

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM**

Michelle Grohe Named 2010 Massachusetts Museum Art Educator of the Year

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's Director of School and Teacher Programs honored by the Massachusetts Art Education Association (MAEA) for outstanding achievement in museum education



Massachusetts Museum Art Educator of the Year Michelle Grohe leads a Thinking Through Art discussion in front of John Singer Sargent's El Jaleo (1882). Grohe was honored at an award ceremony at MAEA's Fall Conference on Saturday.

BOSTON, NOVEMBER 16, 2009 – Michelle Grohe, *Director of School and Teacher Programs* at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, has been selected as the Massachusetts Art Education Association's 2010 Museum Art Educator of the Year. The award is given annually to an educator who has made significant contributions to the field of art education in Massachusetts, and whose personal and professional accomplishments are deemed outstanding by MAEA. The award was presented at an Awards Luncheon at the MAEA Fall Conference on Saturday, November 14, 2009, at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.

"Michelle is a gifted educator and artist," says **Peggy Burchenal**, *Esther Stiles Eastman Curator of Education and Public Programs* at the Gardner Museum. "During her time at the Gardner she has developed a national reputation for her innovative work with schools, especially at the middle and high school level. Her model for the museum's school programs, based on shared goals for teaching and learning, suggests how art museums might play a central role in creating 21st century schools. I am delighted that MAEA has decided to recognize her thoughtful and passionate pursuit of excellence."

Grohe has worked with schools and teachers as an art museum educator for the past eight years. At the Gardner Museum, she oversees the *School Partnership Program*, in which she fosters close working relationships with local students and teachers. From 2005-2007, she managed the Gardner's *Thinking Through Art* research grant, a three-year federally-funded study of the relationship between learning to looking at art and the development of critical thinking skills in urban elementary students. The study found that using multiple visits and Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) resulted in statistically significant increases in the development and use of five of seven critical thinking skills used by students when looking at and talking about art.

More recently, Grohe has been applying the lessons learned from the *Thinking Through Art* project towards transforming teacher programs, curriculum, and docent training, focusing particularly on new programs for middle and high schools. Michelle has co-authored articles about changes to the curriculum and structure of the Gardner's *School Partnership Program*, including "Reimagining School Programs" in the winter 2009 volume of *Visual Arts Research*.

Prior to joining the Gardner in 2005, Grohe worked at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey and the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Massachusetts. She received her Bachelors degree in Studio Art from Millikin University and Masters in Art Education from the Rhode Island School of Design.

INNOVATION IN ARTS EDUCATION | *School Partnerships* • *Visual Thinking Strategies* • *Thinking Through Art*
Education at the Gardner Museum is directed by nationally recognized museum educator and Gardner Museum *Curator of Education* Margaret Burchenal, named "National Museum Educator of the Year" in 2002 by the National Art Education Association (NAEA). The museum's award-winning *School Partnership Program* pairs Gardner Museum educators with students and teachers at neighboring Boston city schools to enrich classroom learning and the development of critical thinking skills through the arts. Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS; www.visualthinkingstrategies.org) is central to the museum's philosophy in arts education. Embraced by museums and art educators throughout the country, particularly in recent years, VTS continues to gain recognition nationwide for its value in empowering young people and adults to look and think about art in new ways.

In 2007, the Gardner Museum completed a three-year federally-funded *Thinking Through Art* study which found that multiple museum visits and the use of Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) resulted in a statistically significant increase in the development and use of five of seven critical thinking skills used by students when looking at and talking about art. The complete *Thinking Through Art* Research Report, along with video clips of kids engaged in VTS, an online tool kit and sample lesson plans, and additional resources, is available online via: gardnermuseum.org/education/gardner.html.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617 566 1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Tue.-Sun., 11 am-5 pm • \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; \$2 discount w/ same day Museums of Fine Arts admission; FREE for members, children under 18, all named Isabella, and all on their birthday • Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo surrounding an interior courtyard garden, the Gardner Museum houses a collection of fine art spanning 30 centuries, including masterworks by artists including Titian, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and Sargent, personally arranged by Isabella Stewart Gardner to fire the imagination of all who visit. Special contemporary and scholarly exhibitions, classical and contemporary classical concerts, evening and family events, dramatic seasonal courtyard garden displays, and nationally recognized artist-in-residence and museum education programs continue to enrich the collection and engage visitors in an intimate encounter with art.

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