Joslyn Art Museum
Comprehensive Study Lesson Plan

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AMERICAN ARTISTS

Focus: Martin Puryear and Self

Objectives – Students will:
• Learn how to look at art critically and consider its various interpretations.
• Discover the styles Minimalism and Post-Minimalism and their similar, yet unique characteristics.
• Create a stop motion animation movie using Martin Puryear's Self.
• Explore what inspired Puryear in his work from African craft to cabinetry to yurts.

Common Core Standards available on online version at www.joslyn.org/education/teachers/thursdays-for-teachers

Resources: Check out the Teacher Support Materials online, and http://www.joslyn.org/education/teachers for additional resources

Suggested Materials: Martin Puryear teaching poster, Self images, various Puryear sculpture images, post-it notes, various decorative papers, markers, single-hole punches, scissors, camera stand, tag board, natural materials for sculptures, tracing paper, sea glass and/or driftwood

Vocabulary: carpentry, cooper, craft, erosion, interpretation, joiner, Minimalist, organic, Post-Minimalist, semi-nomadic, wheel right, yurt

Procedure:
• Engage: Self. Show students an image of Martin Puryear's Self. Have students write their interpretations on post-it notes. Share them and post around the image.

• Art Talk: Minimalism vs. Post-Minimalism. Talk about the how Minimalist artists created art that "removed the hand" from the piece. Why did Puryear reject it? Discuss his quote "I looked at it, I tasted it, and I spat it back out." Consider how Post-Minimalism reintroduces natural materials and personal narrative to sculpture. Refer to the teaching poster for additional information.

• History: Who is Martin Puryear, and what is his story? Refer to the gallery experience led by Littleton Alston at the October 2013 Thursdays for Teachers as well as the teaching poster and additional information in Teacher Support Materials.

• Aesthetics: "Listen to but do not dominate the wood." This advice was given to Puryear from the renowned cabinet maker James Krenov. Puryear became highly interested in carpenter's craft and being sensitive to the process of woodworking. He first was interested in carpentry when introduced to traditional African craft while in the Peace Corps at Sierra Leone. Looking at Self and more sculptures by Puryear, discuss how these influences may be seen in his works.
• **Production:** I looked at it, I tasted it, and I animated it. Use stop motion animation to study Puryear’s *Self*. Refer to the workshop led by Becky Hermann and Peg Reinecke at the October 2013 Thursdays for Teachers.

• **Close:** Show the students Puryear’s *Self* again. Have them write down what they think of on a different color of post-it note to share their thoughts with the class. How did the interpretations change? Did any stay the same?

**Extensions:**
- **Cultural Connections:** Discuss Puryear’s interest in the yurt, a collapsible, wooden dwelling used by semi-nomadic tribes in Central Asia, as inspiration for his work. Have students research other types of mobile dwellings from other cultures. Create a collage – real or virtual – of these structures including bits of text to describe them.

- **Fine Arts:** Inspired Sculpture. Using the collages from Cultural Connections, have students sketch out sculptures that reflect the mobile dwelling they researched. Then using natural materials, create an organic sculpture. Advise students to carefully craft their artwork spending time shaping it.

- **Language Arts:** Minimalism vs. Post-Minimalism part 2. Students should select one style and write a one page persuasive essay why their style is a stronger form of art (or other argument you select). Then take the one page and narrow it down to 55 words. Final step is a six-word description. They should only share their thoughts with students who selected the same style before you tell them they must switch to the other style and do the project in reverse. (This is geared for high school students).

- **Math:** Using images of *Self* from various angles, students should trace them to get an understanding of the shape in 3-D. *Self* is hollow so have students imagine and draw out what they think the structure below the surface looks like. Highlight points where more support is needed.

- **Science:** Erosion. One of the interpretations of *Self* is that it can appear that its surface has been eroded. Talk about the process of erosion using sea glass and driftwood as examples.