

The Art Adventure begins!

Here is a guide for your visit today. It covers all the works of art featured on the tour, along with practical information about what your child is learning, and suggestions for how to engage even more with what you see together.

We know there may not be time to read everything as we are walking around; therefore we've put only the information you may want to refer to quickly, in **bold**. (The rest of this guide serves to give you insight into your what your child was exposed to during the tour, to help keep the conversation about art going at home).

1. Welcome: 5th Floor, Ilham Gallery Gift Shop

What happens? Registration, warm-up activity.

The role of an Art Curator is introduced to children, and they will be given a job application form to fill out - for the position of "Junior Curator" at the ILHAM.

Some quick tips.

- Go over behavioural expectations with your child: Remind them to help keep artwork safe (including installations) by not touching anything in the galleries. Also, please take all snack breaks at the designated area as food and drinks are not allowed in the gallery exhibition areas.
- Allow your child to warm up to the new environment by getting him to doodle with other children. You can promote social skills and help him feel more comfortable by introducing him to at least one other child during this time.

2. Public Sculptures: In Front of Building

What are we looking at?

BREAST STUPA TOPIARY, Pinaree Sanpitak, 2013. Created by one of Southeast Asia's most admired artists, the eight freestanding objects are designed to support the growth of plants, and is an invitation to play.

DIVINA PROPORTIONE, Ai Weiwei, 2015. An expression of mathematical elegance and beauty, the polished bronze and stainless steel construction forms an industrial aesthetic, perfectly positioned in the high-tech architectural landscape of Kuala Lumpur.

What happens? Children are invited to walk in and around the sculptures to explore the structures up close. They will also be shown various images of everyday objects that share a similar shape to the sculptures, and asked about their opinion of the work. The process of creating sculptural art will be discussed with older children.

What your child learns.

- Shapes help children identify, organise and make visual connections. When shapes are being explored, your child is observing same and different, a basic process that will carry forth into all that he sees around him.¹
- Shapes are also symbols, so the ability to recognise them is a pre-reading and writing skill, as letters of the alphabet are essentially complex shapes.
- Shape sorting is a pre-cursor to analytical, problem-solving skills in children, and sharpens their ability to grasp mathematical concepts as they get older.
- Using physical objects to learn about shapes gives children a new perspective of the world - one where shapes do not only exist on paper (in “cartoon” form), but as real things around them.
- Your child’s sense of natural curiosity is nurtured by the enjoyable experience of interacting with the sculptures.
- Sculptural art is great way to encourage children to use different materials and tools when making art; giving them an expansive idea of what sculpture can be made out of (almost anything!)

3. Symbolism & Color Theory: 5th Floor, Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

WORKS FROM SHAPE, COLOUR, QUANTITY, SCALE SERIES, 2010, LIEW KWAI FEI. A set of repetitive procedures and algorithms as a means to study colours, forms, and shapes. The abstract artworks invite viewers to respond instinctively (as a child would do!) to the colours structures and surrounding space, rather than with contextual or interpretive analysis. The way in which the artwork has been displayed differently at its original showing, during the original hanging and the re-hang is shown and discussed.

What happens?

Children are asked to identify various colours and connect individual emotions or thoughts to them. Colour theory and the process of choosing colours and shapes in artwork is discussed, as well as the the use of colours as symbolism.

¹ Church, Ellen Booth. Parents, Scholastic.

What your child learns.

- A little primer about looking at art in the gallery, i.e. how you can get information on an art piece.
- Colour theory helps children appreciate the nuances of colour and the way colours can be used in art and design.
- Reinforces the language of colour and expands his vocabulary with colour words (e.g. cool, warm, complimentary, contrasting).
- Children are shown how colours can be used as symbols.
- Being in a formal gallery environment helps children practice their social etiquette and teaches them how to conduct themselves in a controlled setting, whilst still having fun!

4. Inspired by the City: 5th Floor Ilham Main Gallery**What are we looking at?**

HIGHWAY HEAT, HAFFENDI ANUAR, 2016. An exploration of the modern Kuala Lumpur cityscape, inspired by unusual architectural features and the hidden colours of the city.

What happens?

Children learn that it's possible to have a very unique way of seeing things, and that inspiration can be found in everyday things that are all around us especially when details are observed.

What your child learns.

- Looking closely at art requires focus and concentration (these are skills that technology and fast-paced media that are full of quick-changes and lots of action, compete for today).
- Observational skills are an important first step in science education (the ability to predict an outcome of something begins with first looking closely at the details). A child's visual skills are sharpened when encouraged to look beyond the obvious.
- Children can learn to observe everyday objects more carefully and to be inspired by these to create new renditions of art, much like artists do.
- Children are taught that art can mean many things to different people, because of our individual life experiences.

5. The Importance of Community: 5th Floor Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at? PROJECT ANGKAT RUMAH, 2010, LIEW SENG TAT.

A participatory project done in the spirit of “gotong-royong” (coming together), the Malay kampung house was moved along 1.3km stretch of road in Setul, by 250 multi-ethnic youth, to demonstrate what a group of people can do when they put their differences aside.

What happens? Children are asked to imagine they are part of a traditional village community, as featured in the film, “Lelaki Harapan Dunia” (2014).

What your child learns.

- Children benefit when they have many little chances to do something in addition to looking at art (in this case, exploring the inside of a kampung house, and learning about the design of the house!); showing them that visiting a gallery can be a varied experience shared with family members increases the likelihood they will want to come again. Studies suggest that children who enjoy visiting galleries and museums when they are young, continue to do so as adults.
- Children are given the opportunity to think the fact that despite outward differences and different cultural identities, we all share many similarities in terms of hope and dreams.

6. Saving our Forests: 5th Floor Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

MERAIH SAHABAT ALAM, PANGKROP SULAP, 2016. ‘Celebrating Friends of Nature’ depicts the rich flora and fauna of the rainforests, in support of forest conservation.

What happens?

The wood-printing technique is shown to children, and the deforestation and environmental damage being done in East Malaysia is discussed, as children are asked to think about the ways in which art can be used to bring awareness to important causes.

What your child learns.

- Visual attention filters are engaged as children search for different animals in the work. (This re-tunes sensory neurons in a way that engages the brain, more so than with sensory processing).
- Connecting children to the concept of caring for nature heightens their enthusiasm towards environmental education.

7: Symbolism in Flags: 5th Floor, Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

WEEDS/RUMPAI SERIES, SHARON CHIN, 2013. A series of banner paintings featuring political party flags collected during the last General Elections is a powerful metaphor for dissent, as weeds not only survive, but thrive in adverse conditions.

What happens?

Children are asked to notice the different colours, symbols and details used on the two different flags, and are asked to consider what they may represent for the political parties in Malaysia. They are also asked to consider why the artist has drawn weeds over these flags and what these weeds represent as symbols.

What your child learns.

- Show children how to look for visual symbols in artworks, and help them learn that these visual symbols can communicate ideas.
- Describing artwork to children builds important pre-literacy skills; a strong narrative helps children “read” what they see in a picture.
- Encouraging early conversations about topics such as the government and the election can help kids learn about the larger things going on around them (and for older children, to be engaged in the political process).

8. Experimentation in Art: 5th Floor, Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

MUD PAINTING, SAMSUDDIN WAHAB, 2015 An exploration of the artist’s evolving sense of identity and the experience of growing up in a kampung, through the transient medium of mud.

BANANA MONEY, CHONG KIM CHIEW, 2017 Based on the expression ‘Banana Money,’ the worthless currency used during the Japanese occupation of Malaya in 1942.

What happens? Abstract art is defined, and children are encouraged to put on their ‘Art Critic hats’ and discuss how they feel, by describing both works of art.

What your child learns.

- Looking closely at art requires focus and concentration (skills technology and fast-paced media full of quick-changes and lots of action, compete for today).

- When children express preferences for certain colours and shapes they are actually making aesthetic choices, which can lead to greater cultural sensitivity and promote language development.
- The opportunity to discuss art and take in the beauty of creative expression with thoughtful adults, not only supports visual perception skills, but also logical and creative thinking skills.
- By articulating what they see, children are able to organise their thoughts and sharpen their vocabulary around communicating their ideas.

9: Learning About Maps: 5th Floor, Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

CULTURAL MAPPING: A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING PLACE, COMMUNITY AND CONTINUITY, JANET PILLAI, ARTS-ED + WONG TAY SY, 2013. Inspired by Janet Pillai's publication and personal practice of cycling, the work visualises the interaction between place, people and use in cultural mapping and planning.

CYCLING KUALA LUMPUR, JEFFREY LIM, 2014 The Bicycle Map Project is compiled by local cycling and commuting volunteers, and aims to establish Kuala Lumpur as a cycle-friendly city.

+ NOT SO LONG AGO, NOVIA SHIN, 2013 A pop-up installation which depicts the social history of Petaling Street (Chinatown); recreating the lives of residents and traders who have been there for generations.

What happens? Children are shown a variety of maps that cover everything from bike trails to local vegetables, and learn about how map skills can be translated into works of art.

What your child learns.

- Map reading is an important tool for building spatial reasoning in children and helps them to better understand the world around them. "Spatial thinking is arguably one of the most important ways for a child to develop as he or she grows...A student who has acquired robust spatial thinking skills is at an advantage in our increasingly global and technical society." (National Geographic, 2013).
- Just like reading and basic math, learning to read a map is a foundational skill that is essential to developing a wide range of knowledge. (Maps are also used frequently in school for many subjects other than Geography).
- Gives your child a chance to practice their ability to "read" a map; a skill that requires considerable time effort.
- Observational skills are an important first step in science education (the ability to predict an outcome of something begins with first looking closely at

the details). A child's visual skills are sharpened when encouraged to look beyond the obvious.

10. Monuments as Symbols: 5th Floor, Ilham Main Gallery

What are we looking at?

THE GREATEST VIEW AT THE SIMILARITIES IN FEATURES BETWEEN THE PINNACLES OF TWO DIFFERENT NATIONS, EDROGER C. ROSILI, 2016. Two iconic war monuments, the United States Marine Corps War Memorial and Malaysia's National Monument (Tugu Negara) are shown to represent shared values between two different countries.

What happens? Children learn that monuments represent events, ideals and values which are important to the country. Examples of famous monuments around the world are shown, and children are taken through a short discussion on these.

What your child learns.

Children are introduced to monuments as objects to be contemplated. This can help children identify and reflect with more curiosity, when they encounter historical landmarks elsewhere during their travels around the country or the world.

11. Activity & Discussion: 3rd Floor Ilham Gallery Lounge

What happens?

Children are asked about the benefits of visiting an actual art gallery or museum versus just looking at artwork on online sites or in books. Some reasons given:

1. To see the paintings for yourself in real life – actual size, colour, impact etc.
2. To meet with the artists and other like-minded people in the community who appreciate art.
3. By going to an art gallery, you are choosing to spend your time around creativity, and works of art, instead of doing what everyone else does like going to the mall, watching television or spending time on gadgets. It means that you'll be thinking about things differently. The experience can inspire you to have ideas of your own.
4. Almost every city in the world you may travel to will have at least one gallery, and many famous cities like New York, London and Paris have amazing art galleries which you may want to visit at least once in your life! Now that you have visited this gallery, maybe on your next family trip you can search for a gallery to visit, look up some of the work online and even find an artist whose work you can see in different countries! For example Ai

WeiWei is one of our family's favorite artists so we always keep an eye out for any of his work, whenever we travel.

Children are asked to think about how the works of art (seen on tour) were grouped for the exhibition and come up with their own themes under which the work could be displayed.

Children also get to create their own three-dimensional map of their journey from home to school (or a familiar place).

What your child learns.

“Open-ended, process-orientated art is nothing but an endless opportunity for making choices, coming to conclusions, second-guessing decisions, and evaluating results...Children become more comfortable with uncertainty and remain flexible thinkers, which is key for creativity and confidence.”

- Jean Van't Hul, The Artful Parent

- Maps teach children spatial awareness and reasoning. They help children figure out their place in the world, as they picture locations of objects and shapes in their mind. Being able to visualise where different things are in relation to one another, and the paths they need to take as they move.
- The creative process challenges children to find immersive involvement in tasks, take on problem solving, develop self-motivation, and tolerate ambiguity and anxiety, as they are encouraged to try a task without certainty of the outcome.²
- When experimenting with a new art-making technique, children are practicing existing fine motor skills in a novel way, and gaining experience with a variety of materials and methods will increase their willingness to try out new combinations in the future.
- The process of experimentation (regardless of outcome) helps children learn to envision new possibilities, study situations in depth, prioritise and make unexpected connections, give form to their ideas and visualize solutions (prototyping). When children put ideas to work they are essentially testing themselves, allowing solutions to appear in stages as well as learn to see the value not knowing for sure how things will turn out.
- Creating a piece of art where several steps are involved fosters patience and a greater sense of accomplishment when the project is completed.

² Deering, Julia. "The Playful Parent."

- Building something (unlike traditional music or art lessons), exercises a child's desire to physically make something with their hands. Putting together three-dimensional constructs, help children explore life-affirming concepts, and make more sense of the world around them.³
- Cutting, fitting and sticking all increase a child's capacity to physically manipulate materials, and develops their intuitive thought and mental representations of space.
- Miniature models help children make independent discoveries, instead of being told exactly what to do. This type of project is the perfect mix of imagination and intelligence, as theory and examination are both used to create.

After your visit...

Thank you for bringing your child to our Tours for Kids! We loved having you, and hope to see you again at another exhibition. Until then, we'd like to encourage you to keep the conversation going at home, and continue to expose your child to art. We believe you don't need to be in gallery for art to have a profound effect on development and one's understanding of the world. We would like to leave you with a few ideas and tips we personally think are great for getting children to appreciate art from wherever you are. If you have any of your own you'd like to share with us, please email them to us!

What to keep in mind.

1. Let go of the notion that you need to have a degree in art history to study art with your child. When you look closely at artwork together, whether it is in a book or on an iPad, it is less about what you know, and more about what you discover WITH your child.
2. Questions are a great place to start. You can use the Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) questions mentioned in the Pre-Visit Handout e.g. "What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? And what more can you find?" Or try questions like, "Do you think you can create something like that artwork we saw the other day?"
3. Set up opportunities for your child to create for your child at home (temporary or permanent) where your child can play at making something. You can use a low bench or table, or a wipe-clean floor surface as a creative station, and stock it with a few tools and art supplies.

³ Kazovsky, All "Architecture Classes for Children? Why Is it a Good Idea?"

Things you can do at home

We want to show you that you don't need overpriced craft-kits to deliver creative experiences to your child. In fact making your own art activities can be even more effective than anything pre-packaged and more fun! Plus it enhances your standing in your child's eyes, e.g. "Wow my mom / dad is so clever he or she can make that from just a few pieces of paper!" This turns you into a creative role model for your little ones.

- Start collecting extra material for construction and collage work. You can save anything from old wrapping paper, to foil, feathers and anything recyclable in large containers or bags to pull out whenever you want to inspire your child to make something with his hands.
- Look in art books or online for artwork you can show your child. A list of 20 Great Artworks to Look at with Young Kids⁴ can be found online at The Art Curator for Kids (artcuratorforkids.com).
- Start a collection of artwork your child likes at home. Print them out and make a wordless art book, and get your child to tell stories about what happens next in the pictures.
- Provide creative material for art making. You don't need to be a 'Pinterest Mom' and make insanely perfect things, just follow your child's lead on what to make. Some great websites with super-simple projects you can try: Deepspaceparkle.com, Redtedart.com, Kid Blogger Network Activities and Crafts Board⁵

Mapping Tools & Activites

- Explore fun map resources online at National Geographic and PBS for some great hands-on activities and lesson plans.⁶
- Create simple maps of familiar places and have your child find hidden objects, for a simple way to boost their spatial sense and basic map skills.
- Use lots of directional language when you are working with your child (e.g. in between, below, behind and above).

⁴ <http://artcuratorforkids.com/20-great-artworks-to-look-at-with-young-kids/>

⁵ <https://www.pinterest.com/playdrmom/kid-blogger-network-activities-crafts/>

⁶ http://www.pbs.org/parents/catinthehat/activity_mapping_tool.html