



# Mendel/PotashCorp School Hands-on Tours

## WHAT TO DO IN THE CLASSROOM BEFORE YOUR VISIT

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This information will help you to plan for your tour. We recommend that you preview the exhibitions to best prepare your group. Program Guides choose artworks from all the exhibitions that are best suited to the theme you select. Mendel Art Gallery exhibitions help participants to see the world in new ways—through open minds! Participants are encouraged to think critically about the often-confusing world around them, and our tour programs deliberately challenge preconceived ideas about art. As a contemporary art gallery, the Mendel offers a context for art production that is difficult to replicate in other environments, therefore providing learners with a unique experience.

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Images: Jayce Salloum, Michèle Mackasey, Kathleen Munn and Lawrie Warrener

## About The Artists and Exhibitions

(September 30, 2011, to January 8, 2012)

### **Jayce Salloum: history of the present** **(selected works 1985-2009)**

How do we come to know what we know? What do we decide to keep and remember?

This mid-career survey of Salloum's photo and video-based installation works explores identity, shifting social and political borders, and the ways that images are employed in contemporary society.

This Lebanese-Canadian artist, whose grandparents immigrated to rural Saskatchewan in the 1930s, left home at 17 to travel and make art. This journey led him across Canada, to Africa, and then to California. Now based in Vancouver, he travels constantly, making work and exhibiting all over the world. Much of Salloum's work appears as a vast and complex archive of these journeys, a meticulously organized array of snapshots, souvenirs and documents, as well as striking video installations.

School groups will critically examine the role of media images in society, how we come to understand our global world, and how this informs identity.

### **Michèle Mackasey: face à nous**

Who is typically the subject of a portrait? Saskatoon-based artist Michele Mackasey has created a new body of work that puts the spotlight on single mothers. These portraits of local families capture the bond between mothers and their children, and point to the complex family dynamics arising when the father is literally out of the picture. The stories in these life-size oil and acrylic portraits are about strength and empowerment, and through the inclusion of taped interviews,

reveal the participants' struggles, triumphs, and aspirations. The artist will be painting at her easel in the Gallery during select times throughout the exhibition, and is eager to talk to visiting groups.

School groups will investigate portraiture as an art form, and make emotional connections with the subjects of the paintings.

### **Kathleen Munn and Lawrie Warrener: The Logic of Nature, the Romance of Space**

How can we use art to talk about national identity? This exhibition features some of the earliest abstract art in Canada, painted by two trailblazers who took their cues from the Group of Seven. Munn, a New York-trained and Toronto-based artist, and Warrener, who is Sarnia-born and worked in Toronto during the 1920s and 30s, both contributed paintings to the official Group of Seven exhibition in 1928, and were included in that year's influential Yearbook of the Arts in Canada. Although the names of both painters faded into obscurity, Munn and Warrener are now recognized as two of the earliest painters Canada to participate in modernist innovations. These artists responded to the dominant artistic and philosophical movements of their time; Munn reinterpreted traditional subjects such as religious and pastoral scenes to create fractured cubist-inspired designs, and Warrener painted lyrically stylized landscapes of the Canadian wilderness.

School groups will explore the history and motivations for abstract art, and the role two Canadian artists played in this international art movement.



OPEN DAILY  
9AM-9PM  
FREE ADMISSION

950 SPADINA CRESCENT EAST  
BOX 569, SASKATOON, SK  
CANADA, S7K 3L6

T (306) 975-7610 F (306) 975-7670  
MENDEL@MENDEL.CA  
WWW.MENDEL.CA

# Preparing for Your Visit to the Mendel Art Gallery

## One activity with variations for each tour theme...

This activity links to the inquiry-based question developed during tours: What can art and images teach us about ourselves? The activity also reflects the photo-based works in the Jayce Salloum exhibition.

1. Photo-based images are all around us—in advertising, video games, magazines, television, and the internet. These images are captured by a lens, and include photographs, video, and digital technology. It is important to remember that individuals make many decisions about what and how ideas are conveyed. Begin by asking students to generate a list of the functions of photo-based images. The list will be expanded in upcoming steps, and might include:

- to document our lives, to make records of special events, tell stories
- to teach us about our world and about specific subjects
- souvenirs of travels and attendance at events
- to entertain, make us laugh or pause to pay attention
- to promote nostalgia for times past and dreams of how we might want things to ideally be
- to “fix” a fleeting moment, something to reflect back on
- memorials to people and events
- industrial and institutional photos, such as brochures, textbooks, manuals
- politics and propaganda
- personal artistic expression and experimentation
- economic (a way to make a living, sell a product)
- forecasting, astronomy, medical imaging, police work, biology, records of things we can't see with our eyes
- commercial photography, advertising, in the fashion field
- post information on web sites, social networking
- video on YouTube for pleasure, to teach, advertise and all of the above

2. To make this next step easier we will limit the discussion to photography. Collect a large assortment of photos of many different subjects and styles, from a variety of sources. Students can participate by bringing in images for homework.

3. Give each group of students an ample random pile of photos. The activity using the photos will reinforce that individual images can have more than one function, and it should generate lively conversation. Ask students to sort and reshuffle the images as you call out the following main categories in five to ten minute intervals:

- subject matter (let the students invent categories...landscape, seascape, portrait, cityscape, still life, fantasy, news, advertising, abstract, etc)
- emotions
- message or intent (eg. to sell a product or idea, document something, decorate, teach, stir emotions, inspire a change in thought or action, etc.)
- the time period reflected (eg. 1950s, futuristic, early 1900s, timeless)

4. Students have now added to their initial list of functions of photo-based images. They have verbalized their own opinions and listened to people with opposing views. The final step is to select one of the following activities (Shape, Colour, Art Core, Viewing and Representing) to reinforce how images can be altered and manipulated to influence how we understand their messages.

Visit [www.artsask.ca](http://www.artsask.ca) and search the themes of Technobabble, Identity, and Imaging Conflict for artists dealing with themes similar to Jayce Salloum. A search on the site will also generate a long list of photo-based artists, including Patrick Close, Brenda Pelkey, Sandra Semchuk, Grant Arnold, Lorne Beug, Edward Burtynsky, Suzy Lake, Carl Beam, Larry Fink, and William John James.

## Variations for Tour Themes:

**Shape Tours:** Encourage students to name the shapes they see in the photo collection, and recognize that the shape also represents a person's eye or a mountain, etc. Then ask them to cut out those shapes and collage them into something new. The ball becomes a cookie!

**Colour Tours:** Consider how changing the color in a photograph can change its meaning.

**Art Core Tours:** Ask students to select three or four images from the photo collection and use them to create a storyboard that changes the meaning of the individual photos. Encourage students to thoughtfully represent the “core” of their idea. Do the lines, shapes, colours, textures, and composition in their artworks all support a clear message?

**Viewing and Representing Tours:** Ask students to select a photo from the collection and add text, to see how words can completely change the way that one might “read” that photo. They could show the original photo to the class for their interpretation, and then layer the text on top and demonstrate how words change the intent of an image.



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