

HERE'S WHAT YOU MISSED:

A RECAP OF "EYES ON CONTEMPORARY ART"

VIDEO SERIES

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Here's What You Missed: A Recap of "Eyes on Contemporary Art" Video Series

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Here's What You Missed:

A Recap of "Eyes on Contemporary Art" Video Series

In early 2021, Melissa Gallagher (our PAEA Membership Chair and Book Club Coordinator) and I led a book club focused on "You Are an Artist" by Sarah Urist Green. This focus on contemporary art and introduction to artists felt like an important resource to offer our

membership at PAEA, and we started brainstorming ways to further explore our interest in contemporary art. When the schedule for the Fall 2021 PAEA conference rolled out and I saw Marita Fitzpatrick (Bodine High School art teacher and 2021 PAEA Secondary Educator of the year) was going to present “Contemporary Art and Increasing Student Engagement”, I knew I’d found the perfect partner for a new series of professional development offerings. Marita was excited to join me in leading the new sessions, and together we planned out 6 months' worth of contemporary art video watch parties.



Each session started with a theme to explore. Then we selected 2 artists whose work could help us consider that theme. We came up with some video viewing tips for how to use the artists' videos in the classroom as well as guiding questions to consider while watching selected video segments. Finally, we developed lesson plan ideas to offer to participants as a way to use the artists right away in the classroom.

Art teachers draw upon what they know about art to share with students. We should continue to search out and take time to learn about what is happening in the contemporary art world, to offer our students relevant experiences and a wealth of inspiration. Contemporary artists work in a wide range of techniques and could expand our understanding of “what is art?”. Contemporary artists also respond to current events and research the past, reflect the world back to us, and help us comprehend where we are and how we got here. We can use contemporary artists as models for how to think and work in the studio and in the classroom with students.

While one could watch artist videos any time, it was a real pleasure to join other art educators for shared professional development and discussion about the artists, artworks, themes, and big questions through the “Eyes on Contemporary Art” video series. But in case you missed our virtual time together, here’s a recap of what was shared for your

viewing pleasure and inspiration. You can open up the slide shows to find big questions, links to videos, the leveled lesson plans, and extra resources for each artist.

Session 1: Paying Attention

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 1](#)

We looked at Olafur Eliasson and Maya Lin, noticing how they take inspiration from things in nature and make viewers stop to pay attention to things they might pass by ordinarily. Both artists are known for their work in architecture and design, but they utilize a wide range of media to best express their ideas and engage audiences. How could you encourage students to pay more attention?



(Left) Olafur Eliasson, *"Your uncertain shadow (colour)"* (2010)

(Right) Maya Lin, *Ghost Forest*, 2021

Session 2: Identity

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 2](#)

Carrie Mae Weems and Roberto Lugo are 2 artists who consider identity as an area of exploration. These two artists also brought up questions like “What is your relationship to power?” and “How can negative experiences be transformed through art?”. In what ways do you encourage students to explore their identities?



(Left) Carrie Mae Weems, *Kitchen Table Series* 1990



(Right) Roberto Lugo, *Yo Soy Boricua*, 2019

Session 3: Construction/Deconstruction

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 3](#)

Damian Ortega and Adam Milner are great artists to look at when thinking about collections, arrangements, and displays. They both show how everyday objects could become materials for artmaking- perhaps by taking them apart or by juxtaposing them with other materials.

How could students become curators of their environments?



(Left) Damian Ortega, *Cosmic Thing*, 2002



(Right) Adam Milner, *Take Care Relief*, 2019

Session 4: Materiality

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 4](#)

Mark Bradford and Leonardo Drew are artists or “makers” (as Bradford prefers to call himself) who really play with materials, transforming old found materials into new works or fresh materials into weathered surfaces. If supplies are getting low, use these artists to change your perspective on what could be used for making art! These artists are also inspiring for how they challenge themselves to move forward in life, career, and artmaking. How do you encourage students to experiment with materials?



(Left) Mark Bradford, *Pickett's Charge*, 2017



(Right) Leonardo Drew, *Number 304*, 2021

Session 5: History

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 5](#)

Abigail DeVille and Sonya Clark both delve into the fraught past of the US and make work that finds personal connection to history. These artists model the importance of research and art as inquiry, as well as thinking about the relationship between medium and message. How could you foster productive discussions around difficult topics?



(Left) Abigail DeVille, *Light of Freedom* 2020



(Right) Sonya Clark, *Interwoven*, 2016

Session 6: Play

[Eyes on Contemporary Art 6](#)

Our final session of the series explored the work of Alex Da Corte and Whoop Dee Doo, both of which use childhood, play, dress-up, and performance as areas of exploration. These artists could also inspire explorations of narrative in art and the logistics of collaboration in the classroom. How do you invite play in the classroom?



(Left) Alex Da Corte with Lowly Worm 2019

(Right) Matt Roche and Jaimie Warren of Whoop Dee Doo

We hope you'll take some time to explore these resources and get to know some new-to-you artists and ask some big questions. If you joined us for any of these sessions, we would love to get some feedback on your experience. If you missed it, but have ideas for us, we'd also love to hear from you. So click through to this [google form](#) to help us shape the next series of "Eyes on Contemporary Art", and stay tuned for more offerings in the coming year!

As always, check out PAEA's [Eventbrite](#) page to access free or low-cost monthly offerings for Act 48 credit: