



art21.org/howardenapindell



Howardena Pindell

ABOUT

Born

1943 (Philadelphia, PA)

Education

Boston University, BFA
Yale School of Art and Architecture, MFA

Lives and Works

New York City

About the Artist

Howardena Pindell's large-scale abstract paintings and mixed-media works combine conventional and unconventional materials and techniques: exploring color, structure, and texture. By developing a visual language through the use of circles, numbers, and grids, the artist's work reflects her interests and struggles ranging from her observations of the cosmos to systemic prejudice in the United States.

In addition to exploring formal elements of artmaking, Pindell also makes work directly referencing issues of politics, racism, exclusionary feminism, and violence. Through both large-scale abstract pieces and more personal and political works, Pindell investigates her identity, experiences, and interests as a Black female artist working in abstraction.

TEACHING CONNECTIONS

Media and Materials

collage
painting
performance
video

Key Words and Ideas

abstraction
activism
circles
family
memory
perseverance
texture
time

Related Artists

Alex Da Corte
Meriem Bennani
Linda Goode Bryant
Leonardo Drew
Mary Heilmann
Barbara Kasten
Julie Mehretu
Elizabeth Murray
Amy Sillman
Stephanie Syjuco
Sarah Sze
James Turrell
Jack Whitten

“When you work with abstraction you’re working with your own intuitive feelings about space, color, line, shape.” —Howardena Pindell

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 Howardena Pindell 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 is your favorite shape? What associations do you have with that shape?
- ② How can memory influence an artist's work?
- ③ When do artists serve as activists?

While Viewing

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

- ① What associations does Pindell have with circles?
- ② How do Pindell's memories of her father influence her work?
- ③ Note what Pindell says about her experience with museums, collectors, and art galleries, particularly in the 1980s.

After Viewing

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

- ① How does Pindell use circles to communicate ideas?
- ② While memory is a theme of Pindell's work over the course of her career, how did her practice change?
- ③ How did Pindell's experience of museums, collectors, and art galleries influence her work? In what ways is Pindell an activist?

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.

- ✓ Pindell remarks that art is “a life source for me.” Ask students to consider an activity that fulfills them and they don't tire of doing. Create a work in any medium documenting that activity.
- ✓ Texture is a recurring theme of Pindell's work, from memories of a Van Gogh painting in her childhood home to papermaking in Dieu Donn e's studio. Prompt students to create a work that uses texture and entices the viewer to touch the final product.