

Discover & Learn



JAMES A. MICHENER ART MUSEUM

A Guide For Families

welcome to the James A. Michener Art Museum!

**This guide was designed for families and art lovers
of any age to better understand works of art!**

NOTE TO ADULTS: This guide is designed to encourage children to look at and talk about works of art. For young children, **read** the guide aloud and discuss together about what you see, think and feel.

As you explore the galleries, please remember to look with your eyes and not with your hands because the oil in your hands can damage works of art, even wood and stone! Help keep the artwork in good condition for future visitors.

You may ask for a pencil at the front desk. Please return all pencils when you are finished. The use of pens are not permitted in the galleries.

**Please look, talk, draw, and imagine!
And, most importantly, have FUN!**

what is a Museum?

A museum is a special place that holds a **collection**. If you have a **collection**, write it here:

Museums can help people learn about the **past** and **present**. Collections can include works of art, and artifacts, like dinosaur bones, or old tools and objects. You will see many different kinds of art when you walk through the galleries. What kinds of art can you name?

There are many different types of museums. Besides an art museum, what other kinds of museums can you think of?

Start your visit in the lobby by the front desk. Look out the glass doors to the courtyard.

The Museum's history

The Michener Art Museum opened its doors to the public in 1989. Before it was a museum, it was the Bucks County Prison for almost 100 years!

The prison closed in 1985, but the original **Warden's House**, the **Guardhouse** and the **prison wall** still stand today.



The **Guardhouse** is now used as a gallery, but it used to be the **control center** of the prison. New prisoners would be put in a temporary holding cell in this area before they were assigned a permanent cell. This guardhouse connected to 58 cells. Look out the lobby doors to see if you can find this building.

(Hint: It has a bronze plaque on its front.)



The **Warden's House** is now used as museum staff offices. The building originally housed the warden's family. This building has a large arched entryway known as the **Sally Port**. This was the only entrance or exit to the prison and you may have walked under it when you visited today! How did you feel when you walked through it? How do you think it made the prisoners feel?

When you visit the outdoor sculpture gardens, you will see the 24-foot high **prison wall** that remains. When you visit the wall, see if you can find evidence left by the prisoners.

Write down four things that might have been different 100 years ago during the prison's existence: _____

AT THE LIBRARY: For older children, take out *The Pine Street Hotel* by Lois Anderson to learn more about the Bucks County Prison.

Turn to your right and move to the next gallery. Look for a desk with a typewriter on it.

Meet James Albert Michener



This museum was named in honor of the **Pulitzer Prize**-winning author, James A. Michener. This exhibit recreates his Bucks County office.

Michener had over 40 books published, into more than 50 languages.

Name one of the books found in this exhibit:

Mr. Michener sometimes took up to seven years to write a book! He would create a basic story outline and a sketch of the **characters** and **settings**. He would do a huge amount of research before he wrote,

often traveling to the location of the book for interviews. Find a travel brochure from one of the countries he visited. Write the country here: _____

At this desk, he wrote some of his best-known **fiction** and **non-fiction** works. What can you find on this desk? _____

Michener grew up in Doylestown. There are photographs of all the homes in which he lived. How many can you find? _____

Even with the invention of computers, Michener continued to write using an old, manual typewriter. His average novel contained 500,000 words!

AT HOME: Write a brief story of your trip to the Michener Art Museum today. Include what you saw and what interested you. Who did you come with? How did you get here? How long did you stay?

Pulitzer: annual prizes for outstanding literary or journalistic achievement, established by the wish of Joseph Pulitzer.

Setting: the time and place of the action (in a book, play or movie).

Fiction: something made-up by the imagination. (Example: a novel).

Non-fiction: literature that is based on real-life events.

EXTRA Activity!

Travel around Doylestown and see if you can find the locations of Michener's homes! Map out your travels and calculate your mileage.

Now walk up the stairs into the main galleries and stop at the painting of the large bird!

what are you looking at?



Walk up to the large bird that is staring right back at you! It is called *Over and Above* by the artist Clarence Carter.

What kind of bird do you think this is? Why?

What is he doing? _____

How does it make you feel? _____

How does the artist make the bird look **three-dimensional**? Explain.

If the artist created this painting on a much smaller **scale**, how would it be different besides being smaller? _____

The **inspiration** for this painting came from an actual bird in the artist's backyard. This bird liked to stand and stare over Carter's fence. List some things that **inspire** you when you create a work of art. _____

OLDER CHILDREN: Artists often use objects to **symbolize** other things. What could the wall symbolize in this painting? Think about the various meanings this might imply and discuss together what this might mean for you.

REMEMBER!

When you talk about the meaning an artwork, it can be different for each person. What the artist says about his or her work is just one way to look at it.

AT HOME: Create a drawing with a **bird's-eye view**! Imagine you are a bird soaring above in your neighborhood. What would the world look like to you? Use colored pencils or crayons for your drawing.

Three-dimensional: having, or appearing to have, height, width, and depth.

Symbol: a subject, object, or image that represents a meaning other than the one with which it is usually associated.

Scale: the size or dimensions of the object.

Now walk into the gallery on your right. Find the Portrait of Edward Hicks.

Portrait Personalities



A **portrait** is a picture of a person. It shows the way someone looks, and can sometimes tell us about his or her personality, and when and where the person lived. **Find the painting on the left.**

Thomas Hicks was a skilled portrait artist who painted many famous people of his day, including Abraham Lincoln. He often included **props** in a painting to help us know more about the person. Thomas Hicks painted this portrait of his older cousin **Edward Hicks**.

By looking at the painting, what can you find out about Edward Hicks? Check off each item as you locate it:

- a palette
- an easel
- eyeglasses
- a knot
- a bible
- a paintbrush in his right hand
- a painting

Now that you have checked off these items, what do you know about Edward Hicks?



Edward Hicks was a sign painter and a Quaker minister. He was a **self-taught** artist who specialized in painting scenes from the Bible. He created over 60 versions of this painting called *The Peaceable Kingdom*!

What message is he expressing in this painting?
Explain your answer.

AT HOME: Create your own self-portrait. Include a few objects that are special to you. Consider your clothing and location. What do you want the viewer to learn about you?

FUN FACT!

Just like his cousin, Thomas Hicks created more than one version of this portrait. You can find the other two versions at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center in Virginia and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. Look up these museums using the Internet.

Self-taught: a person, such as an artist, who has not received formal instruction.

Now find the painting with the two girls in pink dresses.

Let's pose!



In this painting, Joseph Pearson, painted his two daughters in his home in Germantown, Pennsylvania. They posed for the painting, most likely standing for a long time. Artists often use models who pose for 20 to 30 minutes, keeping perfectly still! Could you do that? Try it: time yourself!

Look at the painting. What do you notice about the twins? How do you think they felt posing for this painting?

Do the girls seem alike or different? Explain.

What else can you find in this painting?

Now find the painting, View of Almshouse.

Tell a Story!



Paintings can be exhibited in museums even if we don't know who the painter is! Here is one painting that was done by an **anonymous** artist. It is believed to be the intersection of Almshouse Road and Route 611 or Easton Road in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. List some objects that you see in the painting:

What are some clues that tell you what time period it was painted?

Tell a story about what you think is happening in this painting. Choose two people in the painting to be your main characters.

AT HOME: Create a painting that tells a story of a trip you recently had. Think about your **composition** and the important details you need to include.

Now walk out of the gallery the way you came in. Turn right and walk down the hallway to the Nakashima Reading Room.

The nakashima Reading Room



This room was created by designer and architect, Mira Nakashima. It was inspired by traditional Japanese **architecture** and features the work of her father, George Nakashima, an internationally-known **woodworker** who lived in Bucks County.

How is this room different from a room in your home?

Be an art detective and find the objects below!

Mother post

(*hint: this holds up the ceiling!*)

Asa-no-ha pattern

(*hint: this is on a wall cabinet!*)

Butterfly inlay

(*hint: this is in the shape of a butterfly!*)

Conoid chairs

Burl walnut table

Tatami mats

Kyo-kabe plaster

Shoji screens

The table is constructed from the **burl** of a tree, and Nakashima kept its natural, **organic** form for its shape. How is the table in this room different or similar to one in your home?

What **geometric** shapes can you find in this room?

You can **touch** some objects in this room, including the furniture and the floor. Compare the floor's **texture** to the edge of the table. What other textures can you find?

How do you feel when you are in this room? Why?

Woodworker: a craftsperson who makes objects in wood

Architecture: a method or style of building

Burl: an abnormal, rounded growth on the trunk or branch of a tree

Organic: of, relating to, or resulting from living organisms

Geometric: shapes found in Geometry, such as circles, squares or triangles

Butterfly inlay: this decorative piece of wood helps keep the table together in its weak spot

Conoid: the name given to one of the buildings on the Nakashima property in New Hope, PA, called the *Conoid Studio*. Designs developed in this building are called Conoid pieces.

Walk out of the Nakashima Reading Room and turn left into the gallery with the landscape paintings. Find the painting that has fire in it!

what's your impression?

In this gallery, you will see many different kinds of **landscapes**. What objects could you include in a landscape?

How would these objects change if you traveled to another place or country? To another planet?

Fire, Fire!



Edward Redfield, a famous Pennsylvania Impressionist preferred to paint outdoors. He completed his paintings in one sitting, a process he called “**at one go.**”

An exception happened on July 22, 1923, when the old wooden bridge across the Delaware River at Center Bridge was struck by lightning. Redfield made notes as he watched the fire, then painted the scene the next day in his studio. The following day, he painted it again. The painting you see in front of you was created on July 24th, his favorite of the two canvases.

Close your eyes. When you open them, where do your eyes look first? This is the **focal point** of the painting. How does Redfield create this focal point?

An artist’s **perspective** depends on the angle or location from which he or she paints. Imagine that you are at the scene of this painting. How would things look to you if you were... In a canoe in the middle of the river? In a tree looking down?

What parts of Redfield’s painting would you see from each of these perspectives? What parts could you not see? _____

AT HOME: Create a landscape! Draw an exciting event you have seen or read about. Include details as if you are a reporter covering the event. What title would you give your landscape?

Now find the largest painting in this gallery and walk over to it.

Look into Landscape



Artist Daniel Garber completed this painting, *A Wooded Watershed*, in only six weeks! It was created for a special exhibition honoring America's 150th birthday celebration in 1926 called the **Sesquicentennial International Exposition**.

What is the date of America's birthday if this painting was created in 1926? _____
What significant event happened on this date?*** _____

This painting portrays the **Delaware Water Gap**. Garber imagined the landscape before humans came and built factories and highways. How has the landscape changed where you live? How do you think these changes effect the environment?

This painting contains the Pennsylvania state animal and the state flower. Find them and list them here: _____

This painting is 22 feet long and almost 11 feet tall! How did the museum staff fit it inside this gallery? (*Hint: Look to the right of the painting.*)

1926 Sesquicentennial International Exposition: a world's fair held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Delaware Water Gap: a geologic formation on the border of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where the Delaware River passes through a large ridge of the Appalachian Mountains.

Walk into the next gallery where you can find the **Family Education Center**. Look at the many books and discovery boxes and use the computer to visit the Bucks County Artists' Database. Search for a photographer, a poet and a musician. Write the names of the artists here:

*Answer: 1776
**Answer: The Declaration of Independence was signed

Next, find the painting by Helen Frankenthaler in the gallery to your right.

what's in a Name?

Do works of art need titles? Look at this painting, but don't look at the title yet! Sometimes artists give titles to works of art to explain what he or she thought or felt when making the piece. Sometimes the artist uses titles to tell the artworks apart.

TITLES CAN:

Suggest an image, like *View of Almshouse*.

Describe the image, like *On Parade*.

Find examples of paintings in the galleries that:

Refer to a time or place in the artist's life _____.

Suggest a feeling _____.

Leave it completely up to you _____.



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK:

Look at this painting by Helen Frankenthaler closely. What do you see? Are there any objects that you recognize? Describe them here.

Instead of using paintbrushes, Frankenthaler laid her canvas down on the ground and poured paint onto it. How does her style change the look of paint compared with paint applied with a brush?

What colors did she use? Do you see any colors that overlap to make new colors?

Now look at the title. Does this help you with the subject of the painting?

OLDER CHILDREN: Frankenthaler used an **unprimed canvas** for her work. Normally, artists who use oil paints **prime** their canvas with a coating called **gesso**, a mixture of plaster and glue. This layer prevents the oil paint from seeping through the canvas by sealing it. Look at the painting closely. What do you notice happening around the colors as a result of the **unprimed canvas**? What do you think could happen over time?

Now find the painting by Alan Goldstein.



All about Abstraction

Artwork that doesn't look realistic is called **abstract**. You might be able to find recognizable objects in an abstract work of art, but not all the time. The painting by Helen Frankenthaler you just saw is a type of abstract work. It is also called **non-objective** because there are no objects that you can recognize in the painting.



Take some time to look at this painting. What do you see? Do you recognize anything?

The artist, Alan Goldstein, was inspired by the **Delaware River** and the **canal** to create this work. He included parts of

the local **landscape** of Bucks County. He used photographs that he had taken of the site to help him create his **composition**.

Compare this painting to a **realistic** landscape. What are some similarities and differences between the two? _____

ALWAYS LOOK AGAIN!

If you feel confused when looking at a work of art for the first time, always give the work a second chance. Make sure you take another long look to see everything you possibly can. The more you look, the more you will see.

AT HOME: Take a series of four to five photographs of an outdoor landscape with a camera. Take an element from each picture and use that in an abstract drawing or painting. What was your real life inspiration to create your work?

Composition: a visual arrangement of design elements such as light, color, line, space, and shape.

Now find the painting **Street Quartet** on the wall to your right.

crazy for contemporary Art



Contemporary art relates to the current time period, including art created after 1945.

Take a look at this painting by Paul Keene. Describe what you see. Is it **realistic**? **Abstract**? Explain your answer.

If you could hear **sounds** in this painting, what would they be? List them here. _____

Paul Keene was influenced by **jazz** music. Does the **title** give you any clue to what he was trying to paint? _____

AT HOME: Listen to **jazz** music. Create a drawing or a painting in response to what you hear. Using colors, lines, and shapes, see if you can describe the music!

Now find the painting called, Cicada.

Symbols in Art



Sometimes **contemporary** art reflects important topics of the current day or suggests ideas to think about.

Sometimes elements in the painting can act as **symbols**. What objects do you see in this painting by Rob Evans that could be symbols? List them here and their possible meanings:

From what you see in this painting, what kind of message is the artist expressing? What story is happening? _____

Do you think there is a reason the artist divided the painting into three areas? Explain your answer. _____

Next, go to the museum's café and out the glass doors to the Patricia D. Pfundt Sculpture Garden.

Take a Sculpture Stroll!

The Patricia D. Pfundt Sculpture Garden's design was inspired by the landscape and geographic regions of Bucks County. This garden features sculpture and plants native to Bucks County.



Find the sculpture that is on the old **prison wall**. This is a **relief**, a type of sculpture that is found on a wall, or made integral to a wall surface. You cannot walk around a relief sculpture like you can with other types of sculpture.

What is the **subject** of this sculpture?

What kind of **material** did the artist use? Circle the answer:

clay plaster wood stone metal found objects plastic

The artist, Selma Burke, expressed one of her favorite **themes** in this sculpture: family love and unity. What other images could **symbolize** family love and unity?

AT HOME: Create a drawing of people who are important to you, like your family and/or friends. Create the image into a relief sculpture using clay or some other modeling material.

OLDER CHILDREN: Research the geographic regions of Bucks County, PA, which include the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Piedmont Region. What characteristics can be found in each? What areas of the garden reflect these qualities? If you live in Bucks County, what region do you live in?

FUN FACT!

Every year, the museum's preparator maintains the sculptures by cleaning and coating them with a special wax. This helps protect them from the elements.

Theme: a subject or topic in a work of art or writing.

Next, find the sculpture of a Native American with a lamb.

The circle of life



How is a sculpture different from a painting? It is **three-dimensional**! You can often walk around a sculpture, which is referred to as “**in the round.**”

Take a closer look at this sculpture called *Raindrops*. A Navaho girl is looking up to the sky for rain. Why is rain important to the Navaho girl? Why is rain important to us?

Allan Houser, a **Chiricahua** Apache painter and sculptor, had a great respect for sheep. Why are sheep important to Native Americans? Why are sheep important to us?

Chiricahua: a member of an Apache people of Arizona.

Next, find Lassie in this garden!

(Hint: Go to the prison cell and look to your right!)

Learn with lassie!



The sculpture of Lassie was created to honor Eric Knight, author of the story, *Lassie Come Home*. In this story, Lassie makes an incredible journey guided only by instinct and overwhelming desire to be with her family again. Have you ever gone on a long journey? Did you use a map? How did you get there?

Lassie was created by the sculptor Eric Berg who is famous for his animal sculptures. He created Massa the Gorilla found at the Philadelphia Zoo.

Take some time to visit the rest of the sculpture garden today.

After you visit the garden, fill in the blanks below.

I have seen _____ sculptures today. My favorite one was _____ because _____. It is made out of _____.

Lassie and the rest of the staff at the Museum hope that you enjoyed your visit and we hope you come and visit us again! Please stop at the front desk after your visit.

A free pass to the Michener Art Museum is available after filling out a feedback form of this guide. Your feedback is essential to the continued quality of our educational programs and materials. Please stop at the front desk.

This guide was created by Adrienne Neszmelyi-Romano, associate curator of education with supplemental information provided by Alice Johnson, 4th grade teacher, Cornwells Elementary School, Bensalem, through the *Educator in the Workplace Program*, 2001.

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On Parade, n.d.
Louis K. Stone (1902-1984)
oil on canvas
H. 40.25 x W. 30.25 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Gift of Janet L. and Lawrence C. Stone

The Burning of Center Bridge, 1923
Edward W. Redfield (1869-1965)
oil on canvas
H. 50.25 x W. 56.25 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Acquired with funds secured by State Senator Joe Conti, and gifts from Joseph and Anne Gardocki, and the Laurent Redfield Family

A Wooded Watershed, 1926
Daniel Garber (1880-1958)
Oil on canvas, 129.25 x 257.25 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Acquired with a Legislative Initiative Grant awarded by Senator H. Craig Lewis

Nakashima Reading Room
James A. Michener Art Museum
Photo by Barry Halkin

James A. Michener
Graphite drawing by C. P. Vaughn installed in the permanent exhibition about the author, "James A. Michener: A Living Legacy" open July 18, 1993 at the James A. Michener Art Museum.

Lassie (Homage to Eric Knight, author of *Lassie Come-Home*), 1996
Berg, Eric (b.1945)
bronze
H. 40 x W. 49 x D. 24.5 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum, Purchased with a Legislative Initiative Grant awarded by Senator H. Craig Lewis

The Twins: Virginia and Jane, 1917
Joseph T. Pearson Jr. (1876-1951)
oil on canvas
H. 60 x W. 72 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Gift of Oliver Pearson

Lise's Supper, 1960
Helen Frankenthaler (b. 1928)
oil on unsized canvas
H. 70.5 x W. 76.25 inches
Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art,
The University of Texas at Austin,
Gift of Mari and James A. Michener, 1991

Street Quartet, 1990
Paul F. Keene, Jr. (b.1920)
acrylic on canvas
H. 54 x W. 52.25 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum,
Purchased with Funds Provided by Anne and Joseph Gardocki

Upriver From Lumberville Walking Bridge II, ca. 1981
Alan Goldstein (b. 1938)
oil on canvas
H. 65 x W. 96.5 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Purchased with funds provided by Anne and Joseph Gardocki

Cicada, 1998-2000
Rob Evans (b. 1959)
acrylic and oil on canvas
H. 40 x W. 120 inches
In trust to the James A. Michener Art Museum from Ms. Joyce Tseng

Raindrops, 1993
Allan Houser (1914-1994)
bronze
H. 60 x W. 34 x D. 46
James A. Michener Art Museum
Gift of Mattiema Silverman, in loving memory of Ira Silverman, who gave hope and inspiration to many

Together, 1975/ cast 2001
Selma Burke (1900-1995)
bronze
H. 74 x W. 49 x D. 9 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum purchase with assistance from John Horton, William Mandel, the Bjorn T. Poffelt memorial fund, Carolyn Calkins Smith and the Friends of Selma Burke

An unidentified man (possibly Sheriff Albert Paxson) poses at the entrance to the guardhouse at the Bucks County Prison, circa 1907. Courtesy of the James A. Michener Art Museum Library and Archives.

The Museum Façade / Warden's House
Image of the James A. Michener Art Museum on Pine Street, Doylestown, PA.
Photo courtesy of the James A. Michener Art Museum Library and Archives.

Over and Above #14, 1964
Clarence Holbrook Carter (1904-2000)
oil on canvas
H. 75 x W. 77.25 inches
Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art,
The University of Texas at Austin,
Gift of Mari and James A. Michener, 1968

View of Almshouse, ca. 1900
Unknown
oil on canvas
H. 24 x W. 30.125 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum Anonymous Gift

Portrait of Edward Hicks, ca. 1850-1852
Thomas Hicks (1823-1890)
oil on canvas
H. 36.125 x W. 29.125 inches
James A. Michener Art Museum
Funds provided by Eleanor K. Denoon, The Bella S. and Benjamin H. Garb Foundation Inc., Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Gemmill, George S. Hobensack, Jr., Laurence D. Keller, William Mandel, Members of Newtown Friends Meeting, Olde Hope Antiques, Inc., Residents of Pennswood Village, Eleanor and Malcolm Polis, Ms. Leslie E. Skilton, Kingdon Swayne and Anonymous Donors

The Peaceable Kingdom, c. 1937
Edward Hicks (1780-1849)
oil on canvas
H. 28 x W. 35 inches
Collection of the Mercer Museum of the Bucks County Historical Society



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