

EYE SPY

PLAYING WITH PERCEPTION

TEACHER GUIDE | Pre-Visit Materials

READY FOR ART EXPLORATION

Talk about your upcoming visit.

Have any of the students been to a museum before? Have they been to this one? What are the right ways to behave in a museum, and why do we have those rules? (Hands to yourself, no running, stay with your group, use appropriate volume, etc.) If you are participating in one of the guided school programs, your students will have the opportunity to sketch in the galleries. We recommend sketching on self-guided visits, too, to encourage close looking at objects and to serve as a memory aid for reflection after your visit.

Practice looking at and asking questions about art.

Use images from pem.org, books (Caldecott winners are a great option), or posters in your classroom. What is the subject of the artwork? How does it make students feel? What details do they notice about the main subject? The background? Other characters/elements in the piece? What colors are used? What mood does it create? What else does it remind them of? Remember, there are no wrong answers when you're interpreting art!

What is perception?

Discuss the meaning of **perception** with your students. Perception means the ability to understand, recognize, identify or be aware of something through using one's senses. Have your students ever come across something that fooled their senses? Perception can also mean the preconceived ideas we have about something. Have the students ever been in a situation that caused them to rethink something they thought they knew? Why might an artist want to make you stop and wonder in this way?



Self-Centered Mirror, 2003. Daniel Rozin. 32 mirror panes.

ACTIVITY

Have students read the poem below to talk about perspective and point of view. Who is speaking, and to whom? Show students images of Monet's paintings mentioned in this poem and talk about the history and ideas behind the Impressionist movement. Explain that Monet suffered from cataracts for the last 20 years of his life. How would this affect an Impressionist artist? Ask students to each pick one of the paintings shown in class and brainstorm new ways to describe it. How does it make them feel? What about the colors, textures, shapes and story they see within it? Make a list of words associated with this image and then refine it to write a free-verse poem.

MONET REFUSES THE OPERATION

By Lisel Mueller

Doctor, you say there are no haloes
around the streetlights in Paris
and what I see is an aberration
caused by old age, an affliction.
I tell you it has taken me all my life
to arrive at the vision of gas lamps as angels,
to soften and blur and finally banish
the edges you regret I don't see,
to learn that the line I called the horizon
does not exist and sky and water,
so long apart, are the same state of being.
Fifty-four years before I could see
Rouen cathedral is built
of parallel shafts of sun,
and now you want to restore
my youthful errors: fixed notions of top and bottom,
the illusion of three-dimensional space,
wisteria separate
from the bridge it covers.
What can I say to convince you
the Houses of Parliament dissolve
night after night to become
the fluid dream of the Thames?
I will not return to a universe
of objects that don't know each other,
as if islands were not the lost children
of one great continent. The world
is flux, and light becomes what it touches,
becomes water, lilies on water,
above and below water,
becomes lilac and mauve and yellow
and white and cerulean lamps,
small fists passing sunlight
so quickly to one another
that it would take long, streaming hair
inside my brush to catch it.
To paint the speed of light!
Our weighted shapes, these verticals,
burn to mix with air
and changes our bones, skin, clothes
to gases. Doctor,
if only you could see
how heaven pulls earth into its arms
and how infinitely the heart expands
to claim this world, blue vapor without end.

EYE SPY

PLAYING WITH PERCEPTION

TEACHER GUIDE | Pre-Visit Materials

USEFUL VOCABULARY

Use these words in class discussion, on bulletin boards and in activities!

ANIMATION — Giving movement to something; the process of making moving cartoons or films that use cartoon imagery.

APPROPRIATION — The act of borrowing imagery or forms to create something new.

BALANCE — The ways in which the elements (lines, shapes, colors, textures, etc.) of a piece are arranged. This may or may not be symmetrical, but all the pieces work together to create a whole.

CONSUMPTION — The intake of objects, images and popular ideas into one's home, body or daily life. Artists whose work deals with consumption or a consumer society are often concerned with what a thing is, how it looks and how it came into existence.

CONTEMPORARY ART — Art made after 1970 or works of art made by living artists.

CONTEXT — The location, information or time frame that informs how a work of art is viewed and what it means. Works of art often respond to a particular space or cultural climate. If the context for a work of art is changed, the way in which the work is understood may change as well.

ILLUSION — A visually misleading or perceptually altered space or object.

JUXTAPOSITION — The state or position of being placed close together or side by side, so as to permit comparison or contrast.

KINETIC — Having mechanical or moving parts that can be set in motion; art that moves.

LENTICULAR — A printed image that shows depth or motion as the viewing angle changes; of or relating to a lens.

OP ART — Short for Optical Art, a style popular in the 1960s that was based on optical principles and optical illusion. Op Art deals in complex color interactions, to the point where colors and lines seem to vibrate before the eyes.

ORIGINALITY — The quality of being new and original; not derived from something else.

PERCEPTION — The ability to understand, recognize/identify or be aware of something using one's senses. Perception can also include the ideas or expectations we have about a particular subject or object.

PERSPECTIVE — A visual formula that creates the illusion of depth and volume on a two-dimensional surface. Perspective also means a particular vantage point or view.

PICTURE-PLANE — The surface of a painting or drawing.

POP ART — Art which draws its subject matter or appearance from mass media and consumer culture. Transforming "low" culture such as advertisements, comics and tabloid photographs into the "high" culture of painting and sculpture, Pop artists of the 1950s and '60s reached a wide audience with their cool, detached depiction of contemporary times.

POSITIVE VS. NEGATIVE SPACE — Positive space is what is actually there in a piece of artwork: a line, a statue's arm, etc. Negative space is the shape or space left by what is not there — the "empty" parts of a composition that can be just as important to the overall design.

VANTAGE POINT — A point of view, or a place from which subject matter is viewed.

EYE SPY

PLAYING WITH PERCEPTION

TEACHER GUIDE | Pre-Visit Materials

RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

Don't feel confined to this list: these are just a few suggestions to get you started on your *Playing with Perception* exploration! Some books may be more or less appropriate depending on the age of your students. Even books that are "young" for your students can serve as an entertaining way to introduce a topic or engage in a conversation.

READ-ALOUDS & POETRY

Palazzo Inverso by D.B. Johnson

Duck! Rabbit! by Amy Krouse Rosenthal

Meanwhile: Pick Any Path by Jason Shiga

Mirror Mirror: A Book of Reversible Verse by Marilyn Singer

Behind the Museum Door, poems selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins

Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors by Joyce Sidman

BOOKS ON ART, CAMOUFLAGE AND OPTICAL ILLUSIONS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Where in the Wild? Camouflaged Creatures

Concealed ... and Revealed by David Schwartz

The Black Book of Colors by Menena Cottin

Trick of the Eye: Art and Illusion by Silke Vry

Optical Illusion Experiments and Optical Illusion Magic:

Visual Tricks and Amusements by Michael A. DiSpezio

Masters of Deception: Escher, Dali & the Artists of Optical Illusion by Al Seckel

Do You See What I See? The Art of Illusion by Angela Wenzel

Optical Illusions in Art by Alexandra Sturgis

Sports Illustrated Kids in Your Face 3-D:

The Best 3-D Book Ever by David Klutho

Draw 3-D (Learn to Draw) by Doug Dubosque

Drawing in 3-D by Mark Kistler

ONLINE RESOURCES

Leonardo's Perspective at the Museum of Science, Boston
www.mos.org/sln/leonardo/LeonardosPerspective.html

Art of Anamorphosis www.anamorphosis.com

Discovering Linear Perspective at The Renaissance Connection
www.renaissanceconnection.org/lesson_art_perspective.html

Just for Fun Facts about Eyes and Vision
www.eyes-and-vision.com/just-for-fun.html

Science Snacks about Perception from The Exploratorium
www.exploratorium.edu/snacks/iconperception.html

American Photography: A century of images from PBS
www.pbs.org/ktca/americanphotography/index.html

Reflection of Light www.micro.magnet.fsu.edu/optics/lightandcolor/reflection.html

Photo Tampering throughout History www.cs.dartmouth.edu/farid/research/digitaltampering

EYE SPY FEATURED ARTISTS

Betsy Connors, Somerville, MA www.betsyconnors.com

Sarah Kabot, Cleveland, OH www.sarahkabot.com

Larry Kagan, Troy, NY www.larrykagansculpture.com

Ron Labbe, Maynard, MA www.studio3d.com

Yanick Lapuh, Brookline, MA www.yanicklapuh.com

Robert Lazzarini, Brooklyn, NY www.robertlazzarini.com

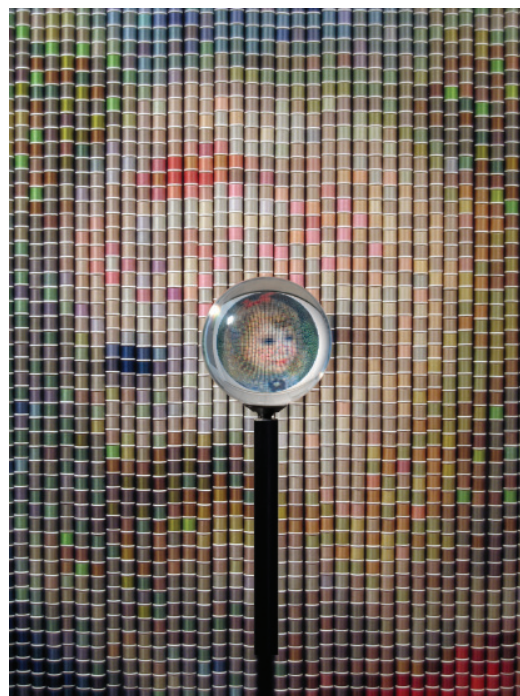
Christopher Ries, Tunkhannock, PA www.christopherries.com

Daniel Rozin, New York, NY www.smoothware.com

Rufus Butler Seder, Waltham, MA www.eyethinkinc.com

Devorah Sperber, Shokan, NY www.devorahsperber.com

Mary Temple, Brooklyn, NY www.marytemple.com



After Renoir (detail), 2006, Devorah Sperber. 5,024 spools of thread.

EYE SPY

PLAYING WITH PERCEPTION

TEACHER GUIDE | Post-Visit Materials

REFLECTING ON YOUR VISIT

What do your students remember? What inspired them?

STORIES OF SURPRISE

Have students practice language arts skills and write a response paper (1–2 pages) about their museum visit. What surprised them? What aspects of the visit made them think about art in a new way? What did they see or discuss in the museum that connects to their own lives? We always love hearing students' reactions, so please consider sending them to us!

POINT OF VIEW

Ask students to draw an object such as their house, the school yard, a car, etc. from three different points of view: their own, a mouse's, and a soaring eagle's. How would they be different? You may find it useful to tie this in with exploration of scale using tools such as Google Earth or books such as *Invisible Worlds: Exploring the Unseen*, by Piers Bizony.

FOCUS ON ARTISTS

Have your students work individually or in small groups to research one of the artists featured in *Eye Spy* (see the list of participating artists on the resources page). Have them examine the artists' statements, photo galleries and biographies, and also find at least two reviews of other exhibitions featuring their chosen artist. What motivates this artist? What media does he or she use, and does the artist concentrate in one form or dabble in many? How does this artist's work tie in with the themes of *Eye Spy*, and what do the students like best or wonder most about this artist? Students may then submit a written report or present their findings to the class.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

LITERATURE

Things Not Seen — Read and discuss the book *Things Not Seen*, by Andrew Clements. In this story of an invisible boy who befriends a blind girl at the library, two young teens cope with the clash between their parents' perceptions and their own while trying to restore Bobby's visibility.

MUSIC

What Do You Hear? What Do You See? — Students should be familiar with music that tells stories: *Peter and the Wolf*, ballad-style pop songs or storybook ballets like *The Nutcracker* or *Swan Lake*. Sometimes what we hear in a piece of music can produce a very different image than what the composer had in mind. In class or at home, have students watch the movie *Fantasia 2000* (or selected clips); then ask them to pick any piece of music they like (preferably wordless) and illustrate three moments from it based on what they "saw" when they heard their piece. This can also be used as a descriptive writing prompt.

Mood Music — Movie soundtracks are instrumental in furthering a movie's storyline. Different kinds of music can influence our emotions and our perceptions of the action on screen. Does the music sound

"IT IS THE FUNCTION OF ART TO RENEW OUR PERCEPTION.
WHAT WE ARE FAMILIAR WITH WE CEASE TO SEE."

— ANAIS NIN

foreboding, make you feel tense? Is it silly sounding? Does it help you to laugh and relax? Is it impressive, heroic sounding music that makes you think of victories and happy endings? Use silent film clips or movie trailers available online and give students an assignment to create their own soundtracks. They may do this by "sampling" music with which they are familiar, using the sound effects available in most podcasting software or composing/creating their own. If your school media or computer lab has the ability to record using an application like GarageBand or Soundbooth, students may choose to record and play back their soundtracks with accompanying images.

HISTORY

A Shifting Sense of Scale — How have human perceptions of the world changed through history? What social and technical innovations have changed how societies think and interact? As a class, talk about some of these innovations, or have students research and present their findings to the class: lenses, microscopes, telescopes, telegraphs, cameras, steam engines, telephones, automobiles, planes, satellites, the internet. What did these innovations teach us about size, distance or the organization of the universe? Were these innovations universally popular, or even accepted at the time? What changes happened in society because of these shifts in human perception?

SCIENCE

Exploring Camouflage — In a discussion of habitats and animal adaptations, talk about camouflage as a means by which insects and animals enhance their chances of survival: to find prey or to avoid becoming prey! Demonstrate the way camouflage helps population survival (www.sciencenetlinks.com/interactives/evolution.html) or try a more advanced approach to adaptations with the BBC's *Walking with Beasts* (www.abc.net.au/beasts/playground/camouflage.htm).

Assign each student a habitat (tundra, jungle, plains, etc.) and ask them to design an animal that would be well camouflaged in that habitat. What does it eat? (Or what eats it?) How does it move? Is it active in the day, at dusk or at night? What other adaptations might it have?

Play with Light and Color — Tie in your *Eye Spy* visit with a unit on the physical properties of light and color. Holographic artist Betsy Connors uses mirrors to bounce laser light around her holography photo table. Try this out in a darkened classroom with a bright flashlight and a set of reflectors such as hand mirrors, CDs or tinfoil to explore the ways light travels and is redirected. For other in-class activities on the science of vision and perception, check out the Exploratorium's educator page (www.exploratorium.edu/explore/seeing).

EYE SPY

PLAYING WITH PERCEPTION

For Chaperones

THANK YOU for agreeing to be a chaperone on this field trip to the Peabody Essex Museum! We are glad you will have the opportunity to explore with your group and share your own enthusiasm with the students. When you are in the museum, here are a few guidelines to help make the visit more pleasant for everyone.

- Please stay with students who have been assigned to you. The museum requires that K–12 students stay with their adult chaperones, regardless of the age of the student. This rule also includes our restrooms and the Museum Shop **(Please note: Only one group of students is allowed in the Shop at a time.)**
- Chaperones are responsible for the proper behavior of their group and for keeping track of each student in their group.
- Learn the names and faces of the students in your group; make sure they know your name.
- If your school group is splitting up, make sure you know the time and place that you will be rejoining the other groups.
- The theme of this visit is Eye Spy, Playing with Perception. Students will tour the interactive Art & Nature Center and the Maritime art galleries, engage in looking closely at specific art objects under the leadership of a museum docent and sketch those objects. They will also work collaboratively to identify artworks relating to specific themes. The program will end with a discussion in the final gallery or with a studio art component, depending on the teachers' selection.
- The process of inquiry and discovery is very important to developing students' skills of observation and critical thinking. Please take the opportunity to draw out students' thoughts through questions such as the ones we have provided below, rather than providing answers.

AT THE MUSEUM

Here are some questions to ask your group to help them observe and reflect on their museum visit.

What is the subject of this artwork? How can you tell?

What materials did the artist use?

How does it make you feel? Can you describe why it makes you feel that way?

What colors, shapes and patterns did the artist use?

What else does this remind you of?

What words would you use to describe this artwork?

Most of all, remember to have fun!

Thank you again, and we look forward to seeing you at the museum!

A BRIEF REMINDER OF MUSEUM BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENTS

- For your safety and the safety of your friends and the art, please keep your hands to yourself.
- Walk, do not run, in the museum.
- Please do not touch unless you are told you may.
- Use appropriate volume when speaking.
- Stay with your group.
- Follow any extra rules the docent gives you.