



K-12 Curriculum



Art Preserve
**John Michael
Kohler Arts Center**

About

Use this guide as a starting point and reference for incorporating Art Preserve artists into your classroom. To find supplemental videos, slideshow presentations, handouts, and artist information, visit jmkac.org and artpreserve.org.

Contact our education team at education@jmkac.org to discuss your specific classroom goals and needs. We can help tailor this content for your students and curriculum or collaborate with you on a larger project.

And when you're ready to bring your students, in-person and virtual field trips to the Art Preserve and the John Michael Kohler Arts Center are wonderful opportunities to connect your curriculum to the genres of artist-built environments and contemporary art. Choose from whole- and half-day in-person experiences for K-12 students. A menu of interactive, docent-led tours, and choice-based, hands-on workshops are available.

Contact us at educationtours@jmkac.org or call the Arts Center at (920) 458-6144 to plan an unforgettable visit or to discuss the possibilities for virtual visits.

On the cover

Emery Blagdon's "The Healing Machine" at the Art Preserve.



John Michael Kohler Arts Center

Founded in 1967, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center is dedicated to making innovative arts programming accessible to a broad audience that ranges from artists to academics to families. Central to its mission is promoting understanding and appreciation of the work of self-taught and contemporary artists through original exhibitions, commissioned works of art, performing arts programs, community arts initiatives, and publications.

The Arts Center's collections focus primarily on works by art-environment builders, self-taught and folk artists, and works created in the Arts/Industry residency program. At its downtown Sheboygan location, the Arts Center offers seven exhibition galleries, two performance spaces, classrooms, a preschool, a public hands-on studio, café, and gift shop.

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center is located at 608 New York Ave., Sheboygan, WI. For more information, visit [**jmkac.org**](http://jmkac.org). Admission is always free. JMKAC is supported by corporate and foundation donors, government grants, and its many members. The Arts Center is not an entity of Kohler Co. or its subsidiaries.

John Michael Kohler Arts Center entrance.



Art Preserve

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center's Art Preserve is the world's first museum to focus entirely on work from art environments. It embodies the Arts Center's conviction that significant, original, and compelling works of art are created everywhere, by people from a broad spectrum of life experiences.

The Art Preserve is a working space designed to house the Arts Center's world-renowned collection of 25,000 individual works of art by more than 30 different creators of art environments. It is a platform for ongoing explorations and investigations into these environments, their makers, and the Arts Center's role as their institutional steward.

Visitors experience a variety of encounters with methods of displaying and exhibiting artwork. Works in the collection are organized by artist, and specially designed displays evoke their original location. Some collections are arrayed on densely packed shelves or racks, while others have been installed as completely immersive environments.

The Art Preserve is located at 3636 Lower Falls Road, Sheboygan, WI. For more information, visit artpreserve.org. Admission is always free.



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1 Nek Chand, (from left) untitled, n.d.; concrete, ceramic shards, and metal; 70 x 24 x 26 in., untitled, c. 1965–c. 1975; concrete, ceramic, slag, and metal; 74 1/2 x 28 x 20 in., untitled, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, ceramic shards, slag, and metal; 75 1/2 x 22 5/8 x 18 7/8 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Installation view of works by Eugene Von Bruenchenhein at the Art Preserve, 2021. Photo: Rich Maciejewski.

3 Installation view of works by Gregory Van Maanen at the Art Preserve, 2021.

4 Installation view of works by Nick Engelbert at the Art Preserve, 2021. Foreground: Nick Engelbert, *Organ Grinder*, c. 1940; concrete, glass, metal, shells, and paint; 76 x 39 x 35 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation, Inc.

Collaborative Transformations

Transformation is a part of life. For example, cities and towns change as more people move there, seeds grow into a large garden by the end of summer, and as people age they might change their hairstyle or the clothes they like to wear.

Many artists who create artist-built environments are compelled to transform everyday objects. In this lesson, students will learn about artists who alter the ordinary into the extraordinary. Then, they will collaboratively create a transformed space or object. Through their exploration, students will consider: *How can I use my imagination to share my ideas?*

Essential Question

How can I use my imagination to share my ideas?

K-3 Adaptation

- How do I use my imagination in my art?

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the idea of transformation as it applies to art and everyday life.
- Students will analyze and discuss one or more of the inspiration artists, considering specifically how they transform everyday objects.
- Students will work collaboratively to design and create a transformed object.
- Students will reflect individually and collaboratively on the challenges and success of object transformation.

National Core Art Standard Connection Visual Arts/Creating#VA:Cr1.2

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.

Essential Questions: How does knowing the contexts, histories, and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design? Why do artists follow or break from established traditions? How do artists determine what resources are needed to formulate artistic investigations?

This lesson was developed with feedback from Wisconsin art educators Ben Jerry and Kate Arvold.



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1 Stella Waitzkin, untitled (individual library elements), c. 1969-2003; resin, paint, wood and mixed media. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Waitzkin Memorial Library Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, untitled (bone chair), c. 1965-70; fowl bones, paint, glue, varnish; (left to right) 6 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 4 3/4, 8 1/2 x 4 x 3 1/2, 9 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 4 1/4, 9 1/4 x 4 x 4 1/4, 6 1/2 x 3 x 2 7/8 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection. Photo: Rich Maciejewski.

Overview

Discuss

As a class, collaboratively define “transformation.”

- What are examples of transformation?
- Have you experienced transformation?
- How can you transform an object or place?

Present information about one or more of the inspiration artists. Then have your students individually reflect, discuss in pairs or groups, or discuss as a class:

- What objects and materials do you recognize in these artworks? How have they been transformed?
- Why do you think the artist(s) selected these objects?
- How did the meaning or purpose of the objects change?
- Which of the elements and principles of art and design are important to consider when creating an artwork using transformed materials?

Create

Choose one or more art media, based on your curricular goals, to have students complete the objective: Students will work collaboratively to design and create a transformed object.

See suggested ideas below for possible projects or starting points for a project.

Suggested Projects

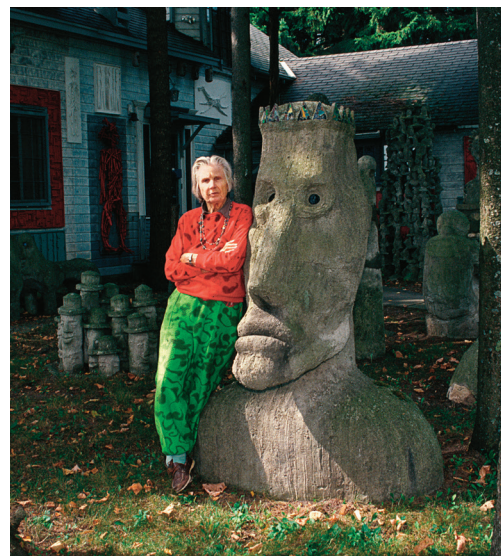
- Students work in groups or pairs to collect recycled materials and transform them into an object to be displayed or used in school.
- Give students in groups or pairs a similar object (or objects), such as a box, a torn piece of clothing, or a broken object that is no longer functional, to transform into an artwork or an object with a new function.
- Students work in groups or pairs to create a figure or figures using upcycled materials.

Artists

- Emery Blagdon
- Loy Bowlin
- David Butler
- Nek Chand
- Nick Engelbert
- Tom Every
- Ernest Hüpeden
- Mary Nohl
- Frank Oebser
- Dr. Charles Smith
- Eugene Von Bruenchenhein
- Stella Waitzkin

Vocabulary

- Upcycle
- Transform/transformation
- Imagination
- Sculpture
- Painting
- Utilitarian
- Decorative



1 Mary Nohl at her lake cottage (Fox Point, WI), 1994.
Photo: Ron Byers.

2 Nek Chand's Rock Garden of Chandigarh (site detail, Chandigarh, India), 1958–present. Photo: Iain Jackson, c. 2003–06.

Care, Healing, and Well-being

Some artist-built environments were created to foster well-being. In this lesson, students will use inspiration from these sites and contemporary artists to design a space or an object that promotes care for themselves or others.

Essential Question

How can I care for myself or others with art?

K-3 Adaptation

- How can creating art make me feel happy?
- What art could I make for someone to show them that I care about them?

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of care, healing, and well-being through art making.
- Students will analyze and discuss one or more of the inspiration artists and demonstrate an understanding of how care connects with their artwork.
- Students will design and create an object or space that promotes care for themselves or others.
- Students will reflect on their process and final product through writing or discussion.

National Core Art Standard Connection

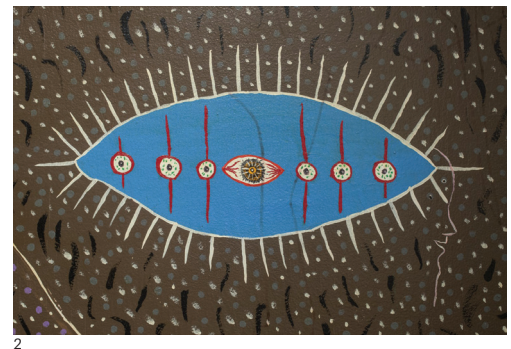
Visual Arts/Connecting#VA:Cn10.1

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding: Through art making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.

Essential Questions: How does creating art enrich people's lives? How does making art attune people to their surroundings? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through art-making?

This lesson was developed with feedback from Wisconsin art educators Ben Jerry and Kate Arvold.



1 Emery Blagdon, "The Healing Machine" (untitled individual component), c. 1955-86; metal and mixed media; 26 x 21 1/2 x 21 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Gregory Van Maanen, untitled (detail), c. 1983; paint on wood; 72 x 36 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Overview

Discuss

Present information about one or more of the inspiration artists. Then have your students individually reflect, discuss in pairs or groups, or discuss as a class:

- How did this artist (these artists) care for themselves or others through their artwork?
- How do you take care of yourself? (for example, when you are having a bad day, feeling sick, or are sad)
- How do you take care of others?

Expand on any of these discussions using your typical discussion or sketchbook routines to connect to other topics or subjects students are studying in your class.

Create

Choose one or more art media, based on your curricular goals, to have students complete the objective: Students will design and create an object or space that promotes care for themselves or others.

See suggested ideas below for possible projects or starting points for a project.

Suggested Projects

- Inspired by Dr. Charles Smith, Gregory Van Maanen, and Emery Blagdon, create an artwork or series of artworks about a topic that is meaningful to you and you want to share with others.
- Inspired by Carl Peterson and Loy Bowlin, design a space that will bring people joy to look at or visit.

Artists

- Emery Blagdon
- Loy Bowlin
- Carl Peterson
- Dr. Charles Smith
- Gregory Van Maanen

Vocabulary

- Care
- Healing
- Well-being
- Three-dimensional art
- Two-dimensional art
- Mobile
- Sculpture
- Site Specific



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1 Loy Bowlin. Photo: Sally Griffiths.

2 Fred Scruton, Work of Dr. Charles Smith (Hammond, LA), 2016; photograph courtesy of the artist.

Gateways and Signs

Many people connect or identify with places. Artist-built environments are often an ordinary place that is transformed by an artist to add personally significant meaning and narratives. In this lesson, students will question: *How can personalizing a space create a stronger connection between that place and my identity?*

Essential Question

How can personalizing a space create a stronger connection between that place and my identity?

K-3 Adaptation

- How can I show that a space is special to me?

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how art can transform a space to show personally significant meaning and narratives.
- Students will analyze and discuss the inspiration artists who create gateways and signs in their art environments.
- Students will design a sign or a gateway in response to their chosen site.
- Students will present their individual designs and articulate the personal significance of their design and the impact or transformation to the site.

National Core Art Standard Connection: Visual Arts/Connecting#VA:Cn11.1

Anchor Standard: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

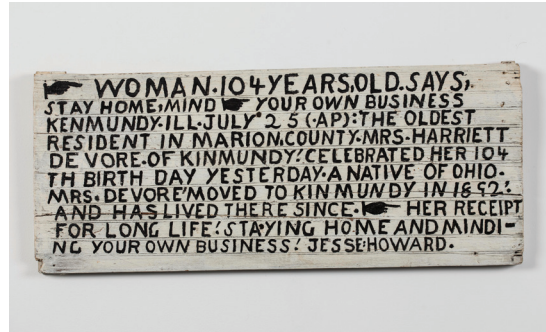
Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

Essential Questions: How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the views of a society? How does art preserve aspects of life?

This lesson was developed with feedback from Wisconsin art educators Ben Jerry and Kate Arvold.



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1 L. F. Ames (center) with his traveling L. F. Ames Museum of Art, c. 1900; gelatin silver print; 11 1/8 x 14 1/8 x 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Jesse Howard, untitled, c. 1945-83; oil on fiberboard; 14 1/4 x 35 1/4 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the Raymond K. Yoshida Living Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Overview

Discuss

Present information about one or more of the inspiration artists. Then, have your students individually reflect, discuss in pairs or groups, or discuss as a class:

- What can you tell about a place from its entryway? While discussing, view images of different entryways, such as schools, amusement parks, zoos, homes, gardens, cemeteries, and/or grocery stores.
- What do artists and architects need to consider when designing a gate or a door? (e.g., environmental impact on material, historical and cultural traditions, logistical and functional needs)
- What do you notice about the gateways and fences that the inspiration artist(s) designed and built?
- What is the purpose of the gateway?

Create

- Choose one or more art media, based on your curricular goals, to have students complete the objectives: Students will design a sign or a gateway in response to their chosen site.
- Students will present their individual designs and articulate the personal significance of their design and the impact or transformation to the site.

See suggested ideas below for possible projects or starting points for a project.

Suggested Projects

- Students create a sign for a space they go to every day or week.
 - Students design a concept for a gateway for a place that is important to them.
- Extension: Create a maquette of the gate or fence.

Artists

- Levi Fisher Ames
- Nick Engelbert
- Tom Every
- Jesse Howard
- Eddie Owens Martin (St. EOM)
- Mary Nohl
- Carl Peterson
- Herman Rusch
- Dr. Charles Smith
- James Tellen
- Albert Zahn

Vocabulary

- Identity
- Personalization
- Vernacular
- Architecture
- Gateway



1 Dr. Charles Smith, African-American Heritage Museum + Black Veterans Archive (site view, Aurora, IL), c. 1985–99. Photo: David Kargl, 1993.

2 *The Making of a Dream: Loy Bowlin + Jennifer Joy Jameson* installation view, part of *The Road Less Traveled* exhibition series at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2017.

Identity

Identity is important in understanding and describing ourselves and others. Many artists who create artist-built environments use art making to explore and express their identity. In this lesson, students will explore concepts of identity, such as: *How does creating art and looking at art allow for a deeper understanding of cultural and individual differences and similarities?*

Essential Questions

- How can art be a vehicle to communicate personal and/or communal identity?
- How does creating art and looking at art allow for a deeper understanding of cultural and individual differences and similarities?

K-3 Adaptation

- How can my art show who I am?
- How can I learn about other people by looking at and talking about art?

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how visual art can express complex concepts of identity in relation to cultural, societal, and community issues.
- Students will analyze and discuss the work of one or more of the inspiration artists.
- Students will design and create an artwork addressing an issue of identity that resonates with them.
- Students will reflect on their process and final product through writing or discussion.

National Core Art Standard Connection Visual Arts/Creating#VA:Cr2.3

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

Essential Questions: How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities? How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems? How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?

This lesson was developed with feedback from Wisconsin art educators Ben Jerry and Kate Arvold.



1 *The World in a Garden: Nek Chand + Dr. Iain Jackson* installation view at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2017.

2 Annie Hooper, untitled, n.d.; driftwood, cement, paint, and shells; 11 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 7 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Gregg Museum of Art and Design and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Overview

Discuss

As a class, collaboratively define “identity.”

- What is an identity?
- What are important parts of your personal identity?
- How do we understand the identity of one person? Of a culture?

Present information about one or more of the inspiration artists. Then, have your students individually reflect, discuss in pairs or groups, or discuss as a class:

- How do these artists express identity in their artwork?
- How do the artists explore complex issues of identity, such as race, cultural norms, or their personal struggles with identity, through their artwork?
- How might you explore issues of personal and community identity in your own art?

Create

Choose one or more art media based on your curricular goals to have students complete the objective: Students will design and create an artwork that addresses an issue of identity that resonates with them. See suggestions below for possible projects or starting points for a project.

Suggested projects

- Students create a two- or three-dimensional portrait of someone important to them.
- Students design a sculpture or sculptures that share something about their identity and describe a place that would be meaningful to display their work.

Artists

- Hawkins Bolden
- Loy Bowlin
- Nek Chand
- John Ehn
- Annie Hooper
- Jesse Howard
- Eddie Owens Martin (St. EOM)
- Mary Nohl
- Dr. Charles Smith
- Fred Smith
- Eugene Von Bruenchenhein
- Stella Waitzkin

Vocabulary

- Figural
- Abstract
- Narrative
- Identity
- Community



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1 Dr. Charles Smith, *Dancers: Natalie Cole Series*, c. 1985–99; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 43 x 20 1/2 x 12 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation, Inc. Ron Byers.

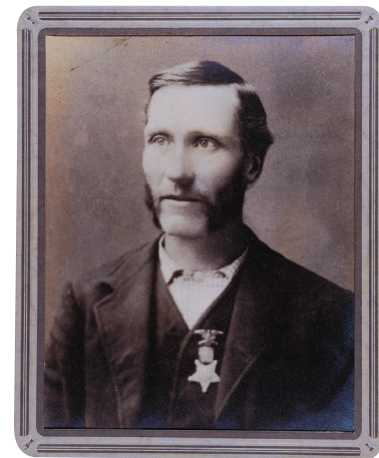
2 Sarah Gail Luther, *untitled (Mary Nohl lake cottage environment site view, Fox Point, WI)*, 2018; digital photograph; dimensions variable.

Levi Fisher Ames (1840–1923)

Levi Fisher Ames was born in Pennsylvania in 1840, and his family moved to Wisconsin when he was a young child. After fighting in the Union Army during the Civil War, Ames returned to Wisconsin to raise a family. He learned wood-carving skills during the war. Using these skills, Ames made and repaired wooden musical instruments and carved several hundred wooden animals over the years. In the 1890s, Ames took a selection of his imaginative carved **menagerie**, which he displayed in hinged shadow boxes, on a **regional tent tour** as the L.F. Ames Museum of Art.



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Ames's wooden beasts and bugs, carved from life and his imagination, were passed down through his family. The works were given to Kohler Foundation, Inc., in 2001 to be conserved and gifted to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center after their conservation.



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Albert Zahn (1864–1953)

Albert August Zahn lived in Door County, Wisconsin, for most of his adult life. Although little is known of his childhood in Germany, Zahn remembered that he began to whittle while working as a shepherd in Germany. When Zahn was fifteen years old, he **immigrated** with his parents, brother, and sister to Wisconsin. In 1891, he married Louise, and together they raised nine children on the family homestead in Forestville, Wisconsin.

Zahn maintained a successful dairy farm. He collected walnut, black ash, pine, and white cedar from the woods surrounding his home to use for furniture making. Zahn's **utilitarian** works, such as wardrobes, tables, and chairs, included imagery of animals similar to the carvings he created later in his life.

In 1924, Zahn gave his farm to his eldest son, Albert Jr., and moved with his wife and two of his children to a house he built in Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin. He spent his days carving woodland animals, birds, angels, and characters from local stories. His wife, Louise, painted the sculptures with house paint. Zahn attached carvings of birds and other creatures, such as deer, to the outside of their home. He named his art environment Birds Park. By the early 1930s, hundreds of carved flying creatures dotted the house and yard, and it was a well-known Door County attraction.

1 Levi Fisher Ames, *The Gigantic and Prehistoric Pig, Captured in Alaska;—Big as a Small Elephant/The Gigantic and Terrible Equinotopolis of Catagolia Captured in the Swamps of Catagolia;—Weight 9 Tons and 7 Ounces*, c. 1895–c. 1910; wood, fabric, glass, graphite, ink, metal, and paper; 8 1/2 x 21 x 2 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Portrait of Levi Fisher Ames, c. 1880–1895; framed gelatin silver print; 16 3/8 x 14 1/4 x 1 3/8 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

3 Albert Zahn, untitled, c. 1924–c. 1950; wood, paint, and metal; 40 1/4 x 20 x 13 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Diane Hiatt and Kohler Foundation Inc..

Menagerie

A collection of wild animals kept in captivity for people to look at.

Regional Tent Tour

Common in the 1800s and early 1900s, regional tent tours were shows or exhibits that took place in large tents and would travel to different towns.

Immigrate

Move permanently to another country.

Utilitarian

An object that has a specific function.



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Literacy Link to the Arts

Spots in a Box by Helen Ward tells the story of a guinea fowl who did not have spots. He writes a letter asking for spots to be sent to him and receives many packages in the mail containing different types of spots and patterns for him to try.

Visit socialstudio.space to watch a video in English or Spanish of JMKAC staff and volunteers reading *Spots in a Box*.

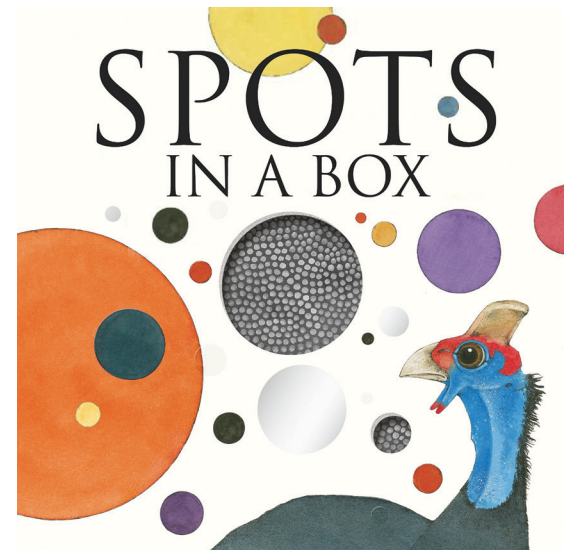
Keep exploring!

Visit jmkac.org/art-preserve/collections to see more work by Albert Zahn and Levi Fisher Ames.

Use the coloring sheet found on socialstudio.space to create patterns inside the outlines of flying creatures Zahn and Ames created.

Write a story about one or more of your creatures. Where are they from and what makes them unique?

Invite friends and family to learn about your creatures just like Levi Fisher Ames did at the L.F. Ames Museum of Art!



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1 L. F. Ames (center) with his traveling L. F. Ames Museum of Art, c. 1900; gelatin silver print; 11 1/8 x 14 1/8 x 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Ward, H. (2015). *Spots in a box*. Candlewick Press.

Emery Blagdon (1907-1986)

Starting in the 1960s, Emery Blagdon worked for more than twenty-five years on sculptures and paintings in a shed near his home in Nebraska. He believed that his **mobiles**, paintings, and sculptures had powers to cure people. He used different art materials and **found objects** to create his work such as masking tape, sheet metal, aluminum foil, minerals, lights, and mechanical odds and ends.

After he died, Dan Dryden, a pharmacist who became friends with Blagdon and Dryden's friend Don Christiansen saved Blagdon's work when it was being sold at an auction. They wanted to make sure that Blagdon's creation was **preserved** so that other people could experience and look at his work. Dan Dryden referred to Blagdon's work as "The Healing Machine."

After "The Healing Machine" traveled around the United States, and even to France in 1997, Kohler Foundation, Inc., purchased the entire collection of more than four hundred individual works in 2004.

It took three years to clean and **conserve** all of the pieces of "The Healing Machine." The entire collection was gifted to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in June 2007. "The Healing Machine" is on view at the Art Preserve.

Mobile

A kinetic sculpture that hangs from the ceiling or another support. Mobiles are carefully balanced so that they can move freely from air movement.

Found Object

Objects that are used as nontraditional art-making tools or materials. Often, a found object is something that was discarded or no longer usable for its original purpose. It can also be something from nature that can be collected, such as driftwood and rocks. Sometimes a found object is still functional for its original purpose but is used in a different way in an artwork. For example, buttons can become a texture that covers a sculpture.

Preserve/Preservation

The process of keeping artwork intact and preventing damage.

Conserve/Conservation

If an artwork is damaged, conservation is the specific techniques and acts of repairing the damage.



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1 Emery Blagdon, "The Healing Machine" (detail, installation view, John Michael Kohler Arts Center), c. 1955-1986; wood, metal, paint, and mixed media. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Emery Blagdon, "The Healing Machine" (untitled individual component), c. 1955-86; metal and mixed media; 26 x 21 1/2 x 21 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Conservation Begins with Care

Emery Blagdon's work was saved because his friend Dan Dryden cared about "The Healing Machine" and wanted future generations to be able to see it. Had Dan not purchased the work at the auction, it might not have survived for us to learn from and experience it today.

What do you care about that you hope is protected for future generations?

Design a button or a poster to tell people about a place, building, or object that means a lot to you. You can add abstract designs inspired by Emery Blagdon's paintings and use symbols and words to create your artwork. Find a button template at jmkac.org/engage/educators/educator-resources.

Additional Resources and Extensions

- Inspired by Blagdon, use recycled materials to create an object that you imagine could have powers, for example the power to heal.
- We are all a part of documenting history! Create your own archive of visual culture. Take pictures of buildings and artwork in your community that you like, objects and rooms in your home, or places in nature that you like to visit. Write about what you notice there, or your memories of visiting.
- Look at more of Blagdon's work and learn about other artist-built environments at jmkac.org/art-preserve/collections.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Connecting 2.3

Anchor Standard

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding

People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

Essential Question

How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities? How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?



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1 Emery Blagdon, untitled, c. 1955–1986; oil paint, paper, and wood; 9 1/2 x 13 x 3/4 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Emery Blagdon, untitled, c. 1955–1986; metal, oil paint, and wood; 12 1/2 x 23 3/4 x 1 in.

Hawkins Bolden (1914–2005)

Hawkins Bolden and his identical twin, Monroe, were born September 10, 1914, in Memphis, Tennessee. A childhood accident blinded Hawkins. Throughout his life, he experienced extreme prejudice against both his race and blindness. Hawkins Bolden created and repeatedly reworked an installation of **figural assemblages** and mask-like forms in and around the yard of his small house in central Memphis during the last forty years of his life.

Perhaps influenced by a childhood spent planting and tending the family garden, Bolden took great pride in crafting artwork around his home as an adult. As a child, Bolden's brother encouraged him to make scarecrows, and he began posting his creations along the fence lining the garden. They became the guardians of the family's vegetable gardens and shaped a protected personal space.

To earn a living, Bolden tended his neighbors' lawns, cleaned the streets, and removed discarded objects and other litter from vacant lots, all of which became a part of his art making. He fashioned his objects from the furniture, clothing, discarded toys, broken tools, and many other items he found. He also used discarded electronic components to make handmade radios.

In 2010, Kohler Foundation, Inc., gave ten of Bolden's works to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Bolden's art environment is no longer **in situ**.

Figural Assemblages

An assemblage is an artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials. A figural assemblage is one that represents or has elements of real forms, particularly the forms of humans and animals.

In situ

In the place it was originally created.



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1 Hawkins Bolden, untitled, c. 1965–2005; metal and rubber; 18 x 16 x 2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of an anonymous donor and Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Hawkins Bolden, untitled, 1989; mixed media. Collection of William Arnett, GA.



Loy Bowlin, *Beautiful Holy Jewel Home* (installation view, Art Preserve, 2021), c. 1985–1990; wood, metal, glass, paper, plastic, glitter, and mixed media. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Loy Bowlin (1909–1999)

Loy Bowlin was born in Franklin County, Mississippi, and lived under conditions of poverty for much of his life. He struggled with depression after his divorce in the 1950s, and sought comfort through his Christian faith.

In 1975, inspired by Glen Campbell's hit record, "Rhinestone Cowboy," Bowlin began to adopt a new **persona** to lift his spirits. First, he covered his clothes entirely with sequins. Next, he **embellished** a 1967 Cadillac. Finally, he transformed his entire home into what became known as the the Beautiful Holy Jewel Home. Bowlin covered every inch of the interior with patterns of cutout paper, paint, glitter, and collaged photographs and magazine illustrations.

After Bowlin's death in 1995, Houston artist and collector Katy Emde was able to purchase the home as long as she removed the house from the property. Emde documented and dismantled the house. In 1998, Kohler Foundation, Inc., acquired the house components and worked for four years on preservation. The foundation gifted the home, along with many of Bowlin's hats, suits, and furniture pieces, to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.



Nek Chand (1924–2015)

Nek Chand was born in 1924 in Berian Kala, Tehsil Shakargarh, India (current day Pakistan). After the **Partition of India**, when British rule came to an end in 1947, Chand's Hindu family was forced to flee their village in the Shakargarh region, which fell within the borders of Muslim Pakistan, and they settled in Chandigarh, India.

In 1955, Chand began working as a road inspector for the Indian government's Public Works Department. Chandigarh was going through a major shift at this time: the government had engaged the Swiss architect Le Corbusier to design and rebuild a new capital from scratch, which quickly changed the layout of the city. Chand, believing that everything in nature transforms itself from one form into another, began collecting rocks, discarded materials, and recyclable items from the demolition of surrounding villages. He used these materials to create the Rock Garden of Chandigarh, an eighteen-acre sculpture garden that he secretly constructed for many years. On January 24, 1976, the Rock Garden was formally **inaugurated** as an official public space by the Indian government.

Beginning in 1996 and lasting over the span of eight years, over 150 sculptures from the Rock Garden of Chandigarh were gifted to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. Chand aided the Arts Center and the Kohler Foundation, Inc., in the selection process, carefully choosing works to receive lasting care and be seen in significant groupings outside of India.

1 Loy Bowlin. Photo: Sally Griffiths.

2 Nek Chand's Rock Garden of Chandigarh (site detail, Chandigarh, India), 1958–present. Photo: Iain Jackson, c. 2003–06.

Pattern and Texture Magnets

Both Loy Bowlin and Nek Chand assembled light-catching materials into arrangements filled with pattern and texture for themselves and for visitors to enjoy.

Use materials such as beads and gems to create an eye-catching magnet that includes pattern and texture. Start by making a plan. Use a paper template that is the same size as the surface of your magnet. You could use wood, mat board, cardboard, the lid of a jar—whatever you have available! Arrange your materials in a way you like on the template. Then use an adhesive such as liquid glue to apply your arrangement onto the surface you chose. Leave your finished design to dry overnight. When your design is dry, attach a magnet to the back of your creation.

Keep Exploring

View more of Nek Chand's and Loy Bowlin's work at jmkac.org/art-preserve/collections.

Listen to "Rhinestone Cowboy" by Glen Campbell.

Can you find India on a map? Search online to find out how far Nek Chand's sculptures traveled from Chandigarh to Sheboygan!



Persona

A persona is a specific aspect of one's personality or identity. For example, a public persona is how someone might act in front of a large group of people or among people they have never met before.

Embellish

To add decorative materials to the surface of an object.

Partition of India

The Partition of India was the division of the Presidencies and Provinces of British India that resulted in formation of two independent dominions, India and Pakistan, in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Inaugurated (place)

To mark the beginning or first official use of a place.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Creating 2.1

Anchor Standard

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding

Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art-making approaches.

Essential Question

How do artists work? How do artists and designers determine whether a particular direction in their work is effective? How do artists and designers learn from trial and error?

Eugene Von Bruenchenhein (1910–1983)

The second of Edward and Clara Von Bruenchenhein's (broon-chen-hine) three sons, Edward Eugene Von Bruenchenhein was born in Marinette, Wisconsin, in 1910. After graduating from high school, Eugene worked as a florist and later found employment at a commercial bakery, where he worked until the late 1950s. During the last forty years of his life, he **transformed** the home he shared with his wife, Marie, into an art environment.

He created work in many **media**, including photography, painting, and sculpture. In all of his work, he transformed everyday materials from his simple way of life into objects inspired by fantasy and royalty. For example, he built towers and chairs out of chicken bones and crowns out of clay.

Not many people visited his home during his lifetime. When he passed away and people saw his work, they wanted to save the work so others could see it. The Arts Center holds the largest collection of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's artwork, which can be seen at the Art Preserve.

Transform

In art, to transform means to completely change the appearance of an object or place. Transformation in art may also change the meaning or function of the object or place.

Media/Art Medium

The substance or material artists use to create their work.



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1 Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, untitled (Eugene), n.d.; gelatin silver print; 10 x 8 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection. Photo: Rich Maciejewski, courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

2 Von Bruenchenhein house (interior detail, parlor table with painted wall), 1983. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection. Photo courtesy of John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Current Events

After seeing an article in the *Milwaukee Journal* in 1954, Eugene Von Bruenchenhein created a series of paintings inspired by the hydrogen bomb. The article showed two images comparing the atomic bomb's reach of eight miles to the new hydrogen bomb's twenty-five-mile-high mushroom cloud. A mushroom cloud is the debris, smoke, and water vapor caused by a bomb, which looks similar to the shape of a mushroom.

His series of paintings were a way for Eugene to express how horrible he thought bombs are. Many of the paintings had a human face inside of the clouds to show that people are the dangerous source of these weapons.

Discuss together or write in a journal:

- What emotions do you feel when you watch or read the news?
- How can you use art to help think about your emotions?



Additional Activities

- Choose a current event from the newspaper or a magazine and create an artwork about it using any art medium you like. How can you express your feelings about the news story? What do you want other people to think about when they see your work?
- View more of Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's work at artpreserve.org/artists/eugene-von-bruenchenhein.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Presenting 6.1

Anchor Standard

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Enduring Understanding

Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding.

Essential Question

What is an art museum? How does the presenting and sharing of objects, artifacts, and artworks influence & shape ideas, beliefs, & experiences? How do objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented, cultivate appreciation and understanding?

David Butler (1898–1997)

David Butler was born in Good Hope, St. Mary Parish, Louisiana, in 1898. After his mother's sudden death, Butler dropped out of school in the early 1910s to care for his seven younger siblings while his father continued to work. Butler devoted what little free time he had to drawing. Some of his subjects included cotton fields, people at work, shrimp boats, and trains. When his siblings were old enough to care for themselves, he moved to Patterson, Louisiana, to look for work and start a life of his own.

Butler worked a series of jobs such as cutting grass, building roads, and working a dragline. In 1962, Butler suffered a head injury on the job and could no longer work. He began designing and constructing his living space, inspired by the imagery of his dreams and spiritual beliefs. The objects he put in his yard and home were **kinetic** sculptures, such as **whirligigs**, and windshields with silhouettes of animals, people, and imagined creatures. When his wife died in 1968, Butler started constructing "spirit shields"—window coverings and awnings that sheltered his house from both the hot Louisiana sun and, he believed, unwelcome spirits.

Over the years, Butler's dynamic home and yard installations have received national attention and acclaim, although his reaction to this attention was not always positive. Much to his disapproval, a traveling exhibition of his work toured Louisiana from the New Orleans Museum of Art to the Morgan City Municipal Auditorium in 1976. The art environment he created is no longer **in situ**.



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Kinetic (art)

An artwork that moves either naturally, such as a mobile, or is machine operated.

Whirligig

An object that has one part that spins.

In situ

In the place it was originally created.

1 David Butler, untitled, n.d.; metal, plastic, fabric, rubber, paint, and mixed media; 46 1/2 x 33 1/2 x 72 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 David Butler, untitled, c. 1968–c. 1970; paint, steel, and mixed media; 13 x 38 x 3 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

John Ehn (1897-1981)

Johan Henry Ehn, known as John, was born in 1897 in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He worked as a wildlife trapper across the United States. When he was in his fifties, he began creating the statues and his art environment, Old Trapper's Lodge, around a motel he owned in Sun Valley, California. Over nearly thirty years, he filled the site with painted concrete sculptures depicting folk tale characters and tombstones with playful **epitaphs**. The art environment was named a California Registered Historical Landmark in 1985.

In the late 1980s, many of Ehn's large sculptures were moved to the grounds of Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California. From the objects that remained, Kohler Foundation, Inc., **conserved** seventy, including sculpture, tools, signs, and **assemblages**, before gifting them to the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in 1996.

Epitaph

Words written in memory of a person who has died, typically placed on a tombstone.

Conserve/Conservation

If an artwork is damaged, conservation is the specific techniques and acts of repairing the damage.

Assemblage

An artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials that are put together.



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1 John Ehn, untitled, c. 1970; mixed media; 29 x 28 x 2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the John Ehn Family Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 John Ehn, untitled, c. 1961; mixed media; 22 x 15 1/2 x 13 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the John Ehn Family Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Nick Engelbert (1881-1962)

Engelbert Kloetnik was born in 1881 in Austria. He changed his name to Nick Engelbert when he was an adult. As a young man, he traveled the world, eventually sailing to Baltimore, Maryland, at the age of twenty-eight. Upon his arrival, Engelbert toured the United States for a few years. When he met his wife in the Midwest around 1913, Engelbert settled in Hollandale, Wisconsin.

In 1922, he purchased a farm he called Grandview. After seeing the **Dickeyville Grotto** in nearby Grant County, Engelbert was inspired to transform his property into his own roadside attraction. Using a technique he developed for building sculptures with concrete, he created more than forty sculptures that celebrated farm life, **immigration**, and family. He also **embellished** the entire exterior of his farmhouse with concrete inlaid with stones, shells, and bright bits of glass. As Engelbert grew older, sculpting in concrete became increasingly difficult. From the comfort of his living room, he painted memories of his life and captured moments as a youthful traveler, as a young father, and as a builder of an incredible **art environment**.

Today, the John Michael Kohler Arts Center cares for several of the more fragile sculptures from Grandview as well as Engelbert's collection of seventy-six paintings. Between 1991 and 1997, Kohler Foundation, Inc., acquired and preserved Grandview, and gifted it to the Pecatonica Educational Charitable Foundation, Inc. Visitors can see the site as part of the Wandering Wisconsin consortium, a group of nine art environments situated across the state.



Ernest Hüpeden (1855-1911)



Ernest Hüpeden (Hoop-eh-den), **immigrated** from Hamburg, Germany, to New York City in 1889. He settled in Valton, Wisconsin, and became known for his **murals** and his paintings on furniture and household items such as bottles and pie pans. Hüpeden created his largest work, a mural covering the walls and ceiling of a lodge belonging to the Modern Woodmen of America (MWA), between 1899 and 1901.

The MWA **panoramic** mural was titled "The Painted Forest," after Hüpeden's death for its inclusion of the piney hills and valleys near Valton. The final scene of "The Painted Forest" narrative depicts Valton one hundred years in the future (1999), which provides insight into how people at the turn of the twentieth century envisioned the future.

The MWA Lodge remained a public building until the 1960s, when it was purchased by a private party. In 1980, Kohler Foundation, Inc., acquired "The Painted Forest" and began restoring the lodge and murals. Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, is now the steward of both the preserved building and an additional art studio and study center built near the site.

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1 Nick Engelbert, Grandview (site view, Hollandale, WI), c. 1930-1960. Photo: 2006.

2 Ernest Hüpeden, untitled, c. 1880-c. 1900; wood, metal, and paint; 98 5/8 x 82 7/8 x 26 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Dickeyville Grotto

An artist-built environment in Dickeyville, Wisconsin, created between 1918 and 1931 by Father Mathias Wernerus.

Immigrate

Move permanently to another country.

Embellish

To add decorative materials to the surface of an object.

Art Environment/Artist-built Environment

A unique place—frequently a home—that is transformed. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, these works of art typically are made of materials that are easily accessible and found nearby.

Mural

An artwork, typically a painting, created directly onto a wall.

Panoramic

A wide view of a scene or picture.

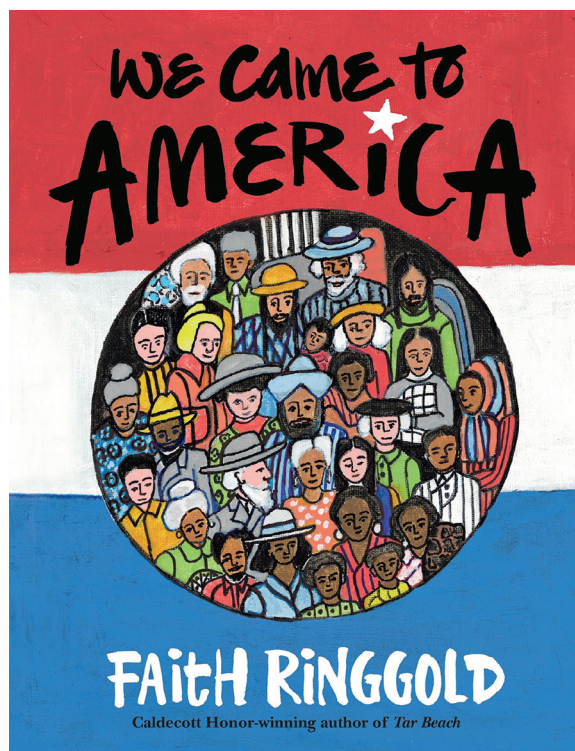
Literacy Link

We Came to America by Faith Ringgold reminds us that people of all colors, races, and religions are part of the American story. They come from different countries, in different ways, and for different reasons. Along with them, they bring new foods, fashions, music, dances, and art—things that make our country unique and wonderful. People who move here from other countries are Americans, the same as those people born in the United States.

Discuss Together

We Came to America suggests there are many reasons why people came to America. Some people, like artists Nick Engelbert and Ernest Hüpeden, wanted to come. Others were forced to come. We also know that people who were already here, such as the American Indian tribes, were forced to leave their land and move somewhere else. How do you think each of those different groups felt about leaving their homes?

Have you ever moved? Maybe your family changed apartments or houses. Maybe you moved to a different city or state. How did you feel about moving? What memories do you have about the previous place you lived? What memories have you created in your new home?



Tom Every (b. 1938)

Tom Every, also known as Dr. Evermor, was born in Brooklyn, Wisconsin, in 1938. When he was a young child, his family helped collect scraps, like metal, to help the country create the supplies it needed during World War II. Having this experience at a young age later inspired his work as an adult.

In 1964, he formed the Wisconsin By-Products Corporation in Stoughton, Wisconsin. For the next twenty years, Every supervised the demolition of more than 350 **industrial** sites across the country. In 1984, Every retired and used his collection of scrap metal to begin building his sculpture park in North Freedom, Wisconsin, as his **alter ego**, Dr. Evermor.

At the center of Every's sculpture park is the Forevertron. Described by Every as a "soul-transformation device," the Forevertron is a massive outdoor sculpture estimated to weigh over three hundred tons. The towering sculpture incorporates materials recovered in the course of Every's wrecking and scrapping jobs, including **deaccessioned** pieces from the Henry Ford Museum and elements from NASA's Apollo program. Surrounding the Forevertron are dozens of sculptures made from scrap, including what Every calls "The Bird Band Orchestra." In 1999, the nonprofit Evermor Foundation was established to provide for the park's maintenance.

Industrial

Relating to manufacturing and factories. Typically, industrial sites have large machines designed to accomplish a task.

Alter Ego

A second personality or identity that is different from one's real identity. For example, in comic books, Superman is Clark Kent's alter ego.

Accession and Deaccession

When a museum decides to add a work to its collection, it is called accessioning. Accessioning an artwork means that the museum agrees to care for it and maintain it through proper storage and conservation. Sometimes a museum decides that an object no longer fits within the collection, or they can no longer care for the object. They can deaccession, or remove an object from the collection, through a process determined by the museum.



Annie Hooper (1897-1986)

Annie Hooper was born in Buxton, North Carolina, in 1897. She was raised in a home with twelve siblings and fourteen foster children. She and her husband, John Hooper, had one son, Edgar. During World War II, Edgar was deployed to the South Pacific, and John went to work at the Norfolk Naval Shipyards.

After the war, Buxton changed from an isolated town that could not be reached by a car to a popular tourist destination. Edgar fell ill after the war and had to leave Buxton again. Hooper became very sad, and turned to her Bible, finding comfort in an illustrated version. Inspired by a piece of driftwood, she began to carve hundreds of pieces of wood, transforming them into **immersive** Biblical scenes. Using concrete, marbles, and shells, her technique began to improve and soon she was making **tableaus** with hundreds of figures.

Hooper led curious visitors through her home, sharing her life story along with teachings from the Bible. When her husband fell ill, she stopped giving tours and instead painted explanations and stories, often in the form of poems and song verses, on meat trays that she scattered throughout the installation. Upon her husband's death, Hooper continued to work, leaving forty-seven unpainted sculptures behind at the time of her death.

Immersive

In art, immersive spaces typically surround the viewer and may include many objects. It can be artwork placed in an existing space such as a room or home, a newly constructed space, or a space outdoors.

Tableau

A group of sculptures representing a place or a story or an event from history.



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1 Roger Manley, Annie Hooper, 1982; 35 mm Kodachrome.
Photo © Roger Manley.

2 Annie Hooper, untitled, n.d.; driftwood, cement, paint, and shells;
11 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 7 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift
of Gregg Museum of Art and Design and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Jesse Howard (1885–1983)

Jesse Howard was known for covering his property in Fulton, Missouri, with hundreds of painted signs. Known as Sorehead Hill, the site contained signs that explained Howard's daily experiences and views of the world, such as interpretations of biblical verses, commentary on local and national politicians, and disapproval of people who stole his signs.

While many local residents disliked the site, newspaper reporters, artists, and art historians at universities took notice of it. By 1968, Howard's signs were featured in Gregg Blasdel's *Art in America* essay, "The Grass Roots Artist," on art environments in the United States, and later, in exhibitions at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and Philadelphia College of Art. In the 1970s, the Kansas City Art Institute purchased several works by Howard, and later became the **steward** of his signs after he passed away in 1983.

In 2016, the Kansas City Art Institute, in partnership with Kohler Foundation, Inc., transferred 187 objects from its Jesse Howard collection to the Arts Center. These objects, including eighty signs, six **mixed-media** sculptures, and more than fifty **archival** documents, joined the twelve signs already in the Arts Center's collection.

Steward

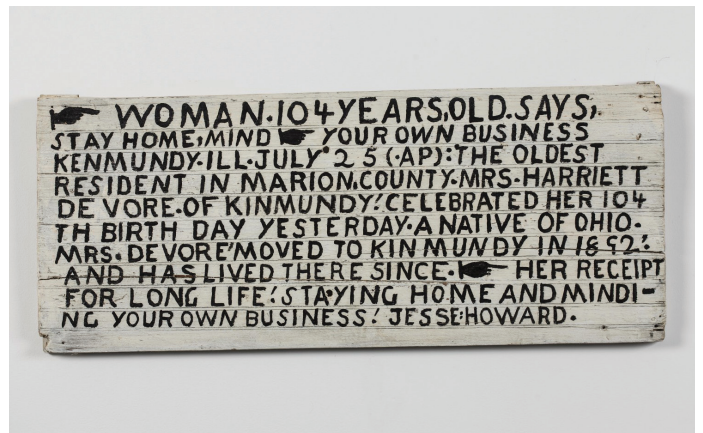
A person or organization that looks after, cares for, and manages a place or object(s).

Mixed Media

The inclusion of more than one type of medium in a work of art. An art medium is the substance or material artists use to create their work.

Archival/Archives

Documents and objects that are important to the history of a person, place, or event.



1 Jesse Howard, untitled (God Bless the Owl), 1956; wood, enameled metal, fiberboard, leather, paint, ink; 39 1/4 x 35 x 2 1/2 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation, Inc.

2 Jesse Howard, untitled, c. 1945–83; oil on fiberboard; 14 1/2 x 35 1/4 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the Raymond K. Yoshida Living Trust and Kohler Foundation, Inc.

Sharing a Message

Artists often rely on visual imagery to share a message. How do the ways artists share their ideas change when they use mostly text instead of images?

Can you think of any signs you have seen in your community or elsewhere that you might consider art? Where is the sign and what did it say?

Think about a place in your home or your community where you would want to display a sign and answer the following questions on a piece of paper:

- Where would the sign go?
- What would the sign say?
- Why is this sign important?

Now design your sign using upcycled materials like cardboard, wood, or other found objects. You can use any medium, such as markers or paint, to make marks on the surface.

You can practice writing your message on scratch paper first. Think about the lettering you want to use. Do you want to use your own handwriting or make your letters look like a specific font?

When you are finished with your sign, display it! If it is intended for a space in your community, such as your school, make sure that you have permission to display it before hanging it up.

Additional Activities

- Go on a sign scavenger hunt. What kinds of signs can you find in your community when you look closely? Are there any you have never noticed before? Do you have a favorite?
- Look at more of Jesse Howard's work at artpreserve.org/artists/jesse-howard.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Connecting 10.1

Anchor Standard

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Enduring Understanding

Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.

Essential Question

How does engaging in creating art enrich people's lives? How does making art attune people to their surroundings? How do people contribute to awareness and understanding of their lives and the lives of their communities through art-making?

Bernard Langlais (1921–1977)

Bernard Langlais was born in Old Town, Maine, in 1921. He began his artistic training at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C., which was followed by scholarships to study at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Brooklyn Museum Art School. He also won a Fulbright Scholarship to study the paintings of Norwegian artist Edvard Munch in Oslo, Norway. As an artist working actively in New York in the 1950s, Langlais created landscapes and still lifes in a **Modernist** style. He was also influenced by fellow artists working in New York at the time and experimented with **Abstract Expressionism**.

Langlais along with his wife, Helen, and artists such as Alex Katz, Jean Cohen, Lois Dodd, William King, and Charles Duback began spending summers in Maine in the early 1950s. One summer in 1956, while renovating his summer cottage, Langlais began working with scraps of wood. He called his process “painting with wood.” Though people liked his abstract wood **reliefs** in New York, in the early 1960s, Langlais decided that he no longer wanted to show work in galleries, and he and his wife moved permanently to Maine. In the last eleven years of his life, he constructed more than sixty-five **monumental** wood sculptures on the land around his home and produced a large collection of two- and three-dimensional works exploring the animal kingdom.



Modernist

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, artists experimented with techniques of creating images that were different from traditional painting and drawing. Art movements such as Cubism—creating an image using primarily geometric forms — or Pointalism—creating an image with small dots—are examples of Modernist art forms.

Abstract Expressionism

An art movement that occurred after World War II. Artwork defined as Abstract Expressionism can have many different appearances, but there are some overarching similarities among them. The works are abstract, or do not look like anything realistic and are primarily shapes, line, and color. Also, they are often created spontaneously or without much planning.

Relief (sculptural)

A sculptural relief contains forms that project out from a background.

Monumental

Of great importance or size.

1 Bernard Langlais in Cushing, Maine, 1976. Photo: David Hiser.

2 Bernard Langlais, untitled (Three Lions) (in situ), c. 1976–1977; wood, paint, and metal; dimensions variable. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Colby College and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Frank Oebser (1900–1990)

Frank Oebser was a dairy farmer who created a series of **kinetic** and stationary works. Farm tools, carriages, old furniture, baling wire, and whatever materials were at hand became part his animated artwork of people and animals. For Oebser, transforming outdated machines into works of art allowed him to **upcycle** the objects and turn his farm into a place of joy. His art environment was called Little Program and was located in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

Kinetic (art)

An artwork that moves either naturally, such as a mobile, or is machine-operated.

Upcycle

To reuse discarded materials to create something new.



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1 Frank Oebser, untitled, c. 1970–c. 1989; cloth, leather, paint, plastic, rope, steel, wood, and mixed media; 87 x 189 x 74 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Frank Oebser, untitled, c. 1970–c. 1989; fiberboard, metal, paint, plastic, wire, and wood; 28 x 99 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Eddie Owens Martin

(1908–1986)

Eddie Owens Martin created a world of his own in **rural** Georgia. Martin grew up in Buena Vista, Georgia, as the son of sharecroppers—farmers who give part of their crop as payment to use the land. At the age of fourteen, he ran away from home to New York City and began developing his art practice. During an illness in the 1930s, Martin had a vision of **deities** from the future who told him he was going to become a “Pasaquoyan” named St. EOM. In 1957, Martin permanently returned to Georgia, moving into the family home he inherited, and began altering the house and grounds to transform the home and land into an art environment called Pasaquan.

Influenced by his research on the temples of pre-Columbian Mexico and the fabled lost continents of Mu and Atlantis, he embellished temples, pagodas, shrines, walls, and walkways with brightly painted, concrete **totem** faces, **mandalas**, snakes, and figures. After Martin’s death in 1986, the Pasaquan Preservation Society cared for the site. In 2008, Pasaquan was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2014, the Pasaquan Preservation Society, Columbus State University, and Kohler Foundation, Inc., preserved the site. It was gifted to Columbus State University for long-term **stewardship**.

Rural

A location with a small population in the countryside, typically consisting of farmland or forests.

Deities

Gods and goddesses in polytheistic religions, which are religions with more than one God.

Totem

An object or animal that is believed to have spiritual significance.

Mandala

A geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

Stewardship

The looking after, caring for, and managing of a place or object(s).



1 Eddie Owens Martin at Pasaquan, n.d. Courtesy of Columbus State University.

2 Eddie Owens Martin , Pasaquan (site view, front entrance, Buena Vista, GA), 1957–86. Photo: Brianna Wright, 2016, courtesy of Columbus State University.

A World of Inspiration

St. EOM drew inspiration from different cultures when designing Pasaquan.

What cultures have you learned about? For example, you might have learned about different cultures from your family history, in school, in books, on tv or in movies, or from traveling.

Do you have objects in your home that remind you of these cultures?

Research about one or more different cultures. You could look online at history museum websites or in books at your local library. Can you discover:

- What patterns are common on clothes, buildings, or objects?
- What foods are eaten daily and what foods are eaten for special occasions?
- If there are dances or traditions that are a part of the culture?
- What language is spoken and how to count in that language from 1 to 10?

Create!

- Create a visual journal entry about the culture or cultures you have learned about.

A visual journal entry combines both writing and drawing to describe an idea. What is the information that you found most interesting? What would you like to use as inspiration for an artwork one day?*

**Remember it is important that when you learn about different cultures and then create artwork inspired by them to not just copy something the people from that culture have created and use it out of its context. This is called appropriation. Always make sure to talk about how and why you were inspired in your artwork and to be sensitive about not using culturally significant or ceremonial images, objects, and ideas from that culture in your work. If you are not sure if it is ok, have a conversation with someone about it or choose a different idea.*

Keep Exploring!

Other artists in the Arts Center's collection were influenced by their travels or objects from other cultures. Look at the work of Mary Nohl and Ray Yoshida for more examples.

View more of Eddie Owens Martin's work at artpreserve.org/artists/eddie-owens-martin.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Connecting 11.1

Anchor Standard

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding

People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art

Essential Question

How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the views of a society? How does art preserve aspects of life?

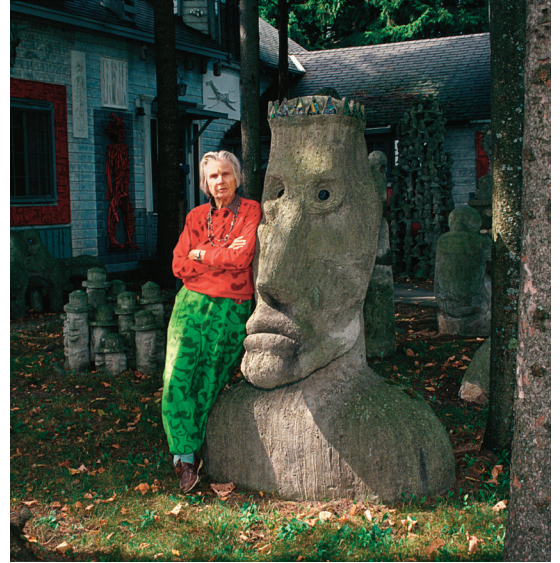
Mary Nohl (1914–2001)

Mary Nohl refused to be confined by artistic categorization. She was a painter, sculptor, ceramicist, printmaker, potter, woodcarver, writer, illustrator, and jeweler who described herself as simply “a woman who likes tools.” Nohl was also an environment builder who altered her lakefront home by filling every room and a large part of the yard with her works of art. Nohl often made her own rules; whether it was melting down her mother’s sterling silver to make jewelry or walking along the shore of Lake Michigan looking for **flotsam** to build driftwood figures, she was interested in everything and how it could be used in her creations as materials or inspiration.

Travel was an integral part of her life. Nohl learned as a girl that travel was an opportunity for her to explore the **visual culture** of other places, and she sketched and wrote about regional styles wherever she went. What influenced her the most, however, was the immense lake just outside her door. Nohl envisioned a fantasy world beneath the waves, where creatures lived funny and interesting lives. A cast of characters emerged in her paintings, sculptures, and in the **bas-relief wooden friezes** that enveloped her small home. The environment Nohl made was highly expressive of both her artistic character and that of her lakeshore cottage and yard.

Living alone, Mary was often perceived as introverted, but actually led a very sociable life. She held memberships at various art-based and social clubs—among them the Milwaukee Potter’s Guild, Chi Omega Sorority, Optimists Club, and the Walrus Club—and she frequently hosted guests in her home.

The home and yard of Mary Nohl are now cared for by the John Michael Kohler Arts Center. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and named a Milwaukee County Landmark. The Arts Center houses over thirty-five hundred Nohl works in addition to her archives.



Flotsam

Materials, man-made and natural, found floating on a body of water. Flotsam such as driftwood is often found washed ashore.

Visual Culture

Any imagery that we find in our environments, for example advertisements, artwork, clothing, architecture, signage, and symbols. Visual culture can be discussed both as a specific representation of a place or group of people or as a global idea.

Bas-relief Wooden Friezes

Bas-relief (pronounced bah-relief) is when the design elements such as figures and other design elements in a sculpture are slightly more raised than the surface. A frieze is an architectural element, typically attached at the top of building or near the ceiling.

1 Mary Nohl at her lake cottage (Fox Point, WI), 1994.
Photo: Ron Byers.

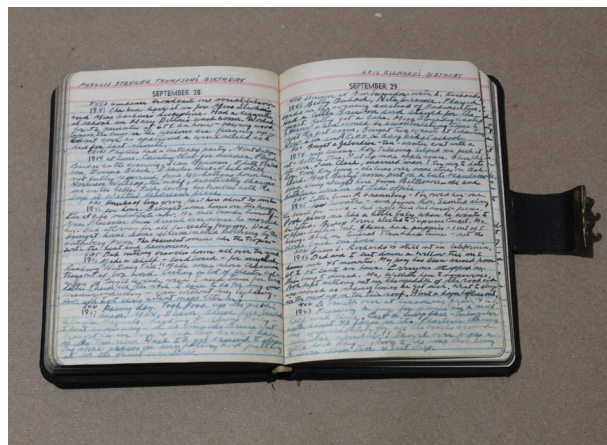
2 Mary Nohl art environment (site view, Fox Point, WI),
c. 1960–2001. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection,
gift of Kohler Foundation Inc. Photo: Kelly Bolter, 2018.

Daily Journaling

Mary Nohl had daily routines for her everyday habits such as creating art, exercising, and searching for treasures by the lake.

One important part of her routine was writing an entry in her five-year diary. A five-year diary has one page for each day of the year, and five small places for an entry on each page. If you write in a five-year diary everyday for five years, each page will show you what you did on that same day over five different years!

Because the spaces were so small, Mary used very tiny handwriting to add as many details as she could. Here is an example of her entry from September 29, 1972.



"Bowled first time – 132. My new bowling shoes are helping me. Got a nice 'Nohl Trees' letter from Sandy (Alexander) Nohl Platts with a lot of proudly... - From New Mexico. If I send them on to... will probably keep them – and I don't want to Xerox – though I caved at library. My desk gets covered with little scraps of paper... with notes to myself – each of which goes in basket when finished."

Discuss with a friend or write about the following ideas

- Why do artists reflect in journals?
- What are different ways that you can journal daily or weekly?
- How can you make a journal personally meaningful?

Try it!

Keep your own journal for a full week using the journal template. You can use drawings or words to record what happens each day. Find a journal template at jmkac.org/engage/educators/educator-resources.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection / Visual Arts Creating 2.3

Anchor Standard

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding

People create and interact with objects, places, and design that define, shape, enhance, and empower their lives.

Essential Question

How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities? How do artists and designers determine goals for designing or redesigning objects, places, or systems? How do artists and designers create works of art or design that effectively communicate?

This activity is part of a lesson written by Kris Lockhart as part of JMKAC's Teacher Fellowship Program. Find the full lesson at jmkac.org.

Carl Peterson (1869–1969)

Carl Peterson was born in 1869 in Sweden and was the oldest of seven children. Growing up with an enthusiasm for design, Peterson gained experience as a **blacksmith**, cabinetmaker, and sculptor. At nineteen, he moved to the United States to live with his uncle Johan Rask, a farmer living near Darfur, Minnesota.

In his fifties, Peterson began transforming his yard by creating sculptures of animals, castles, churches, and towers from **stone-inlaid** concrete. His work was inspired by the shapes and colors of his early life in Sweden. He hoped to make his American yard into a beautiful formal garden like those he remembered in Europe.

After Peterson died, his son lived in the home until 1985. The artwork was purchased and removed from the site. The Kohler Foundation, Inc., (KFI) learned about the work when ten pieces were auctioned in Maine. After bringing those pieces back to Wisconsin and **conserving** them, KFI continued to try to learn more about the site and find as many pieces as possible to bring the work back together. Some of the pieces are on view outside of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center.

Blacksmith

A person who creates objects with wrought iron or steel. They get the metal very hot and use different tools to shape it, such as special hammers.

Stone-inlaid

When stones are set into the surface of the artwork, typically to create a pattern or texture.

Conserve/Conservation

When artwork is damaged, conservation is the specific techniques and acts of repairing the damage.



1



2

1 Carl Peterson, untitled, c. 1925–c. 1935; concrete, stone, metal, and paint; John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Carl Peterson Sculpture Garden at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2010. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Herman Rusch (1885–1985)

The son of immigrants from East Prussia (now Poland), Herman Rusch was born in 1885 in Trout Run Valley, in northwestern Wisconsin. Rusch spent most of his teens working on farms, and in 1914, he took over the family farm when he married his wife, Sophie. He and Sophie raised three children.

Rusch retired in 1952 after forty years of farming. He first rented, then purchased, the Prairie Moon Dance Pavilion and transformed it into a museum. Rusch filled the arched-roof building with natural **phenomena**, **curios**, machines, and personal **mementos**. Among the objects in the museum was a tree grown around a scythe (a tool used for cutting crops like wheat) and a washing machine powered by a goat on a treadmill.

Concerned that the grounds of the museum were barren, Rusch built his first concrete and stone planter in 1958. By the age of 89, Rusch had created nearly forty sculptures to enhance the grounds.

In late 1994, Kohler Foundation, Inc., donated the Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden and Museum, to the Town of Milton to be maintained as a public art site. Visitors can see the site as part of the Wandering Wisconsin consortium, a group of nine art environments situated across the state.



Phenomena

Something that is known to exist, but where the origin or cause is questioned or unknown.

Curios

Unusual art objects.

Mementos

A souvenir or object that reminds someone of a specific time, place, or person.



1 Herman Rusch at his Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden & Museum. Photo: Sam and Jo Farb Hernández, 1974.

2 Herman Rusch, Prairie Moon Sculpture Garden & Museum (site view, Cochrane, WI), 1952–79. Photo: Robert Mertens, 1987.

Dr. Charles Smith (b. 1940)

Dr. Charles Smith is an artist, activist, minister, veteran, and historian. He creates **figural sculptures** about Black history to create a more equitable **representation** and educate people about the untold histories of African-American people.

His sculptures show famous events in history, such as the civil rights movement, and scenes from everyday life, like a family eating dinner together. Details are often added to the sculptures in the form of found objects like hats, broken glass, and fabric. Dr. Smith's artwork, created around his home—first in Aurora, Illinois, and currently in Hammond, Louisiana—is an **artist-built environment** that he titled African-American Heritage Museum + Black Veterans Archive. His museum is always open to visitors.

Dr. Charles Smith was inspired to open a second museum after stopping in Hammond, Louisiana, on his travels. When he stopped, he found a historical marker that included a grave marker titled “Unnamed Slave Boy.” Frustrated by the lack of equal representation in the story on the marker, Dr. Smith moved to Hammond and began his second museum, also titled African-American Heritage Museum + Black Veterans Archive. After Dr. Smith moved to Hammond, more than 500 of his sculptures from the first museum site in Aurora were acquired by other museums across the country.



The art of Dr. Charles Smith acts as both a **primary source** and a **secondary source** in teaching Black history. He draws on his own experience as a soldier when depicting scenes of war. Because he was a soldier in the Vietnam War, he acts as a primary source for his art in that case. Because he was not alive during the time of slavery, he acts as a secondary source who researched, then depicted that story.

Figural Sculpture

Three-dimensional art that represents or has elements of real forms, particularly the forms of humans and animals.

Representation

Generally, representation is a verbal, written, or visual description of a person, event, culture, place, or objects. Culturally, representation focuses those descriptions on teaching and sharing the history of all people truthfully and equally.

Artist-built Environment

A unique place—usually a home—that is transformed by an artist. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, they typically are made using nearby and easily accessible materials.

Primary Source

An original artifact such as a document, photograph, or artwork from a specific time period or historical event, or a person who experienced the time period or event.

Secondary Source

An artifact, document, or other informative piece about a person, place, thing, or event, that the creator did not directly experience or know. For example, a book about dinosaurs is a secondary source.

Secondary Source Shape Responses

1. Look at examples of Dr. Charles Smith's work online at jmkac.org/artist/smith-dr-charles or use the images on this handout. Choose a sculpture, a shape in one of the sculptures (such as a camera, a shoe, or a hat), or create your own shape inspired by his work.

Sketch your shape on a piece of paper.

2. Fill in the shape with words or designs that express your reactions to Dr. Charles Smith's work. You can also write a poem, such as a "see, think, wonder" poem.

Complete the following sentences to create a poem.

I see...

I think...

I wonder...

Find more ideas for poems at socialstudio.space.

3. Cut out your shape poem, tape it to a skewer, and display it, for example, in your home, classroom, or garden.

4. If you are working with friends, family, or in a group, discuss your responses together and create a collaborative display of all of your shapes.

Additional Resources and Extensions

- Read anti-racist books. Find suggested children's books at <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/childrens-books>.
- Research online or at your library to learn about the history of the people Dr. Charles Smith represents in his work, including Louis Armstrong, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Watch Dr. Charles Smith tour his Hammond, Louisiana, environment at <https://vimeo.com/270386320>.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connections

Visual Arts Connecting 11.1

Anchor Standard

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding

People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art.

Common Core Social Studies Literacy Standards
Grades 6-8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic



Dr. Charles Smith, (from left) *Horn Player: Louis Armstrong Series*, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 32 3/4 x 9 1/2 x 13 1/2 in. *Rosa Parks*, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 40 x 18 3/4 x 29 in. *untitled*, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 44 1/2 x 9 1/2 x 12 in. *Issues*, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 46 x 18 x 25 in. *Woman with Fancy Earrings*, c. 1985–c. 1999; concrete, paint, and mixed media; 36 x 18 x 10 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Fred Smith (1886–1976)

Fred Smith grew up in Ogema, Wisconsin. As an adult, he worked in area lumber camps with horses and hand-operated tools. He also grew Christmas trees and **ginseng** to help support his family. At age sixty-two, after his retirement, he began building **bas-relief** plaques and sculptures near the tavern he owned, the Rock Garden Tavern, in Phillips, Wisconsin. He would eventually create 237 concrete and mixed-media sculptures. The art environment is known today as Wisconsin Concrete Park.

The sculptures have **armatures** of wood, steel pipe, and wire covered with concrete, embellished with materials Smith salvaged, including brown beer bottle pieces, mirror shards, reflectors, colored glass, rocks, and other materials. Many of the sculptures show the history of Northern Wisconsin, told through representations of people, animals, tales, and events that impacted the area. He stated, “Nobody knows why I made them, not even me. This work just came to me naturally. I started one day in 1948 and have been doing a few a year ever since.”



1

Ginseng

A Chinese perennial herb that has five leaflets on each leaf, scarlet berries, and a root used in herbal medicine, especially in eastern Asia.

Bas-relief

A sculptural relief is when forms project out from a background. Bas means low. A bas-relief means that the sculpture is low or does not project out very far from the background.

Armature

An armature is like the skeleton of a sculpture. It is a frame that an artist places the material for a sculpture, such as clay or concrete, onto to make it stronger.



2

1 Fred Smith, untitled, n.d.; concrete, glass, paint, and wood; 78 x 41 3/4 x 41 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Price County Forestry Department and Friends of Fred Smith.

2 Fred Smith, *Woman and Angel* (detail, Wisconsin Concrete Park, Phillips, WI), 1948–64. Photo: Fred Scruton, 2004.

It's Gotta be in Ya!

What memories stick with you? Is there a place or an object you would want to save were it in danger of being destroyed?

Many artist-built environments, like Fred Smith's Wisconsin Concrete Park, exist today because people saw the importance and value in the site artwork and made sure that it was preserved for future generations.

Watch the stop-motion animated video by Souther Salazar to hear the story of how former Arts Center Director Ruth Kohler helped ensure that Fred Smith's environment could remain in its location as he created it.

vimeo.com/205906008

Then discuss the following questions or write and draw about them in a sketchbook.

- What place or object means a lot to you?
- Share a story about your favorite memory from that place or about the object.
- Why would you want to save that place or object if it were in danger?

Additional Resources and Extensions

- View more of Fred Smith's work and learn about other artist-built environments at jmkac.org/art-preserve/collections.
- Perform your own puppet show or create a stop motion animation inspired by Souther Salazar to tell a story about the site that you would preserve. Create 2-D or 3-D objects to use in your story, for example puppets and backgrounds. You can use basic materials to create your props such as paper and markers—or even cut out pictures of the place or object and tape it to a stick to make a puppet! Many free apps are available for smart phones and tablets to create a stop motion animation.



For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connections

Visual Arts Responding 7.1

Anchor Standard

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding

Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.

Essential Question

How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?

Fred Smith, untitled, n.d.; concrete, glass, paint, and wood; 78 x 41 3/4 x 41 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Price County Forestry Department and Friends of Fred Smith.

Lenore Tawney (1907-2007)

Lenore Tawney was an American artist who is known for developing new ideas and techniques for creating art using **fiber**. She made other types of artwork during her life, including drawings, collages, and **assemblages**.

Fiber is traditionally used to create **utilitarian** objects, such as clothing, rugs, and pillows. Lenore Tawney used fiber to create sculptural artwork, using an approach that has been named **open-warp weaving**. Her work helped change the way people think about fiber art.

Lenore moved to New York City in 1957 when she was fifty years old and began to focus on making artwork using fibers. About ten years after moving to New York, Lenore had a studio space where she lived and worked. The space had very high ceilings which allowed her to create much larger work.



The contents of her studio are now a part of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center's collection. The objects are displayed at the Art Preserve. This is the first time that the Arts Center has labeled a studio space as an **artist-built environment**.

Fiber

A natural material, such as cotton or wool, or synthetic material, such as polyester or acrylic, that can be used in weaving to create a fabric.

Assemblage

An artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials that are put together on one surface.

Utilitarian

An object that has a specific function.

Warp

The threads that are warped, or stretched to have tension, on a frame or loom. They typically run vertically, or up and down.

Weaving (verb)

Creating a fabric by interlacing materials through a fiber warp in various patterns. Tawney's experimentation with open-warp weaving techniques resulted in loose, free-flowing works.

Artist-built Environment

A unique place—frequently a home—that is transformed. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, they typically are made of materials that are easily accessible and found nearby.

Paul J. Smith, Lenore Tawney's 20th Street Studio, 1985; digital file from the negative; dimensions variable. Courtesy of Paul J. Smith.

Playing with Fiber

Tawney's work was known for being experimental. She learned traditional methods of creating art with fiber, such as weaving on a loom, and discovered her own, unique processes through her art practice.

To be able to experiment, you have to become familiar with the material and learn how it works.

Use yarn or string and try the following:

- Create a braid using three different strands*
- Create a piece of finger knit fabric*
- Invent your own way to use the yarn or string. Can you make something functional? Or something decorative?

* **Find video tutorials for these processes at socialstudio.space**

Additional Activities

- Find a video about Lenore Tawney and more images of her work at artpreserve.org/artists/lenore-tawney.
- Learn more about how fabric is woven by reading books from your local library or searching online. Can you find out what makes linen different from cotton fabric?



For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Creating 2.2

Anchor Standard

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding

Artists and designers balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility while developing and creating artworks.

Essential Question

How do artists and designers care for & maintain materials, tools, & equipment? Why is it important for safety & health to understand and follow correct procedures in handling materials and tools? What responsibilities come with the freedom to create?

Lenore Tawney, *Written in Water*, 1979; canvas, linen, and acrylic; 120 x 120 x 120 in. Courtesy of the Lenore G. Tawney Foundation, New York. Photo: Rich Maciejewski.

James Tellen (1880–1957)

James Tellen worked as a “striper” at the Northern Furniture Company in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Stripers added accent stripes and details to chairs and other furniture. After a stay in a local hospital in 1942 where he viewed marble statues of saints and grottos from his window, he was inspired to create his own sculptural environment.

Beginning in 1942 and continuing until his death in 1957, James Tellen created more than thirty sculptures out of concrete in the woods surrounding his family’s summer cottage in Wilson, Wisconsin. He built the cottage with his wife, Elizabeth, in the 1920s. When he built the cabin, he learned about the properties of concrete, which helped him understand how to use the material to create sculptures out of concrete later in his life.

His sculptures are inspired by historical, religious, and **mythical** people and stories. Visitors can visit the site as part of Wandering Wisconsin, a group of nine **artist-built environments** across the state.

Mythical

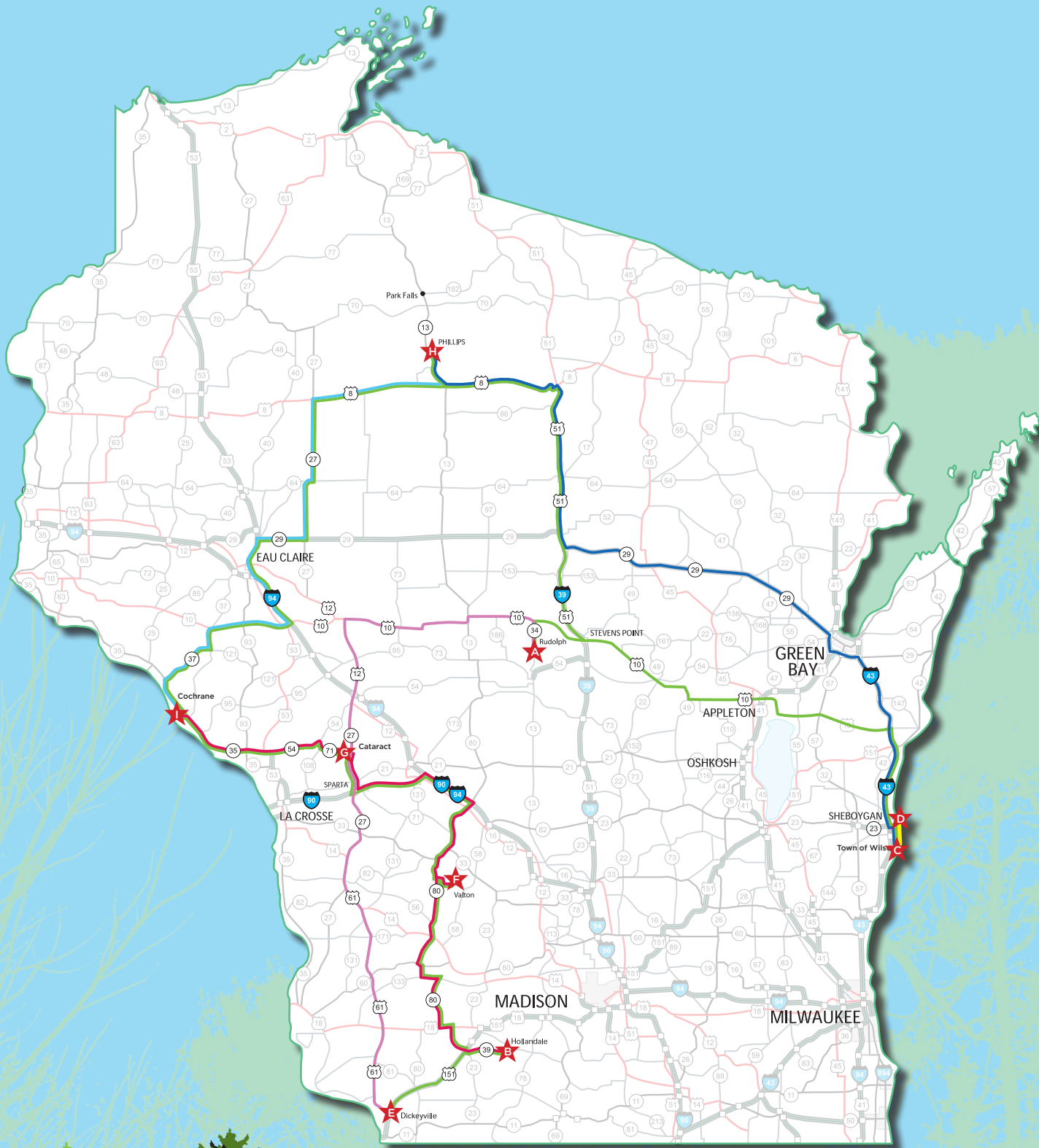
Something that happens or exists in a fairy tale, myth, or folk tale. In some cases you might believe that it could be real, but there is no evidence.

Artist-built Environment

A unique place—usually a home—that is transformed by an artist. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, they typically are made using nearby and easily accessible materials.



- 1 James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden (site detail, Native American family tableau, Town of Wilson, WI), c. 1942–1957, John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.
- 2 James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden (site view, Town of Wilson, WI), c. 1942–1957, John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.



To learn more, visit wanderingwisconsin.org.

Gregory Van Maanen (b. 1947)

Gregory Van Maanen was born in 1947 in Paterson, New Jersey. He received a **Purple Heart** after serving in the Vietnam War between June 1968 and January 1970. His art making offered an escape from his upsetting memories from the war. He described it as “**self-preservation** sometimes shared with others.”

Van Maanen believes in the healing power of art for veterans and nonveterans. Today, his body of work includes several thousand paintings, drawings, sculptures, and found objects featuring skulls, all-seeing eyes, open palms, glowing hearts, and a range of personalized symbols of protection and “good magic.”

Van Maanen continues to create art and resides in upstate New York. His work has been widely shown in group exhibitions and is in several **permanent collections**.

Purple Heart

A military decoration for those wounded or killed in action, established in 1782 and re-established in 1932.

Self-preservation

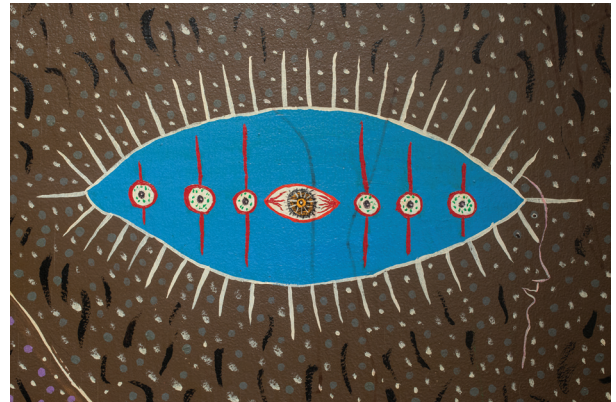
The basic instinct in human beings and animals to protect oneself from harm or death.

Permanent Collection

The artwork that a museum owns; the museum either purchases or is given the work. When a museum decides to keep a work or purchase a work, it is called accessioning.



1



2

1 Gregory Van Maanen, *the devil's after your ass*, 1989; paint on wood; 64 x 48 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Gregory Van Maanen, *untitled (detail)*, c. 1983; paint on wood; 72 x 36 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Kohler Foundation Inc.

Processing through Creating

Connect to Gregory Van Maanen's work by creating your own artwork to process trauma or express ideas about caring for your mental health.

This project was designed in 2020 in collaboration with Sheboygan high school student Sara Vang. She was inspired to create a project about mental health because she sees it as a crucial focus in an age of overwhelming information and limitless connection through technology. She shares, "We become lost in seas of media, and when we are lost, we fail to reach out. The purpose of this project is to counter this by reaching out to the community and encouraging connection. It offers an outlet for those who wish to share about their lives." Sara hopes that her project, called Project Vividly, will help us find connections we have never thought of before.

Create your artwork

1. Design an artwork about your experience with mental health. You can use any media—for example, paint, collage, sculpture, and photography.
2. Consider these questions when designing your artwork:
 - How has your life been affected by mental health, either personally or through someone you know?
 - How has your life affected your mental health?
 - Are there any moments in your life that you feel fundamentally changed who you are?
3. Create your art! You can be abstract, simple, whimsical, wild. You can even write a poem! Be yourself and put your experience down on paper.
4. Choose how to display your art.
 - You can work with a group, for example, with friends, family, or a classroom, to create a group of artwork to display together.
 - Display your artwork in your room or home.
 - Give your artwork as a gift or share a picture of it with friends and family through e-mail, text, or social media.

Additional Information

View more of Gregory Van Maanen's artworks at artpreserve.org/artists/gregory-van-maanen.

Explore mindfulness resources at mhasheboygan.org.

Visit socialstudio.space to view the work created for Sara's project, Project Vividly, and displayed in the Social STUDIO in May of 2021.

Stella Waitzkin (1920–2003)

Stella Waitzkin was born in 1920 in New York to Austrian immigrant parents. Izzy, as her father was known, owned a successful lighting fixture company. He hoped his two daughters and one son would help continue the business, but Waitzkin, unlike her siblings, did not want to be a part of the business. She married her husband, Abe, who worked for the lighting company, in 1942, and divorced in 1959.

Waitzkin then traveled from Great Neck, New York, to New York City to study painting with Hans Hofmann and life drawing with Willem de Kooning. During the 1960s and '70s, Waitzkin expanded her work to include sculpture, performance art, and film. Waitzkin also experimented with plastics, a new material that allowed for innovative casting methods. In 1969, Waitzkin moved to an apartment on the fourth floor in the Hotel Chelsea in New York City, a place that would influence the rest of her life. In her apartment, Waitzkin cast old, leather-bound volumes in resin as colorful single objects and as elements of larger installations.

Residing for more than three decades at the Chelsea, Waitzkin filled the walls of her small fourth-floor apartment with a library of colorful, cast-resin books and other sculptural and **found objects** that she termed Details of a Lost Library.



1

Found Objects

Objects that are used as non-traditional art making tools or materials. Often, a found object is something that was discarded or no longer usable for its original purpose, or something from nature that can be collected, such as driftwood and rocks. Sometimes a found object is still functional for its original purpose, but is reimagined in an artwork. For example, buttons can become a texture that covers a sculpture.



2

1 Stella Waitzkin. Family photograph courtesy of Fred Waitzkin, c. 1970.

2 Stella Waitzkin, untitled (individual library elements), c. 1969–2003; resin, paint, wood, and mixed media. John Michael Kohler Arts Center, gift of the Waitzkin Memorial Library Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

The Impact of Your Surroundings

Stella Waitzkin's environment played an important role in her work. Elements of her environment, such as the people who surrounded her, where she lived and vacationed, the music she listened to, and her emotions, influenced her work.

Take a moment to reflect. How does your own environment and the current time period we are in influence you and your work?

Document your thoughts. You could make a voice recording, use a journal or sketchbook, create a digital collage, or have a conversation with a friend.

Interview a friend or family member who grew up in a different time period. What is different about the time period when they were a child versus the time period you experienced? How do you think your experiences make you similar or different?

Keep Exploring!

Discuss or journal: Stella Waitzkin's later work includes recurring imagery such as fish, birds, and faces. Do you notice recurring imagery or ideas in your own work?

View more of Waitzkin's work at artpreserve.org/artist/stella-waitzkin.

Research and look at the work of Waitzkin's professors and abstract expressionists Hans Hoffmann and Willem de Kooning.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connection

Visual Arts Connecting 11.1

Anchor Standard

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Enduring Understanding

People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art

Essential Question

How does art help us understand the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures?

How is art used to impact the views of a society? How does art preserve aspects of life?

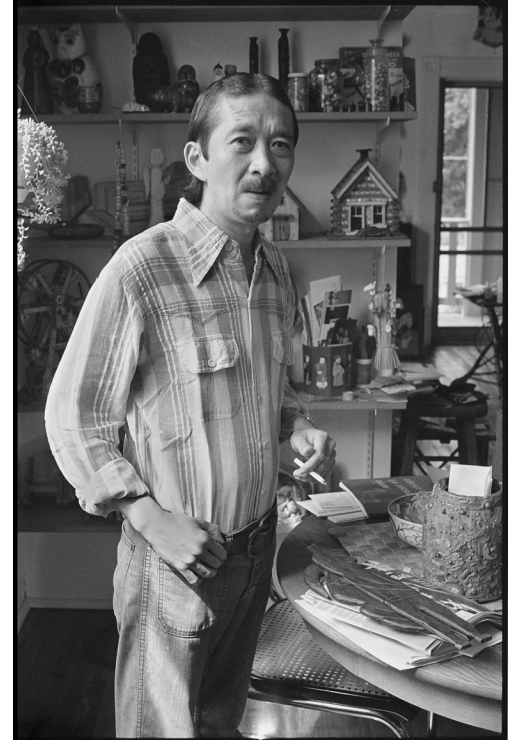
Ray Yoshida (1930–2009)

Ray Yoshida was born in 1930 in Hawaii. After serving in the military, he studied art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Syracuse University. In 1959, he began teaching at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Over the next four decades, he became an important person on the Chicago's **art scene**. He is known as both a peer and mentor to a group of artists known as the Chicago Imagists.

Yoshida mostly created paintings, but collage was a regular part of his art practice. He carefully cut out images from comics, and then pasted the images onto different surfaces such as sketchbooks, paper, and canvas and kept loose pieces organized in small boxes.

Yoshida also collected unique and interesting objects. He often chose and organized objects based on the **elements and principles of art**, such as form, shape, line, and color. Placing objects in different arrangements highlighted the similarities and differences among the objects. He was interested in how placing two different objects next to each other could change their meaning. Yoshida acknowledged that living in and among these objects also changed him.

His expansive collection ranges from works of art by **self-taught artists** and fellow art professors to souvenirs and treasures found at flea markets to ritual masks of New Guinea.



Yoshida did not like to talk about his life, but he did enjoy sharing information about the objects in his collection. These objects and their stories helped him connect to the people in his life. Yoshida's process of discovering and collecting these objects inspired generations of Chicago artists to find their own meaningful connections to the material world around them.

In 2012, the Arts Center acquired the majority of Yoshida's home collection, amounting to approximately 2,600 works. The collection was shown in the 2013 exhibition *Ray Yoshida's Museum of Extraordinary Values* and is on view at the Art Preserve.

Art Scene

A phrase that refers to the people, places, and events in the visual arts at a specific period of time. For example, someone could say that New York City has an exciting art scene because it contains lots of galleries and museums and many artists live there.

Elements and Principles of Art

Seventeen different concepts that can comprise the foundation of an art practice. The elements of art are: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value; the ten principles of art are: balance, emphasis, harmony, movement, pattern, proportion, repetition, rhythm, unity, and variety.

Self-taught Artists

Artists who did not go to art school or receive formal training in art.

Ray Yoshida in his apartment (site view, c. 1980), Chicago, IL, 1953–2003. Photo: William H. Bengtson.

Collect, Reflect, Repeat

Try it!

1. Go to a place where you keep objects that you collect or that are important to you. Observe the objects just as they are while independently journaling or having a conversation with another person to answer the following:

Describe or draw the objects. *What are their most important characteristics? Are they tall? Small? What are they made out of? What color are they? Where did they come from? Why do you like them? Why are they organized in this way? Does the way they are organized right now tell you anything about the objects?*

2. Decide, independently or as a group, how to rearrange the objects either in the same place or in a different space. You can remove objects from or add new objects to the arrangement.

3. Through journaling or conversation, answer the following:

Has the meaning of the objects changed now in their new arrangement? Why or why not?

Additional Resources and Extensions

- Repeat this activity with the same or different objects. Reflect on how the experience changes, now that you have practiced the activity.
- Look at more images of Yoshida's artwork and his collections at artpreserve.org/artist/ray-yoshida.
- Learn about the Chicago Imagists at www.chicagomagists.com.
- Try Ray Yoshida's collage process. Cut out images, such as comics, and then organize them in containers and create collages on paper or canvases.

For K-12 Educators

Suggested National Standard Connections

Visual Arts Reflecting 7.1

Anchor Standard

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Enduring Understanding

Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed through engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments.

Visual Arts Creating 3.1

Anchor Standard

Refine and complete artistic work.

Enduring Understanding

Artist and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising, and refining work over time.



Ray Yoshida's *Museum of Extraordinary Values* installation view (Tableau 5, detail) at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 2013. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of the Raymond K. Yoshida Living Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

Glossary

Abstract

In art, an artwork that does not look realistic or representational that is created using only shape, color, line, and texture.

Abstract Expressionism

An art movement that occurred after World War II. Artwork defined as Abstract Expressionism can have many different appearances, but there are some overarching similarities among them. The works are abstract, or do not look like anything realistic and are primarily shapes, line, and color. Also, they are often created spontaneously or without much planning.

Accession and Deaccession

When a museum decides to add a work to its collection, it is called accessioning. Accessioning an artwork means that the museum agrees to care for it and maintain it through proper storage and conservation. Sometimes a museum decides that an object no longer fits within the collection, or they can no longer care for the object. They can deaccession, or remove an object from the collection, through a process determined by the museum.

Alter Ego

A second personality or identity that is different from one's real identity. For example, in comic books, Superman is Clark Kent's alter ego.

Architecture

The practice of designing or constructing buildings, or the design of a building or structure.

Archival/Archives

Documents and objects that are important to the history of a person, place, or event.

Armature

An armature is like the skeleton of a sculpture. It is a frame that an artist places the material for a sculpture, such as clay or concrete, onto to make it stronger.

Art Scene

A phrase that refers to the people, places, and events in the visual arts at a specific period of time. For example, someone could say that New York City has an exciting art scene because it contains lots of galleries and museums and many artists live there.

Artist-built Environment

A unique place—usually a home—that is transformed by an artist. Often inspired by the life experiences of the artist, they typically are made using nearby and easily accessible materials.

Assemblage

An artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials that are put together on one surface.

Bas-relief

A sculptural relief is when forms project out from a background. Bas means low. A bas-relief means that the sculpture is low or does not project out very far from the background.

Care

To look after, give attention to, and protect a person, animal, place, or object.

Community

A group of people who live in the same place or share something in common.

Conserve/Conservation

If an artwork is damaged, conservation is the specific techniques and acts of repairing the damage.

Curios

Unusual art objects.

Decorative

A embellishment or additional detail added to an object, room, or building. Decorative is often used to describe an object that does not have a purpose other than looking beautiful to the viewer.

Deities

Gods and goddesses in polytheistic religions, which are religions with more than one God.

Dickeyville Grotto

An artist-built environment in Dickeyville, Wisconsin, created between 1918 and 1931 by Father Mathias Wernerus.

Glossary

Elements and Principles of Art

Seventeen different concepts that can comprise the foundation of an art practice. The elements of art are: color, form, line, shape, space, texture, and value; the ten principles of art are: balance, emphasis, harmony, movement, pattern, proportion, repetition, rhythm, unity, and variety.

Embellish

To add decorative materials to the surface of an object.

Epitaph

Words written in memory of a person who has died, typically placed on a tombstone.

Fiber

A natural material, such as cotton or wool, or synthetic material, such as polyester or acrylic, that can be used in weaving to create a fabric.

Figural Assemblages

An assemblage is an artwork made of various two- and three-dimensional materials. A figural assemblage is one that represents or has elements of real forms, particularly the forms of humans and animals.

Figural Sculpture

Three-dimensional art that represents or has elements of real forms, particularly the forms of humans and animals.

Flotsam

Materials, man-made and natural, found floating on a body of water. Flotsam such as driftwood is often found washed ashore.

Found Object

Objects that are used as nontraditional art-making tools or materials. Often, a found object is something that was discarded or no longer usable for its original purpose. It can also be something from nature that can be collected, such as driftwood and rocks. Sometimes a found object is still functional for its original purpose but is used in a different way in an artwork. For example, buttons can become a texture that covers a sculpture.

Gateway

An opening or entrance that can be closed by a gate.

Ginseng

A Chinese perennial herb that has five leaflets on each leaf, scarlet berries, and a root used in herbal medicine, especially in eastern Asia.

Healing

The process of becoming healthy again.

Identity

The characteristics or details that describe who a person, place, or thing is.

Imagination

The ability to be creative, to think of new ideas or solutions.

Immersive

In art, immersive spaces typically surround the viewer and may include many objects. It can be artwork placed in an existing space such as a room or home, a newly constructed space, or a space outdoors.

Immigrate

Move permanently to another country.

In situ

In the place it was originally created.

Industrial

Relating to manufacturing and factories. Typically, industrial sites have large machines designed to accomplish a task.

Kinetic (art)

An artwork that moves either naturally, such as a mobile, or is machine-operated.

Mandala

A geometric figure representing the universe in Hindu and Buddhist symbolism.

Media/Art Medium

The substance or material artists use to create their work.

Mementos

A souvenir or object that reminds someone of a specific time, place, or person.

Menagerie

A collection of wild animals kept in captivity for people to look at.

Mixed Media

The inclusion of more than one type of medium in a work of art. An art medium is the substance or material artists use to create their work.

Glossary

Mobile

A kinetic sculpture that hangs from the ceiling or another support. Mobiles are carefully balanced so that they can move freely from air movement.

Modernist

From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, artists experimented with techniques of creating images that were different from traditional painting and drawing. Art movements such as Cubism—creating an image using primarily geometric forms—or Pointalism—creating an image with small dots—are examples of Modernist art forms.

Monumental

Of great importance or size.

Mural

An artwork, typically a painting, created directly onto a wall.

Mythical

Something that happens or exists in a fairy tale, myth, or folk tale. In some cases you might believe that it could be real, but there is no evidence.

Narrative

A spoken or written story.

Painting

An artwork created using paint.

Panoramic

A wide view of a scene or picture.

Permanent Collection

The artwork that a museum owns; the museum either purchases or is given the work. When a museum decides to keep a work or purchase a work, it is called accessioning.

Personalization

Creating something specifically for one person.

Phenomena

Something that is known to exist, but where the origin or cause is questioned or unknown.

Preserve/Preservation

The process of keeping artwork intact and preventing damage.

Primary Source

An original artifact such as a document, photograph, or artwork from a specific time period or historical event, or a person who experienced the time period or event.

Purple Heart

A military decoration for those wounded or killed in action, established in 1782 and re-established in 1932.

Regional Tent Tour

Common in the 1800s and early 1900s, regional tent tours were shows or exhibits that took place in large tents and would travel to different towns.

Relief (sculptural)

A sculptural relief contains forms that project out from a background.

Representation

Generally, representation is a verbal, written, or visual description of a person, event, culture, place, or object. Culturally, representation focuses those descriptions on teaching and sharing the history of all people truthfully and equally.

Rural

A location with a small population in the countryside, typically consisting of farmland or forests.

Sculpture

A three-dimensional artwork with height, width, and depth.

Secondary Source

An artifact, document, or other informative piece about a person, place, thing, or event that the creator did not directly experience or know. For example, a book about dinosaurs is a secondary source.

Self-preservation

The basic instinct in human beings and animals to protect oneself from harm or death.

Self-taught Artists

Artists who did not go to art school or receive formal training in art.

Site Specific

An artwork created to be displayed at a particular location.

Glossary

Steward

A person or organization that looks after, cares for, and manages a place or object(s).

Stewardship

The looking after, caring for, and managing of a place or object(s).

Tableau

A group of sculptures representing a place or a story or an event from history.

Three-dimensional Art

Art with height, width, and depth, often also described as a sculpture.

Totem

An object or animal that is believed to have spiritual significance.

Transform

In art, to transform means to completely change the appearance of an object or place. Transformation in art may also change the meaning or function of the object or place.

Two-dimensional Art

A flat artwork, for example, a drawing on a piece of paper.

Upcycle

To reuse discarded materials to create something new.

Utilitarian

An object that has a specific function.

Vernacular

A building or object created using local materials and knowledge.

Visual Culture

Any imagery that we find in our environments, for example advertisements, artwork, clothing, architecture, signage, and symbols. Visual culture can be discussed both as a specific representation of a place or group of people or as a global idea.

Warp

The threads that are warped, or stretched to have tension, on a frame or loom. They typically run vertically, or up and down.

Weaving (verb)

Creating a fabric by interlacing materials through a fiber warp in various patterns.

Well-being

Being healthy and happy.

Whirligig

An object that has one part that spins.



Art Preserve **John Michael Kohler Arts Center**

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