

museums



Delightful DeTOURs

*A DeTOUR event at
Memorial Art Gallery.*

EMILY HESSNEY LYNCH
*Emily Hessney Lynch is a
Rochester-area freelance writer.*

Rochester has an abundance of museums that offer visitors education on a broad range of topics, be it film and photography at the George Eastman Museum, science and the stars at the Rochester Museum and Science Center and Strasenburgh Planetarium, or art history at the Memorial Art Gallery. Many of our museums are beginning to innovate in exciting ways in order to attract diverse audiences to their programming. One wonderful new monthly event that launched in 2016 is the DeTOUR series at the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester (MAG).



DeTOURS take place on the third Thursday of each month at the MAG. These exclusive themed tours of the museum strive to provide an engaging and entertaining experience for visitors. Themes vary from month to month, and each tour offers insight into artists' personal lives, inspiration and methods behind their creativity, and other lesser-known facts about items in the MAG's collection. The tour guides typically include icebreakers, games, activities, and even memes!

Memes in a museum? If you're feeling skeptical, don't. You'll have a blast pairing cards like *"When he ghosted you three months ago and then sends you a*

text asking 'WYD' at 10:39pm" with the perfect painting. You might even learn about paintings by e. e. cummings in the MAG's collection. Or perhaps you'll learn about the cat mummy in the Egypt section. And you'll definitely see a portrait by Kehinde Wiley, the same artist who painted Barack Obama's presidential portrait.

The Memorial Art Gallery has also incorporated partnerships with local organizations to offer another perspective on the art in the collection. Past partnerships include a literary-themed DeTOUR with local nonprofit Writers & Books (complete with a reading of *"The Jabberwocky"*), a musical-themed DeTOUR with WXXI (where musicians played live in



the museum alongside the art), a Rochester-themed DeTOUR with a blog called I Heart ROC (featuring hidden gems of Rochester), and a movie-themed tour with folks from The Little Theatre (including movie trivia and more).

You may be wondering where the idea to offer such an eclectic museum tour came from. Rochesterian and MAG employee Jessica Gasbarre attended a MuseumHack bootcamp in New York City, where she was inspired by their unconventional approach to museum tours. Gasbarre brought back what she learned and made some modifications to better cater to the audience in Rochester. Since then, the MAG

has run 17 different DeTOURs, often partnering with other passionate and creative Rochesterians to keep things fresh. Each DeTOUR experience is made even more special by the fact that Gasbarre offers small prizes and handwritten notes as parting gifts for attendees.

Dying to get on a DeTOUR next time you're in Rochester? Well you're in luck! Make sure you're in town on the third Thursday of the month and drop by the MAG to snag a ticket. Tickets are available online in advance or at the desk the day of the event. You can learn more about DeTOURs on the Memorial Art Gallery's website: mag.rochester.edu.