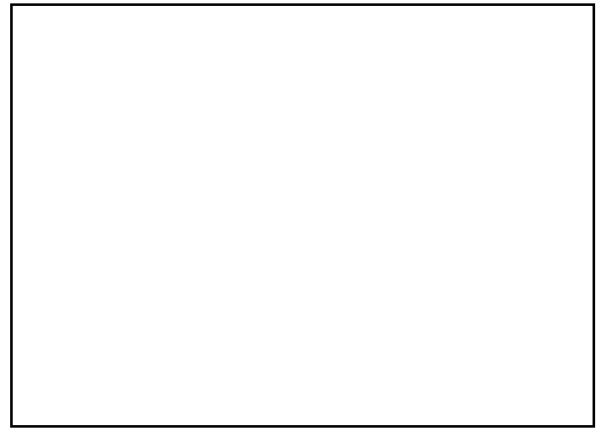


## **Teacher's Orientation to the Illinois State Museum's Art Web Module**



### **Audience of the Module**

The Illinois State Museum Web development staff defined the target audiences for the Art module as:

- Teachers of grades 3-12 who are planning lessons on Illinois and American art, social studies, and language arts
- Students of grades 6-12 who are looking for information, images, and activities to broaden and deepen their study of art by participating in online activities and finding background resources
- Members of the general public, who may view the Museum's collections

### **Goals of the Module**

The Illinois State Museum Web development staff outlined the following goals for the Art Module:

- Help visitors understand how studying the fine and decorative arts can help them understand the human experience
- Help visitors observe works of art with an understanding (visual literacy) of the basic elements of art, its media, its styles, and its context (its place in the larger world)
- Help visitors understand how the Illinois State Museum's collections in fine and decorative arts can be used for various educational purposes
- Encourage people to visit the museum to see original works of art (not necessarily just those on the Web site)

### **Objectives for the Module**

The team developed educational objectives for the Art Module:

After viewing this Art Module, K-12 students and the general public will have increased their knowledge of

- the role of Illinois artists in the larger world
- art as a form of communication and documentation
- the elements and principles of art and design
- options and ideas for the image-based teaching of art and other subjects using museum collections
- the important works of fine and decorative arts located in the collections of the Illinois State Museum

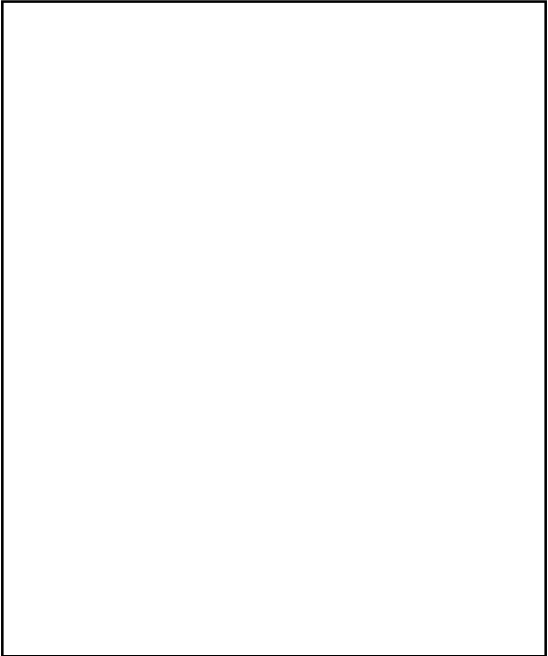
## Structure of the Art Module

The structure of the units in this Web module is based on museum-based methods of teaching, that is, the use of objects for the basis of activities and lessons.

- The objects in the collection of a museum are the basis for the teaching of art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. There are seven sub-modules on different media and topics.
- The Web is an apt medium for the publication of this educational approach because it offers the opportunity for viewers to see and study images of the museum objects from afar.
- Its interactivity affords the viewer the ability to communicate with the objects through the thought- and discussion- provoking questions and offline activities that accompany the images. Teachers should not attempt to cover all images or all questions at once. This material is enough to cover easily a year's lessons. Images, themes and modules can be returned to for different purposes. The Art Module is a resource to be mined.
- Teachers can adjust the grade level of the discussion by choosing the number and the topic of the questions and encouraging students to initiate questions.
  1. The teacher can choose one question with which to lead a lesson and have the class look at several images to compare how the questions may be explored with different artworks. (Ex: A question for *Sunday on the Farm* (WPA) is "What details in the painting are very realistic?" The class could compare the 'realistic' details of it with those of "outskirts of Galena" in the same module)
  2. The teacher could choose one work of art and ask several questions about it. Better still, the students could ask and answer questions about it. (Ex: While viewing Julia Thecla's Self-Portrait, teacher or students might wonder what she is looking at, how she feels, why she painted herself so pale, what the brown leaves might mean, what mood the colors create, what the temperature might be around
  3. We have provided a glossary for each sub-module for teachers to use as a vocabulary list or other activity.
- The online and print resource lists and the hands-on and discussion activities sections give viewers access to more information and experiences. The activity descriptions were written for a broad grade level that teachers can adapt for the age and number of students they have, and the time they have in which to do the activities. Art teachers often see students once a week for 45 minutes, while classroom teachers may make available a half hour each day for a week or more by integrating the activity into another subject's content and form. Students who are exploring the modules independently may want to explore the links provided to add depth to the subject at hand. Teachers could use the links for background information or as part of a class activity.

## Art Module Approach to Art Education

As you and your class proceed through the art modules, it is important to keep in mind the philosophy behind the structure of the pages and activities, which are object-driven, rather than based solely on inspiration for art production. This choice reflects our support of art education in the schools as a discipline with its own content, theories, and skills. The museum staff has chosen a modified **Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE)** and **object-based approach** to art education in its presentation of Web pages and in its activities for several important reasons. • Illinois State Board of Education Goals for Fine Arts are written in language that reflects a discipline. (Ex: “Through observation, discussion, interpretation, and analysis, students learn the “language” of the arts.”) Goal 25 supports the discussion and analysis of art through language(art criticism). Goal 26 supports the production of art. Goal 27 supports Art History and Aesthetics. (See the Goals for standards for your grade levels.)

- It is particularly fitting for a museum to use an object-based and discipline-based approach to art education because a museum presents a collection of objects, performs research on objects, and educates about objects in its galleries, and publications. Its art production activities are based on original objects from the collections and conversations with visitors about art history, aesthetics, and art criticism.
  - Students and teachers have questions about art. DBAE provides a structure on which to build guided explorations of those questions and construct a meaningful, personal, and informed definition of what art can be.
  - Using a DBAE approach to teaching art encourages students to place studio production (hands-on) decisions into a larger context. They become aware that art production involves decisions that will have consequences in communication and meaning. They begin to place their own work within the context of an art historical continuum.
- 

## Structure of the Web Pages

The general structure of a Web page in the Art Module consists of several parts:

- The basis of a page is an image of a museum object, such as a painting, sculpture, print, or photograph of fine art, or an historical decorative, industrial, or commercial object of decorative art.
- Accompanying the image of the object is a museum label that identifies it. This consists of the title or name of the object, its date, the name of the artist or maker, the size, the medium or material, a museum identification number, and a credit line denoting the donor to the collection, a purchase for the collection, or a copyright held by the museum or another entity or person.
- Also accompanying the image is a question in blue type. This question is to stimulate thinking and/or discussion about the image by the viewer if he or she so chooses. This is a method of interaction with objects that the Museum staff has used in gallery guides for museum visitors, and with staff-led tours of museum exhibits. It is a deductive method of leading viewers of art into discipline-based exploration of art. The questions include exploration of

how the object was made

what details help to communicate ideas

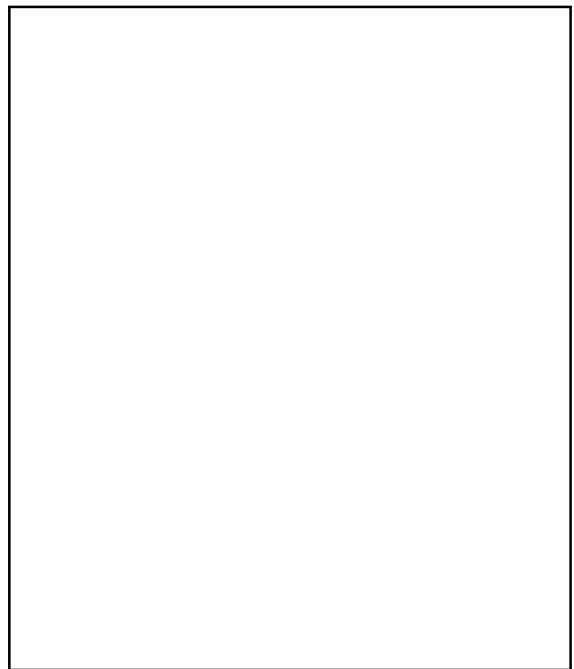
how the object or image reflects its time in history

what art and design elements the artist or maker used to create effects

what feelings are evoked by the object or image

how the image reflects its time in history

what are some of the definitions of art



# Discipline Based Art Education Basics (DBAE)

## Introduction

There are four areas of exploration in the DBAE approach, or **four disciplines**: art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Each individual brings his or her own personal backgrounds to a new work of art. DBAE helps them use their past experience to think about art and helps them expand their ways of thinking about art. It trusts people to use their eyes and to ask questions that mean something to them.

Here are some areas in which art viewers can learn through DBAE:

They learn that:

- there are rewards for looking at and thinking about art
- they are capable of doing it (observing and discussing)
- there is more than one right answer
- there are rules to the game that can make sense of art (interpretation)
- they can communicate their ideas to someone else

They also learn how to:

- keep an open mind about art and about other people
- enjoy the experience of observing and discussing art.
- Look for these experiences in new places

## Four Disciplines

The discussion of art is very important in motivating a student to learn a new artistic concept and be able to show his/her learning through production of a work based on that concept. The combination of the viewing of art, discussion, and production produces sustained learning in all four categories of the study of art. Creative expression with media alone does not do this. There are four areas for discussion in art. The following is a summary of the four aspects of art education: art production, art history, aesthetics, and art criticism.

## Art Production

The activities in these art modules include the hands-on making of art. The given description of each activity is a general one, aimed at multiple grade levels, with which teachers work to adapt them up or down to the various abilities and attention spans of their students. With clear and thorough motivational viewing of art and discussions, even Kindergarten students can participate in a version of the activities. Because of time and space considerations, and because of the experience teachers have of adapting lessons to meet the needs of their students, a lesson plan of each activity for each grade level was not included.

Art production has been the basis of art education in the United States for decades. In some cases, exploration of media and self-expression has been the goal of art education. According to recent Standards and Goals written by many states and by Goals 2000, art production is **only part** of art education. It is used as an opportunity for students to put into tangible and contextual form the concepts and skills they learn from by discussing art objects, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

Questions about art production are part of any consideration of an artwork. Such questions include:

- How was it made?
- Of what materials is it made? (choice, availability to the artist, suitability to image)
- What size is it?
- How is it placed (if installed)?
- What colors were used?

These are often the most obvious questions and sometimes the easiest to answer but often they do not communicate too much about the meaning of the artwork. An analysis of these formal elements can be used as a tool to begin a discussion in order to focus the viewer's attention on the physical aspects of the work of art.

## **Art History**

Questions about art history can help to place the artwork within the context of other artworks that were being produced at the same time, either within the indigenous culture, or outside it. Comparing figurative works, for example, created during the same time period from five different countries teaches us about all these cultures. The following events impact the way art looks, its subject matter, and the materials from which it is made.

- Politics (wars, invasions, imperialism)
- Social changes (economic depressions, population shift, new technologies)
- Philosophical shifts (religious influence, influence of media, educational theories)

Alternatively, studying a variety of works by a single artist created over time can bring an appreciation of development of style, approaches to media, and shifts in approaches to subject matter.

Here are some **sample questions in art history**:

- When was this object made?
- Who made it?
- Where was it made?
- Did other artists make similar objects?
- Who bought or used the object?
- Where and how was it used?
- Is this object typical of the artist? The time? The place?

## **Aesthetics**

Stewart says that aesthetics is “ the talk about the talk about art.” When discussing aesthetics, people’s questions are about the essence and definitions of art, as opposed to questions of an investigative purpose, as in art criticism. The questions are broad, open-ended, without prescribed answers. These questions have prompted discussion since the time of Plato and Socrates, and continue today in all societies.

Here are some **sample questions in aesthetics**:

### **Questions about the Nature of Art:**

- Why do people make things?
- What makes something a work of art?
- What kinds of things would you say could never be an artwork?
- What makes an artwork good? Do standards for good art stay the same in all cultures or groups?
- Why will people sometimes agree about what is good art or what is not good art?
- What purposes do artworks serve?
- Does art mean the same thing in every culture? In every group?
- In what ways do artworks tell the truth? Do all artworks tell the truth?
- Who determines the meaning of an artwork, the artist or the viewer?
- When people decorate things, are they making art?
- Do artists have to take a lot of time to make good artworks? Why or why not?

### **Questions About Viewers and Viewing Art:**

- To interpret the meaning of an artwork should the artist be consulted. Why or why not?
- Are titles important clues to understanding the meaning of an artwork? Why or why not?
- Do the meanings of artworks change over time? If so, how?
- Can we understand the meanings of artworks made in cultures other than our own? Is this understand art from other cultures?
- What does it mean to evaluate or judge an artwork?
- Where do people obtain their beliefs about art?
- Should people respond to artworks by feeling something?
- Do artworks tell us about the world or culture in which they are made? How is this possible?
- What is the role of museums in culture? Are they important?

These questions can be raised as part of a general discussion of art or a specific object - *any* object. They can encourage lively discussion. A class can be divided into groups who have to defend their position on a question, or find an image or object that fits their answer to a question. Newspaper articles on an artist or exhibit can spark a discussion or debate.

## Art Criticism

Art criticism is the discussion of meaning in the physical characteristics and the contextual information in a work of art. Each viewer brings his own life experiences, beliefs, and values with them as they look at each work of art. Discussion will involve looking at the

- artists' use of the elements of art and principles of design to create meaning
- the social, political, religious, and historical context in which the work was made
- the contexts in which today's viewers see the work (individually, according to their definitions of art and personal experiences)

**Personal interpretation, not consensus, is the goal. Viewers will learn to create valid arguments for their interpretation by returning to the work of art itself and to its context. There is never just one interpretation of a work of art.**

### Sample questions in art criticism:

What was the purpose of this work of art?

What's happening? (with a narrative image)

What techniques were used?

What culture produced it?

Where (geographical location) was it produced?

Where (geographical location) was it produced?

If there are images of humans present:

Who are they?

What are they doing?

Why are they doing it?

Why did the artist deem it important that they be pictured?

What is the title?

What was the artist's intention - what or whom did he want to reach by creating this?

Did someone commission the artist to create it??

Is it "famous"?

Is the artist "famous"?

What is the monetary value of the piece in question?

In what style is it rendered?

How does this object connect to me?

Have I experienced (touched, seen been part of , smelled, heard) anything like this?

Does it relate in any way to any of the other arts?



## Print Resources on DBAE:

Alexander, Kay and Michael Day, editors. *Discipline-Based Art Education: A Curriculum Sampler*. Getty Trust, 1997. Actual graded lesson plans, K-12.

Dobbs, Stephen Mark. *Learning in and through Art: A Guide to Discipline-based Art Education*. Getty Trust, 1997.

Eisner, Elliott. *The Role of Discipline-Based Art Education in America's Schools*. Getty Trust, 1988. This book is a policy statement about the positive gains to be made in art education by the expanded use of DBAE.

Reynolds, N. *Art Lessons for Middle Schools: A DBAE Curriculum*. Weston J. Walch, 1999.

Smith, Ralph Alexander. *Discipline-Based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development*. University of Illinois, 1989. This thesis is a basic history of the development of DBAE.

Stewart, Marilyn G. *Thinking through Aesthetics*. Davis Publications, Inc., 1997. This small volume is a teacher handbook for guiding students through discussions about art.

Stewart, Marilyn G. "Diving Below the Surface: A Conversation with Dr. Marilyn Stewart." ArtsEdNet Offline Newsletter, Winter, (#8), Getty Trust, 1998.

## Online Resources for DBAE:

<http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/>

The homepage of ArtsEdNet; Web resources of the Getty Education Institute. Sections include changing DBAE online units, image galleries, lesson plans and ideas, resources, a listserv, and valuable links to art education and interdisciplinary arts education websites. There are many online units, such as *Artworlds*, developed as a teacher course; it includes units on art worlds, Mexican-American Art, African-American Art, and Navajo Art.

<http://www.artsednet.getty.edu/ArtsEdNet/Resources/Philos/background.html> *Philosophers Forum: Asking Questions about Art*. This is a high school level discussion sight featuring 'big' questions about art using a Web site about Trajan.

<http://www.utah.edu/umfa/hansen.html> The Web site features an interactive use of pairs of paintings to illustrate elements of art. It is from the University Museum in Utah.

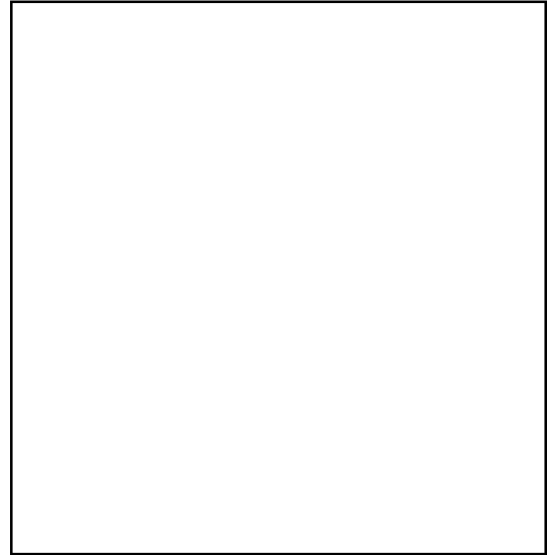
# Object-based Education

## Introduction

Object-based education is very compatible with museum education, as museums are collections of objects –artifacts, artworks, and specimens – and present them in exhibits to the public. When visitors can read the objects as well as the labels, they enjoy a richer experience.

Decorative Arts exhibits such as *At Home in the Heartland*, both the museum and the online versions, and *Art Web Module* sub-modules such as *Nineteenth Century Furniture Styles*, *Nineteenth Century Illinois Folk Art*, *Illinois Quilts and Quilters*, and *Two Illinois Photographers* feature decorative arts or historical objects as well as some works of fine art.

The images of the objects in these modules can be used in the classroom to teach students how to analyze or research objects by ‘reading’ them, that is gleaning as much information from the object itself before going to other sources. Material life studies, a branch of history, uses this method in its various forms. Materials, maker or manufacturer, date, signs of wear, and style are some of the kinds of information that an object itself may tell us. Some of the activities and online questions in these modules focus on learning history from objects.



## Format of Activities

The hands-on art production activities use a museum object or group of objects as their basis. The given image from the collection is the source of the medium used, techniques applied, tools needed, and general appearance of the object produced by the student. Within this framework, lessons are adapted to the age and abilities of students, who should never be underestimated when they are given energetic motivation before they start a project, and a model or concept to understand.

For example, the activity for a patriotic appliqué quilt top pattern, in paper or cloth, begins with the image of Helen Gilchrist’s bedcover pattern. After looking at and discussing the motifs in her bedcover, and looking at other patriotic symbols and their meanings, students can choose symbols from their own experience and background. Younger students could choose and render one symbol, combine it with those of classmates to make a quilt top of blocks. Older students could create a symmetrical pattern of many symbols. An ambitious project would be a wall hanging quilt with iron-on fabric motifs. Students should be able to relate what they create with the model objects. This connection reinforces the concepts of art studied in the activity.

### **Print resources for Object-based Study::**

Allan, Barbara and Schlereth, Thomas, Eds. *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*. University of Kentucky Press, 1990.

Schlereth, Thomas. *Material Culture Studies in America*. Altamira Press, 1996. This book is used as a text in university American Material Life history courses. It contains essays by history scholars about the methods used in researching historical objects.

Ibid. *Material Culture: A Research Guide*. University Press of Kansas, 1985.

Ho Foy, Jessica and Thomas Schlereth, Eds. *American Home Life 1980-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*. University of Tennessee Press, 1994.

Schlereth, Thomas. *Victorian American: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915*. Harper Perennial paperback, 1992. A survey of the commonplace objects, events, experiences, products and tastes that made up American's Victorian Era culture.

### **Online Resources for Object-based Study:**

<http://chd.gse.gmu.edu/immersion/knowledgebase/strategies/constructivism/objectbased/>

Good outline of object-based learning, with links to museum Web sites (including ISM's *At Home in the Heartland*) as examples, and links to sources about museum education history.