The exhibition *Elias Sime: Tightrope* aims to explore the precarious balance between technological progress and its detrimental impact on the global environment. The first major museum exhibition to focus on the work of contemporary artist Elias Sime (Ethiopian, born 1968), *Tightrope* features more than two dozen works of art in varying scales and showcases brightly-colored tableaux and sculptural assemblages rooted in modern Ethiopian art.

*Elias Sime: Tightrope* is organized by the Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, and will be on view at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri, through January 31, 2021.

Please visit Kemper Museum’s website at kemperart.org regarding the latest COVID-19 related precautions currently in place before scheduling your tour.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome! ........................................................................................................................................... 3
Museum Map ........................................................................................................................................ 4
Museum Spaces and Collections ............................................................................................................... 4
*Elias Sime: Tightrope* .......................................................................................................................... 6
About the Artist: Elias Sime ................................................................................................................... 6
For Educators: Getting Ready for Your School Visit ............................................................................. 9
For Chaperones: Your Important Role in Our Tours ............................................................................. 10
For Students and Teachers: Here is Your Field Trip Checklist! ............................................................ 11
Important Facts for Your School Visit ................................................................................................ 12
For Kansas and Missouri School Teachers: State Standards at a Glance .......................................... 13
Pre-Visit Activity for School Students: Learning to Look .................................................................. 14
Post-Visit Activities for School Students ............................................................................................ 15
I’m a Contemporary Artist! ..................................................................................................................... 15
Beyond the Brush .................................................................................................................................. 15
Maps in Mind ......................................................................................................................................... 16
Glossary: Useful Terms for Your Visit to the Museum ....................................................................... 17

WELCOME!

Thank you for choosing Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art as a center for learning! Experiences in our galleries spark creative and critical thinking, deepen sensitivity, and invite conversation.

Today’s artists are reflecting on and reacting to the realities of our fast-changing world. Interacting with their works of art in the Museum or online is an opportunity to examine living cultures, question social realities, and consider diverse ideas. A Kemper Museum experience can be a catalyst for change in how you and your students feel, inquire, and know.

Are you looking for an online tour experience for your students? Kemper Museum offers docent-led, virtual tours of Elias Sime: Tightrope, as well as specially designed, virtual school tours of contemporary artworks in our Permanent Collection. Virtual tours are tailored to fit the needs of educators and students working with new learning environments. This Educator Resource Guide offers extensive information about traditional tours inside the Museum galleries; however, its resources on Elias Sime: Tightrope are useful for virtual, docent-led tours, or for a self-guided exploration of the exhibition, available on Google Arts and Culture!

Whether you enjoy a tour in the Museum or online, this Educator Resource Guide can help to make your visit more comfortable and fulfilling. It will familiarize you with the art of Elias Sime, whose work you will find in the special exhibition, Elias Sime: Tightrope. The final sections of the Guide offer pre- and post-visit activities to extend learning and engagement, and a glossary of terms useful for understanding contemporary art, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, and the exhibition, Elias Sime: Tightrope.
MUSEUM MAP

MUSEUM SPACES AND COLLECTIONS

Our Building


Gunnar Birkerts was born in Latvia in 1925 and immigrated to the United States in 1949. Based in Detroit, Birkerts designed many notable American buildings, such as the Corning Glass Museum, in Corning, New York, and The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, in Houston, Texas. In designing buildings, he wished to let things unfold with “intuitive imagination,” the way music unfolds as you hear it. We hope you feel free to imagine as you move through the uncommonly shaped rooms of Kemper Museum!
Our Collection
Founders Bebe (Hunt) and R. Crosby Kemper, Jr. (1927 – 2014) assembled a collection of modern and contemporary art, and gifted it to the Museum as its core Permanent Collection. Over the course of the past twenty-five years, the Permanent Collection has tripled in size. It now includes over 1,400 works.

Kemper Museum’s Permanent Collection contains works from the early twentieth century to the present day —spanning over a hundred years. The Museum’s collection holds works of modern art, from the early and mid- twentieth century, and contemporary art, from the mid-twentieth century to today. Exploring our collection, students might see how art changes with the times.

Through the works in our Permanent Collection, the Museum community stays in touch with diverse, ever-changing artistic practices and perspectives. Engaging the art of recent, past eras as well as current times encourages us to think, feel, and respond more fully in the present.

Our Exhibitions
While we cannot exhibit all of our artworks at once, we change our exhibitions regularly. In our galleries, we show selections from our Permanent Collection, special group and solo artist exhibitions, and traveling exhibitions, all with a global focus on presenting artists from around the world. In our special exhibitions, we are especially proud to select promising and daring works, often by artists at early stages in their careers.

Kemper Museum hosts three major exhibitions annually in our main gallery, the Charlotte Crosby Kemper Gallery. The current exhibition, Tightrope, presents work by Elias Sime. The second part of this Educator Resource Guide is dedicated to learning about Sime’s life and work.

Café Sebastienne is also an art gallery, where you can eat artful food while you are surrounded by floor-to-ceiling paintings by American artist Frederick James Brown. Most of the works are Brown’s unique interpretations of artworks from throughout human history. Ask your server at the Café to show you the printed Installation Guide, which indicates which artwork from history is referred to by each of Brown’s paintings.
In our other galleries, we primarily hold exhibitions of works selected from the Museum’s Permanent Collection. Visit our website to see what is currently on view.

The Museum’s Atrium, the expansive space where guests enter Kemper Museum, has its own, scheduled rotation of Permanent Collection works. It also features the specially commissioned atrium project. Started in 2016, The Atrium Project has displayed special installations by contemporary Latin American artists on the twenty-five square foot wall by the Museum’s main entrance.

**ELIAS SIME: TIGHTROPE**

Ethiopian artist Elias Sime carefully weaves together *repurposed* materials such as computer circuit boards and keys to make complex, often colorful compositions. These *assemblages*, which have occupied much of his practice in the past decade, make up the exhibition, *Tightrope*.

The works are composed of intricately woven and densely layered surfaces, and their imagery expresses the unity of nature and landscape, and the energy that is shared by living things. Joining the technical and the natural, his works allow us to consider ecological sustainability, the resilience of nature, social responsibility, and the beauty of useful objects.

Through the title “Tightrope,” Sime recognizes the uneasy balance between advances made possible by technology and the destructive impact that technical devices can have on people and our environment. He explores how instruments intended to connect us have also come between us.

Sime’s artistic practice requires a great input of human labor and energy. Through it, he collects and then takes apart the computer devices meant to connect humanity. By exposing their insides, he removes their powerful mystique, making them more real and ordinary, but also allowing a new energy to emerge from them. The devices and machines become landscapes, figures, and *abstractions*. The repeated stitches, lines, and shapes in Sime’s artworks are rhythmic and songlike.
ABOUT THE ARTIST: ELIAS SIME

Sime’s Early Years and Education
Elias Sime lives and works in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Born in 1968, he grew up there under the oppressive Derg regime, in power from 1974 to 1991.

The Derg dictated artistic practice, and during Sime’s years in art school, he worked with “Socialist Realism,” a style that the government mandated. It favored images of common Ethiopian life and avoided abstraction. While this was in some ways limiting, it provided the artist with connections to the land and the artistic traditions around him, connections that still matter deeply to him today.

In 1990, Sime received a degree in graphic design from the School of Fine Arts and Design, now the Alle School of Fine Arts and Design, at Addis Ababa University. This was where he began his practice of mixed-media collage. After graduating, he focused on sculptural assemblage, an art form he has pursued for over a quarter of a century. Although he became influenced by international art and abstraction after the fall of the Derg, Sime has continued to learn from Ethiopian art and tradition and invite their influence on his work. He continues to study the traditional art forms of Ethiopia, especially weaving, ceramics, and hand-crafted architectural structures.

The Artist’s Life in Community
In the past decade, Sime has traveled in rural Ethiopia to research ancient rituals still in practice, and to explore the work of local artisans. Along with the anthropologist and art curator Meskerem Assegued, Sime works closely with Ethiopian ceramicists. His admiration for their artistry appears in the collection of clay pots in this exhibition, a work titled Barenness.
Some of Sime’s artwork is inspired by indigenous architecture, such as the round, mud and straw granaries of northern Ethiopia. Collaborating with Meskerem Assegued, Sime has applied traditional architectural styles to build Zoma Museum in Addis Ababa. Zoma is an ecologically inspired community center built on land that was previously a garbage dump. Now inspiringly lush and beautiful, Zoma supports contemporary artists, but also reaches its local community with food gardens, a school, and a dairy.

The surfaces of Zoma’s buildings and walkways are covered with visual patterns. Flowing lines and shapes refer to the movements of nature and the animal world. Surfaces are elaborately sculpted with the mud and straw mixture used in traditional Ethiopian architecture. The whole community space reminds people of the connectedness of nature and the human drive to make and transform nature’s materials. Zoma’s energetic atmosphere sends a message of interconnectivity that we can recognize throughout Elias Sime’s artwork.

**Elias Sime’s Exhibitions**

Sime’s art has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Austria, Ethiopia, Israel, the Netherlands, Senegal, and the United States. His work is in the permanent collections of Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Detroit Institute of Arts; Newark Museum, New Jersey; and Israel Museum, Jerusalem, among many other institutional and private collections.

*Please remember to visit Kemper Museum’s website at kemperart.org, regarding the latest COVID-19 related precautions currently in place before scheduling your tour.*
FOR EDUCATORS: GETTING READY FOR YOUR SCHOOL VISIT

1. **Please provide name tags for students & chaperones.**
   These help us engage with students and bring them into discussions.

2. **Groups of ten, please.**
   Online or in the Museum, prior to your arrival, assign students to groups of 10 (+/-). We call on enough docent guides to keep groups small, in order to allow for in-depth conversation and meaningful engagement with artwork. During gallery tours, this also helps keep the artwork safe.

3. **More than 10 minutes late to the Museum?**
   **If so, please call 816-753-5784.** The Visitor Services Desk will let your docents know you’ve been delayed.

4. **Take restroom breaks before arriving at Kemper Museum.**
   The hour or so students spend with artworks is precious time!

5. **Please leave backpacks, lunches, bags and umbrellas on the bus.**
   We cannot accommodate personal items in our coat room for members of school tours.

6. **Parking information & directions**
   Kemper Museum is located at 4420 Warwick Boulevard, Kansas City, Missouri. Buses can drop students off at the entrance on the north side of our building (instead of using the front entrance near the *Spider* sculpture). Parking is available and free in both of our parking lots: one is a row of spaces on the west side of the building, and the other is a large lot a half block north, accessed through its entrance on Warwick Boulevard. Please park busses in the north lot. Thank you!

7. **Post-visit activities**
   After you get back to your classroom, try out the post-visit activities found in this guide!

8. **We want to hear from you!**
   Following your tour, please take a moment to evaluate your visit with your students. Your docent will provide you a paper survey to complete or you may share your feedback with us online at: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZQLVZXL](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZQLVZXL)
FOR CHAPERONES

Chaperones are an extremely important part of the Museum experience for every child. Thank you for your assistance!

1. Group size
Please allow for one adult chaperone to accompany each group of 8-10 students.

2. Your role in protecting the artwork
You can assist us in protecting the artwork on view at Kemper Museum and keeping your students safe by remaining with your group at all times.

3. Please model engagement for the students.
Chaperones often help students to learn and enjoy their visit by noticing students’ responses to artworks and engaging their questions and comments. Rather than answering questions that the docents ask students, please encourage students themselves to respond.

Throughout your visit, you can help students stay together and stay a comfortable distance from the artwork.

4. Encourage participation
Encourage your students to respond to activities and questions posed by your docent. We ask that, rather than answering questions yourself, you allow the students to respond and help draw them out if need be.

Learn more!
Check out this video about visiting an art museum, featuring Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, created by The Art Assignment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drrBd1bCiW0

Please remember to visit Kemper Museum’s website at kemperart.org, regarding the latest COVID-19 related precautions currently in place before scheduling your tour.
FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS: CHECKLIST

We invite you to enjoy the Museum’s artwork and to join us in protecting and preserving it. Here are rules to help make that happen:

☞ Leave coats and bags on the bus. They can’t be carried in the galleries, and our coatroom’s limited space cannot accommodate school tours. Thank you!

☞ Please do not bring any food, drink, gum, or candy inside.

☞ Please don’t touch the art. Human skin contains oil and other substances that cause damage. Bumping artworks can break them.

☞ Please do not lean against the walls.

☞ The art is exciting, so this rule takes extra focus: please, stay with your group!

☞ Want to take notes or sketch while you’re in the galleries? Good idea! Pencils only, please. Be sure your paper is in a notebook instead of loose leaf, so you have a hard surface to write on as you tour the galleries.

☞ Ask questions and share your ideas! If you see something interesting, please stop your docent and ask about it.

☞ Don’t let your phone distract you — this is the REAL thing!

Who’s Who at the Museum

A DOCENT is a guide in a museum who helps visitors look at art and explore the ideas, stories, materials, and techniques behind it.

The CURATOR is a museum administrator responsible for organizing exhibitions and choosing which works of art are on display.

You will see the SECURITY staff in each gallery you visit. They have the important job of helping keep you and our artwork safe. They also love to answer questions from our visitors.

Kemper Museum VISITORS come from the Kansas City community, other states, and even other countries!
IMPORTANT FACTS FOR YOUR SCHOOL VISIT

Planning a School Visit
Please visit our free Museum any time! If you would like to set up a time to meet with a museum educator, send us an email at tours@kemperart.org.

Wheelchair Accessibility
Kemper Museum is wheelchair accessible, and we also have a wheelchair available if you or anyone in your group should need it.

Grants for Bussing and Substitute Teachers
Schools and youth groups in the greater Kansas City area can submit reimbursement for busing and substitute teacher costs. However, our Field Trip Reimbursement Program will only reimburse the costs related to your field trip to Kemper Museum. Please note that funding is subject to availability. For schools in outlying areas, a stipend may be available to help offset your travel costs to and from the museum.

What Students See on a Tour
During a docent-led tour in 2020, students will engage with artwork featured in the exhibition, Elias Sime: Tightrope. Students will also have the opportunity to see artwork from our Permanent Collection located in adjacent galleries or on the Museum grounds. If you would like to preview any images, just email tours@kemperart.org.

Kemper Museum is Free of Charge
Guided tours and general admission to Kemper Museum are free, and our parking is also free. Please encourage your students to come back at any time!

Tour Length
Docent-led tours last approximately one hour. The first tour of the day begins at 10:15 a.m.

Virtual Tours
Check our website to find the current listing of virtual tours! We offer contemporary art tours for all grade levels, including focused inquiries designed to amplify your humanities curriculum.

Group Size Limits
Because of space limitations, we can only accommodate 60 students at one time. For larger groups, please contact us to discuss bringing students over multiple times or dates. Please note that due to social distancing requirements relating to Covid-19, our group size limits in Kemper Museum are reduced. Email tours@kemperart.org for more information about social distancing during your tour.
FOR KANSAS AND MISSOURI TEACHERS: STATE STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

Our guided tours meet both Kansas and Missouri state standards in visual arts education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missouri STRAND</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product-Performance</td>
<td>Artists communicate ideas through artworks by selecting and applying media techniques and processes, subject matter, and themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elements and Principles</td>
<td>Artists communicate ideas through artworks by selecting and applying art elements and principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Perceptions</td>
<td>Viewers’ respond aesthetically to artworks based upon their personal experience and cultural values. Viewers analyze, interpret, and evaluate the quality of artwork through art criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary</td>
<td>Visual art is connected to performing arts, communication arts, math, science, and social studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic and Cultural</td>
<td>Visually literate citizens understand the role and functions of art in history and culture. Artists influence and are influenced by the cultures and time periods in which they live</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kansas STRAND</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating</td>
<td>Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and works. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. Refine and complete artistic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation. Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>Perceive and analyze artistic work. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting</td>
<td>Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

Learning to Look

Sometimes a series of steps can help students feel comfortable looking at artworks. For this activity, you might use artwork from Kemper Museum’s Permanent Collection, found on our website at kemperart.org/permanent-collection.

Here are links to some recommended artworks for this activity:

https://www.kemperart.org/collection/nate
https://www.kemperart.org/collection/ahulani
https://www.kemperart.org/collection/still-life-shoes
https://www.kemperart.org/collection/passage
https://www.kemperart.org/collection/gum
https://www.kemperart.org/collection/masters-met

Here is a useful four-step process: Look, Describe, Think and Feel, and Connect. It might be helpful for students to create a four-square graph with these headings, and then write responses to the questions on their own graphs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 1: LOOK</th>
<th>STEP 2: DESCRIBE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a minute without distractions to observe this work of art. Feel your eyes move.</td>
<td>Talk about what you see in this work of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now turn around, facing away from the image.</td>
<td>• What lines, shapes, and colors does the artist use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you remember?</td>
<td>• List ten words to describe the image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• List as many details as you can!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 3: THINK AND FEEL</th>
<th>STEP 4: CONNECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpret and give meaning to what you see.</td>
<td>Relate this art work to your life or to another artwork you have seen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does this remind you of a place? If so, is it real or imaginary? What makes you think this?</td>
<td>• What does this work of art remind you of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the mood of the work? What feelings might it show? How do you know?</td>
<td>• How might this work of art relate to an aspect of your own life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How does the artwork cause your eyes to move? From top to bottom? Following certain lines? Do your eyes rest on certain colors or shapes?</td>
<td>• Compare this work of art to other things that you have seen, either in a museum or in your everyday life. How are they similar? How are they different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Now that you have looked for a while: what do you see that you did not notice at first?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

I’m a Contemporary Artist!
Following your visit to Kemper Museum, ask students to brainstorm topics, issues, and ideas important to them and their community. Let students know that they will create a work of art about a topic that matters to them. Ask each student to list at least three topics.

Once they have made their lists, ask students to select one topic from their list that will serve as inspiration for their work of art. Depending on time and available materials, this is where you can be flexible. The work of art can vary from a quick sketch to a more in-depth collage, or even a three-dimensional sculpture. Consider leaving it up to the students to choose the medium they think would best communicate their ideas.

Questions for Discussion:
- What issues or topics did you see in the artwork in the Museum?
- Will your own artwork focus on a personal issue, or are you exploring larger issues that affect your community, nation, or world?
- How might your chosen medium change an audience’s understanding of your artwork?

Beyond the Brush
Many contemporary artists find creative ways to use everyday objects. Artist Elias Sime gives durable, hard objects the look of flowing movement, as if he were painting with wire, hard plastic and metal. Sime’s work can inspire students to use the materials around them in new ways.

Questions for Discussion:
- What was unique about Elias Sime’s artistic process, that is, the way he made his artworks?
- Where do you think the artist Elias Sime buys or finds art materials?
- Have you ever made art from “stuff” you found instead of using traditional art materials? How about drawing on a paper napkin or piecing together pictures from a magazine?
Encourage your students to think about everyday objects that could be used for creating art. To brainstorm ideas, have students list objects from the classroom, the outdoors, and their homes that could be repurposed as artists’ tools.

With permission, have each student bring in one or two non-traditional artist tools (or borrow something from the classroom). Create space for them to make their own works of art using these found materials/objects, then have them share their work.

Maps in Mind
Elias Sime’s artwork focuses on the connections between people, nature, and the objects that humans make. Many of his works look like landscapes and maps. Landscapes and maps show spaces where natural forms, human beings, and human creations reside together.

Students might choose to close their eyes as they listen to the questions below and imagine connections in their lives. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions.

Questions for Quiet Thought:
- What do I feel connected to every day?
- When I imagine an important connection in my life, how does that connection make me feel?
- What images do I see when I think of this connection? Are there colors, textures or objects that go well with what I imagine?
- What places might be part of this connection?
- How might I make an artwork to show this important connection?

Students can create a collage on cardboard or paper to show the responses they imagined.
GLOSSARY: USEFUL TERMS FOR YOUR VISIT TO THE MUSEUM

These terms are found throughout this Educator Resource Guide. Some pertain to museum visits in general, and others are especially useful for discussing the exhibition, Elias Sime: Tightrope.

**Abstract Art** focuses less on showing things and places we can recognize, and instead uses lines, shapes, colors, forms, and expressive marks to affect how we feel and think.

**Addis Ababa** is the capital City of Ethiopia. Ethiopia is located in the eastern part of the continent of Africa, also called the Horn of Africa.

An **art collector** is anyone who collects art. Art Collectors study, purchase, and protect artworks. For centuries, art collectors have supported artists by buying and showing their work. Rare collections often end up belonging to museums.

A private art collection reflects a collector’s interests and values, as with the collection of R. Crosby Jr. and Bebe (Hunt) Kemper, which they gifted at the founding of Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in 1994.

An **artifact** is an object made by human beings. This word usually refers to an object from a past culture. When these objects come from current times, they are sometimes called, “found objects.” Many contemporary artists use found objects in their artwork.

An **assemblage** is an artwork made when diverse objects are brought together. To make assemblages, artists take objects out of their usual contexts, inviting us to look at them in new ways. An assemblage is different from a collage, because it invites us to see in three dimensions, while a collage is usually two-dimensional.

**Contemporary Art** is a term that usually refers to artworks made during or after the 1960s. Contemporary artists face the questions of our times. They have a lot of freedom in how they use materials and techniques. Their art frequently reflects the diversity of society and the blending of cultures. Often, it directly challenges popular ways of viewing things. It can be helpful to compare this term to “Modern Art,” also listed in this glossary.
Indigenous is a term describing people or things that have evolved in a certain place for a long time. An indigenous form of art or architecture has a unique ability to reflect both tradition and change.

Medium is any material used to make a work of art. The plural of this word is media, and when an artwork includes many materials it might be called a “mixed media” artwork.

Modern Art is art that reflects the changes in human life since the mid-nineteenth century, when industry, technology, and ideas changed quickly, and the world's cultures began to combine more often. While the term Modern Art can refer to all artworks made since that time, people often use the term Contemporary Art, listed above, for artwork made during or after the 1960s.

Starting in the late nineteenth century, artists were encouraged to re-imagine traditional rules for their practice. Whom can you make a portrait of? What materials might you use to create an artwork? Modern artists found greater freedom to ask these basic questions than the artists who came before them had known.

The Permanent Collection of a museum is made up of artworks that are owned and cared for by the museum. Curators make exhibitions from these works to highlight themes and ideas.

To repurpose is to use something in a way that it was not intended for. An artist can use an object in a completely new and surprising way. Seeing a computer, a shoe, or an earring repurposed in an artwork might make us more aware of what that item means to us.

A symbol is something used to stand for another thing. Often a tangible or concrete symbol leads us to think of an idea, concept, or feeling. A toy, for example, might cause us to think about childhood.

Ways of looking are ways that we perceive people, places, or things. Our ways of looking transform along with society and technology. Telescopes and mobile phones, for instance, have changed what and how we see, even when we are not using those devices. Social values and beliefs can also foster certain ways of looking. Visual artists ask how ways of looking change our thoughts and feelings. How might they connect us with nature, with each other, and with diverse communities?