Over the past year, many of us have spent more time looking at screens than we ever have before. Technology makes staying safer at home easier by connecting us with others over video calls, making information to learn new skills accessible, and entertaining us through movies, shows, and games. However, even while we stay safer apart, it is important that we continue to create connections away from screens. For example, when we take the time to look closely at art—an object that someone else took the time to create—we might naturally think about different questions: How did they make this? How does it make me feel? Why did they make this artwork? Closely looking helps us connect back to our surroundings, ourselves, and others.

Use the close-looking activity on the back of this card to try different exercises in the galleries at the Arts Center or Art Preserve, at your home, or in your community.

The artists in Shallow Act of Seeing all work with wood to create nonutilitarian objects. Where do you normally see objects made out of wood and what are they used for?

Dan Gunn uses lacquered plywood to create works that appear to be soft, flexible fabric from a distance.

Bayne Peterson assembles concentric circles and ovals of plywood in unusual color combinations to create curvy sculptures.

Rachel Beach started creating her tall sculptures by sketching four different types of vessels and then extending lines out from those drawings to complete her designs.

Words to Know

Nonutilitarian: An object that does not have a specific function. Sometimes also described as decorative.

Lacquered: Coated with a protective layer. Sometimes the material used also makes the object shiny or adds a color of stain to the object.

Plywood: A wooden board created by gluing two or more layers together with the direction of the grain alternating between each layer.

Concentric: Shapes of different sizes, often circles, that share the same center. When you touch water, the ripples create concentric circles.
Follow the steps below to practice mindful close looking.

**Step 1**
Turn off or put away any electronic devices.

**Step 2**
Choose an object to observe. It could be an artwork, a photograph, something in nature—anything inanimate that interests you.

**Step 3**
Stand in front of the object. Can you answer the following?
- What is it made out of?
- How many pieces is it made from?
- How old is it?
- What colors do you see?

**Step 4**
Compare yourself to the object.
- How much larger or smaller are you than the object?
- Does it remind you of a specific memory or place that you have been?
- What way do your eyes move when you look at the object? Are you focusing on one area or looking at the entire object?

**Step 5**
Imagine
- What do you think the object smells like? Tastes like? Feels like?

Try this activity again with another object or create your own mindful looking activity. What ideas do you have for other questions to ask about an object or ways that you can look closely?

---

John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Visit your local library or search online to learn more about these historical figures and moments in history.