

LANDSCAPE CONFECTION

Pre-Visit Activities for Elementary School Students

These pre-visit activities will help prepare your students for their museum visit to see the exhibition *Landscape Confection*. *Landscape Confection* showcases new and intriguing works that expand the boundaries of landscape painting. The exhibition features more than 50 imagined landscapes portrayed in stitched fabric, beads, wax, metal, silk flowers, and other surprising materials. *Landscape Confection* brings together 13 contemporary artists from countries around the world including England, Switzerland, France, Australia, India, Germany, and the United States.

Your museum visit and pre-visit activities support interdisciplinary learning by connecting Visual Arts and Language Arts, and address the California State Content Standards in the Visual Arts.

- 1.0 Artistic Perception
- 2.0 Creative Expression
- 3.0 Historical and Cultural Content
- 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing
- 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Feel free to adapt these activities according to your classroom needs.

Orange

COUNTY
MUSEUM
OF ART

850 San Clemente Drive Newport Beach CA 92660 949-759-1122 www.ocma.net

Learning Objectives:

Students will make discoveries about works of art from the exhibition, *Landscape Confection*, by looking closely and using their observations to derive meaning. Students will use descriptive vocabulary to discuss works of art, and learn what to expect when they visit the museum.

Featured Artist:

Lisa Sanditz, *49th and Clarke Street Park, Oakland, California, 2003*



Materials:

Transparency of *49th and Clarke Street Park, Oakland, California*

Overhead projector

Paper

Pencils

Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Discuss:

Ask your students if they collect anything. What do you collect? Why do you collect these things? How do you display and care for your collection? Why do you think a museum collects certain objects? Ask your students what they think they will see when they visit the Orange County Museum of Art. What types of art do you think you will see? (Sculpture, painting, drawing, etc.) Ask your students why it is important not to touch anything at the museum.

Explain that a museum collects beautiful, valuable, fragile, historical, and thought-provoking objects, such as artworks like painting and sculpture. A museum cares for these objects, and shares them with people who come to visit their exhibitions. An **exhibition** is a display of objects that have something in common. When we visit the Orange County Museum of Art, we are going to see an exhibition of works of art by thirteen **contemporary** (living) artists from all over the world. These artists use all sorts of different materials. Some use paint, others use fabric and thread, some use beads, some use silk flowers, some use little balls of wax. But the one thing these artists all have in common is that they all create landscapes. Does anyone know what a landscape is? A **landscape** is a view of the outdoors. Each artist shows his or her personal view of the world around them. The exhibition is called *Landscape Confection* because some of the artworks look so delicious and fun you want to eat them like candy! We can't really eat them, but we can look at them and talk about them and try to discover what the artists want to tell us about the world.

Look:

Ask students to take out a pencil and piece of paper. Project the transparency provided. Tell your students that this is a landscape by the artist Lisa Sanditz. This is one of the artworks in the exhibition *Landscape Confection*.

Ask students to look closely at the landscape and make a list of everything they see. Tell them to search for details - like detectives searching for clues! Students should write quietly for 2 minutes or more. Next ask students to write a second list of everything they don't see in the landscape. As they write, remind students that artists make choices about what to put in, and what to leave out. Looking at these choices helps us understand the artist's **intent**, or the ideas they want to communicate.

When students are finished writing, ask each student in the class to share one thing they saw. Can they think of an adjective to describe their finding? Next, ask for volunteers to share something they didn't see. Ask if this is a natural or **urban** (city) environment? What things in the landscape are natural? What are man-made? Where are all the people? What time of day do you think it is?

This landscape painting isn't realistic—it doesn't look exactly like things do in the real world. Instead, it is an abstraction of the real landscape. The word **abstract** means to simplify. Even though the painting doesn't look real, can you imagine walking around in it? Do you see space in the painting? What looks farthest away from us? What looks closest?

The artist created a sense of space by positioning objects that should appear closer to us at the bottom of the painting in the **foreground**, and far away objects at the top, in the **background**. She also used size to help describe which items were closer or farther away, and overlapping to describe which objects were in front of each other.

In the foreground of this landscape we see a tree and a McDonald's sign. How does the artist make them appear closer to us?

- They seem larger than other objects. Things that seem closer are greater in size while things that are far away appear smaller. Compare the tree to the tiny car.
- They overlap other objects. We can tell that things are farther away because they are behind objects.

Where are we located in relation to the landscape? What is our point of view? Are we looking down or up at things? The artist has given us a **birds-eye perspective**, as though we are above the urban landscape looking down.

Write:

Ask students to write a first person narrative from the point of view of the person looking down on this landscape. Where are they? How did they get up here? What happened just before this moment? What does this person notice from their perspective? What will happen next?

Create:

Inspired by Lisa Sanditz, ask your students to create a fantastical landscape based on their school environment. Sanditz has combined urban elements with abstract, natural forms. Ask your students to close their eyes and imagine what their school looks like early in the morning, before anyone arrives. Next, imagine they are flying above their school - How might it look different from this point of view? Using birds-eye perspective, ask students to draw a picture of their school. Distribute markers, crayons or colored pencils. Tell students they can use bright, expressive colors and abstract shapes to depict their school, like Lisa Sanditz. Try overlapping shapes to create space. Draw things in the foreground, and some things in the background. Use variations in size to create a sense of depth. This is a fantastical depiction of their school, so anything goes!

Vocabulary

- Exhibition
- Contemporary
- Landscape
- Intent
- Urban
- Abstract
- Foreground
- Background
- Birds-eye perspective



Photo of Lisa Sanditz.

Who is Lisa Sanditz?

Lisa Sanditz was born in 1973 in St. Louis, Missouri. She lives and works in New York. Lisa Sanditz is interested in capturing the peculiarities of the American landscape as it exists today. Using a color palette derived from "cheap house paints," she creates dense, tapestry-like landscapes that combine aspects of urban and suburban space seamlessly together. Some of her paintings examine the relationship of people to the natural environment in the context of outdoor recreational activities such as tailgate parties, sports events, camping, and backyard cookouts. Others focus on such "pseudolandscapes" as shopping malls, freeways, golf courses, or theme parks. The catch is that a typical Sanditz landscape is depopulated, imbuing her works with a distinct sense of melancholia despite their high-spirited color schemes. They depict a world of fun-filled group activities minus the groups, where everything is in place except for the people.