

The Frick Partners with City Schools

to Cultivate a New Generation of Art Lovers

“It was exciting to see my students discover that art is history, social studies, and powerful messages from the past.” So said David Macaluso, the visual arts teacher at Manhattan East School for Arts and Academics (MS 224). More than seventy sixth graders from MS 224 participated this year in the Frick’s school partnership initiative, one of many programs including museum visits and after-school and weekend classes offered by the Frick’s education department. Together, the programs serve some 3,200 students annually. The partnerships, which are developed by Frick educators in collaboration with classroom teachers to meet the unique needs of each school’s curriculum, are designed to foster a love and appreciation of the fine arts.

Museum-school partnerships, which have become an increasingly important part

of the education department’s offerings, use the museum’s resources to expand learning inside and outside the classroom. “I am so proud of this program,” said Rika Burnham, Head of Education at The Frick Collection. “These partnerships breathe new life into the Frick’s mission to serve the public. We not only take great pleasure in seeing so many students in the galleries, but we ourselves are inspired every day by the energy and insights they bring to the Collection.”

To complement their classroom project in portraiture, MS 224 students visited the Frick galleries five times over the course of six months, focusing on portraits that represented people from different parts of the world. They scripted dialogues between Sir Thomas More and Sir Thomas Cromwell, imagining a conversation that the two great men might have had in the past or one they

could have now, after years of “facing each other” in the Frick’s Living Hall. To practice their drafting skills, they made contour drawings of Ingres’s *Comtesse d’Haussonville*, discovering her unusual serpentine posture through close looking. Finally, each student created his or her own portrait in a style inspired by a favorite work of art at the Frick.

To celebrate the Frick’s fall 2010 exhibition, *The Spanish Manner: Drawings from Ribera to Goya*, museum educators created Expedition Art, a fourteen-session course for the Washington Heights Expeditionary Learning School. The program included visits to the Frick galleries as well as to El Museo del Barrio and the Hispanic Society of America and earned participants credit toward high school graduation. Over the course of a semester, the students wrote poetry, mounted an exhibition of paintings at their school, and made a short film about the friendship between Velázquez and Philip IV of Spain.

For some students, the Frick partnership provides the opportunity to visit an art museum for the first time. This was the case with The East Harlem School (EHS), a year-round middle school for children from low-income families, which this spring sent each and every one of its students to the Frick to study Old Master paintings and to support the school’s mission of community building. “The students were so excited about their visit to the Frick,” said Courtney Knowlton, program director of EHS. “I could hear them talking in the halls and asking each other, ‘Have you been to the Frick yet?’ They shared a special experience that brought them together across all grade levels.”





In collaboration with the modern languages department of the Nightingale-Bamford School, the Frick conducted sessions in French and Spanish for high school students. Participants sketched works of art from the permanent collection and then discussed the objects using descriptive nouns and adjectives, ultimately composing poems in either French or Spanish. Teacher

Marilena Kim said of her class's experience, "Our wonderful guide helped students view art critically and express their own interpretations in Spanish. The exercises were so instructive that I've incorporated them into my language classes."

Junior and senior advanced placement illustration classes from the High School of Art and Design (HSAD) in midtown

Manhattan came to the Frick five times during an intensive semester-long partnership. The program encouraged creativity through activities such as sketching and acting. Students wrote and performed their imagined version of the mysterious letter depicted in Vermeer's great masterpiece *Mistress and Maid*. They spent more than an hour sitting in front of *The Polish Rider*, discussing their own theories about the horseman's identity and Rembrandt's haunting landscape. They imagined the scene "outside" of Manet's *Bullfight*, many drawing a dead toreador just as Manet had originally envisioned. In front of Turner's great harbor scenes they sketched details and recreated them from memory, as the artist had done in his studio nearly two centuries ago. "Sketching the masterworks in The Frick Collection requires a sharp focus and concentration that allow the students to see and understand the artist's process and technical achievement, and they carried these insights back to their studio practice," said James Harrington, HSAD arts instructor. The results—along with poetry and artwork by students from other partner schools—can be viewed online in the student gallery on the Frick's Web site.—Jennie Coyne, Assistant Museum Educator

THIS PAGE
Viktorya Vilks, the Frick's Samuel H. Kress Fellow in Museum Education, talks about Barbet's bronze *Angel* with David Evans, Jaytirmoy Barman, and Christina Bernstein of the High School of Art and Design.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Assistant Museum Educator Jennie Coyne discusses Jacob van Ruisdael's *Landscape with a Footbridge* (1652) with students from the High School of Art and Design, one of five New York City schools that partnered with the Frick this year.