

EXPERIENCE #2: Title: Touching on Things Japanese -- A Sensory Experience

<p>Setup</p>	<p>I am Gretta Spier. My colleague, Mary Wakefield, and I are part of a team creating tours for guests from a residential facility; i.e., people who have progressed in their disease to the point of needing special care. The Enrichment Coordinator of the facility takes great pains in selecting the people she brings to the museum. She knows who can tolerate a field trip without distress. She next looks for those who might have a family member also interested in attending. The tours allow the family and residents to be “in the moment” together. We always get biographical sketches in advance so we know who plans to come and a bit about their prior history. We usually have four residents, rarely more than six, plus family and staff. This slide shows a father and daughter.</p> <p>Design considerations: We design tours with several things in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- limited mobility of our visitors (we don't want them to spend their limited energies on moving around the museum). This also helps create a settled & safe feeling, in what could otherwise be a disorienting and exhausting outing for some of these folks.- paired activities (involving a family member or staff teamed with each resident, which among other positive effects, helps reduce feelings of isolation)- a strong emphasis on objects and props that provide a sensory experience, thus engaging with our visitors “in the moment” of seeing, touching, feeling, smelling & hearing- a greater than usual emphasis on music and singing. (though not much in evidence today). In a very successful tour recently, we all sang a song at each art object on the tour (the songs carefully chosen to match in theme or mood the object). One visitor was heard remarking eagerly to her family member as we moved to the next object - “I wonder what we will sing at this painting!” <p>Using the Japanese Gallery: We had lovely kimonos on view in the Japanese Gallery and this inspired us to work on a tour which could take place completely in that gallery. The gallery experience had 2 parts -- the first using the kimonos on display. The opportunity to enjoy the physicality of both a kimono and an obi, to feel the weight and textures, in a serene space, created one of our more memorable tours. Although it was designed for a more impaired set of visitors, it also worked well with our other groups.</p> <p>I will then demonstrate the second part of the experience -- an invitation to tea. (As a reference point - we would typically spend an hour or so in the gallery; today you will see a much condensed version designed to illustrate our approach. We ask you to imagine an experience that slowly and ceremoniously unfolds for our guests.)</p> <p>*So, now, let's join Mary in the Japanese Gallery.</p>	<p>#1 - Title slide - Touching on Things Japanese</p> <p>#2 - Green bamboo & music</p>
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<p>Experience</p>	<p>Part One: Kimonos with Mary. Good afternoon, KONNICHIWA and welcome to the Japanese Gallery. Gretta and I will be taking you on a tour in a quiet, peaceful gallery as we would with our guests. This gallery allows us to be away from background noise and other visual distractions. We stay in one gallery which eliminates the need for disruptive movement (helpful since our guests often visit using their walkers wheelchairs) and allows us to carefully control our pace. The lives of our visitors are changing in many ways -- their cognitive skills, their memories, their physical abilities. As a practicing Physical Therapist I am interested in making it possible for the sense of movement to be part of the enjoyable sensory experience in our tours. Regardless of abilities, we work with our tour and guests in a way that captures wherever they are in the moment.</p> <p>This visit takes us to Japan - a country with picturesque mountains and cool ocean breezes. Our first stop on this tour will be to see beautiful silk clothing called <i>*KIMONOS</i>. <i>If any of this triggers a memory for someone we stop, listen and go with that.</i> For example - if a guest has visited Japan, we might say “oh, you have visited Japan? A beautiful island country with picturesque mountains and ocean breezes? You may have seen people dressed in beautiful silk clothing called kimonos.”</p> <p>Our tour continues with our group in front of our showcases taking the opportunity to engage with the viewing of the kimonos. I would point out some details - <i>*like this regal peacock</i> with the chrysanthemums which are symbols of the sun. I would talk of the regal overlord who would wear such a kimono for a formal occasion. <i>*In this next kimono</i>, we see a landscape and the story of the Genji. I would note that the decorative portion is all in the lower part of the kimono. Vocabulary like painting, embroidered, landscapes, beauties of nature would be used and explored.</p> <p>Again, if any of these experiences evoke a memory/thought/reaction from our guests, we will go in that direction. For example - <i>*a guest may wonder about the silk</i>. I might respond saying isn't it amazing that this creature -- not even a worm - can make this beautiful thread from its cocoon and it ends up in these lovely fabrics. I might mention one of the stories of how the silk worm got out of Japan.</p> <p>I make eye contact, moving slowly among our guests letting them touch and feel the piece of silk I am holding. The guests experience the texture, color, pattern of the silk prop. As I do this, I continue with some information <i>*such as how much fabric it takes to make a kimono and how kimonos are constructed -- 5 panels</i>. At this point, I would invite a guest to be a model for me. In either a sitting or standing posture, I slowly roll out the pieces and then drape them on the guest as I talk about the sleeve length and dress length that extends to the ankles.</p> <p>By this time, our guests have been in the gallery seeing, feeling the softness of silk and moving with the tour. This is the opportunity to share some more information like the different length of the sleeves for married versus unmarried women. <i>*As you can see here, trying on the kimono</i> can be an artistic experience as we help the donning of this and wrapping our guest in an obi to attain the correct kimono length. The guests can sway with the music, be reminded of ocean breezes or dancing to the rhythm while enjoying the experience.</p> <p>We have incorporated our imaginations on our peaceful visit to Japan and will continue our tour as we explore the tea ceremony with Gretta.</p>	<p>Black/red kimono front & back views</p> <p>Peacock kimono</p> <p>Kimono with decoration on lower section</p> <p>Build slide of silkworms/cocoons</p> <p>Series of photos with Mary & a deconstructed kimono</p> <p>Series of photos with guests in the gallery modeling kimonos.</p>
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<p>Experience, cont.</p>	<p>Part Two: Tea with Gretta Welcome to part 2 of our Japanese experience. Since the tea ceremony is intended to be a multi-sensory experience, it seemed appropriate to explore it with our population. Over the years, our museum has hosted tea ceremonies. We also felt the feeling in the Japanese Gallery would be good for relaxing our visitors and alleviating any anxiety.</p> <p>We host our “event” in the Japanese Gallery. So, after enjoying the kimonos, our guests merely have to turn around to be at their next stop.</p> <p>We set up in front of a wall, which is used to display several small pieces. The rest of the surroundings are simple. The light is low.</p> <p>Would everyone else please stand, turn around and sit down again? This mimics what our guests essentially do.</p> <p>Now, if you would, please close your eyes. Breathe in and breathe out, breathe in...</p> <p>We will be looking at the lovely implements used in the tea ceremony.</p> <p>We, obviously, can't have charcoal or water in the gallery so we make do with a picture and ask the guests to imagine they hear the water burbling.</p> <p>Here are 2 items: the ladle for water and the scoop for tea. I'd hand them out and ask what they felt like? Smooth? Light: Both are made from bamboo. This next item is made from a single piece of bamboo as well. It is a whisk. Delicate, fragile and light? Props: ladle & scoop</p> <p>We can't have a tea ceremony without the tea. Ask our visitors to look and smell... Ask how they they describe it? Is it different from the tea they usually drink? Props: tin of green tea</p> <p>Finally, we need to “make” and “sample” some tea. I'd ask “can you hear the whisk in the tea bowl?” Props: tea bowls & whisk</p> <p>As they take the bowl, they imagine it is warm. They feel the outside (rough or smooth)? Is there a design? How would they describe the bowl? Is the inside the same as the outside? More...</p> <p>While this ends our tea ceremony, we extended the Japanese experience by including haiku and a bit of origami.</p> <p>Haiku is a form which works well in English, too. (In fact, some of you may have second or third-graders learning to write them.) Props: printed haiku</p> <p>Mary and I created a couple for our visitors. We send them home with small scrolls in little origami boxes. They may not remember why they have these. However, their families can use them to mention the visit and talk about it. Props: rolled up scroll & origami box</p>	<p>Atmospheric Tea ceremony then UMMA Apse Tea Ceremony</p> <p>Serenity - gallery & orchid prints on the wall</p> <p>Build slide with tea ceremony implements on a mat.</p> <p>Water pot with ladle</p> <p>Ground green tea, tea bowl & whisk</p> <p>Ground green tea with superimposed image of tea bowl on tray</p> <p>Tea bowls - set of 4 Docents serving tea to our guests</p> <p>Cartoon</p> <p>Sample haiku</p> <p>Visit to the museum - 3 haiku scroll and box</p>
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Re-cap	<p>In sharing this experience, we hoped to demonstrate how we have adapted our work with memory loss audiences to a population whose disease is in a more advanced stage. Our success comes from paying particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- sensory experiences that can unlock deep memory and/or create wonder & delight “in the moment”- collective experiences (like passing a tea bowl) to counteract social isolation. The connecting power of a shared experience- mood, setting and environment to create a sense of calm, peacefulness- sound, music & singing- transitional objects (haiku and origami box) <p>Gretta and I have found much JOY sharing our art museum with visitors from a residential memory loss facility. Our JOY mirrors our visitors and what we bring to the visit is reflected in the interactions of singing, movement and snippets of conversation with our guests. Preparation for the visit is vital and depends on information from the Enrichment Coordinator, presence of family, friends or staff and the docent being tuned in to each guests’ status & needs.</p> <p>Let us now move to our last of the 3 vignettes. We join Jeanie in our portrait gallery.</p>	<p>A joyful guest in the Japanese gallery.</p>