

# EXPLORING *BETWEEN BODIES*

OCT 27, 2018 – APR 28, 2019

## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to the Henry!

This resource is intended for teachers and facilitators of sixth to twelfth-grade youth groups, but can be adapted for other ages as well. We invite you to use this as a flexible tool for facilitating your experience in the galleries and for making personal connections with the artworks in *Between Bodies*.

## TIPS FOR LOOKING AT CONTEMPORARY ART

Contemporary art can challenge our assumptions about what art is and what it can be. It can also help us think about ourselves and current issues in unexpected ways. Below you will find several strategies that you can use to think with and about contemporary art. These approaches will help you make individual connections with the art on view and determine what it means to you. These meanings will often differ among viewers, and that is okay.

Contemporary artists often explore several ideas simultaneously in their works, so sharing observations with a friend or group of friends can be particularly helpful in unpacking the many possible meanings of an artwork.

**OBSERVE:** What do you see, hear, smell or feel? Create a list of things you notice in the work of art as you experience it.

**THINK:** What does the work remind you of or make you think about? Vocalize or write each word or phrase that comes to mind (even if it seems unrelated or doesn't make immediate sense).

**FEEL:** What emotions come up for you? Discuss the feelings that emerge and think about what is causing them.

**DISCUSS:** Why do you think the artist chose to make the work this way? What new questions does it raise for you? If you were to describe it to someone who isn't with you today, how would you describe it?

## ABOUT *BETWEEN BODIES*

*Between Bodies* is a group exhibition featuring sculpture, augmented reality, video, and sound-based works that explore the interconnected relationships between humans and a variety of “more-than-human” bodies including other animals, microorganisms, water, earth, machines, and more. Works in the exhibition raise questions about how society values these bodies, and how different populations are impacted by changes in the environment. The exhibiting artists draw from across science, technology, feminism, and queer and decolonial perspectives to explore multiple forms of intelligence, including embodied and local knowledge, and sensorial experience. Works on view image alternative ways of being and forming relationships as a way to grapple with the violence humans commit against the Earth, each other, and the planet's many other inhabitants.

As you explore the galleries consider some of the following ideas and questions:

## IMAGINING THE FUTURE



### What can we learn through imagining the future?

Throughout the exhibition, artists are experimenting with reality and thinking about potential futures in order to grapple with current conditions. One example is *Sin Sol, Forest Memory*, a video and augmented reality installation by artists micha cárdenas and Abraham Avnisan in which a changing planet blanketed in the smoke of forest fires puts earthly human survival on the abyss. By speculating about a future that blurs with the present, cárdenas and Avnisan encourage viewers to reflect on how what life looks and feels like is changing for different populations now. What other works can you find in the exhibition that help you imagine possible futures?

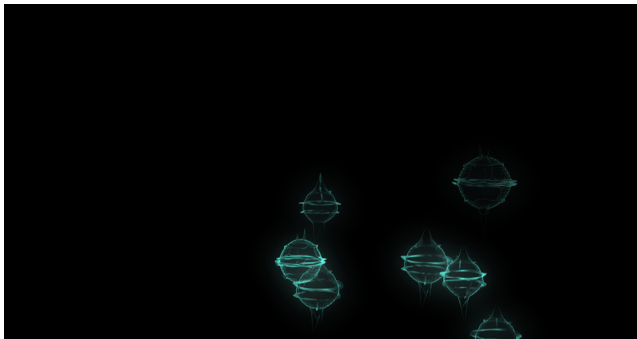
## WAYS OF KNOWING



### Where do we find knowledge?

Several of the artists in the exhibition explore different sources of knowledge and forms of intelligence that exceed quantified data. For example, the body as a site of knowledge is a recurring motif: in the installation *Imaginary Explosions* by Caitlin Berrigan, place your hands or whole body on the bilateral sound instrument; listen and feel the vibrations of sonified seismic information and consider what memories your body and the Earth hold. What other works can you find that invite you to seek out knowledge in an expanded way?

## COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SPECIES



### What can communication look like?

Throughout the exhibition artists are exploring how different beings are intimately entangled with each other and their environments. Check out Susanne M. Winterling's work *Glistening Troubles* in which she explores the behavior of bioluminescent sea creatures named dinoflagellates and their place within the ecosystem of Glistening Bay, Jamaica. We learn from Gerry, a local fisherman, that these microorganisms are responsive to changes in the water, functioning as an alarm system of sorts that indicates potential toxic conditions. Are there other artworks in the exhibition that explore connections and forms of communication across species.

## INANIMATE OBJECTS?



### How do we treat inanimate objects?

Many works in this exhibition explore the animate qualities of matter. Consider Carolina Caycedo's *Water Portraits* in which she prints collaged photos of rivers on large scrolls of canvas to experiment with representing these bodies of water as subjects with their own active presence. Make sure to also view Caycedo's video *A Gente Rio/We River*, in which she investigates the social and environmental impacts of large dam projects in Brazil and Paraguay that treat rivers as commodities.\* In what other works can you find artists exploring the ways that matter and the more-than-human serve as active agents?

In addition to this guide, check with the front desk to learn more about related activities and reading materials associated with *Between Bodies*. Look on object labels throughout the galleries for reading recommendations from the exhibiting artists, many of which are available to you in The Lobby.

\*This video play in the auditorium every Thursday and Sunday at noon, 1,2, & 3 PM. Additional screenings at 6 & 7 PM on First Thursdays of the month. It is also available to educational groups for viewing on an iPad by request.

Images, left to right:

Abraham Avnisan (U.S., born 1983) and micha cárdenas (U.S., born 1977). *Sin Sol, Forest Memory*. 2018. Multi-channel video installation composed from color LiDAR data scans with audio, augmented reality poetry, and 3-D avatar. Courtesy of the artists. [installation view in *Between Bodies*, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, 2018]. Photo: Mark Woods, courtesy of the Henry.

Caitlin Berrigan (U.S., born 1981). *Imaginary Explosions* (video still). 2018. HD video. Image courtesy of the artist.

Susanne M. Winterling (Germany, born 1970). *Glistening Troubles*. 2017. Multi-media installation with mirror columns, specimens cast in resin, CGI animations (color, with sound), and HD video (color, with sound; duration: 7:14 minutes). Courtesy of the artist. [installation view in *Between Bodies*, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, 2018]. Photo: Mark Woods, courtesy of the Henry.

Carolina Caycedo (U.S., born England 1978). Works from the *Water Portraits* series. 2015-2018. Dye-Sublimation prints on canvas. Courtesy of the artist and Instituto de Visión, Bogotá. [installation view in *Between Bodies*, Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, 2018]. Photo: Mark Woods, courtesy of the Henry.

# HENRY

# SPECULATIVE STORIES

*Recommended for ages 11 and up*

This activity explores speculating about the future of our world, a theme that can be found throughout the exhibition, *Between Bodies*. It is adapted from “Speculative & Collaborative Writing,” a workshop developed by artist Caitlin Berrigan whose work is in the exhibition.

## GOAL

Using the Exquisite Corpse writing process, youth will explore their personal ideas about the world and learn how to write about those ideas collaboratively.

This activity will take about thirty minutes and can be completed after visiting the galleries or in your classroom after your visit. If you wish to complete this activity while at the museum materials may be requested at the front desk.

## STEP 1

Have your group brainstorm issues that are important to them. Consider asking questions such as: What challenges do we face in the world today? If you could change one thing about the world today, what would you change? Why is this change important to you?

Give the group three to five minutes to brainstorm their ideas.

## STEP 2

On a sheet of paper have them spend five to seven minutes writing about the ideas they just brainstormed. Have them imagine that their issue is still present in the distant future. What is this world like? How did the world become this way? What kind of environment does it have? Who lives in this world and what are their lives like?

After five to seven minutes have each person pass the paper they have just written on to someone else in the group.

## STEP 3

For the next five to seven minutes the group will continue to write the story they have just received. They should expand on what their peers have started and bring their own thoughts and ideas to continue the story.

Repeat one or two more times. The goal is to have three or more contributions to the same story. Afterwards return papers to the original person who started the story.

## STEP 4

As a group, reflect on the stories. What do they think about how the stories turned out? What did they think of this writing process? Have people read their stories aloud if they wish to share them with the group.

In addition to this activity several artists from *Between Bodies* have created writing prompts, to which the group can also respond. Find these prompts in The Lobby or request them from the front desk.

# MYSTERY BAGS

*Recommended for ages 5 and up*

This activity explores the many ways we learn and how we relate to “inanimate” objects.

## GOAL

Using senses beyond sight, youth will use touch, verbal description, smell, and imaginative observation to understand an object in a new way. Materials for this activity may be requested at the front desk. This activity can be completed before or after exploring the galleries.

## STEP 1

Break into smaller groups of four to five people. Once the smaller groups have formed pass out one mystery bag to each group. *They should not look in the bag.*

## STEP 2

Have each small group explore the object inside their bag using their sense of touch, sound, and smell. The bag should be passed around so each group member has a chance to explore the object.

As the bags are passed around each group, ask questions such as:

- How big is your object?
- How much does it weigh?
- What is its texture? Does it have more than one texture?
- Does the object make any sound? How would you describe the sound? Can you make a similar sound?
- Does your object smell like something familiar to you? How would you describe its smell?

## STEP 3

After everyone has had a chance to learn about their object, ask them to reflect on what they know about their object beyond what it might be. Ask questions such as:

- What does this object make you think of?
- Does it bring up any memories for you?
- What might this object be able to do?
- How might you be able to use this object in your everyday life?

After your discussion let each group take their object out of the bag and see what their object is.

## STEP 4

Ask youth to reflect on their experience. What was this experience like for them? How does this experience change the way they think about inanimate objects and how we learn from them?