

SAN LUIS OBISPO
museum OF **art**



CURRICULUM GUIDE

ONCE UPON NOW

February 28 – May 30, 2026

A FEW HELPFUL FAQS BEFORE WE JUMP IN...

What is an exhibition curriculum guide?

An Exhibition Curriculum Guide is a resource designed to help parents and educators engage children and students with the themes and artworks featured in our museum exhibition. It provides background information, discussion questions, and activities that align with the exhibition's content. The guide serves as a bridge between the museum experience and classroom or home learning, with the goal of enriching the overall experience of the museum visit!

Who is this guide for?

This guide can be used by anyone but is primarily intended for parents and educators who want to enhance the learning experience of children or students. It is perfect for families visiting museums together, teachers looking for classroom resources that complement the museum's exhibition, or homeschoolers wanting to integrate museum visits into their lesson plans. The activities and questions are adaptable for a variety of age groups and learning levels, ensuring that all visitors can engage with the exhibition in a meaningful way.

What is the best way to use this guide?

The Exhibition Curriculum Guide can be used in several ways, depending on your needs:

- 1. Before the Visit:** Use the guide as an introduction to the exhibition. Review the themes, key artworks, and questions to help prepare children or students for what they will see. This can spark curiosity and anticipation.
- 2. During the Visit:** Bring the guide with you to the museum and use it to direct attention to specific pieces or concepts. The discussion questions and activities can be used to guide conversations or observations as you explore the exhibition.
- 3. After the Visit:** Once you've returned home or to the classroom, use the follow-up activities and reflection questions to reinforce learning, encourage further exploration, and discuss what was seen. This can also help students or children retain what they learned and express their thoughts creatively.

EXHIBITION CURRICULUM GUIDE

Artist Name:

Felix Gonzales-Torres, Edouard Duval-Carrié, Max Weber, Frank Stella, Rachel Rose, Alex Katz, Robert Gober, Alfred Conteh, Richard Prince

Exhibition:

Once Upon Now

Dates:

February 28 - May 30, 2026



CONTEXT

ARTIST BACKGROUND



- There are 9 artist from almost 100 years of history in this exhibition.
- Art from different times: This exhibition shows artworks made over many years (from long ago to today), so we can see how American art has changed and stayed the same.
- Stories about people and feelings: The artworks explore who we are, friendship, memories from childhood, and how people feel about home and belonging.
- Looking at our world through art: These works help us talk about our communities, what matters to us, and how art can help us imagine a better future.



CONTEXT

ELEMENT OF FOCUS



- The element of focus for this curriculum is Color. In this diverse exhibition, all nine artists work with color in their own, unique ways. It is a colorful show – with lots of unique approaches to color.
- Color is what we see when light reflects off objects. Artists use color to show feelings, tell stories, and help our eyes move around an artwork. Colors can be bright or dark, warm or cool, calm or exciting. Do you have a favorite color?
- **Each artist in this exhibition uses color in their own special way – here are a few examples:**
 - Edouard Duval-Carrié uses glowing blues, greens, and golds to create dreamlike scenes that feel mysterious and emotional.
 - Rachel Rose uses soft, natural colors that feel calm and thoughtful, like memories from childhood.
 - Alfred Conteh uses warm, natural colors to show friendship, care, and human connection.

Pop-out Element of Focus Activity:

Take some crayons in your favorite color. Fill this square with shading from different shades of the same color. Notice how they blend into each other and how your eye connects the different shades.



RESPONDING

KEY WORKS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER



Lost at Sea, 2014 (detail)



Edouard Duval Carrière, *Lost at Sea*, 2014, Mixed media on aluminum



Lost at Sea, 2014 (detail)



Lost at Sea, 2014 (detail)



Lost at Sea, 2014 (detail)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is the very first thing you notice when you look at this work?
2. What is the first feeling that comes up when you look at this work?
3. Does this artwork feel calm, scary, magical, or something else? Why?
4. Where do you think this place could be? What clues help you guess?

RESPONDING

KEY WORKS

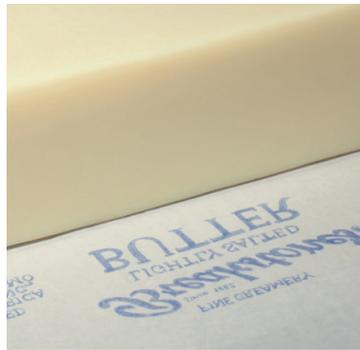
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER



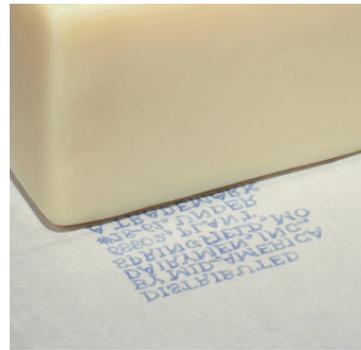
Robert Gober, *Untitled*, 1993-1994, beeswax, wood, glassine and fiber-tipped pen



Untitled, 1993-1994 (detail)



Untitled, 1993-1994 (detail)



Untitled, 1993-1994 (detail)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have you ever seen something like this before? Where?
2. Does this artwork feel normal or surprising to you? Why?
3. If this artwork could talk, what do you think it might say?

RESPONDING

KEY WORKS

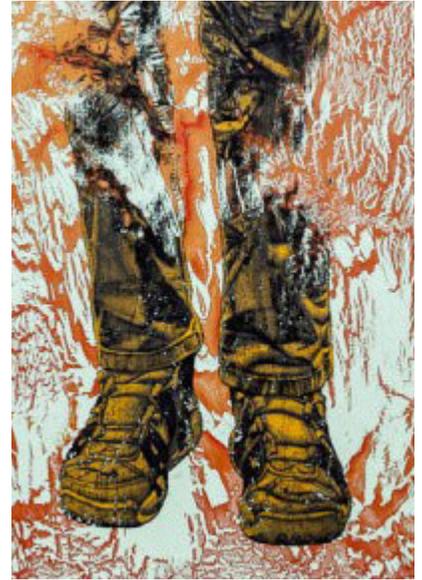
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER



Alfred Conteh, *Malik and Marquis*, 2020, Acrylic and urethane plastic on canvas



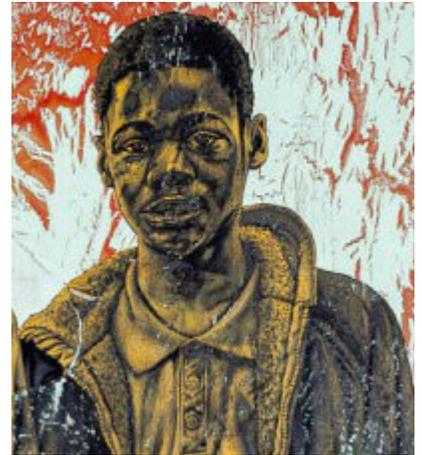
Malik and Marquis, 2020, (detail)



Malik and Marquis, 2020, (detail)



Malik and Marquis, 2020, (detail)



Malik and Marquis, 2020, (detail)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What do you think the artist wants us to notice most about these two people?
2. What do you notice about the colors in the clothes and the background?
3. Do you notice any materials the artist used besides paint?

RESPONDING

KEY WORKS

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

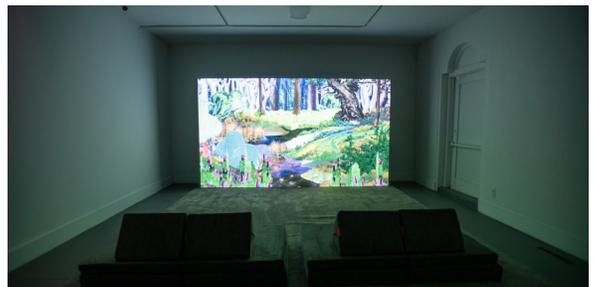


Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled” (L.A.), 1991, Green candies individually wrapped in cellophane, endless supply

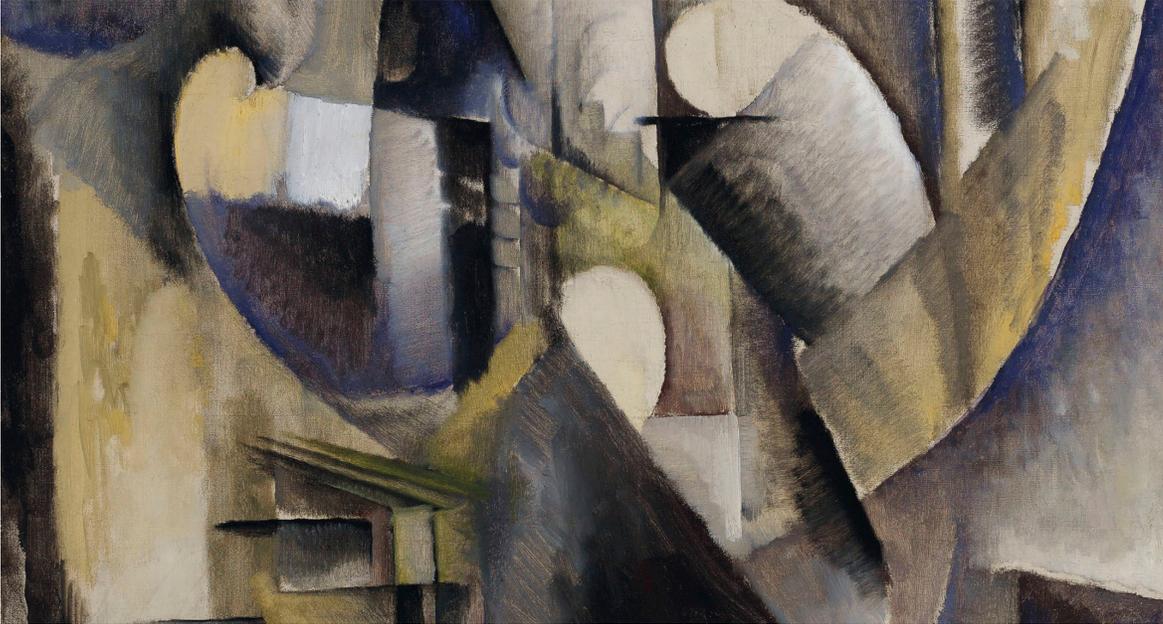
QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What makes this artwork different from others you’ve seen in a museum or gallery?
2. How does it make you feel to look at (or take part in) this artwork?
3. How might this artwork change over time?
4. Why do you think sharing is important in this artwork?

When you come to the Museum, you’ll get to see the video work *Lake Valley*, by Rachel Rose. Rachel Rose uses images from old children’s books to tell her stories in video and animation. You’ll love it!



CONNECTING YOUR WORLD



Max Weber, *Interior with Music*, 1915, Oil on canvas

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: AGES 5 - 7

1. Do any of these artworks remind you of something from your life, like a place, a person, or a feeling?
2. Which artwork has colors that bring up a specific feeling for you? Why?
3. If you could step inside these artworks, which one would it be and why?
4. Which artwork would you want to tell a story about? What might happen in your story?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: AGES 8 - 10

1. Do any of these artworks remind you of a memory you have?
2. Which artwork feels most like something you see in your everyday life? What makes it feel familiar?
3. How do the colors in one artwork match how you're feeling today?
4. If one artwork showed something important about your life, what would it be and why?

CONNECTING YOUR WORLD



Alex Katz, *Dark Glasses*, 1989, Oil on canvas

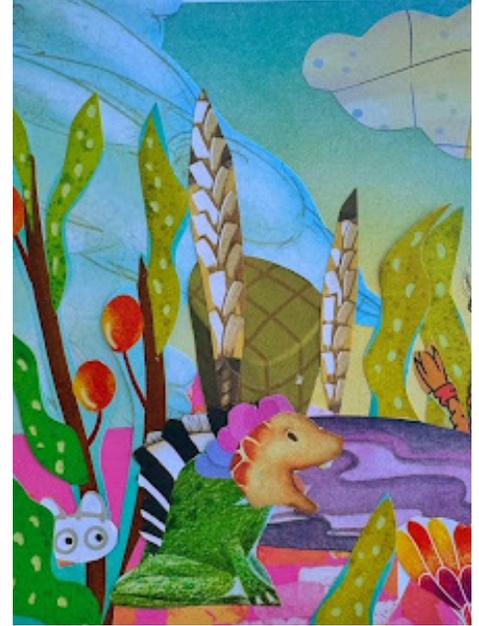
QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: AGES 11 -13

1. Which artwork do you feel most connected to, even if you don't know why?
2. Do any of these works make you think about friendship, belonging, or being yourself?
3. How do the colors in one artwork change the way you understand what it might be about?
4. Can you think of a moment in your life that feels similar to the mood of one of these artworks?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS: AGES 14 - 18

1. Which artwork reflects something you've experienced or thought about in your own life?
2. How do the artists use color to show emotions or ideas you recognize from your world?
3. Do any of these works make you think about identity, community, or belonging? How?
4. If you could ask one artist a question about their work, what would you ask - why does it matter to you?

CREATING YOUR TURN!



ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS: AGES 5 & UP

Rachel Rose's Lake Valley is an animated video featuring a fictional animal. Each frame is a mix of elements from children's book illustrations. With this activity, students are invited to use deconstructed children's books to create your own fictional animal collage.

1. Have students consider what their imaginary creature will look like. Will it have ears, a tail, or whiskers? Where does the animal live, in a forest, on the beach, or in outer space? Once these questions are answered, it's time to start building the background.
2. To make the world your imaginary creature lives in, cut out shapes that could be plants, ponds, clouds, rocks, mountains, or whatever you'd like your environment to have. Then, glue down your scenery.
3. Next, assemble your creature and glue it onto your background.
4. Lastly, name your animal and its imaginary world, and share your creative project with friends and family.

MATERIALS: Glue | Scissors | Illustrated Paper | Cardstock

POP-UP! We'll have premade art kits at the Museum with this activity on March 14, 11am-1pm! Stop by!

Once Upon Now is generously presented by:

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