

online lesson library site map

www.pbs.org/art21/education/onlinelessonlibrary.html

Abstraction & Realism

www.pbs.org/art21/education/abstraction

Title Describing the Real

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Ali, Antin, Ford, Herrera, Murray, Osorio, Pettibon, Puryear, Ritchie, Rothenberg, Sugimoto, Walker

Title Cartoon Commentary

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Ford, Herrera, Marshall, Pettibon, Walker

Title Looking at Likeness

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Antin, Hamilton, Hancock, Hawkinson, Marshall, Rothenberg, Walker

Labor & Craftsmanship

www.pbs.org/art21/education/labor

Title Dictators, Collaborators, Managers, and Soloists

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Antin, Barney, Celmins, Herring, Lin, Pettibon, Pfeiffer, Puryear, Ritchie, Serra, Smith, Stockholder, Wilson

Title Traditional Crafts, Contemporary Ideas

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Antoni, Mann, Puryear, Sikander, Suh

Title Converging Media

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Antoni, Applebroog, Barney, Cai, Chin, Hamilton, Murray, Smith, Wodiczko

Ritual & Commemoration

www.pbs.org/art21/education/ritual

Title Remaking Myths

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Hancock, Ritchie, Sikander, Smith, Wilson

Title Honoring Heroes and History

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Bourgeois, Herring, Lin, Puryear, Smith, Suh, Wodiczko

Title New Rituals

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Antoni, Nauman, Orozco

Home & Displacement

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Title Understanding Home

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Marshall, Osorio, Suh, Zittel

Title Migrating Viewpoints

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Orozco, Osorio, Sikander, Suh, Walker

Title Model Homes

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Kelley, Osorio, Ritchie, Suh, Tuttle, Zittel

The Natural World

www.pbs.org/art21/education/naturalworld

Title Ode to a View

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Celmins, Horn, Mann, McElheney, Orozco, Pfeiffer, Schorr, Turrell, Tuttle

Title Landscape and Place

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Celmins, Chin, Ford, Mann, Schorr, Turrell

Title In the Landscape

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Chin, Lin, Nauman, Orozco, Turrell

Technology & Systems

www.pbs.org/art21/education/technology

Title Systems and Styles

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Celmins, Gallagher, Nauman, Orozco, Pfeiffer, Ritchie, Zittel

Title Mediating Media

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Ali, Charles, Kilgallen, Kruger, Pfeiffer

Title New Tools, New Materials

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Antoni, Barney, Chin, Hamilton, Hawkinson, Lin, Zittel

Individuals & Collectives

www.pbs.org/art21/education/individuals

Title Characters and Caricatures

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Ali, Antin, Charles, Gallagher, Hancock, Herrera, Kilgallen, Stockholder, Walker, Wilson

Title Yearbook Tribes and Nomads

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Schorr, Suh

Title The Alter-Ego Saves the Day

Subject Area Visual/Performing

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Public & Private Spaces

www.pbs.org/art21/education/public

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Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Antoni, Atlas, Osorio, Schorr

Title The Face of Fame

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Horn, Pfeiffer, Schorr, Wodiczko

Title Public Façades, Private Interiors

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Lin, Puryear, Serra, Turrell

War & Conflict

www.pbs.org/art21/education/war

Title Wartime Voices

Subject Area Language Arts

Artists Antin, Schorr, Suh

Title War on Film

Subject Area Social Studies

Artists Cai, Korot, Mann, Schorr, Wodiczko

Title Confronting Conflict

Subject Area Visual/Performing

Artists Ali, Applebroog, Cai, Ford, Sikander, Walker

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art:21

ART IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

EDUCATORS' GUIDE TO THE FOURTH SEASON

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Credits

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get involved

www.art21.org

Teaching with Art21

The Teaching with Art21 toolkit is a broad-based introduction to contemporary art. This toolkit explores the art and ideas of artists working today, offering suggestions about how to bring discussions of contemporary art into the classroom and into the lives of students.

Professional Development Workshops

Art21's self-directed Professional Development Workshops encourage educators to develop techniques for integrating the thought provoking content of the Art:21 series into their teaching. Designed to assist individuals and organizations interested in hosting workshops, seminars, training events, and institutes, the toolkits contain suggestions for workshop content, as well as examples of past programs.

Preview Screenings

To initiate local screenings of Season 4, both nationwide and abroad, Art21 offers preview DVDs and a screening guide containing planning suggestions and publicity materials. Museums, schools, community-based organizations, and individuals are encouraged to host preview events before the Fall 2007 premiere to inspire new audiences and alert local communities about the broadcast.

Thematic and Artist-based Screenings

To promote flexibility and a diversity of approaches to hosting screening events, Art21 has created screening guides for each episode from all four seasons of the television series. Art21 strongly encourages both individuals and cultural institutions to incorporate participatory components to events such as question-and-answer sessions, panel conversations, guest speakers, or hands-on art-making activities.

additional resources

Art21 Slide and Digital images

www.pbs.org/art21/education/teachingmaterials

In partnership with Davis Publications, Art21 produces slide and digital images based on the artists featured in the series. Images are available individually or in complete sets by season.

Art21 Companion Books

www.pbs.org/art21/series/products

Art21's richly illustrated companion books mirror program themes, featuring essays by scholars and Art21 Executive Producer and Curator Susan Sollins (Volume 1) and interviews with the artists (Volumes 2, 3, and 4). Published by Harry N. Abrams, Art21 books are available where books are sold.



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introduction

Art21, Inc.

A private non-profit organization, Art21's mission is to increase knowledge of contemporary art, ignite discussion, and inspire creative thinking by documenting artists at work and in their own words.

Art21 illuminates the creative process for students, teachers, and the general public by producing films and videos, including the Emmy-nominated, nationally broadcast PBS series *Art:21—Art in the Twenty-First Century*, as well as books, two comprehensive Web sites, education materials, multimedia resources, and public programs featuring a diverse selection of visual artists working in the United States today.

Art:21—Art in the Twenty-First Century, the Series

Endorsed by the highly regarded imprimatur of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), Art21's Emmy-nominated series *Art in the Twenty-First Century* is an educational resource, a valuable archive, and a living history of contemporary art in the United States. It's a body of work with value that lives far beyond each Season's initial broadcast.

- *Art:21* is the first broadcast series for national public television to focus exclusively on contemporary visual art and artists in the United States.
- Four seasons have been produced for PBS (Fall 2001, Fall 2003, Fall 2005, and Fall 2007).
- Each season contains four, one-hour programs.
- Each hour features 3–5 artists in 12–15 minute segments.
- A total of 72 established and emerging artists have been featured.

Featured Artists

In the *Art:21* series, contemporary artists speak directly to the audience in their own words, reflecting on their lives, sources of inspiration, and working processes. Profiled artists include painters, sculptors, printmakers, photographers, installation and video artists, and artists working with new media, environmental or public issues, and hybrid forms.

Viewing the Series

Season 4 programs can be taped off the air and used for educational purposes at no cost for one year from the date of the first national broadcast, October 2007. Check local PBS station listings as broadcast times may vary.

For long-term use, Seasons 1 through 4 of the series are available on VHS and DVD from PBS Video and Davis Publications.

To order from PBS
1-800-PLAY-PBS (1-800-752-9727)
www.shoppbs.org

To order from Davis Publications
1-800-533-2847
www.davis-art.com

Audience

The series *Art in the Twenty-First Century* is produced for a broad range of public television audiences. Series-related education materials support the use of contemporary art in K-12 classrooms, on college and university campuses, and for adult and community audiences. The Educators' Guide content and additional online resources introduce critical concepts and opportunities for higher-level thinking relevant to middle, high school, and college students. Teachers who work with students of all ages are encouraged to interpret the material to support their individual teaching methods and needs.

Art21 strongly recommends that teachers preview all videos before showing them to determine whether the content is appropriate for their students' age level.



This guide is designed as a resource for planning lessons, facilitating discussions, introducing Season 4 video content in various contexts, and supporting further research and exploration of contemporary art and artists. Educators are encouraged to use the *Art in the Twenty-First Century* video series, Educators' Guides, and Art21 Web sites in tandem to integrate contemporary art and ideas into classroom learning and community dialogue.

Artist Pages

Biography A broad overview of each artist's work and working methods, including current and past projects. Biographies can also be found online at www.pbs.org/art21/artists

Media and Materials A synopsis of major media and materials referenced in the video segment and in current work. Use these media to compare and contrast with other artists across the series.

Key Words and Ideas Additional thematic connections and ways to relate the artists work and working process to curriculum. The Key Words and Ideas also reference relevant vocabulary to support discussion.

Discussion Questions Suggested discussion questions explore ideas introduced in the video and book. **Before Viewing** and **After Viewing** questions are provided to connect and build on audience knowledge before and after segments are screened.

Activities To follow up discussion questions, suggested activities provide opportunities for hands-on exploration of the ideas and materials presented in the series. Activities are open-ended and can be interpreted for different age levels, learning styles, and media choices.

Themes

Each one-hour program is loosely organized around a broad category or theme that helps viewers analyze, compare, contrast, and juxtapose the works of the profiled artists. These themes are intended to inspire interpretive possibilities, and in many cases the artists' works are relevant to multiple themes.

Discussion questions and suggested activities support investigation of the diverse artists featured within the theme but can also be used as general discussion topics relevant to artists across the series.

Glossary

Selected vocabulary words are highlighted in bold print throughout this Guide. Definitions for these words can be found in the glossary on page 32. An online glossary with additional vocabulary can be found at www.pbs.org/art21.

www.art21.org

In 2007, Art21 will launch a new Web site, www.art21.org. This Web site will feature video, community authoring tools, and social networking to create a dynamic and collaborative online environment in which to experience and discuss contemporary art.

www.pbs.org/art21

The series Web site provides more information about the artists featured in *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, including biographies, interviews, video clips, and slideshows.

Artists Online

www.pbs.org/art21/artists

For each artist featured in the broadcast series, Art21 produces a wide range of supporting resources to inspire further exploration. Slideshows include works of art as well as video stills from the broadcast. Interview transcripts present material from the series as well as new content from extended conversations with the artists. Video clips show short segments from the broadcast.

Online Lesson Library

www.pbs.org/art21/education/onlinelessonlibrary

The Online Lesson Library is an archive of interdisciplinary lesson ideas suitable for a single class period or for an entire semester. Lesson plans support teaching with contemporary art through references to literature, the humanities, visual literacy, **popular culture**, history, and current events. Links to national and state education standards, student worksheets, video clips, and slideshows enrich each lesson. Topics include **abstraction** and **realism**, home and displacement, individuals and collectives, labor and craftsmanship, the natural world, public and private space, **rituals** and commemoration, technology and systems, and war and conflict.

what is contemporary art?

Art21 defines contemporary art as the art of today, produced by artists who are living in the twenty-first century. It is both a mirror of contemporary society and a window through which we view and deepen our understanding of the world and ourselves.

Contemporary artists work in a globally influenced, culturally diverse, and technologically advancing world. Their art is a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts, and subjects that challenge traditional boundaries and defy easy definition. Diverse and eclectic, contemporary art is distinguished by the very lack of a uniform, organizing principle, ideology, or "ism." In the United States, contemporary artists give voice to the varied and changing landscape of American identity, values, and beliefs.

Contemporary viewers play an active role in the process of constructing meaning in art. With contemporary art, it is often said that the viewer completes the artwork by bringing to it his or her personal reflections, experiences, and opinions.

Connections to Teaching

- Bringing contemporary art into school and community learning enables educators to address issues that affect our lives, provoking curiosity, encouraging dialogue, and igniting debate about the world around us.
- *Art:21* artists serve as creative role models who inspire students to consider how ideas are developed, articulated, and realized in the contemporary world, and they offer educators opportunities to support diverse learning styles.
- Contemporary artists address both current events and historical ideas. These references help educators and students make connections across the curriculum and support interdisciplinary thinking.
- As artists continue to explore new technologies and media, the work they create encourages critical thinking and **visual literacy** in our increasingly media-saturated society.
- *Art:21* enables students to understand that contemporary art is part of a cultural dialogue that concerns larger contextual frameworks such as personal and cultural identity, family, community, and nationality.

teaching with contemporary art

An Introduction to Contemporary Art

Curiosity, openness, and dialogue are important tools for engaging audiences in contemporary art. Instead of questioning whether a work of art is good or bad, the study of contemporary art requires a more open-ended methodology and an inquiry-based approach. Asking questions that stimulate discussion and debate is the most important step in the process towards appreciating and interpreting works of art.

One of the cornerstones of the Art21 philosophy is to allow the artists to present their work in their own words and to encourage viewers to find their own innate abilities to consider, react, and respond to visual art.

Use the questions and activities on the following page as a way to introduce broad concepts and ideas that artists address in their work.



Starting a Conversation about Contemporary Art

What makes a work of art a work of art? Is contemporary art defined by particular boundaries or parameters? (See artists Jaar, Allora & Calzadilla, Dion, Manglano-Ovalle, and Ryman)

What is the role of the artist? Has this role changed over time? (See artists Spero, Dion, Adams, Jaar, Holzer, and Pittman)

What distinguishes visual art from other forms of visual communication like advertising and **photojournalism**? (See artists Adams, L  , Holzer, and Bradford)

Who decides what a work of art means—the artist, the critic, the viewer, or history? (See artists Pittman, Ryman, Manglano-Ovalle, Allora & Calzadilla, and Dion)

What are the most important skills an artist can have? (See artists Dion, Simmons, Pfaff, Huyghe, Jaar, Sullivan, and Bradford)

Where do artists find inspiration? (See artists von Rydingsvard, Bradford, Spero, Simmons, and Pfaff)

What materials and tools do artists use to create art today? Have tools for making art changed over time? (See artists Manglano-Ovalle, Huyghe, von Rydingsvard, Spero, Sullivan, Allora & Calzadilla, Holzer)

What is the difference between working alone and collaborating with fabricators, audiences, others? (See artists von Rydingsvard, Pfaff, Ryman, Manglano-Ovalle, Dion, Sullivan, Allora & Calzadilla, and Simmons)

In addition to museums and galleries, what are other sites or venues where art can be shown? How does the location or context of a work of art affect its meaning? (See artists von Rydingsvard, Jaar, Sullivan, Bradford, and Holzer)

What are the subjects, issues, and themes important to artists working today? (See artists Pittman, Adams, Jaar, Spero, L  , Bradford, Simmons, Dion, and Huyghe)

What role does beauty play in contemporary art? Does a work of art need to be beautiful? (See artists Adams, Pittman, Ryman, and L  )

Suggested Activities

Initiate a debate based on any of the previous discussion questions. Turn the question into a statement and have students develop arguments for and against to present to the class.

Encourage students to write regularly in a journal or notebook to keep questions, ideas, or pictures related to their art-viewing experiences. Use any of the **Before Viewing** and **After Viewing** questions as journal assignments to be completed in anticipation of a group discussion.

Use the *Art:21* series and the Web site to prepare students to view art in museums, galleries, and other exhibition venues. Discuss the different ways audiences can see and experience contemporary art (in the *Art:21* series, on the Internet, in person, etc.) and reflect on how these different contexts influence the way we look at and interpret the work.

View a range of different artist segments to inspire students to write their own artist statements.

Use Art21 as a springboard to connect with your local arts community. Invite a local artist, **curator**, or collector to discuss particular artists, issues, or concepts relevant to your audience.

Using Video in the Classroom

Teachers should preview all video content. Consider viewing a single artist profile or specific portions of different artist profiles to address specific discussion questions or to anticipate a hands-on activity.

Prepare viewers for what they will see. Initiate a discussion or writing exercise using the Before Viewing questions. These questions are designed to set up expectations about the content and solicit personal experiences and opinions.

Ask viewers to identify vocabulary words while watching. Use the Art21 Glossary to discuss and clarify relevant terms.

Introduce additional resources such as copies of artist interviews, images of specific works of art, or lesson ideas and topics found on the Art21 Web site www.pbs.org/art21. These resources introduce specific ideas or themes addressed in the video segments and can support post-viewing discussion.

Encourage active viewing by identifying appropriate points for pausing, clarifying, or expanding on what participants are seeing and hearing. Stop and revisit the pre-viewing questions or ideas when relevant. Encourage participants to take notes, sketch, or consider specific questions while they watch.

Facilitate after-viewing discussion by analyzing and responding to the video segment with relevant discussion and follow-up activities. Consider ways for participants to process their ideas independently before sharing them with the group either by writing or drawing.

Use the Art21 themes to initiate conversation about multiple artists and their work. Compare and contrast different creative models for thinking and making, as well as ways of problem solving and expressing ideas.

For more information and resources about using contemporary art in the classroom, visit www.art21.org

Theme ecology

Robert Adams born 1937, Orange, New Jersey

Mark Dion born 1961, New Bedford, Massachusetts

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle born 1961, Madrid, Spain

Ursula von Rydingsvard born 1942, Deensen, Germany

How is our understanding of the natural world deeply cultural? This thematic hour features artists who address the submission of wilderness by civilization, the foundations of scientific knowledge, the impact of technology on biology and society, and mankind's relationship to the earth, forged by working the land.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Research and discuss the term “**ecology**.” How does the term apply to the man-made environment as well as to the natural world? How does it relate to issues that are currently in the news?

■ How do ideas about the human relationship to nature vary across world cultures?

Across historical time periods? What are some of the ways these ideas have been expressed in visual, musical, or literary form?

■ What are the most pressing environmental issues that society faces today? What role can artists play in addressing these issues?

After Viewing

■ How does each artist in this hour explore human relationships to the environment? What are some of the different ways they describe or create environments?

■ How is an artist's process a kind of **ecology**? Describe the “artistic **ecology**” specific to each of the artists featured in this hour. How does each artist interact with their assistants or **collaborators**? What environments do they operate within? Who is their audience and what impact does their work have on society?

ACTIVITIES

■ Create a visual web or diagram that illustrates the different elements or participants within an ecosystem of your choice. Select a real system (school, neighborhood, biological, or political) or an invented one (a novel, film, or television series).

■ All four artists in this hour use **metaphor** as a tool. Create a visual response to a pressing environmental concern using **metaphor** to carry the message. Write a poem or artist's statement that expands on the ideas explored in your visual work.

I'm interested in ecologies, whether those are political and social ecologies or natural ecologies. Understanding the interrelatedness of things is interesting to me, and I think that it's something we often miss in our culture.—Mark Dion

Theme paradox

Jennifer Allora born 1974, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mark Bradford born 1961, Los Angeles, California

Guillermo Calzadilla born 1972, Havana, Cuba

Robert Ryman born 1930, Nashville, Tennessee

Catherine Sullivan born 1968, Los Angeles, California

How do contemporary artists address contradiction, **ambiguity**, and truth? The artists in this episode blur the boundaries between **abstraction** and representation, fact and fiction, order and chaos. Creating **juxtapositions** that are at times disorienting, playful, and unexpected, these artists engage with uncertainty and plumb the relationship between mystery and meaning in art.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss and define the term “**paradox**” by consulting a variety of sources. What are examples of paradox? Where do we see paradox in the world?

■ How does contemporary art defy expectations? What artworks have challenged your expectations regarding the way they look, how they were made, or the ideas they address? Can a successful work of art make you uncomfortable, confused, angry?

After Viewing

■ Return to the definitions of **paradox** that you discussed earlier. Now that you are familiar with the artists included in this theme, has your understanding of paradox changed?

■ How do the artists in this thematic hour include humor in their work? How is humor related to the idea of **paradox**?

■ Catherine Sullivan is interested in **paradoxical** “social **rituals**” such as the cruel/comedic games played at wakes in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. List contemporary situations that play with similar **juxtapositions**, such as frightening/fun. How do the other artists in this hour explore contradiction or incongruity?

ACTIVITIES

■ Mark Bradford says of his art practice, “In archaeological terms, I excavate and build at the same time.” Choose two opposite verbs or negating activities, such as revealing and concealing and using this framework, create a visual comment on your local environment or a current issue.

For us, the idea of having a work that has contradictions is very important—when, in affirming something, it includes itself and attacks itself. How can you put together all of these things that have nothing to do with each other? You use glue! Glue can be an idea, a word. You can use an ideological glue. —Allora & Calzadilla

■ Contronyms, also known as “autantonyms” or “Janus words,” have two opposite meanings. For example, the word “dust” can mean “to remove fine particles,” or it can mean “to add fine particles.” Put together a list of contronyms and play a game of charades or Pictionary using each word's opposite meaning as the clue.

Theme protest

Jenny Holzer born 1950, Gallipolis, Ohio

Alfredo Jaar born 1956, Santiago, Chile

An-My Lê born 1960, Saigon, Vietnam

Nancy Spero born 1926, Cleveland, Ohio

How does contemporary art engage politics, inequality, and the many conflicts that besiege the world today? How do artists use their work to investigate issues such as misery, turmoil, and injustice? This episode examines the ways in which contemporary artists picture war, express outrage, and empathize with the suffering of others.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss the idea of protest in relation to personal experience as well as local, national, and global events. What current events and historical issues have been protested? Are there differences between what has been protested in the past and what is protested now? What forms can protest take? In what ways have protests of the past affected contemporary forms of protest?

■ Discuss historic works of art that address political or controversial subjects, such as Goya's Black Paintings or Picasso's *Guernica*. Do artists have a role or responsibility in times of conflict or violence? Do viewers?

After Viewing

■ How do issues of **ambiguity** and contradiction surface in the work of artists featured in this episode? How do these terms challenge conceptions about the nature of protest and how protest is realized?

■ How do these artists address or anticipate their audiences? What are the expectations of viewers in relation to their work?

ACTIVITIES

■ Make a list of the various **symbols** and appropriated imagery used by the artists featured in this hour. Create a new set of **symbols**, images, or text that can be used in a poster series, a postcard, or another printed form to express personal ideas about a current event or political cause. Display or mail your work to a targeted audience.

■ Redesign found images of political **propaganda** or protest-related material to create a sense of **ambiguity** and encourage a conversation or dialogue about related issues.

Maybe the strongest work I've done is because it was done with indignation.
—Nancy Spero

Theme romance

Pierre Huyghe born 1962, Paris, France

Judy Pfaff born 1946, London, England

Lari Pittman born 1952, Los Angeles, California

Laurie Simmons born 1949, Long Island, New York

What role do emotion, fantasy, and nostalgia play in contemporary art? How do contemporary artists further and react to traditionally romantic ideas such as sentimentality, pathos, and the philosophy of art for art's sake? This thematic hour poses questions about the value of pleasure in art and features artists whose works are extended meditations on mortality, love, and make-believe.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Make a list of personal and cultural associations with the word "romance." Where do ideas about romance come from? Compare and contrast historic and contemporary ideas about the nature of romance. Consider diverse cultural sources such as *The Tale of the Genji* or Shakespeare's sonnets, as well as current popular media such as movies and tabloids. Is romance real, invented, constructed, personal, universal?

After Viewing

■ Discuss the concept of having a romance with a work of art. Can an artist have a romance with specific materials or techniques? What works of art, materials, or working methods from this hour were inspiring?

■ In what ways do the artists in this hour include elements of nostalgia, heroism, cynicism, fantasy, and melodrama in their work? How do these ideas relate to the theme of romance?

■ Discuss how the artists featured here illuminate **abstract** concepts or emotions in their work. Expand the conversation by referencing additional artists who create **abstract** work, for instance Mondrian, Jackson Pollock, or Richard Tuttle.

ACTIVITIES

■ Write or illustrate a ballad or tribute to a person or event that inspired a strong emotional response or personal change in your life.

■ Create a collage, sculpture, or **installation** that incorporates images from popular media that express different aspects of romance: fantasy and reality, sentimentality and cynicism, nostalgia and melodrama.

At this time in my life, I'm ready to accept or own a kind of romance and melancholy or melodrama that I wasn't ready to reveal before. It was always there in my inner life as an artist, but I was too afraid to share it.—Laurie Simmons

**Born**

1937, Orange, NJ

Education

B.A., University of Redlands, Redlands CA
Ph.D., University of Southern California,
Los Angeles, CA

Lives and Works

Northwestern Oregon

Biography

Robert Adams's refined black-and-white photographs document scenes of the American West's past four decades, revealing the impact of human activity on the last vestiges of wilderness and open space. Although often sparsely populated or devoid of inhabitants, Adams's photographs capture the physical traces of human life: a garbage-strewn roadside, a clear-cut forest, a half-built house. An underlying tension in Adams's work is the contradiction between landscapes visibly transformed or scarred by human presence and the inherent beauty of light and land rendered by the camera. Adam's complex photographs expose the hollowness of the nineteenth-century American doctrine of Manifest Destiny, expressing somber indignation at the idea (still alive in the twenty-first century) that the West represents an unlimited natural resource for human consumption. But his work also conveys hope that change can be effected, and it speaks with joy of what remains glorious in the West.

Media and Materials

photography

Key Words and Ideas

beauty, contrast, documentation,
juxtaposition, light

DISCUSSION**Before Viewing**

■ Examine a selection of photographs spanning the history of the medium and, as a class, choose several of the most powerful to discuss in greater detail. Which characteristics determine what makes a successful photograph? Is beauty important? Can unattractive or disturbing things be represented in a beautiful way? In what ways can images possess or exert power?



East from Flagstaff Mountain, Boulder County, Colorado, 1975. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 inches. © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

■ Adams asserts that "photography and poetry both center on **metaphor**." Discuss this statement from a personal perspective and in relation to Adams's work. In what other ways is photography like poetry? How do they communicate ideas differently?

After Viewing

■ Why do you think Adams "admits" to being "in pursuit of beauty?" What do you think he means when he describes beauty as "a suspect word among many in the art world?"

■ Adams says that his goal as an artist is to capture both "what remains glorious in the West" as well as "what is disturbing and needs correction." Describe several of Adams's photographs in relation to this statement. Discuss his relationship to traditional images of the American West and to the tradition of **social commentary** in art.

ACTIVITIES

■ Explore the history of your region using sources such as books, magazine and newspaper articles, the internet, and interviews with teachers, neighbors, and members of your family. How has your area changed over the years in terms of development, land use, and human impact on the environment? Create a visual essay that documents your research to share with others.

■ Create a beautiful image of a typically ugly or repulsive subject. Write a companion piece that narrates the process of producing the image and describes your subject's transformation.



Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1968. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 inches. © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



Clearcut, Humbug Mountain, Clatsop County, Oregon, 1999–2001. From the series *Turning Back*. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches. © Robert Adams, courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ How can humor be used to say something serious? Discuss the role of humor, absurdity, and contradiction in visual art. Consider the work of artists such as Marcel Duchamp and the Dadaists in your discussion. How have artists used absurdity and contradiction to address serious social issues or challenge conventions? Where do you see the use of absurdity and contradiction in art and **popular culture** today?

After Viewing

■ Allora says, "The nature of making art . . . is to turn something upside down. Then you start to see it completely differently and new meanings come out." In what ways do Allora & Calzadilla disrupt expectations? How do they give objects and materials new meaning?

■ Allora & Calzadilla say that their projects, such as the video *Returning a Sound* represent a "way to confront something which in general may seem overwhelming, and then to own it and contribute something." Discuss this statement, and use the Art21 Web site to compare the ways in which other contemporary artists such as Krzysztof Wodiczko, Cai Guo-Qiang, and Jenny Holzer interpret and respond to current events or political issues.

■ The **installation** of *Chalk (Lima)* enabled protesters in Lima, Peru, to "make visible their demands" and culminated in the "arrest" of Allora & Calzadilla's sculptural chalk pieces. What effect does public interaction have on the meaning(s) of this artwork? How and by whom is meaning created?



Chalk (Lima), 1998–2002. 12 chalks, 64 x 8 inches in diameter each. Installation view: Pasaje Santa Rosa, Bienal de Lima, Peru. Courtesy the artists.



Clamor, 2006. Mixed-media sculpture, approximately 15 x 30 feet (diameter). Installation view: The Moore Space, Miami. Photo by Dawn Blackman, courtesy the artists and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, Gladstone Gallery, New York and Lisson Gallery, London.

ACTIVITIES

■ Collaborate with classmates to design an interactive **public art** piece that sparks community discussion. Consider how your work will relate metaphorically to local issues, and choose materials accordingly. Document audience interaction with the piece, and analyze the results.

■ Create a list of topics that Allora & Calzadilla address in their work, such as freedom of speech and globalization, and select one to research and respond to. Working with a partner or small group, choose three or more everyday objects to arrange in a way that addresses your topic.

■ Assemble an archive from a variety of online sources, audio recordings, video clips, music, text, or still images related to an event or issue you would like to investigate. Construct a **montage** or collage from your findings, and design a fitting display or performance space for exhibition.



Born

Allora: 1974, Philadelphia, PA
Calzadilla: 1972, Havana, Cuba

Education

Allora: B.A., University of Richmond, Richmond, VA; M.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
Calzadilla: B.F.A., Escuela de Artes Plásticas, San Juan, Puerto Rico; M.F.A., Bard College

Live and Work

San Juan, Puerto Rico

Biography

Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla have collaborated since 1995. Allora & Calzadilla approach visual art as a set of experiments, testing the ability of concepts such as authorship, nationality, borders, and democracy to adequately describe today's increasingly global and consumerist society. Believing that art can function as a catalyst for social change, the artists solicit active participation and critical responses from their viewers. The artists' emphasis on cooperation and activism lead them to develop hybrid art forms, such as sculptures presented solely through video documentation, digitally manipulated photographs, and public artworks generated by pedestrians.

Media and Materials

video, sculpture, multimedia performance and **installation**

Key Words and Ideas

absurdity, audience interaction, **collaboration**, **juxtaposition**, **metaphor**, **montage**, **social commentary**

**Born**

1961, Los Angeles, CA

Education

B.F.A. and M.F.A., California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA

Lives and Works

Los Angeles, CA

Biography

Transforming materials scavenged from the street, Mark Bradford's wall-sized collages and **installations** respond to the impromptu networks that emerge within a city, such as underground economies, migrant communities, or the popular **appropriation** of abandoned public space. Drawing from the diverse cultural, geographic, and visual makeup of Southern California, Bradford's work is as informed by the merchant community as it is by the tradition of abstract painting developed worldwide in the twentieth century. Made entirely of paper built up in twenty or more layers, Bradford's maplike collages reference not only the organization of streets and buildings, specifically areas in downtown Los Angeles, but also images of crowds, from Civil Rights demonstrations of the 1960s to the contemporary protests surrounding illegal immigration.

Media and Materials

painting, collage, video, **installation**

Key Words and Ideas

advertising, **appropriation**, **juxtaposition**, **postmodernism**, public space,

DISCUSSION**Before Viewing**

■ Initiate a conversation about public spaces and the concept of "community," exploring your local environment for cues if possible. How do constructed spaces such as city streets, parks, and market places both shape and reflect the identities of the people who live there? In what ways has technology changed our concept of public space, geography, and community? How have artists approached these issues in recent history?

After Viewing

■ Why do you think Bradford makes a distinction between a "making background" and an "art background?" Use the Art21 Web site to compare and contrast Bradford's work with that of Barry McGee and Margaret Kilgallen. What distinguishes art from other handmade or informal modes of visual communication, such as advertising, signage, and graffiti? What impact does context have on the way a visual work is perceived or understood?

■ Bradford says that scanning the layers of informal advertising around Los Angeles, he feels he is "tracing ghost cities of the past. It's the pulling off of a layer and finding another underneath." How is this sentiment reflected in his work? How are Bradford's artistic processes related to archaeology or anthropology?

■ Discuss the term "**postmodern**" and consider Bradford's description: "It's a state of mind. Fluidity, **juxtapositions**, cultural borrowing—they've all been going on for centuries. The only authenticity there is what I put together." What does Bradford mean by authenticity? How does he use **juxtaposition** in his work?



Market-Place, 2006. Mixed-media installation, dimensions site-specific. Installation view: *Consider This...*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Courtesy the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



Practice, video still, 2003. DVD, 3 minutes. Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co.

ACTIVITIES

■ Many of Bradford's paintings include nontraditional collage elements, such as hair salon end papers and billboard remnants. Bradford describes these elements as "materials that have memory." Select a material that for you evokes a specific time or a place, or one that symbolizes an aspect of your identity. Use this material to create an **abstract**, multimedia self-portrait.

■ Bradford says, "The sheer density of advertising creates a psychic mass, an overlay that can sometimes be very tense or aggressive." Do you agree with this assessment? Identify and make note of every piece of advertising you come into contact with over a 24-hour period. What have you discovered?

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ What is the job of an artist? Of a **curator**? Of a scientist? Discuss these roles in relation to the creation and dissemination of knowledge as well as collection and exhibition practices. Organize field trips to art and natural history museums, and consider your personal knowledge of laboratories and artist studios. Discuss the different kinds of objects and collections found in each context, as well as the different ways that these objects and collections are organized, stored, and displayed.

After Viewing

■ Dion says, "The job of an artist is to go against the grain of dominant culture to challenge perception, prejudice, and convention." Discuss Dion's work in relation to this quotation and what perceptions, prejudices, and conventions he challenges.

■ According to Dion, the "bread and butter of artists" are humor, **irony**, and **metaphor**. How does Dion utilize these tools in his work? Use the Art21 Web site to explore and compare works by other artists (such as Laylah Ali, Raymond Pettibon, and Walton Ford) who use humor, **irony**, and **metaphor** in their work.

■ In reference to his work *Neukom Vivarium*, Dion says, "I want to acknowledge or even enhance . . . the wonder of the vast complexity and diversity within a natural system. I want to show how difficult it is for us to grasp." How is this idea reflected in *Neukom Vivarium*? How does it relate to Dion's other work, such as *Scala Naturae*?

ACTIVITIES

■ As a class or in groups, build an encyclopedic museum collection from a random sample of household, classroom, and natural objects. Create a fictional society and historical narrative that explains each object's significance within the collection. Consider how items should be classified and display them accordingly.

■ Research visual and literary forms of parody and **satire** that use **irony** as a vehicle for cultural **critique** (such as Francisco Goya's print series *The Disasters of War*, political cartoons, or the plays and novels of Oscar Wilde). In the visual medium of your choice, use humor and **irony** to make a statement about an issue that is important to you.



Scala Naturae, 1994. Stepped plinth, artifacts, specimens, taxidermic animals, and bust, 93¾ x 39¾ x 117 inches. Courtesy Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York.



Born

1961, New Bedford, MA

Education

B.F.A. and Honorary Doctorate, University of Hartford School of Art, Hartford, CT

Lives and Works

Beach Lake, PA

Biography

Mark Dion's work examines the ways in which dominant ideologies and public institutions shape our understanding of history, knowledge, and the natural world. The job of the artist, he says, is to go against the grain of dominant culture, to challenge perception and convention. Appropriating archaeological and other scientific methods of collecting, ordering, and exhibiting objects, Dion creates works that question the distinctions between objective (rational) scientific methods and subjective (irrational) influences. The artist's spectacular and often fantastical curiosity cabinets, modeled on Wunderkabinetts of the sixteenth century, exalt atypical orderings of objects and specimens. By locating the roots of environmental politics and public policy in the construction of knowledge about nature, Dion questions the authoritative role of the scientific voice in contemporary society.

Media and Materials

Mixed media **installation**, **public art**, sculpture

Key Words and Ideas

classification, collections, **irony**, **metaphor**, **satire**, **site-specificity**



Neukom Vivarium, 2006. Mixed-media installation, greenhouse structure: 80 feet long. Installation view: Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle. Gift of Sally and William Neukom, American Express Company, Seattle Garden Club, Mark Torrance Foundation, and Committee of 33. Photo by Paul McCapia, courtesy the Seattle Art Museum.

Jenny Holzer

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/holzer>



Born

1950, Gallipolis, OH

Education

B.A., Ohio University, Athens, OH
M.F.A., Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Honorary Doctorates, University of Ohio, Rhode Island School of Design, and New School University, New York, NY

Lives and Works

Hoosick Falls, NY

Biography

Whether questioning consumerist impulses, describing torture, or lamenting death and disease, Jenny Holzer's use of language provokes a response in the viewer. Her subversive work often blends in among advertisements in public spaces, while its arresting content violates expectations. Holzer's texts—such as the **aphorisms** “abuse of power comes as no surprise” and “protect me from what I want”—have appeared on posters and condoms and as electronic LED signs and projections of xenon light. Holzer's recent use of text ranges from silkscreened paintings of declassified government memoranda detailing prisoner abuse to poetry and prose in a 65-foot-wide wall of light in the lobby of 7 World Trade Center, New York.

Media and Materials

printmaking, printed and electronic signage, **public art**

Key Words and Ideas

aphorism, **appropriation**, authorship, censorship, consumerism, **redaction**

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Initiate a discussion about the role of language in visual art. How is visual art related to spoken and written language? In what ways is visual art a language? How do artists and writers reveal their authorship (“hand” or “voice”) in their work? In what instances might authors or artists choose to remain anonymous? In what instances is written and visual information censored? By whom?



Truisms, 1977–79. T-shirt worn by Lady Pink, New York, 1983. Text: *Truisms* (1977–79). Photo by Lisa Kahane, © 2007 Jenny Holzer, member Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

After Viewing

- Discuss the term “truism” and create definitions for the word independent of Holzer's work and in relation to Holzer's work. How does the use of the first-person voice in *Truisms* affect the meaning of text as well as the interpretation of the work?
- Study an example of Holzer's **redacted** work, such as *WISH LIST BLACK* and research the process of government censoring. What is being censored in the original texts and why? How does Holzer merge visual imagery and text to call attention to what has been eliminated in these works?
- Holzer says, “I like to be absolutely out of view and out of earshot. I don't sign my work because I think that would diminish its effectiveness.” Discuss Holzer's statement. How does Holzer's **appropriation** of text and **collaboration** with writers serve this objective?

ACTIVITIES

- Create a new version of a catalog, map, advertisement, sign, or menu that subverts the original intention of the object by altering visual and textual elements. Place your object in a location where someone might expect to see the original version and document public response.
- Explore the relationships between political **propaganda**, commercial marketing, and visual art. Describe the techniques used to address the public in each area.



Truisms, 1977–79. Spectacolor electronic sign, Times Square, New York, 1986. Text: *Survival* (1983–85). Photo by John Marchael, © 2007 Jenny Holzer, member Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

- Choose a current topic from the news and divide the class into three groups: one to visually represent the topic as **propaganda**, one to represent it as marketing, and one to represent it as art. Discuss the results and compare the strategies used to convey different intentions.

AFYB-MI-HHOC

Detainee Abuse Incident - 15-6 Investigation

[redacted] instructed [redacted] to stand with [redacted] arms out at [redacted] sides, knees bent, and head tilted back so [redacted] faced the ceiling. [redacted] stood in that position for approximately 15 minutes. [redacted] told [redacted] to stand a few feet from the wall, forehead pressed to the wall, arms out at his sides and parallel with the floor, such that [redacted] body stood at approximately a 70-degree angle to the floor. At some point, [redacted] moved from [redacted] position against the north wall to just inside the door against the south wall, likely to get a better view. [redacted] continued to question [redacted] and [redacted] maintained [redacted] innocence. Not receiving the answer [redacted] wanted, [redacted] hit [redacted] across his buttocks and possibly [redacted] lower back as well. [redacted] likely did not intend to hit [redacted] on his buttocks or lower back when he began the interrogation. I believe this was a spur-of-the-moment idea [redacted] had. Again, neither [redacted] objected. [redacted] approximately 10 times. [redacted] concluded the interrogation and [redacted] led [redacted] back to [redacted] cell. [redacted] states [redacted] walked in and out of the interrogation, as it was time to feed other detainees. I believe [redacted] spent much more time in the interrogation than the 50% [redacted] states, nor was [redacted] notably absent each time the baton was used against [redacted]. I also believe [redacted] not only consented to giving [redacted] baton, but condoned using the baton on [redacted] and [redacted] was likely even a co-conspirator with foreknowledge when [redacted] approached him originally.

k. [redacted] remained in [redacted] cell while [redacted] moved [redacted] back. [redacted] then interrogated [redacted] with [redacted] remaining in the room. Shortly after the interrogation began [redacted] arrived and joined the interrogation. This interrogation was much quieter than the preceding one. I do not feel anything significant occurred during the course of [redacted] interrogation. Later that evening, [redacted] went to [redacted] and explained [redacted] had seen nothing of note during the interrogation and that [redacted] was only put in stress positions. [redacted] demonstrated three stress positions [redacted] used (see Exhibit J).

l. Neither [redacted] said anything about the events of [redacted] interrogation to [redacted] went to dinner later that evening and sat with [redacted] 104th MI Bn, NFI (see Exhibit Q). [redacted] asked [redacted] how [redacted] interrogation of "MP" [redacted] had gone that evening and whether [redacted] had been able to "break" [redacted] said [redacted] was thus far unsuccessful and had beaten [redacted] with an MP "control stick". "Control stick" refers to the MP riot baton and is the terminology [redacted] used in [redacted] interview and the same terminology [redacted] quoted in [redacted] sworn statement. [redacted] looked at each other, unknowing whether to believe [redacted] Neither questioned [redacted] further about the incident. At approximately 0900 or 1000 hours on 24 September, [redacted] and told [redacted] to restrict [redacted] access to detainees until further notice. [redacted] refused to explain over the telephone and asked [redacted] to come to [redacted] office. [redacted] woke [redacted] and asked [redacted] what had happened the previous evening. [redacted] told [redacted] about [redacted] hitting [redacted] s feet. [redacted] did not ask further and went to [redacted] office. [redacted] went upstairs to discuss the matter. Following this conversation, [redacted] drafted a counseling statement for [redacted] on 25 September and counseled [redacted] on 26 September. The counseling statement (see Exhibit R) detailed [redacted] punishment of 10 hours of one-on-one Geneva Convention training with [redacted] as

6614



Pierre Huyghe

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/huyghe>

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ What does it mean to be creative? Discuss the concept of originality and its relationship to **appropriation**, **collaboration**, and influence. How and why do artists use **appropriation** in their work? How do artists borrow from and build on foundations laid by their predecessors? Their contemporaries? Is it possible to say something truly new and unique?

■ How are **rituals** created and how do they change over time? Research the history of several annual celebrations across various cultures (such as El Dia De Los Muertos, Mardi Gras, and New Year celebrations). Discuss the initiation of each of these traditions and why they endure.

After Viewing

■ Huyghe describes the initiation of a new project as “creating a world” and that his “walk through this world is the work.” Describe the different worlds that Huyghe creates. How does the viewer enter into these worlds and what is the viewer’s role upon entry?

■ Huyghe says that he wants to “bring back some myth to create a zone of no knowledge.” Why are myths important or useful? How are they established? How is Huyghe’s work related to myth? In what ways does Huyghe’s work, as well as myths, combine elements of reality and fiction?

■ What images, ideas, and characters does Huyghe borrow to make his work? Can/should images be owned? Ideas?

ACTIVITIES

■ Create a myth or story that explains why a school mascot or local icon is an important figure in your community. Invent an annual celebration honoring the figure, including elements like reenactments, parades, costumes, songs, and decorations. Set a date and host the celebration. Document the results with photography or video.

■ Huyghe is interested in **allegory** and **parables**. Describe how his work relates to these written forms and then choose a fable or **parable** and bring it to life in visual form.

■ Choose a work of visual art to translate into sound or music. Record your audio piece and perform it for a live audience.



This Is Not a Time for Dreaming, production still, 2004. Live puppet play and super 16mm film, transferred to DigiBeta, 24 min, color, sound. Photo by Michael Vahrenwald, © Pierre Huyghe, courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris/New York.



Born

1962, Paris, France

Education

1982–85, École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France

Lives and Works

Paris, France, and New York, NY

Biography

Employing folly, leisure, adventure, and celebration in creating art, Pierre Huyghe’s films, **installations**, and public events range from a small-town parade to a puppet theater, from a model amusement park to an expedition to Antarctica. By filming staged scenarios—such as a re-creation of the true-life bank robbery featured in the movie *Dog Day Afternoon*—Huyghe probes the capacity of cinema to distort and ultimately shape memory. While blurring the traditional distinction between fiction and reality and revealing the experience of fiction to be as palpable as anything in daily life, Huyghe’s playful work often addresses complex social topics such as the yearning for utopia, the lure of **spectacle** in mass media, and the impact of Modernism on contemporary values and belief systems.

Media and Materials

video, **performance**, photography, multimedia **installation**

Key Words and Ideas

allegory, **appropriation**, fiction, icon, myth, **parable**, reality, **ritual**



Streamside Day, production still, 2003. Film and video transfers, 26 min, color, sound. Photo by Guilherme Young, © Pierre Huyghe, courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris/New York.

LEFT: Pierre Huyghe & Philippe Parreno. *A Smile Without a Cat*, 2002. Fireworks event, Miami Beach, Florida. From *No Ghost Just a Shell*, 1999–2003. © Pierre Huyghe, courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris/New York.



Born

1956, Santiago, Chile

Education

Instituto Chileno-Norteamericano de Cultura, Santiago, Chile
Universidad de Chile, Santiago, Chile

Lives and Works

New York, NY

Biography

In **installations**, photographs, film, and community-based projects, Alfredo Jaar explores the public's desensitization to images and the limitations of art to represent events such as genocides, epidemics, and famines. Jaar's work bears witness to military conflicts, political corruption, and imbalances of power between industrialized and developing nations. Subjects addressed in his work include the holocaust in Rwanda, gold mining in Brazil, toxic pollution in Nigeria, and issues related to the border between Mexico and the United States. Many of Jaar's works are extended meditations or elegies, including *Muxima* (2006) (a video that portrays and contrasts the oil economy and extreme poverty in Angola) and *The Gramsci Trilogy* (2004–05) (a series of **installations** dedicated to the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, who was imprisoned under Mussolini's Fascist regime).

Media and Materials

film, photography, multimedia
installations, public projects

Key Words and Ideas

architecture, current events, media,
metaphor, public intervention

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss the importance of location and context in determining the meaning of a work of art. Consider works of art installed in public locations versus those installed in galleries, museums, libraries, government offices, schools, etc. Conduct a survey of the different sites where works of art (both historic and contemporary) are on view in your community. Consider why the work is located there, who views it, and how different viewers might interpret it.



Rwanda, Rwanda, 1994. Offset print, 68½ x 46½ inches, edition of 100. Public intervention in Malmö, Sweden.
© Alfredo Jaar, courtesy Thord Thordeman, Malmö, and Galerie Lelong, New York.

After Viewing

■ Where and how does Jaar choose to exhibit his work? How do his **installations** affect the way a viewer interacts with and reads the work? What expectations does Jaar have of his audience? What does Jaar hope his art will do?

■ For Jaar, making art combines three significant influences in his life: theater, magic, and architecture. How are these influences apparent in his work?

■ Jaar says, "The **paradox** is that there has never been so much control of images by governments and corporations—control of images, control of our landscapes, of this landscape that affects our lives. What we see is what makes us." What images is Jaar talking about? How do images make us?

ACTIVITIES

■ Choose a public location in your community and temporarily install a visual or written statement. What would you like to communicate to the individuals that use this space and how will you find out what their responses are?

■ Ask students to complete the following tasks every day for a week: watch the evening news on two different television stations, collect the front page of two different newspapers, print out two different online news sources. What are the lead stories for each source? What images are used to illustrate each story? What information is included and what is omitted? As a group, discuss which event made the most impact and why. Create a collaborative work of art that illustrates this story from a new vantage point.



Muxima, video still, 2006. Digital video with sound on Mac Mini computer, 36 minutes. © Alfredo Jaar, Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss the different ways that wars have been represented over time in entertainment, news media, and art. Where are images of contemporary conflicts occurring worldwide presented? What messages about war do these images convey? Describe the most moving or memorable images of war you have seen and what made them particularly striking. What are the similarities and differences between **photojournalism** and art photography?



29 Palms: Mechanized Assault, 2003–04. Gelatin-silver print, 26 x 37 1/2 inches. Edition of 5. © An-My Lê, courtesy Murray Guy, New York.

After Viewing

- Discuss Lê's life experiences as a political refugee, artist, and war reenactor. In what ways do these roles promote different perspectives and how are these experiences reflected in Lê's photographs?
- Lê says, "I'm fascinated by the military structure, by strategy, the idea of a battle, the gear. But at the same time, how do you resolve the impact of it? What it is meant to do is just horrible. But war can be beautiful." How do Lê's images describe both the beauty and horror of war?
- Select examples of news photographs of the Vietnam War and compare them with Lê's photographs taken in Vietnam and as a reenactor. How are the images similar or different? Discuss the differences between personal experience and journalistic narratives about war.

ACTIVITIES

- Make a collection of images that represent a particular aspect of war, such as uniforms, equipment, or explosions. Present the images with an accompanying text that describes changes over time and/or across conflicts.
- Interview someone who has experienced war as a civilian or soldier. Question them, soliciting their personal experiences and memories about that time. Record your interview and create a collaborative work of art that brings together the perspectives of the interviewer and the interviewee.



Work in progress, 2006–07. Archival pigment print, 26 x 38 1/2 inches. © An-My Lê, courtesy Murray Guy, New York.



Born

1960, Saigon, Vietnam

Education

B.A.S. and M.S. in Biology, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
M.F.A., Yale University, New Haven, CT

Lives and Works

New York, NY

Biography

An-My Lê fled Vietnam with her family as a teenager in 1975, the final year of the war, eventually settling in the United States as a political refugee. Lê's photographs and films examine the impact, consequences, and representation of war. Whether in color or black-and-white, her pictures frame a tension between the natural landscape and its violent transformation into battlefields. Projects include *Việt Nam* (1994–98), in which Lê's memories of a war-torn countryside are reconciled with the contemporary landscape; *Small Wars* (1999–2002) in which Lê photographed and participated in Vietnam War reenactments in South Carolina; and *29 Palms* (2003–04) in which United States Marines preparing for deployment play-acted scenarios in a virtual Middle East in the California desert. Suspended between the formal traditions of documentary and staged photography, Lê's work explores the disjunction between wars as historical events and the ubiquitous representation of war in contemporary entertainment, politics, and collective consciousness.

Media and Materials

photography, film

Key Words and Ideas

ambiguity, landscape, reenactment, war

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/manglanoovalle>



Born

1961, Madrid, Spain

Education

B.A., Williams College, Williamstown, MA
M.F.A., School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Lives and Works

Chicago, IL

Biography

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle's technologically sophisticated sculptures and video **installations** use natural forms such as clouds, icebergs, and DNA as **metaphors** for understanding social issues such as immigration, gun violence, and human cloning. In **collaboration** with astrophysicists, meteorologists, and medical ethicists, Manglano-Ovalle harnesses extraterrestrial radio signals, weather patterns, and biological code, transforming pure data into digital video projections and sculptures realized through computer rendering. His strategy of representing nature through information leads to an investigation of the underlying forces that shape the planet as well as points of human interaction and interference with the environment. Manglano-Ovalle's work is attentive to points of intersection between local and global communities, emphasizing the intricate nature of ecosystems.

Media and Materials

Mixed-media sculpture, **public art**, sound, video

Key Words and Ideas

beauty, **collaboration**, **conceptual art**, **fabrication**, **metaphor**, **site-specificity**

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

- Consider the ways that science, technology, and art are related. How have scientific discoveries and technological advances changed the materials and tools that artists use? How can data and scientific or mathematical concepts be represented visually?
- Research and discuss the term **conceptual art**. Discuss examples of works by artists from art history (such as Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Beuys) as well as current artists (such as Jenny Holzer and Fred Wilson).



Cloud Prototype No. 1, 2003. Installation view, Purgatory, at Max Protetch Gallery, New York. Fiberglass and titanium alloy foil, 132 x 176 x 96 inches. Courtesy the artist and Max Protetch Gallery, New York

After Viewing

- Manglano-Ovalle says, "All my work, even the most formal work, has an underlying politics to it. But I don't want to reveal my position." Research other artists whose work could be considered political on the Art21 Web site (such as Krzysztof Wodiczko, Nancy Spero, and Alfredo Jaar). What issues do they address? How and why does each reveal or conceal their position on their subject matter?
- Discuss Manglano-Ovalle's statement, "Art does not reside in the object. It resides in what is said about the object." Can a conversation about a work of art be more powerful than the work itself?
- How does science inform Manglano-Ovalle's working process, media choices, and subject matter? Discuss how natural forms such as clouds and icebergs serve as **metaphors** to address social issues such as immigration and identity.

ACTIVITIES

- Manglano-Ovalle says, "If art is a platform from which to speak but not tell you something, that's good . . . And if that's a way in which I give you a platform from which to think and debate it, that's even better." Choose one of Manglano-Ovalle's works to initiate a debate. Research both sides of the issues raised by the work and debate the different interpretive perspectives.
- Redesign an everyday object to comment on a current social issue. Consider material and scale. Whose help or expertise would you need to **fabricate** the object? What exhibition location would be most appropriate?
- Manglano-Ovalle uses **metaphor** to draw a parallel between storm clouds and the influx of new immigrants to the United States, describing the hope and anxiety that characterize both. Create a national weather map that illustrates other examples of **metaphorical** storms of our times drawing on current events.



Bulletproof Umbrella, 2006. Kevlar, graphite, ABS rapid-prototyped polymer, 36 x 36 x 33 inches. Courtesy the artist and Max Protetch, New York

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ As a class, create a list of steps an artist might use to plan and prepare for a **site-specific** work. Consider examples of indoor and outdoor **site-specific installations** in your community or from the experience of students. How does each relate to its particular surroundings? How are viewers encouraged to move through the space? How and where was the work **fabricated** before being installed? Imagine that your classroom is an exhibition space. What steps would you take in order to create an **installation** that fills the space?



Buckets of Rain, 2006. Wood, steel, wax, plaster, fluorescent lights, paint, black foil, expanding foam, and tape; 2 galleries, 153 x 245½ x 209 inches and 153 x 228½ x 165 inches. Installation view: Ameringer & Yohe Fine Art, New York. Photo by Zonder Title and Jordan Tinker, courtesy the artist and Ameringer & Yohe Fine Art, New York.

After Viewing

■ Pfaff says of her work, "I've been very involved in not having a signature material. I think there is a signature style. It's like handwriting." How would you describe Pfaff's style? Compare and contrast Pfaff's work with that of other artists who create **site-specific installations** such as Jessica Stockholder or Richard Serra. What distinguishes Pfaff's work, making it characteristically hers?

■ Pfaff describes her **installation** *Buckets of Rain* as being not only about a great loss, but "more about choices—life and death, good and bad." How does she communicate the duality of **abstract** ideas and emotions through color and shape?

■ Pfaff says she was a poor student in school but explains that she was recognized for "visual intelligence." Discuss the idea of visual intelligence. How would you teach someone about sculpture without using words? What other subjects can be taught visually?

ACTIVITIES

■ Create a list of unusual drawing materials. Make a three-dimensional drawing with a new tool or unusual means of mark-making.

■ Visualize an **abstract** idea such as sadness, loss, joy, or excitement and create a sculpture or **installation** using a combination of found and handmade objects.



Gu, Choki, Pa, 1985. Steel, wood, plastic, organic materials, bamboo, lattice, signs, veneer paneling, Formica, steel grating, and paint, 20 x 40 feet. Installation view: *Vernacular Abstraction*, Spiral/Wacoal Art Center, Tokyo, Japan. © Judy Pfaff, courtesy the artist.



Born

1946, London, England

Education

B.F.A., Washington University, Saint Louis, MO
M.F.A., Yale University, New Haven, CT

Lives and Works

Kingston and Tivoli, NY

Biography

Balancing intense planning with improvisational decision-making, Judy Pfaff creates exuberant, sprawling sculptures and **installations** that weave landscape, architecture, and color into a fractured yet organic whole. A pioneer of **installation** art in the 1970s, Pfaff synthesizes sculpture, painting, and architecture into dynamic environments in which space seems to expand and collapse, fluctuating between the two- and three-dimensional. Pfaff's **site-specific installations** pierce through walls and careen through the air, achieving lightness and explosive energy. Her work is a complex ordering of visual information composed of materials such as steel, fiberglass, and plaster as well as salvaged signage and natural elements such as tree roots. She has extended her interest in natural motifs in a series of prints integrating vegetation, maps, and medical illustrations and has developed her dramatic sculptural materials into set designs for several stage productions for the theater.

Media and Materials

Installation, mixed media sculpture

Key Words and Ideas

abstraction, **collaboration**, color, contrast, duality, **site-specificity**

**Born**

1952, Los Angeles, CA

Education

B.F.A. and M.F.A., California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA

Lives and Works

Los Angeles, CA

Biography

Influenced by commercial advertising, decorative traditions, and Latin American folk art, Lari Pittman's meticulously layered paintings transform pattern and signage into luxurious scenes fraught with complexity, difference, and desire. Pittman's hallucinatory works reference many aesthetic styles, from Victorian silhouettes to social **realist** murals to Mexican **retablos**. Pittman uses **anthropomorphic** depictions of furniture, weapons, and animals loaded with **symbolism** to convey larger themes of romantic love, violence, and mortality. His paintings and drawings are a personal rebellion against rigid, puritanical dichotomies. They demonstrate the complimentary nature of beauty and suffering, pain and pleasure, and direct the viewer's attention to bittersweet experiences and the value of sentimentality in art. Despite subject matter that changes from series to series, Pittman's paintings often include complex narratives and opulent imagery that reflect the rich heterogeneity of American society, the artist's Colombian heritage, and the distorting effects of hyper-capitalism on everyday life.

Media and Materials

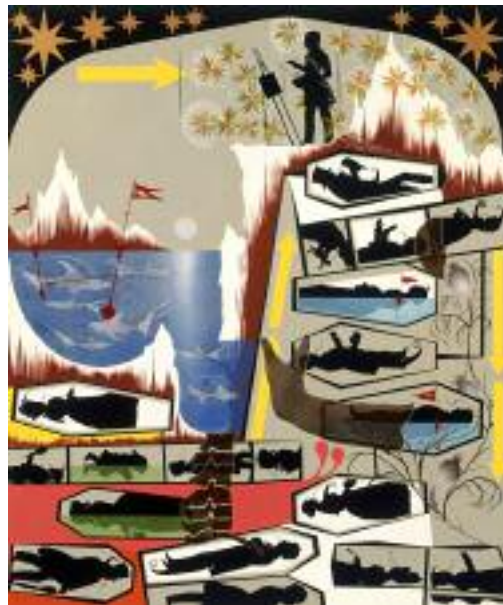
painting

Key Words and Ideas

aesthetic, allegory, metaphor, social commentary, symbolism, visual literacy

DISCUSSION**Before Viewing**

■ Discuss what it means to be alternative or mainstream. Cite examples from contemporary culture as well as social and cultural movements of the past 100 years that have challenged or changed mainstream beliefs, practices, or styles. What role have artists played in these transformations? What is the role of **social commentary** and **critique** in art? What works of art include **social commentary**? Discuss what these works comment on and how they communicate ideas visually. Which are the most effective and why?



This Landscape, beloved and despised, continues regardless, 1989. Acrylic and enamel on mahogany panel, 72 x 60 inches. Private collection. Photo by Douglas M. Parker Studio, courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.

After Viewing

■ Pittman says that Latino culture is characterized by "bittersweetness," that "being simultaneously happy and sad is not a problem. Nor is it fundamentally contradictory." In what ways is this duality apparent in Pittman's work?

■ How do we read visual images? Pittman compares certain visual elements in his paintings to nouns and verbs. Select one of Pittman's paintings and identify visual verbs, nouns, and adjectives in order to create a reading of the work.

■ Pittman says, "as chaotic as American culture is . . . I thrive on that." What does he mean? How is this sentiment reflected in his work?

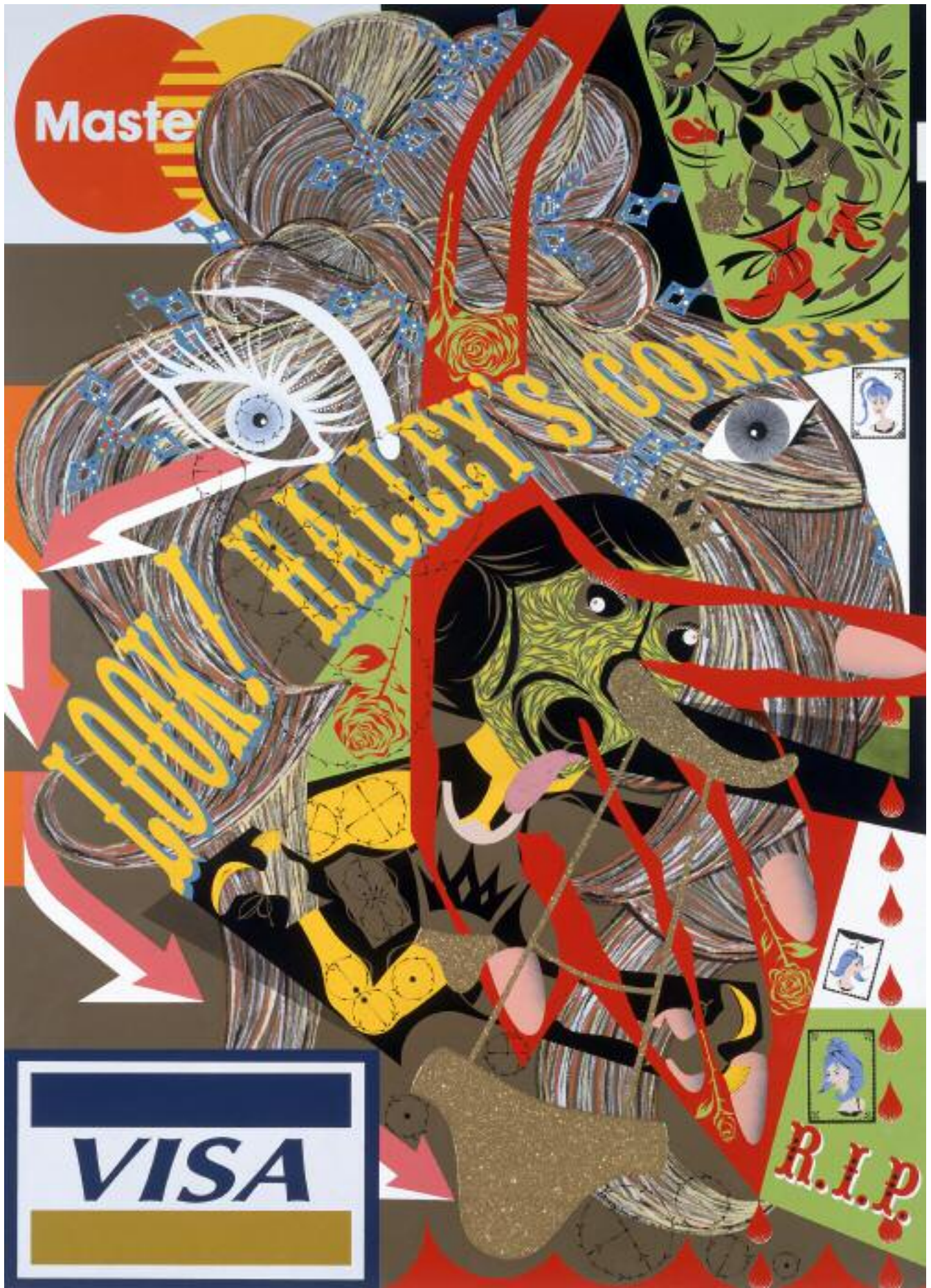
ACTIVITIES

■ Create a visual or written work that explores the concept of duality, bittersweetness, or simultaneity in American culture.

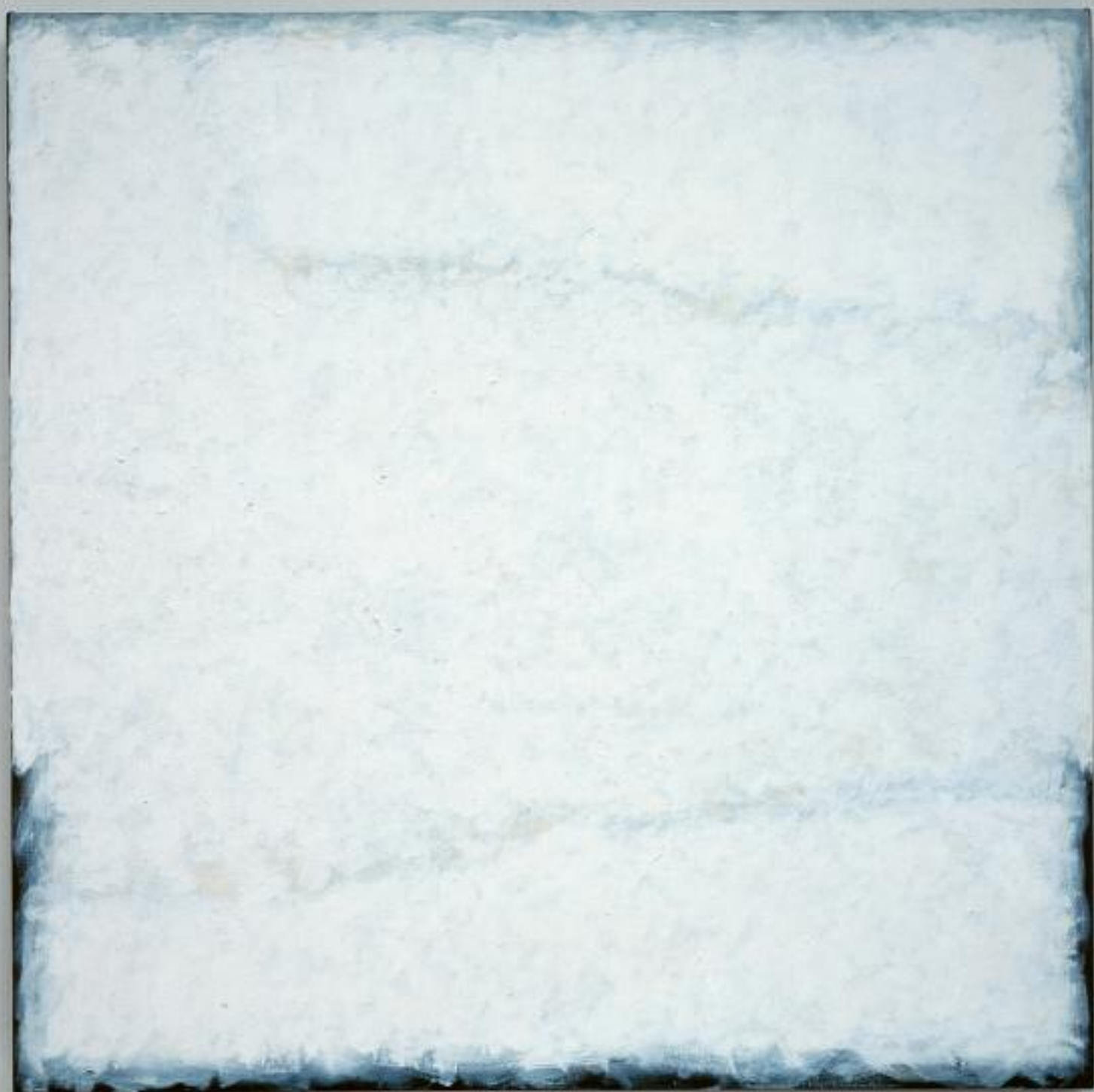
■ Study one of Pittman's paintings and list the references to advertising, **popular culture**, and historic art traditions you find in the work, noting why each may have been used. Collect photos or drawings of signs and **symbols** from around your community and incorporate them into a portrait of your local environment.



Untitled #8 (The Dining Room), 2005. Cell vinyl, acrylic, and alkyd on gessoed canvas over panel, 86 x 102 inches. Photo by Douglas M. Parker Studio, courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.



Untitled #32 (A Decorated Chronology of Insistence and Resignation), 1994. Acrylic, enamel, and glitter on panel, 84 x 60 inches. Private collection. Photo by Douglas M. Parker Studio, courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles, and Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York.



Robert Ryman

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/ryman>

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss the terms **abstraction** and **realism**, using a variety of examples from genres such as academic painting, abstract expressionism, minimalism, and photorealism. Engage in a conversation about different ways to “read” a painting, such as looking at subject matter, materials, and technique. What kinds of stories can a painting tell? How has history shaped our expectations about what a painting looks like? How do factors like personal background, perception, patience, and curiosity factor into the ways we read works of art?

After Viewing

■ Ryman says, “**Realism** can be confused with representation. And **abstract** painting—if not abstracting from representation—is involved mostly with symbolism.” Can a work of art that is abstract also be realistic and vice versa? How? In what ways does Ryman create realistic paintings?

■ Use the Art21 Web site to compare Ryman’s work with that of other painters, such as Ida Applebroog, Matthew Ritchie, and Michael Ray Charles. Discuss the various purposes painting has served over time and consider Ryman’s statement, “The real purpose of painting is to give pleasure.” What do you think the purpose of painting is today?

■ Ryman says, “the type of music I was involved with—jazz, bebop—had an influence on my approach to painting.” Play and discuss a selection of jazz and bebop music and discuss how these styles might be related to Ryman’s process, as well as to the structure and composition of his paintings.

ACTIVITIES

■ Select an everyday object and consider how your perception of it could be altered by color, context, lighting, and framing. Paint or cover the object in a single color and display it in a neutral context. Photograph the object in several different locations, changing lighting, framing, and perspective. Create a book with your images or display them as a series. How does repetition and **juxtaposition** affect the impact of the individual images?

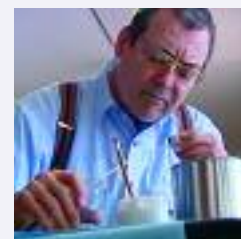
■ Identify all the different varieties of white surfaces and objects that exist in a particular setting. Using white paint chip cards from a hardware store, compare and label the multiple tones of white. How does light (natural and artificial) affect one’s perception of the object or surface? Alternatively, use a piece of white paper and masking tape to explore different tones of white created by changing the context and surroundings of the paper. View and discuss the placements and what affected the changes.



Untitled, 1958. Casein, colored and charcoal pencil on manila paper, 9 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches. Photo by Ellen Page Wilson, courtesy PaceWildenstein, New York.



Note, 1998. Oil and graphite on multi-density fiberboard, 15 1/8 x 15 1/8 inches. Private collection. Photo by Bill Jacobson, courtesy PaceWildenstein, New York.



Born

1930, Nashville, TN

Education

Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, Nashville, TN
George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, TN

Lives and Works

New York and Pennsylvania

Biography

Robert Ryman’s work explodes the classical distinctions between art as object and art as surface, sculpture and painting, structure and ornament—emphasizing instead the role that perception and context play in creating an **aesthetic** experience. Ryman isolates the most basic of components—material, scale, and support—enforcing limitations that allow the viewer to focus on the physical presence of the work in space. Since the 1950s, Ryman has used primarily white paint on a square surface, whether canvas, paper, metal, plastic, or wood, while harnessing the nuanced effects of light and shadow to animate his work. In Ryman’s oeuvre, wall fasteners and tape serve both practical and **aesthetic** purposes. Neither **abstract** nor entirely **monochromatic**, Ryman’s paintings are **paradoxically** “realist” in the artist’s own **lexicon**.

Media and Materials

painting

Key Words and Ideas

abstraction, light, **monochromatic**, **realism**, scale, surface, texture

Laurie Simmons

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/simmons>



Born

1949, Long Island, NY

Education

B.F.A., Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA

Lives and Works

New York, NY

Biography

Laurie Simmons stages photographs and films with paper dolls, finger puppets, ventriloquist dummies, and costumed dancers as “living objects,” animating a dollhouse world suffused with nostalgia and colored by an adult’s memories, longings, and regrets. Simmons’s work blends psychological, political, and conceptual approaches to art-making, transforming photography’s propensity to objectify people, especially women, into a sustained **critique** of the medium. Mining childhood memories and media constructions of gender roles, her photographs are charged with an eerie, dreamlike quality. On first glance her works often appear whimsical, but there is a disquieting aspect to Simmons’s child’s play: Her characters struggle over identity in an environment in which the value placed on consumption, designer objects, and domestic space is inflated to absurd proportions. Simmons’s first film, *The Music of Regret* (2006), extends her photographic practice to performance, incorporating musicians, professional puppeteers, Alvin Ailey dancers, Hollywood cinematographer Ed Lachman, and actress Meryl Streep.

Media and Materials

Photography, film

Key Words and Ideas

animation, characters, domestic settings, narrative, **popular culture**, puppets

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Start a conversation about the similarities and differences between “high” art forms and “popular” art forms. Make a list of media and practices that fall into each category and consider what distinguishes one from the other. Why and by whom has the distinction been made? Do they ever overlap? If so, how?

■ Compare and contrast characters from a variety of sources such as illustrations and cartoons, television, film, and theater. What are the key components of characterization? How do writers, actors, puppeteers, and animators develop a character through narrative? How do still images convey narrative differently than live action or film?

After Viewing

■ Why do you think Simmons makes a distinction between being a photographer and “using photography as a tool”? How can a tool or technique direct an artist’s ideas? How can ideas determine media choices?



Walking Camera I, Jimmy the Camera (Color), 1987. Cibachrome print, 64 x 46 inches. © Laurie Simmons, courtesy the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York.



The Music of Regret (Meryl), 2006. Flex print, 40 x 40 inches. © Laurie Simmons, courtesy the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York.

■ Simmons cites influences ranging from such painters as Manet and Matisse to fashion photography, *Life* magazine, and old TV commercials. Describe the influences and references you see in her photographs as well as the film, *The Music of Regret* (2006). What influences your work?

■ Describing the making of *The Music of Regret*, Simmons says, “I got a chance to revisit my work and figure out what would happen if the characters started to talk to me, to sing and dance.” Discuss how the transformation from still to moving images changes the impact of Simmons’ work. How does the film re-examine or reinvent her earlier subject matter?

ACTIVITIES

■ Simmons says that when she first began using photography as a tool, the fact that “you didn’t have to be super-skilled to pick up a camera and use it . . . it was so completely liberating.” Choose a medium or tool that you have never used before to reinterpret a piece you originally made in another more familiar one. Document your process and the results.

■ Create a character or self-portrait in the form of a puppet. Write a monologue that describes a specific emotional state and stage a performance with accompanying music.

■ Select a painting or photograph that suggests a specific narrative. Create a written story or drawing that reflects what happened five minutes before and five minutes after what you see in the image. Alternatively, follow one of the subjects back in time from the moment depicted and then forward.

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Discuss as a class what it means to be political in the general sense and as an artist. How do issues become politicized? Images? Ask students to select a picture from a newspaper or magazine that they feel represents a political issue. What sides or opposing viewpoints are depicted or implied? Is the image slanted towards one side, or is it neutral? Is the image meant to urge the viewer to believe or do something? If so, what?

■ Collaborate on a list of famous artists. What percentage of these artists are women? Analyze your findings as a class and discuss the factors that may explain the iniquity.

After Viewing

■ Consider Spero's statement, "I see things in a certain way, and as an artist I'm privileged in that arena to say publicly what I'm thinking about." What do you think Spero means by "privileged?" Do artists hold a privileged position within society? Why or why not? If, as the saying goes, with privilege comes responsibility, what is an artist's responsibility?

■ How does Spero's work reflect the specific time period in which it was created as well as universal or timeless themes? Using the Art21 Web site, explore the work of artists such as Eleanor Antin, Kiki Smith, Shazia Sikander, Kara Walker, and Nancy Spero. Consider how each uses historical figures, narratives, or techniques to comment on the present.

ACTIVITIES

■ Collect drawings and found images of historical figures or mythological characters from a variety of sources such as Egyptian hieroglyphs, Greek vases, Mesoamerican reliefs, or Hindu statuary. Create a visual statement about a contemporary issue using your collection as collage elements or source material.

■ Spero says, "I never thought of my work in terms of being radical, although I tried to make it radical—that is, to shift the premise of what goes for pictures on a wall." Create a visual image that challenges the conventions of your chosen medium. Look at examples of artists' statements or exhibition texts and write a companion piece that similarly defies traditional form.



Search and Destroy, detail, 1967. Gouache and ink on paper, 24 x 36 inches. Photo by David Reynolds, © Nancy Spero, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York.



Born

1926, Cleveland, OH

Education

B.F.A., School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL
Honorary Doctorates, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Williams College, MA

Lives and Works

New York, NY

Biography

Nancy Spero is a pioneer of **feminist art**. Since the 1960s, her work has been an unapologetic statement against the pervasive abuse of power, Western privilege, and male dominance. Executed with a raw intensity in the vulnerable medium of paper and in ephemeral **installations**, her work often draws its imagery and subject matter from current and historical events such as the torture of women in Nicaragua, the extermination of Jews in the Holocaust, and the atrocities of the Vietnam War. Spero works with a rich range of visual sources showing women as protagonists—from Egyptian hieroglyphics, seventeenth-century French history paintings, and Frederick's of Hollywood's lingerie advertisements. Her figures, in full command of their bodies, coexisting in nonhierarchical compositions, visually reinforce principles of equality and tolerance.

Media and Materials

drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, **installation**

Key Words and Ideas

ephemerality, **feminism**, **monoprinting**, political activism, scale



The Hours of the Night II, 2001. Handprinting and printed collage on paper, 11 panels approximately 9 x 22 feet overall. Installation view: Galerie Lelong, New York. Photo by David Reynolds, © Nancy Spero, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York.

**Born**

1968, Los Angeles, CA

Education

B.F.A., California Institute of Arts, Valencia, CA

M.F.A., Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA

Lives and Works

Chicago, IL

Biography

Catherine Sullivan's anxiety-inducing films and live performances reveal the degree to which everyday gestures and emotional states are scripted and performed, probing the border between innate and learned behavior. Under Sullivan's direction, actors perform seemingly erratic, seizure-like shifts between gestures and emotional states, all while following a well rehearsed, numerically derived script. Unsettling and disorienting, Sullivan's work oscillates between the uncanny and camp, eliciting a profound **critique** of "acceptable" behavior in today's media-saturated society. A maelstrom of references and influences—from vaudeville to film noir to modern dance—Sullivan's **appropriation** of classic filming styles, period costumes, and contemporary spaces such as corporate offices draws the viewer's attention away from traditional narratives and towards an examination of performance itself.

Media and Materials

video, film, live performance

Key Words and Ideas

body language, gesture, **paradox**, signification

DISCUSSION**Before Viewing**

■ Sullivan's work is influenced by both the performing and visual arts. Initiate a conversation about the similarities, differences, and intersections between the contexts of theater, film, and visual art. How would you describe the viewing experience in each one of these contexts? How does each define and use terms such as gesture, expression, and craft?

After Viewing

■ Research and discuss the elements of drama, including plot, character, and theme. How do Sullivan's video works adhere to or break with film and performance traditions? With conventional narrative structure? What references to common or familiar styles, settings, and genres do you see in her work?

■ When describing her work Sullivan says, "There's a place in the work where automation and mechanization is like a kernel of mindlessness. It's meant to be frightening because it's arbitrary—because you can't understand why." Discuss her statement and your personal reactions to her work. How would you describe the emotional impact of Sullivan's films and performances?

■ Describe the effect that isolating and repeating a single gesture or expression has in Sullivan's video work. What do you think Sullivan means when she says that the choreographed sequences for her video work *The Chittendens* suggest "oppressive cultural regimes"?

ACTIVITIES

■ Select a film to watch as a group. Individually choose two opposing emotions, such as joy and sorrow or anger and contentment, and identify scenes and characters that exhibit your chosen emotions. Take note of the costumes, sound effects, musical style and volume, dramatic lighting, and camera point-of-view that accompany these characters and scenes throughout the film. Discuss your findings as a group, reenacting illustrative scenes that contain your selected emotions.

■ Create a visual script, score, or map that provides detailed instructions for recreating a common scene or completing a daily activity, such as preparing a meal, attending school, etc. Exchange scripts and perform the instructions. Document the performances and discuss the results.



Misfire #4 (Cinematically Distant), 2006. From the series, *Misfires 0–13 (The Chittendens)*, 2006. Color photograph, approximately 21 x 35½ inches. Edition of 6. © Catherine Sullivan, courtesy the artist.



Theaterinis play their theater, production still, 2003. From *Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land*, 2003. Five channels shot on 16mm film transferred to video, projected from DVD, 21 min 48 sec per channel, black and white, silent. © Catherine Sullivan, courtesy the artist.

■ Select an emotion and develop a single, representative gesture with accompanying sound but no dialogue. With classmates, choose a simple song and use the sheet music or tablature to structure a sequence of your gestures, assigning to each note a number that corresponds to a group member. Perform your sequence as a group and discuss reactions. What narratives emerge? What ambiguities exist?



Chittendens Screen Tests (Second Set. Virtuous Woman: Mean Showgirl Lynching Retreat), production stills, 2005. Performer: Carolyn Shoemaker. From *The Chittendens*, 2005. Five or six channels shot on 16mm film transferred to video and projected as digital media, color, sound, variable length per channel (total length: 2 hours 13 min). Musical score by Sean Griffin. © Catherine Sullivan, courtesy the artist.



Ursula von Rydingsvard

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/vonrydingsvard>

DISCUSSION

Before Viewing

■ Von Rydingsvard cites specific childhood memories and personal anecdotes as having a strong influence on her work. Consider the role of memory and childhood as an inspirational source for making art. What materials, tools, or imagery provide inspiration for your own art-making? How do artists translate personal associations into universal themes and ideas?

After Viewing

■ Von Rydingsvard says, "My home was one in which words were not used very often . . . So words were very sparse. And in fact anybody that used too many words was automatically suspect." How is this personal anecdote reflected in Ursula's work? What can be communicated visually that cannot be said with words?

■ Discuss how von Rydingsvard's sculptures might be seen as **metaphorical**. What relationship does her sculpture have to landscape? To the human body? To emotional or psychological states?

■ Von Rydingsvard says that she "learns" from **vernacular** objects such as washboards, bowls, wooden spoons, and pots. What do her sculptures retain from these sources? How does her work transform these objects and give them new meaning?

ACTIVITY

■ To explore a personal memory or experience, reinterpret a common household object or vessel using a new medium and a radical change in scale. Write a series of instructions that describes how to create a temporary work of art for a specific space or public location. Ask colleagues to complete the instructions and compare their results to what you envisioned.



Czara z Babelkami, 2006. Cedar, 202 x 125 x 74 inches.
Installation view: Madison Square Park, New York. Photo by Jerry L. Thompson, © Ursula von Rydingsvard, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York.



Big Ladle, 1997. Cedar and graphite, 120 x 42½ x 20 inches.
© Ursula von Rydingsvard, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York.



Born

1942, Deensen, Germany

Education

B.A. and M.A., University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
M.F.A., Columbia University, New York, NY
Honorary Doctorate, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD

Lives and Works

New York, NY

Biography

Ursula Von Rydingsvard's massive sculptures reveal the trace of the human hand and resemble wooden bowls, tools, and walls that seem to echo the artist's family heritage in preindustrial Poland before World War II. Having spent her childhood in Nazi slave-labor and post-war refugee camps, the artist's earliest recollections of displacement and subsistence through humble means infuses her work with emotional potency. Von Rydingsvard builds towering cedar structures, creating an intricate network of individual beams, shaped by sharp and lyrical cuts, and glued together to form sensuous, puzzle-like surfaces. While **abstract** at its core, Von Rydingsvard's work takes visual cues from the landscape, the human body, and utilitarian objects—such as the artist's collection of household vessels—and demonstrates an interest in the point where the man-made meets nature.

Media and Materials

sculpture, drawing

Key Words and Ideas

labor, landscape, process, surface, texture

LEFT: *berwici pici pa*, 2004. Cedar and graphite, 8 x 86½ x 5½ feet. Public commission for the Bloomberg Building, New York.
© Ursula von Rydingsvard, courtesy the artist and Galerie Lelong, New York.

glossary

The following words include both art and non-art terms. Many of these words have been defined in the context of an art experience but also have nuanced meanings and additional significance beyond the definitions in this glossary. A more comprehensive glossary with additional vocabulary can be found on the Web site: www.pbs.org/art21

abstract art At its purest, abstract art is characterized by the use of shapes, colors, and lines as elements in and for themselves.

aesthetic Used to describe something as visually-based, beautiful, or pleasing in appearance and to the senses. Aesthetics is a term developed by philosophers during the 18th and 19th centuries and is also the academic or scientific study of beauty and taste in art.

allegory The expression, by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions, of truths or generalizations about human existence.

ambiguity A situation in which something can be understood or explained in more than one way. For artists, ambiguity is often cited as an important characteristic that allows their work to be appreciated or interpreted from multiple perspectives.

animation Giving movement to something; the process of making moving cartoons or films that use cartoon imagery.

anthropomorphism The attribution of human form, characteristics, or behavior to nonhuman things.

aphorism A concise statement expressing an opinion or a general truth, often in a clever way. For example, "Art is the lie that makes us realize the truth." (Pablo Picasso)

appropriation The act of borrowing imagery or forms to create something new.

collaboration A working arrangement between an artist and another person, group, or institution. Artists often work in collaboration with a variety of specialists, assistants, colleagues, and audiences.

conceptual art Works of art in which the idea is of equal, or greater, importance as the finished product. Conceptual art can take many forms, from photographs to texts to videos, while sometimes there is no object at all. Emphasizing the ways things are made more than how they look, conceptual art often raises questions about what a work of art can be.

critique An assessment of something with comments on its good and bad qualities. Criticism is the activity of judgement or informed interpretation. In art, critiques often take the form of a group discussion in which the merits of a particular work are debated. Critique remains an important element in many works of art that address social issues, ideas, and events.

curator A person who is responsible for the collection, care, research, and exhibition of art or artifacts.

ecology The relationship between organisms and their environment, ecology is also concerned with the relationship between people and nature.

fabrication The construction or manufacture of an object. Artists working on large or technically difficult pieces often enlist the help of fabrication studios with access to specialized equipment and a skilled labor force.

feminist art movement The efforts of artists internationally to bring increased visibility to the role of women within art history and art practice. The movement began in the 1960s and continues today. Feminist art is related to the larger feminist movement that encompasses literary, political, and social activists.

iconography Symbols and images that have a particular meaning, either learned or universal.

installation art A work of art created for a specific architectural situation. Installations often engage multiple senses such as sight, smell, and hearing.

irony The incongruity between what is expected to happen and what actually happens, especially when the disparity seems absurd or laughable. In art and literature, irony is often used as a device for social critique and is based on making a statement that suggests its opposite is true.

juxtaposition The state or position of being placed close together or side by side, so as to permit comparison or contrast.

lexicon Literally, a vocabulary. A collection of terms or characteristics used in a particular profession, subject, or style.

metaphor A relationship between disparate visual or verbal sources where one kind of object, idea, or image is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.

monochromatic Made of or having only one color or variations of one color.

monoprint A printmaking technique that yields a singular image that cannot be exactly reproduced. Essentially a painted print, in the monoprinting process ink or paint is applied directly to a plate, creating a unique image that cannot be produced as an edition or series.

montage Literally "putting together," montage refers to an image or, in film and music, a sequence, composed by assembling and overlapping many different pieces from various sources.

parable A brief, succinct story that illustrates a moral or religious lesson.

paradox A statement, proposition, or situation that seems to be absurd or contradictory, but in fact is or may be true. Also, a statement or proposition that contradicts itself.

performance art Public, private, or documented (for example in film, video, audio, or writing), performance art is a nontraditional art form that features a performance activity by, or directed by, an artist.

photojournalism The profession or practice of recording and reporting real and "newsworthy" events using photography.

popular culture Literature, broadcasting, music, dance, theater, sports, and other cultural aspects of social life distinguished by their broad-based presence and popularity across ethnic, social, and regional groups.

postmodernism 20th-century cultural movement marked by reactions against the philosophy and practices of modern movements. Typically marked by the abandonment of strong divisions of genre or hierarchy and the embodiment of complexity, ambiguity, diversity, and interconnectedness or interreferentiality.

propaganda A systematically spread message aimed at influencing the opinions or behavior of people. Often, publicity released by an organization or government to promote a specific policy, idea, doctrine, or cause.

public art Works of art that are designed specifically for, or placed in, areas physically accessible to the general public.

realism The realistic and natural representation of people, places, and/or things in a work of art; the opposite of idealization.

redaction The editing of text to make it suitable for publication. In government documents, refers to the process of removing sensitive or classified information from a document prior to its publication or release to the public.

retablo A small oil painting typically on wood panel or relief. Used primarily in Latin American tradition as a devotional image honoring a Catholic saint.

ritual A ceremonial act or a detailed method or process of accomplishing specific objectives.

satire Exposing human vices or follies to ridicule or scorn.

site-specific art Work created especially for a particular space or site. Site-specific work can be permanent or temporary.

social commentary The act of expressing an opinion about the nature of society, most often with the intention of promoting change by calling attention to a given problem. Artists engage in social commentary through their work as a means of raising public awareness and inspiring dialogue about pertinent issues.

spectacle A mediated or constructed view or image that is of a remarkable or impressive nature, sensationalizing its subject.

symbolism The practice of representing things by an image, sign, symbol, convention, or association.

vernacular Everyday language specific to a social group or region; the everyday language spoken by a people as opposed to the literary language.

visual literacy The ability to effectively interpret images or create and use images as a form of communication.