

Michener Museum hosts open house for educators

Connie Wrzesniewski

Artwork collected by school districts in the region beginning in the 1890s was the highlight of the open house on Oct. 19 at the James A. Michener Art Museum.

The event provided public school teachers who are members of the Pennsylvania State Education Association Midwestern Region (PSEA/MER) and school administrators with education opportunities for students throughout Bucks and Montgomery counties. The program was co-sponsored by the Council for the Advancement for public schools (CAPS).

Those in attendance learned about the Michener's onsite and offsite programs along with STEAM (Science, Technology English, Art, Math) in education.

Adrienne Neszmelyi-Romano, director of interpretation and innovation, gave a brief overview of the day's events, followed by a special gallery talk which included the current exhibition, "Dedicated, Displayed, Discovered: Celebrating the Region's School Art Collection." Devon Meves, Michener adjunct faculty, led a Curriculum Connections Workshop.

"The museum sees thousands of students each year through the school visit program," said Neszmelyi-Romano. "We're delighted to familiarize more teachers with the museum offerings and provide them with a valuable resource in their curriculum planning."

Neszmelyi-Romano spoke further on the individual programs including the Google Art Project,



ADRIENNE NESZMELYI-ROMANO

an online resource that contains more than 142 articles and the Youth Audio Guide and Art Programs developed by students.

"We offer teaching posters, outreach programs, pre- and post-visit curriculums and a traveling



Michener Museum's Traveling Trunk, a popular resource that brings art to schools.

trunk program," said Neszmelyi-Romano.

"We're pleased to introduce more of our members to the many resources for learning enhancement offered by the wonderful Michener Art Museum," said Alan Malachowski, president of PSEA/MER, also in attendance.

The origins of School Art Collections of the Region sprung from the New Hope-Solebury School District (NHS), which incorporated artwork in school halls. The area is in close proximity to Phillips' Mill, home and studio of William Lathrop, where many artist gatherings took place.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Picture Study and Schoolroom Decoration movements also influenced schools in the art collection field. In the mid 1930s, Superintendent Dr. Charles Boehm, an advocate of the arts, joined with 25-year school board participant Walter Baum, a Pennsylvania Impressionist painter and passionate arts educator, to form the Bucks County Traveling Art Gallery to educate students. The gallery is still alive today, visiting schools in an outreach program called "Art on the Move," a collaborative between the Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22 and the Michener Art

Museum.

The majority of the NHS collection has been on permanent view in the district administration building. In spring of 2016, the building was closed for extensive renovation. To continue to share the artworks with students and the public throughout the anticipated two-year renovation project, the Michener Museum and NHS are collaborating to display selections from the collection, which highlights works by Pennsylvania Impressionist painters including Fern Coppedge, Florence Snell, Elizabeth Price and Kenneth Nunnamaker.

"Dedicated, Displayed, Discovered: Celebrating the Region's School Art Collections," co-curated by Neszmelyi-Romano and Louise Feder, is on display through Jan. 7. The exhibition includes works from Pennridge, New Hope-Solebury, Philadelphia, Quakertown Community and Souderton school districts, as well as the Traveling Art Gallery of Bucks County Intermediate Unit #22.

The museum presents exhibitions that explore a variety of artistic expression and offers diverse educational programs that develop a lifelong involvement in the arts.



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