BASIC
Itinerary
ANONYMOUS CATALAN ARTIST
Noah’s Ark and The Descent
13th century. Last third
Tempera on walnut panel
108 x 52 cm
(each one)

AMBROSIO BENVSON
Pietà at the Foot
of the Cross
c. 1530
Oil on oak panel
68 x 88.2 cm

FRANCISCO DE ZURBARÁN
The Virgin with the Child Jesus and
the Child Saint John the Baptist
1662
Oil on canvas
169 x 127 cm

JOAQUÍN SOROLLA
Kissing the Relic
1893
Oil on canvas
103.5 x 122.5 cm

FRANCISCO ITURRINO
Colts in the Country
c. 1912-1914
Oil on canvas
150.4 x 200.5 cm

JEAN METZINGER
Nature morte
(Still Life)
1919
Oil on canvas
73.3 x 100 cm

ANTONIO SAURA
The Three Graces
1959
Oil on canvas
196 x 292 cm

RONALD B. KITAJ
The Hispanist (Nissa Torrents)
1977-1978
Oil on canvas
244.2 x 76.2 cm

JOHN DAVIES
(Every) War
Memorial
1974-1977
Mixed technique
162.5 x 368.5 x 244 cm

REMIGIO MENDIBURU
Roots
c. 1970-1971
Beech tree stumps
200 x 116 x 111 cm
GUIDELINES FOR YOUR VISIT

TIMING THE VISIT

1. Arrival at museum at time agreed at preliminary meeting with teachers.

2. Audiovisual on the "Essentials of Sculpture" lasting 7 mins, and/or the "Essentials of Painting" lasting 8 mins.

3. 60-minute walk through museum galleries commenting on works included in "Visiting Cards".

4. Teachers and children fill in questionnaire.

5. Visit ends.
SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK FOR THE MUSEUM VISIT

A few days before visiting the museum, it is a good idea to hold an interdisciplinary work session to convince pupils that not only can you learn in the museum (not in itself a new idea) but that you can also learn through the museum.

Here are some suggestions for activities. Choose the ones that you feel are most suitable, or use ones designed by your own school.

Geography and History
- Historical and artistic background to the works they are going to see.
- How to use the "Visiting Cards".
- Greek and Latin mythology in the arts.

Languages
- Spanish: go over the new vocabulary in the educational files. Literary fragments concerning art movements represented in art: Romanticism, Realism, Expressionism, etc.
- Other languages: words used in art that come from Latin, Greek, French or English.

Drawing
- Review of colours and perspective.

Physics and Chemistry / Natural Sciences
- Study of light and colour.
- Colours and acrylics.
- Moisture meter.

Music
- Fragments corresponding to art movements to which the selected works belong.

WORK SUGGESTIONS FOR AFTER THE VISIT

These suggestions are given in order of usefulness.

1. **Making a dossier.** Some possible guidelines:
   - What a museum is, what use it is and what it represents.
   - The arts as a whole: similar representations in literature, music, painting and sculpture.
   - Description of the visit and the works they liked most.
   - Personal view.

2. **Select fragments of literature, painting and music and explore the ways they correspond.**

3. **Select two paintings and a sculpture for discussion.**

4. **Select two of the works studied and talk about their most important features.**
DURING THE VISIT

Although all students are given a “Visiting Card”, the person in charge of the group can start the visit by asking the questions posed below.

Based on simple questions and the subsequent use of the “Visiting Cards”, this method helps students to develop their critical sense, and to comment on a selection of paintings in the museum. Rather than simply acquiring information, they are encouraged to interpret what they see for themselves directly in the works of art. The idea is to promote a dialogue between the students as they look at the selected works, in a kind of process involving learning through art.

Method for the visit:

1. Let your pupils look at the selected work in silence for about a minute before making any comments.

2. You don’t need to know anything about Art History to answer these questions coherently.

3. The idea behind the visit is to encourage them to think about what they see and stimulate their powers of observation, rather than proposing they come up with the “right answers”.

4. It is a good idea to start with the comments before reading the title. Use the information you have on the work sparingly, only if it is necessary in the context of what they say, and always after they’ve talked about it for a while. Giving too much information or giving it too soon may inhibit them from taking part or making comments.

5. You can always start by asking your pupils:  
   What do you see in this picture or sculpture?  
   And then continue (if necessary):  
   - What else is happening?  
   - What else can you see?  
   - Can you add anything else?  
   - Does anyone see anything different?

6. A thorough inspection of the work enhances their powers of observation and makes their answers much more complex. Also, by answering these basic questions, they can come to conclusions about the image they are discussing while being aware of how they reached them.  
   So you can continue your first question with:  
   What is it you see there to make you say that?  
   This question makes them think about their initial reactions and go back over their comments with some clear backing from the painting. A few possible variations:  
   - Why do you think that?  
   - Where do you see that?  
   - What do you think of that?  
   - Can you say a little bit more about that?

7. Once you’ve worked these simple questions out, you’ll find the subsequent work with the “Visiting Cards”, on discovering and commenting on the selected paintings, much more useful and interesting.

8. Finally, when you finish talking about a work, sum up the most interesting parts of what your students have said after discussing each painting in detail. By going back over their answers, you give their ideas validity.

Don’t be surprised if the process takes longer than you expected; you can always make any adjustments you think are necessary depending on the situation.
WHERE TO FIND THE WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ACTION
COMMENTARIES ON THE WORKS
These two works from the Middle Ages are the oldest in the entire visit. We don’t know who painted them. People suffered terrible tragedies in those days, and turned above all to God and religion for answers and consolation. Most people were illiterate, and they learnt about religion through art.

The two works show two consequences of wicked behaviour. *The Descent* tells us about the crucifixion of Christ, who died to redeem our sins, and *Noah’s Ark* recounts a story from the Bible, the Flood, when God saved the righteous and punished the wicked. This is the lesson the artist who painted the two works wanted to illustrate.

And how did he paint in order to teach?

- With thick-lined drawing and strong colours that are easy to see.
- There are no shadows or different tones of the same colour, giving rise to some strong contrasts between colours.
- Nor does the artist use either perspective or depth. In other words, we don’t get the impression that some things are further away from us than others. Only the most important characters are painted larger.
- Some figures are placed below others, or to one side, but with connections between them. Both paintings are very naive, almost as if executed by a small child.

So it’s not hard to come to the conclusion that these are figurative paintings on religious themes. A greenish colour predominates in *Noah’s Ark* and red in *The Descent*. They are clearly painted on panels, the artist using a brush and size, a material very similar to tempera.
Ambrosius Benson painted this work in the 16th century. It is a Pietà, which remained a very common theme in religious painting until the 18th century.

Full of detail, the work is perfectly drawn.

Besides, the artist used a remarkable variety of very luminous colours, making everything he painted seem real. It is also interesting to see how the colours "cool" into the background, to increase the sensation of depth.

The natural light becomes more tenuous as we look at the upper part of the painting.

In an attempt to relate several events in the life of Christ, Benson painted two episodes at the same time: the painting shows the scene of the Pietà and in the right background, the Burial of Christ.

On the opposite side, the bodies of the main characters form a triangular composition. If we draw a line joining the face of the Virgin with Christ’s and His dead hand, we make a triangle coinciding with the points we first look at, precisely where the tension is greatest.

One curious feature of the work, painted on panel in oils with a brush, is that the buildings and characters’ clothing are anachronistic. This means they belong to the time when the artist lived, and not to the people portrayed in the painting.
This picture, painted by Francisco de Zurbarán in 1662, is his last known dated work. It shows the Virgin holding the Child Jesus in Her arms while He plays with John the Baptist. The way the characters are set in the picture creates a pyramidal composition, with the head of the Virgin at the apex.

Although Zurbarán was a great draughtsman, skilfully imitating the richness of fabrics and objects, here it is his way with colour and light that draws our attention. Despite being so rich, the colouring actually gives a feeling of sobriety; warm colours predominate, balanced by the blue of the Virgin’s mantle and the olive green background. The light was conceived to create the mysterious, slightly misty atmosphere in which the figure of the Child Jesus stands out from the other characters.

Despite the group’s stability, Zurbarán manages to suggest movement by twisting the Virgin’s torso, and through the posture of Jesus, who is turned towards St. John.

On a second look at this religious painting we spot the lamb, the cross in St. John’s hand and the red of the Virgin’s tunic as symbols of Christ’s Passion (the Lamb of God, the Crucifixion and red for suffering).

Zurbarán painted this work in oils with a brush on a canvas support, all standard media in 17th century Spain.
All the characters in this painting by Joaquín Sorolla are seen inside a church, waiting in line to kiss the relic the priest holds in his hands, while an altar boy collects donations.

The natural light enters from above, illuminating the heads of the people portrayed and highlighting the church’s decorative elements.

Though sober, the colouring is varied, producing a balance between the warm range of reds, browns and ochres, with the somewhat colder greys, blues and greens.

Despite being subordinated to the effect of the light, the brushwork is varied, being loose and sketchy in the illuminated areas, and more dense and compact in the rest. The end result is that Sorolla manages to capture quite naturally the immediate impression of a daily event.

When we look at this picture, we get a good idea of the importance and significance of religion for Spanish society at the time, particularly the lower classes.

Sorolla created a horizontal composition in which the distribution of the elements in three main planes is particularly important in creating a sensation of depth: the tiled floor and altar, the main characters and the decorated wall in the background.

Painted in the late 19th century, the characters’ clothes are a perfect reflection of that time.
Francisco Iturrino painted *Colts in the Country* some time between 1912 and 1914. Although born in Santander, Iturrino moved at an early age to Bilbao with his family, which explains why he is included in the group of Basque artists.

The most immediately striking thing about the painting is the number of animals portrayed, all of them seemingly intent on avoiding the spectator’s gaze. Viewers get the impression the colts are too big for the canvas chosen by the artist. The large group of horses and the low viewpoint hide the horizon, which reinforces this impression.

Iturrino achieved the sensation of depth and movement by positioning the colts with their backs to the spectator, and creating a diagonal inclined towards the upper left angle.

Painted directly onto the canvas, the work was done with no preliminary drawings, Iturrino using long, broad brushstrokes in a particular order and direction to give form to the horses’ manes, tails and backs. This fast, direct mode of painting imbues the work a slightly sketchy but highly expressive feel.

The work was painted outdoors in the full light of day, which accounts for the vivid, intense colouring. Iturrino skilfully harmonizes ochres, browns and violets with the ranges of greens, yellows and whites.
This work by Jean Metzinger belongs to what was known as the Cubist movement, a tendency that presented objects as if they were being seen from different points of view at the same time.

Objects were also shown flat, without the perspective artists had used for centuries, basically because the Cubists rejected the imitative nature of art, arguing that if the surface of the canvas was flat, then the images painted on it should be flat too.

The still life shows a table, a guitar, a bottle, a fruit bowl and what would seem to be a rectangular piece of cloth spread over the table. All the forms are synthesized, seen from different angles and each infringing on the space of the others; even the colour fields are independent of the forms of the objects.

Instead of faking the sensation of depth to draw our gaze, Metzinger created a closed space where the objects are grouped together and seem to come chaotically towards the viewer. The space is organized by the oval shape framing the scene and the rhomboidal setting of the table.

Brushwork is virtually inappreciable, with browns, blacks and greys predominating, distributed by the artist almost symmetrically. The background and table exchange their colours to the right and left of an imaginary line that seems to divide the painting into two halves.
In this work from 1959, Antonio Saura reinterprets a mythological theme that had from the beginning allowed artists to paint female nudes, the most famous of these being perhaps the painting by Rubens with the same title.

Here the artist separates the three women and paints them on different canvases and in different postures. The central figure lifts her left hip, the one on the right shows her backside and breasts at the same time, while the woman on the left pushes her belly forward.

Saura uses apparently thick, fast, almost careless brush strokes, applied with great energy and expressive power, to reduce the basic features of the female body to its most elementary forms. This, together with the size, lack of light and the exclusive use of black and white (even the white of the canvas is used as a colour) endows the images with a remarkable immediacy and a crude, direct aggressiveness.

Unlike Rubens, Saura was clearly not interested in using this contemporary triptych to establish any sort of communication between the three women; this is clear from the fact that each figure is executed on an independent canvas signed individually by the artist.
Kitaj produced this painting sometime around 1977-1978. The sitter is his friend Nissa Torrents, a leading Hispanist of Catalonian origin who worked at the University of London.

Set indoors, the painting portrays Torrents surrounded by a series of objects captured from an impossible perspective that also speak about her tastes and the cultural circles she moved in. The mobile with two cats is the same as one made by Picasso and used as a sign for the Barcelona café Els quatre gats, a rendezvous for artists and intellectuals. The Head of Christ sculpture is a reference to Spanish culture, and the chair she is seated in marks Torrents’ acceptance of the new or avant-garde developments in the society of her time.

In the upper part, the interior opens out towards a landscape on the Costa Brava, which floods the whole scene with clear light. In this setting, Torrents looks self-assured, confident and modern, her attitude reflecting her complicity with the artist and their mutual sympathy.

The drawing is important here, bordering as it does all the features in the painting and structuring the composition in large planes. Applied in thin layers, the oils do not cover the canvas completely, leaving some areas untouched and others with different layers of colour showing through.

Although the brushwork is not appreciable, it has been done in such a way as to give the rich, varied colouring a rough, rather dry look. A wealth of historical features helps to situate both work and sitter in a specific context.
Davies had his first major one-man show in London in 1972. Three years later he again displayed his plaster and polyester sculptures, largely focusing on portraiture and the human figure. The installation surprised London public and critics alike, who discovered the work of a figurative, realist sculptor far removed from the abstract trends predominating in British sculpture of the time and whose work was full of allusions and references closer to painting, theatre and performance.

In this early period of his career, Davies produced life-size, very realistic looking figures (occasionally obtained using moulds from the life, and fitted with glass fibre eyes and natural hair) all dressed in second-hand clothing and shoes. The sculptures were usually carefully placed in pairs or groups. Allusions to the immediate environment are minimal. Often presented holding odd or unusual objects, the figures are placed on raised platforms that strengthen the work’s stage-like nature.

According to artist friend Timothy Iman, "...Davies worked for some years on (Every) War Memorial. Three young men, naked from the waist up, are placed in odd postures (Davies calls them ‘stations’); one holds a sort of frame, intensifying the artificial nature of the work as a whole. The source of inspiration for the work was a photograph of a street in Beirut taken after a bomb explosion, with civilians scattered around on the ground in various states of shock. The figures, modelled on real people, are perfect for portraying the paralysis affecting them, just as the plaster poured on them effortlessly transforms into blood and dust."

Opinions on the work were divided, prompting the artist to say: "For me, there’s always a conflict between the qualities of the sculpted figures created and what one sees on the street, but I always try to ensure the figures reflect the quality of human beings rather any purely sculptural quality."
Remigio Mendiburu is a Basque sculptor who worked with metal and wood, producing mostly abstract works. Although abstract, this work, *Roots*, from 1970-1971, has clear references to nature and is made from the wood of the beech tree, which abounds in the Basque Country.

Unpolished, the work bears marks of the gouge Mendiburu used to carve it. The texture, thickness and roughness of the material used are all important and easily appreciable here.

Although this is a very dense, highly expressive work, the sculptor actually worked on each part independently, joining them together afterwards with nail-shaped beech wood wedges to make a single object, almost as if it were a building game.

The title matches the sculpture’s form perfectly, this being a mass with a branch-like look to it that reminds us of forests, woods and nature.

Executed in wood, *Roots* could be described as an abstract work on a symbolic theme, involving a vaguely round block that is at once warm and full of energy.
BASIC
Itinerary

1. NOAH’S ARK and THE DESCENT
2. PIETÀ AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS
3. THE VIRGIN WITH THE CHILD JESUS AND THE CHILD SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST
4. KISSING THE RELIC
5. COLTS IN THE COUNTRY
6. NATURE MORTE (STILL LIFE)
7. THE THREE GRACES
8. THE HISPANIST (NISSA TORRENTS)
9. (EVERY) WAR MEMORIAL
10. ROOTS
Does any character or feature stand out more than the rest? Why?

What range of colours predominates?

- [ ] Yellows
- [ ] Reds
- [ ] Violets
- [ ] Greens
- [ ] Blues
- [ ] Ochres and browns

The painting you’re looking at has:

- [ ] A lot of light
- [ ] Intermediate light
- [ ] A little light
- [ ] No light at all
  
  If it has light, mark where you see it or where it comes from.

How was it painted?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Brushwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>Thick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canvas</td>
<td>Tube</td>
<td>Pastel</td>
<td>Fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board</td>
<td>Nib</td>
<td>Fresco</td>
<td>Loose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Fingers</td>
<td>Watercolour</td>
<td>Small touches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Spatula</td>
<td>Engraving</td>
<td>Not appreciable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall</td>
<td>Pencil</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>Charcoal</td>
<td>Tempera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Punch</td>
<td>Waxes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose the format of the painting and draw the main lines of the composition. Look at the example.

Are there any historical features? (clothing, furniture, buildings, etc.)

What period and artistic style do you think it’s from?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is it figurative?</th>
<th>Is it abstract?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What is the theme?**

- Mythological
- Landscape
- Religious
- Everyday
- Still life
- Social criticism
- Historic
- Portrait
- Other

**Was it made from?**

- Wood
- Glass
- Granite
- Iron
- Plastic
- Other stone
- Bronze
- Marble
- Other metals
- Baked clay
- Alabaster
- Others

**What technique did the artist use?**

- Adding material
- Eliminating material
- Other

**How was it painted?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gouge</td>
<td>Direct on material</td>
<td>Finished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisel</td>
<td>Hollowed in other material</td>
<td>Polished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammer</td>
<td>By adding elements</td>
<td>Unfinished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Is it coloured?**

- Cold
- Warm
- Aggressive
- Luminous
- Huge
- Heavy
- Energetic
- Delicate
- Crude
- Light

**This sculpture seems**

- In the light
- In the carving
- In the material
- In the form
- In the colour
- In the surface

**Is there any way in which theme and sculpture seem to be in accord?**

- In the light
- In the carving
- In the material
- In the form
- In the colour
- In the surface
1. What did you like the most about your visit? What least? (Mark one answer only in each column)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most</th>
<th>Least</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The selection of works</td>
<td>The audiovisual content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone talking about the works</td>
<td>The files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way we saw the works</td>
<td>The files</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Something else: ..............................................................................................................................................................

2. Would you like to know more about the collection of the museum?

- No
- No very
- Just as interested
- Quite a lot
- Yes, very

3. Do you think you could talk about the works you’ve seen today with other people?

- A lot
- No
- Quite a lot
- A little

4. Would you like to come back to the museum another time?

- Yes, soon
- Yes, in a few years’ time
- Only on a special occasion
- No

5. Who would you like to come back with?

- An organized group with guide
- A school group (like today)
- Family
- Friends
- Other: ____________________________
- I’d not come back

6. The visit seemed:

- Short
- About right
- Long

7. Did you enjoy your visit? Give it a score between 1 and 10.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

8. Choose the sentence (one only) that best sums up what you think about art museums.

- They are places for people who know a lot about art.
- Anyone can enjoy a visit.
- They are no use to anyone.
- They are serious places to learn and enjoy in silence.
- You enjoy them more the more you know.

9. Would you change anything about your visit or improve it in any way?

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Thank you very much for coming.