THE VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP

CURRICULUM THEMES
GRADE 8 TO 10 New Art Forms/Media, Technology, Digital Media

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS
All grade levels have a Critical Responsive section in their Arts Education curriculum, and have outcomes and indicators related to responding to a variety of artworks by professional artists. In this activity, students will respond both critically and creatively to works by professional artists from many different backgrounds. They will create both a sketch and a poem as creative responses. They will use the Mackenzie Method to analyze what the artwork conveys. They will develop further questions for extended research.

CP10.3: Students will examine different ways of communicating through the arts- in particular through digital technologies. They will respond creatively through sketching and poetry.

CR20.1: Students will explore connections between the arts and ways of knowing. They will learn about how digital technology can be incorporated into the arts, and used to convey ideas

CR30.2: Students will investigate contemporary arts practices as a response to place and time. They will investigate immersive, interactive, and non-traditional art forms that come out of a rapidly changing digital age.

CONTENT ADVISORY
The resources related to Landscapes of Digital Art are intended for an older audience than some of our Studio Sundays/Teacher Resources. We recommend using this resource with ages 14+/Grade 8 and up. We encourage teachers and parents to view all virtual art galleries in advance of sharing with children or students. Please be aware that some virtual galleries, like New Art City, are open to visitors from all over the world at the same time. You might encounter other people in a virtual setting, and they might communicate with you through chat. If this does not appeal to you, please choose an online gallery that isn't public.

ACTIVITY

Digital artwork creates new opportunities for accessibility! Go on a "field trip" to a virtual art gallery. Try these three mini-activities during your virtual visit. Think about how the experience felt, and what you would like to see in virtual art spaces in the future.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Computer connected to the internet.
- Optional- a projector or smart board to share the virtual gallery with a group.
- Optional- VR headsets (if you choose a VR gallery)
- Optional- Writing materials to answer questions
- Drawing materials- pencil, sharpener, eraser and paper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Select a virtual art display to "visit" as a class. It may look like a virtual art gallery with artworks hanging on imaginary walls. Or, it might take a very different form. Perhaps your virtual gallery visit might mean playing a video game together, or watching several online films hosted on a website, or being part of a workshop on Zoom. Digital art can be experienced in a wide range of ways.

> We encourage everyone to search for and select their own "virtual galleries" to visit, but here are a few places to get you started:

> > Many of the videos that are shared on *Landscapes of Digital Art* could be considered virtual art displays.

> > The MacKenzie Art Gallery's *The Multiple Lives of Drawings* is a virtual exhibition in the form of an interactive website. It contains images and videos of European drawings from 1500-1800. *Please note this exhibition contains nudity in an art-historical context.

> > The MacKenzie Art Gallery's *My Claustrophobic Happiness* also uses a website to display images of artworks. This exhibition focuses on a story written by Jeanne Randolph to connect artworks from the MacKenzie's Permanent Collection.

> > Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (or AbTeC) and Initiative for Indigenous Futures (IFF) features several online art projects and exhibitions. Both sites consider how Indigenous peoples can use digital technologies and spaces. One of the projects that both organizations are working on is AbTeC Gallery, a virtual gallery on AbTeC Island in Second Life. Instructions on how to visit are included on the website. You can even book a guided tour!

> > What if there was a gallery where you were encouraged to touch and manipulate the artworks? If you have access to Virtual Reality (VR) equipment, you could visit a virtual display at the Museum of Other Realities. This VR art space allows you to interact with and experience artworks in entirely new ways.

> > New Art City: Virtual Art Space is another online gallery platform, and it doesn't require VR equipment. It contains many virtual galleries in the form of virtual spaces that can be visited by multiple people at a time.

2. Complete the following activities on paper, through discussion, or on a computer. The wide variety of forms that digital artwork can take will mean that it may be hard to pick out a specific "artwork" within the virtual gallery to respond to. In this case, feel free to use scenes, points of view, moments within the artwork, or paused frames of videos as you see fit.

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Make some notes about what you think you might see, hear, or feel during your virtual gallery visit. Write down what you think a virtual gallery will be like, and how you think you will interact with it.

MINI ACTIVITY 1 — SKETCHING

1. Pick your favourite virtual artwork, moment, or viewpoint as you are visiting a virtual gallery.

2. Make a sketch to remind you of the important features of this artwork. This could be done while viewing the artwork, or after the fact. Don't worry so much about trying to make a perfect copy of what you see. Think more about recording the feeling of the artwork, and the elements that really stood out to you. Some digital artworks may not focus on visuals. If this is the case, your sketch might be an abstract response to what you hear or feel.

MINI ACTIVITY 2 — THE MACKENZIE METHOD

The MacKenzie Method is one strategy for talking about art. It focuses on the knowledge you already bring to an artwork or exhibition, helping you to see the connections your own mind is making to an artwork. During your virtual gallery visit, pick one virtual artwork and have a conversation with your classmates. Use these questions in order to guide your discussion:

First Impressions
What is the first word you think of when you look at this artwork?

Analysis
What did the artist do that made you think of this word?

Interpretation
What do you think is important to this artist?
If this artwork was an album artwork, what kind of music do you think it would contain? Or if this artwork were used as the poster for a movie, what type of movie would it be?

Context
After seeing this artwork, what questions do you have about it or about the artist?
Does this artwork relate to anything that you don't have enough information about to understand? Who or what would be an appropriate resource for this information?

Take some time to research these questions.

MINI ACTIVITY 3- POETRY RESPONSE

1. Make a poem that responds to the exhibition or artworks you saw. Start by making a word bank to use in your poem from the activities above. It could include:

Words that describe the feeling you captured in your sketch.

The word you came up with as a first impression.

Any other important words that stood out to you of during the MacKenzie Method activity.

2. Re-organize and connect the words in your word bank to make a poem about your virtual gallery experience. Think about trying to share the feelings this virtual gallery gave you with someone who's never viewed it before.

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION

Discuss some of these follow-up questions together as a group:

What benefits does a virtual gallery have over an in-person gallery space?

What drawbacks does a virtual gallery have compared to an in-person gallery space?

Do you think digital exhibitions should only be displayed for set periods of time, similar to in-person exhibitions? Or should they be available as long as the technology allows?

What do virtual galleries and artworks mean for the future of art ownership and collection?

Accessibility means the considerations and adaptations you make for the wide range of people's needs when providing services, running public spaces, or sharing information. Did the virtual gallery experience make artwork more accessible to you in any ways? Did it make the artwork it shares less accessible in any ways?