



Halifax Theatre for Young People

About the Play

Three short plays by Nova Scotian playwrights inspired by original Nova Scotian art, ***Art Attackk!*** is a “***vibrant and fascinating mix of art and theatre***”. This funny and endearing show includes a hip hop musical, the story of an unexpected encounter at the art gallery and a eulogy for a cat! ***Art Attackk!*** hits kids where they live and demonstrates that art and creativity can help us understand, accept, and express our emotions and connect with others.

School Performances

Running time

The play runs for approximately 45 minutes and is followed by a Q&A for up to 15 minutes.

Art Attackk!

Cast and Artistic Team

Featuring: Henricus Gielis, Rachel Hastings & Sam Vigneault
Director: Tessa Mendel
Design: Katrin Whitehead
Sound: Brian Riley
Stage Manager: Tessa Pেকেles

On the Right Track by Jacob Sampson
Artwork: Ocean Limited by Alex Colville
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Cats are More than Memes by Richie Wilcox

Photo credits: Terry Pulliam

There are Rules (but only sometimes) by Lindsay Wilson

Folk Art inspired by pieces in the AGNS

Before attending a performance:

Teachers – please review acceptable theatre behavior with your students.

Actors are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. We want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your experience of the performance. However, please be considerate audience members. Talking, whispering and excessive movement during a live performance is distracting for the actors, and disruptive for other audience members.

As members of the audience, you play an important part in the success of a theatrical performance. Please remember to observe the following rules:

- Food, drinks, candy and gum are not permitted in the performance space.
- No electronic devices are permitted in the theatre because they affect our sound system.
- Photography, audio and video recording during a performance are prohibited.
- Please try not to leave during the performance as it disrupts the show.

Ways to enhance your students' experience:

Encourage your students to look for different aspects of the production. Before the show, identify tasks for your class. Have one group of students looking at the set, another listening for the music and sound effects, a third watching the costumes and a fourth, noting the different roles played by the actors in the three different plays. Compare notes after the show about what they observed. Your students will be more informed and they'll be surprised by how much they noticed.

Prepare students for the post-show talk back. All school shows will be followed by a maximum 15-minute talk back session with the actors. Teachers should suggest that their students, while they are watching the show, try to think of a question to ask the actors during the talk back. Brainstorm with them about possible topics to get the most out of the experience!

Information about the plays, the artworks that inspired them and possible discussion points:

All three plays in ***Art Attack!*** are set in an Art Gallery.

Have you ever visited an art gallery? What was your experience? What do you think the purpose of an art gallery is?

On the Right Track

On the Right Track by Jacob Sampson is about a boy's visit to the art gallery and his initial difficulty in relating to any of the art works. It is based on a painting called ***Ocean Limited*** by Alex Colville.

One of Canada's most respected and influential artists, Alex Colville was born in Toronto and grew up in Amherst, Nova Scotia. A bout of pneumonia and the lengthy convalescence that followed had a profound effect on Colville. It is during this time of solitude that he turned to drawing. He studied art at Mount Allison University and in 1942 joined the Canadian army where he served in Europe as a war

artist. When the war ended he was one of three artists sent to observe and record Bergen Belsen concentration camp, an event that had a profound influence on him. After the war he taught art and art history at Mount Allison University before devoting himself full time to his painting and printmaking.

Colville's work has been exhibited all over the world; in North America, Europe and the Far East. He has received many honours. He was chosen to design a set of coins for Canada's Centennial in 1967, the same year he was named to the Order of Canada. Colville has been awarded eight honorary degrees and for 10 years served as the Chancellor of Acadia University in Nova Scotia. Alex Colville lived in Wolfville, Nova Scotia for many years before he died in 2013.



Geometry is at the heart of Alex Colville's art. Composition, which is the term for how a painter puts an art work together, can be determined by several factors. Some painters compose by instinct, arranging things because that is what they feel is right. Others rely on what their eye tells them. They compose by repeating what they see around them. Still others compose by a reliance on geometric relationships, on proportions and strict mathematics. This is partly Colville's strategy.

Colville is heavily influenced by Renaissance painters, and uses techniques from their theories of geometric composition. In Colville's paintings, outlines, contour, proportion and geometry all reinforce the impression of precision. He changes the proportions and the relative scale between objects in order to heighten or otherwise have an impact on the emotional charge of the painting. In the study drawings for his paintings, one can see his careful plotting of the placement of his figures, both in relationship to other figures, and in the landscape. There are no accidents in an Alex Colville painting, everything is precise, ordered, determined.

Discussion:

What do you think is happening in the painting? If you were to tell the story of this painting, what would it be? Why do you think Alex Colville was drawn to paint this particular image?

Show your students some images of Canadian art:

(<https://ago.ca/collection/browse?collection%5B1710%5D=1710>)

Ask them to answer the same questions D had to answer for his assignment.

1. How does this painting make you feel?
2. What does this painting make you think about?
3. What part of the painting do your eyes go to first? Why?

Cats are More than Memes

Cats are More than Memes by Richie Wilcox is about a girl who decides to hold a memorial for her cat actually in the art gallery. She chooses three photographs (by local photographer Terry Pulliam) as the background to different sections of the memorial.

After the performance - discuss:

Why do you think Maddie wanted to hold the memorial in an art gallery?

Why did she choose those particular images as the background to the different parts of the memorial?

Have you experienced the death of a pet or someone close to you? Write about what you would include in a memorial to them.

There are Rules (but only sometimes)

There are Rules (but only sometimes) by Lindsay Wilson, is set in a room in the gallery that exhibits Nova Scotian folk art.

What is folk art?

Traditionally, folk art sprang from a desire to make human and meaningful the daily round of work and home life, and thus reflected the cultural and regional diversity in Canada.

Scholars divide folk art into two general categories. In their book *A Compendium of Canadian Folk Art*, authors Terry Kobayashi and Michael Bird write: "On the one hand, folk art is defined as the collective manifestation of an ethnically-based decorative tradition. On the other hand, folk art comes to be seen rather as the product of the individual mind, the artistic outpouring of an untrained painter, sculptor or other practitioner." Or to put it more simply, most folk art in Canada either relates to an ethnic tradition (for example, Ukrainian or Scottish) or is an individual expression by someone untrained as an artist.

Though much of folk art is related to an object that can be useful (like a woven rug or a weather vane) folk art does not have to be useful, or based on culture or tradition. It may be purely whimsical, rooted in the particular imagination of the artist. Garden ornaments, birdhouses, shadowboxes and figurines may be exotic, humorous or fanciful, though always direct and spontaneous in their "folksiness"

Discussion:

What folk art objects did you see in the third play?

Show your students some images of Nova Scotian folk art:

<https://www.folkartmaritime.com/paintings/paintings1.htm>

How can you tell that they are examples of folk art rather than fine art?

Folk Art Activity

Show your students the short film I Can Make Art ... Like Maud Lewis

[www.nfb.ca/film/i can make art like maud lewis](http://www.nfb.ca/film/i_can_make_art_like_maud_lewis)

Ask them to identify things they see in their neighbourhood. Each student chooses one landmark, building, object or location to paint on foam board. Together assemble the separate paintings on one large piece of foam board.

Final Thoughts

Art and creative expression are important to people because they can help us to understand ourselves and to cope with our emotions. We do that when we identify with a character in a book, or a feeling in a song, or a situation in a movie. We also do that when we use our own creativity. Discuss how in each of the three plays the characters used their creativity to process or express their thoughts and feelings.

We would love to hear from you!

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