ART as Welcome
In Santa Barbara, art is common ground on which we enrich and nurture an energetic, caring, and united community.

Our education programs—accessible to everyone—offer a variety of programs with a clear set of ideals: give diverse people access to the Museum’s collections and resources, ignite imagination and spur learning through careful instruction, and build community connections through empathetic growth and cultural exchange.

Through these efforts, we continue to touch people’s lives, offer them a path to learn about the growing community and larger world, and—on the best of days—help them learn about themselves.
ART as Now

Young at Art
(K–2nd Grade)

Artful Thinking:
In-Class PowerPoints and Museum Tours
(2nd–6th Grades)

ArtReach:
Multi-visit, In-Classroom Lessons
(2nd–6th Grades)

Art Express at the Ridley-Tree Education Center at McCormick House

A-OK After-School Program on School Sites

Junior High and High School Museum Tours

Junior High and High School Events at the Museum

Busing

Teacher Training and Resource Development

ELL Programs & Literacy Initiatives

Art After-School

Homework/Artwork at the Eastside Library

Art Camps and After-School Classes

AIM (Art in Motion)

Community Partnerships

Emerging Teen Internship Program

Family Resource Center

Community and Cultural Celebration: Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)

Family Guides

Art After-School

Docent Programs

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Docent Programs
The Luria Activities Center is filled with smiling children, each one focused on creating an imaginative composition. In Young at Art, 4- through 7-year-olds begin to discover the elements of line, shape, and color. They then explore the galleries with a Museum Teaching Artist, using Visual Thinking Strategies (interactive, non-threatening methods to get students thinking) that build skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, perceiving, and drawing. Young at Art also often involves a tour of the nearby Santa Barbara Public Library.

More than 25,000 students participate in a class program or visit to the Museum each year.
A dozen 10-year-olds gather attentively around the sculpture that their docent guide is describing. They look closely, ask questions, form opinions, and share their thoughts in a circle of viewpoints.

The Artful Thinking program begins in the classroom with a Museum-provided introductory PowerPoint that the teacher can access online and share with students prior to their Museum visit. At the center of the program is a field trip to the Museum where students participate in a docent-led tour of the galleries. Lessons engage students in active viewing and dynamic discussions, emphasizing links with the Common Core Content Standards.

Discussion points feature higher-level thinking skills: comparing and contrasting, making connections, analyzing, and evaluating. A tour of the Santa Barbara Public Library is also available.

Artful Making is an alternative which begins with a half hour tour and interactive discussion in the galleries focused on two or three works of art, followed by a half hour of art making directly linked to the artwork seen.

Artful Writing begins with writing exercises and a discussion in the galleries followed by a half hour of art making incorporating language inspired by the artwork.
The 2nd grade classroom at Aliso Elementary has never been this quiet; every eye in the room is focused on the Museum Teaching Artist demonstrating Impressionist painting techniques.

We’re looking at ArtReach—an on-site, multi-visit, and Museum tour program that sends SBMA Teaching Artists into school classrooms. Lessons emphasize the materials and methods artists use, and the cultural context in which their works are produced.

Visual Thinking Strategies—tactics that use works of art to spark looking, speaking, and listening—encourage students to make connections between course material, their own experiences, and original works of art in the Museum’s permanent collection or special exhibitions. Participating schools vary each academic year depending on need and the advice of district administrators. Special programming is available upon request.
Laughter and the earthy smell of clay waft out an open window of McCormick House. Art Express begins with a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by an hour of interactive demonstration, hands-on experimentation, and art-making at the Ridley-Tree Education Center at McCormick House.

In Art Kitchen-Science Studio, 4th and 5th graders use works of art from the Museum’s collection as a starting point to explore the shared materials, methods, and myths associated with art, food, and science.

In Greco-Roman Sculpture, 6th graders become archeologists for a day as they dig deeper into the materials and methods for making Greco-Roman sculpture in the ancient world. Students observe a marble-carving demonstration, participate in a hands-on exploration of antique bronzes housed in a reproduction of a Roman household shrine, and sculpt three-dimensional clay pieces under the direction of a Museum Teaching Artist.

Art Express
at the Ridley-Tree Education Center
at McCormick House

Hands-on experimentation and art making provide the perfect recipe for learning.
A mother picking up her son after a long workday lights up with a smile when he gets in the car, proudly displaying a large pastel drawing—the colorful fruit of two hours of art making.

The Museum partners with After School Opportunities for Kids (A-OK) to provide a program in which SBMA Teaching Artists offer arts enrichment and instruction at selected school sites. Each site is supervised by well-trained staff and offers a structured, engaging array of academic and enrichment activities. As the lead agency, the Santa Barbara Unified School District administers the program.

Programs operate every single school day until 6 p.m.
Paloma warmly welcomes the two giggling 5-year-olds—cousins who reunite every summer for one week of making art together at the Ridley-Tree Education Center at McCormick House. She remembers her own first day of camp 10 years ago. Now a high school sophomore studying at the Visual Arts & Design Academy of Santa Barbara High School, she knows how art builds both confidence and friendships. SBMA Art Camps and After-School Classes offer students ages 5-12 the opportunity to explore art fundamentals such as drawing, painting, sculpting, color, and composition while connecting to the Museum’s current exhibitions. As students create art they build confidence, become actively familiar with the Museum, and learn Visual Thinking Strategies which enhance communication, visual literacy skills, and critical thinking across all curriculum areas.

The Museum’s companion program, Ceramics Camp, teaches campers ages 6-14 techniques of sculptural and functional ceramics in a fun, relaxed environment. Students create simple clay forms and experiment with surface decoration and glazing techniques.
A class of high school sophomores looks closely at a massive Ansel Adams gelatin silver print. Aspiring photographers themselves, the group leans in as the docent facilitator skillfully draws out their observations and invites them to dig deeper, asking, “What more can we find?”

Junior high and high school tours introduce young people to the beauty housed at SBMA. All schools in the area are invited to bring classes and student groups to the Museum for docent-led tours of special exhibitions and the permanent collection. Every class at the Museum uses inquiry-based conversations that encourage students to look closely, ask questions, and share ideas.

Inquiry-based learning poses questions, problems, or scenarios—rather than presenting established facts or portraying a smooth path to knowledge.
The Mary Craig Auditorium hums with energy as students from Santa Ynez, Oxnard, and Santa Barbara high schools slide into their seats. Just outside, the Museum’s Teen Interns make final adjustments to the large-scale interactive installation they have created for this morning, a cellophane construction of language and light.

The Museum invites high school students to participate in a special interactive learning opportunity tailored to their academic curriculum and interests. Each session features an introduction in the Mary Craig Auditorium, informal docent-led tours, art-making projects led by SBMA Teaching Artists based on special exhibitions and the Museum’s permanent collection, and an additional collaborative project designed by Teen Interns for their peers. Teachers receive lesson plans and curriculum-linked writing and art activities to use in the classroom.

Six yearly events serve 600+ high school students.
The Museum isn’t a familiar destination for all school children. But on this sunny Thursday, a yellow school bus heads up the 101, transporting 30 middle schoolers to SBMA—the first visit for many of them. Off to the left, blue ocean glistens in morning sunshine.

SBMA provides free busing for all Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Carpinteria school tours and junior high and high school special events. For those outside of the local school districts, busing stipends are also available.
STEAM—Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math—is an educational movement that fuses the arts with math and science.

What makes a room full of elementary school teachers feel more like a room full of students? The delight that arises from combining the art of Claude Monet and the science of polarity in a color-mixing exercise using milk, food coloring, and dish soap. SBMA offers a rich calendar of workshops that expand educators’ thinking and equip them with actionable plans for the classroom. Teachers can attend workshops that demonstrate how art education can intertwine with STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics), writing, and reading lessons; focusing on Common Core Standards, Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards; and recommending classroom activities with materials that are easy to access. Furthermore, SBMA provides teachers with a digital image bank, lesson plans, and sample assignments.

Beyond the workshops, SBMA facilitates collaborations with institutions such as the UCSB Graduate School of Education, the South Coast Writers Project, and Antioch University. Finally, the Museum hosts two Educator Open Houses per year—social and informational events for more than 300 teachers.
A mother and father stroll through SBMA’s permanent collection, led by their eager 10-year-old son, the best English speaker in the family. He is excited to share with them the artwork he learned about on a recent class trip. Proudly, he translates the label that explains that this painting was made in France more than 100 years ago. Together, they follow the clues on a family scavenger hunt, and explore other artwork with the smiling assistance of the bilingual gallery guide.

Programs for English Language Learners (ELL) facilitate English language development by inviting teachers and families to explore the Museum’s permanent collection and special exhibitions, while focusing on reading, writing, and conversation skills. Special bilingual activities led by bilingual educators and volunteers and writing prompts provide scaffolding for vocabulary building and personal expression. On selected 1st Thursdays and Studio Sundays, bilingual activities, informal gallery conversations, and musical performances encourage Spanish-first speakers to visit the Museum frequently with increasing levels of comfort and community.
The group of girls at Art After-School eagerly queues up at the cabinet to retrieve supplies for their projects. Polaroid photographs, abstract prints, and sculpted clay reliefs are just some of what they have nearly completed. Next week is the reception where their families will see their art, so it’s time for finishing touches. The Museum Teaching Artist moves about the room, encouraging their efforts.

Art After-School is a free program for 1st through 5th grade girls, largely from lower-income families, offered once a week during the academic year at Girls Inc. sites of Greater Santa Barbara and Carpinteria. During three nine-week sessions, students and a Museum Teaching Artist explore current SBMA exhibitions while learning art fundamentals such as drawing, painting, color, and composition. Included in the curriculum are exciting and educational visits to the Museum, and a reception for both students and their families, celebrating what they have learned.
Three beaming faces peer inside the Eastside Library door. They have arrived early for Homework/Artwork After-School because they have good news to share. When the door opens, signaling it’s time for class, Elena’s cousin bounds ahead of her. “She aced her test!” she broadcasts. Student, family, and Teaching Artist all relish this moment of pride and celebrate that in the comfort of making art, Elena has developed the confidence to ask for help with math.

Homework/Artwork After-School is a free program for students ages 6-12 that provides homework help from a certified classroom teacher or qualified tutor, hands-on art classes inspired by current Santa Barbara Museum of Art exhibitions taught by SBMA Teaching Artists, field trips to the Museum, and Family Nights. Roughly 98% of the program participants are Latino, the majority of whom are from low-income families, and whose parents are either non-English speaking or learning English as a second language. Arts enrichment acts as an incentive for the completion of homework, while also imparting a refreshing and empowering perspective for those students who are struggling with grammar, spelling, and math. Ultimately, it is the combination of homework and artwork that effectively increases participants’ confidence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes.
A group of tiny artists are walking hand-in-hand from the Storyteller Children’s Center to the basement of the First Congregational Church where they attend their art class. Suddenly, an enthusiastic chant goes up, “Tina, Tina, Tina,” as they spy their Museum Teaching Artist across the street. They can’t wait to get started. Later that evening these same students, ages 3-5, will be joined by their parents in making multi-colored prints in a joyful mix of generations, language, and skill levels.

The Art in Motion summer program helps at-risk and low-income participants of all ages create community and positive personal expression by making connections between themselves and the world around them through art. During July and August, a bilingual SBMA Senior Teaching Artist provides free art lessons at three community sites in Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Carpinteria. Family participation is encouraged through family Museum tours, program finale student art shows, and the distribution of free, multi-visit admission passes. Partners have included Storyteller Children’s Center, the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, and the United Boys & Girls Club, Goleta Unit.
The Opera Santa Barbara singers chat amiably with fans who have followed them to the Museum for the last in a season of Pop-Up Opera performances. Tonight the repertoire is French, a perfect pairing with the 19th-century photographs of the Paris Opera House currently gracing the gallery walls.

The Museum collaborates with local community partners through on- and off-site programming that invites new audiences through the doors and takes the Museum out into the community. There is a wide range of opportunities: multi-session art and music collaborations with the Santa Barbara Symphony and UCSB Arts & Lectures; one-day events like Pi Day, during which an SBMA Teaching Artist leads a math-inspired art activity at the Central Library; a gallery tour for the Kavali Institute for Theoretical Physics; and setting up an interactive altar to Lola Alvarez Bravo at the Santa Barbara County Bowl. Partnerships vary each year and programs are always offered at no cost to participants.

ART as Invitation

Community Partnerships
The 10 Teen Interns can’t wait to try out the 4x5 box camera the visiting Artist in Residence brought for them to use. Having mostly relied on their cell phones as cameras, they have never seen photo negatives before. “Fight against the literal!” is the photographer’s advice as they seek to construct images of objects as metaphors, revealing their emotions.

This program is for students aged 12-15 with a passion for art, a curiosity for learning in a museum environment, and a craving for new experiences. Mentored by SBMA Senior Teaching Artist Tina Villalobos, participants dive into the themes of a current exhibition and/or a featured artist during a session of six weekly classes. Inspired by these themes, the group creates art in a variety of mediums, showcases their resulting artwork, and leads activities connected to their discoveries at a culminating event. Each session includes interaction with a visiting Artist-in-Residence.
An earthy scent of beeswax emanates from the FRC, which has been transformed into “The Sensory Space,” inspired by the Valeska Soares: Any Moment Now exhibition. Families are exploring a novel medium, carving tiny pillows out of beeswax.

At the heart of the Museum, the Family Resource Center is a free, interactive space for all ages designed for the hands-on exploration of themes resonating from the Museum’s special exhibitions or permanent collection. Family Guides for use in the galleries, take-home art activities, and a variety of art-making materials are always available free of charge. The Museum website offers the most up-to-date description of FRC programming as the content changes throughout the year to respond to changing exhibitions. Accessible to all visitors, the Family Resource Center serves as an introductory and welcoming opportunity for all ages to engage with art.
For 29 years, the Museum has honored the Mexican tradition of remembering the dead with a variety of family festivities in the galleries and back plaza, including music and dance performances, art-making activities, bilingual storytelling, a special display of altars created by school and community groups, and traditional refreshments. In given years, depending on exhibitions, additional Community Celebrations may be added. For example, in 2016 SBMA celebrated the Museum’s 75th anniversary, and in 2017 it hosted a community celebration in conjunction with the Valeska Soares: Any Moment Now exhibition.

The Museum’s back plaza is alive with music as a troupe of dancers from nearby Goleta dip, twirl, and stamp their feet to the rhythm of the traditional music. A crowd gathers, having momentarily paused their art making, to watch the famous Oaxacan “Pineapple Dance.” For many in the audience, it is a scene from their childhood.

For 29 years, the Museum has honored the Mexican tradition of remembering the dead with a variety of family festivities in the galleries and back plaza, including music and

ART as Memory

Community and Cultural Celebration:
Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead)
A family of four stands just a few feet from Claude Monet’s Waterloo Bridge. Then, in unison, they take eight steps backward to get a broader view of the painting. Their new vantage point sparks a discussion about the clarity and fuzziness of the work—a concept that might not have come up if not for the Family Guide that has them all pondering the question, “What if an artist could paint sunlight?”

Family Guides are simple, free, family-friendly booklets, sheets, or cards created to help families access the art and ideas behind special exhibitions and the Museum’s permanent collection. Ranging from suggestions for guided viewing, to scavenger hunts and riddles, to sketching in the galleries, these easy-to-follow guides make families feel at home in the Museum and often include a related take-home art activity. Family Guides are produced 3–5 times per year, depending on exhibitions.
ART as Unity

Studio Sundays on the Front Steps

The Museum’s front steps are busy on a Sunday morning, as a large group of visitors use wood, metal, and paper to create multimedia collages representing a scene from their favorite books. A local trio of musicians launches into an up-tempo number, gracing the scene with the sounds of acoustic guitar and harmonica.

Visitors of all ages are welcome to participate in this hands-on workshop with SBMA Teaching Artists on the Museum’s front steps. Participants explore different media, including clay, metal, ink, wood, photography, and paper. All projects are inspired by works of art in the Museum’s permanent collection or special exhibitions. On selected Studio Sundays, music or other community-building elements are added to enhance visitors’ experience. Participants also receive free passes for entrance to the Museum.
Parents and children sit side by side at an oversized table. They are selecting two of the many black-and-white reproductions of portraits on view upstairs and coloring them to create an imaginary conversational pairing. It’s a fun moment when adults can let go of their daily stresses and feel like kids again. Best of all, families are doing this together.

Families are invited to enjoy Family 1st Thursdays together in the Museum’s Family Resource Center. Museum Teaching Artists assist families in creating special exhibition-based art projects. Afterwards, families have the opportunity to view the art that inspired them in the galleries using free Family Guides available in the Family Resource Center.
On a warm June evening, Museumgoers linger outside, transfixed by a projection of scenes from the Globe Theatre’s production of Macbeth. Inside, moving through the galleries, they are startled when a young man—a fellow visitor, they thought—suddenly leaps on top of a wooden bench and shouts, urging Ophelia to “Get thee to a nunnery.” Even the Family Resource Center has taken on the role of stage for one night. It is Pop-Up Shakespeare and it is everywhere within and without the Museum walls.

The Museum provides a changing selection of programs and events aimed at adults. These are designed to enhance the visitor experience and contribute to the overall understanding and appreciation of exhibitions on view at the Museum. Offerings for adults include: talks given by artists, scholars, and curators such as Director’s Dialogue and the Art Matters and Curator’s Choice lecture series; film screenings; general collection and focus tours; live theatre; music performances; Pop-Up Opera; Pop-Up Shakespeare; poetry readings; art studio classes such as Adult Ceramics (offsite) and Sketching in the Galleries (every month); and books signings. Many of these are free with Museum admission.
There’s a line outside the Mary Craig Auditorium on this Sunday afternoon. Ticket holders waiting to enter chat excitedly, holding copies of books they hope to get signed, eager to hear the thoughts and stories of the world-renowned author they have come to see.

Parallel Stories is a literary and performing arts series that pairs art and artists with award-winning authors and performers of regional, national, and international acclaim. This series functions as a multidisciplinary lens through which to view the Museum’s collection and special exhibitions. The series has included sculptor Charles Long and cultural critic Jonathan Lethem; artist Lewis deSoto and author Pico Iyer; Andrew Winer, writer, artist, and a recipient of an NEA Fellowship in fiction, and Colm Tóibín, acclaimed Irish author, poet, essayist, critic, and Man Booker Prize finalist; and Geoffrey Dyer, novelist and critic, and winner of the 2011 National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism.
It’s Friday night and the Museum’s front steps are crowded with costumed croquet players: an astronaut pairs with a deep-sea diver to win. Inside the galleries, guests move from a reimagined Warhol print factory to a David Bowie-inspired dance. There is nothing like the combination of specialty cocktails, performance, and art.

Atelier (the French term for “workshop”) is envisioned as a studio for the imagination and offers its audience an evening of intriguing and occasionally irreverent interactions with art and artists in the Museum’s galleries. Now in its ninth season, Atelier is creatively themed and inspired by the Museum’s exhibitions or permanent collection, and highlighted by performance, dance, music, and specialty hors d’oeuvres and cocktails. Past highlights include composer Jake Heggie, artist Robert Wechsler, writer Geoff Dyer, and a dance performance by Larry Keigwin Co. from New York.
The Museum’s Artist in Residence takes the now-familiar path across the park from the Ridley-Tree Education Center at McCormick House—where she has just finished her final visit to the ceramics studio class—to the Museum’s auditorium for the evening’s panel discussion. Tomorrow she will work with a class at Santa Barbara City College before flying home after a week of teaching, learning, and enjoying the beauty of Santa Barbara.
60 active docents provide free gallery talks that reach more than 14,000 people each year.

Vicki smiles with welcome as a group of visitors from the Mexican Consulate come to see the Museum’s mural created by David Alfaro Siqueiros, one of Los Tres Grandes. Seamlessly moving between Spanish and English, she invites her visitors to look closely.

The face of the Museum’s education programming, the approximately 60 active docents provide free gallery talks to both students and adults. The Museum’s docent program is known for the quality of its training as well as for the excellence, enthusiasm, and dedication of its membership. A docent is a volunteer teacher who serves the Museum and the community as an art educator. Docents act as tour guides for children and adults visiting the Museum; offer curriculum-related tours to students using inquiry-based discussion methods of Visual Thinking Strategies; offer gallery talks to adult visitors; lecture throughout the community and in senior residences through the highly successful Community Speakers Program; and meet for lectures and workshops as part of their ongoing professional development.
Santa Barbara Museum of Art proudly offers educational programming for every member of our community.
ART
as
Empathy