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News Release

For Immediate Release

Springfield Art Museum to debut "Art Hunters" game this summer

Looking for something fun to do this summer? How about chasing runaway art throughout the city of Springfield? That's the experience that the Springfield Art Museum is offering with its alternate reality game "Art Hunters," which will run from June 6 to July 17

Alternate reality games — called ARGs for short — are a little like video games set in the real world, explains game designer Dakota Russell.

"Players will be following along with our characters through online videos," he explains, "but they'll also be advancing the story by solving puzzles in the real world, at the Art Museum and other Springfield locations."

The game's protagonists, two hard-as-nails "art retrieval specialists," are the subjects of a fictional reality series that will be shown each week on the game's Web site. These Art Hunters specialize in returning art that has come to life and escaped museum collections. As it turns out, they'll need a lot of help stopping a series of breakouts from the Springfield Art Museum. Halfway through each episode, the Art Hunters will call on players in the real world to assist them in their quest.

Real world challenges, says Russell, will be exciting and varied.

"We're going to have something for everyone," Russell says. "We're making a game that's fun not only for seasoned gamers, but for families who want to do something together over the summer break."

Players will also be visiting a new locale around the city each week, in pursuit of the missing art.

Russell isn't telling where they'll be going, though.

"That's for the players to find out," he says.

Springfield Art Museum director Nick Nelson says the point of the game is to encourage people to engage with art on a personal level.

"It's always been part of our mission to bring art to life for our visitors," he jokes. "We're just doing it literally this time."

In all seriousness, though, Nelson says that the game will prompt players to think more deeply about artwork in the museum's collection.

“The way the game has been designed, it’s difficult for players to complete a mission without learning a little bit about not only who created each piece of art, but why they were moved to create it,” he says.

The “Art Hunters” game will begin June 6. In the meantime, those wanting to play along can sign up at the game’s website, www.ArtHuntersOnline.com.

For questions about the game, please contact the Springfield Art Museum at 417-837-5700 or Dakota Russell at dakotawrussell@gmail.com.

The Springfield Art Museum is free of charge and is accessible to all visitors. Visit springfieldmo.gov/art for hours of operation and other information.