

Liz Glynn: *Open House*

Learning Resource



This resource is designed to help you prepare to explore Liz Glynn's installation, *Open House*, with your students at Storm King. We hope to engage learners in focused close looking, activities, and conversation—providing a solid foundation as students construct connections throughout their experience.

Image: Liz Glynn, *Open House*, 2016. Photo by Jeffrey Jenkins.

Location: Tippet's Field | [#830 on our Map](#)

Credit: Liz Glynn (American, b. 1981), *Open House*, 2016. Cast concrete, twenty-six objects: five arches, eight armchairs, four ottomans, six side chairs, and three settees. Courtesy the artist and Paula Cooper Gallery.

Main Themes

Gilded Age references and class critique. The cast-concrete furniture and arches are based on images of a Gilded Age ballroom in the since-demolished Manhattan mansion of politician and financier, William C. Whitney (1841-1904). The ballroom was used just once a year by New York's social elite. Liz Glynn's work critiques this lavish abundance and calls into question how these Gilded Age references might relate to our present economic conditions. Some of the objects in the Whitney ballroom were historical antiques while some were copies of originals, made to form a complete set. The artwork is a copy of a copy - distorting time and historical references.

Concrete as a material. Not only is concrete a versatile medium for casting, it is also often used in utilitarian public spaces like plazas. This choice creates tension between the form - opulent, soft furniture - and the material - hard, readily available concrete.

The Title, *Open House*, and interactivity of the work. "Open house" is a real estate term for a scheduled public event where a residence is open for potential buyers to tour. This title adds another layer of meaning: the Whitney ballroom was an exclusive space, while the artwork is more accessible.

Anachronistic ruins. *Open House* was previously installed in two urban environments, and this presentation is the first time the work has been exhibited in a natural landscape. The artist has said that this shift in setting creates a new connotation: that of a folly, or a faux ruin place in a natural landscape and left to time and the elements.

Artwork Engagement

View the work from multiple angles. Divide a sheet of paper into four sections and create a quick sketch in each section from a different perspective. Move around the many sculptural elements and look closely from different angles, from a distance and up close. What do you notice?

Interact and consider the site. Sit on the couches, footstools, and armchairs. Touch the material. What do you notice about the sculpture's texture? How might the configuration, or siting, of the pieces encourage observation and framing of specific views? Close your eyes and listen to the world around you. What do you hear? How might experiencing the artwork in its former urban environments be different? What do you think of the title *Open House* now that you've interacted with the artwork?

Perform. Performance is an important aspect of Liz Glynn's artistic practice. She is also interested in how furniture becomes part of social spaces. With a partner or small group, consider a performance (dance, music, theater, spoken word, etc.) that could take place at *Open House*. What is the content and mood of your performance? What is its duration? Design, practice, then showcase your performance.

Connect and reflect. Chat with a friend about places you might have seen furniture like this before. Share a few examples of when you have seen furniture outdoors. Is this artwork similar to those experiences? How is it different? What do you think the artist might be trying to say with this artwork?

Continued Engagement & Resources

Furniture design & displacement. Think about a piece of furniture that is specific to a certain space, like a throne or a lawn chair. Draw this furniture item on paper, then cut it out. Now displace this furniture item by placing your cut-out over images or drawings of different, contrasting settings. How might the cultural connotations of the furniture change?

Resources

For more information about the exhibition, visit our digital guide on Bloomberg Connects via the QR code here.

