This self-guided exploration through the Communities Galleries asks you to think about history through the lens of art in community.

3rd Grade and Up
How has art been used in community?

What does art say about community? What does community say about art? This self-guided exploration through the Communities Galleries asks you to think about history through the lens of art and community. Exploring history from different angles can help us to have a deeper understanding of the larger story.

There are nine stops. Each stop asks you to consider a question(s) or an activity. You (or your group) can do as many stops as you like. You can go in any order you like. You can also participate by taking photos at specific stops. Below is a map of where you can find the locations.

1. Fashions on the Ice: Debi Thomas’ Costume
   - Debi Thomas wore this purple and black costume when she won the U.S. and World Championships in 1986. Thomas would go on to become the first African American to win a medal at the Winter Olympics when she won a bronze medal in Ladies’ Singles Figure Skating in Calgary in 1988.
   - How is fashion used in ice skating? How is fashion used in other sports?
   - Strike a dramatic pose. Imagine that you performing in an ice skating championship. Give your best ice skating pose individually or as a group. Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.
Adornment, Soldiers, and War: WWI Buffalo Arm Patch

The 92nd Infantry Division was organized at Camp Funston in 1917 and served in France during the First World War. The buffalo on the patch symbolizes the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers.

- Why do you think soldiers use art, like patches, on their uniforms during wartime?
- Sometimes life can feel like a battle or a fight. If you had to design a patch to represent yourself, what would it look like?

Painting James Armistead Lafayette

James Armistead Lafayette was a spy for French General Marquis de Lafayette during the Revolutionary War. He represents contributions by African Americans that transcended fighting on the battlefield.

- Why do you think it was important for James A. Lafayette to have his portrait painted?
- Pose as if you were going to have your portrait painted. Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.

The Shearer Summer Theater

The Shearer Summer Theater was an amateur Black theater company, one of two on Martha’s Vineyard. It operated from the 1940s until the early 1980s. They were a popular source of entertainment on the Vineyard.

- Who directed plays in the company? What were some of the plays that were put on by the company?
- What do you think is the importance of community theater? Have you ever participated in or seen a community theater production? Would you like to be in a community play or go see one?

The Milliner (Hat Maker) of Philadelphia

Mae Reeves’s Millinery operated for over 50 years in the bustling retail neighborhoods of Philadelphia. She established herself as a one-of-a-kind ladies’ hat maker who attracted customers from all walks of life.

- How does Mae Reeves and her millinery (a word for a hat maker’s shop) show the power of fashion in community, business, and politics?
- If you could choose one hat on display for yourself, or as a gift for someone, which one would you choose?
Photography in Greenville, Mississippi

Beginning in the late 1940s, photographer H. C. Anderson recorded an insider’s picture of Black life in the city of Greenville, Mississippi, during the era of segregation.

- Point out three images or objects that you find interesting in this section. Why are they interesting to you?
- It is time you (or your group) stepped in Anderson’s studio. Choose two images on display in this section and copy the poses, as best you can. Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.

Designing for the Masses: Boyd’s Bedsteads

Born into slavery in Kentucky, craftsman and entrepreneur Henry Boyd became one of the most successful African American businessmen of the 19th century. His furniture factory in Cincinnati, Ohio, supplied “Boyd’s Bedsteads,” popular for their solid yet easy-to-assemble design.

- What do you think? Is it important for an object to be used (than its look) or is it more important how it looks (than can it be used)?
- Create a photographic advertisement for Boyd’s Bedstands. Imagine you were creating an add to help sell Boyd’s Bedstands. How would you (or your group) pose? Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.

Early Black Magazines

Prior to the launch of Ebony in 1945, other publishers had sought to create a popular Black monthly magazine. They shared a common goal of promoting pride in African American culture and achievement.

- Name three early Black magazines published before Ebony in 1945 that can be found on display.
- Strike a pose. Imagine that you were going to be featured on the front of a magazine. How would you (or your group) pose? Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.

HBCUs International: Japan Pioneer Bowl Program, 1976

Grambling State and Morgan State competed in the first collegiate game played in Asia. Celebrated sport artist Leroy Neiman designed the cover.

- Why do you think this American colligate football game was played in Japan in 1976?
- Strike a winning pose. Imagine that you were going to be featured on the front of program for a football game. Give your best football play pose. Have someone take a picture to capture the moment.