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Missoula Art Museum Launches Remote Access Platform for Montana Students

MISSOULA, Mont., February 6, 2020

Last spring, the education team at the Missoula Art Museum partnered with Inspired Classroom, a Missoula-based education tech company, to build an interactive, online platform to provide schools outside of western Montana with a live tour and educational experience at the museum. MAM successfully piloted this program with two classrooms from St. Ignatius Elementary School and has successfully integrated it as an extension of MAM's Fifth Grade Art Experience (FGAE). FGAE, which includes a tour of MAM and artmaking, runs annually from October to January and has served over 1,500 fifth grade students from five counties so far this year. This new program, called Museum as Megaphone, will launch on February 10, 2020, with six schools participating from across the state, some as far as the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

In a state where geography, weather, and economic factors are obstacles to visiting MAM, Museum as Megaphone allows students and teachers from anywhere to virtually tour the galleries. Using the distance learning platform and technological expertise of Inspired Classroom, students log in from their classroom and interact directly with exhibiting artists and art educators. Each session includes an interactive exhibition tour, a curriculum for self-guided, hands-on artmaking, and videos and resources for teachers.

Modeled after the 34th year of FGAE, the pilot season of Museum as Megaphone will focus on the art of Indigenous artists Rick Bartow (Mad River Band Wiyot) and Lillian Pitt (Wasco, Warm Springs, Yakama). This focus is rooted in the museum's commitment to exhibiting contemporary Native American artists and providing access to rural and tribal communities. "By 2022 we hope to have schools participating from all seven American Indian reservations in our state. This access and engagement with contemporary art and artists serves the education and well-being of all Montana youth. The program meets several Montana State Content Standards for educational curricula," said Kay Grissom-Kiely, curator of education at MAM.

Participating in Museum as Megaphone is free. Any classroom equipped with an internet connection and a computer with a camera and microphone can partake. [Watch this short video](#) of the program in action with St. Ignatius Middle School.

About MAM: Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM is emerging as the leading contemporary art museum in the Intermountain West. MAM is situated on the traditional, ancestral territories of the Séliš (Salish or "Flathead") and Q̓lispé (upper Kalispel or Pend d'Oreille) peoples. MAM is committed to respecting the indigenous stewards of the land it occupies. Their rich cultures are fundamental to artistic life in Montana and to the work of MAM. MAM is a fully accessible, free public museum boasting eight exhibition spaces, a library, and education center in the heart of Missoula's historic downtown.

If you would like more information about this topic, please call Kay Grissom-Kiely at 406.728.0447 or email kay@missoulaartmuseum.org.

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