



art21.org/kameelahjananrasheed

Kameelah Janan Rasheed

ABOUT

Born

1985 (East Palo Alto, California)

Education

Pomona College, BA
Stanford University, MA

Lives and Works

Brooklyn, New York

About the Artist

A self-described learner, Rasheed examines the appearance and legibility of text in a range of creative forms, including wall collages, large-scale public installations, publications, and lecture-performances. Poetic and political, these works explore the complications, slippages, and possibilities of language in relation to Black subjectivity, and create new ecosystems of meaning.

Rasheed's process draws upon the tools typically used in the self-publication and distribution of radical writings. She excerpts, combines, photocopies, and annotates fragments of letters, words, and images from her archive of books and printed matter in order to "talk back" to a text.

TEACHING CONNECTIONS

Media and Materials

collage, installation, publication, performance

Key Words and Ideas

annotation	learner
collaboration	literature
communication	poetry
identity	reading
language	text

Related Artists

El Anastui	Barbara Kruger
Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg	Glenn Ligon
Ann Hamilton	Azikiwe Mohammed
Trenton Doyle Hancock	Elizabeth Murray
Tim Hawkinson	Paul Pfeiffer
Jenny Holzer	Rose Salane
Margaret Killgallen	Chris Ware
	Xu Bing

"Even if you have read something once, it doesn't mean you understand it." —Kameelah Janan Rasheed

How to Use This Guide

Art21 encourages active engagement when teaching with our films. The questions and activities below are recommendations for incorporating Art21 films featuring Kameelah Janan Rasheed into your classroom. Each class will likely require different adaptations for best results.

NOTE: Please view all films before sharing them with your students.

Before Viewing

Establish key ideas, in anticipation of viewing the film(s):

- ① What does it mean to understand a text or piece of literature? How do you know you actually understand it?
- ② How do artists and viewers, like authors and readers, interact through their art?
- ③ When has your family influenced the way you go about making or doing something?

While Viewing

Support active viewing, and pause the film to clarify particular ideas:

- ① What does Rasheed say about the relationship between writer and reader?
- ② As you watch, note which words or phrases stand out to you.
- ③ How does Rasheed's family influence her process and her choice of materials?

After Viewing

Follow-up on key ideas and synthesize information learned from the film(s):

- ① Why does Rasheed invite people to "go slow"? What does she hope the viewer will do?
- ② Where was Rasheed's final work displayed? Does the placement of a text or artwork influence the viewer's interpretation?
- ③ Why might Rasheed have adapted her father's study method as her artistic process? How does Rasheed take her father's study method to a new place? How are their processes both similar and different?

Related Activities

Engaging in creative activities after watching Art21 films can reinforce learning and stimulate ideas. Art21 encourages educators to adapt these activities to their classrooms.

- ✓ Choose a member of your household and consider their process for a typical task, like organizing, cooking, cleaning, studying, etc. Adapt their process for a new artwork. Use their materials or choose your own.
- ✓ Choose one of the words or phrases you wrote while watching Rasheed's film. Use this word or phrase as the starting point for a small drawing or video you create. Feature the word or phrase at least once, or many times, to allow viewers to engage with the idea you're sharing.