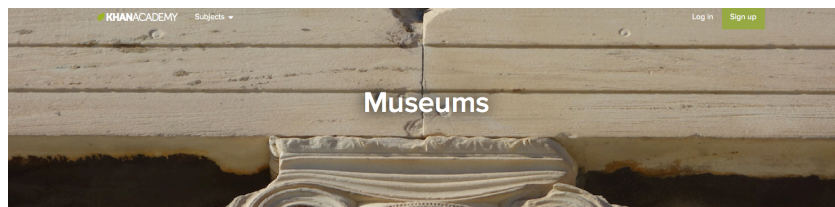


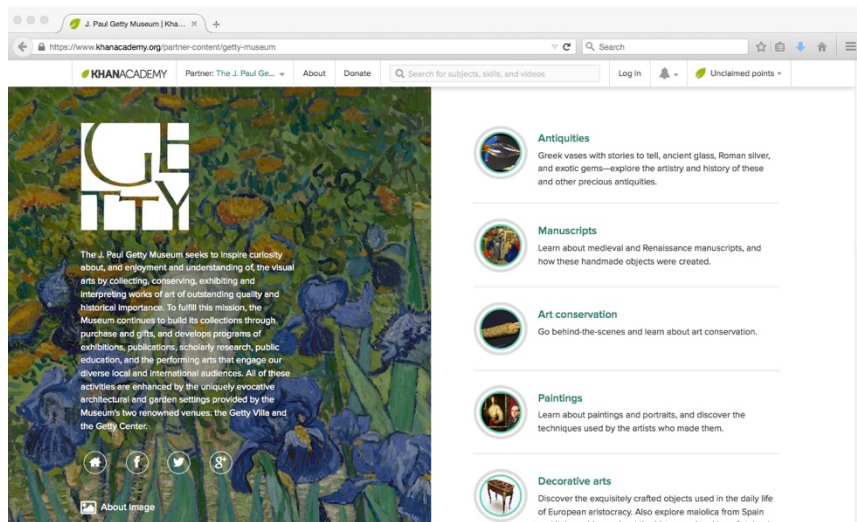
Khan Academy Partner Content - Museums

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Khan Academy Partner Content – Museums is a recent extension of the Khan Academy's popular online open courses. Originally a hub for K-12 math tutorials, the Khan

Academy (KA) later expanded into a number of new subjects, including art history when, in 2011, Khan acquired Smarthistory, a multimedia web-book founded by art historians Beth Harris and Steven Zucker. Partner Content – Museums (PCM) expands Smarthistory, an art history resource featuring videos and articles, by providing online educational content developed by the Asian Art Museum, the British Museum, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Tate as well as American Museum of Natural History, the California Academy of Sciences, and Exploratorium. It must be stressed that the museum content was not produced specifically for the PCM. Rather, the PCM assembled existing video and museum education materials, as developed by their parent institutions, for instruction through the Khan platform. A unit on abstract expressionism from MoMA, for example, contains videos originally produced for the museum's AB EX NY iPad app.

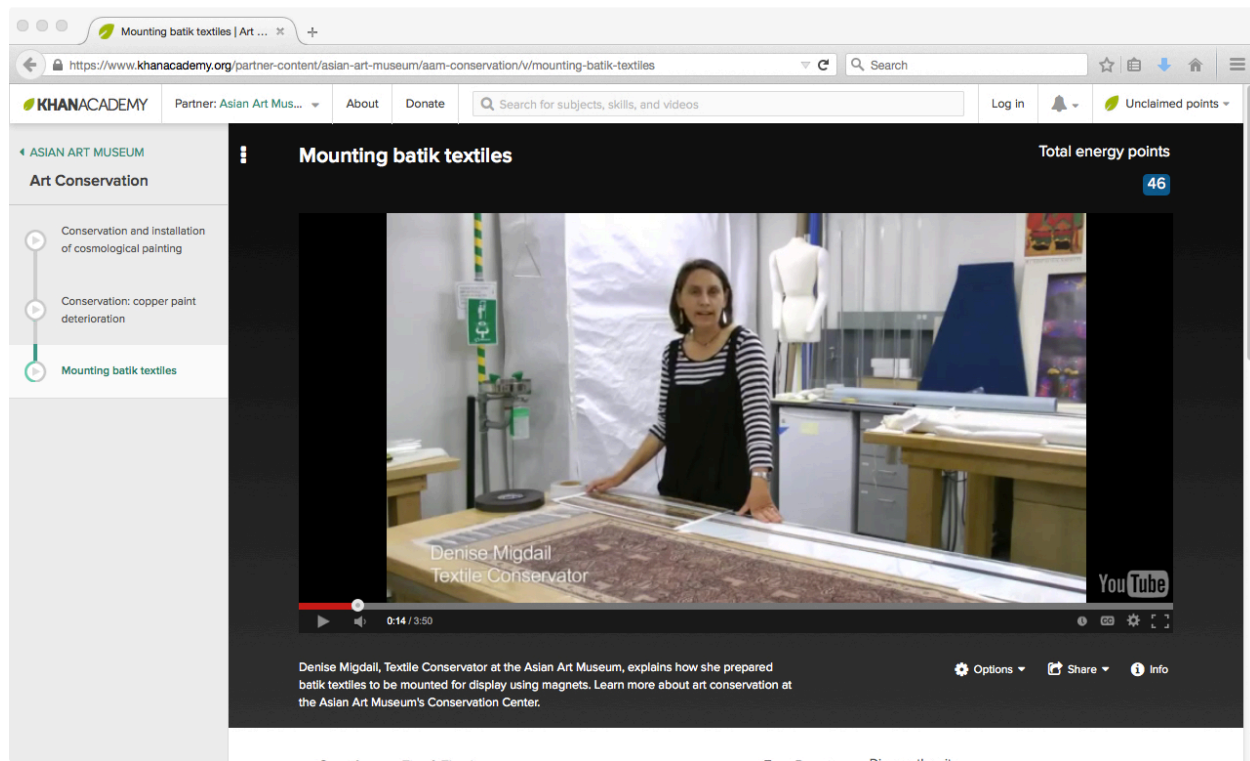


Because the content is repurposed, PCM's quality and tone vary greatly from topic to topic. The Getty's stand-alone tutorials are most useful, with each unit clearly organized into sequential lessons that feature articles, quizzes, and video tutorials. The British Museum content features scholarly articles and videos that are grouped by six global regions, each

of which introduces a selection of museum objects and a list of suggested readings. Either

program would aptly enhance or support any standard undergraduate art history survey. In contrast, the Met's educational videos lack significant depth and would not suffice as a viable academic resource; the videos are three-to-five minute object examinations in which a curator discusses how the object was made, its provenance, and then offers some social context for the object. These videos might be useful as enrichment tools for advanced arts students or as reference materials for curatorial, arts education, or museum studies students. But their content may be difficult to unpack for the every-day visitor. Two common themes throughout the PCM are art production and art conservation. Artists are featured in their studios, discussing their projects, as are museum conservators in their labs, all of which offers a unique insight into the museum and studio as workplaces. This feature is a real strength of the PCM as it brings one behind the scenes of art and museum professions.

In terms of functionality, the interface is awkward and lacks cohesion given that the content and its formatting originates from different sources. Each museum's entry point features a brief note about the mission of the museum along with categories of lessons one can engage with; in the case of the Tate, one may try "Conflict and Contradiction in Art" or "Meet the Artist: JMW Turner" among the Tate's eight modules or lessons. The site search will search for a term across the PCM as well as the Smarthistory content (and in fact, the Smarthistory content overwhelms the search results); while the information retrieved may be quite useful, the user may have difficulty navigating back to the PCM content he or she started with.



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A login is not required to take the courses but those who register earn "energy points" and badges for participation. Although this mode of whimsical acknowledgement is popular with any number of online learning programs, it seems ill-suited for PCM learners. Classroom instructors may enroll an entire class and may monitor student progress through the Khan platform. But the PCM is far from the established course management systems such as Blackboard or Canvas. A Khan Academy iPad app includes PCM videos but the experience is hampered by reduced functionality.

While Khan Academy Partner Content – Museums cannot offer a cohesive pedagogy to function as a proper, academic course, it serves as a sound supplement to developed curricula by providing interesting access to and interaction with museum collections and those that manage or create them. Most significantly, Partner Content – Museums reveals behind-the-scenes perspectives of the art studio, the archive, and the museum as a workplace, which may help students envision how they might put their arts education to future use.