

COWRA REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Teachers Resource and Information Guide

This Teachers Resource and Information Guide aims to help teachers prepare for their visit to the Cowra Regional Art Gallery. We understand that for many students this might be their first visit to an art gallery and we want this to be an enjoyable, enlightening and memorable experience and a hassle free visit for teachers. Please read the following information in preparation and do not hesitate to contact the Gallery if you require any further information.

COVID-19: During the current pandemic group numbers are limited. A maximum limit of 20 students is permitted. Groups up to 20 must be split to enable compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. There must be a teacher/student ratio of 1:10. The Nguluway Room adjacent to the Gallery can be used as part of the visit for an activity. The Nguluway Room limit is 26 people ie 1 person per 2m square space at 1.5m apart.

Important information: For the health and safety of everyone, please observe the changing COVID-19 precautions which include not visiting when sick; sanitising hands on arrival; electronic check-in by (2) Group Leaders on arrival; keeping an electronic record of names of attendees; maintaining a physical distance of 1.5m when in the Gallery and observing any supervisor to student ratios per space as deemed appropriate prior to your visit. *Please be advised that these conditions may change. Please discuss further with Gallery Staff when booking your school visit.*

The Gallery has a responsibility to protect the art works under its care during an exhibition. For this reason there is a maximum limit of 20 students and mandatory number of teachers/supervisors required per school group. These conditions must be complied with. The preferred ratio of teachers to students is 1:10. If this is not possible please discuss further with Gallery Staff prior to booking.

It is the teacher's responsibility when in the Gallery to supervise, oversee the general behaviour of students and intervene when necessary.

1. GALLERY CODE OF CONDUCT

Please ensure that the students and accompanying adults are aware of the following Code of Conduct prior to coming to the Gallery.

1.1 **Supervising Teachers/ Adults Carers**

A supervising Teacher /Adult Carer must accompany the students **at all times** during a school visit to the Gallery and actively monitor student behaviour. Unlike museums, artworks are often on open display. Whilst staff members are usually available to assist and trained in managing groups it is the **teacher's responsibility** to oversee the general behaviour and to intervene when necessary. We recommend a Teacher/Adult Carer ratio of 1:10 students.

1.2 **Do not Touch the Artworks**

Discuss the 'no touch' rule. Why can't we touch art? Touching causes dirt and natural oils from a person's hand to damage the art. Understanding the uniqueness and fragility of the artworks and why the students must take care not to touch should be discussed with the students prior to their visit. Students should remain at least **one metre away** from the art works.

1.3 **No Food or Drinks**

Food and drink and chewing gum are not allowed in the Gallery exhibition space. As well as direct damage, vermin prove a constant hazard to artworks. Groups bringing in packed lunches can deposit them at the reception desk with Gallery Staff. Exceptions will be made for medical reasons, please advise staff on arrival.

1.4 **No Photography**

In most cases no photography by the general public is allowed in the Gallery. This includes photography of artworks and general interior Gallery shots. The Gallery is obliged to implement this regulation so as not to infringe strict copyright rules pertaining to works of art. Filming and photography of visiting exhibitions is prohibited at all times with the exception of the media.

1.5 **No Running or Shouting**

The Gallery is a public building and it can be disturbing for other visitors if students are shouting and making lots of noise. We do not allow running in the Gallery for both the safety of the artworks and the safety of the students themselves.

2. **PRE-VISIT PREPARATION**

The following are a few suggestions to enhance your school's visit to the Gallery

- 2.1 If possible, the teacher should visit the Gallery prior to the excursion to become familiar with the Gallery. This will enable viewing of current exhibitions, layout and facilities available in the Gallery. As we have an active exhibition program, displays are constantly changing so please ensure you know what will be on show for your group visit. This information is available from the Reception desk.
- 2.2 When you visit you may wish to address a few select works, or a theme for your trip such as photography, drawing or portraiture. Relate the visit to what the students are currently learning in school. They can then use the visit to do research or to find out more about a relevant subject.
- 2.3 Be realistic about how long the students will remain engaged in the Gallery. Younger children, especially preschool and primary, will usually learn best in short 15-20 minute periods. Older students can spend approximately 20 – 30 minutes. Allow extra time if students wish to discuss the exhibition or do sketches of a work they like, for future reference.
- 2.4 **Students will be expected to behave in a manner very similar to that in the classroom and should be made aware that this is a public building with many other visitors. The teacher/group leader is ultimately responsible for the behaviour of members of their group. But we do emphasise that we want this to be an enjoyable, enlightening and memorable experience for the student that will encourage them to return.**

3. **ON THE DAY**

- 3.1 Name tags are great for primary students. They enable the staff member to personalise discussions and help identify students.
- 3.2 Allow sufficient travelling time as tours are scheduled for specific time slots with staff members. If a group arrives late it will probably still have to finish at the scheduled time. This will cut down the effectiveness of the tour, the number of art works the students will be able to view and may curtail the activity.
- 3.3 Organise the students into groups of 10 students per teacher before arriving as this will save time once you get to the Gallery. This will allow maximum time for the tour and/or art activity briefing.
- 3.4 **Parking:** There is "temporary parking" areas on Darling Street (near the Peace Bell) for coaches to unload groups and collect groups from the Gallery. There is also ample parking for cars and small coaches in the parking area next to the Gallery.
- 3.5 **Accessibility:** Cowra Regional Art Gallery is fully accessible for all visitors, with sloped access to the building and disabled toilets.
- 3.6 **On Arrival:** Upon arrival, please report to the Reception desk, situated at the Gallery entrance, to register your group. A staff member will meet your group there.

3.7 Bags: It is advisable to leave bags at school or on the bus. Please ensure that your students have all they need with them (including medication) before they enter the Gallery.

3.8 Lunch space: The Gallery does not have an allocated eating area.

4. DURING YOUR VISIT: looking and talking about Art!!

4.1 You may wish to start your visit with a short talk about the Gallery or exhibition; this can be facilitated by a member of staff through prior arrangement or delivered by the teachers themselves. We encourage debate and conversation in the Gallery amongst students, while being mindful of other visitors in the area. Here are some example questions to engage the students in discussion:

1. What can you see?
2. How do you respond to the work?
3. What do you like or dislike about the work?
4. What do you think the artist wanted to represent in this artwork?
5. What is it made from? Why do you think the artist has used these materials?
6. How has the artist used colour?
7. How is it similar or different to other works nearby in this Gallery?

4.2 Use the **artwork's label** to help guide the student's looking. The artwork's title, year it was made, and material can all contribute to a meaningful conversation about the piece. Perhaps relate the artwork to something they are already familiar with and therefore can relate to, this could link in with previous classroom activities.

4.3 Encourage all **student comments** within discussions; there is no 'wrong' when looking at art. Student's confidence in looking and interpreting the art needs to be encouraged. Get them to question what they think and see. If they talk about a painting having a certain mood, feeling or apparent narrative, get them to question what they can see that makes them say that. Therefore they learn to back up their opinions with visual evidence.

4.4 Discuss with the students how they can find answers to their questions about the exhibition and its exhibits, such as in text panels, labels and handouts.

4.5 Put yourself in the artist's shoes: what were they thinking and trying to do? What were the ideas and inspiration behind their work? When and where did they live? Were they rich, poor, happy, sad, and frustrated? An artwork can reflect the society, lifestyle, area, social and political environment that the artist lives in, and much, much more.

4.6 Some artwork can just be aesthetically pleasing, and can be appreciated for its colour, pattern, brush marks, tone or texture.

4.7 Artworks with recognisable subjects such as landscapes, creatures or people are a great starting point for **story telling, poem or story writing and drama role-plays**. Think about where the scene is located, who is in the image and why? What are they doing? Get the pupils to think about the feelings, emotions and moods the artwork provokes in them and discuss it with their classmates.

4.8 Students that have already begun to explore a theme or artist prior to the visit can then relate to the exhibition and displays at a more meaningful level. For future reference, take note about what excites the students when in the Gallery.

4.9 Students of all ages can gain and develop many skills through a visit to Cowra Regional Art Gallery. Here are a few we have identified:

1. Confidence and familiarity of being in a Gallery environment.
2. Observational skills.
3. Learning to verbally communicate about something visual.
4. Becoming familiar with different art forms: painting, drawing, prints, photography.

5. Investigating different materials and media.
6. An ability to compare and contrast different artworks.
7. Confidence in discussing what they think of an artwork.
8. Learning to investigate an artwork.
9. Development of language and descriptive skills.
10. An awareness of artists, their methods, mediums and contemporary practice.
11. Development of presentation and discussion skills.
12. Practical visual art skills including sketching.
13. Encourage pupils to think in visual terms both in representational image making and in looking.
14. Research skills.

5. CLASS ACTIVITIES IN THE GALLERY

In most circumstances older students may use clipboards and pencils in the Gallery spaces for class projects only when supervised by a teacher at all times. Please note only pencils may be used within the Gallery. Younger students can work in the Gallery Nguluway Room if available. Please discuss further with Gallery Staff when booking your school visit.

6. POST VISIT

- 6.1 Look for opportunities to continue learning after the visit. Hold a discussion back at school or give students a post-visit exercise. This provides them with an opportunity to further explore what they saw at the Gallery through research or their own art practice.
- 6.2 The experience of their visit and their findings can be used across the curriculum, not only through Art & Design but also within their Music, Drama, Mathematics, English, and Science lessons.
- 6.3 Keep a look out for forthcoming events and workshops at Cowra Regional Art Gallery, including regular artists' talks. These can help students understand artists' professional practice.
- 6.4 This guide is only an outline for a group visit and will vary from group to group. Hopefully it will enable the teacher and students to derive the most out of a meaningful and exciting visit to the Cowra Regional Art Gallery

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

7.1 Emergency Evacuation

- i) Gallery staff will be on duty during the period of your excursion.
- ii) When the evacuation alarm is sounded, the teacher responsible for the school group should keep their group together and follow the instructions of Gallery staff. All groups will be evacuated by the safest possible exit to a nominated assembly area. This is the responsibility of, and is managed by, Gallery staff. It is the Teachers responsibility to respond to the instructions of Gallery staff.
- iii) Government-owned buildings and premises such as the Gallery are insured by Risk Cover and therefore comply with the Public Liability insurance requirements of the Department of Education's excursion policy. A copy of the Gallery's Certificate of Currency is available on request.

Enjoy Your Visit!

**Brian Langer
Gallery Director.**

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