

Variations: *Conversations in and Around Abstract Painting*

ARICH HISTORY OF EXPERIMENTATION AND dissension in art throughout the twentieth century paved the way for today's artists to explore a wide variety of approaches to artmaking. Contemporary artists have used this freedom to both embrace and reject traditions associated with creating art. The artists included in LACMA's exhibition *Variations: Conversations in and around Abstract Painting* all share an interest in working in an abstract manner, a style that initially gained traction around 1910. Working in an abstract mode means these artists prioritize formal elements, such as shape, form, color, and line over recognizable subject matter. However, beyond this commonality in emphasis, there is much diversity within the artworks in the exhibition. The media of the artwork (painting, sculpture, installation, video, etc.), the wide-ranging processes by which the objects were made, and the ideas the artists explore in their work reflect the dynamic and varied terrain of contemporary art.

These curriculum materials provide an introduction for teachers and students to learn about and discuss just a few of the many approaches that living artists utilize in their creative processes. Two of the artworks featured in the packet, one by Amy Sillman and another by Analia Saban, can be viewed primarily through the lens of formalism, meaning the way they are made and their aesthetic qualities. The remaining artworks, by Mark Bradford and Rachel Lachowicz, are also concerned with the formal aspects of artmaking, but their work is conceptual as well. They employ the ambiguity of abstraction to explore complex issues like community, identity, and gender. All four works were made within the last five years and are recent additions to LACMA's growing collection of contemporary art. Contemporary artworks like these can be effective tools for exploring current topics with students, as well as cultivating their visual analysis skills.

The paintings by Sillman and Saban are notable for their composition, texture, color, and other formal aspects integral to abstract art. In the case of Sillman's *Untitled (Purple Bottle)*, viewers are compelled to appreciate the cool palette of blues and purples and how the brushstrokes serve to document the artist's gestures rather than lend themselves to a specific interpretation of the artwork. One of the reasons artists were initially drawn to abstraction was because they felt that no matter how realistic the technique, the imagery created on the surface of a canvas was a mere representation. Rather than focusing on the illusion of representation, these early artists emphasized the only actual things involved in a painting—the canvas itself and the physical qualities of the paint on the surface. Saban's *Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Pint Perspective with Guidelines)* acts as a contemporary example of this idea and takes it one step further. Rather than applying paint to the surface of the canvas in a way that would simulate depth and texture, Saban gives the work actual depth and texture by using a laser cutter to slice into the canvas.

Bradford and Lachowicz also work in an abstract manner, but with a more conceptual approach. Looking at their artwork only in terms of its visual qualities would neglect another important aspect of their work, the meaning or commentary it conjures. Bradford's *Shoot the Coin* is visually stunning in the way it evokes an aerial view of a cityscape through layers of paper collaged onto the surface, but the ideas behind it are equally critical to appreciating the work. Inspired by maps, the artwork comments on the way the U.S. highway system has cut through neighborhoods like Bradford's Los Angeles hometown, creating forced divisions that ultimately shape the way communities evolve and are sometimes perceived. Similarly, Lachowicz's sculpture *Cell: Interlocking Construction* (2010)

uses blue eye shadow in place of paint to create art reminiscent of an iconic artwork made by a male artist. By using a material associated with femininity to reference this famous work, the artist alludes to the exclusion of women from art history and the continued inequities that women experience in the art world and society at large.

These four artworks are explored in greater detail in the following essays. *Variations: Conversations in and around Abstract Painting* and its related resources cover only a fraction of the practices and concepts explored by artists today. However, these curriculum materials provide a starting point for teachers and students to begin to engage with a contemporary art world in which no idea, topic, or art form is off limits.

Credits

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Untitled (Purple Bottle), 2012

Amy Sillman

THE OVERALL COLOR PALETTE OF BLUES, PURPLES, and grays highlighted with shades of yellow, brown, and green in *Untitled (Purple Bottle)* is representative of Amy Sillman's distinct and thoughtful approach to color. Upon close viewing, one notices brushstrokes that reveal the artist's process, such as the gray-green paint strokes over a section of pink salmon or the strong black lines near the bottom of the painting. Recognizable forms such as a blue and green bottle or pitcher coexist with the lines and blocks of color that distinguish this work, and the representational imagery dissolves in and out of the abstract lines and shapes.

Sillman's work is often characterized by an extended exploration of the formal principles of art, including such painterly concerns as figure, scale, and space. Yet her materials and processes are quite varied—she works in pencil, crayon, watercolor, and collage, creating cartoons, diagrams, prints, and, recently, iPhone and iPad drawings and animations. Drawing is at the core of Sillman's process; graphic gestures produce both light and heavy marks across her papers, canvases, or pages. An intuitive approach also informs her painting process, which can include multiple layers, constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing space.

Sillman acknowledges a wide variety of influences. Many commentators have noted similarities between her work and that of twentieth-century painters such as Philip Guston and Richard Diebenkorn, as well as with that of sculptor Eva Hesse. Sillman also has spoken of the importance of Henri Matisse's use of color, and Willem de Kooning's use of transition and change in pictures that include dissolving figures. She has said that two extended trips to India fostered an interest in art that was intimate, narrative, mythic, and beautiful, and a residency in Italy allowed her to explore the flat spaces and imperfect perspective of early Renaissance painting.

Discussion Prompts

Research some of the artists or styles that Amy Sillman acknowledges as influential. What similarities and differences do you observe between the work of these artists and Sillman's work?

What type of mark-making do you prefer? (Types of mark-making include drawing, painting, print-making, collage, cartoons, digital animations, etc.) What artists and movements do you think have influenced you, and why?



Untitled (Purple Bottle), 2013

Amy Sillman

Oil on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Contemporary Friends, 2013 M.2014.26
© Amy Sillman, photo courtesy the artist and Thomas Dane Gallery, London

Shoot the Coin, 2013

Mark Bradford

MARK BRADFORD'S MIXED-MEDIA COLLAGE IS A large-scale, densely layered work. Though predominantly pale white and gray, it is punctuated with areas of black, pink, blue, orange, red, and brown alongside small fragments of text. While the work seems to reference an aerial view of streams, lakes, and inlets, it also appears rather atmospheric. The textured and distressed look of the canvas highlights Bradford's process of layering, scraping, and bleaching.

An interest in the divisions and intersections demarcating the natural and the urban environment underlies *Shoot the Coin*. The work is part of a series considering the history of the US interstate highway system. The system was championed in the 1950s by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had surveyed the nation's relatively ad-hoc road system as a member of the Transcontinental Motor Convoy of 1919 and later experienced the German autobahn system during World War II. In fact, the title for Bradford's series *Through Darkest America by Truck and Tank* comes from a chapter in Eisenhower's memoir. Bradford is particularly interested in how communities, including his own in South Los Angeles, have been divided by the highway system and the resulting physical and psychological impact on the community. Maps of highways, coupled with Google maps, were used as points of reference for this work, which plays with various changes in perspective and acknowledges how individual memories shape our understanding of place.

Bradford's work includes references to both politics and art history, and although the artist and many art critics refer to his work as painting, he is not a painter in the conventional sense. Instead he creates painterly effects by working with materials such as string, carbon paper, and billboard paper manipulated through drawing, layering, bleaching, caulking, sanding, and burnishing. His earlier works primarily used materials gathered from the urban environment, often incorporating posters advertising local businesses in his neighborhood.

Other works in LACMA's collection represent Bradford's range of materials and interests. *Biggie, Biggie, Biggie* (2002) combines paint, permanent-wave endpapers, Xerox copies of endpapers, and Bradford's interest in African American music and language (The title of the work is one of the refrains from a popular song by the rapper Notorious B.I.G.). *Carta* (2013) was inspired by a seventeenth-century book of maps and trade routes by the Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu.

Discussion Prompts

What types of transportation do you use on a regular basis? In what ways does your point of view change during these trips? How does this impact your relationship to the places you travel through and to?

Take a walk in your neighborhood and make a list of the images, advertisements, and objects you see or find. What could someone conclude about your neighborhood based on your list?



Shoot the Coin, 2013

Mark Bradford

Mixed media on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with major funding provided by Andy Valmorbidia,
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© Mark Bradford, photo by Ben Westoby, courtesy White Cube

Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two Point Perspective with Guidelines), 2012

Analia Saban

ANALIA SABAN'S *EROSION (GEOMETRIC CUBES WITHIN Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines)* is a painting on canvas, yet the canvas lifts away from its circular frame, giving the work a sculptural quality. Visible brushstrokes record the process of applying acrylic to the canvas, yet the texture of the work approaches that of delicate, burned lace. This burned lace effect is due to Saban's use of a laser-cutting machine. The artist begins by drawing on the canvas, and then applies paint in differing areas of thickness. Once this is done, she puts her resulting painting through the laser-cutting machine, after which the parts of the canvas with the thickest layers of paint remain intact and the areas with lighter applications of paint appear charred.

Saban is known for her interest in exploring the artmaking process itself and in pushing the boundaries of specific materials, questioning genres, and blurring the distinctions between different mediums. For example, she has scraped still-wet photography prints in order to experiment with the development process and the materiality of photography, and has unwoven paintings in order to create sculptural forms from their threads. For the latter works, she says, "Usually we think of painting on a canvas. It was interesting to think of painting as pigment on thread." *Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines)* is emblematic of her interest in laser-burning paper and canvases. Sculptural paintings combine organic and technological elements while exploring traditional notions about art through her

reference to two-point perspective, which is closely associated with art created during the Renaissance. Other works by Saban in LACMA's collection include *Layer Painting (CMY): Flowers* (2008), *Study for Paint (Wet)* (2011), and *Kohler 5931 Kitchen Sink #2* (2013). In each of these works Saban's interest in exploring materials, techniques, and processes is visible. For *Study for Paint (Wet)* she sealed a painted canvas in a clear plastic bag in order to preserve the look of the wet paint. Inspired by the abstract geometries that are part of everyday life, she has created *Kohler 5931 Kitchen Sink #2*, a model of a kitchen sink in marble placed on canvas and hung vertically on the wall. These works embody Saban's interest in how one's expectations of a medium can be complicated through exposure to the object's materiality or fabrication.

Discussion Prompts

This painting seems to resemble burned lace. What other associations does this work evoke for you? Do you think these associations are intentionally generated by the artist? Compare your associations with those of your peers. Are they similar? Do any surprise you?

In this work, Analia Saban combines a new technology, a laser-cutting machine, with the traditional art historical concept of two-point perspective. Create your own unique work of art that combines modern technology with traditional art forms or concepts.



Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines), 2012

Analia Saban

Laser-sculpted acrylic on canvas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Gift of Jennifer Hawks and Ramin Djawadi, and Candace and Charles Nelson M.2012.124

© Analia Saban, photo © 2014 Museum Associates / LACMA

Cell: Interlocking Construction, 2010

Rachel Lachowicz

AN ELEGANT, COMPLEX, AND COMMANDING SCULPTURE, this work is composed of more than thirty transparent Plexiglas geometric shapes, each filled with a different shade of blue eye shadow. The work references both the history of abstraction and the way individuals, especially women, use makeup to package themselves and the image they present to the world.

Cell: Interlocking Construction was made from a three-dimensional sketch that was created by placing abstract cardboard shapes over the surface of a ten-foot paper reproduction of Kurt Schwitter's work *Merzbau*, which hung on the wall in Rachel Lachowicz's studio. (Schwitter's *Merzbau* refers to the immersive environment he created by incorporating sculptural elements such as grottoes, columns, and found objects into his family home in Hanover, Germany.). Revealing the significant roles appropriation and homage play in her work, Lachowicz states, "I want to come near things, but I want these things to mutate to become their own hybrid that recognizes interlocking relationships."

Known as a conceptual sculptor, Lachowicz has created many works that explore art of the past, most of which was made by men. Adopting makeup as her primary sculptural medium, she has used humor and a feminist perspective to comment on the exclusion and misrepresentation of women artists in art history. Seeing makeup as a component of her artmaking, she creates all of her own pigments in her studio. *Untitled (Lipstick Urinals)* (1992) is another work by Lachowicz included in LACMA's collection. Recontextualizing Marcel Duchamp's classic *Fountain* (1917), it also references the bronze sculpture *Fountain (after Marcel Duchamp: A.P.)* (1991) by Sherrie Levine, another artist known for appropriation. By deliberately

repurposing male artists' forms, Lachowicz questions assumptions about materials, gender, and authorship.

Discussion Prompts

Makeup can have many associations. It can be used for female beautification, for a kind of mask or war paint, as a tool for seduction, and/or as a multi-billion-dollar consumer commodity. How do these multiple, and perhaps competing, definitions of makeup influence your understanding of this work?

Choose a work of art that is meaningful to you. Think about the materials the artist used and the message he/she was trying to convey. Next, create a new artwork by putting the artwork you chose in a new context or by re-creating it with different materials. How has the meaning of the artwork changed with the change in setting and/or materials?



Cell: Interlocking Construction, 2010

Rachel Lachowicz

Pigment, cosmetic compound, Plexiglas

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Purchased with funds provided by Dr. Oded Bahat, Jill and Jay Bernstein, Marilyn and Larry Fields, Dina and Eitan Gonen, Joleen Julis, Lilly and Bruce Karatz, Jean Smith and Rodnie Nelson, Eileen Norton, Amnon and Katie Rodan, Linda and Tony Rubin, Shoshana and Wayne Blank, Susan Okum M.2014.4.1-35

© Rachel Lachowicz, photo © 2014 Museum Associates / LACMA

Classroom Activity

Color in a Bottle

Essential Question	How do artists use color and layering to create a work of art?
Grades	K–3
Time	One–two class periods
Art Concepts	Color, collage, still lifes, background, foreground
Academic Concepts	Art vocabulary, overlapping, layering, scale
Materials	Cardboard, scissors, pieces of solid color construction paper, tissue paper, scratch paper, specialty paper scraps, oil pastels, pencils
Talking about Art	<p>View and discuss a reproduction of Amy Sillman’s <i>Untitled (Purple Bottle)</i> (2013) included in the curriculum. What do you notice first? What colors do you see? Can you recognize any objects? If so, which ones?</p> <p>Even though Amy Sillman creates art today, she is inspired by artists and artworks from the past, like still-life paintings, a type of art that includes both natural objects (like flowers and fruit) and man-made things (such as baskets and bottles) placed carefully together.</p> <p>What do you think was the artist’s first step? What did she put in the background, the area of the painting furthest from us? What did she put in the foreground, the area closest to us? How is Amy Sillman’s painting like a still life? How is it not?</p>
Making Art	<p>After discussing Amy Sillman’s painting, choose colors that you would like to use in your artwork, and select the appropriate color paper. Take time to think about how the different colors look next to each other. After experimenting with layering the colored paper, glue it onto the cardboard, creating a collage background for your artwork.</p> <p>On scratch paper, practice drawing objects; they can be natural or man-made. Choose two of the objects and draw them onto your collage with oil pastels. Think about whether you want to draw your objects in the background or foreground of your artwork. Think about how the scale of the objects would have to be drawn, depending on where you want to put the object (objects in the background are smaller; objects in the foreground are bigger).</p>

Reflection

Share what colors you chose to make your artwork and the objects you chose to include, and why. Discuss the sequence of steps you took to create your artwork.

Curriculum Connection

Find another still life from LACMA's collection:

[http://collections.lacma.org/search/site/still%2520lifes?f\[o\]=bm_field_has_image%3Atrue](http://collections.lacma.org/search/site/still%2520lifes?f[o]=bm_field_has_image%3Atrue)

Consider the following questions:

What colors did the other artist use? What objects did he or she decide to include? Are they realistic or abstract?

Compare and contrast Amy Sillman's work with the other still life.

What are some similarities between both artworks? How did each artist use color? Did they include similar objects? How did each artist use scale in their artworks?

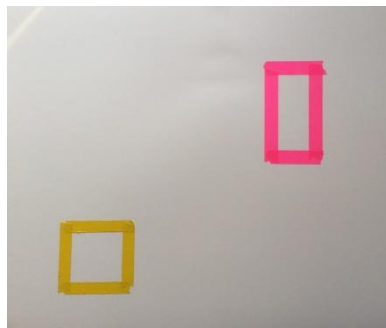
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING

K.4 Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail. 1.5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

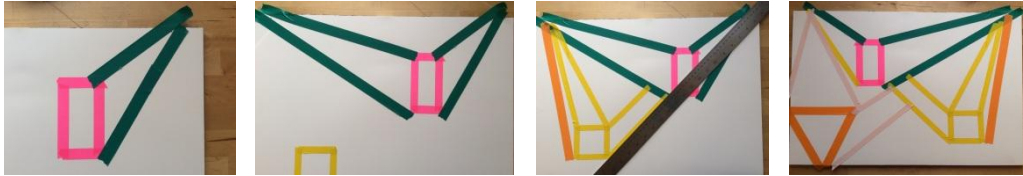
Classroom Activity

Prismatic Perspectives

Essential Questions	How do contemporary artists use two-point perspective to make new art?
Grades	3–6
Time	One class period
Art Concepts	Line, shape, contrast, positive space, negative space, warm & cool colors, and two-point perspective
Math Concepts	Draw and identify lines and angles, and classify shapes by the properties of their lines and angles.
Materials	140 lb watercolor paper, art tape, art tissue, brushes, water, and water cups
Talking about Art	<p>View and discuss a printed image of <i>Erosion (Geometric Cubes within Circle: Two-Point Perspective with Guidelines)</i> by Analia Saban.</p> <p>Saban used a laser-cutting machine to finish this artwork. How does <i>Erosion</i> differ from what you might expect from a traditional painting? What shapes can you identify in the composition? What do you think might have inspired or influenced the artist in the making of this piece? Share your observations, interpretations, and inferences with a partner.</p>
Making Art	<p>Discover the artistic process of two-point perspective by creating your own abstract painting inspired by Analia Saban. How will you transform these two-dimensional shapes using perspective?</p> <p>First draw one or two geometric shapes by placing art tape on the watercolor paper. Draw a dot (representing the vanishing point) on each of the two upper corners of the watercolor paper.</p>



Create the sides of the shapes by making lines with the art tape from the corners of the shapes to each vanishing point. Allow the tape to hang off the edge of the paper a bit to make it easier to remove the tape later on when you've finished. You may use a ruler to help you make straight lines from the corners of the shapes to the vanishing points. Do not cross over into any previously taped areas. If you are feeling ambitious, add a third shape. The shapes and their sides will be the positive space in the painting and the remaining background will be the negative space.



Using a paintbrush, apply water to the paper within the taped shapes first and then choose a color of art tissue with which to fill in each shape. Place the colored tissues over each shape and then apply additional water to the top of the tissues to allow the color to dye the paper. Do not touch the moistened art tissue or it will stain your fingers. Fill in one side of each shape with cool colors of tissue paper and the other side of each shape with warm colors. Each time add water to the paper first to allow the tissue to stick, apply the tissue, then brush a small amount of water on top to unlock the color.



After the shapes and their sides have been filled with color, choose one color to fill in the remaining negative space. Lay out paper towels next to your paper. Then begin carefully removing the tissue paper, starting with the first tissues placed on the paper, which should be semi-dry by this point. Notice the beautiful mixing and blending of the colors! Deposit the removed wet tissue paper on the paper towels so they do not stain the desk. After all of the tissue paper has been removed, carefully remove the art tape.



Reflection

Display the paintings in the classroom and facilitate a gallery walk. Reflect on the art-making experience by responding to the following questions orally or in written form:

- Does your painting incorporate two-point perspective? (Show examples from your artwork.)
- How does the contrast of warm and cool colors play a part in the look of your painting?
- What visual changes did you make along the way?
- How does the final painting compare to your original idea?
- Describe in what way(s) your painting is similar and different from the art object?

Curriculum Connection

Identify the shapes that you created. Measure the angles of the lines you drew from your shapes to the vanishing point and note whether they are acute, right, or obtuse. Think about how the shapes and measurements of the angles you created affect the overall artwork and present your observations to your classmates.

CCSS.VPA- VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS. 4. 2.6

Use the interaction between positive and negative space expressively in a work of art. 5. 5.1 Use linear perspective to depict geometric objects in space. 6.2.2 Apply the rules of two-point perspective in creating a thematic work of art.

CCSS.MATH. 3.1G

Reason with shapes and their attributes. Understand that shapes in different categories (e.g., rhombuses, rectangles, and others) may share attributes (e.g., having four sides), and that the shared attributes can define a larger category (e.g., quadrilaterals). Recognize rhombuses, rectangles, and squares as examples of quadrilaterals, and draw examples of quadrilaterals that do not belong to any of these subcategories. 4.MD5 Recognize angles as geometric shapes that are formed wherever two rays share a common endpoint, and understand concepts of angle measurement.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING.3-6.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. 6.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

Classroom Activity

Memory Maps

Essential Questions	How can an abstract artwork reference and address social concerns?
Grades	6-12
Time	One class period
Art Concepts	Abstraction, experimentation, layering, texture, mapping, text-based artwork
Cultural Concepts	Gentrification, class
Materials	White tempera paint; brushes; color maps and black and white photocopies of maps of Los Angeles, Wilshire Boulevard, and Hollywood; various color markers; bristol paper or watercolor paper; glue sticks
Talking about Art	<p>View and discuss a printed image of <i>Shoot the Coin</i> by Mark Bradford. Mark Bradford creates mixed media paintings that reference mapping, the urban environment, and social issues like fragmentation, inequality, and community.</p> <p>How does Bradford's <i>Shoot the Coin</i> painting evoke social issues and maps? What are some of the various meanings that can be discussed in Bradford's <i>Shoot the Coin</i> painting?</p> <p>In what ways can a map's shape, color, and meaning influence the visual art-making process?</p>
Making Art	<p>Using color markers, begin by writing a short paragraph about an event (social, political, or personal) or a memory of being/living in Los Angeles, Wilshire Boulevard, or Hollywood—fill the paper with your text by writing many words, repeating words, and/or writing large-sized letters. Then choose a map that corresponds to the area you wrote about (either Los Angeles, Wilshire Boulevard, or the Hollywood area). Apply glue to the back of the map, being careful to NOT apply any glue to the edges around the map. Glue the map onto the paper, covering your text completely. Let dry for a few minutes, then, grabbing from the edges around the map, rip off sections of the map. Alternatively, you could cut the map into sections before you glue it down. Once this step is complete, apply a thin coat of white tempera paint onto your entire paper. Title your artwork using words that you wrote with marker in the artwork.</p>

Reflection

Arrange a display of all the completed artworks around the room. Ask students to walk around looking at the artworks. What does each artwork seem to be about? Do you get a sense of the story written beneath the painting's layers from the painting and its title? What meanings can be inferred from the ways in which the map was ripped off of the paper? Have you been in the area shown in the map? What memories do you have there? How is your artwork similar and different to the other artworks?

Curriculum Connection

This painting was inspired by Mark Bradford's interest in the history of the US highway system promoted by President Eisenhower in the 1950s to make travel throughout the country easier. Research when the freeway nearest your home was built and try to find images of how the area appeared before the freeway. Think about how the freeway has impacted your neighborhood. What has it done to traffic? Has it united or divided your neighborhood? How so?

CCSS.VPA- VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

7. 4.2 Analyze the form (how a work of art looks) and content (what a work of art communicates) of works of art. 8. 3.1 Examine and describe or report on the role of a work of art created to make a social comment or protest social conditions. 9-12. 4.1 Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art.

CCSS.ELA-WRITING

7. 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING

6-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners. 6-12.6 Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.

Classroom Activity

Art in Context

Essential Questions	How do an artwork's site and materials affect its meaning?
Grades	Grades 9–12
Time	Two class periods
Art Concepts	Site, context, photography, documentation, reproduction, sculpture, and assemblage
Materials	<p>Plastic tubs, buckets, binders, coasters, feather dusters, masks, fake flowers, tiles, bookends, stools, and classroom chairs.</p> <p>Choose household or industrial items that reflect light, or have an unusual texture. Common household objects and lightweight industrial materials are ideal. They should be easy to carry, stack, and disassemble, be of a variety of colors, transparencies and textures, and be at least as big as a textbook.</p>
Talking about Art	<p>View and discuss a printed image of Rachel Lachowicz's, <i>Cell: Interlocking Construction</i> (2010). Even if we know nothing about the origin of an artwork, assessing it in terms of its materiality can help us access its meaning. Much of Lachowicz's work is created through the use of makeup. <i>Cell: Interlocking Construction</i> is a sculpture built from stacked Plexiglass boxes containing eyeshadow. Describe the physical qualities of eyeshadow. What cultural connotations does makeup convey to us outside of the context of art? What are the sites/contexts in which makeup is used and distributed? Who uses makeup? Describe the physical qualities of Plexiglass. In what contexts do you usually see Plexiglass? What are some common uses for Plexiglass?</p> <p>Much of Lachowicz's work responds to canonical works of art by 20th century male artists. How does Lachowicz's practice encourage discussion about influence and gender in the art world?</p> <p><i>Cell: Interlocking Construction</i> puts familiar materials into new contexts/arrangements as a means of abstracting, or defamiliarizing the materials' original functions. Describe the arrangement and use of the materials. How does the quantity and scale of the materials used affect our understanding of the work? Describe the sculpture's relationship to your own body in terms of scale and proportion. Describe the sculpture's relationship to other artwork/objects in the gallery, and to the gallery itself. How do the other works and the space of the gallery affect our reading of Lachowicz's work?</p>

Making Art

Create temporary sculptural installations out of everyday objects within designated areas of the school grounds, photograph the install, and then promptly disassemble the work.

Form small groups in your class. Each group will be given an assortment of objects with which to make a quick installation within a designated space. Examine the objects carefully, noting their interiors and exteriors. As you arrange the materials, juxtapose different colors and textures, focusing on experimenting with the materials' physical form rather than trying to achieve a specific meaning.

When you're finished, photograph your installation from various vantage points (3–4 photos per installation) and then disassemble it. After objects are removed from the site, you will have the opportunity to view and reflect on the photographs in a classroom setting with a projector.

Reflection

What information did the photograph retain from the installation? Which of the objects' qualities/utilitarian uses can be gleaned from the photographic representation? What information did the photograph leave behind? Which qualities of the installation could only be experienced in person?

What new information can we glean about the interior or exterior architectural setting of the installation (carpeting, concrete, white wall, office setting)? How does this information on site and setting affect how we read or understand the arranged objects? What new meanings/understandings of the objects exist through the creation of a photograph? What does the photograph say about the objects represented? What does the photograph say about the installations created? What does the photograph say about the person taking the photo?

Curriculum Connection

CCSS.VPA- VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

9-12.3.3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art. 3.4 Discuss the purposes of art in selected contemporary cultures. 4.1 Articulate how personal beliefs, cultural traditions, and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in a work of art.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SPEAKING AND LISTENING

9-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners.