

There are many ways to interpret art. At WAM we recognize that the questions and stories visitors share is vital to the process of experiencing and interpreting art. Our tours encourage close observation, critical thinking, and conversation.

The Learning & Teaching to Look program prepares volunteer tour guides or “docents” to lead free, guided experiences for nearly 5,000 school age children, university students, and adult learners annually. New docents are accepted into the training program every other year during the fall semester and are asked to volunteer for one year following their training.

As a volunteer docent, you will learn an inquiry-based method of observation called visual thinking strategies (VTS), which is used by many art museums. You will also learn to utilize multi-modal activities, like writing, role-playing, and sketching, to spark discussion and help students connect the art to their own experience.

About the Program

While no prior teaching or art expertise is required, it is essential that volunteers are comfortable looking at and talking about modern and contemporary art with visitors of all ages, especially children and teens. Successful docents:

- Make visitors feel at ease
- Project enthusiasm and curiosity
- Are comfortable with art that is challenging, complex, or not one’s taste

Tours at WAM are scheduled year-round and last between 50-60 minutes. Docents also are invited to lead occasional public tours on Thursday evenings and during special events, or to be on hand to answer visitor questions in an informal capacity on Saturdays and Sundays. That said, our greatest need for docents is during the school day, 10am-3pm, September-May. A tour schedule is shared weekly via email and on line. There is no requirement to lead tours on a specific day or time.

While there is no fee to participate in the docent program, we ask that docents become WAM Members at a giving level of their choice. Docent benefits include information on all exhibitions, artist and curator talks, exhibition catalogs, a WAM parking permit, and docent field trips. The docent program is generously funded by the Sherrill/Gingrow Docent Education Endowment and the Weatherspoon Endowed Education Fund.

Training Schedule – New Docents

Once accepted into the program, incoming docents will participate in four training classes. Training classes are offered Monday mornings with a Thursday evening option (enrollment dependent.)

Attendance in all four classes is mandatory.

Class #1	Monday, Aug 26 (10-11:30am) or Thursday, Sept 5 (6-7:15pm)
Class #2	Monday, Sept 9 (10-11:30am) or Thursday, Sept 19 (6-7:15pm)
Class #3	Monday, Sept 23 (10-11:30am) or Thursday, Oct 3 (6-7:15pm)
Class #4	Monday, Nov 18 (10-11:30am) or Thursday, Nov 21 (6-7:15pm)

Fall Semester: Incoming docents begin classes while observing and co-leading tours with a docent peer. New docents are invited to attend continuing education classes for active docents during this time. Your time commitment will be 2-4 hours per week.

Spring Semester: In addition to attending monthly continuing education classes, new docents begin leading tours on their own. While you'll be spending less time in class, more time will be needed as you prepare for your tours. All docents are expected to lead a minimum of 16 tours (or volunteer 32 hours) annually to maintain active docent status.

Continuing Education Schedule – Active Docents

Mondays • 10:00am-11:45am

Sept 16	Topic: Alyson Shotz, “Unfolded” exhibition
Oct 7	Field Trip to Guilford College Art Gallery & Lunch. All docents invited. Time TBD.
Oct 21	Topic: Mary Kelly, Falk Visiting Artist and Shahzia Sikander, video installation
* Nov 4	Topic: Alison Saar, “Mirror, Mirror” exhibition
* Dec 9	Topic: Preview of “To the Hoop” exhibition, opening winter 2020.

** New docents invited to these classes in preparation for leading tours in 2020.*

How to Apply – Application due August 1, 2019

An application and an interview with WAM education staff are necessary for acceptance into the program. Applications are available on line: <http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/learn/volunteer/>

As an unpaid volunteer at the Weatherspoon Art Museum at UNC Greensboro, you may be involved in leading tours of the museum for children and sensitive populations. UNC Greensboro requires all volunteers working with children and sensitive populations to undergo a criminal background screening check prior to service. A separate consent form for the criminal background screening check will be provided upon acceptance into the docent program. UNCG Volunteer Policy: <https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/volunteer/>

Questions

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