

Artis—Naples

The Baker Museum

Docent Program Manual

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I. Introduction to the Baker Museum and Artis—Naples

Since it opened in 1989, Artis—Naples has become one of the busiest and most successful performing and visual art centers in the United States. The center presents 400 audience events each year, the majority occurring between October and May.

The Baker Museum is the most recent addition to the Artis—Naples campus. The first full-scale art museum in Southwest Florida, the Baker Museum boasts permanent collections of modern American art (1900-50), modern Mexican Art, miniatures, walking sticks, two glass chandeliers and a glass ceiling by Dale Chihuly, special exhibitions organized by the museum, as well as special traveling exhibitions.

A. Mission Statement

We create and present world-class visual and performing arts. We inspire, educate and entertain to enrich our diverse community.

B. Key Staff

1. Kathleen van Bergen, *President, CEO*
2. Frank Verpoorten, *Director/Chief Curator*
3. David Filner, *VP Artistic Operations*
4. Bonnie Thayer, *Director of Education and Community Partnerships*
5. Jessica Wozniak, *Curator of Education*
6. Shannon Gallagher, *Executive Assistant to the Director/Chief Curator*
7. Gisela Carbonell, *Curator of Special Collections*
8. Silvia Perera, *Curatorial Research Associate*
9. Chris Smith, *Art Handler*
10. Jacqueline Zorn, *Registrar*

II. Introduction to Docent Service

A. Mission Statement

The mission of the Baker Museum Docent Program is to enable visitors to discover, enjoy and learn about the collections, exhibitions and architecture of the Museum. Through tours and outreach services, we seek to stimulate curiosity, meet the diverse needs of visitors and provide skills for lifelong learning. The Docent Program actively supports and applies the Museum's mission.

B. Guiding Principles Paramount in All Docent Activities

1. Museums are the object of a public trust whose value to the community is in direct proportion to the quality of service rendered.
2. Docents' personal appearance, attitude, habits and behavior should convey a professional, favorable impression to patrons and others.

C. Docent Roles

As volunteers, the Docents dedicate many hours to studying, attending meetings, mentoring and conducting tours throughout the year.

1. Volunteers

Docents play an important role in the public's participation in art and its perception of the Artis—Naples campus, including the Galleries, Sculpture Gardens and the Baker Museum. Docents should act in accordance with the approved policies of Artis—Naples.

2. Educators
Docent comes from the Latin word *docere*, which means to teach. Docents, as opposed to guides, thus share their knowledge with visitors. In many ways, docents translate curatorial/artspeak into everyday English, encouraging visitors to engage with works of art on many levels.
3. Representatives
As representatives of the Baker Museum, docents may be the *only* representatives of the organization many visitors to Artis—Naples ever meet. In the interests of the public, as well as of the institution, docents should deal with patrons efficiently and courteously at all times.

III. Docent Program General Policies

A. History of Artis—Naples and the Baker Museum

The Docent Program was started in 1989 with four galleries in the main building of the center. In November 2000, the Baker Museum was added and we now have 15 new galleries in addition to the original four. The Docent Program has close to 50 members. The course of the Program has, and continues to be, guided by the following goals:

1. To relate information pertaining to exhibitions in an educational, informal manner
2. To illuminate the theme of exhibitions
3. To promote an interest in the Baker Museum
4. To raise awareness about visual art in our community
5. To present consistently accurate, informative and engaging tours
6. To continue educational opportunities for members
7. To meet the high standards set by Artis—Naples

B. Membership Requirements

Active and prospective docents should be members of the Baker Museum and are encouraged to join Friends of Art.

C. Service Agreement

Any volunteer program works best when all participants have a clear understanding of what is expected.

1. Docents can expect from the Baker Museum and Artis—Naples:
 - Opportunities that will provide challenges and enrichment
 - Adequate preparation and materials to perform docent assignments
 - Free admittance to exhibition lectures
 - Opportunities to contribute suggestions for improvement or enhancement of the Docent Program
 - Recognition of your service to the Museum
2. What the Museum expects from participants in the Docent Program:
 - Dependable execution of assignment
 - Discretion with any information to which you have access as a result of your affiliation with the Docent Program and the Museum
 - Commitment to helping the Docent Program reach its objectives
 - Fulfillment of all obligations outlined in this manual
 - Professional Conduct/Conflict of Interest: As representatives of the Baker Museum, docents are expected to refrain from any activity which might compete with the programs and interests of the Museum or which might make use of privileged information.

- Objectivity: Avoid expressing personal opinions or biased views. Try to remain objective about works of art and artists.

D. Crediting Docent Service

1. Please record volunteer hours and submit to the Curator of Education at the end of each calendar year.
2. Recording volunteer hours is important for two reasons:
 - It enables each docent's contribution to be recognized.
 - It assists organizational planning and funding.

IV. Docent Categories and Participation Requirements

A. Prospective Docents

1. Commitment
 - a) Four to five month training period. A minimum of 125 volunteer hours/season.
 - b) Two year Active Docent commitment to the Museum in exchange for the Museum's training investment in education, time and experience.
 - c) Mandatory attendance at training sessions and exhibition orientations.
 - A training manual is distributed to each prospective docent: *The Good Guide: A Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides* by Alison L. Grinder and E. Sue McCoy.
 - d) Mandatory attendance at all exhibition lectures.
2. Accreditation
 - a) Participation in the training program, which requires the observation of a minimum of five tours, led by experienced and active Docents.
 - b) Final Evaluation Tour:
 - Each Prospective Docent performs an Evaluation Tour after the training has been completed.
 - Prospective Docents request an Evaluation Tour date through the Curator of Education
 - An appointed committee attends all Evaluation Tours. Prospective docents may invite additional guests.
 - Successful Evaluation Tours will demonstrate a mastery of material, an engaging technique and a command of touring process in the allotted time period.
 - Prospective docents are given *two* opportunities to lead a successful Evaluation Tour.
 - c) Final Examination:
 - Final examination on the Baker Museum permanent collection, history and architecture.
 - At an appointed time late in the Season, an examination will be distributed to the prospective docents which will cover the following:
 - History of the Artis—Naples complex
 - Architecture of the Artis—Naples complex
 - Fine art and sculpture from the Permanent Collection
3. Service
 - Program assistance, if requested.

B. Active Docents

1. Background Requirements
 - a) Successful completion of Museum Docent Training Program.
2. Commitment
 - a) Attendance at all exhibition orientation meetings. Active Docents must attend exhibition orientation meetings in order to participate in tours for individual exhibitions.
 - b) Attendance at all exhibition lectures.
 - c) Minimum of 125 volunteer hours/season and 5 tours per month.

C. School Tour Docents

1. Docents for school tours may require additional training, plus the above- mentioned requirements, on specific exhibits.

V. The Calendar

A. Scheduling

1. The Docent Sign-up Calendar for public tours is located online and a copy is in the Docent Program Binder at the Museum desk.
2. The Calendar will be updated at each exhibition orientation meeting and posted in the Docent Program Binder.
3. The School Tours Sign-up Sheet will be available at docent meetings and online. (There is no limit to the number of school tours docents can provide.)
4. Private Tours are scheduled by the Executive Assistant to the Director and docents will be contacted directly to fill these tours.
5. Docents are expected to provide a minimum of 5 tours per month.

B. Absences and Substitutions

1. Under no circumstance, including illness, should any docent miss a scheduled tour without making arrangements for a substitute.
 - If a docent is unable to keep a scheduled tour, it is his or her responsibility to find a replacement and to alert the Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator.
 - It is understood that docents “repay” each other for substitutions when it is requested by the substituting docent.
 - If a substitute cannot work on the day on which he or she has agreed, it is the substitute’s responsibility to find an additional replacement. Alert the Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator of the change.
 - In case of difficulty, please call the Volunteer and Special Events Coordinator or Curator of Education for assistance in finding a substitute.
2. Leaves of Absence
 - A leave of absence excuses a docent from active duty for one year.
 - Requests for leave should be submitted in writing to the Curator of Education.
 - Former Docents who have been away from the Program for two or more years must re-apply to the Docent Program.
3. Absences
 - Requests for excused absences from exhibition orientation meetings, training sessions, and exhibition lectures must be approved by the Curator of Education. Two absences per year are permitted.
 - Any docent who does not attend a mandatory meeting is responsible for covering any missed content on his or her own.

C. Disciplinary Action

Three infractions in any given season are unacceptable and grounds for dismissal. All Docents are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to the rules and regulations set forth in this manual.

- Infractions include, but are not limited to, tardiness, absenteeism, lack of participation and so on.
- The Docent Program reserves the right to dismiss docents who fail to meet participation requirements or fail to maintain standards of the program.

VI. Tour Descriptions

A. Public Tours

Public tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 1 p.m. on Sundays for any Museum visitor desiring a tour.

- Tours are 45 to 60 minutes in length.
- Public tours are designed as a highlight tour, covering all current exhibits.

B. Private Tours

Please direct inquiries from patrons, area resorts, regional art centers, clubs, and community organizations to the Executive Assistant to the Director.

- Special tours are scheduled in advance by the Executive Assistant to the Director.
- Private adult tours may present the opportunity to provide specialized or in-depth tours of specific exhibits when requested.

C. School Tours

Please direct inquiries from schools/teachers to the Curator of Education.

- School tours are provided at no charge when scheduled through the Education Department.
- School tours will include selected exhibitions often with a connected theme.

D. Docent Responsibilities

1. Wear badge at all times.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the tour.
3. Alert staff/museum volunteers at the information desk to your presence.
4. Coordinate your tour schedule /rotation with other groups when needed.
5. When more than one docent is scheduled for a tour the responsibility is to be shared. Respectfully decide, as a team, how to handle the tour group.
6. Focus on the art!
7. Ask open ended questions and create engaging discussion/observation opportunities.
8. Provide context and connections.
9. No notes or props are permitted when presenting tours of any type.
10. Props cannot be used unless provided by the museum/education staff.
11. Help visitors understand art through visual analysis and other creative techniques.
12. Keep your tour upbeat and involve visitors in the conversation.