

MODERN ART AND IDEAS 8
1962–1974

A Guide for Educators

Department of Education at The Museum of Modern Art

MINIMALISM AND CONCEPTUALISM

Artists included in this guide:
John Baldessari, Joseph Beuys, Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin, Eva Hesse,
Donald Judd, Yves Klein, Joseph Kosuth, Yayoi Kusama, Sol LeWitt,
Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Morris, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson.

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A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

This is the eighth volume in the Modern Art and Ideas series for educators, which explores the history of modern art through The Museum of Modern Art’s rich collection. While traditional art-historical categories are the organizing principle of the series, these parameters are used primarily as a means of exploring artistic developments and movements in conjunction with their social and historical contexts, with attention to the contributions of specific artists.

This guide is informed by issues that arise from the selected works in a variety of mediums (painting, sculpture, collage, printmaking, photography, and, significantly, works that transcend the traditional division of mediums), but its organization and lesson topics are created with the school curriculum in mind, with particular application to social studies, visual art, history, and language arts. Lessons are accompanied by writing, research, and hands-on, art-based activities that encourage students to make connections between the visual arts and other disciplines.

The guide’s purpose is not just to investigate works of art but also to demonstrate how images and historical information can be integrated into numerous subject areas and skill bases taught in the classroom. Students will be introduced to significant ideas in art and culture. By comparing a variety of mediums and artistic styles, students will be able to practice observation, articulation, and discussion skills, and to further develop their visual literacy.

The Modern Art and Ideas series was devised with the understanding that the history of modern art is not simply a progression of hermetic styles; rather, a complex matrix of intellectual, social, and historical factors have contributed to the creation of art. Modern art is not solely the product of artists who seek to overthrow convention at all cost. Works of art may be understood through a variety of approaches and offer multiple ways of understanding the historical moment in which they were made as well as the individuals who created them.

USING THE EDUCATOR GUIDE

The five lessons that compose this guide—**Serial Forms/Material Difference**, **Language Arts**, **Constructing Space**, **Public Interventions**, and **Performance into Art**—may be used sequentially or as independent units. An introduction to the key principles of each lesson is followed by a close examination of the works, including historical context and information on the artists. Discussion questions based on the images lead students through analysis of the visual elements of artworks and seek to create connections between information and visual evidence. The activities that conclude each lesson encourage students to synthesize what they have learned about the works and carry the lessons into the broader curriculum or relate it to skills they are practicing in the classroom.

IMAGES

All of the questions, discussions, and activities in this guide are based on the images on the accompanying CD-ROM. Please examine the images carefully before showing them to your students. The CD-ROM can be used if your classroom is equipped with a computer and LCD projector, and you may also print images from the CD-ROM to transparency paper for overhead projection.

ACTIVITIES

The Activities sections encourage students to make connections between their own experiences and the concepts presented in the lessons in this guide. Through these activities, students will begin to develop a language for discussing and looking at art. Feel free to tailor the activities to the skills and interests of your students. The materials in this guide also provide opportunities for in-depth research on specific artists or artistic movements. We have suggested some topics, and we encourage you to add your own.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION AND SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

Additional discussion questions and research projects are included in the For Further Consideration section. A Selected Bibliography and Resources section is also provided, for teachers and students to use in conducting research. The resources recommended in these pages provide further information on the artists and artworks in the guide, general historical topics, and additional classroom activities.

GLOSSARY

A glossary of art-historical and technical terms (bolded in the text on first mention in each lesson) is included at the end of the guide.

SETTING THE SCENE

This guide explores Minimalism and Conceptualism, two artistic movements that developed during the 1960s mainly in the United States, largely in response to prior art movements. Minimalism developed in direct reaction to the critical and popular success of Abstract Expressionist painting over the previous decade, while Conceptual art fundamentally challenged traditional notions of visual art by emphasizing ideas over objects.

- Ask your students to consider what makes something a work of art. What is art supposed to accomplish? Who is it for? Where does one encounter art? Have each student write a list of criteria.
- Divide the class into small groups to discuss and debate their criteria. Ask your students to create a list of criteria they have in common and a list of criteria they disagree about. Have each group share their lists with the class and write them on the board for the class to review.

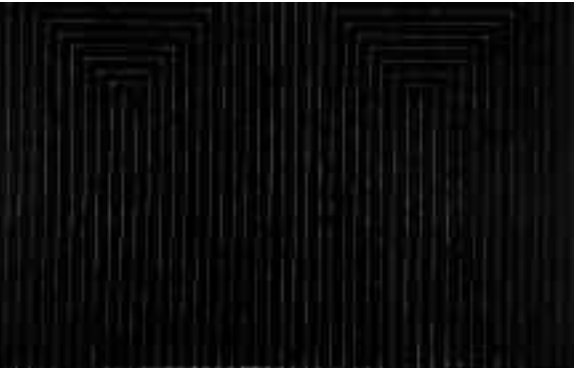


IMAGE ONE: Frank Stella. American, born 1936. *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II*. 1959. Enamel on canvas, 7' 6 3/4" x 11' 3/4" (230.5 x 337.2 cm). Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. © 2007 Frank Stella /Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE TWO: Marcel Duchamp. American, born France. 1887–1968. *In Advance of the Broken Arm*. August 1964 (fourth version, after lost original of November 1915). Wood and galvanized-iron snow shovel, 52" (132 cm) high. Gift of The Jerry and Emily Spiegel Family Foundation. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York /ADAGP, Paris / Estate of Marcel Duchamp

ORIGINS OF MINIMALISM: “WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU SEE”

The early 1960s brought about a significant shift in American artistic production, largely in reaction to the critical and popular success of Abstract Expressionism (for more on Abstract Expressionism, see *Modern Art and Ideas 7: Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art*). In response to this earlier artistic movement, which celebrated personal and expressive painterly gestures, Minimalist artists produced pared-down three-dimensional objects devoid of representational content. Their new vocabulary of simplified, geometric forms made from humble industrial materials challenged traditional notions of craftsmanship, the illusion of spatial depth in painting, and the idea that a work of art must be one of a kind.

- Show your students the image of *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II*, by Frank Stella (Image One), and ask them to describe what they see.
- Ask your students to describe the relationship between the lines on the canvas and the edges of the canvas.

Concentric black bands and white lines outline each other in two inverted U shapes. Stella painted the bands parallel to the canvas’s edges, creating a direct relationship between the painting as an object—in this case a rectangular canvas—and what is rendered on its surface. In an attempt to shift painting from two-dimensions to three, Stella stretched this canvas over an unusually deep frame—nearly three inches in depth.

- Inform your students that Stella used commercial black enamel paint and a housepainter’s brush to make *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II*. The thick black bands are the same width as the paintbrush he used. Ask your students to consider how Stella created the white lines.
- Inform your students that the thin white lines are not painted; they are gaps between the black bands in which the raw canvas is visible.

Stella identified his materials and process with those of a laborer. He rejected expressive, painterly gestures and the illusion of depth on a two-dimensional picture plane in favor of an overall structure that recognized the canvas as both a surface and a three-dimensional object. About his manner of painting, Stella famously said, “My painting is based on the fact that only what can be seen there is there.... What you see is what you see.”

- Ask your students to consider how the artist’s statement relates to *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II*, using their knowledge of Stella’s materials and process.
- Students may ask about the work’s title. Have them define *marriage*, *reason*, and *squalor*. Ask them to consider how these words relate to the **formal** qualities of the work. How does the title affect the way they understand the work?
- Ask your students to revisit their lists of criteria for a work of art. Does *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II* fulfill any of their criteria? Ask them if they would like to refine or expand their lists.

ORIGINS OF CONCEPTUALISM: MARCEL DUCHAMP

Conceptual art, which emerged in the late 1960s, emphasized ideas and theoretical practices rather than the creation of visual forms. While Minimalists stripped away representational content and even craftsmanship from their art, Conceptual artists went further still, insisting that there was no need for art objects at all. In 1967, the artist Sol LeWitt gave the new genre its name in his essay “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” in which he wrote, “The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product.”¹

- Show your students the image of *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, by Marcel Duchamp (Image Two). Ask them to describe what they see. Does it fulfill any of their criteria for a work of art? Why or why not?
- Inform your students that Duchamp did not handcraft this work of art but, rather, he selected a shovel, hung it from the ceiling of his studio, and called it art. To indicate that the idea was conceived by him but that the shovel itself was not made by him, he called the first version, made in 1915, *In Advance of the Broken Arm* / (from) Marcel Duchamp.
- Ask your students to consider how this work relates to their definition of art, particularly with regard to materials and the role of the artist.

Duchamp’s work was perhaps the most significant art-historical precedent for Conceptual art. Claiming to be “more interested in the ideas than the final product,” starting in 1913 Duchamp challenged accepted notions of art by selecting mass-produced, functional objects from everyday life and designating them as art.² He called these readymades. Duchamp’s readymades were aimed at shifting viewers’ engagement with works of art from what he called the “retinal” (pleasing to the eye) to the “intellectual” (in “the service of the mind”), subverting the traditional notion that beauty is a defining characteristic of art.³

This is the fourth version of *In Advance of the Broken Arm*. Because the objects Duchamp selected to be readymades were mass-produced, he did not consider any one readymade to be the original.

- Show your students images of *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor, II* and *In Advance of the Broken Arm*. Ask them to draw comparisons between the materials used to make these two works. How do these materials (enamel house paint and a shovel) support the artists’ intentions? How do the artists’ roles in making these works compare? How do the titles contribute to the interpretation of these two works?

WORDPLAY: WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Duchamp’s title, *In Advance of the Broken Arm*, refers playfully to the function of a snow shovel: to remove snow from the ground. Duchamp’s title assumes that without the shovel to remove the snow, one might slip and fall and even break an arm. The artist frequently assigned humorous titles to his readymades. In 1916, he turned a urinal upside down, signed it with a pseudonym, and titled it *Fountain*, to the dismay of audiences at the time. Such wordplay has an important role in Conceptual art as well.

1. Sol LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 80.

2. Marcel Duchamp, quoted in Roberta Smith, “Conceptual Art,” in *Concepts of Modern Art*, ed. Nikos Stangos (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1994), 256.

3. Marcel Duchamp, quoted in H. H. Arnason and Marla F. Prather, *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Photography*, 4th ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 274.

ACTIVITIES

Divide your class into small groups. Have each group select three objects from around the classroom (such as a chair, a ball, or a book) to designate as readymade works of art. Ask each group to brainstorm a list of titles for their readymades. When they are finished, have them take turns presenting their titled readymades to the entire class, explaining why they selected these titles and whether wordplay or humor played a role.

Duchamp's first readymade is a bicycle wheel attached to a kitchen stool. To explore *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), please refer to *Modern Art and Ideas 5: Dada and Surrealism*. To hear the artist speak about this work, listen to the MoMA Audio: Modern Voices program, at www.moma.org/audio.

LESSONS

LESSON ONE: Serial Forms / Material Difference

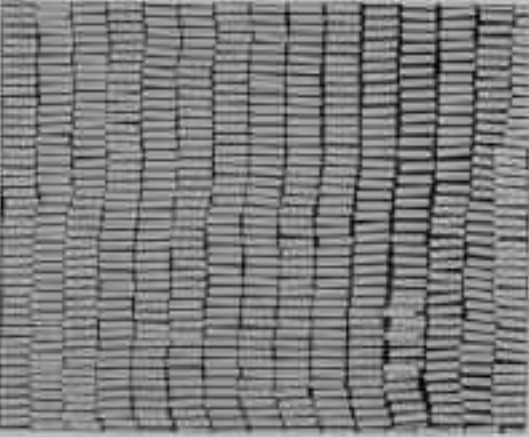
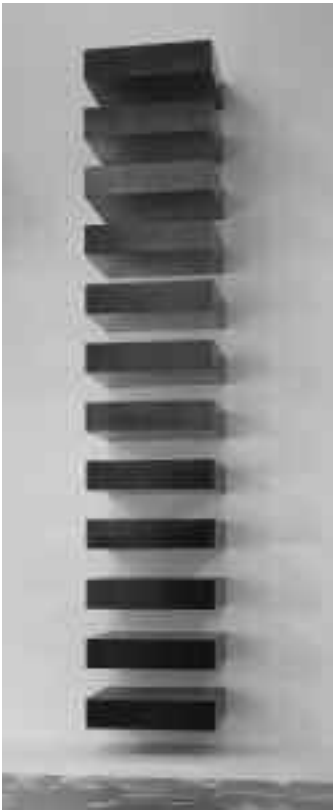


IMAGE THREE: Yayoi Kusama. Japanese, born 1929. *Accumulation of Stamps*, 63. 1962. Pasted labels and ink on paper, 23 ¾ x 29" (60.3 x 73.6 cm). Gift of Philip Johnson. © 2007 Yayoi Kusama



IMAGE FIVE: Eva Hesse. American, born Germany. 1936–1970. *Repetition Nineteen III*. 1968. Fiberglass and polyester resin, nineteen units, each 19 to 20 ¼" (48 to 51 cm) x 11 to 12 ¾" (27.8 to 32.2 cm) in diameter. Gift of Charles and Anita Blatt. © 2007 Estate of Eva Hesse. Galerie Hauser & Wirth, Zurich

IMAGE FOUR: Donald Judd. American, 1928–1994. *Untitled (Stack)*. 1967. Lacquer on galvanized iron, twelve units, each 9 x 40 x 31" (22.8 x 101.6 x 78.7 cm), installed vertically with 9" (22.8 cm) intervals. Helen Acheson Bequest (by exchange) and gift of Joseph Helman. © 2007 Estate of Donald Judd / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY



INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of consumer goods in the United States after World War II prompted Pop artists to borrow the materials, techniques, and imagery of mass production for their art. A predominantly American group of artists known as Minimalists used manufactured materials, industrial fabrication, and repeated forms in their work, but opted to leave the imagery of Pop art behind. Together these strategies challenged traditional notions of the uniqueness of works of art and the role of artistic expression and skill.

In this lesson, students will consider their own definitions of painting and sculpture and explore three works of art made with repeated forms that may challenge these definitions. Students will discuss artists' choices in relation to materials, methods of making, and display.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- **Students will consider artists' choices related to materials, line, color, and scale.**
- **Students will consider artists' motivations for using repeated forms.**
- **Students will compare and contrast industrially fabricated works of art with those made by hand.**

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

The three works of art discussed in this lesson employ repeated forms and use materials that are associated more with industry than with art. These tendencies were embraced by Pop artists in the early 1960s, most notably Andy Warhol.

- **Show your students an image of *Orange Car Crash Fourteen Times* (1963), by Andy Warhol. This work may be viewed in MoMA's Online Collection, at www.moma.org/collection. Ask your students to describe what they see. What image do they see? How many times is it repeated?**

To make this painting, Warhol and members of his studio, which he called The Factory, **screenprinted** a police photograph of a fatal car accident onto a canvas fourteen times. About this method of working Warhol said, "I tried doing them by hand, but I find it easier to use a screen. This way, I don't have to work on my objects at all. One of my assistants or anyone else, for that matter, can reproduce the design as well as I could."⁴

- **Ask your students to consider Warhol's choice of photograph and how this image changes—both visually and in meaning—when it is repeated fourteen times.**
- **Ask your students to consider why the photographic image is repeated on one canvas but not the other.**

Warhol added a plain red canvas to the first to form a **diptych**. About this he stated, "You see, for every large painting I do, I paint a blank canvas, the same background color. The two are designed to hang together however the owner wants. . . . It just makes them bigger and mainly makes them cost more."⁵

This painting uses preexisting imagery and combines manual and mechanical reproduction. Ask your students to keep Warhol's materials and process in mind as they explore the three works in this lesson. (For more about Andy Warhol, see *Modern Art and Ideas 7: Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art*.)

4. Andy Warhol, quoted in Kasper König et al., eds., *Andy Warhol* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1968), n.p.

5. Andy Warhol, "Superpop or a Night at the Factory," interview by Roger Vaughan, *New York Herald Tribune*, August 8, 1965, quoted in Annette Michelson, *Andy Warhol* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), 19.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students the image of *Accumulation of Stamps, 63*, by Yayoi Kusama (Image Three). Ask them to describe what they see, paying particular attention to **composition**, **color**, and **line**.
- Ask your students to look closely at this work and infer how it was made.
- Inform your students that Kusama made this **collage** by placing individual adhesive labels on brown paper that she had covered with an uneven wash of black ink.
- As a class, come up with a list of adjectives to describe the lines formed by the stickers. Have your students point out which lines lead their eyes around the collage. Ask them to infer where Kusama might have begun applying stickers, paying particular attention to the edges of the composition.

In the early 1960s, Kusama used labels and stickers (originally made for file folders, airmail, and pricing) to make gridlike collages. While the stickers provided a **readymade**, standardized form, she applied them in weaving, misaligned grids—even cropping some at the edges of her compositions.

Kusama has said that her use of repeated forms grows out of her lifelong struggle with mental illness. She does not consider her art to be an end in itself, but rather, she has said, it serves a personal function: “I am pursuing my art in order to correct the disability which began during my childhood.”⁶ When she was a girl, Kusama had hallucinations of flowers, dots, and nets—“the same pattern covering the ceiling, the windows, and the walls, and finally all over the room, my body, and the universe.”⁷ The repetitive production practices required to make her collages, paintings, and immersive sculptural **installations** are reflected in her titles, which often include the words *accumulations* and *infinity*.

- Before showing your students the next image, ask them to spend a few minutes writing down characteristics they associate with painting and characteristics they associate with sculpture. Have them share their ideas with the class. Write these on the board for the class to review and discuss.
- Show your students the image of *Untitled (Stack)*, by Donald Judd (Image Four).
- Ask your students to name characteristics *Untitled (Stack)* seems to share with painting and characteristics it seems to share with sculpture. Using visual observation, students should consider **formal traits** such as line, shape, color, materials, and dimensionality.

In 1965 Judd wrote, “Half or more of the best works in the last few years ha[ve] been neither painting nor sculpture,” but rather what he called “Specific Objects.”⁸ Judd’s three-dimensional objects, including *Untitled (Stack)*, challenged the strict categorization of art into **mediums** like painting and sculpture that dominated the discussion of **abstract art** in the 1950s and early 1960s.

- Inform your students that *Untitled (Stack)* includes twelve identical units. Each square unit is forty inches wide, thirty-one inches deep, and nine inches tall. According to the artist’s specifications, the work must be installed so the vertical space between each unit is also nine inches. To give your students a sense of the work’s scale, have them measure out the width and depth of each unit using a tape measure. Then have them measure out the height of four stacked units with proper spacing between them. Mark these measurements on the board or on paper.

6. Yayoi Kusama, quoted in Calvin Tomkins, “On the Edge,” *New Yorker*, October 7, 1996, 100.

7. Ibid.

8. Donald Judd, “Artist’s Statement,” in *Primary Structures*, exh. cat., ed. Kynaston McShine (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1966), n.p.

- Ask your students to count how many units are visible in this image of *Untitled (Stack)*. Ask them to consider why all twelve units are not pictured.

Depending on the height of the ceiling of the gallery where *Untitled (Stack)* is displayed, the number of units may be reduced to maintain proper spacing between them. The flexibility of this work reflects the importance to Judd of the whole work of art over its individual parts.

- Ask your students to consider the relationship of this work to viewers and to the surrounding space, paying particular attention to its scale and how it is displayed.

Judd made his objects bearing viewers' bodies in mind, not just their sense of sight, because he believed that the body's movement through space greatly affected a viewer's perception of a work of art. Although it is hung on a wall like a painting, *Untitled (Stack)* projects nearly three feet from the wall and rises imposingly from floor to ceiling.

Untitled (Stack) is made of galvanized iron, which is a mottled gray color. The sides are covered with the commercially available translucent green lacquer that is used to customize Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Beginning in the mid-1960s, Judd's works were fabricated by a small manufacturing company called Bernstein Brothers. Although Judd was criticized for using nontraditional art materials and for not making his objects by hand, he insisted, "If someone says his work is art, it's art."⁹

- Ask your students if they agree with Judd's statement. Why or why not?
- Show your students the image of *Repetition Nineteen III*, by Eva Hesse (Image Five), and ask them to describe what they see, keeping in mind shape, color, and arrangement of forms.
- Have your students work in pairs to write a list of the similarities and differences between this work and Judd's *Untitled (Stack)*. When they are finished, have them share their lists with the class.

Repetition Nineteen III is composed of nineteen translucent, bucketlike forms approximately twenty inches tall. Minimalist artists explored serial repetition of identical units, but Hesse loosened that principle; her forms are both repetitive and irregular. These forms are hand-made and organic rather than manufactured and hard-edged; although they are similar to one another in size and shape, each form maintains its individuality.

Hesse was flexible about the arrangement of the nineteen units that make up this work. She said, "I don't ask that the piece be moved or changed, only that it could be moved and changed. There is not one preferred format."¹⁰ Because she did not give specific instructions about how her work was to be arranged, its overall shape varies with each installation.

- *Repetition Nineteen III* sits directly on the gallery floor. Ask your students to consider how this placement differs from other sculptures they have seen. How does it affect the work's relationship to the viewer? How does this differ from Judd's *Untitled (Stack)*, which projects from the wall?

9. Donald Judd, quoted in Thierry de Duve, "The Monochrome and the Blank Canvas," in *Reconstructing Modernism: Art in New York, Paris, and Montreal, 1945–1964*, ed. Serge Guilbaut (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 272.

10. Eva Hesse, quoted in *MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from The Museum of Modern Art*, rev. ed. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 271.

Hesse used a wide range of materials to make her sculptural works. She was drawn to newly developed materials, particularly latex and fiberglass, despite the fact that they discolor and deteriorate over time. Aware of the instability of these materials, Hesse stated, “Life doesn’t last; art doesn’t last. It doesn’t matter.”¹¹

- **Ask your students to compare these materials to those used by Judd.**
- **Inform your students that the first version of this sculpture was made from white-painted papier-mâché over wire mesh at half the scale. Hesse planned other versions, in Sculp-Metal and latex, but did not realize them.**
- **Ask your students to brainstorm alternate versions of this sculpture. Have each student draw how they would arrange the units, what size they would be, and what materials they would use. Ask them to consider how changing each of these elements would change the work.**
- **The works in this lesson by Kusama, Judd, and Hesse all use repeated forms. Ask your students to review the works and discuss the similarities and differences between them, giving consideration to materials and how individual units relate to the works as a whole. Also, have your students compare the artists’ roles in the process of making these works.**

ACTIVITIES

Repeated Forms

As a take-home assignment, have your students make a two- or three-dimensional work of art using repeated forms or images. For two-dimensional works, students may want to use labels, stamps, photocopies, photographs, or photocopy transfers. (For how-to information about photocopy transfers, please visit *In the Making on Red Studio, A MoMA Site for Teens*, at www.moma.org/redstudio.) For three-dimensional works, they may use conventional art supplies, small everyday objects, or recycled materials. Encourage your students to be creative not only in selecting their materials but in forming their compositions.

Have your students present their completed works of art to the class. Discuss the range of materials and forms they used. Ask your students to share the reasons why they selected the particular material or image they chose to repeat. Does the meaning of the object or image change with repetition?

Red Studio Podcast

To hear about the materials, fabrication, and maintenance of Judd’s *Untitled (Stack)*, listen to the podcast on this work by MoMA’s Youth Advisory Council on *Red Studio, A MoMA Site for Teens*, at www.moma.org/redstudio.

11. Eva Hesse, quoted in Mignon Nixon, “Ringaround Arosie: 2 in 1,” in Mignon Nixon, ed., *Eva Hesse* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 212.

LESSON TWO: Language Arts



IMAGE SIX: Joseph Kosuth. American, born 1945. *One and Three Chairs*. 1965. Wood folding chair, photographic copy of a chair, and photographic enlargement of a dictionary definition of a chair, chair 32 3/8 x 14 7/8 x 20 1/8" (82 x 37.8 x 53 cm), photographic panel 36 x 24 1/8" (91.5 x 61.1 cm), text panel 24 x 24 1/8" (61 x 61.3 cm). Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. © 2007 Joseph Kosuth / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE SEVEN: Joseph Kosuth. American, born 1945. *One and Three Chairs* (detail). 1965. Wood folding chair, photographic copy of a chair, and photographic enlargement of a dictionary definition of a chair, chair 32 3/8 x 14 7/8 x 20 1/8" (82 x 37.8 x 53 cm), photographic panel 36 x 24 1/8" (91.5 x 61.1 cm), text panel 24 x 24 1/8" (61 x 61.3 cm). Larry Aldrich Foundation Fund. © 2007 Joseph Kosuth / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE EIGHT: John Baldessari. American, born 1931. *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*. 1971. Lithograph, composition: 22 3/8 x 29 1/16" (56.8 x 75.1 cm); sheet: 22 7/16 x 30 1/16" (57 x 76.4 cm). Publisher: The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada. Printer: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design Lithography Workshop, Halifax, Canada. Edition: 50. John B. Turner Fund. © 2007 John Baldessari



IMAGE NINE: Sol LeWitt. American, 1928–2007. *Untitled from Squares with a Different Line Direction in Each Half Square*. 1971. One from a portfolio of ten etchings, plate: 7 3/16 x 7 3/16" (18.6 x 18.6 cm); sheet: 14 1/2 x 14 1/2" (36.8 x 36.8 cm). Publisher: Parasol Press, New York, and Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford. Printer: Crown Point Press, Oakland. Edition: 25. Gift of the artist, Parasol Press, and the Wadsworth Atheneum. © 2007 Sol LeWitt / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

INTRODUCTION

Beginning in the late 1960s, Conceptual artists questioned long-held assumptions about what defined a work of art. In emphasizing ideas over visual forms, they gave language a central role in their work. In this lesson, students will explore the different ways language is used in Conceptual art and investigate how language and images function as systems of representation.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will be introduced to artworks that emphasize ideas over visual forms and consider how these works fit into or challenge their definitions of art.
- Students will explore different methods of using language in art.
- Students will consider the role of artists in making language-based Conceptual art.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Divide your class into groups of three. Give one student in each group a card with a noun written on it (such as *chair*, *house*, or *dog*). Ask that student to draw a picture representing the noun, and have the other two students guess what it is. Next, distribute a card with a verb on it (such as *run*, *think*, or *fly*) for the second student to draw and the other two students to guess. Finally, distribute a card with an idea or concept on it (such as *freedom*, *community*, or *individuality*) for the third student to draw, and go through the same process.

When your students are finished with the activity, have them reflect on how they chose to represent the word they were given. Was it easier for students to draw and guess a noun than a verb or a concept? It may be helpful to point out that although they share a common language and vocabulary, each student has different, though often related, visual associations with words or concepts.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students the image and detail of *One and Three Chairs*, by Joseph Kosuth (Images Six and Seven).
- Ask your students to describe what they see and consider how the three elements that compose this work are related.

One and Three Chairs is an installation that includes a black-and-white photograph of a chair, an actual wooden chair, and a Photostat of a dictionary definition of the word *chair*. The title refers to Kosuth's presentation of one chair using three different forms of representation: an image, an object, and words.

- Ask your students to consider how the photograph and the dictionary definition function differently than the chair itself. Is one representation of the chair—visual or written—more accurate?

Kosuth, who said, “art is making meaning,” emphasized ideas over the convention that art should reflect the artist’s skill or be pleasing or beautiful in some way.¹² Influenced by the artist Marcel Duchamp’s *readymades*—everyday manufactured objects that Duchamp designated as art—Kosuth did not make the chair but, rather, selected one to include in his installation. He had someone else photograph the chair in order to further remove artistic decision making from the process.

12. Joseph Kosuth, quoted in Christopher Lyon, ed., *Contemporary Art in Context* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 47.

- Ask your students to consider Kosuth's use of a simple wooden chair. How might their interpretation of this work have differed if Kosuth had selected an ornate chair?
- Revisiting their lists of criteria for a work of art (see *Setting the Scene*), ask your students if *One and Three Chairs* fulfills their definitions. Ask them to support their observations with visual evidence.

Kosuth believed that the creative act should always be critical. Following the model established by Duchamp's readymades, he produced art that questioned supposedly "unquestionable forms of authority of the culture."¹³ Concerned that people accepted things to be works of art simply because they were exhibited at art museums, Kosuth made works that challenged the authority of art institutions to define objects as art.

- Ask your students to name some ways this work challenges artistic convention and institutional authority.
- Show your students the image of *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art*, by John Baldessari (Image Eight). Ask them to describe what they see and what they think this sentence means.
- Ask your students to consider whether the fact that this statement is handwritten impacts its meaning. Ask them to consider how the meaning of this statement is affected by being repeated over and over.

Baldessari's art often examines how words as a form of communication are interpreted differently by different people because of their diverse experiences of life. He has stated, "Everybody knows a different world, and only part of it. We communicate only by chance, as nobody knows the whole, only where overlapping takes place."¹⁴

Like written language, the language of visual art is also subject to interpretation. What is considered boring to one person may not be regarded as such by another.

- Inform your students how this work was made, using the artist's own words:

I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art was my response to Nova Scotia College of Art and Design to do an exhibition there.... As there wasn't enough money for me to travel to Nova Scotia I proposed that the students voluntarily write, "I will not make any more boring art" on the walls of the gallery, like punishment. To my surprise they covered the walls.¹⁵

This **lithograph** was made by those same students responding to Baldessari's instructions from thousands of miles away, but not under his direct supervision.

- Ask your students to consider the role of the artist. Should Baldessari be considered the artist of *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art* since his only role in its making was to provide the idea and instructions? Why or why not? How is Baldessari's role similar to Kosuth's? How is it different?

13. Ibid.

14. John Baldessari, quoted in Coosje van Bruggen, *John Baldessari* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 58.

15. Ibid, 11.

The reference to “boring art” in this 1971 print may allude to Baldessari’s *Cremation Project* from the year before. He had abandoned making more traditional **landscape** paintings, and fed up with his cluttered studio, the artist decided to burn every painting he had made between 1953 and 1966 that was still in his possession. He buried the ashes in coffins and placed a notice in the newspaper documenting his act.

- **Give your students a few moments to look at *Untitled from Squares with a Different Line Direction in Each Half Square*, by Sol LeWitt (Image Nine), but do not tell them the title right away.**

LeWitt wrote instructions, or what he called “operational diagram[s] to automate art,” that also act as the titles of his artworks.¹⁶ Ask your students to infer what one-sentence title LeWitt might have written to instruct someone how to make this work of art, using visual evidence to support their observations.

- **Inform your students that this lithograph is part of a series called *Squares with a Different Line Direction in Each Half Square*. Write this title on the board and ask your students to describe how it relates to the work’s lines and **composition**.**

LeWitt hoped his work would appeal to viewers’ intellects, rather than their senses or emotions. He believed that words and lines had equal weight in expressing ideas.

- **Inform your students that although he was interested in all aspects of a work’s creation, from the initial idea to its final execution, LeWitt often hired assistants to execute wall drawings according to his instructions, likening his role as artist to that of a composer of music rather than a performer.**
- **In “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” LeWitt wrote, “The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.”¹⁷ Ask your students what they think the artist meant by this statement.**

LeWitt hoped that by using written systems, he might eliminate the self-expression traditionally valued in art. Furthermore, he was not interested in the beauty of the final drawings. “If I give the instructions and they are carried out correctly, then the result is OK with me,” he stated.¹⁸

- **Make sure each student has a pencil and a blank sheet of paper. Ask them to use the same title, *Squares with a Different Line Direction in Each Half Square*, as instructions to draw a composition different from the one they have already seen. After they are finished, your students should share their drawings with the class and discuss how they interpreted these same words. What are the similarities and what are the differences among their drawings? Other works from this series are pictured in MoMA’s Online Collection, at www.moma.org/collection.**

ACTIVITIES

Artistic Influence

LeWitt’s “Statements on Conceptual Art” and “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art” were very influential for other artists. A short film of Baldessari singing some of LeWitt’s statements in 1972 can be viewed on UbuWeb, at www.ubu.com/film/baldessari.html.

16. Sol LeWitt, quoted in Lucy R. Lippard, “THE STRUCTURES, THE STRUCTURES AND THE WALL DRAWINGS, THE STRUCTURES AND THE WALL DRAWINGS AND THE BOOKS,” in *Sol LeWitt*, exh. cat., ed. Alicia Legg (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1978), 24.

17. Sol LeWitt, “Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,” 80.

18. LeWitt, quoted in Lippard, “THE STRUCTURES,” 24.

Following Instructions

LeWitt often hired people to execute his written instructions for works of art. Divide your class into pairs. Taking turns reading and drawing, the students in each pair should use a black crayon, ruler, and paper to make a drawing according to these instructions from LeWitt's portfolio *WORK FROM INSTRUCTIONS* (1971):

USING A BLACK, HARD CRAYON DRAW A TWENTY INCH SQUARE.
DIVIDE THIS SQUARE INTO ONE INCH SQUARES. WITHIN EACH
ONE INCH SQUARE, DRAW NOTHING, OR DRAW A DIAGONAL
STRAIGHT LINE FROM CORNER TO CORNER OR TWO CROSSING
STRAIGHT LINES DIAGONALLY FROM CORNER TO CORNER.

After they have finished drawing, each pair should share their works with the class. If there are differences among the drawings, students should determine if it is because the drawer did not correctly follow the instructions or if it is because LeWitt's written instructions can be interpreted in different ways.

Do it

Do it is a compilation written by contemporary artists of playful and provocative do-it-yourself instructions for making artworks and artistic interventions. Selections from the manual are available online at www.e-flux.com/projects/do_it/homepage/do_it_home.html (see Selected Bibliography and Resources).

As an after-school activity, have each of your students select one set of instructions to follow from the *Do it* manual or Web site. Once their works are complete, students should present them to the class. If more than one student chooses the same instructions, have them compare how they interpreted the instructions.

Please note that some artists' instructions may be inappropriate for younger students. We recommend instructions written by the following artists:

Louise Bourgeois, Critical Art Ensemble, Tacita Dean, Jimmie Durham, Olafur Eliasson, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Joseph Grigley, Roald Hoffman, Allison Knowles, Steve Kaltenbach, Jeong-a Koo, Julius Koller, Jorge Macchi, Annette Messenger, Yoko Ono, Cesare Pietrousti, Marjetica Potrc, and Erwin Wurm.

Paper Sculptures

The Paper Sculpture Book contains instructions and materials developed by contemporary artists for building paper sculptures (see Selected Bibliography and Resources). Have each student in your class follow the instructions to make one of the paper sculptures. When they are finished, have them present their work to the class and then create an exhibition of their paper sculptures in the classroom. Ask your students to discuss whether the instructions are straightforward or if they allow room for interpretation and intervention.

LESSON THREE: Constructing Space



IMAGE TEN: Richard Serra. American, born 1939. *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*. 1969 (refabricated 1986). Lead, four plates, each 48 x 48 x 1" (122 x 122 x 2.5 cm). Gift of the Grinstein Family. © 2007 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE ELEVEN: Robert Morris. American, born 1931. *Untitled*. 1969. Felt, 15' ¾" x 6' ½" x 1" (459.2 x 184.1 x 2.5 cm). The Gilman Foundation Fund. © 2007 Robert Morris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE TWELVE: Dan Flavin. American, 1933–1996. *Pink out of a Corner—To Jasper Johns*. 1963. Fluorescent light and metal fixture, 8' x 6" x 5 ⅜" (243.8 x 15.2 x 13.6 cm). Gift of Philip Johnson. © 2007 Estate of Dan Flavin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

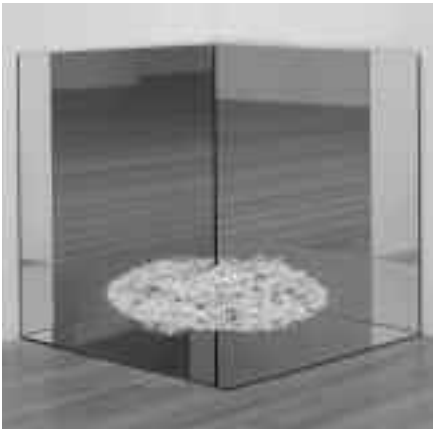


IMAGE THIRTEEN: Robert Smithson. American, 1938–1973. *Corner Mirror with Coral*. 1969. Mirrors and coral, 36 x 36 x 36" (91.5 x 91.5 x 91.5 cm). Fractional gift of Agnes Gund. © 2007 Estate of Robert Smithson / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of Minimalist artists was to produce work that engaged the surrounding space. Although art has long been made to be looked at, these artists sought to involve viewers in a more physical way, acknowledging that their perception shifts as they move through space. In this lesson, students will be introduced to three-dimensional works that employ a wide range of materials to engage the surrounding space and an embodied viewer.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will explore artists' choices of nontraditional art materials.
- Students will explore how artists use different materials to engage space and will consider the role of the viewer in that process.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

Ask your students to collectively define sculpture based on examples they have seen before or by referring to the list of characteristics they made in Lesson One. Students should consider materials, subject matter, and scale. What does sculpture typically depict? How is it displayed? How does it relate to space differently than painting? How does a viewer typically interact with sculpture, compared to painting? Students should keep their responses in mind as they explore the four works in this lesson.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students the image of *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*, by Richard Serra (Image Ten), but do not tell them the title right away. Ask them to describe what they see.
- Inform your students that this sculpture is made from four lead plates, each four feet by four feet in dimension. Ask them to name some properties of lead.
- Inform your students that this work, part of a series Serra made "dealing with the basic tectonics of building," is called *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*.¹⁹ Ask your students to define the elements that compose the title: *ton*, *prop*, and *house of cards*. What does each word or phrase suggest? How do they relate to each other, and how might they relate to this work?
- Inform your students that the four five-hundred-pound lead plates lean against each other and prop each other up; they are not attached to each other or to the floor. Ask your students to come up with some verbs to describe the action performed by the lead plates making up this sculpture.

In the early 1960s, Serra wrote something he called "Verb List," hoping, he said, to "establish a series of conditions to enable me to work in an unanticipated manner and provoke the unexpected" (see For Further Consideration).²⁰ He subjected materials, including lead, rubber, and steel, to the different actions on this list. He made *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* by reacting to the verb *to prop*. About *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*, Serra has said, "Even though it seemed it might collapse, it was in fact freestanding. You could see through it, look into it, walk around it, and I thought, 'There's no getting around it. This is sculpture.'"²¹

- Ask your students how the artist's statement relates to their definitions of sculpture (see Lesson One).
- Ask your students to describe the surface of the lead plates. How do the materials and surface differ from Donald Judd's *Untitled (Stack)*, discussed in Lesson One?

19. Richard Serra, audio interview for *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years*, The Museum of Modern Art and Acoustiguide, Inc., March 13, 2007.

20. Richard Serra, quoted in Carmen Gimenez et al., *Richard Serra: The Matter of Time* (Bilbao: Guggenheim, 2005), 30.

21. Ibid.

While drawing on the simplified geometric forms and industrial materials of Minimalism, Serra used the weightier, unpolished materials he first encountered working at steel mills and shipyards as a young man.

- **Show your students the image of *Untitled*, by Robert Morris (Image Eleven). Ask them to infer what material the artwork is made from.**
- **Inform your students that this work is made of a large piece of felt, cut and hung on the wall by two hooks. Ask them to name some qualities of felt and things that are made from felt.**

Both Serra and Morris have likened the materials and forms of their artworks to the human body. Serra has related his Prop pieces, including *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)*, to the body in terms of their reliance on balance and counterbalance, and he has claimed that they were inspired in part by experimental dance performances he saw in New York in the late 1960s.²² Morris, who choreographed several dance performances in New York in the early 1960s based on the exploration of bodies in space, believes that felt is “skinlike.”²³

- **Ask your students to draw an outline of Morris’s *Untitled*, using pencil and paper. Then have them draw the outline of what they imagine this same piece of felt looked like after it was cut, but before Morris suspended it from the two hooks on the wall. How do these two shapes differ?**
- **Ask your students to compare and contrast Serra’s *One Ton Prop (House of Cards)* with Morris’s *Untitled* in terms of materials, lines, and shape. Ask them to consider the role of gravity in each of these sculptures.**

In the late 1960s, Morris broke away from the rigidly geometric, industrially fabricated forms of Minimalist sculpture and began using materials, like felt, with more expressive potential. Subjecting this malleable and tactile material to simple actions such as cutting and dropping—a strategy he called “anti-form”—Morris relinquished much of his own artistic control to gravity, inviting chance to play a role in creating form.

Many artists in the twentieth century—most notably Dadaists and Surrealists—used chance as a strategy for making art. To explore chance as an artistic strategy, see *Modern Art and Ideas 5: Dada and Surrealism* or encourage your students to explore Chance Words at Red Studio, A MoMA Site for Teens, at www.moma.org/redstudio.

The next two artists in this lesson use very different materials to make works that engage the space around them.

- **Show your students the image of *Pink out of a Corner—To Jasper Johns*, by Dan Flavin (Image Twelve). Ask them to write five adjectives describing what they see. Inform your students that Flavin’s work is made from a fluorescent tube that is eight feet tall. Ask them where they usually find fluorescent lights. What is their function? What colors are they? Ask your students to describe the color of this light and consider how its color affects its function.**

Flavin began using fluorescent light tubes as an artistic medium in 1963, the year he made this work. The colors and lengths of the fluorescent tubes he used were determined by what was commercially available at the time—red, blue, green, pink, yellow, ultraviolet, and four shades of white, in two-, four-, six- and eight-foot tubes.

22. Ibid.

23. *MoMA Highlights*, 287.

- Ask your students to look at the image of *Pink out of a Corner—To Jasper Johns*, paying close attention to the light and shadows cast on the walls and floor. Have your students close their eyes and imagine they are standing in front of the work. How might the colored light flood the surrounding architectural space? How might it color their bodies and how might this change as they move around the space?

Flavin did not consider his works to be sculptures, because they consist not only of the physical object (the fluorescent tube) but also of the space illuminated by the light. When the light emitted touches people or objects or a reflecting plane, such as a wall, floor, or ceiling, it illuminates and colors these as well. Flavin's work unites color with light and space, bringing color into three dimensions and transforming the surrounding space.

- Ask your students to consider the location of this work, in a corner. What are their associations with corners, and why might Flavin have placed it in one?

As its title suggests, *Pink out of a Corner—To Jasper Johns* was made to be installed in a corner. While the fluorescent tube and metal backing physically obscure the corner, the light emitted seems to erase the fluorescent tube itself. When a viewer looks at the work for a sustained period of time in close proximity to it, the light creates the effect of a cylinder much wider than the tube itself. When the viewer looks away from the work, the surrounding space briefly appears to be greenish-yellow—the complementary color of pink.

- Ask your students to test this by staring at a bright-colored image or light for thirty seconds then looking away, at a white surface. The color of the afterimage will be the complementary color of the original colored image or light.

Like all lights, fluorescent tubes, which are formed from a combination of mercury vapor, argon gases, and glass, have a finite lifespan. When a museum acquires a work by Flavin, it receives an artist's certificate indicating specifications for replacement tubes, which it purchases when necessary, to extend the life of the work.

- In 1915 Marcel Duchamp suspended a snow shovel from the ceiling and affixed a bicycle wheel to a stool. For this work, Flavin oriented a fluorescent tube vertically in a corner. Ask your students to consider how Flavin's use of commercially available material relates to Duchamp's readymades (see *Setting the Scene*). Duchamp, who made several versions of each readymade, did not consider any one of them to be the original. Ask your students to draw parallels between the choices made by these two artists with respect to found objects.

Although his work has often been described as sublime, or awe-inspiringly beautiful, Flavin rejected this characterization, stating, "One might not think of light as a matter of fact, but I do. And it is ... as plain and open and direct an art as you will ever find."²⁴

- Show your students the image of *Corner Mirror with Coral*, by Robert Smithson (Image Thirteen). Divide the class into pairs and ask them to compare and contrast this work with *Pink out of a Corner—To Jasper Johns*. Then have each pair share their ideas with the whole group.
- Inform students that this work is made from three square mirrors in a corner of a room—two perpendicular mirrors against the wall and one on the floor—and a small pile of pinkish-white coral. Given the shape of the coral's reflection in the mirrors, ask your students to infer the shape of the actual pile of coral.

24. Dan Flavin, quoted in Michael Gibson, "The Strange Case of the Fluorescent Tube," *Art International* 1 (Autumn 1987): 105.

Smithson believed that taking natural materials out of their original contexts abstracted them. In this work, Smithson's idea of abstraction is made visual as the wedge-shaped pile of coral is multiplied and fragmented in its mirror reflections.

- **Ask your students how mirrors can make them aware of spaces around them. Ask them to think of instances when mirrors alter or distort appearances rather than reflect them.**

On his use of mirrors as a material, Smithson said, "I'm using a mirror because the mirror in a sense is both the physical mirror and the reflection: the mirror as a concept and abstraction; then the mirror as a fact within the mirror of the concept."²⁵

- **Ask your students to consider how Smithson's statement might also apply to Flavin's use of fluorescent lights. How do mirrors and lights engage viewers and space in a similar way?**

In using these materials, Flavin and Smithson acknowledged that viewers experience artworks with their bodies, not just with their sense of sight, and that their perceptions of works of art shift as they move through space. The light cast by Flavin's fluorescent tube and the reflections in Smithson's mirrors change in direct relationship to the position of the viewer. No two people experience these works in precisely the same way.

- **Ask your students to close their eyes and imagine they are standing in front of *Corner Mirror with Coral*, which is three feet high. Ask them to imagine what they would see reflected in the mirrors, aside from the pile of coral.**

Because Smithson's work is located in a corner, it fragments the viewer's body and the surrounding architectural space in its reflections. To get a better sense of this effect, it may be useful for students to hold two small mirrors perpendicular to each other and observe what the mirrors reflect. Is it possible for your students to position themselves so they will not be reflected in the mirrors at all?

- **Ask your students to collectively generate a list of adjectives describing the coral and a list describing the mirrors. Write them on the board for reference.**

Although Smithson was best known for his *earthworks*, sites in which he manipulated the natural landscape, *Corner Mirror with Coral* is an example of what he called a "non-site." Combining natural materials with the sleek, industrial materials of Minimalism, non-sites are typically displayed in galleries or museums rather than outdoors. About these works, Smithson stated, simply, "Instead of putting a work of art on some land, some land is put into the work of art."

Smithson referred to gallery spaces as prison cells and likened museums to tombs or graveyards, and his non-sites function in part to critique conventions of displaying art. For instance, *Corner Mirror with Coral* reflects the institutional setting of the museum back to the viewer, who cannot avoid seeing its reflection. Furthermore, Smithson's non-sites sit directly on the floor of the museum rather than on pedestals. This was a huge break from tradition, instigated by Minimalist artists. In opposition to traditional museum display, the works become part of the viewer's space rather than taking on a separate or elevated status.

- **Ask your students to reconsider their definitions of sculpture in relation to the works of art in this lesson. How do these works define space? How do they engage viewers in the space?**

25. Robert Smithson, "Fragments of a Conversation," ed. William C. Lipke, in *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 169.

ACTIVITIES

Public Art: Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*

In 1979, Serra was commissioned to produce a public work of art for Federal Plaza in New York City. About his design for *Tilted Arc* (1981), the sculpture he made for the plaza, Serra said,

The viewer becomes aware of himself and of his movement through the plaza. As he moves, the sculpture changes. Contraction and expansion of the sculpture result from the viewer's movement. Step by step the perception not only of the sculpture but of the entire environment changes.²⁶

Because of its high cost and massive scale, *Tilted Arc* was the subject of public debate from the time of its installation in 1981 to its removal in 1989. Have your students conduct research on this controversial sculpture. Have each student write a one- to two-page opinion piece about *Tilted Arc* addressing the issues raised at the time, using at least two sources. After completing the assignment, divide your class into two groups—one for and one against the removal of this **site-specific** sculpture. Have your students discuss and debate their ideas about the role of public art, using *Tilted Arc* as an example. Encourage them to research and draw on examples from where they live.

For more information about Serra's sculpture, visit www.moma.org/serra or www.pbs.org/art21/artists/serra. Visit www.publicartfund.org for more information about recent public art projects in New York.

Color Fields

Flavin's early fluorescent works were influenced by the work of **Abstract Expressionist** painter Barnett Newman, who was known for his large **color field paintings** divided by vertical bands he called "zips." Have your students explore Newman's expansive painting *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1950–51)—nearly eighteen feet wide—which envelops viewers with color. In what ways does Newman's painting function similarly to Flavin's fluorescent tubes? In what ways does it function differently? To further explore this work by Newman, see *Modern Art and Ideas 7: Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art*.

Jasper Johns's *Flag*

Pink out of a Corner—To *Jasper Johns* is dedicated to an artist Flavin greatly admired whose work similarly blurred boundaries between objects and their representation. To explore Jasper Johns's painting *Flag* (1954–55), see *Modern Art and Ideas 7: Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art*.

Earthworks

Smithson is best known for his earthworks, artworks in which he manipulated natural landscapes. His best-known earthwork is *Spiral Jetty* (1970), in Utah's Great Salt Lake. Have your students conduct research on *Spiral Jetty* or another of Smithson's earthworks, considering some of the following questions: What is the significance of the location? What kinds of natural materials does Smithson manipulate? What is the scale of the project? How has it changed over time? How do photographs and films of the earthwork shape our perception and interpretation of it?

For more information about Smithson and his work, visit www.spiraljetty.org and www.robertsmithson.com. An excerpt of a film Smithson made about *Spiral Jetty* in 1970 can be viewed on UbuWeb, at www.ubu.com/film/smithson.html.

26. Richard Serra, quoted in Vilis R. Inde, *Art in the Courtroom* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998), 59.

LESSON FOUR: Public Interventions



IMAGE FOURTEEN: Daniel Buren. French, born 1938. One screenprint from *D'Une Impression L'Autre*. 1983. Photographs of installation executed 1968–82. Illustrated book of thirty mounted color photographs and thirty screenprints, page: 13 ¾ x 20 ½" (35 x 52 cm). Publisher: the artist and Éditions Média, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Edition: 95. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1985. © 2007 Daniel Buren / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



IMAGE FIFTEEN: Daniel Buren. French, born 1938. One photograph from *D'Une Impression L'Autre*. 1983. Photographs of installation executed 1968–82. Illustrated book of thirty mounted color photographs and thirty screenprints, page: 13 ¾ x 20 ½" (35 x 52 cm). Publisher: the artist and Éditions Média, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Edition: 95. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Purchase, 1985. © 2007 Daniel Buren / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris



IMAGE SIXTEEN: Gordon Matta-Clark. American, 1945–1978. *Bingo*. 1974. Building fragments, three sections, overall 69" x 25' 7" x 10" (175.3 x 779.8 x 25.4 cm). Nina and Gordon Bunshaft Bequest Fund, Nelson A. Rockefeller Bequest Fund, and the Enid A. Haupt Fund. © 2007 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE SEVENTEEN: Gordon Matta-Clark, American, 1945–1978. *Bingo*. 1974. Building fragments, three sections, overall 69" x 25' 7" x 10" (175.3 x 779.8 x 25.4 cm). Nina and Gordon Bunshaft Bequest Fund, Nelson A. Rockefeller Bequest Fund, and the Enid A. Haupt Fund. © 2007 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



IMAGE EIGHTEEN: Gordon Matta-Clark, American, 1945–1978. *Untitled*. 1974. Chromogenic color print 13 7/8 x 20 1/8" (35.2 x 51.1 cm). Gift of the Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2007 Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

INTRODUCTION

The 1960s were years of experimentation and of rethinking the social order. This decade saw struggles against established power structures and institutions of all kinds—most notably related to gender and racial equality. The Vietnam War incited mass protests in the United States, and in Europe students and workers violently clashed with police in May 1968. Many public spaces, including streets and university campuses, became active sites of political expression. Artists began to look at such spaces as ideal sites of artistic intervention.

In this lesson, students will be introduced to two artists who made interventions in public spaces, and they will consider how their practices expose underlying power structures in society.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will be introduced to the notion of ephemeral and **site-specific** art and will consider the role of the photodocumentation of these works.
- Students will explore works that challenge traditional notions of where art should be displayed.
- Students will be introduced to artists' strategies of **institutional critique**.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

- Ask your students to name locations where they typically encounter works of art. Then ask them to name what these locations have in common.
- Now ask your students to name unexpected places where they have seen art. Ask them to consider how their reactions to works of art differ in relation to where they encounter them.
- Ask your students to consider why artists might choose to make works for display in public spaces. They should keep these ideas in mind as they explore the artwork in this lesson.

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- Show your students Image Fourteen, from Daniel Buren's artist's book *D'Une Impression L'Autre*, and ask them to describe what they see. Do not show them Image Fifteen right away.

In 1966, Buren began producing striped materials, including posters, banners, billboards, and clothing, in a variety of colors, materials, and overall dimensions. This white paper printed with green stripes is one example of his work. Buren considered this **motif** of alternating colored and white vertical stripes precisely 3.4 inches (8.7 centimeters) in width to be a stand-in for painting and hoped it would free painting from its traditional burden of having to tell a story, represent something or someone, or express emotion.

- Ask your students if they agree with Buren's designation of this work as a painting even though it is printed on paper. What, if any, characteristics does it share with traditional painting?
- Now show your students Image Fifteen. Ask them to describe the location pictured in this photograph, using visual evidence. Ask them to consider how this image might be related to Image Fourteen.

This image is what Buren calls a **photo-souvenir**, a photographic snapshot that documents his artworks **in situ**. When installed outdoors, Buren's works are inevitably covered up, removed, or worn down over time. Although they are instrumental in documenting his ephemeral, or temporary, works, Buren insists that photo-souvenirs cannot replicate the experience of seeing the work of art in person, nor, he says, should they be considered art.

- Ask your students if seeing Buren's photo-souvenir documenting the painting's original location affects their interpretation of the work of art. Why or why not?

This photo-souvenir was taken in Paris in April 1968, just days before leftist student protests engulfed the city. In an *affichage sauvage*, or "wild postering" campaign, Buren pasted two hundred green-and-white-striped posters around Paris without authorization, in the middle of the night. In this image, Buren's painting partially obscures advertisements and a poster announcing an upcoming student protest.

Buren maintains a critical attitude towards museums and galleries. He has stated, "The museum/gallery instantly promotes to 'art' status whatever it exhibits with conviction, i.e., habit, thus diverting in advance any attempt to question the foundations of art."²⁷

Concerned that the institutional authority assumed by museums and galleries leads audiences to accept everything displayed in those locations as art, Buren circumvented institutions by installing his paintings in highly visible public and commercial spaces, such as advertising billboards, store windows, and subway stations, rather than conventional art spaces.

27. Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Museum" (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1973).

- Ask your students if they agree or disagree with Buren’s belief that context or location affects the interpretation of a work of art. Why or why not? You may want to refer back to work by Marcel Duchamp (*Setting the Scene*) and Joseph Kosuth (*Lesson Two*), which deal with similar notions of institutional critique and context.
- Show your students the two images of *Bingo*, by Gordon Matta-Clark (Images Sixteen and Seventeen), but do not show them Image Eighteen right away. Inform your students that these two images show opposite sides of the same work.
- Ask your students to infer what materials *Bingo* is made of. Write a list of these materials on the board for reference. As students name materials, ask them to consider what is unusual about how they are arranged in *Bingo*.
- Now show your students *Untitled* (Image Eighteen), by Matta-Clark, and ask them to infer how *Bingo* was made, based on this photograph.

Bingo was made from three building fragments taken from the facade of a suburban house in Niagara Falls, New York, that was about to be demolished by the local housing commission. Matta-Clark secured permission to “unbuild” this two-story, red-shingled house over the course of ten days. Working twelve hours per day with a small team, he cut the north facade into nine equivalent rectangles (each nine feet wide and five feet tall), then removed each one until only the central rectangle remained. Of his choice of medium, Matta-Clark stated, “Why hang things on the wall when the wall itself is so much more a challenging medium?... A simple cut or series of cuts acts as a powerful drawing device able to redefine spatial situations and structural components.”²⁸

- Now have your students compare the images of *Bingo* with *Untitled*. Have them try to figure out which building fragment came from which part of the facade.
- Based on visual evidence and what they know about the game Bingo, ask your students to consider why Matta-Clark titled this work as he did.

The artist called this work *Bingo* because the facade, when cut into nine pieces, resembled the grid of a Bingo game card. In his complete vision for the project, Matta-Clark hoped to cut out the central panel of the opposite facade and leave the rest intact, to create a negative, or opposite, of this facade, but there was not enough time. He explained in his film *The Making of “Bingo”* that “an hour later, the bulldozer arrived.”²⁹

- According to Matta-Clark, this house was “last used as a beauty parlor removed to make room for weeds.”³⁰ Ask your students to consider what Matta-Clark meant by this statement. Have them infer some possible motivations that prompted Matta-Clark to “unbuild” this house and other buildings on the verge of demolition.

Growing up in New York City, Matta-Clark witnessed firsthand the ever-shifting value of real estate, which resulted in the demolition of older buildings for the construction of new ones. The artist claimed, “If anything emerges to cut up, I’ll go anywhere anytime” in the hope of giving buildings a new life—a process he referred to as “anarchitecture.”³¹ While the gesture of sawing back and forth through walls and floors may seem destructive or even violent, Matta-Clark believed it ultimately resulted in visual order, “opening up the view to the invisible”—the normally hidden interiors of walls and floors.³²

28. Gordon Matta-Clark, quoted in Corinne Diserens, ed., *Gordon Matta-Clark* (New York: Phaidon, 2003), 19.

29. Gordon Matta-Clark, in *The Making of “Bingo,”* 1974. Super 8, color, silent, 9 minutes, 40 seconds.

30. Ibid.

31. Gordon Matta-Clark, quoted in Diserens, *Matta-Clark*, 148.

32. Gordon Matta-Clark, quoted in Michael Kimmelman, “Cross Sections of Yesterday,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2007.

Matta-Clark “judiciously dumped” five of the eight building fragments at Art Park, a sculpture park in nearby Lewiston, New York, where he hoped they would be “gradually reclaimed by the Niagara River Gorge.”³³ He did not initially intend the three remaining fragments, which make up *Bingo*, to be reconstructed and displayed as sculpture.

Like Buren’s paintings, Matta-Clark’s anarchitecture projects were intended to be ephemeral, or temporary, but now these works and the accompanying documentation are in the Museum’s collection.

- **Ask your students if Buren’s paintings and Matta-Clark’s building fragments offer institutional critiques similar to those in works by Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Kosuth, and Robert Smithson (see *Setting the Scene*, Lesson One, and Lesson Three). How does the meaning of these works change when they are displayed in an art museum?**
- **Ask your students to consider how photodocumentation has informed their understanding of these two works. Do they consider the photographs to be an essential part of the work? Why or why not?**

ACTIVITIES

Graffiti Compositions

In 1996, the artist Christian Marclay plastered more than five thousand blank musical notation sheets in public spaces throughout Berlin during a month-long sound festival. Members of the public filled them in with standard musical notations as well as scribbles, drawings, and random marks. Marclay photographed many of the graffitied sheets and compiled them into a book, creating a musical score from them. He called this selection of prints *Graffiti Composition* (2002), which can be seen in MoMA’s Online Collection, at www.moma.org/collection. Ask your students to compare and contrast Marclay’s project with Buren’s, bearing in mind their specific geographical and historical contexts.

After this discussion, divide your class into small groups to develop an artistic intervention on paper that can be photocopied and posted throughout the school. Each group should consider how they would like their work to engage other students. Do they want it to pose direct questions or remain more abstract, like Buren’s paintings? Have your students post their projects for one week, then collect them. Together, discuss the responses to these interventions. How did the format and content affect students’ responses? How may location have played a role?

May 1968

Leftist student protests and strikes erupted in Paris in May 1968, and much of France’s workforce joined in. Buren’s photo-souvenir from April 1968 shows a poster beneath his striped painting announcing a student protest on May 1 at the University of Paris at Nanterre, which was shut down by authorities on May 2. Have your students research the events of May 1968. What were the reasons behind the protests? What was the outcome?

Graffiti and posters allowed students to spread their messages during the protests. Some of your students may want to research the images and slogans of May 1968, particularly the posters made by **Atelier Populaire**, a renegade print workshop that was established at Paris’s École des Beaux-Arts during the protests. New posters were created daily at Atelier Populaire to respond to events as they happened.

For more information about Atelier Populaire, please visit the Web site *Eye on Europe: Prints, Book and Multiples / 1960 to Now*. For additional Web sites, please see Online Resources.

33. Gordon Matta-Clark, quoted in press release, David Zwirner Gallery, New York, 2004; Matta-Clark, *The Making of “Bingo.”*

As a point of comparison, some students may want to research the student protests that took place in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

This Old House

Ask your students to write a short story about the people who lived in the house Matta-Clark “unbuilt” to make *Bingo*, keeping in mind the time period—the early 1970s—and the location—Niagara Falls, New York. Since the house was last used as a beauty parlor, students may opt to write about the parlor’s clients.

Digging Deeper

Matta-Clark made art out of residential, commercial, and civic structures before they were demolished, from a New York City pier to a Paris apartment building. Currently, in Detroit an anonymous group of artists called Object Orange draws attention to dilapidated houses by painting their front facades bright orange like those officially slated by the city for demolition. The group’s hope is that these buildings will be torn down to make room for open spaces. (For more information about Object Orange, see Online Resources.)

Have your students work in small groups to research a local site where existing structures were removed or demolished in order to make room for new construction or open space. Students may conduct research on an ongoing building project or a historic one. Those researching a large civic or commercial project, such as a courthouse, skyscraper, stadium, mall, park, or highway, should identify and research the architects and developers involved.

Major building projects can often be controversial, especially if homes or businesses are displaced in the process. Students should investigate whether local residents and politicians supported or contested the projects they choose to research. Some students may want to research artistic or other interventions that have occurred at these sites. Have each group present their findings to the class, along with photodocumentation of the old and new structures. Put up a map of your city in the classroom so students can indicate the locations of their sites with pushpins.

Local newspapers, historical societies, and Web sites will be helpful resources. Here are a few of the many Web sites about building projects in New York City:

Curbed
www.curbed.com

The Municipal Art Society of New York
www.mas.org/viewcategory.php?category=4

Neighborhood Preservation Center
www.neighborhoodpreservationcenter.org/designation_reports.htm

New York City Landmarks Preservations Commission
www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/home/home.shtml

Waterfront Preservation Alliance of Williamsburg and Greenpoint
www.waterfrontalliance.org

LESSON FIVE: Performance into Art



IMAGE NINETEEN: Yves Klein. French, 1928–1962. *Anthropometry: Princess Helena*. 1960. Oil on paper on wood, 6' 6" x 50 ½" (198 x 128.2 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wiesenberger. © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

IMAGE TWENTY: Joseph Beuys. German, 1921–1986. *Eurasia Siberian Symphony* 1963. 1966. Panel with chalk drawing, felt, fat, hare, and painted poles, 6' x 7' 6 ¾" x 20" (183 x 230 x 50 cm). Gift of Frederic Clay Bartlett (by exchange). © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn



INTRODUCTION

Performance art, which emerged in the 1960s, encompasses a diverse range of forms, including theater, dance, and music. While some performances are now known only through photo, video, or film documentation, others resulted in works of art. In this lesson, students will explore two works of art that were created by performances.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will be introduced to performance art and will consider its relationship to more traditional forms of visual art, such as painting and sculpture.
- Students will consider the different ways in which performance art is documented.
- Students will explore artists' construction of identities in performance and their adoption of signature materials and props.

INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

Ask your students to discuss their experiences with performing arts, such as music, theater, and dance. What kinds of performances have they attended or participated in? What are the roles of sets, costumes, instruments, and props? What is the role of the audience? What materials, if any, are typically created by live performances? How does seeing photographs, video, or film of a performance differ from seeing the live performance?

IMAGE-BASED DISCUSSION

- **Divide your class into pairs. Have one student from each pair face the screen where you project images while the other student faces away. Show the image of *Anthropometry: Princess Helena*, by Yves Klein (Image Nineteen). The students facing the screen should describe this work to their partners, paying attention to color, materials, and **composition**. Their partners should draw what is being described, seeking clarification if necessary. When they have finished, have the partners facing away from the screen turn around to see if the work resembles what they drew.**
- Ask your students to write down five words they associate with the color blue in this work. Have them share their words with the class.
- Inform your students that in 1960, with the help of chemists, Klein invented and patented this color, which he called International Klein Blue, or IKB. International Klein Blue is made from pure pigment held together by a clear binder that leaves its intensity intact.

Klein claimed that International Klein Blue reminded him of the color of the sea and sky of his hometown on the Mediterranean coast of France. Using this color, he made many **monochrome** paintings, which he believed symbolized limitless space. He said, "Through color, I feel a total identification with space; I am truly free!"³⁴

Klein wanted to remove the direct touch of the artist's hand, traditionally valued in painting, and so he employed female models to act as "living paintbrushes," or machines for making art. He directed the women, who covered themselves in International Klein Blue paint, to make imprints of their bodies on large sheets of paper or canvas. In his large *Anthropometry* series (anthropometry is the study of human body measurements), Klein made only three paintings using the imprint of his own body.

- Ask your students what they think about Klein's characterization and employment of models as "living paintbrushes."

34. Yves Klein, "My Position in the Battle between Line and Colour," in *Force Fields: Phases of the Kinetic*, by Guy Brett (London: Hayward Gallery, 2000), 242.

To emphasize the importance of process over the finished works of art, Klein staged the making of his Anthropometry paintings as elaborate performances for large audiences, complete with blue cocktails and a performance of his *Monotone Symphony* (1960), a single note played for twenty minutes, followed by twenty minutes of silence.

- **Describe Klein's process to your class using the artist's own words:**

In this way I stayed clean. I no longer dirtied myself with color, not even the tips of my fingers. The work finished itself there in front of me, under my direction, in absolute collaboration with the model. And I could salute its birth into the tangible world in a dignified manner, dressed in a tuxedo.... By this demonstration, or rather technique, I especially wanted to tear down the temple veil of the studio. I wanted to keep nothing of my process hidden.³⁵

An audio excerpt of Klein's *Monotone Symphony* can be heard on UbuWeb, at http://ubu.wfmu.org/sound/klein_yves/Klein-Yves_Monotone-Symphony_Excerpt.mp3. A film of the making of Klein's Anthropometry paintings can be viewed on UbuWeb, at www.ubu.com/film/klein.html. **Please note: this film features nudity and may not be appropriate for all students.**

- **Ask your students to discuss Klein's role as an artist. Is it similar to that of a painter, conductor, choreographer, or director? How does his role as artist compare to Sol LeWitt's (see Lesson Two)?**

Before immersing himself in art, Klein had become an expert in the Japanese martial art judo, or "gentle way." According to Klein, judo locates the human body at "the center of physical, sensorial, and spiritual energy."³⁶ He earned the most advanced judo diploma possible, produced films and a book on the subject, and even founded a judo club in France.

- **Ask your students to consider how Klein's interest in judo might relate to his Anthropometry series. What role does the body play in each of these arts?**

Klein said that the body prints in his Anthropometry series reminded him of imprints left on the judo mat after a participant had fallen.

- ***Anthropometry: Princess Helena* registers a physical trace of the model rather than a detailed likeness. Ask your students if they would consider this painting to be a portrait. Does the work's title influence their interpretation? It may be useful to discuss this work in relation to handprints, footprints, and, particularly, thumbprints, which have long been linked to identity.**

Klein's Anthropometry paintings register a direct trace of the body. Even though they do not typically include imprints of the head or face, Klein believed they were superior to representational paintings as portraits, as he considered the torso to be the body's "essential mass."³⁷

As a point of comparison, students will now look at another artist whose work is the product of a performance.

- **Before showing your students the next work of art, write the following list of materials on the board for reference: blackboard, chalk, hare, poles, fat, felt.**

35. Yves Klein, quoted in Jean-Paul Cloutier, *The Anthropometric Mystery*, www.uwo.ca/visarts/projects/kleinmystery/galleries/jp.htm (viewed August 2007).

36. Amelia Jones, "Untitled Anthropometry," in *The Artist's Body*, Tracey Warr, ed. (New York: Phaidon, 2000), 54.

37. Yves Klein, "Truth Becomes Reality," trans. Howard Beckman, in *Yves Klein 1928–1962: A Retrospective*, exh. cat. (Houston: Institute for the Arts, Rice University, 1982), 230.

- Ask your students to draw a picture or write a story incorporating these materials. Have your students share their pictures and stories with the class. What associations have they made with the different materials? Are there any commonalities among their pictures and stories?
- Now show your students the image of *Eurasia Siberian Symphony 1963*, by Joseph Beuys (Image Twenty), and ask them to describe what they see.

This work is composed of the materials previously listed, used by Beuys in a 1966 performance—what he called an “action”—at a Berlin art gallery. Each of these materials held symbolic power for Beuys. While the hare, with its quick jumps, suggests the ability to span long distances, fat suggests insulation, which was essential to Beuys’s “warmth theory”—his obsession with the role of calories in sustaining life. To him, felt embodied protection and warmth as well as detachment and isolation.

- Ask your students if they recognize any of the words and symbols written on the board in Beuys’s work.

The board notes the degrees of the angles of fat and felt affixed to the sticks and the temperature (42° Celsius) of a high human fever. Note that both angles and temperature are measured in degrees.

This performance was documented through a series of black-and-white photographs, and very few of its details have been recorded. It was one of many performances in which Beuys used a taxidermied hare. In the empty gallery space, he knelt to tie the hare’s legs to long wooden poles, elevating it to his own height. He then hoisted the hare onto his shoulder and, holding it close to his cheek, whispered to it. Beuys took his own temperature and the hare’s and recorded these and the angles between the sticks on the board.

In his performances, Beuys often used animals, which he believed “comprehend more than many human beings with their stubborn rationalism.”³⁸ In addition to the dead hare, which recurs in several performances, Beuys lived with a wild coyote for five days for his 1974 performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*.

- Ask your students to consider the title of this work, *Eurasia Siberian Symphony 1963*. What do they know about the two geographic regions in the title?

Eurasia is the continental block that links Europe and Asia, evoking the fusion of Eastern and Western cultures—resonant for Beuys, who lived in divided Cold War Germany. Siberia, which Beuys saw as a place of spiritual journey and metamorphosis, is a vast, icy region of Russia and northern Asia. Beuys claimed that when he was injured in a plane crash during World War II, he was rescued by the nomadic Tartars of this region, who rubbed him with fat and wrapped him in felt to warm his body. Although Beuys’s performance, unlike Klein’s, lacked symphonic accompaniment, the photodocuments indicate that, in it, he played two long wooden poles as if one were a bow and the other a violin.

- Ask your students to compare and contrast *Anthropometry: Princess Helena* and *Eurasia Siberian Symphony 1963* as documents or remnants of performances. Ask them to compare the roles of the two artists in their performances and in the making of these works.

38. Joseph Beuys, quoted in Ursula Meyer, “How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare,” *Artnews* 68, no. 9 (January, 1970): 57.

During their performances, both Klein and Beuys assumed stage personas, akin to actors performing in character, and used signature props, materials, and costumes. Klein wore a tuxedo as he oversaw elaborate performances, while Beuys was known for wearing jeans, a felt hat, and a fishing vest both onstage and off.

- Ask your students to consider why artists might create stage personas and use signature materials.

ACTIVITIES

Fluxus Happenings

Joseph Beuys was considered part of Fluxus, an interdisciplinary, international **utopian** artists' group formed in the early 1960s that sought to break down the barriers between art and life and challenge the commodity status of the art object. Fluxus was known for impromptu performances, or **Happenings**, and for the distribution of low-cost **multiples**.

Both Beuys and Yayoi Kusama participated in Happenings, which were originated by Alan Kaprow. Have your students conduct research on Happenings by Fluxus artists, including Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Kusama, and Beuys. What prompted them? Where did they occur? What was the response to them?

Contemporary Performance Art

Have your students conduct research on contemporary performance artists and artists who use performance to produce works of visual art—such as Marina Abramovic, Vito Acconci, Janine Antoni, Matthew Barney, Martin Creed, Coco Fusco, Gilbert & George, Richard Long, Yasumasa Morimura, Adrian Piper, Miranda July, Bruce Nauman, Carolee Schneemann, Cindy Sherman, and Mierle Laderman Ukeles. What strategies and materials do they employ? What is the role of the artist's body in their performances? What subjects do the performances explore? How are they documented?

RESEARCH PROJECTS

Conceptualism in Brazil

While this guide focuses on Conceptualism in the United States and Europe, artists around the world have employed strategies to expand traditional notions of art. In the late 1960s, as Brazil was ruled by a ruthless military dictatorship, Conceptual art's emphasis on ideas made it an ideal vehicle for the clandestine expression of political dissent. Divide your students into small groups to research Brazilian Conceptual artists—particularly those involved in the Neo-Concrete movement, such as Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica, Lygia Pape, and Cildo Meireles. Ask your students to investigate the ideas, strategies, and materials these artists used. How does their work relate to the political climate of Brazil? How does it compare with the American and European Conceptual art explored in this guide?

Art and Politics

The latter part of the 1960s, continuing into the 1970s, is remembered for the confrontational spirit that produced a “counterculture” and a wave of protests against the establishment and its policies. Have a discussion with your students about the American political climate in the 1960s and 1970s, and make a timeline of the major events and movements of this period. Ask your students to compare the political climate in the 1960s and 1970s to that of today. What is similar? What is different?

Many artists made work using strategies or subject matter that critiqued social, political, and economic structures. Discuss artists and artwork that addressed the fraught political climate of the time, such as Hans Haacke's 1970 *Poll of MoMA Visitors*, which solicited museum-goers' opinions on the Vietnam War, and the Art Workers Coalition's antiwar posters, also made in the 1970s.

Marcel Duchamp and the Art of Ideas

Many of the artists in this guide were influenced by the work of artist Marcel Duchamp and his concept of the **readymade**. Ask your students to research Duchamp's work. What examples did he set for artists such as Joseph Kosuth, John Baldessari, and Dan Flavin? Students may want to visit Red Studio, A MoMA Site for Teens, at www.moma.org/redstudio, to hear MoMA curators and students discuss Duchamp's work and his legacy.

Design Your Own Podcast

MoMA's Youth Advisory Council created podcasts about works of art in the Museum's collection, including Donald Judd's *Untitled (Stack)* and other works made in the 1960s. Ask your students to listen to the podcasts on Red Studio, A MoMA Site for Teens, at www.moma.org/redstudio, then discuss the podcasts as a group. Refer to the Make Your Own Podcast section of the site for suggestions about how students can create their own podcasts about the works of art in this guide. Encourage your students to submit their podcasts to Red Studio when they are finished.

Activating Materials

Give your students a copy of Richard Serra's "Verb List" (1967–68), below. Serra wrote this list because he wanted to construct a system in language that would "establish a series of conditions to enable me to work in an unanticipated manner and provoke the unexpected."³⁹ Have your students read his list aloud, imagining how these ordinary actions might be applied to the different materials Serra uses, including lead, rubber, and steel.

The List:

to roll, to crease, to fold, to store, to bend, to shorten, to twist, to dapple, to crumple, to shave, to tear, to chip, to split, to cut, to sever, to drop, to remove, to simplify, to differ, to disarrange, to open, to mix, to splash, to knot, to spell, to droop, to flow, to curve, to lift, to inlay, to impress, to fire, to flood, to smear, to rotate, to swirl, to support, to hook, to suspend, to spread, to hand, to collect—

of tension, of gravity, of entropy, of nature, of grouping, of layering, of felting—

to grasp, to tighten, to bundle, to heap, to gather, to scatter, to arrange, to repair, to discard, to pair, to distribute, to surfeit, to complement, to enclose, to surround, to encircle, to hide, to cover, to wrap, to dig, to tie, to bind, to weave, to join, to match, to laminate, to bond, to hinge, to mark, to expand, to dilute, to light, to modulate, to distill—

of waves, of electromagnetism, of inertia, of ionization, of polarization, of refraction, of simultaneity, of tides, of reflection, of equilibrium, of symmetry, of friction—

to stretch, to bounce, to erase, to spray, to systematize, to refer, to force—

of mapping, of location, of context, of time, of carbonization—

to continue.⁴⁰

Have each student write their own list of five to ten verbs about another work in this guide, making sure their verbs reveal something about the materials or process of making the work. After completing their lists, have your students take turns sharing them with the class.

Visit MoMA

Visit The Museum of Modern Art and ask your students to identify a work of art included in this guide. When looking at the work, they should consider its size and scale. Ask them to compare the work with the reproduction they saw in the classroom. Do they see any details now that they did not notice originally? Have their ideas about this work changed? Why or why not? Ask your students to consider the works of art installed near the one they are viewing and draw connections between these works. Why might those works be displayed together?

39. Richard Serra, quoted in Gimenez, *Richard Serra*, 30.

40. Ibid, 49.

GLOSSARY

Abstract: A term generally used to describe art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

Abstract Expressionism: A movement of American artists in the 1940s and 1950s characterized by large abstract painted canvases. The movement had two groups—action painters, such as Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, and Helen Frankenthaler, and color field painters, such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Action painting is characterized by sweeping, gestural lines. Color field painting is characterized by large, unmodulated areas of color.

Atelier Populaire: The renegade print workshop established at Paris's École des Beaux-Arts during nationwide protests in France in May 1968. The workshop created new images daily to respond to events.

Binder: Adhesive.

Collage: An art technique in which fragments of paper and other materials are arranged and glued to a supporting surface. Also, such a work of art is called a collage.

Color field paintings: Paintings of large areas of color, typically with no strong contrasts of tone or obvious focus of attention.

Complementary colors: Colors located opposite each other on the color wheel and that, when mixed together, produce a shade of gray or brown. When one stares at a color for a sustained period of time then looks at a white surface, an afterimage of the complementary color will appear.

Composition: The arrangement of elements within a work of art.

Diptych: A work of art made up of two parts, usually hinged together.

Earthwork: Artistic manipulation of any scale of the natural landscape.

Facade: A surface of a building.

Formal: Relating to form.

Genre: A division of a particular form of art based on sets of conventions.

Happening: A performance, event, or situation considered as art, especially those initiated by the artists' group Fluxus in the early 1960s. Happenings can take place anywhere, are often multidisciplinary and nonnarrative, and frequently seek to involve the audience in some way. The key elements of Happenings are planned, but artists sometimes retain room for improvisation.

In situ: In its original position or place.

Installation: A form of art developed in the late 1950s to challenge the dominance of painting and sculpture. It typically creates an enveloping aesthetic experience in a particular environment.

Institutional critique: A form of art that comments on the various institutions and norms of art. It often seeks to make visible the historically and socially constructed boundaries between inside and outside and public and private and is often directed at art museums and galleries.

Landscape: An image that has natural scenery as its primary focus. Also, the subject of such an artwork.

Lacquer: Any of various clear or colored synthetic organic coatings that typically dry to form a film.

Lithography: A printmaking technique based on the repulsion of oil and water. (For more information and for a demonstration of this process, please see the Web site What Is a Print? at www.moma.org/whatisaprint.)

Medium: The general or specific categorization of art based on the materials used (for example, painting [or, more specifically, watercolor or oil], drawing, sculpture).

Monochrome: Describes a work of art made with a single hue. Also, such a work of art is called a monochrome.

Motif: A single repeated design or color.

Multiple: A small-scale, three-dimensional work conceived by an artist and often commercially produced in relatively large editions.

Organic: Having characteristics of an organism or developing in the manner of a living plant or animal.

Performance art: An art form that emerged in the 1960s that encompasses a diverse range of forms, including theater, dance, and music.

Photo-souvenir: Daniel Buren's term for photographs of his striped artworks in situ that, he has stated, "bear no more relation to what they represent than a postcard of the Eiffel Tower does to the Eiffel Tower itself."

Photostat: A duplicating machine that makes quick positive or negative copies directly on the surface of prepared paper. Also, the resulting print is called a Photostat.

Pigment: Colored matter, typically added to a binding substance to make paint.

Portrait: A representation of a particular individual.

Readymade: A word coined by artist Marcel Duchamp in 1915 to describe mass-produced objects that he designated as art.

Screenprinting: An art process that begins with a porous fabric screen stretched tightly over a wooden frame. A stencil is applied to the screen to block out areas that are not part of the desired image. The artist then uses a squeegee to press ink through the unblocked areas directly onto paper below, creating the final print. Also known as silkscreen. (For more information and for a demonstration of this process, please see the Web site What Is a Print? at www.moma.org/whatisaprint.)

Site-specific: Describes a work of art designed for a particular location.

Translucent: Permitting the passage of light.

Utopian: Proposing or advocating impractically ideal social and political schemes.

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www.art-for-a-change.com/Paris/paris.html

The Chinati Foundation

www.chinati.org

Dia Art Center

www.diacenter.org

Grove Dictionary of Art Online (requires subscription)
www.groveart.com

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www.nga.gov

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