

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS THROUGH ART AT THE NERMAN MUSEUM



PHOTO COURTESY E.G. SCHEMPF

Docent Susan Tinker leading a tour for MCC Blue River. Artwork from left to right: Do-Ho Suh, *Some/One*, 2004, Stainless steel military dog tags, steel structure, fiberglass resin, fabric, 75 x 114 x 132 inches, Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003.02, Gift of Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation in honor of their children; Roger Shimomura, *American Infamy*, 2006, Acrylic on canvas panels, 60 x 96 inches, Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 2006.15, Acquired with funds provided by JCCC and Marti and Tony Oppenheimer and the Oppenheimer Brothers Foundation; Kerry James Marshall, *Untitled (Altgeld Gardens)*, 1995, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 79 x 103 inches, Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1999.16.

By Karen C. Gerety Folk, Curator of Education

As an integral part of the Johnson County Community College campus, learning occurs on a daily basis at the Nerman Museum. Even when galleries in the museum are closed (outside operating hours), hundreds of works from the museum’s collection enliven public spaces and provide unprecedented access to contemporary art. Students, faculty, staff and visitors enjoy free encounters with a diverse collection throughout the year.

Allison Smith, professor and chair, Art History, states, “I think of the Nerman Museum as another one of JCCC’s learning laboratories on campus. In the same way a chemistry professor engages her students in a science lab, I can engage my art history students in the museum. Being able to see actual works of art at close range — to see the presence of the artist’s hand in a brushstroke for example

— engages the student on a much more personal level than slides in a dark classroom.”

Smith also notes that “some of JCCC’s art history courses fulfill the college’s diversity requirement, and what better way is there to learn about the diversity of the human experience than through a work of art? Examining the creative expression of the diverse range of artists housed in the Nerman Museum helps students understand how others think about the world and express their life experiences, as different as they may be from the students’ own.”

JCCC is home to two world class arts institutions — and in addition to the college academics, the educational potential for schoolchildren and faculty is growing each year. The next generation of college students is gaining early exposure to

the art of our time. “We are deeply committed to ensuring the arts are accessible to all children, and to supporting educators with creative teaching tools,” said Angel Mercier, program director, Performing Arts Series Arts Education. The educational offerings at the museum and performance stages often work hand in hand, and they use the various arts disciplines as catalysts to engage children in subject areas such as English language arts, math and science, history and social studies, social/emotional learning, and cultural diversity.

Leawood Middle School art teacher So Choi has brought students to JCCC for arts education experiences since 2011. “I have the fortune of attending most of the artist lectures and exhibits; hence, I gain inspirations to integrate the style, process and materials into my art classroom. The Native American art collection — pottery, masks and weavings — has been effective in helping students make connections between what they are learning in the classrooms to real world applications.”

Arts education specialists are not the only partners. Penny Selle, mission director for Notre Dame de Sion School, organized a teacher development program for her entire staff at the Nerman to kick off the spring 2017 semester. “The teachers and staff loved coming to the museum and seeing works of contemporary art from a number of people

from differing cultural backgrounds and addressing a variety of subjects relating to issues of social justice.”

The museum educators frequently work with college faculty in other academic areas, ranging from humanities to the sciences, and through these collaborative efforts, critical thinking and visual literacy skills develop with the aid of original art works. Mariella Rainwater (adjunct professor of English for Academic Purposes/AAC/English) stated, “I bring my Speaking and Listening classes to the art gallery for multiple reasons . . . the art gallery helps my students to improve their listening, speaking and presentation skills. It is a wonderful teaching tool.”

About the Nerman Museum

Located in Overland Park, Kan., at 12345 College Blvd., the Nerman Museum has one of the top internationally acclaimed collections of emerging and established artists today. The museum presents many of the region’s most important exhibitions of leading-edge contemporary art. For more, visit www.nermanmuseum.org.

About JCCC

With more than 46,000 students enrolled in credit and noncredit classes each year, Johnson County Community College is one of the state’s largest institutions of higher education. JCCC offers a full range of undergraduate credit courses and 150 career and certificate programs. Visit www.jccc.edu.



PHOTO COURTESY SUSAN MCSPADEN

Professor Allison Smith teaching class with Roger Shimomura’s *Kabuki Party*, 1988, Lithograph, 12 x 24 inches, Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.27, Gift of John and Betty Dixon; and Robert Rauschenberg, *Bellini #2, 3 and 4*, 1987, Color intaglio on paper, each 60 x 38.5 inches, Collection Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, 1989.02-4.