

Alchemy4

JAN. 21 – APR. 29, 2018
CURRICULUM GUIDE



Image: Gabrielle Suzanne Castonguay, *My Instinct Catches My Falls*. Photo courtesy of The Enamelist Society.

Exhibit Description

Alchemy, a term that refers to a seemingly magical power of transmutation as well as the ancient chemical philosophy of turning base metal into gold or silver, can apply to enamel as it is magically transformed by heat.

The 16th Biennial International Juried Enamel Exhibition and 12th International Juried Student Enamel Exhibition, sponsored by The Enamelist Society, highlights the best in contemporary enamels produced in the last 2 years with 150 objects created by 98 artists. The International Juried Exhibition showcases the work of enamelists that demonstrate aesthetic and technical expertise, while the Student Exhibition features the work of students in accredited degree programs throughout the world.

More information about The Enamelist Society may be found at www.enamelistsociety.org.

Tennessee Visual Art Standards

STANDARD 1: Students will understand and apply media, techniques and processes.

STANDARD 4: Students will understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Learning Objectives

The student will...

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

- (1.2) explore the technique of enameling.
- (4.1) recognize that art comes from different cultures, times and places.

3rd Grade – 5th Grade

- (1.4) investigate the process of enameling.
- (4.2) discuss how culture, history and art influence each other – past and present.

6th Grade – 8th Grade

- (1.3) compare and contrast the effective communication of ideas through the use of media, techniques, technologies and processes.
- (4.5) reflect on how historical and cultural factors influence contemporary artwork and visual culture.

High School

- (1.2) Compare and contrast the use of specific techniques in selected artworks.
- (4.1) identify ways in which history and culture influence the production of art.

Before Your Visit

Enameling is an ancient decorative technique that began around the 13th century B.C.E. in early civilizations in the Mediterranean region, which then spread throughout the world. Before your visit to the Museum, introduce students to enameling by viewing images of enameled objects from a variety of cultures throughout history. For each image, have students describe what they see and how the object was made using the vocabulary words below.



Images: Lorena Lazard, *Natureza 1 & 2*.
Photos courtesy of Paolo Gori.

During Your Visit

Tours

Guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more on Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:30AM until 4PM and Sundays from 12:30PM until 4PM. All guided tours must be scheduled a minimum of two weeks in advance. Basic tours include a guided tour of the changing exhibitions, the permanent collection and the grounds. The total length of a tour is 45 minutes without a metalworking demonstration, 1.5 hours with one metalworking demonstration and 2 hours with additional demonstrations and/or hands-on activities. Due to special limitations, guided tours are limited to 60 attendees. Please contact the Education Coordinator, Lori Gipson, for additional information at 901.774.6380.

Demonstrations

Demonstrations cannot be scheduled without a guided tour. Demonstrations allow for up to 20 participants per demonstration. Larger groups will be divided.

Forging (30 minutes): Resident blacksmiths demonstrate basic forging techniques, including tapering, bending, twisting and hand-punching a hole as they make a steel hook.

Casting (30 minutes): Learn how various types of molds are created and then watch as molten metal is poured into a mold to make a casting.

Bladesmithing (45 minutes): Two artists create a sword or dagger form using traditional blacksmithing team-striking methods. The demonstration can also explore the tales of Beowulf.

Hands-on Activities

Hands-on activities may be scheduled without a guided tour, in which case general admission is included in the cost of the activity. There is a 10-person minimum to schedule a hands-on activity.

Art Tiles

Casting is the simplest and most direct way of producing a finished shape from metal. Each participant draws a design in a pre-made sand mold, called a scratch block, using a “stylus” tool. Molten metal is then poured into the molds. When the metal is cooled participants have a custom 4” x 4” art tile. FEE: \$35 per person. Additional fees may apply to larger groups.

Copper Bracelets

Students will use hammers and stamps to add their names, symbols and texture to a piece of copper, which will be formed to fit the student’s wrist. FEE: \$10 per person.

Chasing Repoussé Copper Tiles

Chasing repoussé is a metalworking technique in which a malleable metal is ornamented or shaped to create a design in low relief. Students will make their own low relief, 2D drawings in copper using a stylus tool to create patterns and textures on metal.

Vocabulary

Basse Taille – an enameling technique in which a metal surface is etched, engraved, carved, punched or stamped and then covered in several layers of transparent enamel, creating various depths in color and showing the underlying design of the metal surface

Brooch – a piece of jewelry with an attached pin on the reverse so that it can be worn on a jacket or shirt

Casting – a process in which molten metal is poured into a pre-made mold, then allowed to cool and harden

Champlevé – an enameling technique in which the surface of a metal plate is carved or etched away to create depressions, which are then filled with powdered enamel before being fired in a kiln or with a torch

Cloisonné – an enameling technique in which metal wire is used to form a design on a metal surface and then powdered enamel used to fill the spaces between wires before being fired with a kiln or torch

Counter Enamel – enamel applied to the back of a metal surface so that both sides of the piece have the same thickness to prevent warping

Decal – a printed image applied to a metal surface that will survive the high temperatures of firing with a torch or kiln

Firing Fork – tool used to pick up an enameled object and place it in a kiln

Firing Rack – what the piece sits on while being fired in a kiln

Hollowware – hollow objects used for holding food or liquid, such as bowls and vases

Kiln – an oven used to melt enamel and fuse it to a metal surface

Limoges – an enameling technique developed by the Pénicauld family in the French town of Limoges in which liquid enamels are painted onto a surface so that scenes can be realistically reproduced

Pendant – a piece of jewelry that hangs from a chain, which is worn around the neck

Plique-à-jour – an enameling technique in which enamel is suspended between metal wire or a metal frame and has no metal backing so that light passes through and has the effect of a stained glass window

Sgraffito – an enameling technique in which a design is formed on a still-wet enameled object by scratching into the surface using a tool to reveal the undercoating

Sifter – a small cup with a wire screen at the bottom and handle used to sift powdered enamel onto a metal surface

Stencil – a cutout of a design placed over a metal surface, over which powdered enamel is sifted

Torch – an open flame that can be used to melt enamel onto a metal surface

Trivet – stand used to fire an enameled object in a kiln for minimal contact to not interfere with the design

Vitreous Enamel – powdered glass mixed with minerals to create various colors that are transformed into a glossy surface when applied to metal and fired in a kiln or with a torch

Resources

Cohen, Karen L. *The Art of Fine Enameling*. New York: Sterling Publishing Company, Inc., 2002.

Darty, Linda. *The Art of Enameling*. New York: Lark Books, 2004.



Image: Zhou Yuan, *Mystery*. Photo courtesy of Jiajun Wang.