

## A Day at the Art Museum...

On Tuesday October 25th, (11) students and (6) chaperones headed north to *the Cleveland Museum of Art* for a rare opportunity to visit one of the premier art museums in the world. It was a chance for my middle school Art Survey class to see some of the paintings we had been studying since August ...”up close and personal”. Despite the numerous pre-warnings about the impact that the various one-of-a-kind originals would have on their senses, the students and parents were awestruck!

Once we arrived at University Circle, we took a stroll around the *Case Western Reserve* campus. Various buildings and sculptures were pointed out by myself and Mr. Schneider, both of us former students of this campus. We were both amazed how much the campus had changed and how much more attractive it had grown since our school days “many moons” ago (Steve has a few fewer moons than me). The highlight of the walking tour was observing the creative architecture at the Lewis Business School with its curved roof and meandering brickwork. I had also forgotten how beautiful the Gothic style churches were. Visiting some of the old landmarks brought back lots of memories.

We arrived at the Art Museum for our 11am tour ready to take in some creative masterpieces. Our tour guide, Ervin Something (Erv), gave us a general overview beginning with an Egyptian Mummy’s sarcophagus (coffin). It was beautifully decorated with hieroglyphs, telling the life story of its occupant, one of the great Pharaohs. Erv mentioned that they would remove certain organs and bury them with the body in a separate jar, so they would have use of them in the next life. This created an “emotional stir” with the students. It gave us a chance to discuss how differently the Egyptians viewed the afterlife from how we do as Christians.



We also viewed some marble statues of “Jonah and the Whale” created around 200 A.D. Erv was impressed with how well our kids knew the story. After looking at a Greek Bronze statue created over 2,200 years ago, we headed for the Baroque painting gallery. We looked at a painting by Del Sarto depicting Abraham Sacrificing Isaac, painted in 1527. Erv mentioned Chiaroscuro (spotlight) and the kids already knew what it was, since we just discussed this principle two weeks ago while studying Rembrandt. We also looked at paintings by Caravaggio, Fransisco De Zubaran (Christ & Mary) and El Greco (The Crucifixion) before heading for the Dutch Masters gallery where we looked at paintings by Franz Hals, Peter de Hooch, Abe Beyeren and Rembrandt.

We then headed up to the Armor Court where we saw some gruesome middle age weaponry and armor. After that we headed for the Impressionism gallery and my students were pumped! They immediately picked out Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet, two of the artists we spent a decent amount of time studying earlier in the school year. The tour was completed after discussing one of Van Gogh’s paintings on a cloth, covered by glass, which is a rarity! Erv said they put it behind glass or it would have fallen apart.

At the end of the one hour tour, both Erv and the Assistant Guide marveled how well behaved, knowledgeable and focused our students were. Everyone at Indian Hills would have been very proud of how well they represented our school ...I know all of us chaperones were! By the way, I want to give them a shout-out for their willingness to drive and support this effort: Bill Strawn, Marsha Miller, Beth and Denny Hicks. Thanks again!!

After our lunch at the Natural History Museum, we relaxed a little outside climbing around on a Stegosaurus (it wasn’t real) before boarding the vans for home. The students (and the adults) were all quite jazzed about this amazing resource and began discussing the possibility of a return trip in the Spring to see the Rembrandt exhibition.



.....October 31, 2011 written by Bill Shryock