

• Nothing compares to the knowledge students gain viewing these prints from a distance of six inches and observing the lines and the shading that the artist made to give an object. Sensory aspects of the etchings-- the feel and smell of the paper, the thickness and gradation of the lines, the imprint of the copper plate on the paper, the scale of the print—all contribute to their greater appreciation for the culture of the period.

• Janie Vanpée - Professor of French Studies and Elizabeth Mugar Eveillard ’69 Faculty Director of the Lewis Global Studies Center
Teaching Foreign Culture and Language at the Smith Art Museum

The Department of German studies has been integrating materials from the Museum for many years. I personally have started bringing students to the Museum about 15 years ago and worked my way up exploring different layers of teaching methods and opportunities. The resources at the Smith Art Museum - incredible works of art and staff (!) - can provide our students with

1. **An approach to a foreign culture through visual art**
   - We can teach cultural concepts not only through written texts, but also through visualization.

2. **An inspiration to find their own voice (even in German)**
   - We can encourage students to “read texts without words” and create their own text.

3. **An opportunity for Interaction and Inclusion**
   - We can help students to explore new learning spaces and ways of interaction with others, engage physically with “real” objects, create sensory memory, and discover and practice individual ways of "learning by doing".
Faculty share: Christine White-Ziegler, Biological Sciences
Faculty share: Payal Banerjee, Sociology
The museum project definitely engaged more than a paper would have. While working on the label and online exhibition, we had to analyze the painting and poem in a deep and multifaceted way like in a paper. Then, considering our audience’s experience, we exercised picking out the most important points, developing a good logic, writing concisely, and working in a group environment that is not involved in an academic paper.

- Student (EAL 237: Chinese Poetry and the Other Arts)
I took interdisciplinary courses throughout high school, [and so] I didn't think there was anything else to be discovered, and being a diehard intended humanities + social science double major, I didn't expect the museum visits to expand my mathematical horizons. However, they did. Each time we went to the museum, I was more and more compelled to rethink my perception of "the narrative." Stories aren't just found in novels, music, and film. That's the big connection I made: art and STEM are both full of stories, even if they seem to be on opposite sides of the academic spectrum.

– Student, Class of 2020 (SDS 136: Communicating with Data)
I was skeptical of using the museum, due to my mild dislike of art. I didn't think there could be much interest in studying art in conjunction with science, but it was actually fascinating. It was nothing like I thought it would be. I learned so much about how to read and understand art, and what the author is trying to say. In the future, I would recommend students come in with an open mind and a willingness to learn about art, even if they don't like it. It may end up changing their mind.

– Student, Class of 2019 (SDS 136: Communicating with Data)
Resources and Support

Henriette Kets de Vries  
* Cunningham Center Manager  
  hketsdev@smith.edu

Charlene Shang Miller  
* Associate Educator for Academic Programs  
  csmiller@smith.edu

Maggie Newey  
* Associate Director for Academic Programs and Public Education  
  mnewey@smith.edu