



The MoMA Alzheimer's Project: Image, Expression, Alzheimer's Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia

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Presented by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare and The Museum of Modern Art

The MoMA Alzheimer's Project: Making Art Accessible to People with Dementia is made possible by **MetLife Foundation**

Additional support for Meet Me at MoMA is provided by The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation.

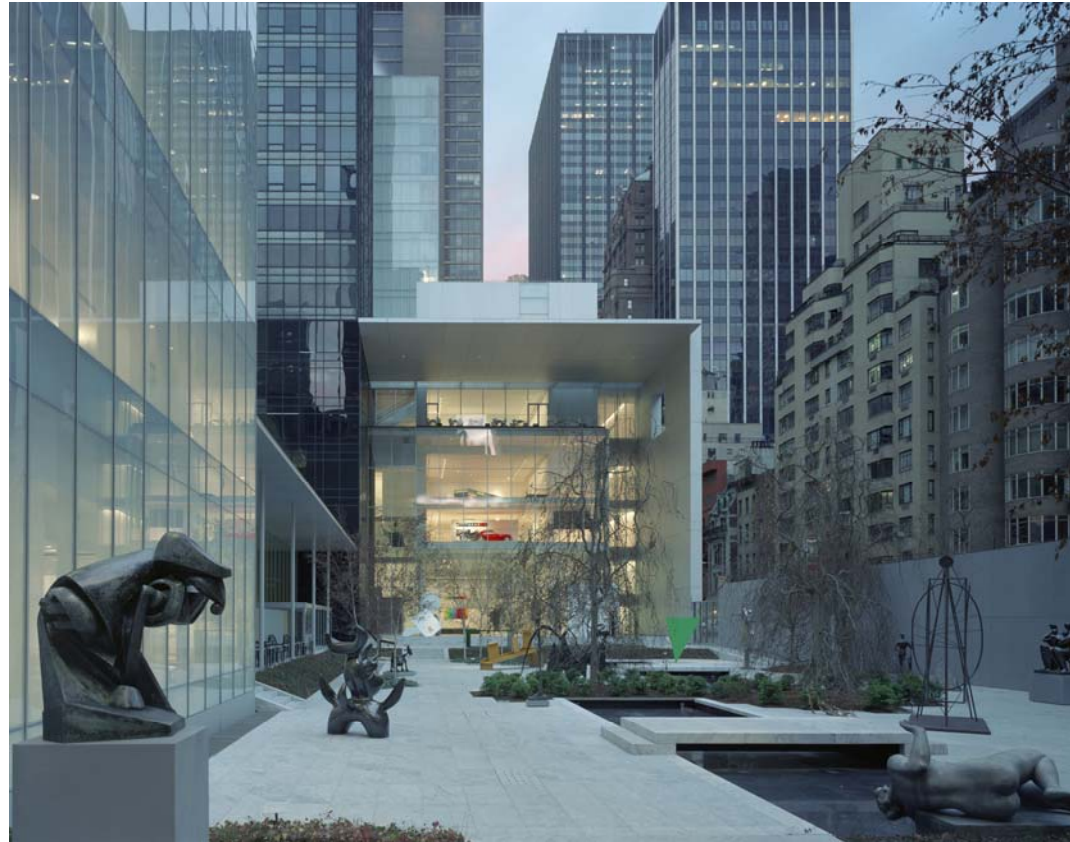


What is Meet Me at MoMA and how does it fit into the Museum's overall educational programming?



- Interactive educational program specifically designed for people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers
- Community and Access Programs
- Museum education and art education

What is the MoMA Alzheimer's Project?

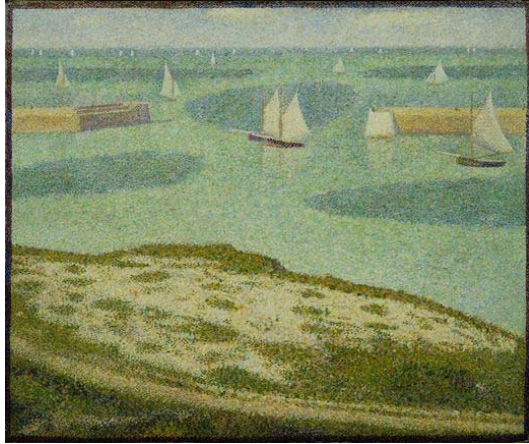


- A nationwide expansion of the Museum's outreach program for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers
- An initiative funded through a two-year grant from MetLife Foundation
- Resources: [Publication](#), [Web site](#), [Research Study](#)

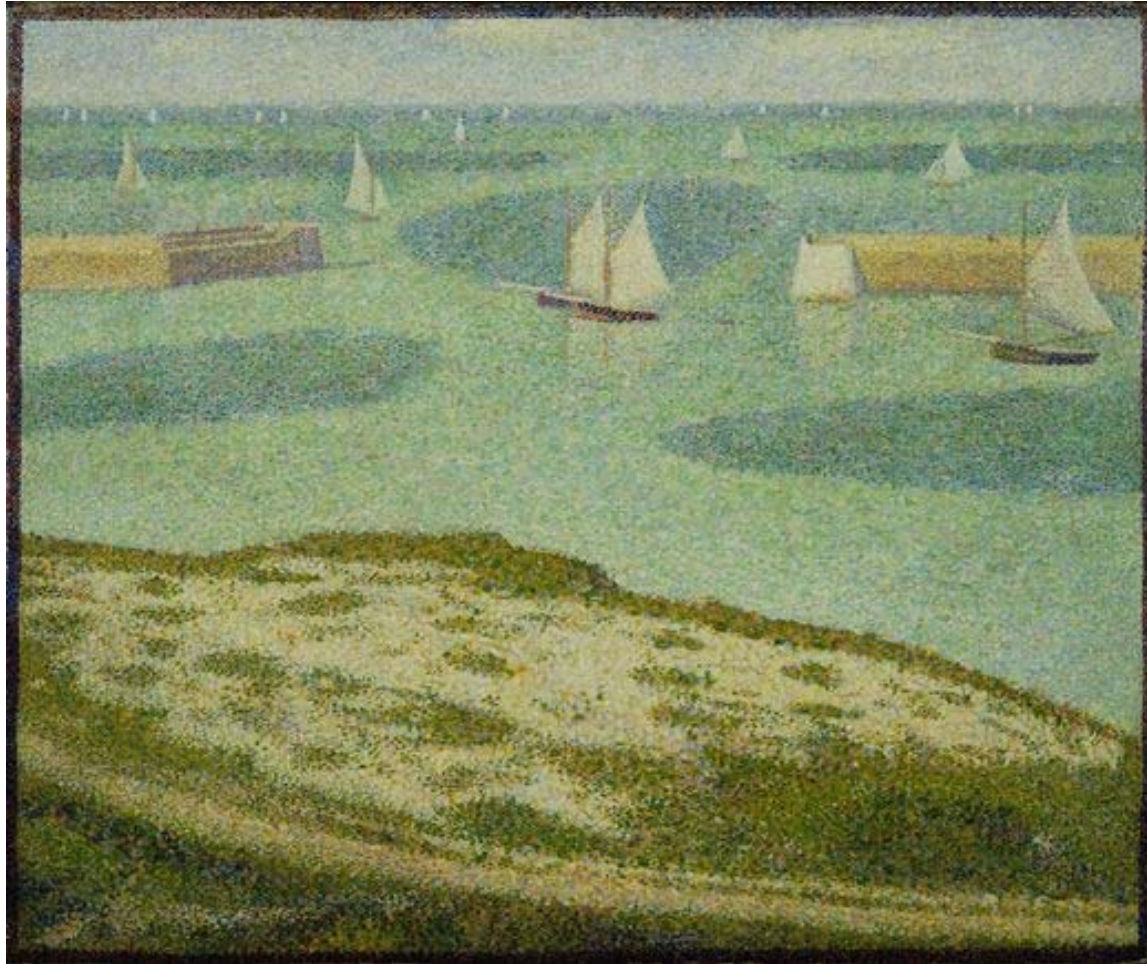
Components of a Gallery Conversation

- Theme; sequence; rationale and transitions
- Communication, facilitation and learning strategies to take into account
- A couple of main thrusts or ideas that are conducive for conversation and exploration for this specific audience
- 3-5 discussion questions per work
- Several art historical points to include
- Looking at and discussing artwork: observation, description, evaluation, interpretation, connection
- Inquiry-based approach
- Discussion-based activities

Far Away, So Close



Preparation



Georges-Pierre Seurat. *Port-en-Bessin, Entrance to the Harbor*. 1888.
Oil on canvas, 21 5/8 x 25 5/8" (54.9 x 65.1 cm). Lillie P. Bliss Collection

In Front of the Artwork



Salvador Dalí. *The Persistence of Memory*. 1931.

Oil on canvas, 9 1/2 x 13" (24.1 x 33 cm). Given anonymously. © 2008 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Observation (looking)

Description (naming what you see)

Interpretation (assigning meaning)

Evaluation (personal opinion)

Connection (to other areas of life,
to other works of art)

Working with this Audience

- Repetition necessary
- Transition from open questions to yes/no questions
- Personal connections and narratives encouraged
- Side conversations allowed
- Greater use of non-verbal communication
- Possibility of tangential comments
- Great interpretive freedom—wide range of responses
- Wide range of cognitive abilities within the same group

Communication and Facilitation Strategies

- Make eye contact and talk directly to the person with Alzheimer's disease, even if they are non-verbal
- Be patient and aware of facial expressions, body language, posture and gestures
- Do not create two planes of conversation
- Maintain a certain degree of lightness and humor and allow the conversation to go into unexpected directions
- Try to interpret what is being said and support participants at their own level of functioning
- Validate frequently and with sincerity
- Never correct or chastise any member of the group

Scenarios

- A person with Alzheimer's disease makes the same point repeatedly in front of different works
- A caregiver is too enthusiastic and dominates the discussion
- A person with Alzheimer's disease brings up topics that are completely unrelated to the discussion
- A caregiver and a person with Alzheimer's disease constantly talk to each other during the group conversation
- A person with Alzheimer's disease constantly responds, but you don't comprehend what the person is saying
- There is very little verbal response from the group

The Program Offers a Person with Alzheimer's Disease:

- Engagement in meaningful activity and opportunity for personal growth
- A forum for exploration and exchange of ideas without relying on short-term memory
- Access to personal experiences and long-term memories
- A means to make connections between individual experience and the world at large
- Mental stimulation and cognitive exercise, which preliminary research suggests offer health benefits
- The opportunity to become part of a community of interpreters
- A social setting where all participants are respected and valued as contributors

The Program Offers Caregivers:

- An opportunity to explore their interest in art while the person in their care is present, safe, and engaged
- Social engagement with other caregivers and the opportunity to share stories and challenges
- A respite, both physically and psychologically

The Program Benefits the Relationship Between the Person with Alzheimer's Disease and their Caregivers:

- Looking at art provides an opportunity for communication and connection.
- Everyone's participation is equally valued; both the person with Alzheimer's disease and the caregiver can engage at various levels and feel validated and empowered.
- Participants learn about each other in different contexts and gain new understanding of each other's ideas and interests.

Adaptations

- Assisted living facilities
- Adult day centers
- Support groups
- Memory programs
- Individual homes
- Hospitals

Resources

- The Alzheimer's Association
www.alz.org
- The Alzheimer's Foundation of America
www.alzfdn.org
- Aging and Dementia Research Centers
- The National Center on Creative Aging
www.creativeaging.org
- The Society for Arts in Healthcare
www.thesah.org

The image shows a modern glass skyscraper with a prominent vertical sign. The sign is white with the letters 'MOMA' in a bold, black, sans-serif font, oriented vertically. The building's glass facade reflects the surrounding cityscape, including other buildings and trees. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clear day.

MOMA

www.moma.org/alzheimersproject

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Pablo Picasso. *Girl before a Mirror*. 1932.

Oil on canvas, 64 x 51 1/4". Gift of Mrs. Simon Guggenheim. © 2007 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

“I learned a lot about myself
by looking at the paintings.
I saw what my eyes saw.”

-Meet Me at MoMA participant