



EDUCATION SESSIONS A – 10:00 AM – 10:45 AM

Beyond the Tombstones: Making Art Accessible

Most museum goers spend less than 30 seconds on each work of art. This presentation invites attendees to open their eyes and minds to the possibilities of art and aims to dispel the self-conscious fears our guests, who may have been put off by the high-blown language of art critics, can harbor. Moving beyond the museum wall texts to learn of the “why” will help docents create the concept of the story each piece of art might tell. [Presented by the Muscarelle Museum of Art.](#)

Interfaith Tours: Themes Across Religious Faiths

This session will focus on how the Chrysler Museum uses its art collection to bring people of various cultures and backgrounds together. Their successes and challenges will be shared as they motivate us to create conversations in which similarities and differences are explored. Tools and ideas for setting up interfaith programming will be offered. [Presented by the Chrysler Museum of Art.](#)

Serving Visitors with Autism

Join Educator, Karen Getty, as she shares VMFA’s experience of working with the Autism Society of Central VA. Participants will hear about the training presented and resources developed in collaboration with ASCV. As museums continue to strive for accessibility, this session offers ideas on how to engage with our visitors on the Autism Spectrum and ensure that we are meeting their needs. Karen Getty is the Senior Tour Services Coordinator at the VMFA. [Presented by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.](#)

EDUCATION SESSIONS B – 11:00 AM – 11:45 AM

Closed But Open: Breaking Down Walls

The Muscarelle will reveal how their closure for renovation in 2022 allowed new ways for the docent community to interact without the benefit of the traditional physical museum. Their experience will help docents learn new and inventive opportunities for development and strategies to engage new communities outside the museum walls including lifelong learning classrooms, senior living residences, the public and college groups. [Presented by the Muscarelle Museum of Art.](#)

Sketch What you See

The focus of this session is both on learning to observe and enjoy a work of art without resorting to the label for understanding, as well as how the looking process differs when contextual information is withheld. This hands-on session will include sketching based on close observation, and a shared learning focus within the participating group. Close observation skills of Modern and Contemporary art works will assist the group in gaining understanding. [Presented by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.](#)

Craftivism and Community: Yarning for Unity

Yarning for Unity (Y4U) was an outdoor, site-specific, drive-thru, “craftivism” installation covering the exterior of the Maier Museum of Art with various art forms such as crochet, knitting, embroidery and printing. The colorful works brought messages of love, hope, and unity during the COVID-19 shutdown. In this session, attendees will hear how Y4U was community-generated and led, and about the immersive installations subsequently created in the Lynchburg community. The concept of “craftivism” and impact of these efforts in art and community will be explored. Attendees will have the opportunity to see works by Kat Owens, an artist/scientist/activist who creates life-sized portraits of animals harmed by marine plastic pollution. [Presented by the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College.](#)

EDUCATION SESSIONS C – 1:00 PM – 1:45 PM

Leonard Baskin Unplugged: Presenting Challenging Content

The session will help attendees explore ways for presenting difficult content. Human Frame, an exhibition of Leonard Baskin's imagery related to racial, social, and religious injustice, will be explored. This session will show how bringing in AI/Chat GPT helped docents find their way comfortably into the exhibition, as well as evoking discussion about the future of creative arts – and artists. Docents will leave with ways to develop a training module that can be reshaped and refocused to serve multiple communities. [Presented by the Muscarelle Museum of Art.](#)

Creative Writing and Connectivity

The Writer's Eye is an annual ekphrastic writing competition at the Fralin. Their decades long program involves the community in development as well as implementation. In this session, the Fralin will share lessons from the program that help engage audiences with works of art and spark creative expression through writing. Writing prompts used during Writer's Eye tours and workshops will be incorporated into the session. Participants will walk away curious about how they might incorporate writing into their docent practice and serve their community and audiences by being a site for creative expression and connection. [Presented by the Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia.](#)

Welcome to the Community: Art Museum Panel

Museums new to the Virginia Docent Exchange – the Daura Museum of Art at the University of Lynchburg and the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg (Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum) – will introduce their collections and missions. They will also share innovative examples from their current practice in which they are “Curating Community.” [Presented by the Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College.](#)