

CLAIMING YOUR VIEW

John Knight's *87°* is a **site-specific** work at Storm King. Site specific means an artwork is made to exist only in a particular location. There are several site-specific works in Storm King's collection. We've included a list of those artworks on the last page of this worksheet.

87° is made up of a telescope—similar to those found at tourist locations—and the view through the telescope's lens. When the telescope is directed at 87 degrees, it focuses on a rounded water tower which is located just south of Storm King's property.





The water tower was built in 1958 at what was then the Star Expansion Company, an industrial factory owned and operated by the family that founded Storm King. The water tower's sleek, steel design was a purposeful choice for the company back in 1958. It suggests an early interest by Storm King's founders not just in industry, but artistic design as well.

So, how do a water tower and a viewfinder create an artwork? John Knight claims the view as the subject of his artwork, connecting Storm King's rolling hills with the industrial production just beyond them.

He chose this view because of its connection and significance to the Art Center's history. So, the artwork is not so much about a finished object, but a concept. In fact, we can categorize 87° as a conceptual artwork. **Conceptual art** is a movement that began in the 1960s and it refers to art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than a finished physical art object. Watch the artist speaking about this site-specific, conceptual artwork [here](#).

So, let's explore: What does it mean to claim a viewpoint as art?

Making A Viewfinder

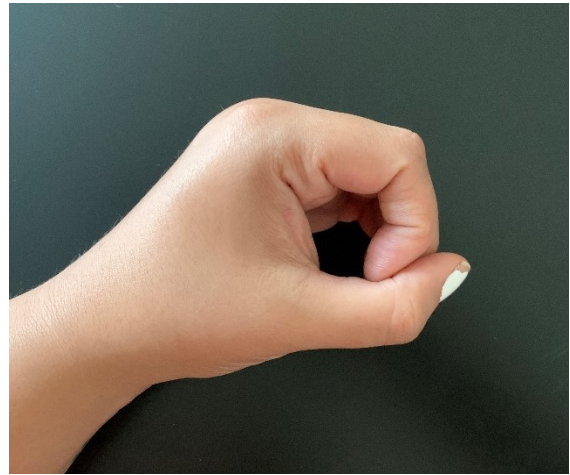
Similar to the telescope used in 87°, a **viewfinder** is a tool that frames or crops a larger view to focus on a specific part within it. There are a couple simple ways you can make a viewfinder at home.

Method 1: Your Hands

The easiest way to make a viewfinder is by using your hands.

Directions:

Make an “o” shape with one hand and hold it up to your eye. Close or cover your other eye. As you look through your cupped hand, you will notice that you see a more focused view than if you were not looking through your viewfinder. You can make a viewfinder with your other hand as well and look through two viewfinders at once.



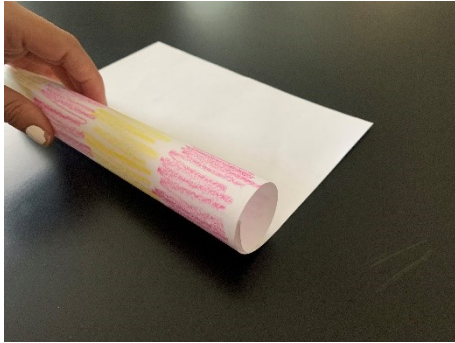
Method 2: Cardboard

You can recycle cardboard toilet paper or paper towel tubes to create a viewfinder.



Directions:

Use 1 or 2 cardboard toilet paper or paper towel tubes. If you have one tube, simply hold it up to one eye to look through while closing or covering your other eye. If you have two tubes, you can use a viewfinder for each eye. Feel free to take some time to personalize your viewfinder with colored pencils, crayons, or paint!



Method 3: Paper

You can use printer paper, construction paper, or recycled paper to make your viewfinder.



Directions:

Roll a piece of paper into a tube, leaving enough space for you to look through. If you have supplies and plan to draw or color your viewfinder, do so on your piece of paper before you roll your tube. Make sure as you're rolling that the decorated side of your paper is on the outside of your tube. Once you have rolled your entire piece of paper, add some tape so the paper won't un-roll.

If you have another piece of paper, you can repeat this process to make another viewfinder for both eyes.

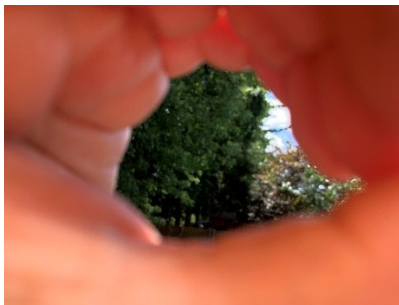
Whether you are using your hands, cardboard, or paper tubes notice how your view has changed from looking through one viewfinder to looking through both.



Using Your Viewfinder

Take your viewfinder outside or use it inside of your home and look around at different views. Focus in on different objects and notice their details or focus on a cropped part of a larger view.

Choose a view that you would like to observe closely.



Claiming Your View

Like *87°* by John Knight, think about claiming this view as your artwork.

Step 1. Record

In your journal write down your location and try to be specific. If you have a compass, or can use a compass app on a smartphone, write down the degree and direction to which you are observing your view.

Step 2. Describe

Draw and/or describe what you see through your viewfinder. What colors, shapes, and textures can you observe?

Step 3. Expand

Does this view have significance to you? If you are unsure, think about why you might have chosen this view. Perhaps there's something you liked, disliked, or found interesting. Explain more.

Step 4. Claim

If you are claiming this viewpoint as your artwork, what would you title it?

Key Vocabulary Words

- **Site-specific**
- **Conceptual art**
- **Viewfinder**

Site-specific artworks at Storm King Art Center **Visit our [website](https://stormking.org) to learn more**

David Brooks, *Permanent Field Observations* (2018)

Daniel Buren, *Sit Down* (1998 (refabricated 2010))

Mark Dion, *Storm King Environmental Field Station* (2019)

Andy Goldsworthy, *Storm King Wall* (1997–98)

Robert Grosvenor, *Untitled* (1970)

Patricia Johanson, *Nostoc II* (1975)

Maya Lin, *Storm King Wavefield* (2007–08)

Isamu Noguchi, *Momo Taro* (1977–78)

Nam June Paik, *Waiting for UFO* (1992)

David von Schlegell, *Untitled* (1972)

Richard Serra, *Schunnemunk Fork* (1990–91)

Charles Simonds, *Dwellings* (1981)