

Global Classroom
Visual Tour to France and the Netherlands 2014

Presentation in Assembly by Andy Chiu 6F and Angus Lee 4F
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Mr. Yuen, Father Philip, teachers and fellow schoolmates, good morning. I am Andy Chiu from 6F and this is Angus Lee from 4F.

This summer, we took part in the “Discovery Art Tour” to France and the Netherlands. We went to lots of museums to see authentic masterpieces. In this presentation, instead of just talking about what we saw, we are going to share with you how we could better appreciate art.

The first thing to do is to determine the period. Works from different periods have different styles and characteristics. In this tour, we focused on two art periods – Baroque and Impressionist.

The Baroque period was in the 17th century. Baroque paintings usually emphasize exaggerated movements to express energy, tension, or grandeur, with a dramatic spotlight effect and irregular composition. Rembrandt is a famous artist of that period. His signature painting “The Night Watch” in the Rijkmuseum shows a great value and color contrast for creating the spotlight effect, focusing on the two main characters in the centre and the little girl.

Another focus of this tour was Impressionism in the 19th century. It was when cameras were invented, and because of that, many artists thought that realistic paintings were no longer meaningful. Therefore, a group of artists started a new painting style, with images that were more abstract, blurred and colorful, painted outdoors. The most famous paintings of this period include the water lilies of Monet. To enjoy impressionist paintings, we need to sit back and observe the whole painting, and we even need to close our eyes a little to allow the colors on the canvas to mix and merge. Instead of detailed and realistic paintings, works in that period are often dream-like impressions.

Now, I will ask Angus to tell you a little about the architecture. Angus, please.

Thanks Andy. To appreciate architecture, it is important to know something about the history of buildings and monuments. My personal favorite is the Orsay Museum in Paris, which was originally a railway station. In 1970, permission was given to tear down the station, but the Minister for Cultural Affairs at that time ruled against the decision, so the station became a historic monument instead and the idea of turning it into a museum was conceived: It was to be a museum that would bridge the older collections at the Louvre and the modern collections at Pompidou Centre. What impresses me most is spacious hall in the centre and the magnificent glass awning, which is now the museum entrance. Today, the museum houses many great paintings of the Impressionist period such as *The Luncheon on the Grass* by Manet, *Starry Night Over the Rhone* by van Gogh and *The Gleaners* by Millet.

Let me now take you to the Netherlands, the country of famous Dutch painters such as Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh. In terms of architecture, the most intriguing building for me was the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, which houses one of the world's richest collections of contemporary art. We were very lucky because the museum had been closed for years for enlargement and modernization projects. It only reopened to the public in 2012. The new section of the museum is all white and very modern. I think local people call it the tub, as in a bathtub. It shouldn't be hard to see why. The "Tub" is also where the main entrance to the museum is. The style is totally different from that of the original museum, which is a 19th century building, but somehow the two styles complement each other. Going from the new wing to the old wing of museum is like travelling in time. Apart from the museum, the Cubic House and the Erasmus Bridge in Rotterdam also impressed me a lot. In Amsterdam and Rotterdam, you can easily see this juxtaposition of modern and ancient buildings, which is characteristic of Dutch architecture. Knowing something about their history of buildings and monuments certainly helps us appreciate them better.

Let us now show you a video of our tour. Please sit back and enjoy.

On behalf of all the students who took part in the tour, I would like to thank the principal and the College council for their support as well as our teachers, Ms Lee, Mr. Lam, Ms Yuen and Mr. Alex Wong, for organizing this wonderful tour for us. We all had a great time and we learned a lot. Thank you for listening to our presentation.