

High School Teacher Fellows

Teacher Fellows are distinguished educators from the Houston metro area who have demonstrated leadership skills and a passion for innovative teaching and learning methods in their classrooms. Established in 2011, the Teacher Fellows program allows participants to work with Museum staff to craft new approaches to interdisciplinary classroom curriculum, school and teacher resources, and professional development opportunities at the Museum. The teachers are selected through their participation in other MFAH activities or recommended by Museum staff members.

The 2018–21 Teacher Fellows for Interconnections: Bridging Teen Learning Ecosystems at the MFAH will co-develop a new interdisciplinary curriculum resource with high school educators using works of art from the Museum’s modern and contemporary collections, as well as create specialized professional development offerings targeted to high school teachers’ expressed needs. The project will also result in reimagined high school tours, together with informal workshops and other teen programming at the Museum. Interconnections will generate timely research on the intersections of in-school and out-of-school learning.



Sandra Burkhalter

Sandra Burkhalter has been teaching for more than 20 years. Starting with kindergarten, she has taught her way through elementary, middle, and, currently, high school. Specializing in the needs of gifted and talented students, she is now focusing on AP classes in English and capstone. For Burkhalter, teaching is a passion and a calling. She considers it a blessing to be helping so many deserving and promising students discover the joy of learning.



Rebecca Clark

As a second-career teacher, Rebecca Clark enjoys sharing her love of science with her students. She strongly believes that every person can benefit from a great science education. After working more than 20 years in the food industry, she is thrilled to teach food science and physics at Friendswood High School. She looks forward to her participation in this project, as it promises to connect art with curriculum in a way that will be meaningful and relevant to high school students today. She can’t wait to see what the group creates. When she’s not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, traveling, and gardening.



Jenny Lucas

Jenny Lucas is a classroom teacher at The Woodlands High School, where she teaches studio art and art history. She is passionate about art making and arts advocacy, and it is her hope that students will come to see art not simply as a reflection of culture, but as a powerful tool to create it. Having grown up in rural Montana, she appreciates Houston’s scarcity of snow and enjoys exploring the city. Lucas holds a BA in English literature and an MA in teaching from Trinity University in San Antonio; an EdM in administration from Lamar University in Beaumont; and is currently pursuing her EdD in art education from the University of Houston. In addition to teaching, she serves Conroe ISD as a visual art facilitator, and sponsors The Woodlands High School Art Trust and Highlanders for Orphans.



Jessica Pittman

Jessica Pittman currently teaches AP human geography and world geography at Clear Lake High School in Houston, Texas. She is in her 11th year of teaching social studies, with experience in world history and US history in addition to geography. Pittman is a proud graduate of Texas Lutheran University. Her greatest joy in teaching is helping students make connections to better understand the world we live in and how they can contribute to our global society.



Carrie Presley

Carrie Presley graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a BBA in accounting, and worked in the corporate field for 14 years before entering education. Presley's unique teaching style infuses creativity into the traditional mathematics classroom and has led her to be awarded Teacher of the Year in both Oklahoma and Texas.



Virginia Reesman

As a lifetime Houstonian, art lover, and current art teacher, Virginia Reesman is so pleased to be a part of the Teacher Fellows program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. She grew up in the Spring Branch Independent School District and studied photography at the Glassell School of Art for three years in high school. Throughout college, she gained experience working with young children at the Innovative Montessori School, and also as a nanny. She graduated from the University of Houston in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in art and a minor in education. As an artist, she is interested in painting and other 2-D mediums. She has been fortunate to be able to now give back to her Spring Branch community while working at Northbrook High School. As a new teacher, she has become passionate about teaching and inspiring underprivileged and economically disadvantaged students. Her hope is to gain knowledge and experience through MFAH that will further enlighten and energize her students, as well as adolescents in the surrounding area. When she is not teaching art, she and her husband enjoy spending time with their three rescued pit bulls in Houston's abundant outdoor trails and parks.



Erica Smith

Erica Smith teaches English and AP research at Clear Lake High School. She holds a BA in history and a BA in mass communication from Louisiana State University and an MA in history from the University of Houston-Clear Lake. She has participated in fellowships around the world, studying Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and art. In her spare time, she is an avid reader and participates in the Houston theatre scene as a director and actress. She is a native Houstonian and is excited to be able to work with one of her favorite museums.



Maya Imani Watson

Maya Imani Watson is an artist, educator, and proud mother. She has worked in the field of museum administration and arts education for 20 years. Watson is a product of HISD, having graduated from The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) with a concentration in art. She received her BA in fine art from Mount Holyoke College and completed her graduate work at SUNY Binghamton in the MBA/arts administration program. Watson worked for over 13 years at Texas Southern University, serving as the museum registrar, education coordinator, museum graphics specialist, and museum archivist. She was instrumental in connecting art students to work in the university museum, and also taught painting, drawing, and graphics at the John Biggers Art Center. Watson is currently a teaching artist at the historic Booker T. Washington High School and the High School for Engineering Professions. She strongly believes that art has the capacity to tell the story of a people and empower youth and humanity.