

ACC STL Members Learn About the Diversity of Cultures of World Faiths at Saint Louis Art Museum

On Friday, July 21, members of the Association of Corporate Counsel St. Louis (ACC STL) had a unique learning experience at the Saint Louis Art Museum. They participated in the “Artful Observation of the Cultures of World Faiths,” a program that uses Artful Observation techniques to enhance bias and observational awareness and facilitate a conversation about the diversity of cultures of world faiths using art as conversation tools.

The facilitator, Dr. Cathleen Fleck, Ph.D., Saint Louis University, Chair of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts and Associate Professor of Art History, used Artful Observation techniques and the rich collection of artworks at the Saint Louis Art Museum to guide conversations about the Christian, Buddhist, Islamic, and African Yoruba cultures.

Artful Observation is a project spearheaded by the Saint Louis University (SLU) Art History Program to establish curricular and research programs based on evidence-based methods about utilizing the visual arts to help students and professionals develop their awareness of issues related to attentiveness, empathy, diversity, equity, and inclusion, individual and collective awareness, and empathetic capabilities.

“Our discussions centered around observing several key artworks at the museum, allowing us to delve not only into the details of the pieces but also into the history of art in relation to religious faiths. Each specific religious culture discussed—including European Catholic Christian, Chinese Buddhist, Middle Eastern Islamic, and African Yoruba cultures—has made choices about how to display the divine,” stated Dr. Fleck.

“Attendees made connections across the faith traditions, such as how colors could have meaning, or gesture could be symbolic. By listening and engaging with one another, they saw differences but also reinforced how their own perspectives and experiences related to others as well,” added Dr. Fleck.

This is the second Artful Observation program that ACC STL members have participated in this year where Dr. Fleck served as the facilitator. The first program was held in March at the Saint Louis Art Museum where ACC STL members had the opportunity to learn about diversity, equity, and inclusion in a unique way, using art as a tool to engage and educate. The program was well-received by the members, and it served as an example of how organizations can incorporate DEI programming into their events and professional development programs.

“We are so very excited to have been able to present yet another fantastic event with Dr. Fleck, showcasing the St. Louis Art Museum and diversity, and we look forward to similar opportunities in the future. This particular program was especially insightful as it allowed attendees to not only learn about religious differences, but also afforded us the opportunity to reflect on the similarities of varying religions. ACC’s diversity committees strive to find interesting ways to present continuing legal education programming to our members, and this is just one of many events that we have throughout the year. All

in-house attorneys are welcome to join the ACC,” said Lisa Savoy, Legal Counsel, Experian, and 2023 ACC STL Social Justice Coalition Chairperson.