9-12

Topic: Bringing the World into Our Homes…Virtually!

When you go to an art museum in New York City, you can imagine yourselves in new and exciting worlds. But for now, we will guide you to do that right from your homes.

We have created a series of activities that will take you to two different areas, the West Coast of Africa, and our neighbor to the south, Mexico. You will have the chance to learn about works of art and create your own. Get your suitcase packed and let’s go!

Traveling Back in Time and Half-way Around the World

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has an exhibition of African Art we would like to share with you. We wish we could take your family there, but all museums are closed right now. So let’s explore this exhibition on-line.

We begin our world tour by exploring the sights and sounds of the Sahel, the region of Africa south of the Sahara, on the west coast of Africa. This region had a network of global trade routes that extended across the empires of Ghana, Mali, and other areas from the 1400’s through 1860’s.

The artwork tells us about these empires’ rise and fall of power. The art also tells us about the arrival of Islam. This region today has the countries Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Our first video will show you where those areas are located.

Video #1

To begin our tour of the exhibition here is a brief introduction. The Sahel was an area very rich in art. Here are some things to think about as you watch:

- Men on horseback…many or just a few?
- Wooden sculpture….many or just a few?
- Gold coins….where did they get that gold?
- Jewelry…..what shapes were used?
- Terracotta (clay figures)…..how were they created?

https://tinyurl.com/sahelintroduction
Mali was part of the Sahel. Watch excerpts from *Living Memory: Six Sketches of Mali Today*. It shows the annual renovation of a 1907 world famous building in Mali, the Great Mosque of Jenne. It is much different than what you would see in New York City if a building was being renovated. What’s different? What do you notice about who takes part in the renovation of the mosque?

This is important work they do each year to preserve the building,

(When you get to this site, just scroll all the way down to Featured Media.)

https://tinyurl.com/metfeaturedmedia

**Art Images and Making Art**

Want a closer look at African works of art from the Sahel? Go to the following website:

https://tinyurl.com/metspringbreak

There are many images to look over. Each family member can select their favorite image and tell everyone else:

1. What they particularly liked about the artwork
2. What questions they have about the artwork
3. What personal connections they can make to the artwork

For example, looking at *Equestrian Figure from Mali* a person might say:

1. What I really like is the smooth lines in the figures.
2. I wonder what the person's gesture means.
3. It makes me think of all those statues in the park of men on horses….but this is so different!

*Equestrian Figure from Mali*
Art Activity: Making Art Accompanied by Musical Inspiration

Using just a pencil and paper, each family member creates their own version of a type of artwork in the online collection of work from the Sahel. Here are some ideas.

Design your own:

- Equestrian Figure
- Piece of gold jewelry
- Hand sculpture
- Bronze bracelet
- Gold coin

As an inspiration, listen to the sounds of this African region by clicking here: Field Recordings: Songs of Celebration and Praise.

Los Tres Grandes: Mexican Muralists

We travel a little closer to home to learn about an art form that Mexico is most famous for....murals. You may see murals in your own neighborhood. There are many in New York City on the sides of buildings. It all began in Mexico! You will be able to make a family mural with just newspaper, pencil and crayons.

About 100 years ago, Mexican artists introduced the art of murals to the United States. The Whitney Museum of American art has a great virtual exhibition, Vida Americana: Mexican Muralist Remake American Art. It shows how Mexican muralists really excited the artists of the United States.

Video #1 and #2

Take a look at the first two videos at www.whitney.org/exhibitions/vida-americana

#1 Los Tres Grandes tells about the three great Mexican muralists:

- Diego Rivera
- David Alfaro Siqueiros
- José Clemente Orozco
Introductory Questions

● What did you like about the Mexican murals?
● Did you notice that the murals are all about working class people?
● Did you see US American artists Jacob Lawrence, Charles White and Jackson Pollock in the video?

A Deeper Look

● What imagery do you see the Mexican painters use to protest economic, social, and racial injustices?
● How did US American artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Jackson Pollock, and Charles White show how the Mexican artists influenced them?

#2 The Abelardo L. Rodriguez Market shows how murals are integrated into everyday life.

1. Go back and see the artwork from the show.
2. Select one piece that everyone finds interesting.
3. Spend just a few seconds looking at it.
4. Have a conversation and discuss
   • What each person noticed first about the artwork
   • Something you wonder about the work
   • What each person liked about the work
Art Activity: A Family Mural

For this art activity all you need is a daily newspaper, pencils and crayons.

The three great Mexican muralists, Rivera, Siqueiros and Orozco were all interested in the lives of the everyday person and their daily lives. They were interested in empowering them and showing the world how important they were.

You can do the same thing!

Each family member selects a worker you see everyday (for example: mailman, crossing guard, grocery clerk, teacher, sanitation worker, fireman).

On a large piece of newspaper, using pencil each person creates the largest figure they can. Outline your drawings in black crayon, and then color them in using the bright colors of the Mexican muralists.

Now, cut them out and prepare to assemble them into a large family mural! Think about how much background paper you will need to fit all the figures. Then tape together enough newspaper pages for the size you need.

NOTE: For the younger children in the family, the Whitney has posted a wonderful drawing activity guide. You can find the link below. All you need is paper and pencil to get to work!

Vida Americana Activity Guide

English:

https://tinyurl.com/vidaactivityguideenglish

Spanish:

https://tinyurl.com/vidaactivityguidespanish