

Rx/Museum: Art and Reflection in Medicine

<https://rxmuseum.org>

Launched in July of 2020, the Rx/Museum initiative is a free, open-access, web-based medical humanities resource for clinicians, educators and trainees. Developed by a consortium of educators and physicians at Penn Medicine, the University of Pennsylvania, and leading museums and arts institutions across Philadelphia, Rx/Museum features a curated series of 52 artworks and essayistic reflections that embody the interplay between museums and medicine.

Taking departure from conventional health humanities pedagogical methods, Rx/Museum diverges in course architecture and learner autonomy. The Rx/Museum framework is an informal, durational 52-week curriculum intended to foster dialogue, reflection and connectivity within the traditional medical paradigm. Subscribers will receive an artwork in their inbox every Monday accompanied by insightful commentary about medicine as a humanistic practice. Each reflection examines traditionally challenging themes for clinicians -- managing uncertainty, nuance, ambiguity and preconceived notions of death, illness, and suffering. Alternatively, users may visit the website to select an artwork and its accompanying reflections to be used for one-time discussion on a theme.

Through an interdisciplinary lens of clinical medicine, medical anthropology, art theory and social justice, Rx/Museum foregrounds its inquiry at the intersection of museums and medicine, bridging civic and health care landscapes. We intentionally present our offerings in an accessible manner and welcome engagement from publics within and outside of the health care sector. While the Rx/Museum collection is unique to Philadelphia, our virtual platform facilitates an expanding subscriber cross section of health professionals, students, and scholars from academic and arts institutions across the country and globe.

As our curriculum evolves, subscribers will have the opportunity to explore artworks by theme via customized virtual tours. Interwoven multimedia adjuncts including embedded podcasts and video clips further enhance individual experience and user interaction. We encourage subscribers to incorporate our content into independent study models and small group discussions in clinical and classroom settings. The Rx/Museum initiative is a reproducible framework for the integration of thoughtful visual arts engagement into best practices for humanistic and socially responsible professionalism, faculty development and medical education programming.



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Resources:

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Zhang, Christiana M et al. "[Bedside Education in the Art of Medicine \(BEAM\): an Arts and Humanities Web-Based Clinical Teaching Resource](#)." Academic Psychiatry. 30 Jun. 2020, doi:10.1007/s40596-020-01270-5