

A Place for Hands-On Learning

VMFA's education programs are designed to foster creativity in everyone, from infant to infinity. And, while VMFA asks visitors to help protect the art by not touching the works on display throughout most of the museum, the Memorial Foundation for Children Teaching Gallery offers a space where visitors have the opportunity to interact with a variety of activities and objects. Over the past five years, this gallery has explored themes to help people of all ages experience art in different ways.

When the museum was undergoing renovations for the 2010 expansion, VMFA educators envisioned a space dedicated to stimulating and engaging families. The museum

approached the Memorial Foundation for Children, a Richmond-based philanthropic organization that makes biannual awards to agencies for programs and projects designed to benefit children. In honor of its 200th birthday, the foundation gave VMFA a grant of \$300,000 in 2005 to create the Teaching Gallery and support the costs of exhibitions.

The gallery's first exhibition—*Picturing Wisdom: Goldweights of the Akan*—featured miniature brass objects from VMFA's African collection. Visitors learned about the tiny weights, which were used for commerce in 19th-century West Africa, and how these objects reflect Akan values and culture. Subsequent exhibitions have served as educational counterparts to the museum's special exhibitions.



A volunteer from Capital One assists a student from Richmond's John B. Cary elementary school in *Beyond the Walls*, the companion exhibition to *Forbidden City*.

Last fall and winter, *Beyond the Walls* allowed visitors to consider daily life in imperial China. In contrast to the world of the emperor on display in *Forbidden City: Imperial Treasures from the Palace Museum, Beijing*, the Teaching Gallery's *Beyond the Walls* provided a glimpse into the home of an 18th-century merchant-class family. Activities included writing Chinese characters on a touch screen and designing personal, virtual seals. School groups and families were able to unroll and view reproduction scrolls, like those featured in *Forbidden City* and in VMFA's East Asian collection, or play traditional musical instruments and games.

At other times the gallery has featured some of the elaborate fashions from *Stylin'*—VMFA's program for teens to design and create clothing inspired by the permanent collection—as well as exhibitions highlighting the Museum Leaders in Training program (M.Lit). Teaching Gallery exhibitions also relate to the greater Richmond community, such as the current *ArtCycle*, which makes the connection between art and bikes by examining how movement inspires artists (see sidebar).

Whether you ride a bike, practice Chinese calligraphy, or appreciate the work of young students and teens, VMFA's Memorial Foundation for Children's Teaching Gallery enables you to experience “hands-on” learning—a catalyst to deepen your own understanding of art and knowledge of the world.

ARTCYCLE

Through June 30, 2016

With the UCI World Road Championships cycling races in Richmond this September, VMFA's Memorial Foundation for Children Teaching Gallery is all about the bike.

Now you can explore the art of the bicycle in this interactive, participatory exhibition. Ride a bike and power the *Get Moving* video to discover the connection between movement and works in the VMFA collection. They range from an ancient Roman mosaic to a mobile by Alexander Calder. You can also experiment with gears, use a spirograph made out of bicycle parts, and design a bike jersey. Enjoy the Beecycle mural wall by Richmond artist Matt Lively and then record your visit by posting a selfie #VMFAartcycle.



Hanging Mobile, 1951, Alexander Calder (American, 1898–1976), painted steel. Gift of Philip L. Goodwin, 51.20

What Is a Sculpture?

A sculpture is a three-dimensional work of art, often made of metal, plaster, stone, or wood. A person who makes sculptures is called a sculptor. One of the most famous sculptors in history was Auguste Rodin. You can see some of his bronze masterpieces such as *The Thinker* in VMFA's special exhibition. He really enjoyed making sculptures of the human figure. Would you like to make a sculpture of a person?



Make Your Own Sculpture with Foil

Use the diagram as a guide and make five cuts to a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil.

Very gently begin crumpling and squeezing each section of the foil to form a body.

Start with the top section and lightly squeeze the foil to create a ball shape for the head, then loosely crumble the foil to create arms. Next, gently squeeze and crumble the left side to create the torso and leg, then repeat on the right side.

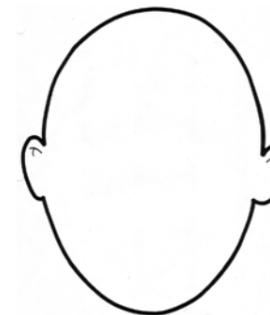
Now that you have the basic form, continue squeezing and shaping the foil until your sculpture feels solid or firm.

At this point, you can bend and move your figure's head, arms, waist, knees, and feet to show different body movements. What pose will you choose for your sculpture?

Expressing Emotions

Auguste Rodin wanted to capture real emotions in his sculptures. His first exhibited sculpture was so realistic that people accused him of casting it from the body of a live model!

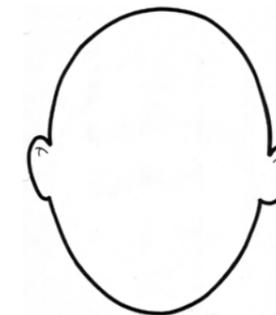
The Age of Bronze in VMFA's exhibition depicts a man in distress. Try drawing faces here to depict the other emotions listed below.



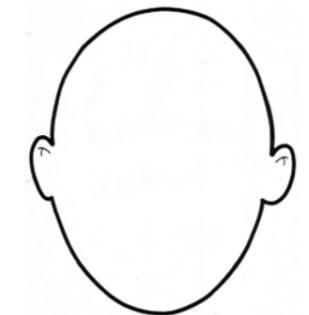
Happy



Sad



Angry



Surprised