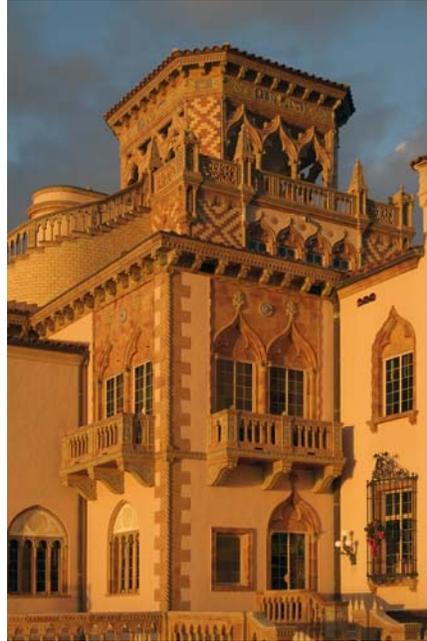


The John and Mable
RINGLING
Museum of Art

Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Cà d'Zan Belvedere at Sunset



East Façade



John Ringling's Bedroom



Court





Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Introduction

The Cà d'Zan Teaching Poster is designed as a resource for classroom teachers to prepare students for a visit to The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art. Use the poster in conjunction with these Classroom Connections to help students increase their understanding. Reinforce the idea that artists have created works of art and architecture for a variety of reasons throughout history.

Students will

- ...Analyze the structure and contents of Cà d'Zan
- ...Recognize architecture as an art form
- ...Define architectural terms
- ...Increase awareness about their home state, Florida
- ...Increase awareness about Florida's unique environment

About the Art

Cà d'Zan is a masterpiece of art and architecture, proudly situated on Florida's Gulf Coast, like a jewel in a crown. Just like any other work of art, a building and its contents can be studied to gain a greater understanding of the artist, the subject, and the time in which it was created. We can learn so much about the people who created this masterpiece simply by looking at the craftsmanship and care that went into the structure. We can also learn about the people who lived inside, their lifestyle, and their passions.

John and Mable Ringling traveled the world in search of acts for their famous Circus. As they visited exotic places, they saw many building styles and materials. Their favorite place to visit was Italy, and they became inspired by the city of Venice – there are no streets in Venice, instead, there are canals that residents travel on by boat or gondola. When given the opportunity, the Ringlings chose to build their winter residence right on the water's edge, and dreamed of a building that was inspired by the Doges Palace and the Hotel Danieli in Venice. Today, we know this building as Cà d'Zan, which translates to "House of John" in the Venetian dialect.

About the Artists

Dwight James Baum, American Architect, 1889-1939

Dwight James Baum was a famous New York architect from the early 20th century. He was well-known in his time for designing large country homes and estates. He was hired by John and Mable Ringling in 1924 to build their winter home in Sarasota, *Cà d'Zan*. Baum was influenced by the eclectic tastes of the Ringlings and their interest in Venetian architecture. He created a grand and whimsical masterpiece of architectural history on Sarasota Bay.

Willy Pogany, Hungarian-born American Illustrator, 1882-1955

Willy came to America in 1915, but before that, lived in other countries – among them Paris, France (two years) and London, England (ten years). Along the way he established himself as a premier illustrator of books (primarily children's stories and fairy tales) including *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Tannhauser*, *Parsifal*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Mother Goose*. Pogany also worked as a set designer for Florenz Ziegfeld's world famous *Ziegfeld Follies* in New York City,



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

and very likely met the Ringlings there. His beautiful ceiling murals in Cà d'Zan include the Game Room on the third floor, depicting John and Mable and their pets at a Venetian Carnivale, and the masterfully created Ballroom ceiling, *Dancers of the Nations*.



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Looking and Discussing

Description: What do you see?

Spend a silent moment looking at the images on the poster. Take 30-60 seconds of silence, and have students look at all the details and elements, colors, and shapes.

As the following questions:

1. What shapes do you see?
2. What colors are used?
3. What materials are things made of?
4. What textures do you see?
5. What tools did they use to create these things?

Analysis: How is it organized?

Looking at the work, think about where things are placed in the space.

Ask the following questions:

1. Is this building made of geometric or organic shapes?
2. Are things symmetrical or asymmetrical?
3. What do you notice first?
4. How large do you imagine the structure to be?
5. Are some elements closer to you than others? Which ones?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

Thinking about how the project began is a good way to learn what the patrons, John and Mable Ringling, had in mind when they commissioned this work of architecture.

Ask the following questions:

1. What is the main purpose of this building?
2. What was the inspiration for the style of the building?
3. Where would the Ringlings have seen buildings in this style before?
4. How could the Ringling express their ideas to the designers and artists?
5. How would their ideas change if this house were being built today?

Judgment: What do you think?

Many people have admired Cà d'Zan over the years. It is considered a masterpiece of design, construction and beauty. Do you agree?

Ask the following questions:

1. Do you like it? Why or why not?
2. What would you change?
3. What would you keep the same?
4. If you were in charge, would you choose to build this close to the water?
5. Based on their home, what kind of people do you think the Ringlings were?



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Timeline

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|------|--|
| 1905 | John and Mable Ringling marry on December 29 in New Jersey |
| 1909 | The Ringlings first visit Sarasota, Florida |
| 1911 | The Ringlings purchase Palms Elysian, a house situated on 20 acres of land – now known as the Ringling Estate |
| 1924 | Dwight James Baum is chosen as architect to design the future residence, Cà d'Zan, and construction begins |
| 1925 | Construction of the structure is complete in October |
| 1926 | Mable completes interior decorating and decorative finishes |
| 1926 | John and Mable spend their first winter holiday season at Cà d'Zan |
| 1929 | Mable Ringling dies on June 8, at age 54 |
| 1930 | The Museum of Art opens to the public |
| 1936 | John Ringling dies on December 2, at age 70, in his New York home, leaving the Sarasota property and collections to the State of Florida |
| 1946 | Public opening of Cà d'Zan on December 15 hosts over 10,000 visitors |
| 1956 | Repairs are done to Cà d'Zan interior |
| 1972 | Air conditioning is added to the home |
| 1982 | Cà d'Zan is added to the National Register of Historic Places and restoration efforts are planned |
| 1996 | Cà d'Zan serves as the backdrop for the film, <i>Great Expectations</i> , starring Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Anne Bancroft |
| 1996 | Restoration begins |
| 2002 | Newly restored Cà d'Zan reopens on April 28 |



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Suggested Class Activities

Before your Visit

Cinquain Writing

While looking at Cà d'Zan, write a poem that expresses your thoughts. Maybe describe how you would have felt as a guest, staying at this incredible home. It was like a resort, with tennis courts, The *Zalophus* yacht for boating, a private beach, and a swimming pool.

A cinquain poem has five lines, and is organized very simply:

Line One: The subject (a noun)

Line Two: Two descriptive words (adjectives)

Line Three: Three gerunds (-ing words) that describe your thoughts

Line Four: A complete sentence that describes your feelings

Line Five: Another noun that relates to line one (a synonym)

Example:

Terracotta
Strong, steady
Holding, sparkling, supporting
The heart of Cà d'Zan's mighty walls
Amber bricks

Architectural Collage

Get yourself in the right frame of mind for an architectural experience. Using magazines, find pictures of different architectural elements like doors, windows, and all the small details that are added to many homes and corporate businesses. Cut them out and assemble together on a large sheet of paper, choosing a theme – focus on a particular color, material, texture or climate.

During your Visit

Architectural Scavenger Hunt

1. Find the following architectural elements on Cà d'Zan while standing outside, either on the terrace or near the front entrance.

Arch: The curved head of an opening, such as a door or window.

Trefoil Arch: An arch containing a trefoil, or three-part curved piece.

Ogee Arch: An arch containing an ogee, or double curve with the shape of an elongated S.

Column: A supporting pillar consisting of a base, a cylindrical shaft, and a capital.

Capital: The distinctively treated upper end of a column.

Cable Moulding: A decorative strip used for finishing an end or edge, which looks like a twisted cable.

Cresting: A decorative element along the roofline, usually designed to give an interesting skyline.

Quoins: Exterior keystones, normally forming an angle.

Rondel: A circular object.



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

2. Draw and label the elements as you find them, or take photographs.
3. Questions to ask your group:
 - Does it look the same in real life as it does in the poster?
 - How many people do you think helped build this home?
 - How has the surrounding area changed since the 1920's?
 - Who should live here now?

After Your Visit

Designer 101

Try your hand at designing a floor plan for Mable Ringling. Include furnishings and fabrics you saw at Cà d'Zan, like armchairs and pianos, screens and large floor lamps. See how you can advance Mable's showplace with modern conveniences like Internet access and motion sensor alarm systems.

Using some of the architectural details you identified on your visit, attempt drawing the Mansion in perspective. Sketch an elevation, or front view drawing, of Cà d'Zan. Use watercolors and inks to make your elevation similar to those that were created by the architect in the 1920's.

My Cà d'Zan

Using Legos, blocks, or other simple shapes, try building a scale model of Cà d'Zan. Try building sections of the home first – columns, windows, or embellishments – and then put them together. Divide the class into groups, and have them each design a grand home of their own using two-dimensional or three-dimensional materials.



Cà d'Zan: House of John Teaching Poster

Glossary

1. Architecture: The art and science of building structures; the essence of the style of a building.
2. Asymmetrical: Not evenly balanced.
3. Commission: Term for the hiring of an artist or architect – to commission someone is to ask him or her to create something new and unique.
4. Craftsmanship: Level of skill in a chosen trade or profession.
5. Geometric Shapes: Shapes with straight edges. These shapes are usually made by man, or with the assistance of machines.
6. Gondola: A small, canoe-shaped boat, best used in small or shallow canals. Popular in Venice, they are operated by a gondolier, who pushes the boat using a long pole.
7. Organic Shapes: Shapes with no straight edges, but instead, curved and flowing edges. These shapes are often found in nature.
8. Patron: The person or group that hires an artist or architect to create a new work.
9. Symmetrical: Evenly balanced on both sides.

Suggested Reading

- De Groft, Aaron H. and David C. Weeks. *Cà d'Zan: Inside the Ringling Mansion*. Sarasota, FL: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2004
- Hack-Lof, Françoise, Teresa A. Koncick and Linda R. McKee. *Cà d'Zan: the Ringling Winter Residence*. 2003.
- Scalera, Michelle A. *Cà d'Zan: The Restoration of the Ringling Mansion*. Sarasota, FL: The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2006
- Weeks, David C. *Ringling: The Florida Years, 1911 – 1936*. Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, 1993.

Sunshine State Standards

Visual Arts

VA.C.1.3.1 - The student understands the visual arts in relation to history and culture

VA.C.1.3.2. - The student understands the role of the artist and the function of art in different periods of time and in different cultures.

VA.E.1.3.1 - The student makes connections between the visual arts, other disciplines, and the real world.

Language Arts

LA.3.4.1 - The student develops and demonstrates creative writing.

LA.3.4.1.1 - The student will write narratives based on real or imagined events or observations that include characters, setting, plot, sensory details, and a logical sequence of events

Social Studies

SS.A.1.1.1 - The student compares everyday life in different places and times and understands that people, places, and things change over time.

SS.A.6.2.3 - The student knows the significant individuals, events, and social, political, and economic characteristics of different periods in Florida's history.