



## Floorplan and

## General Information

# National Gallery of Canada

### The Garden Court and Water Court

Inside the Gallery, architect Moshe Safdie created two courtyards, one enclosing a garden, the other a pool of water. His intention was to provide moments of pause and reflection, of peaceful contemplation in the heart of the Gallery.

### The Rideau Street Chapel

The Convent of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart – the Rideau Street Convent – was a girl's school in Ottawa administered by the Sisters of Charity (formerly the Grey Nuns of the Cross). Its chapel, a priceless element of our Canadian Heritage, was almost destroyed some years ago. The completed interior of the chapel with the original altars and ornate altar screen is installed in the heart of the Canadian galleries.



### AUDIOGUIDE

For enriched information on the collections, please ask at the information desk for one of our audioguides.



Visit us at <http://cybermuseum.gallery.ca>, your online educational tool.

### Photography

Visitors may take pictures for personal use, with a hand-held camera and electronic flash, of works in the permanent collection. It is not permitted to reproduce or sell the photographs; to photograph works on loan, in temporary exhibitions, or in the Canadian and Aboriginal Art galleries; or to use a tripod.

### Please do not touch the works of art.

We ask you not to touch, because we hope that future generations will be able to enjoy the same works of art that you see during your visit.

Paintings and sculptures are fragile and may be damaged permanently by even the gentlest touch. Moisture from your fingers can in time corrode the paint or varnish on a picture, as well as stain or remove the surface finish from sculptures. Fingernails, rings, and other sharp objects such as pencils or pens can scratch and seriously damage the delicate surfaces of works of art.

Thank you for helping us preserve the past for the future.



National Gallery Musée des beaux-arts  
of Canada du Canada

38, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, June 2004

Canada

### Information on Gallery Architecture

Official Opening: 21 May 1988

Architect: Moshe Safdie, Parkin/Safdie Architects Planners,  
Toronto and Montreal

Landscape Architect: Cornelia Hahn Oberlander

### Building Materials

**Concrete.** All the precast concrete work for the Gallery was done in Montreal. The formwork for the 40,200 cubic metres of concrete poured for the building came from British Columbia.

**Granite.** The 25,250 square metres of variegated rose granite come from a hillside quarry 20 kilometres north of Tadoussac, Quebec. The grey granite used in the interior of the building comes from Peribonka, Quebec. The charcoal-grey stone in the courtyard of the Contemporary Art galleries, known as *Impatia*, comes from Zimbabwe.

**Wood.** The floors of the Contemporary Art galleries are of Canadian maple. The Canadian galleries have floors and door frames of red oak from the southern United States. The floors of the Special Exhibitions and European galleries are white oak from the United States.

**Steel.** Steel in the building comes from Hamilton, Ontario. The glass-and-steel doors are from Minnesota.

**Glass.** Glass in the skylights, and throughout the building, comes from Ontario. All glass is double-glazed and contains a layer of plastic to prevent transmission of sound.

### The Taiga Garden

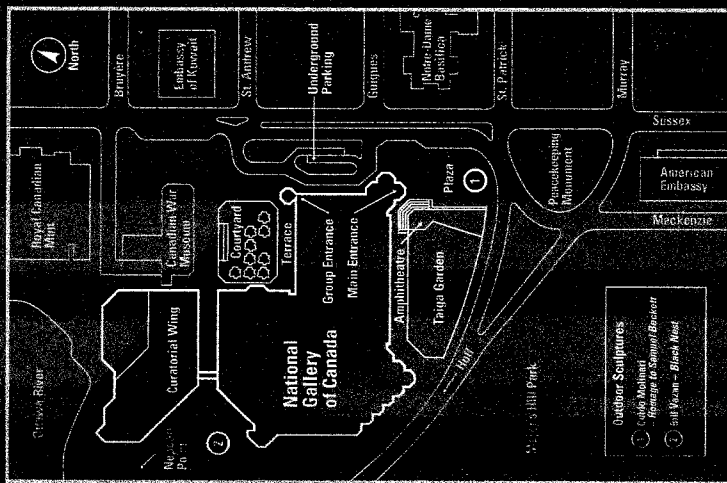
The landscape architect Cornelia Hahn Oberlander found the inspiration for the garden in the paintings of the Group of Seven, in particular A.Y. Jackson's *Taiga Sawage*. Here at the Gallery she recreates that uncompromising taiga landscape, with its severe northern beauty and its muted colours.

### The Colonnade

The Colonnade that joins the Main Entrance to the Great Hall is 85 metres long and 19 metres high; the slope has an incline of 3.5 per cent.

### Great Hall

Standing 43 metres high, the Great Hall is the Gallery's principal ceremonial space. It was designed as a tribute to the Parliamentary Library, itself a Victorian reinterpretation of a polygonal Gothic house.






### General Information

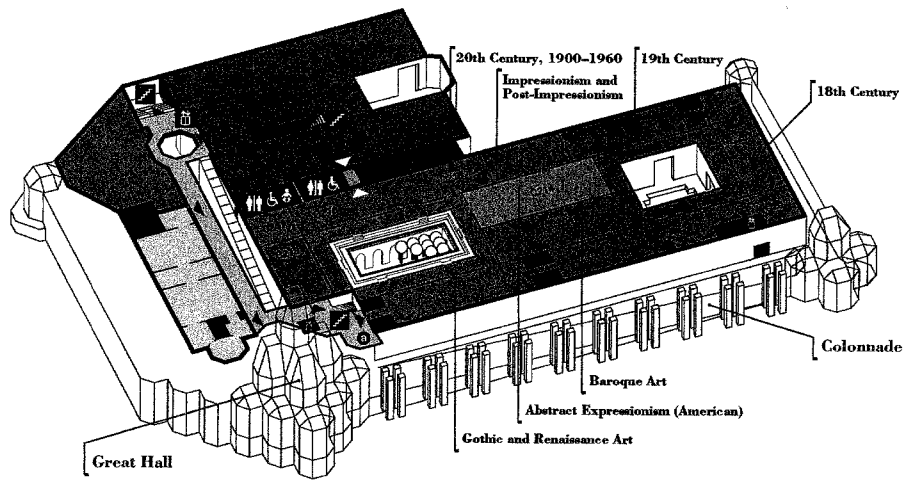
National Gallery of Canada  
380 Sussex Drive  
P.O. Box 427, Station A  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4

Telephone: (613) 990-1985  
[national.gallery.ca](http://national.gallery.ca)  
[info@gallery.ca](mailto:info@gallery.ca)

No smoking in the Gallery.

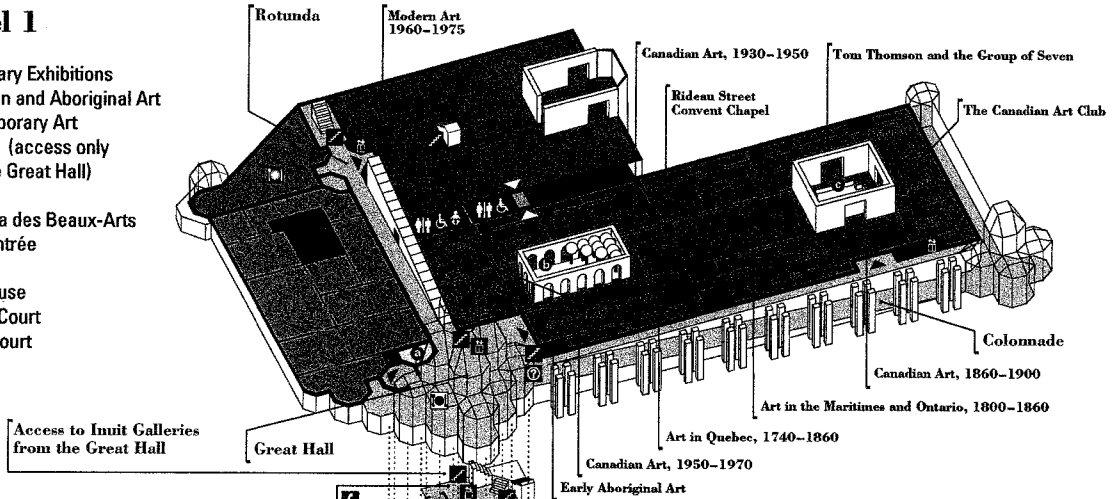
## Level 2

-  Asian Art
-  Contemporary Art
-  European Art
-  Prints, Drawings and Photographs (temporary exhibitions)
-  Library and Archives
-  Great Hall Balcony















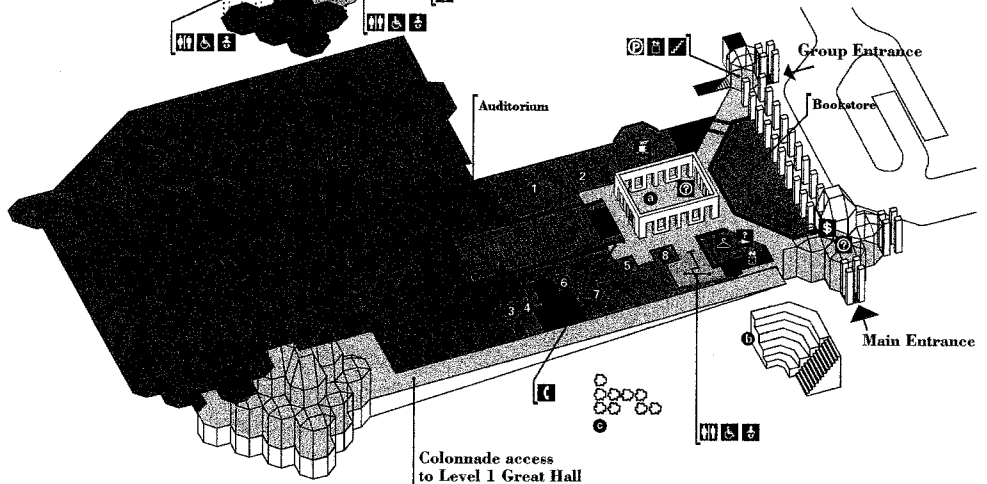
## Level 1

-  Temporary Exhibitions
-  Canadian and Aboriginal Art
-  Contemporary Art
-  Inuit Art (access only from the Great Hall)
-  Cafétéria des Beaux-Arts
-  Café l'Entrée
-  CyberMuse
-  Garden Court
-  Water Court








## Ground Level









-  Sketches
-  Studio 1
-  Group Cloakroom
-  Friends of the National Gallery Office
-  Membership Office
-  Seminar Room A
-  Seminar Room B
-  Lecture Hall
-  Studio 2
-  Foyer
-  Amphitheatre (outside)
-  Taiga Garden (outside)



## For Your Convenience

-  **Visitors with Special Needs**  
All public areas, galleries, programs, and most washrooms (exceptions noted) are accessible by wheelchair. The locations of elevators are marked on the floorplan. Strollers and wheelchairs are available free of charge at the Foyer Information Desk.
-  **Lost and Found**  
Inquire at the Cloakroom, or call Security at 990-3402. After Gallery hours, call 990-1981.
-  **Cloakroom**  
For the protection of the works of art and comfort of the public, we ask all visitors to check umbrellas; briefcases; backpacks; baby back carriers; and packages, bags, and purses bigger than 30 x 40 cm at the Cloakroom.

-  **First Aid**  
Security guards are qualified to provide First Aid. In addition, Information-Desk staff will call for medical assistance.
-  **Entrance to Parking**  
The garage, on two levels underneath the building, is open from 7 am to 11 pm.\*
-  **Sketches**  
Ground level, Foyer. Lunchroom with vending machines, open during Gallery hours.\*
-  **Cafétéria des Beaux-Arts**  
Level 1, Rotunda. Open during Gallery hours; closes 4 pm.\*
-  **Café l'Entrée**  
Level 1, Great Hall. Open during Gallery hours.  
*\*Subject to change.*

-  **Stairs**
-  **Washrooms**
-  **Telephones**
-  **Elevator**
-  **Information Desk**
-  **Baby-changing Facility**
-  **Bank Machine** 

*In case of emergency, call Security at 990-1980.*

PED2140

National Gallery of Canada visit

\_\_\_\_\_, Thursday,  
5pm - 8pm (3 hours in the permanent collection)  
Free – donations encouraged.

\*Bring your VRN, a pencil, and this booklet.

\*Self-Guided Tour

\*Work through

Part A: *Masterpieces Speak for Themselves*

OR

Part B: *Decoding Art*. Both are included in this booklet.

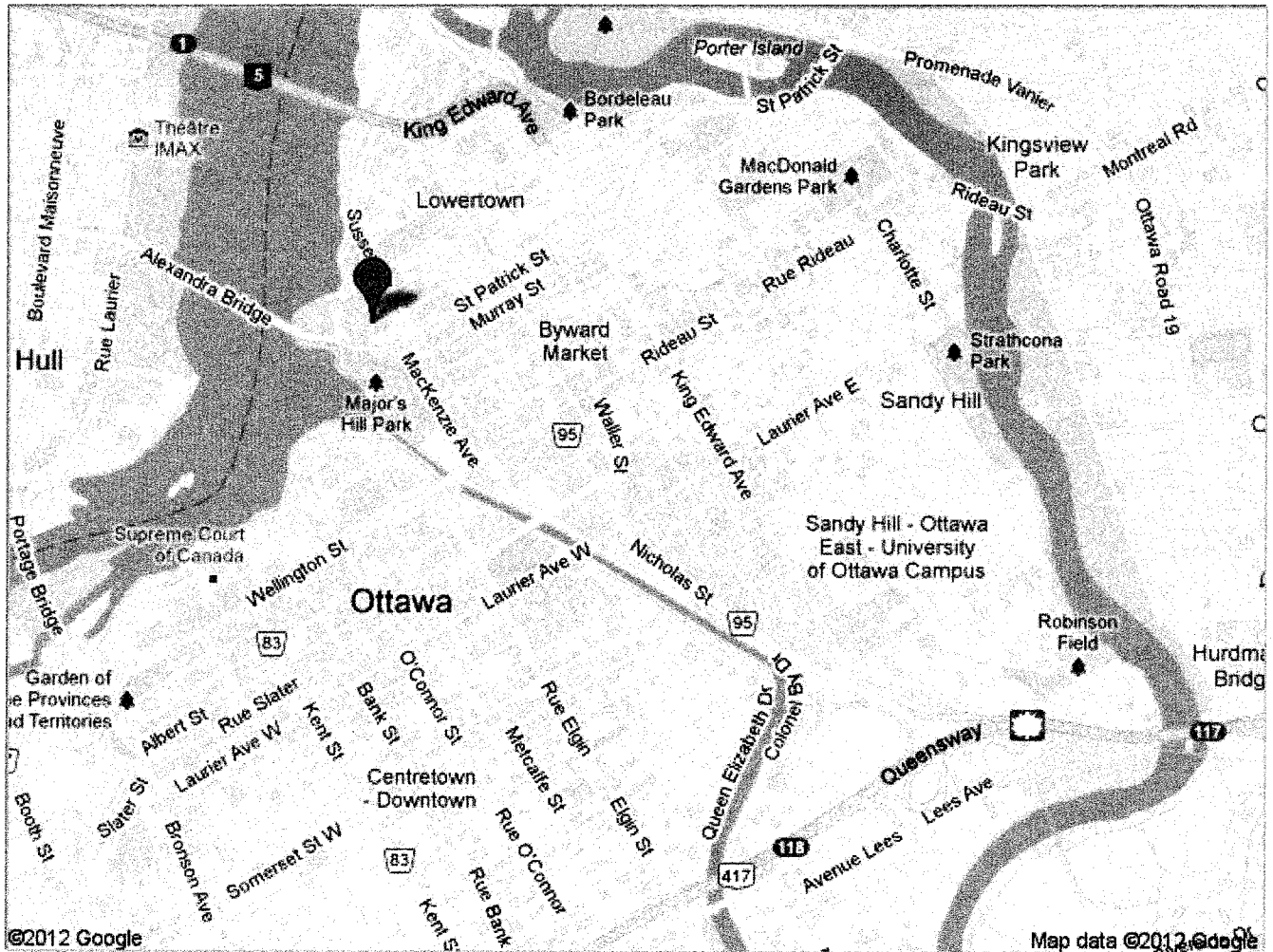
Both can be found on the NGC website: [cybermuse.gallery.ca](http://cybermuse.gallery.ca)

A. National Gallery of Canada

380 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1N 9N4

(613) 990-1985

38 reviews



**Part A**  
**Masterpieces Speak for Themselves: Finding  
Treasures in the National Gallery of Canada  
Collection.**  
**(5 pages)**

# TEACHERS: RESOURCES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

## Self Guided Tour For Students Grades 7-12

### Masterpieces Speak For Themselves: Finding Treasures in the National Gallery of Canada Collection

#### Introduction

During this self-guided tour, discover the qualities that make a great work of art and realize that every age has its masterpieces. Find four artworks that you like and that you would consider masterpieces. Then answer the questions.

#### In the galleries

Select your first two favourite artworks from the European or Canadian or Inuit galleries. The last two works will be selected from the Contemporary galleries.

#### Artwork #1

**Artist:**

**Title:**

**Date:**

#### What do you think makes a great work of art?

Select and prioritize your answer from the list below and add your own thoughts.

- Innovation
- Quality
- Historical relevance
- Truth to nature
- Rare
- Expensive materials
- Technique, skill
- Artists transcend the expectations of their time
- Anything else?

---



---



---

# TEACHERS: RESOURCES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Draw a thumbnail sketch  
in your VRN

## Artwork # 2

**Artist:**

**Title:**

**Date:**

**Artists create works to trigger a response in the viewer. How do you respond to this work?**

Select and prioritize your answer from the list below and add your own thoughts.

- I see something I like
- I feel something new
- I feel disturbed
- I feel excited
- I like the way the artist has arranged the composition
- I like the subject matter
- I see a reflection of myself
- I like the colours
- Why have you chosen this work?

Draw a thumbnail sketch  
in your VRN.

**Now visit the contemporary galleries**

Find two artworks in the **Contemporary** galleries that you like and that you think are masterpieces.

2A

# TEACHERS: RESOURCES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

## Artwork #3

Artist:

Title:

Date:

**Artwork reproductions in books and posters are not the same as the original.  
How different is the original work of art?**

Select and prioritize your answers from the list below and add your own thoughts.

- Size
- Texture
- Frame
- Medium
- Anything else?

---

---

---

Draw a thumbnail sketch  
in your VRN.

3A



# TEACHERS: RESOURCES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

## Artwork # 4

**Artist:**

**Title:**

**Date:**

### Why do contemporary artists create non-traditional artworks?

Select and prioritize your answers from the list below and add your own thoughts.

- To be innovative
- To be of their time
- To use new technologies
- Everything has been done before in art
- They are tired of making beautiful things in an ugly world
- To challenge conventions
- To work with different, non-traditional materials
- Any other thoughts?

---



---



---

*Draw a thumbnail sketch in your VRN.*

### Optional question

#### What do you think is the role of an art gallery?

Select and prioritize your answers from the list below and add your own thoughts.

- To collect artworks
- To preserve artworks
- To entertain visitors
- To display artworks
- To define a nation's culture
- To teach about art
- To change society
- To engage the viewer
- To help visitors form an identity
- Anything else?

4A

# TEACHERS: RESOURCES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

## After your gallery visit

Pretend you are a curator and you have to select one artwork for your collection. Which one would you choose? Research the selected artwork on CyberMuse and learn about its many interpretations. Justify your selection by writing a statement. After your research, would you still consider it a masterpiece? Why?

5A



**Part B**  
**Decoding Art**  
**(6 pages)**

## MAKE YOUR OWN

Research the symbols you discovered during your visit and learn their many interpretations. You will be surprised how their meaning changes according to different cultures and time periods.

Try to come up with your own symbols. Symbols come to us through dreams and every day encounters. Often they present themselves to us over and over until they are interpreted. Try making a work of art using these symbols.

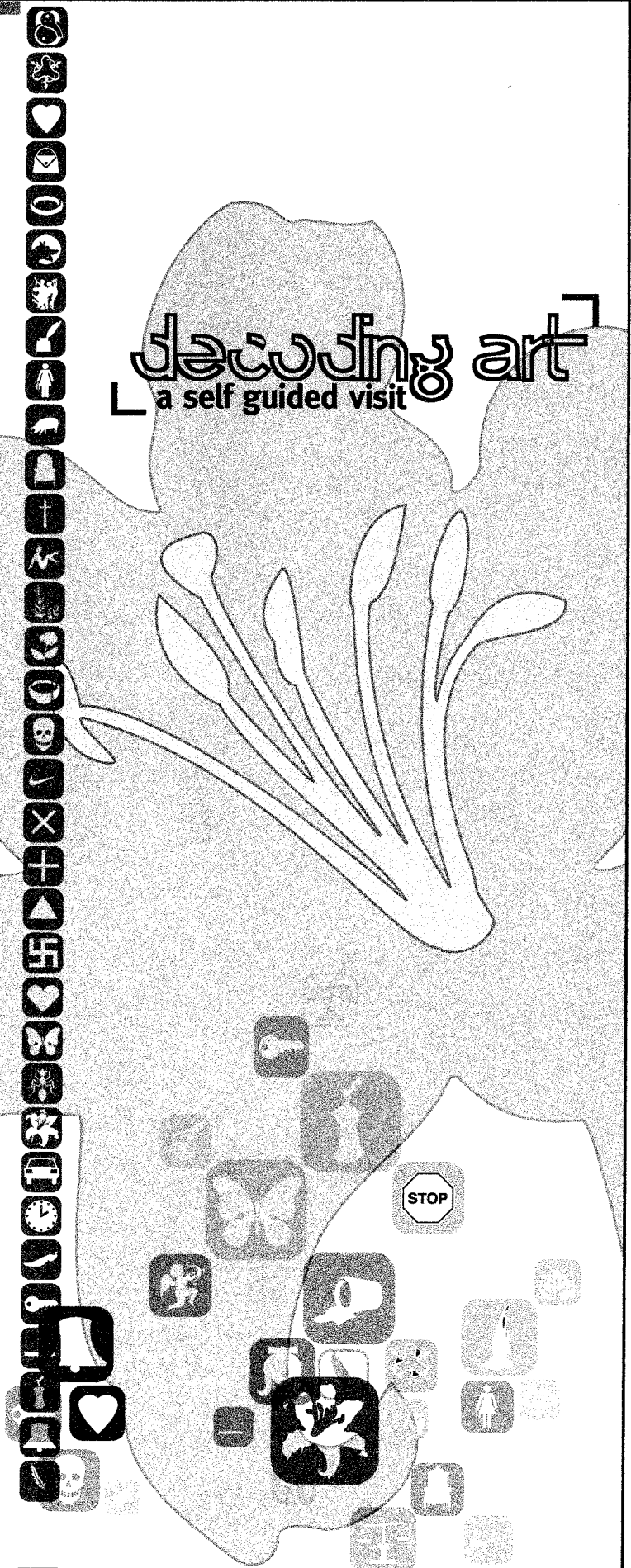
## RULES AND GUIDELINES

The National Gallery of Canada is happy to welcome your school.

For the protection of the works of art and comfort of the public, we ask you to follow these rules:

- Please do not touch the works of art.
- All bags must be left in the group cloakroom.
- No food, beverages, or gum are allowed in the Gallery.
- Only pencils are used as writing tools.
- Photos may be taken of some of the artworks in the permanent collection only. Please ask about our policy at the information desk.

decoding art  
a self guided visit



**WELCOME TO DECODING ART,**  
a self-guided visit. Bring me along to  
the European galleries and select two  
artworks, then go to the Contemporary  
galleries and select two other artworks.  
Follow the steps from 1 to 4. Enjoy!



(To find the different galleries, you may want to  
pick up a floor plan at the Information Desk.)

Since early man first learned to make a mark on  
the wall with his hands, symbols have become  
an important part of the human experience.  
Each day, we are bombarded with symbols that  
direct, warn and inform us.

Remember, symbols in a work of art may be  
objects or may be represented by the formal  
elements such as colour, line, texture,  
composition and space.

## DECODING THE SYMBOLS

**1. Find an artwork in the European galleries that  
pleases you and has symbols.**  
*Draw a thumbnail sketch in your VRN.*  
Artist, title, date of artwork

---

---

---

Ask yourself two (2) questions: What is the symbol?

---

---

---

What do you think it means in the work?

---

---

---

**2. Find another artwork in the European galleries  
that you believe has similar symbols or meaning  
as in #1.**  
*Draw a thumbnail sketch in your VRN.*  
Artist, title, date of artwork

---

---

---

---

Ask yourself: What is the symbol?

---

---

---

How is it similar to the symbol in the first work?

---

---

---

**3. Find an artwork in the Contemporary galleries  
that pleases you and according to you has symbols.**  
*Draw a thumbnail sketch in your VRN.*  
Artist, title, date of artwork

---

---

---

Ask yourself two (2) questions: What is the symbol?

---

---

---

What do you think it means in the work?

---

---

---

---

**4. Find another artwork in the contemporary galleries  
that you believe has similar symbols or  
meaning as in # 3.**  
*Draw a thumbnail sketch in your VRN.*  
Artist, title, date of artwork

---

---

---

---

Ask yourself: What is the symbol?

---

---

---

---

How is it similar to the symbol in the third work?

---

---

---

---



## Symbols Glossary



**Ants:** Ants crawling on fruit symbolize the ravages of time.



**Bell:** The bell is a symbol of St Anthony and was used as an instrument to ward off evil spirits.



**Black dress:** The black dress in Western culture is a symbol of mourning.



**Blue:** Blue symbolizes spirituality, the heavens.



**Books:** Books are symbols of knowledge.



**Bowl of sweets:** The bowl of sweets is a symbol of Ganesha, the deity of good luck.



**Butterfly:** Butterflies go through different stages from worm to butterfly. This symbolizes the cycle of life.



**Car:** Cars can symbolize freedom, speed, masculinity, wealth, power, transportation and can be an indication of social class.



**Cherubim:** A Cherubim, a form of an angel, symbolizes divine wisdom.



**Cigarettes:** Cigarettes at one time were symbols of masculinity.



**Clean domestic environment:** A clean domestic environment indicates a virtuous home.



**Clock:** The clock is a symbol of time, and the transience of life.

















**Cross:** A cross can mean multiply, wrong answer, letter X, stop, kiss, number 10, poison and buried treasure.



**Decayed fruit:** Decayed fruit symbolizes the transience of life.



**Disordered room:** A disordered room indicates chaos or an undisciplined person.

-  **Elephant goad:** The elephant goad (spiked stick) is a symbol of Ganesha.
-  **Ganesha:** The elephant head and human body are symbols of Ganesha. Ganesha is a symbol of good luck.
-  **Gold:** Gold symbolizes the sun, richness, and the heavens. The yellow metal has a mystical quality associated with legends such as King Midas and Nebuchadnezzar.
-  **Heart:** The heart can symbolize love, life, intelligence, emotions, Venus, charity and envy.
-  **Ink-pot:** An ink-pot symbolizes that the person can write.
-  **Keys:** Keys symbolize knowledge.
-  **Lily:** The lily symbolizes purity.
-  **Martin Luther, portrait of:** Martin Luther is founder of the Lutheran church. In this work it symbolizes a belief in Protestant values.
-  **Musicians:** The musicians accompanying Ganesha symbolize the ganas, the wild spirits that followed him.
-  **Nike:** This symbol, an ancient symbol for the messenger of the gods, is associated today with running shoes.
-  **Pansies:** Pansies are symbols for thoughts.
-  **Peacock feathers:** Peacock feathers symbolize immortality.
-  **Pig:** The pig symbolizes gluttony and is a symbol of St Anthony.
-  **Pink:** Pink is a warm, feminine colour.



**Purse:** The purse symbolizes wealth, a person with money.



**Quill pen:** The quill pen is a symbol of a literate person, a person who knows how to write.



**Rose:** The rose depending on the culture can symbolize victory, pride, triumphant love or martyrdom.



**Red:** Red is a symbol of fire, danger, love etc. It has many meanings.



**Rosemary:** Rosemary is a symbol for remembrance.



**Serpents, wreath of:** The wreath of serpents, in this work, is a symbol of Ganesha.



**Shadow, light:** Light and shadow is used to intensify the gravity of the scene.



**Skull:** The skull is a symbol of death and a *memento mori*.



**Swastika:** The swastika can symbolize sun, a wheel, ying/yang, a cross, Nazis. The swastika displayed on the chest of the Buddha Shakyamuni symbolize the heart.



**Throne:** The throne symbolizes royalty.



**Time:** Time in this work is signalled by the fruit, which is grown in different seasons.



**Triangle:** The triangle symbolizes the Trinity, stability.



**Working woman:** A working woman indicates a virtuous woman.



## Glossary

**Allegory** is when the literal content of a work stands for abstract ideas, suggesting a parallel, deeper symbolic sense.

An **Attributes** is an object often associated with a person, character or office. Attributes are used by artists to identify characters and to tell stories.

**Iconography** is the pictorial representation of a subject. It is also the study of subject matter and symbolism in the visual arts.

A **Memento mori** is a reminder of death. (ex : skull)

**Metamorphosis** means a transformation. To metamorphose is to change appearance, character, condition or function (ex: the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly.)

A **Metaphor** is a situation in which a word or thing that ordinarily designates one thing is used to designate another, thus making a comparison.

A **Symbol** is a form, image or subject representing a meaning other than the one with which it is usually associated.

**Vanitas:** This Latin word for vanity refers to a type of still life consisting of a collection of objects that symbolize the brevity of human life and the transience of earthly pleasures and achievements. (ex: a human skull, a mirror, broken pottery).

