

art21.org/josephinehalvorson



Josephine Halvorson

ABOUT

Born

1981 (Brewster, MA)

Education

The Cooper Union, BFA
Columbia University, MFA

Lives and Works

Western Massachusetts

About the Artist

Combining attention to detail and an insistence on painting from life, Halvorson gives herself only one day to complete each canvas. Traveling outside of New York to paint, she works onsite, often selecting scenes that convey a sense of postindustrial grit. Her subjects range from a patch of missing paint on a wall to doors, windows, and other architectural details, but she acknowledges that "anything in the world could be a painting." Interested in her relationship to the subjects of her paintings, Halvorson resists the term painter; she prefers to think of painting as recording time spent with an object in its environment.

TEACHING CONNECTIONS

Media and Materials

painting

Key Words and Ideas

education
materiality
nature

observation
record

student
time
travel

Related Artists

Phyllida Barlow
Rackstraw Downes
Lubaina Himid
Luchita Hurtado
Ragnar Kjartansson
Liu Xiaodong

Robert Mangold
Kerry James Marshall
Amy Sillman
Rose B. Simpson
Salman Toor

"I can feel with my brushstrokes what it's like to be that surface or that object... there is a synthesis between my painting and the object and myself. We're all the same thing at the same moment." —Josephine Halvorson

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 Josephine Halvorson 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 How do we pay attention to our surroundings?
- ② What does “time” mean to you? How do you experience time each day?
- ③ If watching the film *Josephine Halvorson Gets The Conversation Going*, discuss: what does it mean to critique an artist’s work? Do you critique each other’s work in this class? How does it feel?

While Viewing

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

- ① How does Halvorson pay attention to her surroundings?
- ② Note what Halvorson says about time.
- ③ If watching the film *Josephine Halvorson Gets The Conversation Going*, consider: How do these students approach critique? What words would you use to describe their interactions?

After Viewing

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

- ① How does looking closely change your understanding of the surroundings?
- ② What does Halvorson say about time and control? How do they interact?
- ③ Why expose an artwork you made to other people? What benefits does critique hold?

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.

- ✓ Pick an area from your surroundings that interests you. Set a duration of time to work with a medium of choice in order to record your time with the objects in your surroundings. Pay attention to what you notice and what you are reminded of.
- ✓ Pick an object. Over several class periods, record the object each time. Notice what changes in each session: if you notice new things, how the image differs, how your thoughts differ, and how your relationship with the object differs.