Volunteer docents at the Weatherspoon do not memorize scripts or give lectures. Instead, they help visitors “learn how to look” by demonstrating skills anyone can use to observe and interpret works of art.

Through their efforts, WAM docents help provide free, guided experiences to nearly 4500 school age children, university students, and adult learners annually. New docents are accepted into the museum’s training program every other year during the fall semester.

**Learning How to Look**

Our goal is to empower visitors to observe, question, and interpret works of modern and contemporary art. As a docent, you will learn to use an inquiry-based teaching approach by incorporating visual thinking strategies (VTS), a technique used by many art museums, along with other prompts to illicit feedback and help visitors transition from passive looking to active engagement.

Through interactive observation exercises, docents introduce information about artists, art movements, materials, and processes as discussions warrant. In this way, both visitors and docents contribute equally to the conversation and the tour.

**Classes**

Prospective docents participate in a five-week training program followed by a period of mentorship during which they observe tours and then assist a docent mentor by co-leading tours. Upon successful completion of training and mentorship, docents are asked to lead a minimum of 2 tours per month and participate in continual learning classes (1-2 per month during the academic year) for at least one year. Most classes meet Mondays, 10-11:30am.

While no teaching or art history experience is required, docents must feel comfortable looking at and talking about art with visitors of all ages, especially children and teens. We find successful docents:

- Project enthusiasm for art and make visitors feel welcome.
- Feel comfortable engaging visitors who have different viewpoints or find some art challenging.
- Enjoy learning from each other and from our visitors.
- And are able to fully commit to training and mentorship.

**Application**

An application and meeting with WAM education staff is necessary for acceptance into the docent training program. Additionally, the Museum asks permission of prospective docents to conduct a background screening check prior to volunteer activities involving children.

Applications are available online: [http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/learn/volunteer](http://weatherspoon.uncg.edu/learn/volunteer) or call (336) 334-5770. **Application deadline is August 1.** Classes begin September 8, 2014
**Expectations**
Docents-in-training can expect to dedicate approximately 4 hours per week to classes, tour observations, and online readings. Upon successful completion of training and mentorship, docents are asked to lead a minimum of 2 tours per month and participate in continual learning classes (1-2 per month during the academic year) for at least one year. Most classes meet Mondays, 10-11:30am.

Tours generally range in size from 12-24 students and are scheduled Tuesday through Friday for 45-60 minutes. Docents may also be invited to lead tours for special events. Our greatest need for docents is during the school day.

All materials are provided and there is no fee to participate in the program; however we do kindly ask that docents join the Weatherspoon Art Museum Association at the reduced Student ($15) or Educator ($25) level.

**Benefits**
Benefits of the docent program include special curator and artist-led talks, exhibition catalogs, WAM parking permit, and an opportunity to connect with others who enjoy modern and contemporary art.

**2014 Fall Docent Training Class Schedule** *
Sept 8, 10-11:30am – Orientation; Visual Thinking Strategies
Sept 22, 10-11:30am – History of modern art; Abstraction & seeing more
Oct 6, 10-11:30am – History of post-modernism; Tour logistics

* Docents-in-Training are expected to attend two Docent Continuing Education Classes in addition to all training classes.

**2014 Fall Docent Continuing Education Class Schedule** *
Sept 15, 10-11:30am – Fall exhibitions walk-thru
Sept 29, 10-11:30am – Art on Paper 2014 walk-thru
Oct 20, 10-11:30am – Behind the Scenes at WAM
Nov 3, 10-11:30am – Paintings from the Collection
TBA, Fall Docent field trip

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