

Storm King Art Center Teacher Resource



What's the Big Idea? Concepts & Connections

Construct connections across art, time, nature, and humanity as we explore contemporary sculptures and installations at Storm King. Recommended for grades 6-12.

Dear Teachers,

We are delighted to welcome you to Storm King Art Center, a 500-acre outdoor museum located in New York's Hudson Valley, where visitors experience large-scale sculpture and site-specific commissions under open sky.

This resource is designed to help you prepare to explore the theme of "What's the Big Idea: Concepts & Connections" with your students at Storm King. By approaching visits through a thematic lens, we hope to engage learners in focused close looking, activities, and conversation—providing a solid foundation as students construct connections throughout their experience.

Whether you have chosen a guided tour or will be facilitating your own visit, this resource offers pre-visit ideas to prepare for your trip, tips and tools for onsite engagement, and post-visit activity prompts for continued exploration.

During a guided visit, your educator might build the experience around a particular sub-theme related to Concepts & Connections (ex: Cultural Commentary, Interactivity). Please be in touch at least two weeks before your program if you have specific interests.

While you may not see all artworks in this packet during a guided program, we invite you to visit additional artworks after your tour, if time allows. The artworks in this packet are situated within one mile of the School Group arrival area.

If you have additional questions about your upcoming visit, please contact us at:
groups@stormkingartcenter.org

We look forward to welcoming you and your students soon!

Sincerely,
The Storm King Education Team

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Cover Image: Nam June Paik (American and German, born Korea, 1932–2006), *Waiting for UFO*, 1992. Bronze, stone, plastic, and concrete (in three parts), 10 ft. 7 in. x 15 ft. x 20 ft. 2 in. (322.6 x 457.2 x 614.7 cm). Gift of Cynthia Hazen Polsky, the Joseph H. Hazen Foundation, and the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation. © Nam June Paik Estate

Pre-Visit

INTRODUCTION TO STORM KING ART CENTER

Storm King Art Center is a 500-acre outdoor museum, where visitors experience large-scale sculpture under open sky. We strongly recommend you download our new, free mobile guide on the Bloomberg Connects app (available on the Apple Store, Google Play, or at <https://www.bloombergconnects.org/>). Here you'll find photos, videos, audio recordings, maps, suggested routes, activities for children and families, and more. You and your students can learn more about Storm King's [environmental stewardship](#), collection, and community connections in this brief [Oral History video](#), featuring Storm King President, John P. Stern.

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME “WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA?: CONCEPTS & CONNECTIONS”

“The viewer completes the artwork.” Ask students what this idea, expressed by artist [Marcel Duchamp](#) and [many contemporary artists](#), means to them. They might discuss in partners or as a larger group.

Invite students to explore association through writing. Name or hold up a series of objects (ex: spoon, pinecone, paper) and ask students to list as many words or ideas as possible inspired by each object. For example, paper might invite connections to school, rectangles, trees, airplanes, papercuts, etc.

Students could also play a verbal free association game with a partner. One partner shares a word, the second partner responds with the first thing that comes into their head, the first partner responds to *that* with the first thing that comes into their head, etc. (Ex: Tired. Bed. Sleep. Dreams. Flying. Airplane. Florida. Oranges...) Did any of their partners' connections surprise them?

Artists often engage us by inviting us to create connections. Certain **forms** and **materials** can evoke different ideas or feelings. Artists might communicate through **symbols**, which are concrete images or objects that represent ideas. Ask students for some symbols they associate with freedom. What symbols would they use to represent themselves or a friend?

Our interpretation of an artwork can depend on its **context**, or the time, place, and events surrounding its creation and viewing. Artists might also **juxtapose** different materials, forms, or symbols--combining elements to invite new ideas. For example, an apple on a plate might invite ideas about nourishment or roundness, but an apple in a pile of dirt might invite ideas about decay or life cycles. Juxtapose some of the objects or words that students initially free-associated about (ex: pinecone wrapped in paper) and see what ideas emerge.

OBSERVE AND DISCUSS

Project or print an image of Alice Aycock's [Low Building with Dirt Roof \(For Mary\)](#) (page 4). Ask students what they notice. What ideas does it make them think of? What choices did the artist make to evoke those ideas? Share some additional context about the piece from page 4 and Alice Aycock's [Oral History Video](#). What did students discover? How does that relate or add to the ideas they formed?

Artwork Images and Information



Alice Aycock (American, b. 1946). *Low Building with Dirt Roof (For Mary)*, 1973/2010. Wood, stone, and earth, 30 in. x 20 ft. x 12 ft. (76.2 x 609.6 x 365.8 cm). Gift of the artist. © Alice Aycock, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

[Low Building with Dirt Roof \(For Mary\) \(1973/2010\) by Alice Aycock](#)

Low Building with Dirt Roof (For Mary) was first created in 1973—a time when many artists were working with the earth as an artistic medium—at Gibney Farm, Pennsylvania, land owned by Aycock's family. There, its roof was intended to be planted with whatever crop was growing in the fields surrounding it. Aycock has associated *Low Building* with both a farmhouse and a small cemetery on her family's property. Mary, of the work's title and dedication, was a child in Aycock's family who died prematurely. Aycock also has said that she was inspired by "frontier homes, the tunnels and tombs of Mycenae, the myth of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, dreams, the memory of my grandparents' attic," and finally adds, "I also have a shelter concept—a sort of physiological need for a 'first house'." The work was re-created at Storm King in 2010.

Media: [Alice Aycock's Oral History Video](#); photos available on our digital guide on Bloomberg Connects.



Nam June Paik (American and German, born Korea, 1932–2006), *Waiting for UFO*, 1992. Bronze, stone, plastic, and concrete (in three parts), 10 ft. 7 in. x 15 ft. x 20 ft. 2 in. (322.6 x 457.2 x 614.7 cm). Gift of Cynthia Hazen Polsky, the Joseph H. Hazen Foundation, and the Ralph E. Ogden Foundation. © Nam June Paik Estate

[Waiting for UFO \(1992\) by Nam June Paik](#)

Nam June Paik's *Waiting for UFO* is a three-part work installed in three locations on and near Storm King's Museum Hill. The sculpture has no single focus or narrative; it is discovered gradually throughout the viewer's encounters with its three distinctly sited parts. While it features some of the elements typical of Paik's interior artificial landscapes—scattered televisions, castings of TV consoles, and representations of Buddha—*Waiting for UFO* is one of very few pieces of outdoor sculpture the artist created. A commissioned gift to Storm King, the sculpture was sited according to the artist's choice, but it can be moved to other locations.

Paik was a pioneer video and performance artist who became world-renowned for his experiments with technology. He began to exploit televisions in his art in the early 1960s, exhibiting his earliest "electronic paintings"—television sets with scrambled images—in 1963. His interactive video works of the period presented the spectator with unprecedented visual experiences. In subsequent decades Paik was known for his installations of television sets filled with assorted objects or stacked video monitors displaying witty or dazzling abstract imagery. In Paik's work, television often represents a landscape of contemporary America, assuming a shrine-like role as it does in modern society.

Installed outdoors, *Waiting for UFO* takes on additional significance, suggesting unanswerable questions about the relationship between technology and nature. Old, empty television consoles, dropped haphazardly onto the ground, appear like technological ruins. Paik also included artificial flowers, bronze and stone Buddhas, and solemn bronze masks of himself staring blankly up toward the heavens. Does the work suggest that technology (or its detritus) has overtaken nature, or merged with it? What do Paik's own self-portrait masks signify? This evocative work lends itself to a variety of interpretations.

Media: Audio recording and photos available on our digital guide on Bloomberg Connects.



David Brooks (American, b. 1975), *Permanent Field Observations*, 2018. Bronze, Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist

[Permanent Field Observations \(2018\) by David Brooks](#)

An artist who has participated in many scientific expeditions, David Brooks believes that a great challenge of addressing climate change is that its effects are often imperceptible. Brooks has created thirty bronze castings of ephemeral natural objects within Storm King's woods—such as tree roots embracing rocks, or delicately intertwined branches—and permanently affixed them next to the subjects from which they were cast. As future weather patterns alter the site in unknown ways, these intimate replicas will act as time capsules. Brooks has stated, “I’m asking viewers to reconcile the intimacy of apprehending the sculptural object in the quietude of the woods with the vastness of the sculpture’s potential lifespan of thousands of years. Such a reconciliation of disparate perceptions is similar to how one might introspectively experience the conflicted notion and existence of climate change.”

Media: David Brooks’ [Oral History Video](#); Audio recording and photos available on our digital guide on Bloomberg Connects.

During Your Visit at Storm King

GENERAL INFORMATION

PLEASE FULLY READ YOUR GROUP CONFIRMATION LETTER for complete details about arrival, lunch, chaperones, trams, tours, and weather. Additional information about Group Visits can be found at <https://stormking.org/groups/> or by contacting groups@stormkingartcenter.org

PREPARE TO BE OUTDOORS: Storm King is a 500-acre outdoor sculpture museum. We're open rain or shine. Please be sure your group comes prepared to spend the day outdoors, wears comfortable walking shoes, and brings sunscreen, bug spray, and weather-appropriate attire.

HELP US PROTECT THE SCULPTURES: Touching, walking on, or climbing on most of the works of art at Storm King is prohibited. The sunscreen, hand lotion, bug spray, and even natural oils on your hands damage the surface of the sculptures. You might not think one touch matters but remember, about 200,000 people visit Storm King every year. Thousands of touches add up to lots of damage.

INTERACTIVE ARTWORKS: Artworks which visitors may touch and with which you may physically interact are designated on the map and on the grounds with a hand icon.

GROUND: The Art Center's grounds comprise varied terrain including rolling meadows, hills, wooded areas, paved paths, and gravel paths. During guided tours, please be prepared to cover up to one mile on grass. If you have a limited amount of time, we suggest making your way to Museum Hill to see the sculptures, vistas, and Visitor Center.

ACCESSIBILITY: There are gravel paths throughout the Art Center that can be utilized by strollers and/or wheelchairs. For guided tours, more accessible routes may be planned with advanced notice. You can also find accessible routes on Storm King's digital guide on the Bloomberg Connects app. Groups with limited mobility are always welcome to use the public tram on a first come, first served basis. Seating is limited and cannot be guaranteed. If you have questions about the use of the public tram, please contact us at groups@stormkingartcenter.org to discuss your group's needs.

TIME: We recommend planning at least 3 hours for your visit. Guided tours are usually 45-60 minutes. If your visit is self-guided, or you have time before or after your tour, you may have lunch at a designated picnic area, and explore the grounds on your own. Suggestions for student engagement are available on pages 8 & 10 of this resource packet.

MATERIALS: You may choose to bring pencils and sketchbooks or notebooks for students to draw and write during the self-guided portion of your visit. Suggestions for student engagement are available on pages 8 & 10 of this resource packet.

MAP: Access an up-to-date map of Storm King under the heading "Grounds and Accessibility" on our ["Visit" webpage](#), or pick up a map when you arrive at Storm King.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA? CONCEPTS & CONNECTIONS

Continue exploring the theme of conceptual connections with your students at Storm King. If you are on a self-guided visit, or have time before or after your tour, walk the grounds. Explore the form, material, symbolism, and context of each artwork. What ideas and connections arise for students?

Visit some or all of the artworks featured in this resource packet:

Artwork: *Low Building with Dirt Roof (For Mary)* (1973/2010) by Alice Aycock



Location: North Woods; see map on page 9

Engagement: View from multiple angles. Ask students what they notice about the artwork in person, which they did not notice when viewing a photo of it in class. Aycock described the piece as both safe and warm, as well as oppressive or dangerous. Do students agree? Why or Why not? Ask students to free write or create a poem inspired by this artwork.

Artwork: *Waiting for UFO* (1992) by Nam June Paik



Location: Museum Hill; see map on page 9

Engagement: Try to find all three locations with parts of this work. How might the different parts relate to each other? How do students interpret the TV's, bronze and stone representations of Buddha, and masks of the artist's own face? How do students think the artwork might relate to its title? In partners, ask students to invent and share a story inspired by this artwork. Compare and contrast different students' stories.

Artwork: *Permanent Field Observations* (2018) by David Brooks



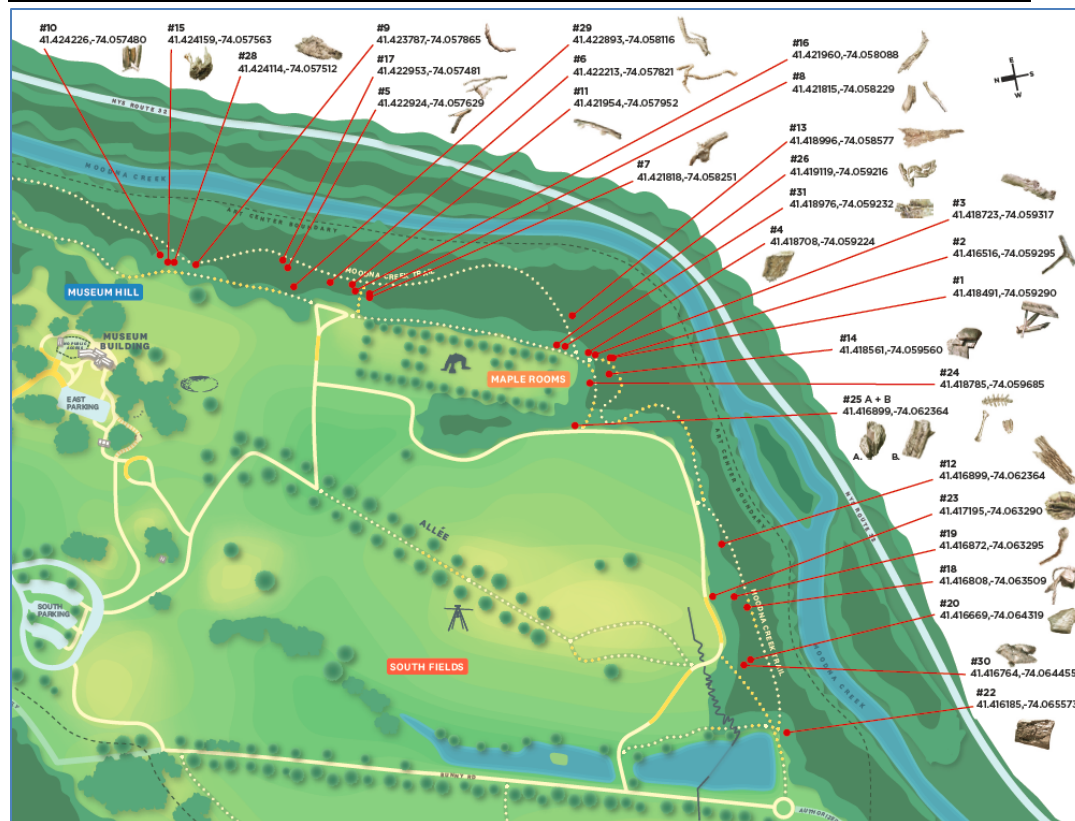
Location: South Fields; see map on page 9

Engagement: Walk along Moodna Creek Trail and search for Brooks' bronze castings of natural objects. In 2018, the artist placed the bronze sculptures right alongside the object they were copied from--fallen branches, roots, etc. Do any of the original objects remain beside the bronze castings? Students can closely observe castings and natural objects by sketching. How do students imagine this artwork might look in one hundred years? Why do they think an artist might choose to capture ephemeral, or changing, natural spaces with more permanent metal sculptures?

“WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA? CONCEPTS & CONNECTIONS” ARTWORK LOCATIONS



Permanent Field Observations (2018) by David Brooks Artwork Locations



TIPS AND TECHNIQUES FOR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AT STORM KING

EXPLORE PERSPECTIVE. View sculptures and vistas from afar, close up, above, and below. Move around and through artworks to experience them from different angles. Invite students to create a rectangle with their hands to use as a viewfinder, “zooming in” on details and “cropping” views. Try photographing the same artwork or area from multiple perspectives. Ask students to imagine or draw what something might look like from a bird’s-eye view or a worm’s-eye view.

ENGAGE YOUR SENSES. Take the time to slow down and breathe deeply. What scents do you notice? What sounds do you hear? Invite students to create a six word poem or story inspired by their sensory experiences. In addition to feeling the tickle of breezes and grass blades, we invite visitors to interact with sculptures marked on the map with a green hand icon.

EMBRACE THE LANDSCAPE. Enjoy cloud gazing, downhill rolling, and creature and critter watching. Please engage with the land safely and respectfully.

SKETCH. Ask students to try capturing sculptures and vistas with single-line contour drawings. Challenge them to create quick sketches without lifting their pencil from the page. Try drawing the same artwork or area from multiple angles. Zoom in on details. Experiment with mark making to capture different textures and create compositions featuring both sculpture and landscape.

GET MOVING! Encourage students to explore ideas with their bodies. They might physically recreate shapes they observe, or respond to art and nature through dance and movement.

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS. Engage students in conversation by asking open-ended questions, such as: What do you notice? What does this make you think of? What do you wonder? What artworks or areas do you like the most? Why?

CONSIDER TITLES. While the audio guide and Storm King [website](#) can provide additional information about each artwork, many works have nearby placards listing the artist and title. You might add an additional layer to group conversations by considering how a title might relate to an artwork.

TUNE INTO THE AUDIO GUIDE. Accessible on Storm King’s new digital guide on the free Bloomberg Connects App. Make the most of your visit with audio and video commentary by artists and Storm King staff. Artwork lookup numbers can be found on the map and on the label next to each artwork.

PICK UP AN INTERACTIVE GUIDE. You can pick up our [Field Guide for Young Explorers](#) at the Visitor Center on Museum Hill, or from staff members when you arrive. Explore art and landscape with guided prompts for drawing, writing, and conversation.

Post-Visit

REFLECT

Ask students to individually journal, or talk with a partner, about their visit to Storm King. What are some sculptures and ideas they explored?

BIG IDEAS

Review what students remember about David Brooks' *Permanent Field Observations* (page 6). Provide some additional context with that artist's [Oral History Video](#). The artist has talked about how this artwork relates to our experience of climate change. In partners or groups, ask students to discuss how they think this artwork might connect with climate change and share back their ideas with class. Review some of the other sculptures your class explored at Storm King. How might those works connect with *Permanent Field Observations*? How are they different?

ART EXPLORATION

Prompt for Students: Ask students to work individually or in small groups to choose an idea they would like to explore through sculpture. It could be an abstract concept (eternity, joy, freedom) or a political, social or cultural issue. Invite students to create plans for a large-scale sculpture or installation related to that idea.

Students might consider the following as they create their plans:

- What **materials** would they use to express their idea, and why?
- What shapes and **forms** will make up the sculpture?
- What **context** would the sculpture be viewed in? (What type of space would it be in? How would people interact with it?)
- How might they use **symbols** to communicate their idea?
- Will they **juxtapose** different elements to help inspire connections?

Ask students to create a large-scale drawing with notes to help convey their vision of the sculpture. If time allows, students could also construct small scale models out of materials like paper, clay, and aluminum foil.

Invite students to share some of their choices with the class, or do a “gallery walk” around the room to explore each other’s plans. If possible, the class might even consider ways they can adapt and create versions of their sculptures to exhibit in or around the school.

Resources

Storm King Art Center Collection

<https://collections.stormking.org/index.php/About/collection>

John P. Stern Oral History

<https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/oralhistory/4867>

MoMA Learning: Marcel Duchamp and the Readymade

https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade/#

SFMOMA Shorts: Art is...Complete by the Viewer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQVZ9tREv2c>

Alice Aycock Oral History

<https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/oralhistory/4862>

David Brooks Oral History

<https://collections.stormking.org/Detail/oralhistory/5725>

Storm King Art Center Groups

<https://stormking.org/groups/>