mini DRAW-A-THON
TEEN Edition
Dear Teen Artist,

Welcome to Draw-A-Thon, teen edition 2020! This program celebrates the arts and sciences of drawing. It features locally-based artists that see drawing as the backbone of many art making practices. Draw-A-Thon is also an opportunity for you to hone technical skills and explore some new ideas and media.

We hope these virtual tools are useful while you and your teachers navigate through these extraordinary times. Like you, artists around the country are asking lot’s of questions and using their creative voices to express their thoughts and feelings like joy, love, sadness and anger.

Sincerely,

Michelle Nichols Dock (Visual Arts Curator)
with Mary Erickson, Ph.D. (TCA Docent)
Inquiry Strategy with Tactical Questions

The following 4-question strategy is an easy to use tool for investigating the layers of context and meaning in visual art.

**What Can I See?** Facts about the artwork.
- Subject Matter
- Design Elements & Principles
- Technical Features
- Function
- Reproduction versus Original
- Care/Condition

**What Else Can I Learn?** Contextual facts.
- Artists’ Lives
- Physical Environments
- Cultural Context
- Artworlds (Art Experience)

**What Does It Mean?**
Conclusions about meanings.
- Personal & Cultural Viewpoints
- Artists’ Intentions
- Art Specialists’ Understandings

**How Does It Compare?**
Conclusions about connections among artworks.
- Style
- Art Influence (From Other Art)
- Themes

The Inquiry Strategy with Tactical Questions was developed for the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts in 2007. It is a revision of prior research by Mary Erickson, Ph.D.
Hints for Asking Good Questions
Hints for a well-rounded conversation: You’ll often learn more from open-ended questions than close-ended questions.

A **closed-ended question** is answered with a one-word response such as yes or no or another single word. Example: Is this an oil or acrylic painting?

*Closed-ended questions* start with verbs like “Is? Do? and Can?”

An **open-ended question** requires more explanation. 
*Example*: How is painting in oil different from painting with acrylics?

*Open-ended questions* start with “Why? and How?”

Some words can be used for both types of questions such as:

- What?
- Who?
- Where?
- When?

Both open and close-ended questions are valuable. The construction and phrasing of a question shapes the kind of information you can expect to receive.

**For Practice:** Write down 3 open-ended questions. Pretend you are meeting someone for the first time. You need to ask questions to get to know that person better.

- a
- b
- c

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Many of the activities are based on processes outlined by D. Rothstein and L. Santana in *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask their Own Questions* (2014) published in Cambridge, MA by Harvard University Press.
What Can I See?
Tips for looking carefully at an Artwork

**Subject Matter:** Some artworks have subject matter and others do not. Subject matter refers to anything real or imaginary that is shown in an artwork (such as people, places, and things).

**Elements of Design:** Traditional elements in Western art include: (“D” represents “dimensional.”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2D Elements</th>
<th>3D Elements</th>
<th>4D Elements/Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>line</td>
<td>form or mass</td>
<td>sequence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shape</td>
<td>space</td>
<td>duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>value (light and dark)</td>
<td>texture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>color</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Design Principles:** Ways artists organize elements of design to create interesting and unified compositions. Some Traditional Principles include:

- Balance
- Harmony
- Emphasis/Focal Point
- Contrast
- Variation
- Repetition
- Rhythm
- Focal Point
- Movement
- Direction
- Pattern
- Transition
- Proportion

**Technical Features:** Careful viewing of an artwork usually reveals evidence of how it was made. (Indicators might include art making tools, materials and processes.)

**Function:** Artists make artworks that serve a great many functions such as:

- Capturing the beauty of nature
- Memorializing an important event
- Celebrating or criticizing a person, event or group
- Exploring visual possibilities
- Sharing a vision
- Promoting a belief or cause
- Celebrating the artist's heritage
- Making the ordinary extraordinary
- Stimulating action
- Many more
What Can I See?
Practice looking carefully at an Artwork

Reproduction Vs Original: Some reproductions can look pretty different from the originals. Common differences between originals and reproductions are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Surface Texture</th>
<th>Luminosity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angle of View</td>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Care/Condition: The condition of artworks can deteriorate over time for many reasons, among them:

- Perishable or fragile materials
- Damage in storage
- Matting, mounting, or framing
- Temperature and humidity
- Accidents
- Vandalism

Sample Questions:
See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what you see.”

Matthew Dickson, Eric, charcoal and chalk on toned paper, 26”x20”

1) Does the drawing show the sitter in profile, full front view or 3/4 view?

2) How are the lines of the facial features different from the lines in the background?

3) How can you tell that this is a charcoal drawing?
Now You Try! **What Can I See?**

Look at this next piece by Esai Calles. List 3 quick descriptions about what you see:

*(Example: “large sculpture, depicts a woman and is made of bronze.”)*

a.

b.

c.

Now, based on your observations, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.

a.

b.

c.
What Can I Learn?
Tips for investigating an Artist’s Background

**Artist's Life:** The personal lives of artists can affect their work, including such factors as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Travel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal life experiences</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Physical Environment:** The physical world, both natural and human made, can inspire their work:

- Natural environment (plants, animals, climate, landforms, etc.)
- Constructed environment (buildings, roads, bridges, vehicles, furniture, consumer goods, etc.)

**Culture:** Artists can draw ideas for their work from their cultures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values and beliefs</th>
<th>Hobbies and entertainment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Economic situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Heritage and/or ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Art Experience (Artworld):** Artists get ideas and support from other people involved in art, through:

- Art education/Apprenticeships
- Insights from specialists in the art form (ceramics, painting, etc.)
- Representation by art galleries
- Contact with art patrons and collectors
- Acknowledgement through art awards, prizes, grants, commissions.
- Art included in museum collections
What Can I Learn?
Practice investigating an Artist’s Background

Papay Solomon
Phoenix-based painter and Liberian war refugee, Solomon lives in the space between two worlds, the world of his adopted home in America and that of his African heritage. His work attempts to reconcile the two into a cohesive whole, with an artistic vision molded by his formal education in the West and with the indelible imprint of his home country.

Known for his paintings of fellow members of the African diaspora, Solomon uses the vocabulary of classical works of art with a modern spin. Through his portraits he aims to honor his sitter’s dignity and cultural identity by representing their stories and experiences.

At the age of 14, Solomon migrated with his family to the United States, where he attended High School and then completed his college education at Arizona State University, receiving the honor of Outstanding Undergraduate of his class. In 2018, shortly after graduating from ASU, Solomon received the 2018 Friends of Contemporary Art Artists’ Grants Award from the Phoenix Art Museum and the Erni Cabat Award from the Tucson Museum of Art.

papaysolomon.com

Sample Questions: See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what I can learn.”

1) In what geographical locations has Solomon lived and worked?

2) How might Solomon’s experience as an immigrant play a role in his art?

4) Where did Solomon receive his art training? What does classical art mean?
Now You Try! What Else I Can Learn?

Brainstorm and list 5 interesting facts about Papay Solomon’s background.
*You may want to consult pg. 9 and/or a media article and/or Internet references about the artist.)

a

b

c

d

e

Now, based on your research, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork/artist.

a

b

c
What Does It Mean?
Tips for interpreting an Artwork

**Artist’s Intention:** Artists decide how they want their artworks to look. Their intentions may be:

- Personal or private
- Unconventional
- Experimental
- Focused on collector, patron, funder or other viewer
- Traditional
- Evolving
- Deliberate
- Other
- Practical
- Emotional
- Boundary breaking
- Spontaneous

**Art Specialists' Understandings:** The considered opinions of art specialists (experts) direct viewers' attention to aspects of artworks that they judge to be worthy of that attention. Art specialists may include:

- Artists
- Art Historians
- Tribal elders
- Art Teachers
- Master Craftspeople
- Others
- Museum Curators
- Ceremonial Leaders
- Art Critics
- Guild Members

**Cultural Understandings:** A viewer's cultural understanding draws upon a set of ideas, beliefs and standards shared broadly within a culture. These are learned, not by special effort and instruction, but simply through growing up as a member of a culture. Unexamined expectations might include:

- High price
- Familiar
- Obvious meaning
- Other
- Difficult to make
- Easily recognizable

**Your Own Viewpoint:** Your responses to artworks are affected by:

- conscious thoughts
- careful viewing
- free association
- unconscious reactions
- thoughtful reflection
- previous art experience
- personal preferences
- relevant information
- and more
What Does It Mean?
Practice interpreting an Artwork

Frank Gonzales
Gonzales was born in Mesa and graduated from McClintock High School. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Laguna College of Art and Design in 2003 and then lived in New York for several years. He’s come back to the Southwest and rekindled a love for the desert and natural habitat.

As a contemporary painter, Gonzales' work combines brightly painted backgrounds with old world painting techniques. His also enjoys studying sciences like ornithology, geology and botany.

Gonzales says “In my work, I take references from various sources including nature, books, the internet and photos to comprise and create my own images. By creating my paintings through reference or made-up elements, there becomes a play between artificiality and realism. I like to combine elements that may seem believable, but wouldn't normally thrive or be seen together in real life.

“My compositions are never thought out much beforehand. I like the spontaneity of starting with a background color or single image as a jump off point for the rest of the painting. One image will spark another and the process takes shape from there. I find this way of working to be both exciting and uncertain. My various marks and color glitches mimic this uncertainty resulting in a visual stillness and movement.”

Gonzales’ work is included in private and public collections including the Ampersand Boutique Hotel in London, The Orange County Children's Hospital and several Valley Starbucks locations. A new floor designed by Gonzales is currently under construction at Sky Harbor Airport.

frankgonzales.net
Now You Try! What Does It Mean?

Look at this work by Gonzales. Brainstorm and list 5 ideas about what the artwork is about.

a
b
c
d
e

Now, based on your interpretation, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.

a
b
c
How Do They Compare?
Tips for gathering insights by comparing Artworks

**Style:** Style is a set of distinctive qualities ("family resemblance") that are shared by more than one artwork. Artists develop their own style and incorporate aspects of the styles of artists from their own or other times and cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist's style</th>
<th>Style of art movement or period</th>
<th>Cultural style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Art Influence:** Most artists are influenced by artists who worked before them, though some self-taught artists, called “outsider artists,” work in isolation, largely unaware of the work of other artists. Art influences can include:

- Technical and aesthetic achievements by other artists
- Other artists' ideas, innovations, commitments
- Traditional or historical art ideas to follow, extend or break away from

**Theme:** Some broad, cross-cultural themes have been the focus of many artists throughout history and across the globe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People and nature</th>
<th>Cultural pride</th>
<th>Conquest</th>
<th>Overcoming obstacles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strength of family</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Fantasy</td>
<td>Social order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>Chaos</td>
<td>Revisiting history</td>
<td>Heroic adventure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious devotion</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Many more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How Do They Compare?
Practice gathering insights by comparing Artworks
by Frank Gonzales

Sample Questions:  See below how an easy
conversation about artworks can begin just by
asking and answering questions about
“how do they compare?”

1) How would you describe the differences of line
quality between the acrylic painting, the crayon work
and the graphite drawing?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2) What is similar about all three artworks?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3) Why might drawing skills be important to Gonzales
even though he works in different media?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Now You Try! How Do They Compare?

Mary Shindell
*Inflection Point II: Variant I: Pluto, Grand Canyon, Pinus pungens, Agave parryi, Lomatium leptocarpus, Erysimum capitatum, Opuntia polyacantha;* drawing, graphite, ink, pastel, Prisma on Rives BFK, 42” x 42,” 2017

maryshindell.com

Monica Aissa Martinez
*The Little Brain*  
mixed media (graphite, gouache, ink, casein and gesso on Mylar)  
13” x 13”

monicaaissamartinez.com

Questions on next page.
Now You Try! How Do They Compare?

Mary Shindell

Monica Aissa Martinez

1) List 3 highlights (your favorite visual features and/or information) about each of the artworks.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

2) Now, based on your comparisons, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about these artworks.

a

__________________________________________________________________________

b

__________________________________________________________________________

c

__________________________________________________________________________
LISTENING to the Artist’s Voice

Asking Engaging Questions:
*In preparation for interviewing one of the Draw-A-Thon artists.*

Artists balance many factors as they gather and generate ideas and make their art. Choose three tokens and formulate three questions to ask about an artist and their artwork. Base your questions on what you see and/or how you think the artwork was made. Circle your chosen tokens.

**Hints:**
Learning about the artist and their work can help you ask better questions, for example, an artist’s statement, key life experiences, and basic information about an individual work of art. Be specific. If you ask easy questions, you are going to get easy answers. If you ask thoughtful questions, you are going to get rich answers. Avoid questions that can be answered with one-word answers. (This page is from a series called TOKEN Response 2.0.)