

**Putting It All Together**  
**Pre-visit Activity**  
**Grades 9-12 Program**

**Before Your Visit**

Review the Albright-Knox Art Gallery School Tour Guidelines portion of the “Important Information for Your Visit” document with your students and chaperones.

**Putting It All Together**

Students in Grades 9-12 will be encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings about works of art and explore more sophisticated questions such as: Why is it art? Why is it in the museum? Is art always beautiful or can work that makes you feel uncomfortable be art too? They will use different questioning techniques designed to help them start exploring on their own in museums, and learn a little about how museums select and install the artwork on view.

Through experience we have found that students who are prepared for the content of a museum visit have a much better experience. Please find the time to do the suggested activity so your students will be prepared for their visit. This exercise will give them practice in carefully observing a work of art and trusting their own thinking processes.

**Class Activity: Observation and Interpretation**

Choose a work of art from our online information

at: <http://www.albrightknox.org/education/worksheet.html>

Follow the instructions on the worksheet, *What Do You Think the Artist is Trying To Say?*

NY State Standards met:

**Visual Arts Standards 2, 3, 4**

**English Language Arts Standards 1, 2, 3**

*What Do You Think the Artist is Trying To Say?*

Paul Gauguin. (French, 1848-1903). *The Yellow Christ*, 1889. Oil on canvas, unframed: 36 1/4 x 28 7/8 in. (92.07 x 73.34 cm.). General Purchase Funds, 1946.

Lorna Simpson. (American, born 1960). *Counting*, 1991. Photogravure with silkscreen edition 8/60, overall: 73 3/4 x 38 in. (187.32 x 96.52 cm.). The Gerald S. Elliott Fund, 1992.

John Baldessari. (American, born 1931). *Two Compositions (Formal;Informal/Male;Female)*, 1990. Vinyl paint on color photograph, framed: 96 7/8 x 62 5/16 in. (246.06 x 158.27 cm.).

Evelyn R. Cary, James S. Ely and Albert H. Tracy Funds, 1991.

Clyfford Still (American, 1904-1980). *1957-D No. 1*, 1957. Oil on canvas, overall: 133 x 159 in. (287.02 x 403.86 cm.). Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1959.

Choose one work of art from the list above. Look very carefully at the image and at the information provided about the image. These images can be found here:

<http://www.albrightknox.org/education/worksheet.html>

Write down as much as you can about what you see:

Hint: make notes about colors, shapes, subject matter, setting, time period that the work was produced, nationality and gender of the artist, and media used.

Based on what you have observed above, write a letter to a friend telling him or her what you think this artist is trying to say to you, the viewer, with this image. Please write your answer in essay format on another piece of paper. Make reference to the notes you made above. Remember that your friend CANNOT SEE the artwork!

If you could ask the artist one question, what would it be?