



art21.org/louisedespont

Louise Despont

ABOUT

Born
1983 (New York, NY)

Education
Brown University, BA

Lives and Works
Mallorca, Spain

About the Artist
Since discovering the potential of working with pencil and architectural stencils on paper, Louise Despont has adopted an intuitive process in which she allows her drawings to develop as she creates them, resulting in an almost devotional object composed of dense colors and shapes. Having collected images for many years, Despont complements her broad visual references with her interest in energy and spirituality.

TEACHING CONNECTIONS

Media and Materials
drawing
collage
installation

Key Words and Ideas
energy
home
inspiration
nature
organic

Related Artists
Ida Applebroog
Vija Celmins
Mark Dion
Marcel Dzama
Walton Ford
Josephine Halvorson
Joan Jonas

pattern
place
process
spirituality
travel

William Kentridge
Dan Miller
Elizabeth Murray
Bruce Nauman
Susan Rothenberg
Shahzia Sikander

“It’s almost like the drawing guides itself and you’re there to do the weeding, and the watering, and the planting.” —Louise Despont

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 Louise Despont 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):

If watching the film *Louise Despont Draws Deep* or *According to the Universe*, consider these questions:

- ① Where can inspiration come from? When do you find yourself inspired?
- ② When did you start drawing? Why might someone choose to draw?

If watching the film *Drawing from Life in Bali*, consider these questions:

- ③ What does it mean to be a tourist? How might a tourist change the energy of a place?
- ④ Think of the last time someone new visited your home, school, or neighborhood. How did their energy change the space? Now think of the last time you went somewhere new. How might your presence shift or change the energy of a place?

While Viewing

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

- ① Jot down descriptive words and phrases that connect with the energy you perceive in Despont's drawings.

If watching the film *Louise Despont Draws Deep* or *According to the Universe*, consider these questions:

- ② What does Despont say about drawing? What does she like about it?

If watching *Drawing from Life in Bali*, consider these questions:

- ③ How does Despont adjust her art practice to living in a new place?

After Viewing

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

- ① What kinds of sensations and thoughts were inspired by looking at Despont's drawings?
- ② How does Despont's use of scale change the viewer's experience with the drawings?

If watching the film *Drawing from Life in Bali*, consider these questions:

- ③ How does Despont reflect on tourism in Bali, Indonesia? How does tourism impact the artwork and landscape of a place?
- ④ Despont says, "the most important thing to make good work is time." How might time be a privilege?

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.

- ✓ Use stencils of any kind to make collaborative drawings with a partner. Each partner starts a drawing with the stencils, then halfway through switch drawings and complete the work. Did pattern play a role in the work? If so, how? And how were some design decisions "unconscious", or connected to the energy in the work?
- ✓ Collect a series of images you are drawn to—postcards, magazine clippings, travel photos, family photos, etc. Think carefully about what interests you about these specific images. Then use that information to initiate a new work of art or a written story. If you like, include images or illustrations to accompany the written story.
- ✓ Photograph an artwork in your neighborhood, school, or in a local museum. Reflect on the kind of energy this work has, and how the work affects your own energy. Then take a few moments to write about this experience. What was it like?