



Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary

teacher
resource
packet



museum of arts and design



museum of arts and design

Dear Educator,

We are delighted that you have scheduled a visit to *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*. When you and your students visit the Museum of Arts and Design, you will be given an informative tour of the exhibition with a museum educator, followed by an inspiring hands-on project, which students can then take home with them. To make your museum experience more enriching and meaningful, we strongly encourage you to use this packet as a resource, and work with your students in the classroom before and after your museum visit.

This packet includes topics for discussion and activities intended to introduce the key themes and concepts of the exhibition. Writing, storytelling and art projects have been suggested so that you can explore ideas about the exhibition in ways that relate directly to students' lives and experiences. Please feel free to adapt and build on these materials and to use this packet in any way that you wish.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Museum of Arts and Design.

Sincerely,

Aliza Boyer
Senior Manager of School,
Youth & Family Programs

Kimberly C. Ramirez
Education Department
Intern

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museum of arts and design

The Museum of Arts and Design has been functioning as an international resource center for craft, arts and design since 1956. Through its collections, exhibitions, programs and publications, the Museum serves as a forum for critical debate concerning the nature of craftsmanship and the engagement with the process that links materials, techniques, forms, patterns and concepts in all creative work.

How does a museum work?

- **Administration:** The team led by the Director of the Museum determines the programs, plans and philosophy of the Museum. It also raises funds to realize the Museum's goals and works directly with the Board of Governors, which guides the Museum's functions.
- **Curatorial:** This is the team, led by the Chief Curator, that works together to decide which exhibits will be shown, how they will look, what artwork is to be included, and how they are to be interpreted.
- **Registration:** Led by the Registrar, this team arranges the safe handling of art to be placed in an exhibition and maintains the permanent collections acquired by a museum.
- **Education:** This team provides the interactive interpretation of the objects on view through the educational programs designed for children, adults and families who visit the Museum.
- **Facility Maintenance:** This is the team that allows the day-to-day operations of a museum to continue: from the lights being turned on, to the safety of all who enter the building.
- **Security Guards:** This is the team most often seen in a museum, because its main task is to protect the artwork from harm so that in the future people will be able to see the same objects as seen in a museum today. They also are helpful to visitors who have a variety of questions.

Museums are places where we can learn about the past, present, and future of the world around us. The diversity of knowledge is endless when the habit of museum exploration is formed at an early age. We look forward to welcoming your group into our galleries.

Helpful Hints for your Museum Visit

"I try, when I go to museums, to do two things. One, to appreciate what I'm looking at, just to see it, but then to isolate a few pieces that I really look at in detail. I study and I draw not with any purpose in mind. I mean, I don't go looking for specific things. I just try to be open-minded and keep my eyes open. It's interesting that every time I go back to the same place, I see something different." Arline M. Fisch (1931-) Brooklyn, New York

While visiting the exhibition try to use all your senses. Notice the way the pieces are displayed. *Are there any specific groupings of pieces you can distinguish? If you enjoy looking at one piece more than others can you explain why?*

Here are some questions and suggestions to think about as you move around the exhibition:

- I. *What can be objectively observed?*
 - a. *What is the physical description? Measurement, weight, materials used, articulation of materials...*
 - b. *What iconography, if any, is used? Designs, words, diagrams...*
 - c. *What are the object's formal design characteristics? Lines, shapes, forms, color, texture...*

- II. *What would it be like to interact with this piece of art? How would you handle, lift, display it?*
 - a. *How would the piece of art feel, move, and sound?*
 - b. *What does the piece do? Does the piece have a function? How would the figures move if they were alive?*
 - c. *What is our emotional response to this beaded figure? Fear, joy, indifference, curiosity, revulsion, excitement...*

- III. *What is in the mind of the artist? What are the viewers thinking and feeling?*

Use creative imagining and free association.

 - a. Review all of the above information and consider what was going on in the world when the work was produced to develop possible interpretations of the piece. (Theories and hypotheses)
 - b. *Do the figures tell a story? Does the piece have underlying political or social meaning? (Understanding and visual thinking)*
 - c. Develop a program to investigate the questions posed by the material evidence. (Program of research)

- IV. Brainstorm about an event or situation that is happening in your life at the moment which you could animate into one scene which could be made into your very own figurative sculpture. (Design themes)

MAD WEBSITE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Please visit our web site at www.madmuseum.org for numerous resources for educators, including:

- **Teachers' Lounge** (click under the “learn” tab to access)

The Teachers' Lounge is MAD's central online location for engaging local, national and international educators in the support, conceptualization and integration of arts- and design-based programs, projects and partnerships. Information can be found about all our programs at MAD including a Teacher's Blog- active online community for arts educator to share ideas and experiences.

- **Curate the Collection** (click under the “interact” tab to access)

Create your own on-line exhibition of objects from the collection of the Museum of Arts and Design. Save the collection for future reference and share it with others. To get started open the curate the collection page and register for this free service.

- **Cell Phone Audio Tour** (click under the “interact” tab to access)

Listen to MAD curators, artists and outside experts discuss artworks on exhibit, as well as highlights of MAD's new home at 2 Columbus Circle, on your cell phone. When visiting the museum, look for the phone icon posted throughout the Museum and in the galleries on selected labels. Call 212.514.0017 and then enter the number printed on the label to listen.

Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary ***September 27, 2008 - April 19, 2009***

Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary is a special thematic exhibition featuring 40 contemporary artists from 17 countries who transform discarded, commonplace, or valueless objects into extraordinary works of art. *Second Lives* includes new commissions and site-specific installations, created from gun triggers, spools of thread, tires, hypodermic needles, dog tags, old eyeglasses, and telephone books, among other manufactured and mass-produced objects. Highlighting the creative processes that repurpose these objects, the exhibition explores the transformation of the ordinary into the extraordinary and stimulates debate on function, value, and identity. The exhibition reflects the museum's core mission of celebrating materials and process, *Second Lives* explores the creative approaches of contemporary artists who give existing objects new life and meaning by transforming them into compelling works of art. We live in a world populated, and sometimes overpopulated, with consumer products. These artists make magic using society's castoffs and overlooked items. While the focus of the exhibition is neither on sustainability nor recycling, the works in the exhibition are a catalyst for thought and discussion about these issues.

Below are questions that our curators would like you to keep in mind while you are viewing the exhibition *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*:

- What determines whether a material is appropriate for making any object, including works of art and design?
- What is the nature of the change that an artist or designer effects when working with a given material, and how does the choice of that material contribute to the meaning or significance?
- How does an artist's intervention inform our understanding of the material's inherent, perceived, or assigned value?

From some of the artists of
Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary...

“The objects I pick already have
their own significance.
I put them together to create new
meanings.”
~Subodh Gupta

“If I had a thousand of any given object,
I know I could make anything, because I
no longer see that thing as what it is. I
see it as a molecule, a particle or a
fractal.” ~Willie Cole

Second Lives Exhibition Themes

The following section highlights the different artwork in *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*. The exhibit includes four general major themes: identity, power and politics, repurposing and function. More than one theme may be relevant to works of art in the exhibition.

- Identity:** Artwork that considers the characteristics of the individual and the group in society
- Power and Politics:** Works in the exhibit that explore issues of political and economic power
- Repurposing:** Use of everyday objects and the transformation of those items into sculptural forms
- Function:** Artwork designed using repurposed objects or materials in order to explore concepts of function



Do-Ho Suh

Metal Jacket, 1992-2001

3000 dog tags on U.S. military jacket fabric liner

60 x 50 x 15 in. (152 x 127 x 38 cm)

Courtesy of Danielle and David Ganek

Discussion Questions for Do-Ho Suh, *Metal Jacket*.

- What material did the artist use to create this sculpture?
- Why did the artist choose to use this material?
- How would it feel to wear this object?
- What does the object remind you of?
- Why did the artist use dog tags?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Terese Agnew

Portrait of a Textile Worker, 2005

Clothing labels, thread, fabric backing

Overall: 98 x 110in. (248.9 x 279.4cm)

Museum purchase with funds provided by private donors,
2006

Discussion Questions for Terese Agnew, *Portrait of a Textile Worker*.

- What is the figure in this piece doing?
- What materials has the artist used to make this work?
- How do you think the artwork was made? What was the artist's process?
- Where do you think all of the labels came from?
- Does a brand name label lose its value when it is cut from a piece of clothing?
- How does the material used to make this work of art relate to the image being represented in the work of art?
- What object has the artist made? Where do we usually find these objects and how are they usually displayed?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?

Susie MacMurray

***A Mixture of Frailties*, 2004**

Inside out yellow washing gloves
stitched onto calico

Overall: 72 3/4 x dia: 128in.

(184.8 x dia: 325.1cm)

Courtesy of the artist



Discussion Questions for Susie MacMurray, *A Mixture of Frailties*:

- Is this piece functional? Explain why or why not.
- What material did the artist use to construct this piece?
- What object has the artist created?
- Would you like to wear this dress? Where would you wear it?
- How would it feel to wear? To touch? Why?
- Do you think it is light or heavy? Why?
- What if the artwork was a different color? Would you view it differently if it were black or red?
- What comment is the artist making by using rubber gloves to create a wedding dress?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Chakaia Booker
Destiny Unchanged, 2005

Rubber tires and wood

Overall: 62 x 47 x 50in. (157.5 x 119.4 x 127cm)

Courtesy of the artist and Marlborough Gallery

Discussion Questions for Chakaia Booker, *Destiny Unchanged*:

- What material was used to make this sculpture?
- Where do you think the artist found the materials?
- How do you think this sculpture was made?
- What other materials can be used to make art? List some of them.
- The name of this sculpture is “Destiny Unchanged”. Why do you think the artist chose this title? What would you name this piece? Why?
- What does the sculpture remind you of?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



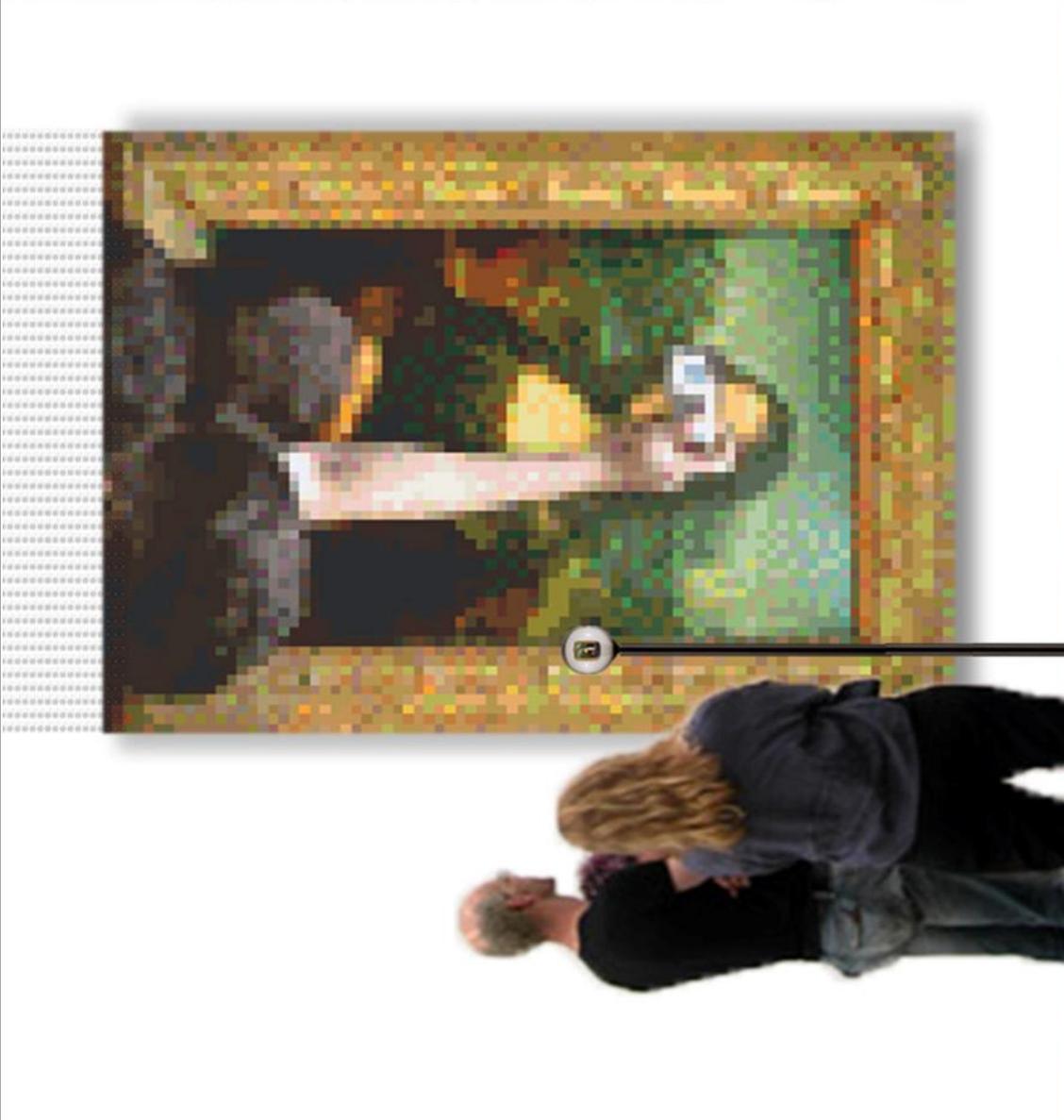
Willie Cole
Loveseat, 2007

Shoes, wood, pvc pipes, screws and staples
Overall: 39 x 65 x 43in. (99.1 x 165.1 x 109.2cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Alexander and Bonin

“If I had a thousand of any given object, I know I could make anything, because I no longer see that thing as what it is. I see it as a molecule, a particle or a fractal.” ~Willie Cole

Discussion Questions for Willie Cole, *Loveseat*:

- What material did the artist use?
- How do you think this object was created?
- What do you observe about the materials? Are they new or used?
- Why do you think artist chose this material?
- What form has the artist created? Is it functional? Why or why not?
- Would material would you choose if you were making the same kind of object? Why?
- How would it feel to sit on this *Loveseat*?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Devorah Sperber
After the Mona Lisa 7, 2008
5,084 spools of thread, stainless-steel ball chain and hanging apparatus,
clear acrylic viewing sphere on metal stand
8 ft. x 6 ft. 6 in. (thread spools only) x 60 in.
(approximate distance of viewing sphere from thread)
Courtesy of the artist

“I am interested in the link between art, science, and technology, how the eyes and brain prioritize, and reality as a subjective experience vs. an absolute truth. As a visual artist, I cannot think of a topic more stimulating and yet so basic, than the act of seeing--how the human brain makes sense of the visual world.

My current body of work consists of sculptures assembled from thousands of ordinary objects -spools of thread, marker-pen caps, map tacks, or chenille stems, combined with optical devices such as clear acrylic viewing spheres, convex mirrors, or reversed binoculars. I place equal emphasis on the whole recognizable image and how the individual parts function as abstract elements, selecting materials based on aesthetic and functional characteristics as well as for their capacity for a compelling and often contrasting relationship with the subject matter.” ~Devorah Sperber

Discussion Questions for Devorah Sperber, *After the Mona Lisa 7*:

- What famous image is depicted? How is it different? What else do you notice in the image? What is happening?
- Why is someone taking a photo of the Mona Lisa? Considering the artist made this image in 2008, what kind of camera might be depicted in her image?
- What material did the artist use for this work? (Look at the right side above, in the background of the glass sphere.)
- What is the function of the glass sphere? What is the significance of its presence in this work of art?
- How do the materials being used to create this work of art relate to the scene being depicted?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?

Long-Bin Chen
1/6 Meeting Room with Buddha Heads, 2007
New York City phone books, catalogs, wood
Overall: 97 x 50 x 79in. (246.4 x 127 x 200.7cm)
Courtesy of the artist



Discussion Questions for Long-Bin Chen, *1/6 Meeting Room with Buddha Heads*:

- What material does the artist use to create this sculpture?
- What has the artist created? Are the portraits recognizable to you? Do these forms have any significance to you? What significance do you think they might have to the artist?
- Why did you think the artist chose this material? What statement does the artist make by using this material? How does the material being used relate to the images being depicted?
- If you were to create a sculpture, what types of materials would you use and why?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Soyeon Cho

***Self Portrait*, 2007**

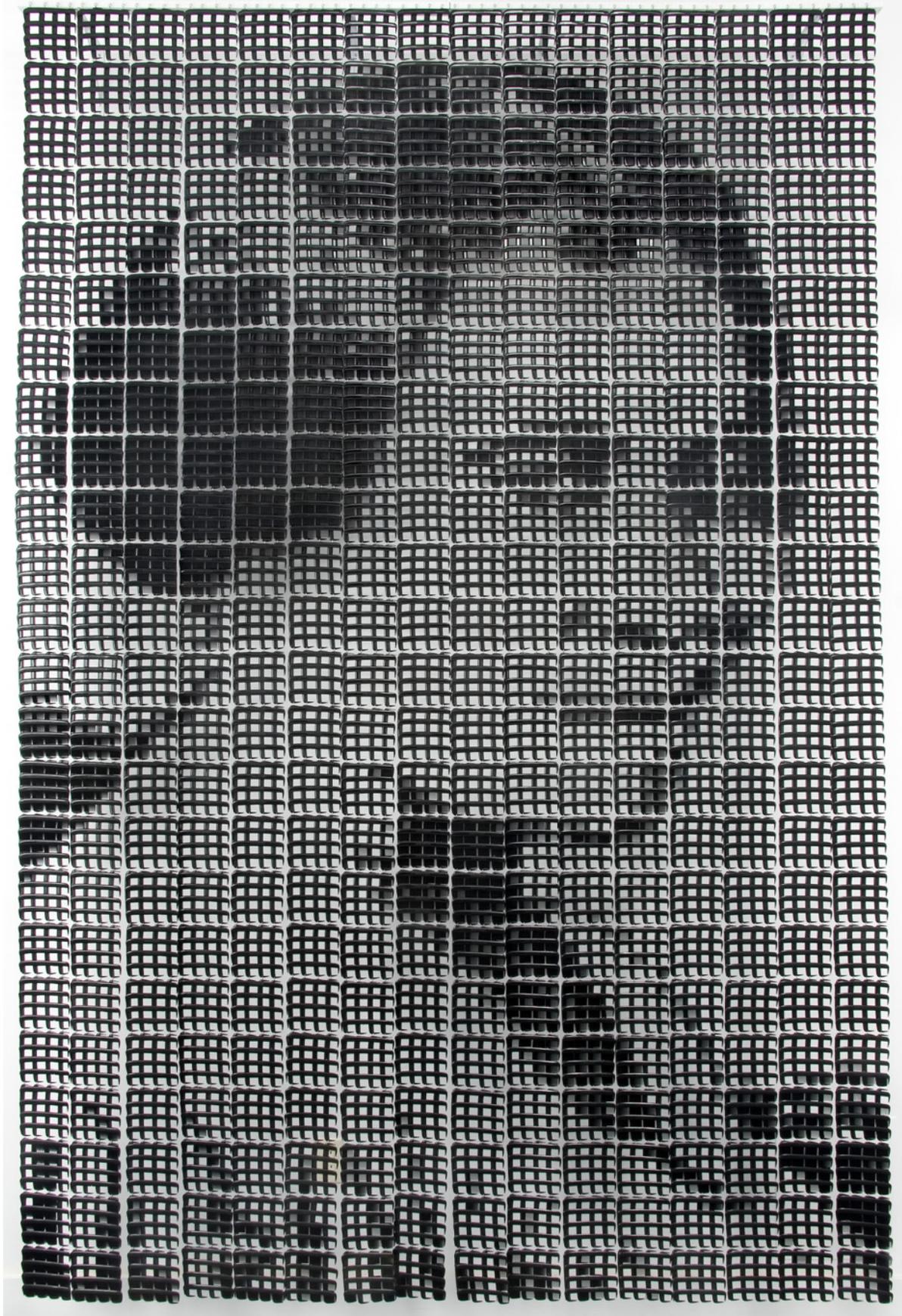
Plastic forks, metal structure, two lights

Overall: 78 x 78 x 84in. (198.1 x 198.1 x 213.4cm)

Courtesy of the artist

Discussion Questions for Soyeon Cho, *Self Portrait*.

- What does this shape look like?
- What materials did the artist use?
- How is the work of art held together?
- How does this piece make you feel?
- Why would the artist consider this a self-portrait?
- If you were to create a self-portrait of yourself, what would it be? What materials would you use?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Sonya Clark

Madam CJ Walker (large), 2008

Unbreakable plastic combs (Courtesy of American Comb Company)

10 ft. 2 in. x 7 ft. 3 in. x 25 in. (310 x 224 x 25 cm)

Collection of the artist

Discussion Questions for Sonya Clark, *Madame CJ Walker*:

- What has the artist created here?
- What material did the artist use to create this object?
- What do you think was the artist's process? How did she make this piece?
- What is the significance of this material? How does the material the artist used relate to the identity of the person depicted?
- Think about your own identity. What material would you use to create a work that reflects your identity?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?



Paul Villinski

***My Back Pages*, 2006-2008**

Vintage vinyl records, record player,

wire, record covers

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist;

Courtesy Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York



Discussion questions for Paul Villinski, *My Back Pages*:

- What material has the artist used? Where do you think these materials came from? Where would you find them? What was this material used for in the past?
- How has he manipulated his materials?
- What image(s) has the artist created? Why do you think he chose this particular image to depict? How might it relate to his process? (How do they both relate to metamorphosis?)
- The artist has named this work "*My Back Pages*." Why do you think he chose this title? Explore the title in context with the material the artist used. What title would you choose? Why?
- How is this piece a self-portrait?
- What are some of your favorite songs or musicians?
- Which theme(s) from the exhibition is represented in this work?

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- Fred Wilson, etc., *Fred Wilson: Speak of Me as I Am: 50th Venice Biennale*, MIT List Visual Arts Center (May 2, 2003)
- Christine Frerot, *Pablo Reinoso*, Ruth Benzacar Gallery (1996)
- Bernhard Dessecker, *Ingo Maurer: Designing With Light*, Prestel Publishing (October 2008)
- Donald Lipski, etc., *Donald Lipski: A Brief History of Twine*, Madison Art Center Inc (September 15, 2000)
- Miwon Kwon & Lisa G. Corrin, *Do-Ho Suh*, Serpentine Gallery (April 1, 2002)
- Michael Rakowitz, etc., *Michael Rakowitz: Circumventions*, Onestar Press (March 2, 2004)

Useful books regarding reclaimed materials:

- Museum of Arts and Design, *Second Lives: Remixing the Ordinary*, exhibition catalog, 2008
- Toying with Technology: A Resource for Design and Technology with a Global Perspective*, published by Scottish Development Education Centre, 2000
- Out of the Bin and into the Secondary Curriculum*, produced by Aylesbury Development Education Centre, 2001
- Toys and Tales - with everyday material*, by Sudarshan Khanna, Gita Wolf and Anushka Ravishankar, published by Tara (India), 1999
- Soule, Amanda Blake, *Simple Ways to Repurpose Old Materials Into New Family Treasures*, Trumpeter, 2009
- Stein, Jeannine, *Re-Bound: Creating Handmade Books from Recycled and Repurposed Materials*, Quarry Books, 2009
- Steven Skov Holt and Mara Holt Skov, *Manufactured: The Conspicuous Transformation of Everyday Objects*, Chronicle Books, 2008

Artist Websites

WOKmedia	www.wokmedia.com
Teresa Agnew	www.tardart.com
CHakaia Booker	www.chakaiabooker.com
Hew Locke	www.hewlocke.net
Stuart Haygarth	www.stuarthaygarth.com
Pablo Reinoso	www.pablereinoso.com
Susie MacMurray	www.susiemacmurray.co.uk
Johnny Swing	www.johnnyswing.com
El Anatsui	http://elanatsui.com
Boris Bally	www.borisbally.com
Xu Bing	www.xubing.com
Fernando & Humberto Campanas	www.campanas.com.br
Marek Cecula	www.marekcecula.com
Sonya Clark	www.sonyaclarke.com
Piet Hein Eek	www.pietheineek.nl
Nicholas Galanin	http://nicholasgalanin.com
Andy Diaz Hope	www.andydiazhope.com
Laura Roth	http://loloro.com
Lee Jae-Hyo	www.leeart.name
Donald Lipski	http://donaldlipski.net
Carlo Marcucci	www.carlomarcucci.com
Ron Arad	www.ronarad.com
Ingo Maurer	www.ingo-maurer.com
Tom Price	www.tom-price.com
Nnenna Okore	www.nnennaokore.com
Michael Rakowitz	www.michaelrakowitz.com
Senga Senga	http://sengasenga.com
Tejo Remy	www.remyveenhuizen.nl
Jean Shin	http://www.jeanshin.com/
Yuken Teruya	http://yukenteruyastudio.com

Glossary

Acrylic: a clear **plastic** that is used as a binding agent in paint and as a **casting** material in sculpture

Asymmetry: when one side of a **composition** does not reflect the **design** of the other. Asymmetrical **balance** is the kind of balance (one of the principles of art) in which the parts of a design are organized so that one side differs from the other without destroying that composition's overall harmony

Balance: an art and **design** principle concerned with the arrangement of one or more elements in a work of art so that they appear **symmetrical** (even) or **asymmetrical** (uneven) in design and proportion

Calico (textile): a cheap textile made from unbleached, and often not fully processed, cotton.

Casting: to **shape** a material such as metal, glass or plastic by pouring or pressing it into a mould

Color: when light is reflected off an object, **color** is what the eye sees. The primary colors are red, yellow and blue. The secondary colors are orange, purple and green

Composition: the arrangement of **lines**, **colors** and **form**

Design: the general **form** or **composition** of any work of art

Dog Tags: the informal name for the identification tags worn by military personnel. The tag is primarily used for the identification of dead and wounded along with providing essential basic medical information for the treatment of the latter such as blood type and history of inoculations.

Fiberglass: also known as spun glass, fiberglass is a composite of extremely fine fibers of glass

Form: a **shape**; an arrangement of parts

Function: the intended purpose of a thing or person

Line: A line is an identifiable path of a point moving in **space**. It can vary in width, direction and length.

Medium: The art material that is used in a work of art such as clay, paint or pencil. Describing more than one art medium is referred to as media. Any substance added to color to facilitate application or to achieve a desired effect.

Mixed Media: Works of art made with more than one **medium**.

Pattern: the repetition of any thing -- shapes, lines, or colors -- also called a motif, in a design; as such it is one of the principles of design.

Plastic: 1. Pliable; capable of being shaped. 2. **Synthetic** polymer substances, such as **acrylic**

Polypropylene: a heavy duty plastic used in industrial and consumer goods

PVC: polyvinyl chloride known as PVC is a widely-used plastic. The material is often used for pipelines in the water and sewer industries because of its inexpensive nature and flexibility.

Resin: any of various solid or semisolid, viscous, usually clear or translucent, yellowish or brownish, organic substances exuded from various plants and trees: natural resins are soluble in ether, alcohol, etc., and are used in varnishes and lacquers, as modifiers in synthetic plastics, etc.

Rubber: A yellowish, amorphous, elastic material obtained from the milky sap or latex of various tropical plants, especially the rubber tree that is modified and finished to make products such as electric insulation, elastic bands and belts, tires, and containers. Or, any of numerous **synthetic** elastic materials of varying chemical **composition** with properties similar to those of natural rubber

Sculpture: the art of carving, modeling, welding, or otherwise producing figurative or abstract works of art in three dimensions, as in relief, intaglio, or in the round.

Shape: an element of art, it is an enclosed space defined and determined by other art elements such as line, color, value, and texture

Spectacles: eye glasses

Stainless steel: is a common name for metal alloys that consist of 10.5% or more Chromium (Cr) and more than 50% Iron (Fe). Although it is called "stainless", a better term for it is "highly stain resistant". A somewhat dark metal, it looks bright because it reflects light. It is one of the most hygienic surfaces for the preparation of foods and very easy to clean, as its unique surface has no pores or cracks to harbor dirt, grime or bacteria. It is very attractive and requires minimal care, since it won't chip or easily rust and it takes little seasoning. It will not affect flavor, as it does not react with acidic foods during food preparation or cooking. With proper care, it has a useful life expectancy of over 100 years, and it is totally recyclable.

Symbol: a symbol is a picture or image that tells a story of what it is without using words

Symmetry: the parts of an image or object organized so that one side duplicates, or mirrors, the other. Also known as formal **balance**, its opposite is **asymmetry**.

Synthetic: formed unnaturally.

Textile: a cloth, a fabric, especially one manufactured by weaving or knitting. Fiber or yarn for weaving or knitting into cloth.

Texture: an element of art, texture is the surface quality or "feel" of an object, its smoothness, roughness, softness, etc. Textures may be actual or simulated. Actual textures you can feel while simulated textures are suggested by an artist but do not actually feel the way they look.

Thonet chairs: In 1830 Michael Thonet began his experiments with what became known as "bentwood" furniture. Michael Thonet experiments with bending steamed wood to create furniture; Thonet and his sons begin to produce innovative "bentwood" furniture, which becomes known for being practical, inexpensive and refined. The Model No. 14, which becomes Thonet's most famous chair design, is developed in the Boppard workshop in 1859. In 1859 Gebruder Thonet receives a patent for the bentwood process of manufacturing; the Thonet family has perfected assembly-line production, becoming a major manufacturer of bentwood furniture.

Thread: a light, fine, string like length of material made up of two or more fibers or strands of spun cotton, flax, silk, etc. twisted together and used in sewing

Truss: a structure comprising one or more triangular units constructed with straight slender members whose ends are connected at joints

Weld: joint formed by welding

Welding: a process that joins plastics or metal together

Weight: either the actual (physical) or the apparent (visual or compositional) heaviness of an object

Wood: the trunks or main stems of trees as suitable for architectural and other purposes; timber or lumber

