

## American Stories – Tour Outline

Theme inquiry focus: Unveiling Stories\*

- What's the story?
- What's the human story?
- What's the world story?
- What's the new story?
- What's the untold story?

### Introduction

Welcome 6<sup>th</sup> graders, my name is Ann and my personal pronouns are she-her-hers. I'm so happy to welcome you here today. I know that you saw some pictures in your classroom around the theme of American Stories. For the next hour we're going to up into the galleries and see the real objects and we'll explore those stories together. And, while these objects are all from the United States by American artists, we'll explore how they are connected to the world, to the local community, as well as to the individual. We'll also discuss what might be the new story – the what's next story – and what is the story that we still wonder about.

Before we begin, we have a few rules that are important to follow while in the museum. What do you think they might be? (review the rules)

Let's begin with an American who is very important to the history of the United States, the first president of the United States of America, George Washington. Follow me up to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

### Thomas Sully, Portrait of George Washington, 1820, oil on canvas, 32.12

- President as statesman and military leader (symbols)
- United States as New Republic based on Greek and Roman principles – Neoclassical
- Painting direct copy of Gilbert Stuart's Munro-Lenox portrait

### Transition

This painting helps to tell a National story of George Washington as a statesman and leader through symbols, now let's travel about 50 years forward in time to see how another artist chose to use symbols to tell a more personal story of living on a plantation in Mississippi.

### Attributed to William Howard, Writing Desk, 1870, yellow pine, tobacco box and cotton crate wood, 2012.11

- Unique, personal style of William Howard – 70 objects
- Life of sharecropper (once enslaved) on a Kirkwood plantation in Mississippi
- Use of materials at hand
- Handed down from Howard's family

### Transition

This desk tells a personal story of William Howard's life as a sharecropper living on a plantation in Mississippi in 1870. Now let's go see how a Minnesota artist tells the story of Minneapolis at just about the same time.

**Alexis Jean Fournier, Mill Pond at Minneapolis, 1888, oil on canvas, 46.8**

- Accurate record of Industrial development in Minneapolis in 1888
- Stone Arch railroad bridge and Mississippi river as transportation and power
- Minneapolis as international center of lumber and flour industry

**Transition**

Alexis Fournier, a Minnesota artist, showed us a glimpse of life from long ago through his painting of Minneapolis, the next artwork we will explore, is also by a Minnesota artist, but this artist documents how people live today.

**Wing Young Huie, Kids Playing, Frogtown, 1994, gelatin silver print, 98.22.5**

- Everyday life in the Minnesota community of Frog Town in St. Paul
- Intimate interaction between subject and photographer
- Frogtown as welcoming haven for immigrants – Hmong, Latino and Somali
- Huie, Chinese American artist from immigrant family

**Transition**

Wing Young Huie captures the joy of children playing in a St. Paul community, now let's go see how another artist has captured the sights and sounds of another city as we travel to New York City in the 1950s. Let's go see what story this next painting tells.

**Grace Hartigan, Billboard, 1957, oil on canvas, 57.35**

- Hartigan captures life in NYC in the 1950s, after WWII
- Economic prosperity creates consumer culture and thriving artistic center
- Technique and style of action painting based on collage

**Transition**

We have discovered how Grace Hartigan has used images from advertising to tell the story of life in NYC in the late 1950s. The last object on our tour will also use images to tell the stories of the Lakota people spanning for over 100 years.

**Lakota, Winter Count, 1900s, pigment on canvas 2002.163**

- Pictograph calendars of yearly events important to the community
- Nomadic lifestyle of the Lakota people – portable objects
- Winter Count recorded by “keepers” who kept the community's history through the lens of the Lakota people

**Conclusion**

Thank you for coming today and for joining me in exploring these six American Stories - how they tell a global story as well as the stories of the United States, Minnesota, the cities of Minnesota, and the personal stories of communities and relationships. Just a reminder that the museum is always free, so I hope you will come back often to discover many more of the stories that are here to be told.

\*Unveiling Stories is from Global Thinking Routines developed by Veronica Boix Mansilla, Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education