

**Ability Guidebooks
presents
Explore Washington, D.C.!**



I Am Going To The Renwick Gallery!
A Step-by-Step Guide On How To Visit This Smithsonian Museum
by
Brett Bigham

The Renwick Gallery is a famous museum in Washington, D.C. that is across the street from the White House.



People come from all over the world and visit this interesting museum. Let's go inside!

These ladies walked up the stairs and are going inside.



They know that once they go inside they will have to use their inside voices. The Renwick Gallery has rules to follow. I'll bet these ladies follow ALL the rules!

Uh oh! This woman just realized she can't take her coffee into the museum. She is going to finish it outside.



Since this woman is smart AND cool, she put her empty cup into the garbage can!

Twice a year, the Renwick changes the art that is on display. When you visit the museum some of this art will have been changed with new art. Each room is different!



Tara Donovan made this art out of piles of index cards! You can get close to the art, but don't touch it!

Gabriel Dawe made a rainbow in her room.



**There is a guard to make sure you don't touch the art.
This man got his picture next to the rainbow but he didn't
touch it!**

Patrick Dougherty used willow branches to create an entire room of crazy shapes. Some of the shapes are small rooms and you can go inside.



These people are going inside some of the shapes. This is a fun place to take a picture. You can go inside but don't climb on the shapes!

Next door there is a movie to watch so you can see the artist make the shapes you just walked through.



This is a terrific place to sit on the floor or on a bench and rest for a minute. Sometimes the museum is very crowded, so this room is a good place to get away from all the people.

Let's go up the stairs to the second floor. Look up at the special chandelier!



Some people take the elevator. These ladies decided to walk up the stairs.

There are bathrooms to the left of the stairs.



If you are thirsty, this is a good spot to get a drink! There is another bathroom on the first floor.

At the top of the stairs is a gigantic room called the Betty Rubenstein Grand Salon.



The art in this room changes. These people got to see colorful nets with changing colors hanging from the ceiling. I wonder what you will see in this room?

When you leave the Grand Salon there are more rooms with art. This room has a giant tree inside of it.



Let's go in this room! The tree was made by artist John Grade. I wonder if the tree will be there when you visit!

The crowds at the Renwick Gallery got to be too much for these ladies. They decided to take a break in one of the seating areas. Sometimes, if you are feeling tense, it is good to sit down, take a few deep breaths and relax.



What do you do when you feel stressed out?

**This dad took his daughter to the Renwick. Some people come with teachers and some come with friends.
Remember to stay with your group!**



Don't forget to take some pictures!

Are you afraid of bugs? Oh no! This room is full of bugs!!



**Don't
worry, they
are fake
bugs!**

When you leave, you will probably walk through the gift store. Be careful! There are fragile things here.



I hope you enjoy your visit to the Renwick Gallery! Please remember the most important rule:

**Please do not
touch the artwork.**



**When you leave the Renwick, turn left
and you are at the White House!**

Things to know about the Renwick Gallery:

Guards will forcefully tell people not to touch the art. If a raised voice is a trigger, headphones might be a good option for the Renwick. I was standing near a guard when someone at the other end of the room got too close to the art. That loud, "DON'T TOUCH THE ART!" totally startled me. This happened repeatedly so some coaching to be ready for those loud voices might be in order.

The Renwick Gallery is a treasure. Originally Washington's first art museum, it was slated for destruction in 1963 but First Lady Jaqueline Kennedy lead an effort to save the building. It now houses American crafts and decorative arts as part of the Smithsonian collection.

The exhibitions change in each room every six months or so. The pictures in this book were from the Wonder exhibition in February of 2016. Because the art changes so often, this book is meant to give an idea of how the museum works. Geography (I am in Oregon) will keep me from updating the book frequently enough to stay current.

The Renwick is set up to encourage interaction with the art without actually touching it. In the Grand Salon, for instance, there were people laying on the floor watching the colors shift across the ceiling. I did not picture this since the next exhibition may not welcome laying on the rug. Keep these things in mind, but the Renwick has a more laid-back feeling than many museums.

The Renwick is not a large space and can be visited quickly, segmented by floors or, since it is free, you could enter, visit the first room and leave. It is very adaptable for a short, easy visit or a longer visit seeing both floors.

Ability Guidebooks are step-by-step instructions on how to access community destinations. For many people with autism new situations can cause stress and discomfort. Ability Guidebooks help to prepare people for new experiences.

This book will also help teachers prepare their students on how to visit the Renwick for field trips.

Brett Bigham is the 2014 Oregon State Teacher of the Year and recipient of the NEA National Award for Teaching Excellence. Bigham is the first Special Education teacher from Oregon to win these awards.

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Care to Translate?

It is my hope to create access for all people with disabilities, not just English speakers. If you can translate this book or any other Ability Guidebook into another language, I would love to hear from you!

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