



## Resource Menu: Visual Arts

Need help finding what you are looking for? Take a look at our Resource Menus; an annotated list of VMFA resources organized by subject area. Here is a curated menu of easily accessible selected offerings relating to Visual Arts.

**Grade Level:** Adult, College, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12, Grades K-2

**Subject Area:** African American, Collaboration, Communication, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Fine Arts, History and Social Science, Math, Visual Arts

**Activity Type:** Resource Menu

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The VMFA website offers many resources to support learners and teachers of all ages and many disciplines. Many are accessible through VMFA's [LEARN](#) website.

There are also valuable offerings on other sections of the website. This annotated list will help you locate the best matches for Visual Arts teachers.

## ART-MAKING PROMPTS

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### **Beyond the Sketch**

Beyond the Sketch activities are art-making challenges designed to help your students investigate their own artistic practice by engaging with works in the VMFA collection. These creative prompts help students learn directly from works of art through a thoughtful analysis of the artist's aesthetic approach and process. They will also find opportunities to practice creative thinking and problem solving by observing, changing, and/or responding to the selected works.

Enrich the experience by asking students to share their work on the virtual platform of your choice (Google Jam, Padlet, Flipgrid, etc.).

[Beyond the Sketch: The Moody Blues](#) (Focus on Expressiveness/Mood)

[Beyond the Sketch: Driven to Abstraction](#) (Focus on Composition)

[Beyond the Sketch: What's Your Angle?](#) (Focus on Figure Drawing and Developing a Scene)

[Beyond the Sketch: Figure It Out](#) (Focus on Geometric Forms, Perspective, Scale, Spatial Perception)

[Beyond the Sketch: Give It a Whorl!](#) (Focus on Design and Idea Generation)

### **From Flat Shapes to 3-D Constructions: Scaffolding Opportunities**

To help your students build their understanding of shape and form, try selecting activities from the three sets of related VMFA resources described below. Each set of activities is scaffolded to move from simple to more complex activities. Pick and choose the best combination of lessons for your classroom.

**Note:** Works of art are sometimes rotated off view. If you find a work of art has gone off view, challenge your class to choose another work from the same gallery that relates to shapes and construction.

The *Get into Shape* gallery hunt and associated activities in *Exploring Shape: Squares, Rectangles, Circles, and More* focus on flat geometric and organic shapes.

The *Fold It, Bend It, Shape It* gallery hunt and *Fold It!* activities leave “flat land” to investigate and make folded shapes. (Math ideas included!)

The *Build It!* gallery hunt and associated activities in *Constructing Art: Catching the Viewer’s Eye* examine 3-D structures and offer hands-on construction challenges.

#### [GET INTO SHAPE GALLERY HUNT](#)

#### [EXPLORING SHAPE: SQUARES, RECTANGLES, CIRCLES, AND MORE!](#)

#### [FOLD IT, BEND IT, SHAPE IT! GALLERY HUNT](#)

#### [FOLD IT! CREATE 3-D WORKS OF ART](#)

#### [BUILD IT GALLERY HUNT](#)

#### [CONSTRUCTING ART: CATCHING THE VIEWER’S EYE](#)

### **Make Art Anywhere and Anytime**

These resources were created during the pandemic when art teachers and students had difficulty making sure that everyone had supplies. The focus of these activities is on making things with ordinary household items, For example, learn how to make glue from flour, salt, and water, and paint from coffee, tea, and carrots. The activities were also designed to be student and/or parent facing.

#### [ELEMENTARY LEVEL](#)

#### [SECONDARY LEVEL](#)

### **Printmaking Methods**

**ART IN DEPTH: PRINTMAKING METHODS:** This Art in Depth Resource highlights six printmaking methods used by artists in Britain at the turn of the 20th century. The selections of techniques are drawn from the body of work produced by Sir Frank Short (1857-1945).

After seeing a print by the influential landscapist J. M. W. Turner, Short abandoned his career in engineering to pursue printmaking. Aided by his engineering mindset, he mastered six different printmaking methods: etching, drypoint, soft-ground etching, lithography, and the languishing traditions of mezzotint and aquatint.

## ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

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The VMFA Learn site offers 34 [ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES](#) that can be easily paired with any lesson plan or assignment to promote active learning. To see all 34, use the drop-down menu and select “Engagement Activity.”

Many of these activities have been adapted from routines developed by “Artful Thinking by Project Zero,” Harvard University (used under CC BY-NC 4.0). Others have been adapted from VMFA interactive gallery exercises.

There are downloadable worksheets for each activity. Five activities have been translated in Spanish. *Writing to Learn: Sensory Inventory* is also available in French and German.

Each activity fits within one of the following categories:

- Sketching to Learn
- Writing to Learn
- Moving to Learn
- Looking to Learn
- Interactive Exercise

## HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

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The VMFA Learn site offers [HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES](#). Many of these were developed for VMFA Family Days, which are attended by thousands of visitors—so these activities can be done quickly and often rely on downloadable templates. These can be used as quick lead-ins to a more complex lesson or challenge.

For example, the *Take & Make: Confetti Glass* activity provides a template inspired by Dale Chihuly's *macchia* to color. You could use this to introduce a unit on color by asking them to create one with complementary colors and another with analogous colors. These activities would also be parent-friendly for students working at home. No printer at home? Students could make their own templates.

There are also quite a few videos and activities in this section developed and produced by VMFA's Early Childhood team. These would be excellent for the younger siblings of the students you teach. Look for the tags *Little Hands Create* and *Little Eyes Look*.

(You can also locate these using the Age Level drop-down menu and choosing “Early Childhood.”)

Don't miss this Hands-on Activity that uses five works of art as prompts for sidewalk chalk art! It's open-ended and offers a great exploration of mark making.

**[HANDS ON ACTIVITY: CHALK IT UP!](#)** Use these artworks for inspiration and decorate a sidewalk near you! We want to see your chalk creations! Share your drawing on social media and tag it #VMFAchalkitup.

**[NARRATIVE ART: WHAT IS YOUR STORY](#)**: This activity, categorized as both a hands-on activity and a lesson concept, offers a scaffolded process with hand-outs for creating a personal graphic novel.

Shared narratives can be found in art from many cultures and throughout time. Use this resource to encourage students to explore diverse narratives, discover their own personal narrative, and express that

narrative through their own work of art.

## HANDS-ON ART-MAKING VIDEO RESOURCES

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**[COLLAGE TECHNIQUES](#)**: Join VMFA Youth Studio Educator, Sandi Wiley, for this Virtual Arts Sparks on creating a found object collage (geared toward ages 5-12). In this video, be inspired by artists that include unique items and materials in their art as you create your own collage using objects found in your own home. For more inspiration, take a closer look at some collages in VMFA's permanent collection.

**[VIRTUAL ART SPARKS: STILL LIFE PAINTING](#)**: Join VMFA Youth Studio Educator, Tiffany Glass Ferreira, for this Virtual Arts Sparks on creating a still life painting (geared toward ages 5-12). In this video, learn techniques to help you paint your own colorful still life composition. (6:13)

### **VMFA How-to WATERCOLOR Videos**

**[Watercolor Techniques: The Basics \(Part 1\)](#)**: Learn watercolor techniques with Studio School instructor Dawn Flores. Techniques covered include wet on wet, wet on dry, and glazing. Watch the instructor paint a watermelon and mango using these basic techniques. (11:42)

**[Watercolor Techniques: Mixing & Layering \(Part 2\)](#)**: Learn watercolor techniques with Studio School instructor Dawn Flores. The instructor creates a color wheel using only red, yellow and blue, and then makes a color chart to illustrate glazing techniques and layering. (11:39)

**[Watercolor Techniques: Experimentation \(Part 3\)](#)**: Learn watercolor techniques with Studio School instructor Dawn Flores. The instructor investigates a variety of experimental watercolor techniques to add to your painting knowledge. (12:57)

**[Watercolor Techniques: Plein Air Painting \(Part 4\)](#)**: Join Studio School instructor Dawn Flores as she paints a James River scene at the Pony Pasture in Richmond, Virginia. Learn step-by-step techniques of Plein Air watercolor painting in this informative video. (13: 23)

**[Watercolor Tips for Teens: Lifting & Using Salt Art Activity](#)**: Join VMFA's Youth Studio Educator, Caroline Velazquez, for a brief tutorial on watercolor painting (suitable for all ages). In this video, you can explore lifting techniques and using salt to create interesting textures, inspired by the Dugald Stewart Walker painting *The Fairy Ring*. (6:28)

**[Watercolor Tips for Teens: Glaze & Gradation Art Activity](#)**: Join VMFA's Youth Studio Educator, Caroline Velazquez, for a brief tutorial on watercolor painting (suitable for all ages). In this video, you can explore grazing and gradation techniques to create value, inspired by the Eugène Delacroix watercolor painting, *Narcissus*. (8:20)

## EXPLORING ARTWORK

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**[COLLECTION STORIES](#)** VMFA's collection of nearly 50,000 objects gives rise to rich connections and opportunities for investigation. Explore VMFA's vast collection and world-class exhibitions in depth through Collection Stories. Stories take inspiration from the rich history and connections discovered through the artists and artwork in the permanent collection, temporary special exhibitions, collectors, and archival research. This link takes you to over a dozen collection stories currently available for use in your classroom.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN-RELATED EXHIBITION RESOURCES

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**[Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop](#)**: This link takes you to the online presentation of this exhibition, which opened at VMFA on Feb 1, 2020. Featured videos include a virtual tour of the exhibition.

*Working Together* features more than 150 photographs by Richmond-born artist Louis Draper and other members of the Kamoinge Workshop, a collective of ground-breaking African American photographers he helped found in 1963.

**LAYERS OF LOUIS**: This digital resource was developed by Museum Leaders in Training (M.LiT) program participants to complement VMFA's exhibition *Working Together: Louis Draper and the Kamoinge Workshop*. The timeline focuses on events during and surrounding Louis Draper's life.

**LOUIS H. DRAPER ARCHIVE PORTAL**: This archive consists of more than 6,600 items (representing more than 50,000 images), including photographs, negatives, contact sheets, slides, computer disks, audiovisual materials, and camera equipment.

**BEUFORD SMITH ARCHIVE**: Smith joined the Kamoinge Workshop in 1965. He was the founder and chief photo editor of the *Black Photographers Annual*.

**THE BLACK PHOTOGRAPHERS ANNUAL**: From 1973 to 1980, a group of African American artists in New York City published The Black Photographers Annual. The idea emerged from the collective of African American photographers known as the Kamoinge Workshop (Kamoinge, from the Kikuyu language of Kenya, means "to work together"). The forty-nine artists featured in the books, however, far exceeded the boundaries of the collective.

**[The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse](#)**: This link takes you to online information about this exhibition, which was featured at VMFA from May 22 to September 6, 2021.

**[Whitfield Lovell: Passages](#)** Visit the exhibition page for this special exhibition which visited VMFA in summer 2023. Scroll down to Exhibition Resources on the right hand side of the page to find supporting educational resources that consider Whitfield Lovell's evocative multisensory installations, conté drawings, and assemblages.

**[Benjamin Wigfall and Communications Village](#)** Visit the exhibition page for this special exhibition shown at VMFA in summer 2023. Scroll down to Exhibition Resources on the right hand side of the page to find supporting educational resources that consider the life and legacy of Richmond native Benjamin Wigfall

## DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES: CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING

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Interactive Exercises: These guided looking help students to access creative and critical thinking to interpret an artwork in VMFA's collection. Each exercise prompts students to examine a single work of art, document the ideas it presents to them, and consider how their thoughts connect with what we know about the artist's own ideas and intentions.

- [Interactive Exercise | SIFT Dismal Swamp Canal](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Step in, Step Out, Step Back Marian Anderson](#)

- [Interactive Exercise | Observational Poetry \*Walking Man\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Think, Puzzle, Explore \*Nataraja\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Step In, Step Out, Step Back \*Army Teamsters\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Choose, Consider, Connect](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Explanation Game \*Map: Commonwealth Project\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Caption It!](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Beyond the Frame \*Scene from the Romance of Amadis de Gaule\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | DJ the Artwork \*Stadia III\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Explanation Game \*Pitcher\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Thought Ladder suite \*Mémoire\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Clay, Paper, Scissors! \*Formulation:Articulation\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Observational Poetry](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Contemplation Exploration](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | SIFT \*Progress\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Thought Ladder \*Page from a Harivamsa Manuscript\*](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Before and After](#)
- [Interactive Exercise | Be the Artist \*Tabard\*](#)

**LESSON CONCEPT: WHY LOOK AT ART:** Students practice engaging with art, making meaning from that interaction, and considering how art can connect us to people and ideas across time and place. Use this before a museum visit to set the stage for a rich in-gallery experience.

**CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING:** Use these prompts after your Evans Distance Learning Program (Evans DLP) session or museum visit to activate creative, critical, and reflective thinking.

**WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING:** Use these prompts after your Evans Distance Learning Program (Evans DLP) session or museum visit to activate creative, critical, and reflective thinking.

**ARTISTRY AND GEOMETRY PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING:** The walls of VMFA display art from all over the world. In some of the museum spaces, visitors can experience large works of art that take up most of the wall. Compare the use of geometry in the pieces suggested in this activity. Imagine what might happen if artists Esther Mahlangu and Sol LeWitt were to meet at VMFA.

**EUROPE: AFTER THE REFORMATION: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**

**PORTRAITS FROM A NEW REPUBLIC: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**

**AMERICA'S MID-19TH CENTURY LANDSCAPE: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**

**INDIA: MUGHAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**

**AFRICA ENCOUNTERS: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**

**ART UP TO CODE: MAASAI: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING:** Use these prompts for extended thinking after your Evans DLP session or museum visit to activate creative, critical, and reflective thinking.

**HISTORIC MESSAGES AND MODERN MIXES: PROMPTS FOR EXTENDED THINKING**



**LESSON CONCEPT: SEEING AND SIFTING:** Why look at art? Art is one way humans communicate ideas to one another. Sifting through the information art presents takes careful and purposeful looking. Before a museum visit or Evans Distance Learning session, students can practice connecting to art as intentional inquirers.

## **GALLERY PREVIEWS**