ASHEVILLE ART MUSEUM

2 South Pack Square | 828.253.3227 | ashevilleart.org
PO Box 1717 | Asheville, NC 28802-1717

smARTguide

Stops and Transcript

Stop	Content	Script
1	Welcome + Architecture	Welcome to the Asheville Art Museum! The Museum was founded in 1948 by a group of local artists who wanted to establish a place where they could share their art with the community. Since then, the Museum has grown into an institution that both collects and exhibits American art made from the mid-1800s to today. With an ever-growing Collection of over 5,500 artworks in all media, the Museum honors the original vision of the founders by showing artworks made in Western North Carolina alongside those by artists working elsewhere in the United States, so that we can look at how artists working here were influenced by American art at large but also influenced the national scene. From 2016 to 2019, the Museum underwent a transformative renovation and expansion project. The new building, designed by ENNEAD Architects from New York and ARCA Design from Asheville, complements the existing historic north wing, built in 1926 and designed by Edward Tilton. In total, the Museum encompasses 54,000 square feet including galleries, the John & Robyn Horn Education Center, expanded art storage, the Frances Mulhall Achilles Art Library, our rooftop sculpture terrace and Perspective Café, and state-of-the-art climate-control, lighting, and technology systems. As you move through the Museum, look for works by artists from other parts of the United States, and compare them with works made by artists living and/or working in Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia. Ask yourself: • How are the works alike? How are they different? • Where can you find influences?

		As you use the smARTguide, please help us maintain one-way traffic by visiting the stops on this tour in the order listed. Be mindful of visitors moving around you in order to provide social distancing.
2	Windgate Foundation Atrium + Special exhibition: *Many Become One*	Let's start in the Museum's Windgate Foundation Atrium. The atrium is the principal gathering space for groups, educational programs, and events; so, it makes sense that the special exhibition here is about people and things coming together. The exhibition is called *Many Become One*, a phrase inspired by the traditional motto of the United States *E Pluribus Unum*, which in Latin means "out of many, one." You may have seen it on US coins and dollar bills, or on the Great Seal of the United States. Originally, the phrase celebrated the establishment of one nation from 13 colonies and went on to describe the concept of people from around the world coming together to make this land their home. As you look at the artworks in this exhibition, ask yourself: • How did the artists bring together separate pieces of material to make their final works? • What are some words you'd use to describe the finished works? • How does the variety of material affect your experience of the work?
3	Wesley Clark, *My Big Black America*, 2015, stain, spray paint, latex, and salvaged wood, 192 × 120 × 14 inches. Museum purchase with major support from 2017 A.R.T. members Ron & Nancy Edgerton, Kevin Click, Butch & Kathy Patrick, Rick & Maggi Swanson, and Monty McCutchen & Terri Sigler, and additional contributions from 2017 A.R.T. members Miller & Constance Williams, 2017.39.01. © Wesley Clark, image 1982 Creative Studios.	The campaign and eventual election of Barack Obama inspired Wesley Clark to create this large sculpture, called *My Big Black America*. At the time, his two children were toddlers, and he reflected on the fact that children their age would spend their younger years only knowing an African American president. For many, including Clark, the idea of an African American president of the US seemed out of reach until Obama's election. He wanted the sculpture to reflect the generations of African Americans, past and present, who built this country's infrastructure and economy. As you look at the sculpture closely, ask yourself: • What materials is it made from? Do you recognize any of its parts? Do you think the materials are old or new? What do you see that makes you say that?

		• Is the color a single shade of black? What might variations in color symbolize? • The title, *My Big Black America*, is both descriptive and symbolic. What do you think the word "my" means for Clark? • What were some events in US history that affected how you felt to be an American?
4	SECU Collection Hall + Special exhibition: *Intersections in American Art*	The SECU Collection Hall is the Museum's new suite of 10 galleries built to showcase our ever-growing Collection of American art from the mid-1800s to today. The Museum currently houses more than 5,500 paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures, and craft objects, plus nearly 5,000 architectural drawings documenting the built environment of Asheville and its surroundings. The Collection hall is organized mostly in chronological order, around three key themes that are important when thinking about modern and contemporary art: • Time & Place; • Experiments in Materials & Form; and • Collaboration & Interdisciplinary Dialogue. Each artwork in the Collection hall relates to one or more of these themes. Some works were made by artists of importance to Western North Carolina and Southern Appalachia, whereas others were made by artists living and working in other parts of the US. The goal is to discover the important role that this region played in the progression of American art, and how national trends and events affected artists working here.
5	[SECU Collection Hall] William C.A. Frerichs, *Western North Carolina Landscape*, circa 1860, oil on canvas, 30 × 48 inches. Museum purchase with assistance of the 2011 Collectors' Circle, 2012.25.01.21. Image John Schweikert. + Joseph Fiore, *Green Landscape*, 1953, oil on	At first glance, William Frerichs's *Western North Carolina Landscape* and Joseph Fiore's *Green Landscape* look incredibly different, but they actually have a lot in common. Both are **landscapes**, or works that show the features of a particular geographical place. In this case, the place the artists represented is Western North Carolina. Frerichs immigrated to the US from the Netherlands in 1850, and in 1854 he moved to North Carolina. Here he was captivated by the mountains and lush vegetation, and captured the natural beauty in the grand European style of his training. Fiore, an Ohio native, moved to North Carolina in 1946 after

	canvas, 30 × 40 inches. Black Mountain College Collection, gift of the people of Western North Carolina and the Artist in honor of Reuben Holden, 1996.04.03.21. © Estate of Joseph Fiore / The Falcon Foundation, image David Dietrich.	serving in World War II. He studied at Black Mountain College, where he experimented with abstraction, expressive handling of the brush, and relationships between colors. As you look at the paintings, ask yourself: • Where do you think the artists stood to paint the views you see? Do they show space in the same way? • Do the paintings show an actual place? Why or why not? • How are the colors in each painting alike? How are they different? What moods do the artists create with color? • Could the 19th-century painting have been made today? What about the 20th-century painting – could it have been made in the 1800s? Why or why not?
6	[SECU Collection Hall] Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, *Japanese Magnolias*, circa 1945, oil on canvas, 36 × 24 inches. Gift of Ted Mitchell in memory of Edna Mitchell, 1997.04.21. © Estate of Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, courtesy WME. + Dodge silver	Zelda Fitzgerald and her husband, author F. Scott Fitzgerald, are best remembered as symbols of the excesses and carefree spirit of the 1920s. Although her story is often told through her struggles with mental illness, Fitzgerald was a multitalented creator who wrote essays and novels, developed her ballet skills to such a high degree that she danced professionally with a company in Europe, and painted in the most innovative modernist style. *Japanese Magnolias* is one of Fitzgerald's rare artworks. Few survive for several reasons. First, she donated many of her paintings to World War II veterans for them to reuse the canvas for art therapy. Second, many of her paintings were destroyed in the same tragic fire that took her life at Asheville's Highland Hospital in 1948. Finally, her family unfortunately destroyed much of her art after her death. Since she only exhibited her paintings once during her lifetime, it wasn't until recently that she has gained recognition as an artist. As you look at the painting closely, ask yourself: • Did you recognize the subject matter immediately as flowers? If you didn't know the title, how would you describe the artwork to someone else? • Does the work feel finished to you? Why or why not?

		• How would the magnolia blossom smell? How do the colors the artist used relate to the smell you imagine? • How might the silver objects nearby relate to Fitzgerald and the Roaring Twenties?
7	[SECU Collection Hall] BMC + Ruth Asawa, *Untitled (S.372)*, circa 1954, iron wire, 34 ½ × 24 × 24 inches. Black Mountain College Collection, gift of Lorna Blaine Halper, 2007.27.09.33. © Estate of Ruth Asawa / Artist Rights Society (ARS), NY, image David Dietrich.	Operating from 1933 to 1957 about 15 miles east of Asheville, Black Mountain College was an experiment in liberal arts education. Some of the 20th century's most well known artists, choreographers, writers, philosophers, musicians, scientists, and educators were associated with the College either as students or faculty. Students directed much of their own academic paths, and all students and faculty helped run the day-to-day life of the College, from constructing buildings to growing food to maintaining the grounds. Due to its international importance and proximity to Asheville, the Asheville Art Museum is dedicated to preserving Black Mountain College's legacy; about one-quarter of the Museum's Collection is related to the college. Ruth Asawa came to Black Mountain College in 1946. She'd spent most of World War II in a Japanese internment camp, where she and her family were incarcerated due to their ethnic heritage. She took solace in creating art, and experimented with nontraditional art materials and forms. As you look at the sculpture closely, ask yourself: • When you think of the word "sculpture," what are words you'd usually use to describe them? What art materials come to mind? • How did the artist use shape, form, and space in this sculpture? • Is this sculpture made out of one single wire, or multiple pieces of wire? How do you know? • What role do light and shadow play in the experience of this artwork?
8	[SECU Collection Hall] Kelly Phelps and Kyle Phelps, *John Henry (Series 3)*, 2014, ceramic and mixed media, 36 ¾ × 15 5/8 × 7	You may remember hearing the legend of John Henry. As the story goes, Henry was a "steel-driving man," or a railroad worker whose specialty was driving metal spikes into bedrock to prepare it for dynamite blasts. In this way, railroad companies blasted tunnels through mountains in order to

	inches. 2014 Collectors' Circle purchase, 2014.29.06.29. © Kelly Phelps and Kyle Phelps, image David Dietrich.	make way for steam engines to transport raw materials to shipping and industrial centers. When a traveling salesman brought a machine to Henry's worksite that he claimed could drive spikes faster than the workers, Henry challenged the man and his machine to a contest. Henry outperformed the mechanical driver; according to which version of the story you may have heard, he either died of exhaustion upon the contest's conclusion, or he went back to work with the knowledge that man could still triumph over machine. Kelly Phelps and Kyle Phelps are identical twin brothers who share a love of sculpture and stories that celebrate the hard-working individuals who built and continue to build the foundations of the United States. They work together in a small studio, back to back, changing positions to work in turn on their figures until they mutually agree that they're completed. As you look at the sculpture, ask yourself: • What are the different elements of the artwork? How do they relate to each other to tell a larger story? • How can you tell that the figure is a worker? • Is the figure historical or contemporary? What do you see that makes you say that? • If you already knew the legend of John Henry, does this artwork match your mental image of the main character? Why or why not?
9	[SECU Collection Hall] Lonnie B. Holley, *For Every Woman I Have Seen Parts of Africa's Dream in Her Honor*, 1993, found objects, wire, stone, paint, and Plexiglas, 68 × 24 × 24 inches. Gift of Randy Siegel, 2015.14.01. © Lonnie B. Holley / Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York, image Western Carolina University.	Lonnie Holley is one of the many self-taught artists represented in the Museum's Collection. Self-taught artists have little to no formal artistic training, but still feel the same creative drive as professional artists. They often make artwork in great quantities, using whatever materials they have at hand. Some self-taught artists keep their works for themselves or pass them down to family members; others sell their works from their homes. Some, like Holley, have gained international acclaim, with major museums collecting their works. Since he was a young man growing up in Alabama, Holley has made unique artworks that consider his and humanity's place in the universe. In this

		sculpture, the artist turned objects he found during his daily walks into an homage to the continent of Africa as the place of origin of all people. He further connected women with themes of creation and a "mother universe" that provides a home for all things. As you look at the sculpture, ask yourself: • What objects do you see? Where do you think they came from? • Silhouettes of faces are often visible in Holley's work. Where can you find them here? • Do you think a work like this belongs in a museum? Why or why not?
10	[SECU Collection Hall] Mack Stanley, *The 16th Street Baptist Church*, 1964, oil on canvas, 52 ½ × 64 inches. Extended loan from the collection of Diane Weaver, EL2001.06.21. © Estate of Mack Stanley, image David Dietrich. + Bruce Davidson photos	Many of the artworks that we've explored so far express an idea, or demonstrate mastery of or experimentation with artistic techniques or materials. This painting, on the other hand, is one artist's reaction to a tragic historical event. In September 1963, several men planted a bomb at the 16th Street Baptist Church in downtown Birmingham, Alabama. The church was located in a predominantly African American neighborhood and served a Black congregation. The men, who were white and believed in segregating white and Black people, targeted the church to upset the African American community's sense of safety. The bomb exploded on Sunday morning, taking the lives of four girls as they prepared to sing in the choir later that day, and injuring about 20 others. This act of domestic terrorism contributed directly to the passage of the Civil Rights Act by the US Congress the following year. As you look at the painting closely, ask yourself: • What evidence do you see of the bombing? • How do the girls look alike? How do they look different? Why might the artist have painted them this way? • What's the mood created by the artist? How has he infused the scene with emotion? • If you were alive during the 1960s, does this painting and the photographs by Bruce Davidson to the right reflect your experience of the era? If you weren't alive then, do they

		confirm or challenge your notions of what the era was like? Mack Stanley painted this work the year following the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. Not much is known about Stanley or his connection to the event.
11	[Atrium] Ken Fandell, *The Sky Above Here (Asheville, NC)*, 2013, montaged color photograph, archival ink on vinyl wall covering, dimensions variable. 2010 Collectors' Circle purchase, 2010.42.01. © Ken Fandell.	This digital collage is the largest artwork on view in the Museum. Its size allows us to feel immersed in space; it can be disorienting, since normally when we look at the sky, we look up, rather than straight ahead. To make this work, Ken Fandell traveled to Asheville multiple times to photograph changing weather, daylight, and nighttime conditions above the city. He then compiled thousands of digital images into one composite work unique to Asheville. While it is a photographic record of the realities of a specific location, it makes a fantastical, unreal place by combining them together. It's ordinary and extraordinary at the same time. As you look at the image, ask yourself: • How many suns do you see? Moons? Stars? • What evidence of different weather conditions do you see? • How do you feel when you stand up close to the work? As you move farther away? • Think of the place where you live. Is there anything unusual or unique about the skies there?
12	[Plaza] Henry Richardson, *Reflections on Unity*, 2016, chiseled, sanded, and bonded plate glass, 72 × 72 × 72 inches. On loan from the Artist, EL2019.04.01. © Henry Richardson.	*Reflections on Unity* is a meditation on artist Henry Richardson's belief in the power of people coming together to make the world a better place. Ingrained in his Quaker beliefs is the idea that every individual has an inner light, and that each person's voice contributes to a stronger society founded on mutual understanding. To make the orb, Richardson layered pieces of plate glass and colored adhesive, much like a painter layers pigments on canvas to create an overall effect. Both the glass orb and the boulder on which it sits are made of a similar primary ingredient—silica—though in different forms transformed by heat, pressure, and time.

		As you look at the sculpture, ask yourself: • How does the color of the orb make you feel? • How do the materials and form of the sculpture embody the idea of inner light? • What types of monuments should communities place in areas of public importance or gathering places?