

Museum News

Art Rounds: Using Art to Train Better Doctors and Nurses

Collaborating with the Center for Medical Humanities & Ethics (CMHE) at UT Health Science Center, San Antonio (UTHSCSA), McNay staff developed Art Rounds, modeled after other programs between medical schools and art museums. Hypothesizing that skills developed at the museum would transfer to the medical environment, CMHE faculty and McNay educators set these objectives for three Art Rounds sessions offered in January 2010: (1) improving physical observation skills, (2) increasing comfort with ambiguity, (3) augmenting empathy skills, and (4) expanding interest in communication with colleagues.

Hoping for grant funding for an ongoing program, Craig Klugman, PhD, Professor of Medical Humanities and Assistant Director for Ethics Education at CMHE, arranged to document the impact of Art Rounds on participants. All students took online pre- and post-tests assessing skills and attitudes. In addition, all who enrolled in Art Rounds received a McNay membership to encourage them to look at art on their own.

Using Visual Thinking Strategies, an educational method of thoughtfully examining and interpreting works of art, McNay educators Kate Carey, Jennifer Chowning, and Rose Glennon—



each with about 10 students—examined works such as Antoine Bourdelle's *Beethoven: A Tragic Mask*, Seymour Lipton's *Sing Sorrow*, or August Rodin's *Burghers of Calais*. After a few minutes quietly looking, participants discussed what they saw. If they moved immediately to interpreting the work of art, educators asked, "What did you see that made you think that?" Each week group members became more comfortable with looking and communicating. During discussions, UTHSCSA observers recorded the frequency of complex responses and comments based on individual demographics.

Outcomes of Art Rounds, based on testing, observers' records, and participants' comments, indicated that three of the four objectives were met. Students lengthened the time spent looking at art and patient images, increased the number of words they used to describe art and patient images, significantly improved their tolerance for ambiguity, and significantly expanded their interest in learning about communication. The program continues in January 2011 with four sessions and some enhancements. A credit course planned for 2011–2012 would combine looking at art in the museum and classes at UTHSCSA.

