

CULTIVATING VISITORS CAPACITY FOR CREATIVITY
resource guide

PRESENTERS

Kelly Bishop, kbishop@ocma.net, Public and Community Programs
Manager, Orange County Museum of Art

Jenni Stenson, jstenson@ocma.net, School and Tour Programs Manager,
Orange County Museum of Art

Calder and Contemporary Art: Form, Balance, and Joy
The Artist at Work: Exhibition Pre-Visit Materials

This pre-visit activity will help prepare your students for their museum visit to see *Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art: Form, Balance, Joy*. From monumental mobiles and stabiles to more delicate works, the exhibition presents approximately 30 sculptures by Calder and major works by seven young artists who embrace the forms and materials used by Calder. Throughout his long career, Alexander Calder combined playful subject matter, primary colors, and organic and geometric shapes to create works that are witty and full of life. The exhibition presents a range of Calder's classic mobiles—**sculptures made of balanced parts capable of motion**; stabiles—**self-supporting, non-moving sculptures**; and bronze sculptures. *Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art* offers an opportunity to see the work of Calder in a new way, through the eyes of contemporary artists who explore structure, balance and play.

Your museum visit and pre-visit materials support interdisciplinary learning by connecting Visual Art, Language Arts, and Social Studies content areas, and address the California State Content Standards in the Visual Arts.

Artistic Perception
Creative Expression
Historical and Cultural Context
Aesthetic Valuing
Connection, Relationships, Applications

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WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

When you visit the museum galleries, you only get to see the final product that an artist produces. What is the story behind each object? What ideas were explored or discarded before the artist created this work? There is no formula for creating a work of art and the journey of an artwork from artist's studio to museum galleries is not a linear path. The process is filled with experimentation, tinkering, play, and failure. This lesson will examine the artistic process of Alexander Calder and explore how his ideas and techniques are still influencing artists working today.

DISCUSS: PROCESS

Start a discussion about the word 'process.' What ideas come to mind when I say the word 'process?' Ask students to brainstorm examples of a process that they participate in on a regular basis (getting ready for school in the morning, preparing a snack, brushing their teeth).

Using one of their examples, ask several students what steps and decisions are involved in their execution of that process? What can influence that process? If you have less time to complete the task, how does the process change? If there is no time limit, what does the process look like? What is similar or different about your approach compared to your classmates' approach? How is the process influenced by your expectations of the end product?

Every task you start, from the everyday to the extraordinary, requires a process. Some tasks are straightforward, while others don't follow any accepted formula. Today, we will be exploring the **artistic process**, or the investigations, decisions and steps that an artist takes to create an artwork. Each artist approaches the artistic process differently. Let's investigate the work of Alexander Calder to see what we can learn.

DISCUSS: THE STUDIO

image: Roxbury Studio

“I spent my childhood as a boy in the midst of my family, always enthusiastic about toys and string, and always a junkman of bits or wire and all the prettiest stuff in the garbage can. When I was a kid of eight my father and mother gave me some tools with which to work wood and I began to do everything it took to augment [or better] my toys.”

-Alexander Calder

Alexander Calder was born into a creative family. His mom, dad, and grandfather were all artists. His family moved frequently, but wherever they ended up, Calder’s parents made sure that he had **studio** space to create artwork. His earliest artworks included wire jewelry for his sister’s dolls and animal sculptures that he created as Christmas presents for his family.

Tell students they are looking at an image of Calder’s studio space in Roxbury, Connecticut which he built at age 40. Ask students what they notice about this space. How would you describe it? What sort of tools can you identify? What types of materials do you see? How does it compare to their ideas about an artist’s studio? Is this someplace where they would want to create art? Why or why not?

activity: my own studio write, discuss, or create

Imagine that your home had a special studio space just for you. Share your ideas with a partner, create a quick sketch, or write a brief description of your studio space. Some ideas to consider include: What would your space look like? How would it be different than the rest of your house? What would be the benefits of having your own space dedicated to creation? What would you create in that space? What tools and materials would you have in your space? What would you do to make it your own?

DISCUSS: THE COURAGE TO TRY

images: *Black: 17 Dots*, 1959; *Big Red*, 1959; *Hanging Garden*

"I don't really think that the thing can be reduced to a formula."

-Alexander Calder

"Failure plays a big role in my work, not that I am hoping to fail, but that I am willing to take the risk of failing. I am always suspect when things come together easily. For me, the reward of discovery outweighs the comfort of predictability."

-Kristi Lippire

Tell students that Alexander Calder's approach to the artistic process was built upon dedication and experimentation. He believed that "man was made to work." Art was more than a full time job for him. He was in his studio seven days a week. He didn't wait for inspiration to find him, nor did he allow accepted ideas about art stand in the way of innovation; instead he would go to the studio and tinker.

Tell students that these two images were created in the same year, 1959. After inventing the mobile form, Calder went on to make over 2000 different variations of it. Look closely at the two works created in 1959. What is similar about these two works? What is different? What do you think Calder might have gained from creating several variations of the same idea?

Calder believes it is the experience of making something, not the object itself, that has the greatest value. Once Calder has finished something, he is no longer concerned with it. Why do you think Calder likes to experiment? What can be gained from the experience of making something?

Ask students to look at Kristi Lippire's *Hanging Garden*. What do you notice first about this work? What materials has she used to create this sculpture? How is this work similar to the Calder works that you just explored? What makes *Hanging Garden* different from Calder's work? Kristi Lippire is a **contemporary artist**, or an artist working today who lives and works in Los Angeles. Tell students that her process is similar to Alexander Calder. She believes that art should be hands-on and experimental. With every work she creates, she challenges herself by using different materials or a new technique. **Innovation**, or making something new, always involves risk and the possibility of failure. Sometimes we are told that failure is bad. When might it be okay to fail? Why do you think people are afraid of failure? To achieve great success, you need to give yourself the opportunity to try new things and make mistakes.

activity: first-timers

discuss or write

Ask students when was the last time they tried something totally new. How did it feel to do something for the first time? What was most important to you: the experience or the end result? What did you find challenging about the experience? What did you enjoy about the experience? Have you done it again? How has your experience and ability changed the more that you continue the activity?

DISCUSS: ARTIST CHOICES

images: *The Spider*, 1940; *Bougie du Isthmus*, 2005

“...having a lot of equipment dedicates you to its use. You go off in the direction your equipment carries you. You should set limits. The trouble with a lot of artists is that they have too much technique.”

-Alexander Calder

“In my work I’m more interested in using my hands to create work from familiar objects than showing something particularly exotic or strange.”

-Abraham Cruzvillegas

Artists today have every material, every technique, and every tool readily available for their use. Put yourself in the role of the artist. What would you do if you had unlimited choices? How would you choose? What do you prefer: to have unlimited choices or to have some limits?

Calder loved to experiment and try new things, but he always created some limits for himself. These limits offered him the structure within which to try new things. When you have every option available to you, sometimes it is easy to lose focus. Read students Calder’s quote: “...having a lot of equipment dedicates you to its use. You go off in the direction your equipment carries you. You should set limits. The trouble with a lot of artists is that they have too much technique.” Ask students what they think about Calder’s belief.

Tell students that Calder didn’t just limit his equipment. Depending on what he was working on, Calder would focus on only using certain colors (black, white, and red were his favorites); certain shapes (circles and spheres); or certain materials (everyday materials). Have students look at Calder’s *The Spider*. What does this remind you of? What colors has he used? How would you describe the shapes Calder has used? How do you think that he created this work? How might this work reflect Calder’s ideas about limits?

Tell students that Abraham Cruzvillegas, a contemporary artist from Mexico City, also incorporates limits into his art making. Show students an image of *Bougie du Isthmus*. Ask students what they notice first about this work. For Cruzvillegas, the object is just the final step in his artistic process. Each sculpture that he creates is closely connected to the location where he made it. His process begins by exploring his surroundings and collecting objects that have been thrown away. He limits himself to these discarded items as the materials for his artwork. What materials can you identify in this sculpture? How has Cruzvillegas used them in a new way? Why do you think he chooses to use materials that others discard as trash?

After learning about these limits that these artists create for themselves, ask students what is gained by limiting your options. What do you think might be lost by limiting your choices? What could you be missing out on?

**activity: define your limit
create**

Read students a quote from Calder: "The simplest forms in the universe are the sphere and the circle. I represent them by disks and then I vary them... spheres of different sizes, densities, colors and volumes..." Have students brainstorm a list of ways to make the most of one shape: the circle. Start with Calder's quote. How did he choose to make the circles he used different from each other? Ask students where in nature they see the form of a circle or a sphere. Tell students they are going to create a drawing of something from nature with the same limitations that Calder set out for himself. The only rule is that all of the forms in the students' drawings must be circles. Once the drawing is complete, ask students how it felt to work within that limit. How did it feel to only be able to use circles? What do you think about using limits as a way to see things in a new way?

DISCUSS: CALDER'S INFLUENCE

"If you can't imagine things, you can't make them, and anything you imagine is real."

-Alexander Calder

Read students this quote from Alexander Calder: "If you can't imagine things, you can't make them, and anything you imagine is real." Ask students what they think Calder meant. Imagination can be a powerful tool. When do you feel most imaginative? How do you use your imagination? Alexander Calder used his imagination to invent art forms that the world had never seen before. Before Calder, **mobiles** like *Big Red* (sculptures made of balanced parts capable of motion) and **stabiles** like *The Spider* (self-supporting, non-moving sculptures) didn't exist. It was only through his love of experimentation and commitment to the artistic process that he was able to create something totally new. What can you imagine that doesn't yet exist? What would you like to invent? How might you improve upon something that already exists? What could you do to make it better?

Calder died nearly 40 years ago, yet his influence on **contemporary artists** remains. Calder's invention of mobiles and stabiles **influenced**, or inspired, generations of artists including Kristi Lippire and Abraham Cruzvillegas. What have you learned about Calder's approach to art making that inspires you? How might you incorporate his ideas into your creative process?

activity: inspiration scavenger hunt write or discuss

Tell students that inspiration can come from anywhere or anyone. Have students use the 5 Ws to brainstorm ideas about the origins of inspiration. They can discuss their answers with their classmates or write them down. Have students answer the following questions:

Who inspires you?

What inspires you?

Where are you most inspired?

When do you feel most inspired?

How do you inspire others?

Remind students that Calder didn't wait around to be inspired. He saw it as his responsibility to go out and find inspiration. Tell students that inspiration is a habit, or something that you develop through practice. Calder was dedicated to his artistic process by creating limits that challenged him and always seeking out the innovative and exciting. Based upon students' answers to the 5 Ws of inspiration, ask students to brainstorm two things that they will do to make inspiration a habit. Students can commit to visiting the place that inspires them once a week or making time to regularly talk with someone who inspires them.

VOCAB:

artistic process: the investigations, decisions and steps that an artist takes to create an artwork

contemporary artist: an artist working today

influence: something that produces effects on the actions of others

inspiration: something that triggers the mind to creativity and inventiveness

innovation: creating something new or different

mobile: sculptures that are capable of motion

stabile: self-supporting, non-moving sculptures

studio: a special, dedicated space where an artist can create artwork

technique: a method for accomplishing a desired result such as the creation of an artwork

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Alexander Calder

Alexander Calder was born in 1898 in Pennsylvania to a family of artists. He studied mechanical engineering in college. In the three years following graduation, Calder worked a variety of jobs including as a draftsman for a power company; adviser on a lumber magazine; timekeeper in a logging camp; mapmaker and fireman on a freighter. In 1922, he began taking drawing classes at night and by 1926, he would earn enough money working as an artist to pay his way to France. It was in Paris where he would begin to exhibit his work and steadily gain a reputation for experimentation and innovation. For the rest of his life, Calder would split his time between America and France. He forever changed the field of sculpture through his introduction of the mobile and stabile. Calder died in 1976.

Abraham Cruzvillegas

Abraham Cruzvillegas was born in Mexico and lives in Mexico City and Paris. He makes sculptures that are closely connected to the locations where they are made. Like Alexander Calder, Abraham collects everyday objects that have otherwise been tossed aside and combines them to make something new.

Kristi Lippire

Kristi Lippire was born in Hawaii and lives in Los Angeles, CA. Kristi transforms everyday objects into carefully handcrafted sculptures. Her artwork, like Alexander Calder's, is hands-on and experimental. She likes to challenge herself by using new materials and techniques with each project.

STUDIO PROCESS GOALS

The Studio Programs supports this vision by:

- Providing a safe, inclusive and democratic setting where participants feel comfortable to experiment, take risks, think creatively, and explore uncertainty and ambiguity.
- Placing the visitor at the center of open-ended, process-oriented art making experiences that allow them to exercise their creativity and imagination.
- Investigating exhibiting artists' creative process and then using those discoveries to inform students' own artistic process from the ground up - brainstorming ideas, exploring new materials, experimenting with new techniques, testing new ideas and ultimately creating a work of art, and reflecting on the experience.

A studio teacher facilitates memorable art-making experiences by:

- Teaching with open-ended directions, allowing each student the opportunity to discover their creativity and think like an artist. Students have the chance to explore and experiment with different materials and processes and are also offered opportunity for reflection and meaning-making.
- Encouraging participants to articulate their ideas, perspectives, and opinions through dialogue.
- Providing ample time and room for imagination, play, and reflection.
- Modeling the creative process through their teaching and art-making.

Intern Tasks for Studio Programs

Before group arrives:

- Review the Tour Calendar to make sure that you are prepared for the correct size group and age level. Keep in mind the name of the school and the teacher's names.
- Check the studio to make sure that the studio space is ready for school groups (tables and chairs situated properly, tables covered with paper, etc.)
- Check to make sure that the project materials are prepped and ready to be used by students.
- Make sure you have your watch and OCMA name badge on.
- Go to the museum to check-in with the Gallery Educators and wait for the bus.

When group arrives:

- Help orient teachers and chaperones, reminding them that students do not need to be in separate tour groups while in the studio.
- Get students in a single file line, reminding them to stay off of the grass.
- Welcome the students and ask them to follow you in a single file line, staying on the cement. Bring students in a single file line to the front of the Museum Education Center.
- Orient students to what the day will look like and what is expected of them:
 - "Good morning! Welcome to the Orange County Museum of Art! My name is _____ and this is _____ and today we will get to make art together! In a moment we will go into the art studio, but before that I would like to review a few things with you briefly. First thing, while we head into the studio we will be walking through offices. I'm going to ask that you keep your voices down to be respectful of the people that are working inside. Second thing, when you get into the art studio you will see some materials on the table in front of you. I'm going to ask that you not touch the materials until I tell you to do so. Can you do that for me? Alright, please follow me in your nice single file line!"

Once students are in the studio:

- Direct students to where they should sit using clear, directive language.
- Review safety and emergency exit procedures.
- Thank students for following directions and listening.

Tips for teaching hands-on project:

- Keep questions open-ended and allow for a variety of responses.
- Be enthusiastic about the exhibition and studio process.
- Allow wait-time after asking a question.
- Ask questions to the whole group. Call on a variety of students and provide questions that everyone can answer by raising their hand.
- Model good studio habits and encourage chaperones and teachers to take part in the process.
- While students are working circulate through the room to find students that might be too shy to raise their hand, but may be willing to interact on a one-on-one basis.
- Ask students to reflect on the answers they give or the choices they make.

Orange County Museum of Art – Studio Process**Calder and Contemporary Art: Tinker Time****Grade: Elementary****Medium: Sculpture****Time Required: 50 min.****Lesson Overview**

Students will explore basic vocabulary and concepts of sculpture, investigate form and balance with wire, and be challenged to create and title their own balancing sculpture.

Learning Objectives

- Students will understand and practice basic concepts of sculpture such as balance and form.
- Students will engage in exercises to physically experience elements and vocabulary of sculpture.
- Students will participate in the artistic process, including the creation of an artwork from inception to completion, as well as creating a title and reflecting on experience.

Materials

- Thin wire (20 gauge)
- Thick wire (12 gauge)
- Paper
- Pencils
- Plastic bag

Connections to Artworks

Martin Boyce, *Gravity Pavilion*, 2009

Alexander Calder, *Little Face*, 1943

Alexander Calder, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1947

Alexander Calder, *Snake on the Post*, 1944

California 4th Grade Content Standards**Creative Expression**

1.0 Students perceive and respond to works of art and use the vocabulary of art to express their observations

2.0 Students apply artistic processes and skills.

Vocabulary

balance (physical)

having the ability to stand on its own

base

the part of a sculpture that touches the ground and allows it to stand

form

the shape and structure of a work of art

line

a continuous mark or point

sculpture

a three-dimensional artwork

Steps

Welcome & Introduction (5 min.)

- Today we are going to create a hands-on art project that connects to some of the ideas in OCMA's current exhibition, *Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art: Form, Balance, Joy*.
- For those of you that have been here before today is going to be very different. We are in an artist's studio, so today YOU get to be the artist and this studio is a special place for you to experiment and play. We are going to create art just like the artists in the exhibition! As you can see around you, we can take inspiration from artist's words and artwork on the walls. We will get to be creative, use our imaginations, and explore new methods and materials!
- When you are in the museum next door you will experience the exhibition *Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art: Form, Balance, Joy*. Alexander Calder was an artist that created thousands of works of art! (point to photo of Calder at work) He was born over 100 years ago, but his artwork is still inspiring artists that are working today. Today we will explore some of this artwork and see how Calder inspires us!
- Since he was a child Alexander Calder loved to TINKER. When you hear the word "tinker", what do you think of? A tinker, or someone who tinkers, is constantly experimenting. They like to spend their time figuring out how things work and what might be a different way of doing things. They like to take things apart and put them back in new combinations. How many of you would consider yourself someone who tinkers? Calder could spend all day in his studio, playing with his tools and materials. This dedication to always trying new things, whether they failed or succeeded, led him to invent totally new types of art like mobiles (point to mobile) and stabiles. We are going to follow in his footsteps today by playing with new materials and methods for making art and we will see what we can discover!
- First, we will explore a unique way of drawing; we'll explore metal wire, and finally create a sculpture that stands all on its own! So you will get to create a sculpture that you can take home and share with your friends and family!

Drawing Activity (7 min.)

- Before beginning a work of art, many artists like to brainstorm their ideas by creating sketches! Sketches are quick drawings that do not have much detail. They allow artists to test out many new ideas without committing a lot of time or materials to a work. Using the paper and pencil in front of you, we will practice creating a sketch now! Sketches are created out of the most basic of the art elements: line. Let's use lines to create a sketch using one of Calder's favorite subjects as inspiration for our artwork. Calder loved to explore nature. On the left side of your paper I would like you to create a quick sketch of something from NATURE. You will have two minutes to create your sketch.
- Now that we've created our quick sketch, let's try something a bit different. Alexander Calder once said "*I seemed to have a knack for doing it [creating art] with a single line*". He would often create quick sketches without lifting his pencil from the paper, using only one continuous line. Let's have my assistant demonstrate this process. As you can see, the drawing is very simple, just a quick outline without much detail.
- Now what I would like you to do is create a drawing of the same subject from your first drawing, but this time without taking your pencil off the paper. This may be new and different to you but remember, just like Alexander Calder, we want to tinker and try new things!
- How was it different to draw with one continuous line than when you created your first sketch? How did it change your approach? How did it change the final image you create for each of your sketches?

Explore Wire (8 min.)

- We just got to try a new way of drawing, now we will get to experiment with a material that may be unfamiliar to you: wire.
- This is an example of a sculpture by Alexander Calder where he used wire to create an image. What does this sculpture make you think of? Why do you say that? How do you think the artist created the face? Well to make this sculpture, *Little Face*, Calder used one piece of wire to create the head and ears! The rest of the face he created out of materials that he was able to find in a trash dump! So he took those materials that he found, and he recycled them by turning them into a work of art that you can see in the museum galleries!
- Just like your drawing, this piece of wire can create all sorts of different types of lines. You can even combine the lines to create shapes. Think of your piece of wire like the lines of your drawing. Alexander Calder once said "*I think best in wire*". What do you think that he meant by that? As we play with the wire, let's try to THINK in wire.
- How many of you have worked with metal wire before? So for many of us this is a totally new material. Remember, just like when we started drawing, it might take some practice before we get used to it. Keep in mind that we are tinkering and experimenting with new materials!
- The wire that we are going to use is very thin, which means we can move it, bend it, and wrap it easily, but we can also straighten it back out very easily! That means you can make plenty of shapes with your wire, then you can straighten it back out and

start all over! The wire we will use later can not be straightened back out, so now is the time to experiment and play with the material!

- Besides the wire that is being handed out there is also a bin of materials on the table in front of you. This bin is full of things that can be used to help you work with the wire. You can wrap your wire around the materials to create unique shapes like squares, circles and spirals! (Depending on age: demonstrate use of certain materials, or invite to explore the box). Now that we've seen what materials are inside the box let's see what we can create with the wire!
- My assistant is passing out pieces of wire that we can experiment with. We will be walking around the room, so if you have any questions just raise your hand and we will come to you.
- *Circulate the room, allowing time for exploration and invention.*
- Now that we've had a couple minutes to work, I'd like us to discuss that experience.
 - What did you notice about working with wire? How would you describe that experience?
 - What challenges did you encounter when trying to work with wire?
 - What worked well, or was successful? We are going to create our final sculpture in wire, so keep this experience in mind for the next time we work with wire.

Explore Balance through Our Bodies (5 min.)

- Another big idea that Calder explored is BALANCE. How would you explain or describe balance? (staying upright, supporting itself) Please stand up, push in your chair, and find an open space as we will be moving around. With both feet on the ground, how do you feel? Steady, balanced? Now lift one leg up-how do you feel?
- Now we will work with a partner to explore balance using our bodies. Our feet will act as our base and we will test to see what makes us feel most balanced. Just like the experimentation we did with the wire, testing different ideas is an important part of tinkering. How can you discover something new when you don't test out all sorts of options?
- I'd like you to join arms with the person standing next to you. How balanced do you feel? How many feet do you and your partner have on the ground? Okay, so with **four** feet on the ground we feel very balanced. While linking arms, I'd like ONE of you to balance on one foot. How balanced do you feel? How many feet do you and your partner have on the ground? So with **three** feet on the ground we feel _____. Okay, now I'd like everyone to take one foot off the ground and stand on one foot. How balanced do you feel? How many feet do you and your partner have on the ground? Okay, so with **two** feet on the ground we feel a lot less balanced!
- Between balancing on your own and balancing with a partner, what made you feel most balanced? What can we conclude about your balance tests? Here our feet acted as our base, or the object that touched the floor and allowed us to stay upright. Remember this information because we are going to sit back down and see what types of bases artists use to keep their artworks standing upright and what we can learn from their choices.

Create Balance with Wire (8 min.)

- I'd like you to take a look at this sculpture by Alexander Calder. What does this sculpture make you think of? Why do you say that? What type of base has the artist used to insure it stands upright? This sculpture is called *Snake on a Post*.
- Now I'd like you to take a look at a sculpture by an artist named Martin Boyce. Boyce is still alive and creating art, and he was actually inspired by Alexander Calder! What does this sculpture remind you of? (table, chair, etc.) What type of base has the artist used to insure it stands upright? This sculpture is called *Gravity Pavilion*. So we decided that this sculpture was able to balance...because it has four legs on the ground that act as its base.
- Artists use many different strategies to make their sculptures balance. Let's take a look at one more sculpture by Alexander Calder. What does this sculpture make you think of? Why do you say that? What type of base has the artist used to insure it stands upright? How is that different from the other sculptures that we've looked at? This sculpture is called *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.
- So now we've just explored how two artists have created sculptures that balance on their own, but in different ways. Keeping these things in mind, I want you to experiment again with your wire. This time we want to explore and create **physical** balance with our wire. Use your wire to experiment and try to create a base that is able to balance and stand up on its own. Think about the exercise we did with our partners where we balanced on our feet and keep in mind the different works of art that we just looked at. You can draw inspiration from all of these things! My assistant and I will be walking around the room, so if you have any questions or problems just raise your hand and we will come to you.

Final Challenge (10 min.)

- Now that we have explored different ways of creating balance and form with wire, we will combine these ideas to create our final sculpture!
- Before we start our sculptures, we are going to take a moment to explore the material we will use for our final sculpture. We will use a different type of wire than we have been practicing with. You will be using this to create a sculpture that is able to balance and stand on its own.
- My assistant is handing out the wire that we will use. Once you receive your wire please feel it and compare it the other wire you worked with. How is this wire different from what we practiced with? Since this wire is thicker it will be hard to straighten out, or undo any bends or twists that you make. As you work with the wire please keep in mind that it will be very hard to undo anything. Before you create your final sculpture, take a moment to think about what you want to create. Sketch it out in your mind or even on a piece of paper.
- Be thoughtful in your choices. Keep in mind that once you start bending your wire it is very hard to undo. Also remember, just like Calder, try to think in wire!

Reflection (5 min.)

- Now that we have finished our works of art we need to give them a title! On the card in front of you please write YOUR name.
- Below that, please write the title or what you will call your work of art. Remember, you are the artist and this is your work of art, so you get to choose the title!
- What did you enjoy about this process? What did you find difficult?

Wrap Up (2 min.)

- Thank you so much for joining me in the artist's studio to explore sculpture with us! My assistant and I had a great time seeing your creativity and ideas! When you go next door to the museum try to find some of the shapes and forms that YOU made with wire, and think about how the artist is able to make their work of art balance!
- Thanks again and enjoy the exhibition!

Orange County Museum of Art – Studio Process

Art as Experiment: Make a Straight Line & Follow It

Grade: Elementary

Medium: Multimedia

Time Required: 50 min.

Lesson Overview

Students will work collaboratively to brainstorm, create, and document their response to the challenge “make a straight line and follow it” using everyday materials.

Learning Objectives

- Students will examine “line”, the most basic element of art, and work together to respond to the challenge “make a straight line and follow it”.
- Students will practice 21st century skills by experimenting, problem solving and working collaboratively in groups.
- Students will explore the role of choice in the artistic process and create an original work of art.

Connections to Artworks

John Baldessari, *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line (Best of Thirty-six Attempts)*

Paul McCarthy, *Painting Face Down – White Line*

California 4th Grade Content Standards

Creative Expression

- 1.0 Students perceive and respond to works of art and use the vocabulary of art to express their observations
- 1.5 Students describe and analyze the elements of art
- 2.0 Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art.

Vocabulary

collaboration

to work together cooperatively to create something

choice

the act of selecting or making a decision

documentation

material, such as photographs or video, that serve as evidence of what happened

experiment

the process of testing ideas

line

a continuous mark or point

Steps

Welcome & Safety – 2 Min.

Introduce Concepts – 11 min.

- Welcome to the Orange County Museum of Art!
- How many of you have been here before? By show of hands, who has been to an art museum before? When you think of art, what sorts of objects do you think of? (paintings, sculptures, drawings, etc.)
- Well today, when you explore the galleries you will get to see two different shows! One show, called *State of Mind: New California Art circa 1970*, features a lot of different artists. The artists in that show were **experimenting** with what art could be. So their artwork may not fit into your definition of what art normally looks like. What is an experiment, or what does it mean to experiment? When you “experiment” you test out an idea, or try something out to see what will happen. You might fail OR succeed, but you never know until you test it out and try different ideas.
- The artists in *State of Mind* were experimenting! They moved away from the kind of art that came before them, and challenged themselves to create totally NEW and different things! Today, we will be experimenting and attempting to make and do totally new things as well!
- Artists at this time were giving each other challenges to see how many DIFFERENT solutions they could find to one challenge. One such artist was LaMonte Young who challenged others to “make a straight line and follow it”.

Examine the Challenge – 3 min.

- Let’s take a really close look at LaMonte Young’s challenge: “Make a Straight Line and Follow It”.
- Let’s start with the first word: MAKE. What part of speech is the word “make”? It’s a VERB. What is a verb? It’s an action word, so that means that there is some sort of action or movement taking place. What are some actions that also mean “make”, some synonyms for “make”? Create, build, shape. Ok, so LaMonte Young is challenging us to ACT or DO something when he says “make”.
- What does he challenge us to make? A “straight line”. What is a straight line? Line is one of the most basic elements of art. It is a continuous mark or point.
- What is the second part of the challenge? Follow It. Let’s break that down. What part of speech is the word “follow”? It’s a verb, so it’s another action word where we have to DO something, physically, with our bodies. What does “FOLLOW” mean? What are some words that also mean “follow”, some synonyms for “follow”? Go after, come after, go next. How about the last word, “IT”. What does the IT refer to? The line! So what does “follow IT” mean? It means to “follow the line”.
- Now that we’ve looked really closely at the challenge, let’s look at two artists who responded to that challenge. Then YOU will get the chance to find a new way to respond to this challenge.

Work #1

- WATCH Paul McCarthy’s *Painting Face Down – White Line*

- Allow students to watch in silence for a minute.
- After a minute or so: What do you see here? How did Paul McCarthy “make a straight line”? How did Paul McCarthy “follow it”?
- Where do you think the artist is in this work of art?
- How did Paul McCarthy experiment to meet the challenge to “make a straight line and follow it”?
- We’ve seen Paul McCarthy make a straight line. Let’s take a look at another artist’s idea of how to make a straight line.

Work #2

- LOOK AT **John Baldessari’s *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line***.
 - What do you see here? How did John Baldessari “make a straight line”? How did John Baldessari “follow it”?
 - Where do you think the artist is in this work of art?
 - How did John Baldessari experiment to meet the challenge to “make a straight line and follow it”?
- The title of this work of art is *Throwing Three Balls in the Air to Get a Straight Line*. The rest of the title is *Best of Thirty Six Attempts*. What do you think the artist meant by that? So the artist tried to do this 36 times! But he didn’t just happen to try 36 times. The artist, John Baldessari, **made a choice** to try 36 times, because that was the number of photographs that his camera could take.
- Baldessari once said “Art making is about making a choice. For me, it was you choose one thing over another – this color over that color, this object over that object, and on and on. You have to make a **choice**.”
 - What do you think he meant by that?
 - As an artist you have unlimited options of materials, techniques, and tools. But how would you choose? Many artists make choices when they start a work of art, to limit the materials or colors or tools they use.
- I’d like you to reflect on the works of art that we’ve looked at together. What are some of the **choices** that you think the artists made to create their works of art?
- Today we are going to do something similar to John Baldessari and Paul McCarthy. We are going to experiment with art by “making a straight line and following it”. And, like John Baldessari, we are going to have to make some choices. The materials you will receive have been chosen for you, but as a group you will need to choose HOW to use your materials.

Project Introduction– 4 min.

- We’ve talked about one of the shows you will see in the museum, *State of Mind*. Now we will get to work together, we will get to **collaborate**, just like the artists in the other show, *Two Schools of Cool*. What do you think are some good rules for collaboration, or working together? We should listen to one another and be respectful of each other’s ideas. Also, we will have a limited amount of time, so we will need to work together as a team and focus so that we can fit as much in as possible!

- We will work together in groups to come up with a new idea of how to “make a straight line and follow it”. There is an infinite amount of ways to “make a straight line and follow it”. Our job as artists is to EXPERIMENT and find NEW SOLUTIONS. It is up to your group to decide what it means to “make a straight line and follow it” and what that will look like. Try to create something *unexpected* and *new* with your group’s idea of a straight line. Your “line” can be a sculpture, or a performance, or anything you can imagine. However, once we are all done presenting our works of art we will have to put all of the materials back so the next class can use them.
- Paul McCarthy said that when he made art he “Just used whatever’s in the room.” What do you think he meant by that? To make our lines we will use everyday materials like balls, cups, fabric, yarn, and even bubbles!
- I mentioned earlier that we will have **to make choices**, just like John Baldessari chose the number of times he would throw three balls in the air. You will be randomly put into groups.
 - Each group will receive FIVE materials that have already been chosen. Those five materials are the only materials that your group will be able to use. What you do with the materials and how you use them to “make a straight line and follow it” is completely up to you.
 - So that means you can use ALL of the materials, or only SOME of the materials.
 - It is your choice as a group how you choose to work with your materials, but remember that we have to put the materials back when we’re done so that the next class can use them.
- Since we will have to put all of the materials back when we’re done, how can we create a record of what we’ve done here? Write down what we do, photograph it, video tape it, etc. How did the artist’s that we’ve looked at, John Baldessari and Paul McCarthy, create a record of their works of art? John Baldessari photographed himself throwing the three balls into the air and Paul McCarthy video-taped himself making a white line out of paint.
- Today each group will get to use a digital camera to record and document how your group responds to the challenge of “make a straight line and follow it”. Each group will get to work with ONE digital camera. As a group you will need to decide if you want one member of your group in charge of photographing, or you can have every member of the group take a turn at photographing and documenting. Once you finish creating your line and documenting it, as a group you will also need to choose 2 photographs that you think best represents your project and delete the rest. These photographs will serve as **documentation** or a record of your art works. Your teacher will receive these photographs via email, and they will be displayed for visitors to see!
- Review how to operate the digital camera, delete photos, etc.

Make a Straight Line – 13 min.

- We thought about the steps that Paul McCarthy and John Baldessari took to create their works of art. Now you will get to choose the steps for your group to “make a straight line and follow it”.

- Each group will receive a box of their five materials. Before we touch the materials and start working with them I'd like you to take 1 minute with your group to brainstorm. You can *look* at the materials, but do not take them out of the box yet. Think about the challenge "make a straight line and follow it". Think about the materials you can choose from. Each group has a clipboard. First, each group will brainstorm and put your ideas on paper. You can write them or draw them; it's up to you. But work **TOGETHER** as a team, collaborate, to plan out how you will "make a straight a line and follow it". Remember the rules for a good collaboration that we talked about: listen to one another, be respectful of each other's ideas, work together as a team and focus.
- After we brainstorm, then we will have time to create our line. Keep in mind that you will need to document your project! Once you've finished your project please put the materials back in the box to indicate that you are ready to present your project.
- We will have a limited amount of time.
- Divide into groups. (group number indicated on their cushion)
- Now that you've had a few minutes to brainstorm as a group you will have 7 minutes to make your work of art. Remember, as a group you are deciding how to respond to "make a straight line and follow it". Afterwards we will take some time for each group to present how they worked together to solve "make a straight line and follow it".

Teacher and assistant(s) circulate between groups to make sure everyone understands and to prompt deeper thought about the materials and concept behind their piece.

Offer time warning periodically.

Group Presentation-Reflection – 10 minutes, group by group

- Please present the plan and ideas that you put down on the sketch pad. What did your group plan to do?
- Now, what did you end up doing to "make a straight line and follow it".
- How did you choose the materials?
- How did you decide what to do?
- How did your group experiment to "make a straight line and follow it"?
- How was it collaborating as a group?
- TIME ALLOWING:
 - How did it feel to create your own line?
 - What was challenging about that experience?
 - What was enjoyable or successful?
 - What do you think you might do differently next time?

Instructor/Assistant jots down on white board the key words that come up. These can be referred back to later when students write their personal reflections.

Documentation Card – 5 min.

- We talked about the importance of documentation to serve as a record of what artist's did. Now we will fill out a card to document or record what you did today at the museum. We've seen each group's answer to "make a straight line and follow it". I'd like you to take a few minutes to write about this experience. You will each receive a card and a pencil. Please hold up your card with the side that says "put

photograph here” facing me. Please WRITE on the side that is facing you, the blank side. I’d like you to respond to the question: What did you experience today?

- Your teacher will receive the photographs of your projects in the mail, and then if you want you can attach your photograph to your reflection card!
- What I’d like you to do is to reflect on the experience that we just had practicing the unexpected, and on the blank part of your Documentation Card write about what you did and how it felt. I’ll give you a few minutes to think about what we did and write about it. If you need inspiration you can always look at the white board to see what came from our share time.
- *The teacher can collect cards and choose to display in classroom or have students take them home.*

Wrap Up – 2 min.

- Thank you so much for joining me to experiment with art and line today! My assistant and I had a great time seeing your creativity and ideas! When you tour the exhibitions you can think about how those artists were **experimenting** with new ideas and ways of creating art! As you look at the different works of art, I’d like you to think about what **choices** the artist must have made to create their art work, just like you all made choices in your projects!
- Thanks again and enjoy the exhibitions!

New Touring Program: open engagement

Experience OCMA's exhibitions in a whole new way. Share your voice, your ideas, and your interpretations about the works on view. Educators will be in the galleries to engage in informal conversations and to answer questions.

Outline of Goals for the Pilot

- **ENGAGEMENT:** Personalize the museum-going experience by offering opportunities for visitors to participate by sharing ideas and asking questions.
- **EMPOWERMENT:** Validate and celebrate visitors' meaning-making (over the sometimes singular authoritarian voice of the gallery wall label or a lecture-based tour). Expand their idea of what a museum experience can be. Leave visitors with the desire and tools to learn more.
- **RESPONSIVENESS:** Make museum content more accessible and relevant by helping visitors make links and connections to the art by being responsive to their comments and inquiries

Considerations for Approaching Visitors in the Gallery

- Before approaching a visitor or group, take a moment to observe them to try to determine the motivation(s) for their visit and best approach.
- Each approach should be personalized for the individual. Educator John Falk has outlined five experience types for museum visitors. You can use his categories as a catalyst to think about what different visitors seek from their experience and how you can engage them. These are fluid categories and the same person can be motivated by different things at each visit. We have nearly 50% repeat visitors for our Second Sunday programs, so many visitors may have already seen the exhibition and may have different motivations than a first time visitor.
 1. Explorers—motivated by personal curiosity (i.e. browsers)
 2. Facilitators—motivated by other people and their needs (i.e. a parent bringing a child)
 3. Experience-Seekers—motivated by the desire to see and experience a place (i.e. tourists)
 4. Professional/Hobbyists—motivated by specific knowledge-related goals (i.e. a scholar researching a specific topic)
 5. Rechargers—motivated by a desire for a contemplative or restorative experience
- Think about what information (where they're from?, is this their first visit?, why they came?, etc.) you may need from the visitor to help craft a meaningful engagement. Please be selective about the questions you ask of the visitor at the start of your interaction. Use their answers to determine how to tailor your approach.
- Gauge the visitor's level of interest and be aware of when it is time to move on to another visitor or group.
- You do not need to know everything about all of the works in your zone. Your role is both facilitator and resource. If you don't know the answer to a visitor's question, admit that you don't know. If you know resources where they may be able to find the answer, share them. If a visitor wants to look at a work you are unfamiliar with, go explore it with them.

Monday Mashups
Training Docents to Lose Control
NAEA 2012, NYC

Jenni Stenson
jstenson@ocma.net
Orange County Museum of Art

Inspired by the slate of exhibitions and the feedback docents provided in an interest-group survey, the Orange County Museum of Art has initiated a new docent venue for idea experimentation called Monday Mashup. Each month, on a Monday when there is no board or council meeting scheduled, we will be offering a Monday Mashup where docents can play, explore, and be at their most creative.

October/Art at Home

How is art affected by its environment? How does one's understanding of a work change when you live with it? "Art at Home" will be a fabulous opportunity to visit private art collections in the homes of two of our own: Barbara and Victor Klein and Darrel and Marsha Anderson. The Andersons and Kleins will open their homes to us and discuss their art and what has inspired them to collect.

November/Birding and Baldessari

Join your fellow Docents and Gallery Educators for a chance to practice and enhance visual acuity! The adventure begins with bird watching, facilitated by avid birdwatcher and Audobon Society member Darrell Wilson, in Newport Beach's Back Bay.

The adventure begins in the OCMA parking lot, continues to the Back Bay, and concludes at OCMA where we will apply our newly honed visual acuity skills as we "see" art in the galleries. These techniques and skills will provide insights for sharing art with the museum visitor. Please bring binoculars, wear a hat, and use sunscreen. We will be viewing birds from the paved parking area. Although there will be no hiking, tennies are a good idea. If you have access to a "spotting scope" Darrell encourages you bring it along.

December/Choose Your Own Adventure: Mid-Wilshire Mashup to LACMA, A+D Museum, Mid-Wilshire galleries and beyond!

Explore the multitude of arts venues in the shadow of LACMA. Join us as we head to the mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles and investigate all the arts and culture opportunities it has to offer. We have arranged for some behind-the-scenes opportunities at the local museums, but really encourage you to follow your interests, explore the institutions and galleries on your own and discover something new.

December/Interpretating the Silent: A Screening and Discussion of *The Artist*

We're off to the cinema. The unique and critically acclaimed film, *The Artist*, will be our next "outside the box" adventure as we travel off-site for another wonderful Monday Mashup. Join us for **Interpreting the Silent: A Screening and Discussion of *The Artist***. Discover why a black and white, silent film is becoming one of the most critically lauded films of the awards season. *The Artist* explores the golden age of Hollywood, focusing on a declining male film star and a rising actress, as silent films grow out of fashion and are replaced by the talkies.

Our encounters with museum visitors are brief. To connect with visitors and quickly deduce how you can best meet their needs, gallery educators must read visitors' verbal and non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body movement posture, eye contact, etc.) cues and adapt accordingly. After viewing the film, *The Artist*, we will reflect on what can be communicated without words.

February/In Conversation with Firoozeh Dumas

Our very special guest for this month's event is award winning author and humorist, Firoozeh Dumas. ***In Conversation with Firoozeh Dumas***, Firoozeh will host an open forum where candid discussion and questions about approaching audiences whose backgrounds are dissimilar from our own is encouraged. As Firoozeh said, "Feel free to ask me whatever you want without the fear of political correctness."

SAVE THE DATE

March/What Would Diebenkorn Cook?: Culinary Creations Inspired by Richard Diebenkorn's *Notes to myself on beginning a painting*

Attempt what is not certain. Tolerate chaos. Be careful only in a perverse way. These are just three of the ten rules that painter Richard Diebenkorn considered before starting a new artwork. Transferring these ideas from the studio to the kitchen, we will engage in a friendly culinary competition. Get ready to stretch your culinary and creative muscles and explore food and its preparation from a totally new angle. We will divide into teams where each group will randomly select ingredients, a type of recipe, and an element of art that will inform the recipe and food presentation. Let the competition begin. A meal and discussion will follow.

April/Observation and Meditation: Looking at Diebenkorn in a New Light with Peter Clothier

"One Hour/One Painting" is an exercise in seeing. The idea was developed by Peter Clothier from the observation that viewers, in museums and galleries, spend an average of six seconds in front of any given art work, and often spend more time with the identifying label than with the work itself.

Small groups will sit in front of a single art work for a full hour and will start with a brief introduction to the principles of closed-eye breath meditation, encouraging participants to relax and refresh the eyes, and to rid the mind of expectations and pre-judgments. This leads to an alternation of closed- and open-eye work, the facilitator guiding the process with brief instructions and directions. This is individual work: there is no discussion or interaction, allowing each participant to experience the work as fully as possible, without interruption.

This is NOT a lecture. It is not about art history or criticism, but about giving the eye and the mind the opportunity to learn about pure visual experience and the benefits of contemplation. Participants can expect to come away with the very complete experience of a single work of art, and with the added benefits of an unusual hour of relaxation and serenity.

**May/Writing as a Path to Freedom with Poet (and Diebenkorn Catalog Contributor)
Peter Levitt**

What is the creative life? What is holding you back from fully embracing it? Tap into your innate ability to create and explore these questions with poet Peter Levitt as he leads a workshop designed to give yourself permission to take risks, express yourself, and rekindle your spirit of play.

June/Seeking the Peak: A Customer Service Scavenger Hunt at Fashion Island

Inspired by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Chip Conley's *Peak*, we will venture to the shopping mecca that is Fashion Island. Consumption is not our goal, instead we will investigate how customer service informs our mall experience and what that can teach us about how we craft experiences for the visitor at the museum. We will explore how expectations affect customer satisfaction or disappointment from the role of both customer and service provider. Explore a whole new perspective on how your role at the museum influences the visitor experience.

Inspired to plan a mashup? I would love to hear what you're doing. Please keep me posted. Email me at jstenson@ocma.net.