

THE BRANT FOUNDATION
ART STUDY CENTER

THIRD DIMENSION: INSTALLATION ART
TEACHER GUIDE
Grades: 6-12

This guide is designed to be used in conjunction with a visit to The Brant Foundation Art Study Center. The suggested projects can also be used in the classroom and can be catered to all age groups.



MISSION:

The Brant Foundation Art Study Center, located in Greenwich and New York, has a mission to promote education and appreciation of contemporary art and design, by making works available to institutions and individuals for scholarly study and examination. The Brant Foundation Art Study Center presents long-term exhibitions and extensive public programming for individuals of all ages.

The Brant Foundation strives to uphold its objective of art education advocacy by developing programs tailored to specific grade levels. These programs allow students to learn and work in a contemporary art institution through lessons designed to excite and inspire. More explicitly, because our K-12 programs are particular to individual classrooms, each group's current in-school curriculum is integrated into the docent-led tour and subsequent art project – making for a highly personalized, unique educational experience. Through immersive learning, the Foundation's activities encourage the exploration and exchange of ideas in order to develop deeper understandings of contemporary art and to help navigate today's highly visual society.



ARTISTS TO EXPLORE

Carl Andre
Dan Flavin
Mike Kelley
Karen Kilimnik
Franz West

INTRODUCTION

[*THIRD DIMENSION: Works from The Brant Foundation*](#) features twenty-five artists and over fifty artworks, all of which incorporate three-dimensional elements, allowing students to witness different styles in medium, process, and technique. This visit will focus on artists who express their views and narratives through installation art.

OBJECTIVES

- Introduce students to the artists and works within the exhibition
- Explore how artists use different approaches to installation art
- Discuss and analyze the sculptural elements of installation art
- Develop tools to respond critically to challenging works of art and appreciate multiple viewpoints

TERMS

Installation art, readymade object, medium, Minimalism, ephemeral, Performance Art, materiality, scatter art

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

1. What materials or **mediums** can a work of art be made of?
2. What is **installation art**?
3. What are some reasons and advantages for why an artist would create an installation work rather than another medium?
4. What would an artist have to consider when making **installation art**?



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CARL ANDRE (b.1935) Carl Andre was born in Quincy, Massachusetts. From 1951 to 1953, he attended the Phillips Academy, Andover, where he studied art under Patrick Morgan. After a brief enrollment in Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio, Andre earned enough money working at Boston Gear Works to travel to England and France in 1954. The following year, he joined United States Army Intelligence in North Carolina. In 1957 he settled in New York and worked as an editorial assistant for a publishing house. Shortly thereafter, he began executing wood sculptures influenced by Constantin Brancusi and by the black paintings of his friend Frank Stella.¹

DAN FLAVIN (1933-1996) From 1963, when he conceived *the diagonal of May 25, 1963 (to Constantin Brancusi)*, a single gold fluorescent lamp installed diagonally on the wall, until his death in 1996, Dan Flavin (1933-1996) produced a singularly consistent and prodigious body of work that utilized commercially available fluorescent lamps to create installations (or “situations,” as he preferred to call them) of light and color. Through these light constructions, Flavin was able to establish and redefine space.²

MIKE KELLEY (1954-2012) Mike Kelley is widely considered one of the most influential artists of our time. Irreverent but deeply informed, topical yet visionary, Kelley worked in a startling array of genres and styles, including performance, installation, drawing, painting, video, photography, sound works, text, and sculpture. He also worked on curatorial projects; collaborated with many other artists and musicians; and left a formidable body of critical and creative writing. Starting out in the late 1970s with solo performances, image/text paintings, and gallery and site-specific installations.³

KAREN KILIMNIK (b. 1955) Drawing correspondences between romantic tradition and consumer culture, Karen Kilimnik's work brings a haunting and contrary sense of beauty to contemporary art. The world of the ballet and childhood, romantic painting and pop music, icons of film and fashion, signs of witchcraft, time-travel, and murder comprise an imagery that has been culled from the fairytale and recent past into an unsettling present. In a world where the forces of nature, youth, and terror have taken awesome hold, Kilimnik's art rematerializes a quest for the romantic sublime.⁴

FRANZ WEST (1947-2012) Emerging in the early 1970s, Franz West developed a unique aesthetic that engaged equally high and low reference points and often privileged social interaction as an intrinsic component of his work. While he was known primarily as a sculptor, his body of work incorporated drawing, collage, video, and installation, using papier-mâché, furniture, cardboard, plaster, found imagery, and other diverse materials. By playfully manipulating everyday materials and imagery in novel ways, he created objects that serve to redefine art as a social experience, calling attention to the way in which art is presented to the public, and how viewers interact with works of art and with each other.⁵

¹ <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/carl-andre>

² <https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/dan-flavin/biography>

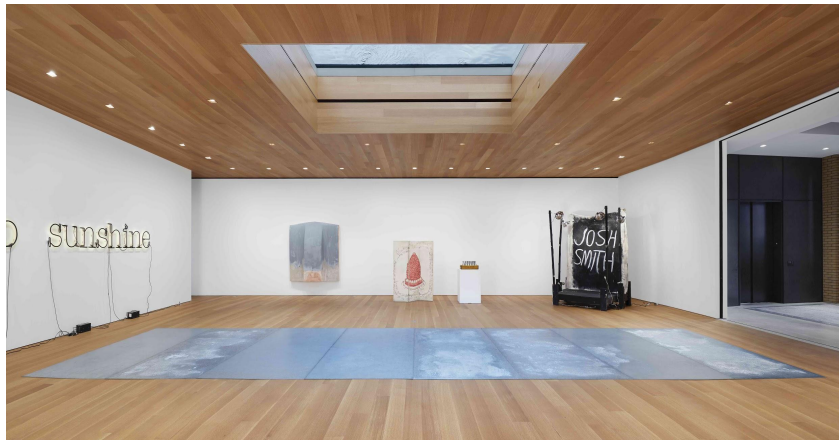
³ <https://mikekelleyfoundation.org/mike-kelley/biography>

⁴ <https://www.303gallery.com/artists/karen-kilimnik/biography>

⁵ <https://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/franz-west/biography>



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CARL ANDRE, *8 Shoeing Smith, Australia* (1973), Galvanized steel sheet; 8 units
Each: 48 x 96 in., Overall: 96 x 384 in.

Carl Andre is a pioneering sculptor in the **Minimalism** art movement. He has famously said, “art is the exclusion of the unnecessary,” and this statement rings true throughout his artistic career. Andre was exposed to industrial design and pre-made metals during his time working at the Pennsylvania Railroad between 1960 and 1964, and this experience allowed him to make a connection between his own life and the materials used in his artistic practice. These materials, such as steel, copper, zinc, and lead, are considered found or premade objects, also known as **readymade** objects.

This piece is displayed in its original 1973 configuration-eight sheets of galvanized steel placed closely together with no spacing in between. From 1966 to the present, Andre considered his horizontal ground works as a manifestation of “place” or “sculpture as place,” using various mediums to address material, structure, and site. Because Andre’s sculptures create an environment, viewers are typically invited to Andre invites viewers to interact with the sculptures, such as walking across the surface. This level of sensory engagement makes the viewer question the relationship with sculpture and their traditional notion of interacting with a work of art.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is **Minimalism**?
- How does the color, shape, materials, and composition of the work relate to **Minimalism**?
- What do you think it means to have an installation that can be changed each time it is shown?
- What is the relationship between the artwork and the space it is in?
- If you were allowed to walk on this work, how would it change your experience of only viewing it?
- Would you display this work differently if given the chance? Why or why not?



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MIKE KELLEY, *Arena #7* (1990), Found stuffed animals, wood, and blanket, 11 ½ x 53 x 49 in.

Arena #7 is an assemblage of used stuffed animals and a blanket sourced from various thrift stores. The worn condition of these toys suggest a story of abandonment by their previous owners and, based on their original function, are meant to symbolize childhood.

This work contains five earth-toned stuffed animals which, upon closer examination, reveal years' worth of stains and filth. These are found animals, which each enter Kelley's Arena with their own complex histories of ownership and—ultimately—rejection. The expressions on their faces and their physical positions around the tattered blanket ask viewers to consider the situation in which they are placed: is this a formal meeting or a social gathering?

The *Arena* series is meant to form a feeling between the subject (viewer) and the objects displayed. Kelley has said that he finds stuffed animals funny to work with because people project their own narratives upon them and see the creatures not as inanimate representations, but as humanlike.⁶ The fact that they have been used and discarded betrays the ideal of childhood purity and exposes this notion as simply a fantasy of adulthood.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What **medium** is the artist using this work?
- What condition are these stuffed animals in?
- What would change in this piece if the stuffed animals were new?
- Is this work permanent, temporary, or **ephemeral**? Does time play a role in this piece?
- How do you think this affects this piece?
- While there are a number of artworks in this room that are composed of different materials, how is Kelley's work different?

⁶ Cary Levine, *Mike Kelley: Arenas* (NYC: Skarstedt, 2011).



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KAREN KILIMNIK *Switzerland, the Pink Panther & Peter Sellers & Boris & Natasha & Gelsey Kirkland in Siberia* (1991)

LET'S LOOK: Take a few minutes to view this work and all the materials included.

Karen Kilimnik's **installation art** employs a mixture of imagery, objects, and nostalgia and belongs to the movement of **scatter art**. In her installations, the artist presents items from pop culture with a whimsical, fairy tale twist that fuels the imagination of the viewer, allowing them to create their own narrative based on the connections they make with the objects she uses. This piece is made from several everyday objects. The contents are organized thematically, but are meant to display the interplay between art, popular culture, and the romanticism of century old art.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What **readymade objects** do you see?
- What poses and expressions do the stuffed animals have?
- Where might this scene take place-season, location? What clues tell you so?
- What effect does the snow and ballet slippers have on the other objects included in this piece?
- Why do you think the artist placed all these objects and materials together?
- If you were to create a narrative behind this work, what would it be?
- How is this work different from the Carl Andre and Mike Kelley artworks? How is it similar?



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FRANZ WEST, *Neurose* (1994), 2 panels of aluminum, plaster and dispersion paint, 2 Chaises lounges of iron, rubber and fabric, Dimensions: Panel 1: 33 ½ x 82 ⅝ x 7 ⅞ in., Panel 2: 34 ¼ x 79 ⅞ x 5 ⅞ in.
Chaises lounges: 36 ¼ x 55 ½ x 26 in. each

Franz West was an Austrian artist whose work was first influenced by **Performance Art** of the 1960's and 70's. West's work had an extreme variation of abstract and interactive sculpture, furniture, and collage that engages the viewer, no matter the medium. In the 1970s, West began creating his "Adaptives", objects that only became art when interacted with. By the mid-1980s, West was making works that combined sculpture and furniture, creating chairs and sofas where viewers could relax, physically interact with the work, and discuss the artwork. Franz West's sculpture and installation works often fused different mediums together and contain a playful approach both in their aesthetic and meaning.

West was known to be extremely influenced by his country's culture and the prominent Austrian figures. This work is inspired by the atmosphere of a therapist's office, more specifically Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, with the idea of reclining on a couch and interpreting your thoughts. Furthermore, *Neurose* is the Portuguese word for Neurosis, a term redefined by Freud's theories on the disorder.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What kind of **mediums** are being used?
- What adjectives can you think of to describe this work?
- How is this work classified as **installation art**?
- Do you see this installation as more focused on painted or sculptural elements?
- What are the contrasting textures/**materiality** in this work?
- What do you think was the artist's intention in making this work?
- If you could interact with this work, how would you?



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DAN FLAVIN, *alternate diagonals of March 2, 1964 (to Don Judd)* (1964) , Daylight fluorescent light, 12 ft. diagonal

In 1963, Flavin began to work with fluorescent tubes, his signature medium. Like many artists in this exhibition, Flavin used commercially made, or **readymade**, objects to explore the potential of banal material. The colors and lengths of all the fluorescent tubes Flavin used for his work were determined by what was available in stores at that time. Working with this prefabricated medium enabled Flavin to focus on color and light itself, and how it would transform or redefine the exhibition space. Flavin did not consider his works to be sculptures, because they consist not only of the fluorescent tube, but also of the space illuminated by the light. Instead, he referred to his work as 'situations'.⁷

"I knew that the actual space of a room could be broken down and played with by planting illusions of real light (electric light) at crucial junctures in the room's composition." -Dan Flavin

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- Where would we normally see this **readymade object**?
- How has the artist transformed this object into a work of art?
- What do you think the artist's intentions are in making this work?
- How does this work engage with the space?
- How is this similar to the previous works we focused on? How is it different?
- Why does Flavin dub his work as 'situations'?

⁷ Rainer Fuchs, Karola Kraus, Stefan Neuner, Juliane Rebentisch, Roland Wäspe, *Dan Flavin* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2013).



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PROJECT

In this project, students will be asked to think about and create their own **installation art**. Students will be divided into various groups and work together as a team to make their own installation artwork. Each group will select items provided by the Foundation, or found everyday objects in the classroom/home, and will create a narrative with these objects, while also keeping in mind the space their art will inhabit.

MATERIALS

- Found objects (e.g. plastic bottles, toys, books, stuffed animals, hangers, knick knacks)
- Various materials (e.g. pipe cleaners, cellophane, felt)

ACTIVITY

Students will be provided with various items, such as the ones mentioned above in the *Materials* section. Students are not allowed to use personal objects within their installation work, but may draw a preliminary sketch of their arrangement before their finalized installation, which will be presented to their classmates. Students will have thirty minutes to complete their installation.

1. Divide students into groups of 3 or 4
2. Each group will select 4-5 items to create their installation piece.
3. When completed, each group will present their work to their classmates, discussing the title of their work and the thematic focus of their installation.



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QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the title of work?
2. What is the narrative behind your piece?
3. How does the space help define your artwork? Does it compliment or contrast with your installation?
4. What were the challenges and successes you faced making your work?

EXHIBITION REFLECTION

1. What did you learn from this exhibition?
2. What artworks or techniques intrigued you? Why?
3. Did any of the artworks change your ideas about what might be considered art?

KEY TERMS

Medium: Refers to the materials used to create an artwork.

Installation Art: An art movement that emerged in the 1960's and is characterized by art works which are made for a specific space and only exist for the duration of its display.

Minimalism: An art movement beginning in the 1960's that focused more on the meaning and experience of art through simple forms, uniformed elements, and repetition rather than the traditional aesthetics of painting and sculpture.

Readymade Object: A term used to describe an industrial or mass produced object exhibited as an artwork with a whole new context and meaning that differs from its original function.

Ephemeral: A material lasting for a short period of time, something that is not meant to last forever.

Scatter Art: This style of art surfaced in the 1980's and is a variation of installation art, consisting of randomly collected materials that have aesthetic meaning only by virtue of their chance arrangement.

Performance Art: A type of artwork that includes an event, performance, or physical engagement as the subject and the medium of the art.

Materiality: A focus on the physical qualities of the material as a main part of the art.

LEARNING STANDARDS

The project and lesson within this teacher guide adhere to the national and state learning standards for the arts.

New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards in the Arts

<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/arts>

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts

<https://www.weteachnyc.org/resources/resource/visual-arts-blueprint-for-teaching-and-learning-1/>



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NATIONAL CORE ART STANDARDS (VISUAL ARTS)

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

6TH VA:Cr1.1.6a Combine concepts collaboratively to generate innovative ideas for creating art.

6TH VA:Cr1.2.6a Formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.

7TH VA:Cr1.1.7a Apply methods to overcome creative blocks.

7TH VA:Cr1.2.7a Develop criteria to guide making a work of art or design to meet an identified goal.

8TH VA:Cr1.1.8a Document early stages of the creative process visually and/or verbally in traditional or new media.

8TH VA:Cr1.2.8a Collaboratively shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art and design.

HS Proficient VA:Cr1.1.1a Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

HS Proficient VA:Cr1.2.1a Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

HS Accomplished VA:Cr1.1.1a Individually or collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.

HS Accomplished VA:Cr1.2.1a Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

HS Advanced VA:Cr1.1.1a Visualize and hypothesize to generate plans for ideas and directions for creating art and design that can affect social change.

HS Advanced VA:Cr1.2.1a Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea, or concept.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work. (6TH-Advanced)

6TH VA:Cr2.1.6a Demonstrate openness in trying new ideas, materials, methods, and approaches in making works of art and design

6TH VA:Cr2.3.6a Design or redesign objects, places, or systems that meet the identified needs of diverse users.

7TH VA:Cr2.1.7a Demonstrate persistence in developing skills with various materials, methods, and approaches in creating works of art or design.

7TH VA:Cr2.3.7a Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce a work of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

8TH VA:Cr2.1.8a Demonstrate willingness to experiment, innovate, and take risks to pursue ideas, forms, and meanings that emerge in the process of artmaking or designing.

8TH VA:Cr2.3.8a Select, organize, and design images and words to make visually clear and compelling presentations.

HS Proficient VA:Cr2.1.1a Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.

HS Proficient VA:Cr2.3.1a Collaboratively develop a proposal for an installation, artwork, or space design that transforms the perception and experience of a particular place.

HS Accomplished VA:Cr2.1.1a Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

HS Accomplished VA:Cr2.3.1a Redesign an object, system, place, or design in response to contemporary issues

HS Advanced VA:Cr2.1.1a Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.



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HS Advanced VA:Cr2.3.IIIa Demonstrate in works of art or design how visual and material culture defines, shapes, enhances, inhibits, and/or empowers people's lives.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

6TH VA:Cr3.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Cr3.1.IIIa.

Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, & interpret artistic work for presentation.

8TH VA:Pr4.1.8a-HS Advanced VA:Pr4.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

6TH VA:Pr5.1.6a-HS Accomplished VA:Pr5.1.IIa

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

6TH VA:Pr6.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Pr6.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

6TH VA:Re.7.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Re.7.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

6TH VA:Re8.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Re8.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

6TH VA:Re9.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Re9.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

6TH VA:Cn10.1.6a-HS Advanced VA:Cn10.1.IIIa

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

6TH VA:Cn11.1.6a-8TH VA:Cn11.1.8a

COMMON CORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.3-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.5-CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5

