

Students caught playing with fire...

Field trip focuses on landscape paintings, Raku firing and artists selling in galleries.



A field trip that was originally scheduled for the day Hurricane IKE came ashore finally happened this month. Northbrook Middle School art students embarked on another exciting field trip on Friday October 17th. Their first destination was the Museum of Fine Arts where students looked at and studied landscape paintings from the exhibit, *The Forest of Fontainebleau*. Through the help of this collection of work, the students were able to glean moods and techniques from

landscape painting. The students chose one painting that they were most attracted to and were able to discuss why it was a good painting using art terminology such as the elements and principles of design. Students were also asked to analyze, as best they could, how each artist painted the landscape. They studied the difficult technique of aerial perspective, as well as the way the artist painted trees and other foliage. Students will use these techniques to create their own Fontainebleau –like landscapes in the classroom.

The second part of the trip was a visit to the ceramic studios of Foelber Gallery in the Montrose area. The owners were kind enough to allow the students to experience a Raku firing. Students had created a vase specifically for this field trip. When the kiln had reached its correct temperature, it was opened to expose the radiating orange heat of 1400 degrees. Using extra long tongs, the vases were picked up and placed in trash cans full of shredded newspaper to cause a reduction that allows a very unique glaze to occur. Everyone was amazed as the newspaper caught on fire and the lid was put on the trash can so that each vase could smoke and cool. While they cooled, John and Judy allowed students to view the ceramic gallery. Students were able to see many different clay techniques and brought back many ideas for their own work.



With work in hand, students returned to the bus and headed to the Moody Gallery to see an exhibit by Mary McCleary. The gallery assistants took the time to explain some of the contemporary art to those who had question. Students were able to see how a living artist is able to set up an exhibit and sell their art work for big money. They were both amazed and confused as to how paintings could sell for more than a car. For many students, this field trip was a unique experience into the life of art and artists.

