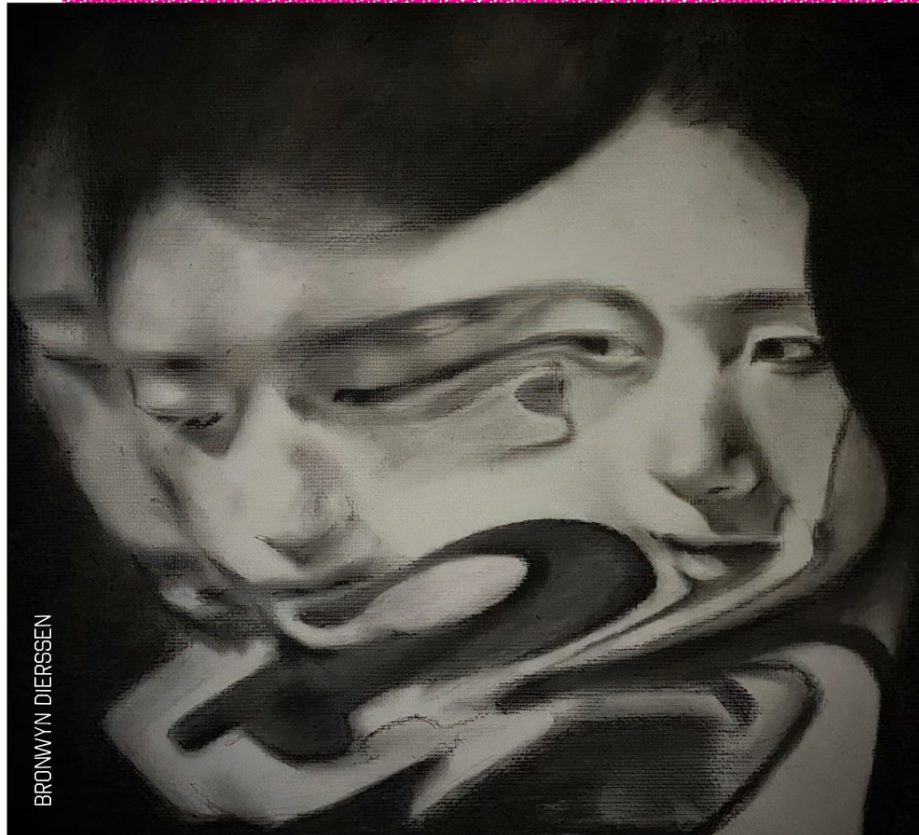


Gallery @ TCA



**HEAR ME.  
SEE ME.**

**2023 SUMMER  
JURIED EXHIBITION**

A Guide for Understanding the Exhibition

# HEAR ME. SEE ME.



Image: Andrea Pro

## Purpose of the Guide:

- To provide easy-to-use tools and inquiry strategies to enhance visitor engagement and understanding of the art on display.
- To help people develop questions that start “informal conversations” about artworks and artists.
- To help visitors learn to read an artwork. Like a book, art can be interpreted and understood in a variety of ways.
- To opens pathways through

[tempecenterforthearts.com/Gallery](https://tempecenterforthearts.com/Gallery)

Learn more about the Gallery at TCA's exhibitions, programs, workshops and free online education resources for teachers and parents.

This exhibition focuses on visual art as a communication tool for artists to speak their minds, share ideas, express feelings and seek understanding about the human experience. For them, art is a shared conversation with viewers about topics like mental health, equity, creativity, aging, identity and more.

Artists were selected by a jury panel who helped create a set of exhibitions that showcase a wonderful array of viewpoints under one umbrella theme: self-expression.

This summer, we also invite you to also enjoy free programs at the Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts and a satellite exhibition at the Tempe Post Office in the heart of Mill Avenue.

During the summer, three artists-in-residence work in art studio spaces inside the Gallery. Visitors can meet the artists and see their artworks in progress over a 12-week timeline. These artists also participate in community programs, professional development sessions and teach hands-on workshops.



Image: Kaori Takamura

## Satellite Exhibition of Hear Me. See Me.

May 13—Sep 27

**Tempe Post Office**  
**500 S. Mill Ave.**

With artists  
Kaori Takamura,  
Megan Driving Hawk,  
Anh-Thuy Nguyen and  
Philip Steverson

## Contact Us:

Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts  
700 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, AZ 85281  
480. 350. 2867

# Inquiry Strategy with Tactical Questions

The following 4-question strategy is an easy to use tool for investigating the layers of context and meaning in visual art.

## What Can I See? Facts about the artwork.

- Subject Matter
- Design Elements & Principles
- Technical Features
- Function
- Reproduction versus Original
- Care/Condition



## What Else Can I Learn?

Contextual facts.

- Artists' Lives
- Physical Environments
- Cultural Context
- Artworlds (Art Experience)

## What Does It Mean?

Conclusions about meanings.

- Personal & Cultural Viewpoints
- Artists' Intentions
- Art Specialists' Understandings



## How Does It Compare?

Conclusions about connections among artworks.

- Style
- Art Influence (From Other Art)
- Themes

# Hints for Asking Good Questions

Hints for a well-rounded conversation: You'll often learn more from open-ended questions than close-ended questions.

A **closed-ended question** is answered with a one-word response such as yes or no or another single word. *Example:* Is this an oil or acrylic painting?

*Closed-ended questions* start with verbs like "Is? Do? and Can?"

An **open-ended question** requires more explanation.

*Example:* How is painting in oil different from painting with acrylics?

*Open-ended questions* start with "Why? and How?"

Some words can be used for **both types of questions** such as:

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Both open and close-ended questions are valuable. The construction and phrasing of a question shapes the kind of information you can expect to receive.

**For Practice:** Write down 3 open-ended questions. Pretend you are meeting someone for the first time. You need to ask questions to get to know that person better.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

# What Can I See?

## Tips for looking carefully at an Artwork



**Subject Matter:** Some artworks have subject matter and others do not. Subject matter refers to anything real or imaginary that is shown in an artwork (such as people, places and things).

**Elements of Design:** Traditional elements in Western art include: (“D” represents “dimensional.”)

### **2D Elements**

line  
shape  
value (light and dark)  
color

### **3D Elements**

form or mass  
space  
texture

### **4D Elements/Time**

sequence  
duration

**Design Principles:** Ways artists organize elements of design to create interesting and unified compositions. Some Traditional Principles include:

Balance	Variation	Focal Point	Pattern
Harmony	Repetition	Movement	Transition
Emphasis/Focal Point	Rhythm	Direction	Proportion
Contrast			

**Technical Features:** Careful viewing of an artwork usually reveals evidence of how it was made. (Indicators might include art making tools, materials and processes.)

**Function:** Artists make artworks that serve a great many functions such as:

Capturing the beauty of nature	Memorializing an important event
Celebrating or criticizing a person, event or group	Exploring visual possibilities
Sharing a vision	Promoting a belief or cause
Celebrating the artist's heritage	Making the ordinary extraordinary
Stimulating action	Many more



# What Can I See? ...continued



**Reproduction Vs Original:** Some reproductions can look pretty different from the originals. Common differences between originals and reproductions are:

Size	Colors	Surface Texture	Luminosity
Angle of View	Lighting	Other	

**Care/Condition:** The condition of artworks can deteriorate over time for many reasons, among them:

Perishable or fragile materials	Damage in storage
Matting, mounting, or framing	Temperature and humidity
Accidents	Vandalism

**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what you see.”

**Now, practice looking carefully at an artwork.**



Kaori Takamura  
*Hazy Memories of Taste*  
mixed media  
37" x 34"

1. View the work from a distance. Then move up close. What details can you see now, such as shapes and colors? What subtleties do you think might be missed in a photograph?  
[REPRODUCTION VS ORIGINAL]

2. How did the artist create and cut the colorful shapes? By hand or with a laser cutter? How might the pieces be attached?  
[TECHNIQUE]

3. How many different colors can you identify? How would you describe the color choices? (bright/dark/pastels/etc.?)  
[DESIGN ELEMENT]

4. How do variations of visual elements (size, color, elevation from background, etc.) draw your eye to move across and around the work?  
[DESIGN PRINCIPLE]

## Now You Try! *What Can I See?*



Kaori Takamura, *Exuvia of Possession*, resin and plastic packaging

**Look at this additional artwork in progress by Takamura. List 3 quick descriptions about what you see:** (Example: "large sculpture, depicts a woman and is made of bronze.")

a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your observations, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.**

a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# What Can I Learn?

## Tips for investigating an Artist's Background



**Artist's Life:** The personal lives of artists can affect their work, including such factors as:

Family                      Work                      Education                      Travel  
Personal life experiences                      Other

**Physical Environment:** The physical world, both natural and human made) can inspire their work:

Natural environment (plants, animals, climate, landforms, etc.)

Constructed environment (buildings, roads, bridges, vehicles, furniture, consumer goods, etc.)

**Culture:** Artists can draw ideas for their work from their cultures:

Values and beliefs                      Hobbies and entertainment  
Politics                      Economic situation  
Language                      Heritage and/or ethnicity  
Other

**Art Experience (Artworld):** Artists get ideas and support from other people involved in art, through:

Art education/Apprenticeships  
Insights from specialists in the art form (ceramics , painting, etc.)  
Representation by art galleries  
Contact with art patrons and collectors  
Acknowledgement through art awards, prizes, grants, commissions.  
Art included in museum collections



# What Can I Learn?

## Practice investigating an Artist's Background



**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what I can learn.” (You may also consult the artist's biography and artist statement in the back of the workbook.)

Anh-Thuy Nguyen, *Untitled #2, #3, #4*; archival pigment print



1. What do Anh-Thuy Nguyen's photographs suggest about how it might feel to be an immigrant in the United States? [ARTIST'S LIFE]

2. Nguyen says, “‘Thuy & T,’ was created during a new wave of anti-Asian hate rippling across the United States (in 2020). The photographs are self-portraits of Nguyen. How does her quote, her dress and actions in the images speak to her concerns as an immigrant? [CULTURE]

3. Nguyen's works have been selected for exhibitions across the world. What messages in her works might be universally understood by curators in museums in both the United States and Vietnam? [ARTWORLD]



## Now You Try! **What Else I Can**



Anh-Thuy Nguyen  
Untitled #1, from the Thuy & T series  
archival pigment print

**Brainstorm and list 5 interesting facts about Anh-Thuy Nguyen's background.**

\*You may want to consult pg. 9, the artists biography and artist statement in the back of workbook, and/or a media article and/or Internet references about the artist.)

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

d \_\_\_\_\_

e \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your research, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about these artworks/artist.**

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

# What Does It Mean?

## Tips for interpreting an Artwork



**Artist's Intention:** Artists decide how they want their artworks to look. Their intentions may be:

- |  |             |           |                   |
|--|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Personal or private                                  | Traditional | Practical | Boundary breaking |
| Unconventional                                       | Evolving    | Emotional | Spontaneous       |
| Experimental   | Deliberate  |           |                   |
| Focused on collector, patron, funder or other viewer |             |           | Other             |

**Art Specialists' Understandings:** The considered opinions of art specialists (experts) direct viewers' attention to aspects of artworks that they judge to be worthy of that attention. Art specialists may include:

- |                |                     |                    |               |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Artists        | Art Teachers        | Museum Curators    | Art Critics   |
| Art Historians | Master Craftspeople | Ceremonial Leaders | Guild Members |
| Tribal elders  | Others              |                    |               |

**Cultural Understandings:** A viewer's cultural understanding draws upon a set of ideas, beliefs and standards shared broadly within a culture. These are learned, not by special effort and instruction, but simply through growing up as a member of a culture. Unexamined expectations might include:

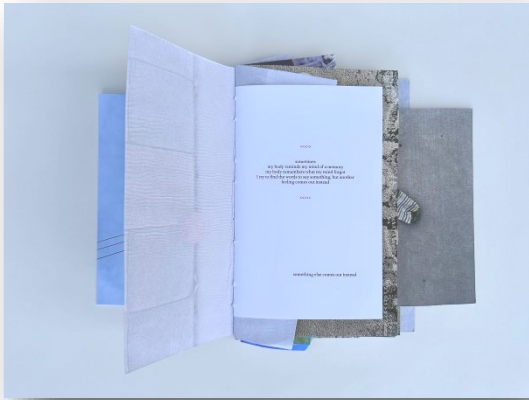
- |            |                 |                   |                     |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| High price | Obvious meaning | Difficult to make | Easily recognizable |
| Familiar   | Other           |                   |                     |

**Your Own Viewpoint:** Your responses to artworks are affected by:

- |                    |                         |                      |
|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| conscious thoughts | unconscious reactions   | personal preferences |
| careful viewing    | thoughtful reflection   | relevant information |
| free association   | previous art experience | and more             |

# What Does It Mean?

## Practice interpreting an Artwork



Megan Driving Hawk,  
*Ghost Fractures*, (3 detail views of  
the hand-made book)  
mixed media  
12" x 16" x 1.25"

**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about "what it means." (You may also consult the artist's biography and artist statement in the back of the workbook.)

1. Driving Hawk writes that in "*Ghost Fractures*" she "*sews together the delicate weavings of life, decay, hope, light, darkness, and what gets left behind.*" Why is the use of photography important in this artwork about memory? [ARTIST'S INTENTION]

2. Driving Hawk is an artist, wife and mother. Her husband is Lakota and this artwork explores her "*role as white mother teaching [her son] how to be a good steward of the land*". What unique insights about the environment might her son grow up to remember when he sees this artwork? [CULTURAL VIEWPOINT]

3. How do you document memories? Do you keep scrapbooks? Journals? Digital photo albums on your phone?

What is your reaction to Driving Hawk's hand-made, handstitched book? Is the hand-made element important to you? Why or why not? [PERSONAL VIEWPOINT]



# Now You Try! What Does It Mean?



Megan Driving Hawk, *What He Brings*, (2 detail views of the hand-made book), mixed media, 5.57" x 30" x .81"

**Look at this work by Driving Hawk. Brainstorm and list 5 ideas about what the artwork is about.** \*You may want to consult a media article and/or Internet . (You may also consult the artist's biography and artist statement in the back of the workbook.)

- a \_\_\_\_\_
- b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_
- d \_\_\_\_\_
- e \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your interpretation, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.**

- a \_\_\_\_\_
- b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_



# How Do They Compare?

## Tips for gathering insights by comparing Artworks



**Style:** Style is a set of distinctive qualities ("family resemblance") that are shared by more than one artwork. Artists develop their own style and incorporate aspects of the styles of artists from their own or other times and cultures.

Artist's style      Style of art movement or period      Cultural style

**Art Influence:** Most artists are influenced by artists who worked before them, though some self-taught artists, called "outsider artists," work in isolation, largely unaware of the work of other artists. Art influences can include:

Technical and aesthetic achievements by other artists

Other artists' ideas, innovations, commitments

Traditional or historical art ideas to follow, extend or break away from

**Theme:** Some broad, cross-cultural themes have been the focus of many artists throughout history and across the globe:

People and nature      Cultural pride      Conquest      Overcoming

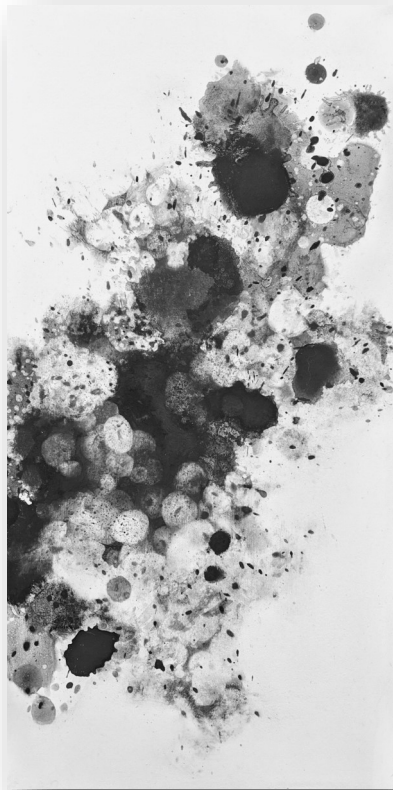
Strength of family      Love      Fantasy      Social order

Harmony      Chaos      Revisiting history      Heroic adventure

Religious devotion      Status      Many more

# How Do They Compare?

Practice gathering insights by comparing two artworks



Jessica Palomo

(LEFT IMAGE)  
*Asteraceases*  
graphite &  
gesso on panel

(RIGHT IMAGE)  
*Papaver*  
graphite &  
gesso on panel

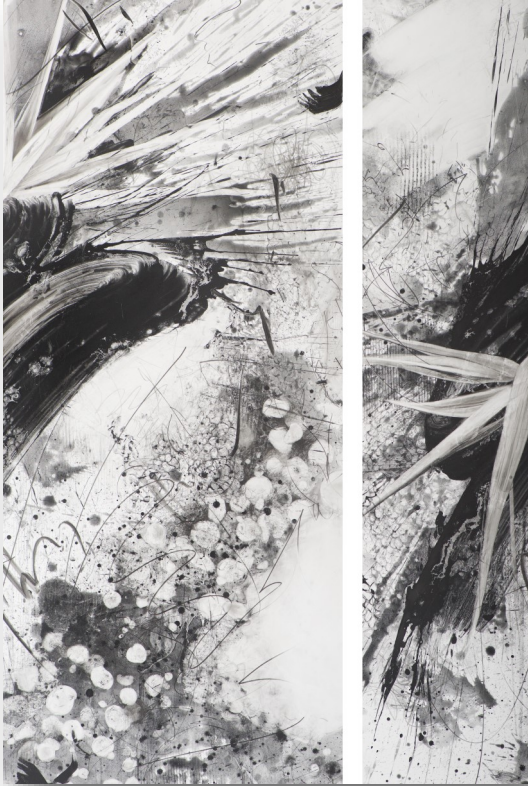
**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “how they compare.” (You may also consult the artist’s biography and artist statement in the back of the workbook.)

1. What visual features, such as color, contrast, shape, illusion of depth, etc., are similar in both artworks? [STYLE]

2. Palomo says these artworks “are a response to the grief of losing a loved one.” How might the process of making these works be therapeutic for the artist? [THEME]

3. The theme of the exhibition explores identity, self-expression and the ways in which art can be a communication tool. What emotions and ideas do these artworks convey to you? [THEME]

# Now You Try! How Do They Compare?



Jessica Palomo  
*Paradisae Asteraceases*  
graphite & yupo on panel



Bryson Bost  
*Collected Willpower*  
acrylic and pigment ink

**Now, based on your comparisons, write three questions you could ask a friend about these artworks.** (You may also consult the artists' biographies and artists statements in the back of the workbook.)

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_



# Token Response 2.0 | SEEKING the Artist's Voice

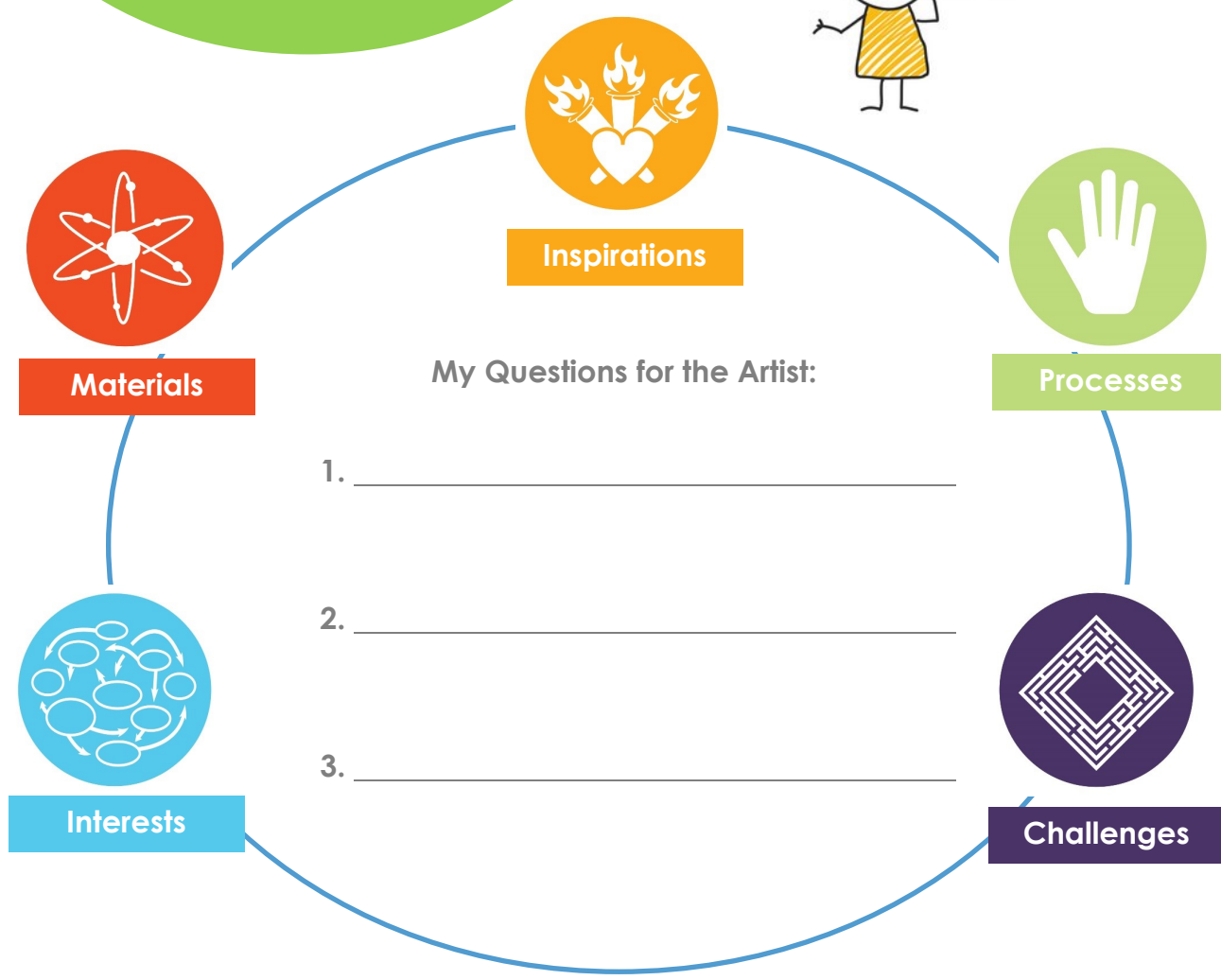
with exhibiting artist, Bronwyn Dierssen

Bronwyn Dierssen, *Symbiosis*, charcoal on paper



Questions can help you figure out how an artist thinks and works. Choose three tokens to guide your inquiry about this artist. If you are able to talk to the artist, what would you most like to know? (Circle your chosen tokens.)

**Hint:** Knowing something about the artist and their work can help you ask better questions, for example, an artist's statement, key life experiences of the artist, and quotes about specific works.



# Token Response 2.0 | SEEKING the Artist's Voice

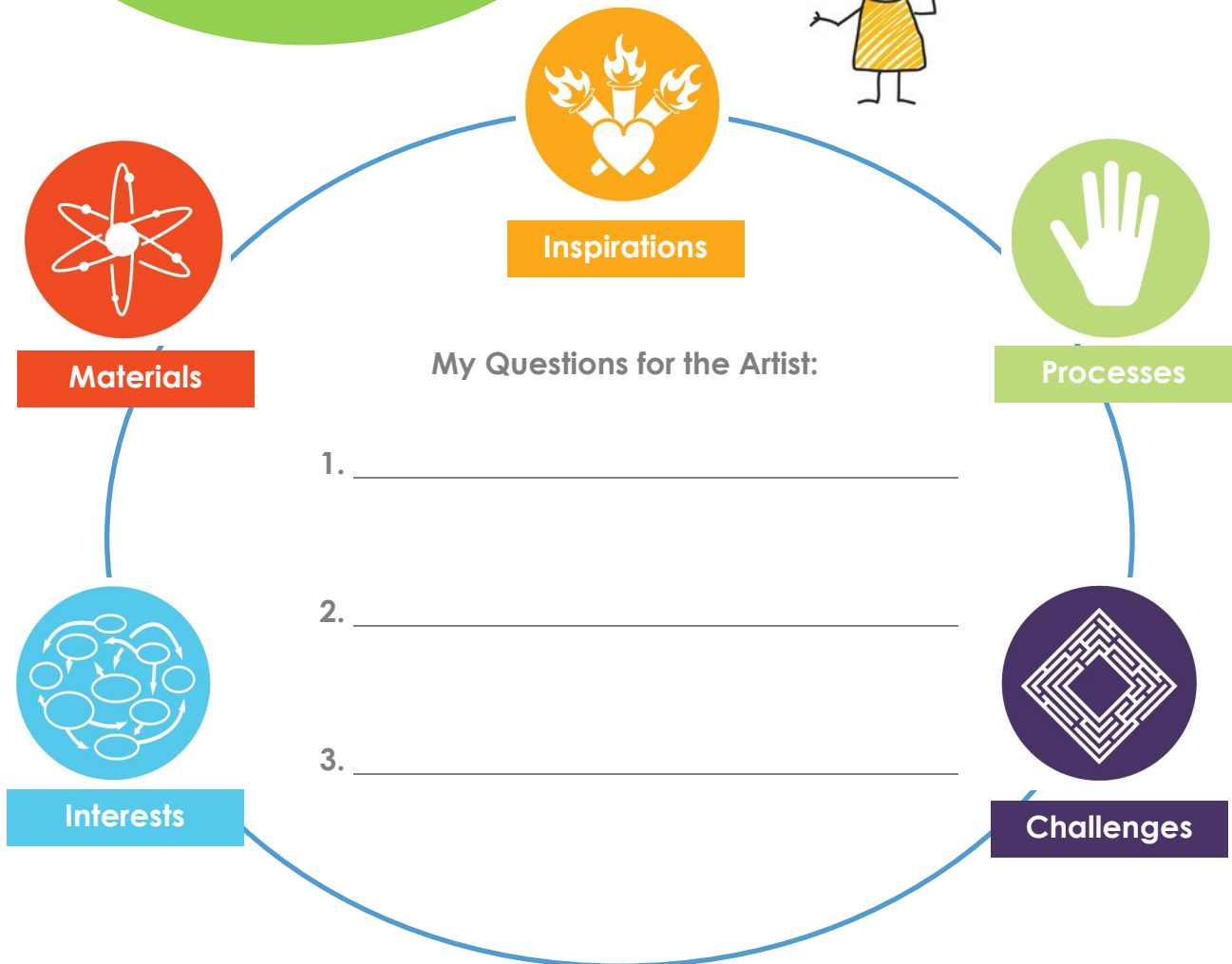
## with exhibiting artist, Philip Steverson

Philip Steverson, *Youthful Innocence*  
oil, acrylic, pastel



Questions can help you figure out how an artist thinks and works. Choose three tokens to guide your inquiry about this artist. If you are able to talk to the artist, what would you most like to know? (Circle your chosen tokens.)

**Hint:** Knowing something about the artist and their work can help you ask better questions, for example, an artist's statement, key life experiences of the artist, and quotes about specific works.





# Exhibiting Artist Text panels

## **Bryson Bost, Phoenix**

Bost grew up near the base of Big Sur on the central coast of California. His early memories of making art go all the way back to pre-school. As an adult, he later ended up studying art at the Instituto Allende in Guanajuato, a visual arts school in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. While there, Bost was influenced by Mesoamerican culture and design.

When asked why he makes abstract art, Bost says it is a gateway for exploring *"Maximalism [a style energized by excess], where I have the ability to position details and intricacies in unexpected ways. The chance to wander within the composition is always present, and that is most enjoyable.*

Bost is also an individual that likes to keep positivity in his life and work. He says it is by choice, *"my creations are not trying to prove anyone wrong, change someone's mind or challenge one's beliefs. In doing so, you'll find yourself a pretty upbeat and positive person."*

brysonbost.com

@brysonbostart

## **Bronwyn Dierssen, Tucson, AZ**

Dierssen grew up in the suburbs of Portland, Oregon and has made art since she was a toddler. Today, she is a wife, mother and artist who loves traveling and going to museums and galleries to see how and what other artists are creating.

Dierssen describes her own art practice as largely self-taught with a focus on themes about mental and physical health, identity and human emotion. The faces in her works include elements of realism, as well as abstracted forms that distort the portraits too. She says, *"using light and dark contrasts with heavy shadows, glitchy and jagged elements disrupts the refined and realistic forms to create a sense of tension, unease and uncertainty. By showcasing the beauty and strength of my subjects as they are faded and fragmented- I hope to exhibit the strength and courage we all possess."*

For Dierssen, making art is also a healing and meditative process. She is open about her numerous health struggles including lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, brain tumors and epilepsy. Dierssen says, *"Art became my outlet as I was getting all these diagnosis' and lost a lot of my independence. It was a great way to zone out, make something beautiful and give myself a sense of purpose again. It's been a tough few years, but I know that being an artist is a big reason I've been able to overcome these struggles. I now encourage art as therapy or an outlet to everyone."*

@bronwyn\_dierssen\_art

bronwyndierssen.com

## **Sher Dunshee-Menton, Fountain Hills**

Originally from the Midwest, Dunshee-Menton earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Iowa. She enjoyed a twenty-five-year commercial art career before embarking on a decade-long sailing adventure. The experience helped re-energize her interests in developing and refining her artistic skills. Today, she sees her paintings as a multi-sensory experience for herself and the viewer. Dunshee-Menton says, *"Our lives are a sacred journey of growth, discovery, stretching our souls, of learning to see, and to listen deeply to our inner truth. My work is a celebration of life and represents the ephemeral: the forces that pulse through and surround everything in our universe."*

Dunshee-Menton also describes her approach to making art, *"I'm inspired by life and our inward journey. All my work begins on the inner realm. I consider painting moving meditation. Like life, painting is about letting go and being open to all the possibilities.... I liken the process to a 'balancing act' between controlling the paintings and allowing them to flow and lead the way: part chaos, part magic."*

sherdunsheementon.com

@sherdmart

## **Jessica Palomo, Phoenix, AZ**

Palomo received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in sculpture from Southern Methodist University in Dallas and a Master of Fine Arts in drawing from Arizona State University. She has been the recipient of awards including the Nathan Cummings Travel Grant and the City of Phoenix Artist to Work Grant. She has also exhibited her work locally at places such as Phoenix Art Museum, Tucson Museum of Art and Chandler Museum, as well as internationally in Italy and China. Today, Palomo is represented by Bentley Gallery in Phoenix.

Palomo says, *"My work is a response to the grief of losing a loved one, a trauma that can overload and fracture the conscious mind, causing a shattered emotional state. Through abstraction and mark-making, I explore the dynamics of this ruptured reality that place identity and emotion in a liminal, ambiguous space."*

*"By rendering only a handful of distinct organic forms, the eyes rest merely for a moment before plunging into a sea of textural marks. These expressive involuntary marks do what language cannot, intuitively creating a passageway to concealed memories, recording a trace of their complexities through drawing, and ultimately logging the intricate and multifaceted sensations of suffering in hopes of creating a truer empathetic connection."*

jessicapalomo.com

@jess\_palomo

bentleygallery.com

## **Andrea Pro, Phoenix**

Pro, also known by her signature, "4.Pro," is a Chicana painter, illustrator and designer. She is originally from the border town of Douglas, Arizona and attended Arizona State University where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting in 2021. Her work includes a variety of art making practices including oil painting, mixed media and digital art. Depending on the work, Pro utilizes vibrant colors, embroidery and imagery like flowers and butterflies which address ideas about cultural identity, spirituality and femininity. They also reflect the personal memories, love of nature and cultural roots she built while growing up in the Sonoran Desert and in an area that sits between the United States and Mexico.

*Pro says, "These three works of art hold a special place in my heart. Each one is a testament to my growth, and they serve as a reminder to myself that I am a multifaceted artist. Each piece was created during a transitional point of my life when I was exploring different storytelling methods through art. 'Thank You Bag (I)' was an undergrad project that was born out of the desire to create an art piece by repurposing used materials.... 'For the Time Being' is a figure painting that was initially a study in color theory and composition, but quickly became a painting reminiscent of my childhood memories in Mexico. 'Not Perfect, Just Growing' is my most recent work. It is a part of an ongoing tradition of mine to create a self-portrait every year. This is also the largest scale embroidery design that I've ever hand sewn, which was a very challenging but successful undertaking for me."*

4proart.com

@4.prp.art

## **Tess Mosko Scherer, Phoenix**

Mosko Scherer's career in the arts spans more than 30 years. She's "worn many hats" in the arts including artist, gallery owner, curator, educator, director and community advocate. Since 2019, she has also served as the Executive Director of the Arizona Arts Alliance, a nonprofit that helps arts organizations throughout the state. Mosko Scherer lives in Phoenix with her husband and their dog. They both maintain studios on their urban farm oasis surrounded by their flock of chickens, gardens, orchard and fish.

*Mosko Scherer says about the Variations on Voice works on display, "This series explores areas where women regain their power through their voice. The background of each piece is inscribed with a word or phrase that represents an area where women often lose themselves. The figure is covered with text that, when embodied, is the source of power through voice or choice."*

*Mosko Scherer says of artwork, The Woundedness of Being Human II, "This piece was created shortly after my oldest sister sustained a brain injury. It affected her executive functioning and left her incapable of tending to herself. Her care and quality of life fell into the hands of all the siblings and healthcare workers. Although the seven of us rallied together on her behalf, the injury took its toll on us as a family."*

Moskoscherer.com

@tess\_mosko\_scherer\_

## **Philip Gabriel Steverson, Phoenix**

Steverson is originally from West Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He later came to the Valley where he earned two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Arizona State University in fashion and creative writing/poetry in 2022. His art and design works have appeared in exhibitions and events at local venues such as Modified Arts Gallery in Phoenix, Cartel Coffee in Tempe, Phoenix Art Museum. Steverson is also the recipient of awards and grants from organizations like the Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture, Artlink and Ted Decker Catalyst Fund. Today, Steverson working to adapt and shift his artistic choices to best express his life, memory and emotion.

*Steverson says, "In the past two years, I have been in between studies of ways to combine the techniques of fashion design, writing and fine art as one form. These two pieces come in between that course of study and a time of despondency due to the transition of my mother from the physical world to the afterlife. With life experiences and personal history being the catalyst in my work, these pieces are reflections of memories and dreams that found me in those stages of grief. The application of found clothing and materials support the memories, bringing them to life on a 3-dimensional plane. With studies underway, the use of materials within the work will be broken down and reimagined as my practice evolves."*

philipgabriel.com

@philsweak

## **George Strasburger, Tucson**

Strasburger was born and raised in a working-class neighborhood in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He recalls admiring the stories and people depicted in the religious murals at the Catholic Church he attended as a child. Those early memories along with years of study of drawing, painting and anatomy led to his career as a figurative painter. Strasburger says, *I am an old school realist, and my paintings portray people performing basic elemental human acts. The works reveal my inner dialogue about my life, neighborhood and society, yet the subjects suggest broader issues that are biblical, political and philosophical."*

*Strasburger says, "My life as an artist is in a way, a solitary one. Spending many hours alone with my work my mind comfortably wanders, and I see that we are all, in the end, isolated in our thoughts.... The man portrayed in The Separation is experiencing this reality, separate from the other characters and looking out of himself for a connection."*

*Strasburger goes on to say, "I painted The Builders in response to a similar painting I made with a bit more sinister suggestion. I had started this as a means to explore some technical and compositional ideas. As is often the case, events or images in the news or my neighborhood or my life entered into the work. My inner dialogue was needing to see people working cooperatively and in peace."*

georgestrasburger.com

@georgestrasburger



## **Kaori Takamura, Tempe 2023 Artist-in-Residence**

Takamura was born in Tokyo Japan but lives and works in the United States. She started her career as a graphic and packaging designer. That training and experience continues to influence the ways she balances the relationships between design, craft and art. Today she is a full-time artist and enjoys working with a variety of materials like paint, canvas, plastics and wood; and processes including hand stitching, printmaking, laser cutting and mold making. Her current work seeks to capture the essence of long forgotten memories through recognizable images like letters, numbers, geometric shapes and popular culture.

Takamura's pieces have been shown at places such as Phoenix Art Museum, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, the San Jose Museum of Textile and Quilts and Haneda International Airport in Japan. This summer she is also a featured artist at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum in the exhibition *Visual Syntax* which runs May 12 – Aug. 6.

*Takamura says, "My recent focus of art practice is to evoke the awareness of evanescent beauty of sublime aging process; how we begin and how we end and what this means to us, in the passage of time and our sentimental collection of memories."*

*"My artwork is influenced by my childhood memories during the rapid growth of the 1970s in Tokyo. Our traditional Japanese culture, which emphasizes modest and simple aesthetics, was strangely mixed with an overwhelming influence of western culture."*

kaoritakamura.com  
@kaoritakamura3

Kaori Takamura  
*Exuvia of Possession*  
resin and plastic packaging

Takamura says, *"This is an ongoing project started in 2023. Through this artwork, I express the nostalgic qualities of commodities that once belonged to people as part of their lives. I believe that these commodities are objects that provide people a certain purpose or meaning or simple joy in daily life. While people and society change, those commodities remain the same but are left behind and exist only in memories like an empty shell. I strive to capture the fading relationship and emotional attachment people have with those possessions. The items are mainly selected from the period of my youth and each are molded in resin, placed in a blister clamshell package to recall when they were once on the shelf at the store as a commodity."*

Kaori Takamura  
*Hazy Memory of Taste*  
mixed media

Takamura explains, *"With a vintage toy-like expression, I capture the nostalgic memories of the specific period in my life in the 70s in Tokyo during the rapid Japanese economic growth at that time. This was a period when Western influences overflowed into our traditional Japanese culture and our everyday lives, changing them drastically. As what was once a culture with modest and simple aesthetics, now began to embrace a colorful and vivid Western flavor that symbolized modern definitions of joy, of dreams and of hope for the future."*

## **Anh-Thuy Nguyen, Tucson 2023 Artist-in-Residence**

Nguyen earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from the University of Arizona and a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography/video from Southern Methodist University in Dallas. Her artworks can be found in permanent collections such as the Amarillo Museum of Art, Tucson Museum of Art, Center for Photography at Woodstock in Kingston, NY. Today, Nguyen lives in Tucson with her family and is the head of the photography program at Pima Community College.

As a Vietnamese American artist, Nguyen's primary artistic source material for the last decade has been her personal history and experiences as a female immigrant. Through art, she investigates her cultural roots and personal identity through several art forms including photography, video, installation and performance art. Nguyen says, *"My work highlights complex relationships and cultural conflicts resulting from my existing between cultural identities: Vietnamese and American."*

Nguyen says of the 12-week residency at Gallery at Tempe Center for the Arts *"it will allow me to develop an extension for A is for Alphabet, a project that explores the struggles of mastering a new language- English and the decolonial power of this language. -The plan is to create a series of artist books in the form of a dictionary to accompany the current work. -The design will be inspired by the first Vietnamese-Portuguese-Latin dictionary, published by the Propaganda Fide in Rome in 1651. It established chữ Quốc ngữ, the Vietnamese alphabet, which became the prominent writing system for Vietnamese since 1861. -The adoption of this language erased the ancient Vietnamese written language and politically shifted Vietnamese social consciousness from imperialism (the Chinese) towards colonialism (the French). I would like to spend my time at this residency to do research related to this dictionary, experiment with papermaking and visual designs for my artist books."*

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Anh-Thuy Nguyen  
*Thuy & T.*  
ongoing mixed media series

Nguyen says, “my ten-year project, *Thuy &*, is my way to visualize the internal struggle of existing between two cultures. However, quickly the piece took on a new meaning and urgency as it was created during a new wave of anti-Asian hate rippling across the United States, started in March 2020. Each punch I threw were my frustration, anger, pain, and sadness towards the experiences of being immigrant, of being Asian, and of being of Asian descent in the USA. Rice is used as a recurrence symbol of my cultural identity, to which I am identified.”

Anh-Thuy Nguyen  
*A is for Alphabet*  
ongoing mixed media series

Nguyen says, “*A is for Alphabet* was originally conceptualized as video, exploring the struggles of mastering a new language- English, and its decolonial power. The project currently includes two video pieces, series of gelatin silver prints, and a set of English alphabets casted from pure silver. In connection with the video component, I created a series of photographs printed on gelatin silver, and a set of English alphabets modeled from my handwriting and crafted from pure silver. This decision is inspired by the Vietnamese **proverb: ‘Lời nói là bạc’ translated to English as ‘Words are silver.’**

During the continued act of repetition and performative articulations between me, the English learner and a native English speaker, words became meaningless, nonsensical babble, rather than building blocks for coherent speech. We both became confused, and the meaning of the scripted words was muddled or lost, along with the language’s colonial power.”

## **Megan Driving Hawk, Gilbert**

### **2023 Artist-in-Residence**

*I work like a busy spider,  
revealing, sewing, healing,  
the unseen wounds and trauma,  
moving from maiden to mother,  
always in a state of postpartum.*

Driving Hawk says, "I reveal connections to the Divine, ancestors, family, community and the environment through the practices of photography, poetry and various forms of traditional needlework.

*I sew together the delicate weavings of life, death, decay, hope, light, darkness and what gets left behind.*

*I heal generational, childhood and collective traumas as I navigate my journey as a white wife and mother to Lakǰóta men."*

Driving Hawk is an artist, mother and educator living in the East Valley on O'odham, Yavapai, Akimel O'odham (Upper Pima) and Hohokam lands. She earned two degrees from Arizona State University including a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography and a Master of Education degree in secondary education and teacher certification in art for K-12. She also received a Master of Fine Arts degree in Interdisciplinary studies from the University of Hartford in Connecticut. Driving Hawk is a photography teacher for high school students and a practicing artist member of Eye Lounge Gallery in Phoenix and serves as the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Representative for the Arizona Art Education Association. Her teaching, research and art making practices concentrate on facilitating collective healing, generational trauma, building community connections and learning about Indigenous cultures.

During Driving Hawk's residency her intent is to "weave together" her art making processes (like fibers, paper, collage, stitching and book binding) with her interests in building "connections between people, places, organizations, ideas, and movements." She says the finished books on display "come from *The View from Here* series of handmade books created between 2021 and 2022. Each book's title is a line from an 8-line poem I constructed from my journal entries during that time. Each contains cultural symbols that have been reconstructed to represent the confluence of cultures that complete my family. Both are made in ceremony and dedicated to experiences of moving forward through change, failed moments in artmaking and parenting, moments of pause in the mundane, teachings of the land, healing trauma and honoring memory."

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Megan Driving Hawk

*ghost fractures*

hand-made book

Driving Hawk says, "*ghost fractures is a visual manifestation of how memory lives in my brain. Each photograph has a vertical line running through it and is folded on that line which gives the book its form. The vertical line represents the fracture in a memory that can't been seen by the viewer. Sometimes I can't see a fracture in memory until I feel it. With every flip of a page, there are pieces of photographs that represent memories and, as the viewer continues flipping, there are pieces from previous photographs.*"

Megan Driving Hawk

*what he brings*

hand-made book

Driving Hawk describes the work, "*what he brings, comes from time spent with my son while we were out on the land, running, hiking or walking. I am asking myself what he is learning and what knowledge he is bringing back home with him. I am investigating my role as a white mother teaching him how to be a good steward of the land.*"

