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About the Exhibition
Drawn to Language

In Drawn to Language, words are given visual form. Letters, words, or phrases are transcribed, visualized, verbalized, symbolized, morphed into patterns, scrambled, or even erased. While the works in the exhibition vary conceptually – from amusing to political to philosophical – each work is defined by its use of words to create an image, a deeper meaning, or both. Visual artists have long been interested in the intersection between art and language. From ancient calligraphy to illuminated manuscripts, some of our oldest surviving texts are an amalgamation of these two forms of communication. Visual artists can be “drawn to language” in a variety of ways. Whether used for additional emphasis, to define pure meaning, to further a narrative, or simply to make a joke, language is an increasingly important element in visual art. The artists in this exhibition use new materials, processes and techniques to entice the viewer to examine language in new ways.

Exhibiting Artists: Adam Ames, Erik den Breejen, Anne Lise Coste, Jenny Holzer, Samuel Jablon, Jack Pierson, Ed Ruscha, Michael Scoggins, Gary Simmons, Leah Singer, Hank Willis Thomas

Essential Question
What is language?

Language is how we tell people something. Artists can make artworks that use words in a different way to tell a story. Stories can be told through writing words, drawing pictures, and speaking.
Lesson 1: Pop-Up Storybooks

Activity: Students will make a pop-up storybook using paper collage materials.

Objectives: Through making a pop-up storybook, students will learn that they can:
1) Tell a story in different ways (images and/or words)
2) Create different parts of a story (characters, setting, plot) from the real world and/or their imagination
3) Transform 2D pieces of paper into 3D forms (folding, layering, tearing, cutting, attaching, and stacking)

Materials: Long Cardstock Paper, Paper Collage Materials, Art Straws, Glue

LOOK

Image 1: Jenny Holzer, Just When the Bug Gets Ready to Land, Hand Painted Enamel on Metal, 1981
What do you see? Who is the character in this story? How would the story change if you were to change the word “bug” into a different character?

Image 2: Fabrizio Cavallo, Life, Age 8, India/Italy, Paint on Paper
What do you see? How does the meaning of the painting change with the words? How is this artwork similar or different than the other artwork? (imagery vs. words)

Image 3: Garry Simmons, Starlight Theatre, Pigment, Oil Paint, Cold Wax on Canvas, 2010
What do you see? What story do you think this painting tells? How is this artwork similar or different than the other artworks that we saw? (light imagery/words on dark background vs. dark imagery/words on light background)

MAKE

Opening Statement: In the gallery, we saw how artists told a story through their artwork in different ways.

Topic Question: How can we tell a story?

Recap: We can tell a story though images/pictures, words, sounds, movement, etc. A story has a setting (place), characters (people,
animals, creatures, objects) and plot (beginning, middle, and end). The parts of story can be real and/or imaginary.

Visualization/Demo: Today, we are going to make pop-up storybooks. What do you think pop-up is? How can we make our 2D pieces of paper 3D?

Recap: We learnt that we can make our 2D pieces pop-up and become 3D by folding, layering, tearing, cutting, attaching, and stacking.

Transition: How will you start? What type of setting, characters, and plot will your story have? How will you create parts that are 2D and/or 3D?

SHARE

Which storybook do you find interesting? Why?
Lesson 2: Mixed Media Storybooks

Activity: Students will make pictures of their favorite place by drawing with oil pastels, sticking tape and foam stickers, rolling wet foam rollers on bleeding tissue paper, and gluing collage materials.

Objective: Through making mixed media storybooks of their favorite place, students will learn that they can
1) Tell a story through a picture
2) Make new shapes that come together to form a picture
3) Layer materials to transform and cover shapes and forms
4) Create different textured surfaces

Materials: Long Cardstock Paper
1) Drawing: Thick Oil Pastels
2) Collage: Diluted Glue in Squirt Bottle, Colored Tape, Foam Shape Stickers, Metallic Paper and Mesh
3) Painting: Bleeding Tissue Paper, Wet Sponge Rollers, Tub of Water

LOOK

What do you see? What materials did the artist use? What do you think these materials feel like?

Image 3: Garry Simmons, Starlight Theatre, Pigment, Oil Paint, Cold Wax On Canvas, 2010
What do you see? What story do you think this painting tells?

MAKE

Opening Statement: In the gallery, we saw how the artists told a story in different ways. In the first artwork, the artist Samuel Jablon made a painting using lots of different types of materials. In the second artwork, the artist Garry Simmons made a picture of a movie theatre, which is one of his favorite places.

Topic Question: What is your favorite place?

Recap: We learned something new about each other. We all have a different favorite place in our neighborhood such as _____.

**Visualization:** Today, we will be making pictures of your favorite place using lots of different types of materials. What types of materials will you use?

**Recap:** We learnt that we can layer materials on top of each other to make new forms, textures, and surfaces.

**Transition:** How will you start drawing your favorite place? How will you layer materials on top of each other?

**SHARE**

Would someone like to share their story of their favorite place?

**JUST WHEN THE BUG GETS READY TO LAND**
**ON YOUR FACE YOU BLOW HARD AND SEND HIM STRAIGHT TO THE CEILING.**
Image 2: Fabrizio Cavallo, *Life*, Age 8, India/Italy, Paint on Paper, Children’s Museum of the Arts’ Permanent Collection
Image 3: Garry Simmons, *Starlight Theatre*, Pigment, Oil Paint, Cold Wax on Canvas, 2010