

Quick Culture: Private Customized Arts Tours in LA

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Participants learn about perspective from guide Ellen Greenberg during a Quick Culture for Kids tour at LACMA

Basics: **Quick Culture for Kids** is a one-hour, private, interactive child-friendly tour of the LA County Museum of Art (LACMA). The tour is designed for ages 6 to 12, but is enjoyable for the whole family, so you can drop your kids off for the hour or join in the tour with them. **Quick Culture for Kids** is \$125 for 2 to 8 people. Museum admission fee for people in the group 18 and older is additional. Tours are by appointment.

Quick Culture also offers **customized tours for adults** of LACMA, the Fashion Institute for Design and Merchandising (FIDM) and LA's various art districts.

Background: **Quick Culture** is the brainchild of Charlotte Robinson and Ellen Greenberg. When they were docents giving tours of **LACMA** to groups of school children, chaperoning parents would ask whether tours were available for families who

Bonus: **Quick Culture for Kids** can also be combined with the **Museum Manners** program offered by Beverly Hills Manners. This adds an introduction before the tour on how to behave in a museum, and lunch afterwards in the museum restaurant with instruction in proper table manners for fine dining.



The Quick Culture for Kids Tour: **Quick Culture for Kids** is designed to teach kids the basics of art appreciation using works on display at the LA County Museum of Art. I joined the tour as Ellen wrapped up a discussion about color and brush strokes, using David Hockney's *Mulholland Drive*.

This was a kids-only tour (plus one big-kid journalist). Two sets of brothers, Hayden and Avery, and Indiana and Montgomery, were joined by friends, Max and Chase. The five boys and one girl (Chase) had been dropped off by their respective parents.

During the hour, they examined 15 works of art, each illustrating a different concept. As the kids learned the difference between bas relief and sculpture in the round, Ellen passed around a small mold she had made to create a poured metal figure.

Chardin's *Soap Bubbles* introduced the idea of shapes used in composition, and the kids caught on quickly to seeing a triangle in the curve of an elbow. They also enjoyed trying to figure out the relationships of the artists' subjects in a Renaissance painting or an Egyptian sarcophagus.

They were totally engaged for the hour, with lots of questions and insights.

"They braided their beards like we braid our hair," commented Indiana of 3000-year-old *Ashurnasirpa II and a Winged Deity* on a stone stele from Nimrud, Iraq. The male figures sported corn rows in their hair and beards, earrings and wedge sandals. Ellen passed around a photo of her own wedgies, which looked a lot like the ones in the bas relief carving.



At the end of the tour, Ellen asked each child to choose which one of the works they would take home if they could, passing around a reminder sheet with photos of the pieces they had seen.

Chase voted for the Hockney painting. "Because it's so colorful?" asked Ellen. "I like the colors, but I like that you can see the back, the middle and the front," she said, referencing the lessons on depth of field and perspective.

"I'd take home the sarcophagus," said Hayden. "I'm going to be a paleontologist and I like really old stuff."

Max looked at all the pictures and had a hard time making up his mind. "I was born for art," he declared in all seriousness. "I want to do it again and see more art!"