

Visiting The Aldrich with Children

While contemporary art can seem complex for children, exploring The Aldrich can be fun, creative, and educational for visitors of all ages!

About The Museum

The Aldrich is a two-story contemporary art museum. There are eight individual galleries with additional transitional spaces. There are two sets of stairs, as well as an elevator.

You can easily explore the Museum in an hour, spending more or less time depending on your preference.

The Studio: A Place for Making and Learning, on the ground level, is open during Museum hours (unless a scheduled program is taking place). The Studio has materials for art-making as well as project prompts related to the exhibitions and artists on view. Additionally, there is reading area with books for all reading levels. It is a space for families to relax, take a break, and explore through reading, making, and discussion.

The Museum has two multi-stall bathrooms and two water fountains (one at child height), on the first floor.



The Museum has a two-acre Sculpture Garden behind the building. Whether or not there is sculpture in it, all visitors are welcome to explore, play, or picnic in the field.

The Aldrich does not have a café or cafeteria, but is located a few blocks from downtown Ridgefield where there are a number of establishments to grab a bite to eat. Some family favorites are 850 Degrees, Dimitri's Diner, Prime Burger, Bare Burger, The Village Tavern, and Chez Leonard.

What to Expect

The Museum is generally a quiet place. You will hear visitors having conversations, noise from any sound-based installations, and the occasional fire siren or car horn from outside.

On days when school groups are visiting, you may hear more noise than usual. If you would like to find out if any large groups or programs are booked on the day you plan to visit, please call ahead to the Front Desk.

The Museum is climate controlled to protect the art and is kept at approximately 68 degrees Fahrenheit. We recommend bringing a light sweater or jacket. We have a coat room for you to leave outerwear, strollers, etc.

Resources for Families

Each exhibition has an associated Family Guide available at the entrance to the galleries. The Family Guides have questions to discuss as a group, things to look for in the work, games or activities to complete in the galleries as well as projects to do at home.



Our Museum Attendants are here to help! They can answer questions about the artwork and also help you determine what is appropriate for your child to view.

Throughout the week and on the weekends, the Museum runs workshops, programs, and tours. Check the Museum's online calendar to see what is going on during the day you are planning to visit.

The staff at the Front Desk, as well as the in-gallery staff, are happy to recommend restaurants, parks, and other cultural institutions in the area if you would like to extend your day.

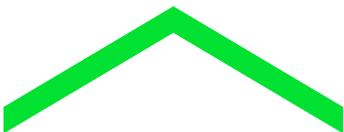
Preparing for Your Visit

There are many ways to prepare for your visit to the Museum!

Go over best practices in the galleries together when you arrive at the Museum. Talk about inside voices, keeping our hands to ourselves (as we cannot touch the art), staying a safe distance away from the artwork, walking in the galleries and most of all, be ready to explore new ideas.

Discuss how artists get ideas from all different places and use varying techniques and materials in their work. Ask your child what they like to use to make art and what processes they use most in school.

Create a viewfinder (using the template included) to help focus on specific details within the works of art during your visit.



Look ahead at the exhibitions together and decide which show your group is most interested in.

Get excited! Visiting a museum as a family is a fun experience.

How to Look at Art with Children

When exploring art with young viewers, whether famous pieces from the art historical cannon or contemporary objects, there are questions that can prompt an inspired, thoughtful, and educational conversation.

The Aldrich follows an inquiry-based approach, encouraging visitors to ask questions, bring their own experiences and ideas to the conversation, and dive deep into each work of art.

Here are some questions to guide your conversation:

- **What do you see?**
- **What do you see that makes you say that?**
- **What more can we find?**
- **What does this remind you of?**
- **Have you ever seen materials like this before?**
- **How are these different than the materials that you use?**
- **What do you think the artist was inspired by?**
- **How does this make you feel?**
- **What part of the artwork do you notice first?**
- **What colors, shapes, lines, and patterns can we find?**
- **How would you change this?**
- **What would you call this?**



- **What questions do you have for the artist?**
- **How do you think the artist made this work? Think about how they moved their bodies, tools, and materials to create what we see.**
- **Do you like this artwork?**

How to Use a Viewfinder

Hold your viewfinder out in front of you, with your arms outstretched.

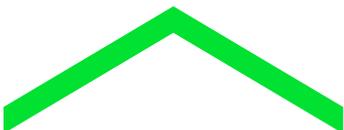
To test the viewfinder, find a chair through the small rectangle in your viewfinder. Make sure the chair is touching at least 2 sides of the rectangle.

This forms a border around the chair (or object you are looking at) and enables you to see the negative space (the space that surrounds an object) between the object and the borders.

Spend some time looking at the negative space, noticing its size and shape. Does the negative space remind you of anything?

Now, try using your viewfinder on a work of art.

Note: Be careful when centering your viewfinder on an object – you don't want to bump into anything behind you!



**Cut out
this
square**

