



explore

Tempe Center for the Arts | 700 W. Rio Salado Parkway, Tempe, AZ 85281 | (480) 350-2867



Detail of *Breathe and Manifest*
by Granville Carroll

A Guide for Understanding the Exhibition

tempecenterforthearts.com/Gallery

explore

Spring/Summer, 2021

Dear New Reader:

We hope this guide will provide you with some easy-to-use tools to enhance your experiences with visual art. Over the years, we've noticed that people can be both attracted to and intimidated by art at the same time. We've found that asking questions that start "informal conversations" is one of the best ways to put people at ease.

Sure, some art is beautiful and easy to approach, while other art can be challenging and not so easy to digest. Just like a book, visual art can be appealing, serious and yes, even ugly. Some art confirms, celebrates and expands how we understand ourselves. Other art opens pathways through which we can explore other viewpoints. You as a viewer (reader) also bring a variety of thoughts and personal preferences into the experience. With practice and some new tools on your belt, you'll find that those seemingly complicated layers of meaning and context can be peeled back and explored. It's just knowing where to look and why.

We would also like to thank the artists for letting us utilize some of their artworks for this guide.

Sincerely,

*Mary Erickson, Ph.D. (TCA Docent) &
Michelle Nichols Dock (Visual Arts Curator)*

For Questions:
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"to boldly go where no one has gone before."

*Captain Jean-Luc Picard,
Star Trek: The Next Generation*

This exhibition is part of a series of arts and technology inspired programs called *CURIOcity*. The theme celebrates the curious minds that thrive on connecting ideas across disciplines. It also features contemporary art made by local and national artists who seek to understand the world through scholarship, collaboration, innovative art making and fearless determination.

The **EXPLORE** exhibitions look at space exploration and the cross over metaphors it represents such as human curiosity, pushing known and unknown boundaries and dreaming of what could be. Within the displays are references to the cosmos, nature, technology and the future. Each of the artists endeavors to maintain a sense of wonder about the human condition.

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:

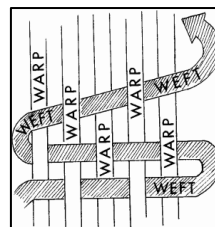
Perishable or fragile materials	Damage in storage
Matting, mounting, or framing	Temperature and humidity
Accidents	Vandalism

Now, practice looking carefully at an artwork.

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



Erika Lynne Hanson, *Time Travel as Space Travel as Particles Collides*, loom woven textile with dyed linen and lurex, 50" x 48" x 2", (detail below)



1. Hanson wove her flags on a large loom. The warp strands are vertical; the weft are horizontal. Look at the detail image. Where does the warp stand out more clearly? Where does the weft dominate more? [TECHNIQUE]
2. Look at the artwork. What subtle patterns and gradual color changes help balance the large shapes? [DESIGN]
3. What about this weaving suggests it could be used as a flag? [FUNCTION]
4. What do you imagine gallery viewers might be tempted to do with this work? How might the gallery prevent this from happening? [CARE/CONDITION]

Now You Try! *What Can I See?*



Erika Lynne Hanson, Image 1: *A confluence of devices that might sense water (Curiosity, dowsing rods, & rocks)*; & Image 2: *Something about depression contours or wishbones or apparitions*. Both are loom woven textiles with dyed linen and lurex, and 50" x 48" x 2" each.

Look at these additional flags by Hanson. 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 _____

Hanson’s entire installation includes three flags “designed and woven for dry lake beds on Mars and a shelf with collected and constructed tools for dowsing and divining.” The installation documents “attempts to find water and the placing of the flags and dry lake beds on Earth that are similar to those on Mars. A simulation of a potential future.” Learn more at elhanson.com

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



Kathryn Maxwell is originally from Illinois and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou and Denver Art Museum. Maxwell says she has been *“profoundly influenced by journeys across the globe from India and Bhutan to Peru and Easter island.”* Today she is Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design in the Arts and continues to work in printmaking and mixed media from her home studio.

Maxwell takes to heart the importance of human exploration, especially when it comes to understanding the many connections people have with each other in the universe. Her mixed media artworks, prints and installations reveal personal and academic investigations about nature, science and spirituality. Her recent artworks include references to disciplines like mythology, astronomy, biology and genetics.

Maxwell says the works from her *Celestial Series* are

“A continuation of a body of work {that} explores the relation of humans to the universe” she quotes Carl Sagan’s book *Cosmos*: *“the nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies are made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of star stuff.”* Learn more at kmaxwell.net

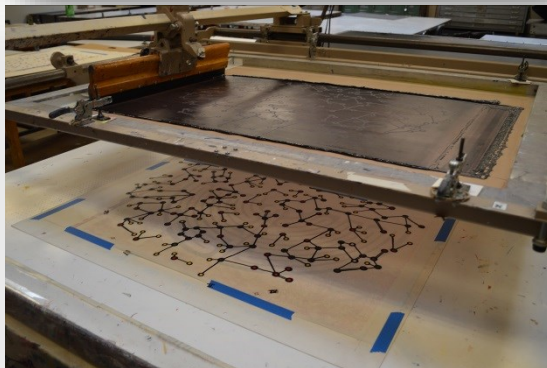
Sample Questions: See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what I can learn.”

1. What diverse disciplines does Maxwell draw upon to understand our environment here on earth and within the larger universe? [PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT]
2. Maxwell has experienced many cultures around the globe- far from her Midwestern roots. How do you think travel and study of other cultures might affect one’s ideas feelings and/or perceptions? [ARTIST’S LIFE AND CULTURE]
3. What educational experiences in Maxwell’s life led to her expansive understanding of art? [ARTIST’S LIFE and ART EXPERIENCE]

Now You Try! **What Else I Can Learn?**



Maxwell working in her studio.



Brainstorm and list 5 interesting facts about Kathryn Maxwell's background.

**You may want to consult pg. 9 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:

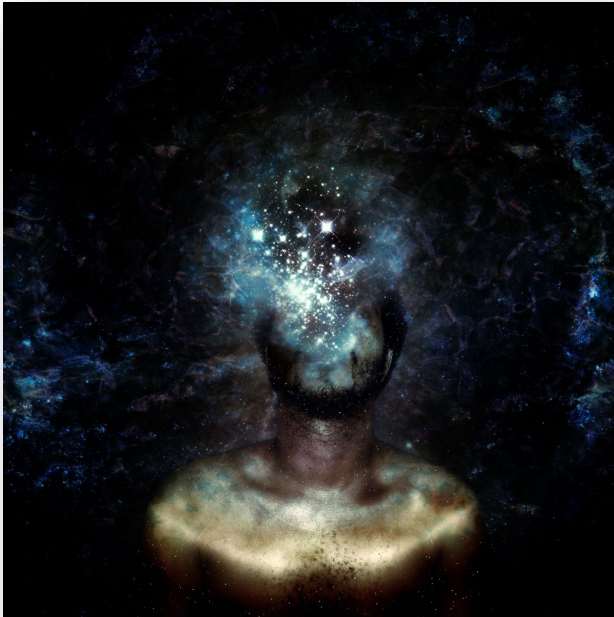
High price	Obvious meaning	Difficult to make	Easily recognizable
Familiar	Other		

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



Carroll is a visual artist and educator with roots in the Valley. He works with photography, digital compositing and photo-manipulation. His work is influenced by Afrofuturism, philosophy and spirituality. Carroll says, *“Afrofuturism is often defined as using the imagination, science-fiction, and technology to redefine the Black identity.... I am always inspired to create art that speaks to unknown worlds and that uses the imagination to envision impossible futures.*

“I have been thinking a lot about my personal and collective past and how they have impacted my present condition. As a Black American my collective history is usually told from the point of slavery, and while this is important to acknowledge, I want to go further back in time where my ancestors weren’t slaves. I want to imagine them as scholars, mathematicians, astrologers, and the like.”



Carroll says, *“Science can explain a lot but there is still so much to be discovered and that idea of the unknown and the undiscovered frontier keeps me humbled and always searching for more connections... . I look into the depths and mysteries of the cosmos to understand my origins and to reconstruct a new origin story for the future. The work explores the imaginative and profound implications of reconstructing an identity that belongs to a legacy that reflects the power and mystery of the cosmic forces that brought us all into existence.”*

Carroll was recently listed in *Vanity Fair* magazine’s inaugural *Silver List of 47 Contemporary Photographers* to watch. Writer Katey Rich in the Feb. 11, 2021 edition says Carroll *“explores the relationship between the external material world and the imaginative and vulnerable inner space of the mind.”* Learn more at granvillecarroll.com

Top Image: Granville Carroll, *Breathe and Manifest*, chromogenic print Bottom: Photo of Granville Carroll

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

1. What about *Breathe and Manifest* suggests a “vulnerable” self portrait ? Explain [ART SPECIALIST’S UNDERSTANDING]
2. How does the artwork explore themes of Afrofuturism? Explain. [ARTIST’S INTENTION]
3. How might African Americans understand *Breathe and Manifest* differently from other Americans? [CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING]

Now You Try! What Does It Mean?



Granville Carroll
Ori, chromogenic print

Helpful Hint: What might the title mean?

Ori: In molecular biology, the word “ori” refers to origins of DNA replication. In a cell, DNA replication begins at specific locations (the origins) in the genome which contains the genetic material of an organism.

In astronomy, the word is used in reference to stars in the Orion constellation located on the celestial equator and visible throughout the world. It is one of the most conspicuous and recognizable in the night sky. It was named after Orion, a hunter in Greek mythology.

Look at this work by Granville Carroll. Brainstorm and list 5 ideas about what the artwork is about. *You may want to consult pg. 12 and/or a media article and/or Internet references about the artist and themes.)

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 obstacles

Strength of family

Love

Fantasy

Social order

Harmony

Chaos

Revisiting history

Heroic adventure

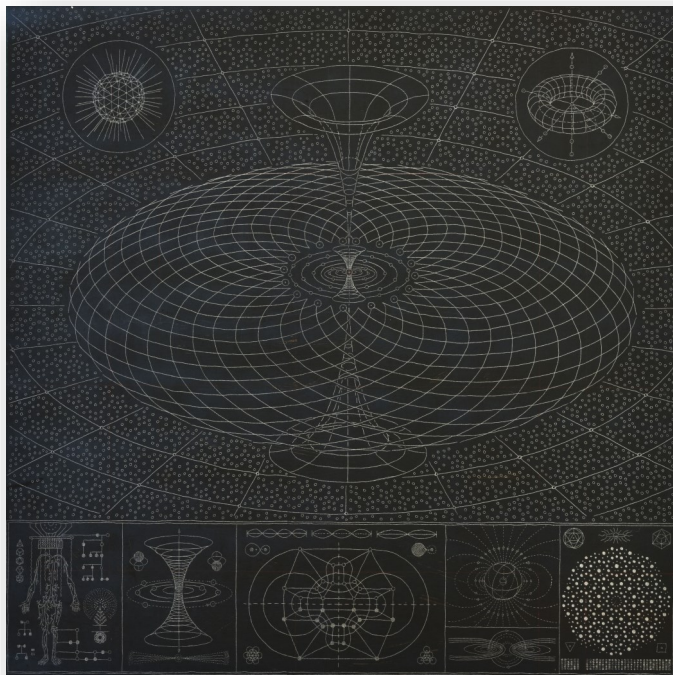
Religious devotion

Status

Many more

How Do They Compare?

Practice gathering insights by comparing pieces by Daniel Martin Diaz



Diaz was born and raised in Tucson. He is a self-taught artist and musician known for meshing ideas and imagery from the disciplines of art history, religion, philosophy, mythology, metaphysics, divination and science. He works in a variety of media including drawing, painting and printmaking. His artworks have been influenced by anything from medieval manuscripts to Victorian scientific diagrams.

A trip to Belgium earlier in his career greatly influenced his love of history and the master artists that combined art and science. While there, he had the opportunity to view the Jan and Hubert van Eyck's famous *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*, better known as the *Ghent Altarpiece* of 1432 (located in Saint Bavo Cathedral). Scholars to this day consider it one of the most significant works of art in Europe.

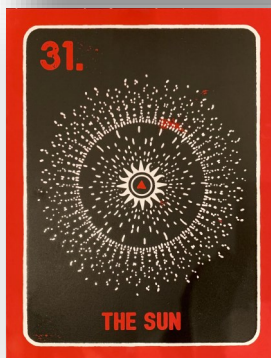
Diaz says, "I always been drawn to an old world aesthetic. My heroes are all of the 1400's to the 1600's. I'm not too much into modern art. The passion of artists such as Van Eyck, Bruegel, Hans Memling and other Northern European Primitives, these are the guys who have resonated with me."

Diaz continues today to be fascinated by the ideas, images and theories people use to ask questions and seek understanding. Some of the pieces on display are loosely inspired by a popular game in Mexico and the southwestern United States called Loteria (a 300 year-old matching game like bingo). His blackboard-like works include references to binary code, computer circuitry, space exploration, sacred geometry, human anatomy, DNA sequencing and more.

Diaz says, "Art is a reflection of ourselves, the story of humanity, and a quest to understand the physical and metaphysical world. As we try to understand our place in the universe, art can be an important part of the dialogue we can create and share with each other. In my work, I seek to reveal the mysterious with arcane imagery and techniques that make sense to me on a deep level that words cannot quantify." Learn more at danielmartindiaz.com

Top Image: Daniel Martin Diaz, *The Universal One*, chalk pencil on wood panel, 32" x 32"

Bottom Image: Daniel Martin Diaz, *The Sun*, acrylic on wood panel, 20.5" x 15.25"



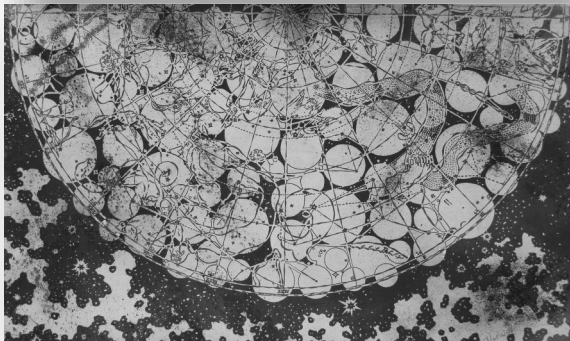
Sample Questions: See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about "how they compare."

1. How do Diaz's works reflect the theme of the **EXPLORE** exhibition? [THEME]
2. What visual characteristics are similar in *these pieces* even though, at first glance, they may seem quite different? [STYLE]
3. What ideas presented in these works might have been inspired by artworks and/or games of the past? [ART INFLUENCE]

Now You Try! How Do They Compare?



1. What similarities can you find between these artworks?
2. What differences do you see among these artworks?



Images

- 1) Christine Cassano, *Celestial Conduits*, circuit boards and copper on paper, framed 20x20
- 2) Kathryn Maxwell, *Northern & Southern Hemispheres 1*, graphite lithographs, each is framed 31"x 45"
- 3) James Turrell, *Roden Crater*, lithograph, 20" x 19"

Now, based on your comparisons, write three questions you could ask a friend about these artworks.

a

b

c

Artist Text Panels

Granville Carroll, Rochester, NY

Carroll is a visual artist and educator with roots in the Valley. He works with photography, digital compositing and photo-manipulation. He received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in photography from Arizona State University and graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography and related media from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Today he is teaching photography in New York and online for ASU.

Carroll's work is influenced by Afrofuturism, philosophy and spirituality. Carroll says, *"Afrofuturism is often defined as using the imagination, science-fiction, and technology to redefine the Black identity.... I am always inspired to create art that speaks to unknown worlds and that uses the imagination to envision impossible futures."*

"I have been thinking a lot about my personal and collective past and how they have impacted my present condition. As a Black American my collective history is usually told from the point of slavery, and while this is important to acknowledge, I want to go further back in time where my ancestors weren't slaves. I want to imagine them as scholars, mathematicians, astrologers, and the like. A lot of great knowledge has come from the African continent and I am inspired to use that legacy to make a statement that Africans are not primitive and that the people in the African diaspora aren't just connected to the atrocities of slavery; we are connected to great and powerful minds that have helped shape the world through their observations and discoveries."

Carroll also acknowledges a life-long interest in science. Like many of the artists in the exhibition, he maintains his childhood curiosity and enthusiasm for "how things work" and "why?" In school, he purposely sought out studies in disciplines like human anatomy, geometry, physics and astronomy. As a photographer, chemistry continues to play an important role in his art making and experimentation process.

Carroll says, *"Science can explain a lot but there is still so much to be discovered and that idea of the unknown and the undiscovered frontier keeps me humbled and always searching for more connections."*

"I look into the depths and mysteries of the cosmos to understand my origins and to reconstruct a new origin story for the future. The work explores the imaginative and profound implications of reconstructing an identity that belongs to a legacy that reflects the power and mystery of the cosmic forces that brought us all into existence."

GranvilleCarroll.com

#granville_carroll



Christine Cassano, Mesa

Much of the inspiration for Cassano's current work expresses the meaningful influences she gained from being in a family immersed in aviation. Her father was an A6 Naval jet pilot, her brother is a Marine Corps C-130 and commercial airline pilot and her uncle is a former Naval test pilot and a veteran pilot astronaut for three of NASA's space missions. These influences have inspired her to navigate perspectives from above and below. She describes her work as an "exploration of the micro and macro" in which she thrives on creating sensory-rich works of art.

Cassano says, "My work explores connection, accumulation and convergence as metaphor within our new, hyper-connected era. I gain this inspiration and understanding by traversing our ecological, technological and cosmological systems. I investigate recursive patterns and connections between biological formations, technological patterns, aerial views of our industrial patterns, and our interconnected universe. In my artistic practice, I often make use of inherent physical properties of materials in order to transform them into experimental mediums. These methods often result in altered mediums used to make small, unique patterns typically presented in outlandishly large numbers. Materials such as copper, glass, porcelain, mirror, concrete, metal formations, and even my own hair as threading is utilized as medium. My installations, sculptures, sound pieces and two-dimensional pieces are formed by collecting, connecting, stacking, tethering and suspending materials into accumulations. These arrangements and relationships explore principles, correspondences and paradoxes of our cultural progress while also offering new considerations of emerging hybrid forms and converging systems."

Cassano was born in Texas and raised in Virginia. Today she is a fulltime Arizona-based artist who exhibits nationally and internationally. Locally, she has shown at Gebert Contemporary Art Gallery, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum and Phoenix Art Museum. Cassano is a recipient of artist grants from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, Contemporary Forum at Phoenix Art Museum (supported in part by the Nathan Cummings Foundation Endowment) and Phoenix Institute of Contemporary Art. The latter made it possible for her to publish a solo catalog of her work in 2016. She also participated in an artist residency at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton. Cassano's public art sculptures, installations and commissioned works are in various collections throughout the United States and abroad. Most recently, Cassano installed a work at the new Wexford Biomedical Campus/Innovation Center in Phoenix.



christinecassano.com

Daniel Martin Diaz, Tucson

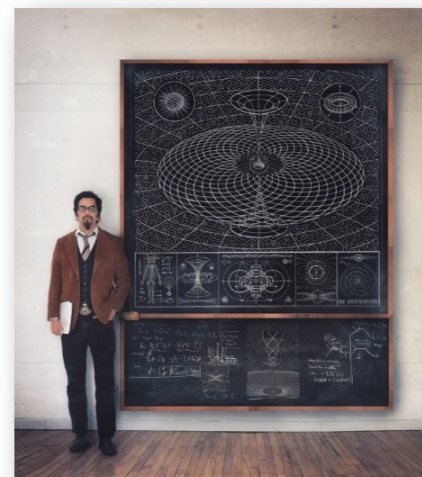
Diaz was born and raised in Tucson. He is a self-taught artist and musician known for meshing ideas and imagery from the disciplines of art history, religion, philosophy, mythology, metaphysics, divination and science. Diaz works in a variety of media including drawing, painting and printmaking. His artworks often have an old-world look and feel that's been influenced by anything from medieval manuscripts and Victorian scientific diagrams to folk art retablos (devotional altars and paintings popular in Mexico and parts of the southwest). Diaz's work has found popularity in pop culture as well. He's published several books; created a line of wearable art, games and collectibles and designed album covers for bands like POD and Good Charlotte. Some of his clients include Warner Brothers, PBS, HBO/Game of Thrones, Universal Studios and City of Phoenix Public Art for whom he designed a terrazzo floor at Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix.

Diaz is fascinated by the ideas, images and theories people use to ask questions and seek understanding. Some of the pieces on display are loosely inspired by a popular game in Mexico and the southwestern United States called Loteria (a 300 year-old matching game like bingo). The traditional game has cards that depict ordinary subjects like a palm tree, as well as, more symbolic characters like La Muerte (Death). It's not a coincidence that Diaz plays with the similarities between the Loteria game and Tarot cards used in fortune telling.

Diaz purposely doesn't tell the viewer exactly what a piece means to him. He creates layers of clues that can be interpreted in a variety of ways and from spiritual and scientific points of view. The three blackboard-like works include references to binary code, computer circuitry, space exploration, sacred geometry, human anatomy, DNA sequencing and more. In each piece, Diaz presents to his classroom [us] a visual lesson about the relationship between old world notions and new world technologies. The wide variety of possible meanings reveal the artist's own love of curiosity and ongoing quest for knowledge.

Diaz says, "Art is a reflection of ourselves, the story of humanity, and a quest to understand the physical and metaphysical world. As we try to understand our place in the universe, art can be an important part of the dialogue we can create and share with each other. In my work, I seek to reveal the mysterious with arcane imagery and techniques that make sense to me on a deep level that words cannot quantify."

danielmartindiaz.com



Erika Lynn Hanson, Phoenix

Hanson is an artist and educator whose work is largely rooted in textile practices. Her projects range in media and scale from loom weaving and video, to large interactive sculptural installations. Hanson's chosen area of interest and research is the landscape and peoples' relationship to things like rocks, trees and water. The broad subject matter allows her to cross disciplines like science and art. Hanson is continually strategizing on how best to translate big ideas, such as the environment and time, into visual symbols and stories.

Hanson says, *"My current project considers a celestial landscape, that of our desert neighbor, Mars. Through decades of research aided by continually advancing technology, scientists have identified paleo lakes, rivers and oceans across the planet. These traces of ancient bodies of water force us to consider the scale of geologic time and to therefore reevaluate our relationship to the patterns and cadences of daily human life."*

Hanson's new work in the exhibition touches on the importance of water and the tantalizing findings of its existence elsewhere in the universe. She describes the three pieces as flags that signal a location. Although seemingly abstract, the shapes, textures and colors on each flag hint at a vernacular representing found resources through *"human-centered physical, and, perhaps, mystical techniques for identifying water sources, such as dowsing."*

Hanson is currently Associate Professor of Textiles and Socially Engaged Practices at Arizona State University. Hanson received a Master of Fine Arts degree from California College of the Arts and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in fiber from the Kansas City Art Institute. Her work has been exhibited at spaces including Form + Concept in Santa Fe, Field Projects in New York City and the Tucson Museum of Art. Additionally, Hanson has participated in residency programs at the Icelandic Textile Center in Blönduós, Iceland and the Wrangell Mountain Center in McCarthy, AK.

She also received a Frontier Fellowship from Epicenter located in Green River, UT.

elhanson.com

[#erikalynnehanson](https://twitter.com/erikalynnehanson)



Daniel Nez, Tempe

Nez grew up in a small town called Lukachukai within the Diné (Navajo) reservation in Arizona. Over the past few years, he has been working and going to school away from home. As more time and distance passed, he felt separated from his culture and traditions and began to make visual art about the oral stories he grew up hearing. Today, his goal is to preserve, celebrate and explore his Diné heritage for himself and others.

This work is part of a larger series from Nez's Master of Fine Arts thesis exhibition in 2019 at Arizona State University. His exhibition was called "Alk'idáá" which translates to "Long ago" and is the common way elders begin a story. The installation included four sculptural works depicting the four worlds of the Diné origins story. Much of the series was recently featured in TCA's *WEAVE* exhibition. However, its run was cut short because of pandemic closures. Since his narrative work includes ideas about the cosmos, nature and human curiosity, Nez was asked to extend the series and *The Fourth World* installation into the *EXPLORE* exhibition.

Each of Nez's loom-like sculptures includes dozens of hand-printed relief prints on paper suspended from wooden looms. From different vantage points the imagery on each loom appears broken apart into abstracted geometric shapes (that reference traditional weaving symbols). However, when viewed from a specific height and distance, the puzzle pieces come together to create one cohesive image. Nez purposely creates an optical illusion that invites viewers to abandon linear thinking and experience a different way of storytelling.

Nez says, *"Stories are told for many reasons. They are told for teaching, for healing and can act as prayers. The words of a medicine man will always be carried with me, 'Prayers can only do so much. Yes, they are powerful, but they can only take you halfway. The other half is up to you. You have to act upon the prayers, striving for your best and condoning yourself in a beautiful way, only then will the prayers be fulfilled.' These stories are my prayers. They are being told. That is my half. It is up to the viewer to have reverence and respect, and to situate themselves accordingly."*

#danielnezzart



Daniel Nez

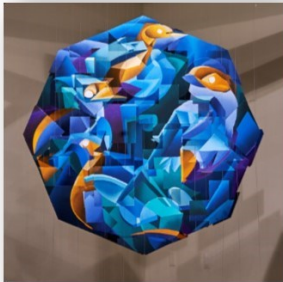
Ni' Hodisxqs (Fourth World)

mixed media including relief print, colored pencil, monofilament, wood, screw, cord lock

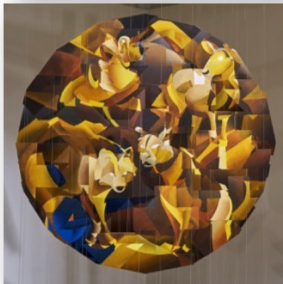
About Nez's work: The Diné teach that their people passed through three different worlds before coming to this world known as the fourth world or "glittering world." Each of the sculptures Nez presents in this exhibition represents elements and characters from *The Four Worlds*.



"The First World is where everything started" says Nez. In the First World, or Black World, Nez depicts a small scene with insects such as a grasshopper, red ant, beetle and dragon fly. At this point in time, there were no people as we know them today, but rather, there were Air-Spirited People. Insects filled this world, but arguments and fighting led to the First World's demise and they had to flee upward to the Second World, or Blue World.



Nez goes on to say, *"The Second World was larger than their own and filled with other creatures. They were greeted by Blue Feather Beings, which we now know as birds"* [such as the blue jays, hawks, falcons and swallows]. They lived peacefully for a while, but again, the arguments and fighting led to this world crumbling too. They had to flee upward until reaching the Third World, or Yellow World.



"The Third World, now larger than the two first worlds, contained even larger beings. It was inhabited by two-legged creatures and four-legged creatures such as, coyote, turkeys, mountain lions and deer. These lands were different than the first two, not only larger, but also contained sacred mountains in each of the cardinal directions. But unlike the first two worlds, it was not fighting that would destroy this world, but a great flood. It was Coyote who caused this flood. He had stolen Water Monster's babies. Enraged, Water Monster floods the land. Everyone escapes this world once again to the next," says the artist.



Nez explains that, *"The Fourth World [The White World or Glittering World] is the world we now live in. It is populated not only by insects, birds, and four legged creatures, but also humanity. It is here that the creation of the different clans came to be."* Other stories of the Diné also unfold in this world also make an appearance

in Nez's depiction, including the Twin Warriors and their journey to the sun.

Nez uses subtle hints to reveal important aspects of Diné culture, such as his repetitive use of the number four. Four is an important number for the Diné as it represents the four directions, the four sacred mountains and colors: Mt. Blanca to the east (white shell), Mt. Taylor to the south (turquoise), San Francisco Peaks to the west (yellow abalone) and Mt. Hesperus to the north (jet black).

Kathryn Maxwell, Tempe

Maxwell is originally from Illinois and earned a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin in Madison and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Her art has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou; Dundee (Scotland) Contemporary Arts; Detroit Institute of Arts and Denver Art Museum. Maxwell is also the recipient of artist residencies in China, Belgium, Greece, Scotland and the United States. Today, she is Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.

Maxwell takes to heart the importance of human exploration, especially when it comes to understanding the many connections people have with each other and the universe. Her mixed media works, prints and installations reveal personal and academic investigations about nature, science and spirituality. Maxwell's recent artworks, like those on display, include references to more specific disciplines like mythology, astronomy, biology and genetics.

Maxwell says these works from her *Celestial Series* are *“a continuation of a body of work that explores the relation of humans to the universe.”* She quotes Carl Sagan's book, *Cosmos*: *“The nitrogen in our DNA, the calcium in our teeth, the iron in our blood, the carbon in our apple pies were made in the interiors of collapsing stars. We are made of star stuff.”*

Maxwell explains, *“It seems we are connected to the universe through our very beings. We are all part of the whole and it is a part of us.*

“We are Stardust I’ is composed of over 180 separate petri dishes and combines images of human DNA molecular structure with images of constellations to emphasize this connection.”

kmaxwell.net
#kmaxwellstudio



Joe Willie Smith, Phoenix

Smith was born in Arkansas to a family of sharecroppers. When he was a young, the family moved to Wisconsin where his mother worked as a cleaning lady at the local university. Though money was tight, Smith's mother encouraged him to make art while he was growing up. She even sold some of his handmade items at work which helped the family buy food and gave Smith the ability to buy art supplies.

Before Smith pursued a fine arts career full-time, he worked as the Art Director at the Arizona Republic. Today, he is a fixture in the Phoenix art scene as a multi-media artist and musician. The staff at Practical Arts in Phoenix describes him as *"what current American culture calls a 'picker'... and has an innate sense for finding value in cast-off objects that are given away to thrift stores, found on the street, in the desert and un-noticed by others. He is a cultural treasure hunter."* One day he can be seen performing at gallery opening and another day he can be found searching local garage sales and alley ways for much of the bits and pieces to make art. The interactive piece in this exhibition is part of Smith's series of *Sonic Sculptures*. Everything from the wires and rubber bands to the sound speakers are upcycled finds from around the Valley.

The futuristic sounds made with Smith's sculptures that "you can touch and play" create a mash-up of ideas and experiences for visitors. The sculptures are complicated, yet simple. They are about the past yet connect with the future too. Smith recently said in a Phoenix Home and Garden interview that *"Everything has a resonance... You, me, ants, dirt, air. There's sound in everything. All I'm doing is tapping into that frequency that already exists."*

Over the past two decades, Smith has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Arizona including Phoenix Art Museum, Bentley Projects, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum and the Musical Instrument Museum. Today, Smith continues to experiment with new sounds, sculptures and paintings in his Phoenix home studio.



#smithjoewillie

Devorah Sperber, CA

Sperber was born in Detroit but grew up in Denver after the age of ten. She went on to study at the Colorado Institute of Art and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Regis University in Denver. Since the early 1990s, she has been actively showing her work in prominent art and science museums across the country and abroad like the Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA and the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale in Milan, Italy. She is represented locally by Bentley Gallery in Phoenix.

Sperber is best recognized for creating perceptual art that turns ordinary materials such as thread spools and chenille stems (pipe cleaners) into optical illusions. Her works play with iconic works from famous artists like Andy Warhol, Pablo Picasso and Leonardo da Vinci and popular culture images like classic Star Trek characters, Marilyn Monroe and Jimi Hendrix. She digitally manipulates the images by deconstructing a JPEG file into a pixelated version that she can translate with materials from the same color palette, like beads. Over time, she's customized computer software that allows her to input thousands of individual pixel colors into a program that helps her create color "maps" as a guide for building the actual artworks by hand.

Another important element to Sperber's work is optical and neurological phenomena. The Star Trek characters renderings on display are dependent on how the brain re-assembles raw data (like the thousands of beads) into recognizable information. The way the brain sorts and quickly makes sense of the information, neurologists call "neural priming." By selecting well-known imagery like Kirk, Spock and McCoy, the artist must rely on viewers having an existing "data file" or memory in their heads about what those characters look like. So, when they see the artworks, it appears as though the three figures are "beaming in."

Sperber says, *"I am interested in the link between art, science, and technology, how the eyes and brain prioritize, and reality as a subjective experience vs. an absolute truth.*

As a visual artist, I cannot think of a topic more stimulating and yet so basic, than the act of seeing-how the human brain makes sense of the visual world."

devorahsperber.com



James Turrell, Flagstaff

Turrell was born in 1943 in Los Angeles and has always had a fascination with the sky, light and human behavior. He studied psychology at Pomona College where he received a Bachelor's degree. He went on to graduate studies at the University of California Irvine and later earned a Master of Arts degree at Claremont Graduate University in 1973. Turrell is also the recipient of prestigious awards such as the MacArthur Foundation Genius Fellowship in 1984 and the Grand Medailles d'Argent, Fondation Academie d'Architecture from Paris, France in 2000. He is also an avid pilot and has logged more than twelve thousand hours of flying.

For more than 50 years, Turrell has created a variety of artworks and installations that focus on the play between light and the physical space. Turrell says on his website, *"My work is more about your seeing than it is about my seeing, although it is a product of my seeing. I'm also interested in the sense of presence of space; that is space where you feel a presence, almost an entity — that physical feeling and power that space can give."*

He has created more than 80 "Skyspaces" such as the one at Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. These space feature a chamber with an opening in the ceiling. People can walk into the space and observe the light, shadows and colors that change and move according to the movement of the sun from dawn till dusk. These works also explore how the human eyes and mind perceive these changes.

Turrell's work on display in this exhibition feature Roden Crater in northern Arizona. The artist acquired the land and started a monumental project in 1977 within this extinct volcanic crater (which is 400,000 years old and three miles wide) to create a multi-sensory experience. The artist thinks of it as a "gateway to the contemplation of light, time and landscape." For Turrell, this is a life-long project that follows in the footsteps of ancient builders who created observatories and sacred sites, like Stonehenge in England and the El Caracol in Chichen Itza, Mexico.

Still in construction and closed to the public, the Roden Crater project includes six tunnels and 24 openings that open to pristine skies unmarred by urban lights.

Visitors will eventually be able to experience day and/or night "Skyspaces" within the crater.

jamesturrell.com



Image credit: James Turrell website

Roy Wasson Valle, Phoenix

Valle was born and raised in Cuernavaca, Mexico and later moved to Arizona with his family when he was 11 years old. He grew up influenced by creatives like his father who was a sculptor and did a lot of work for church spaces. Valle himself was a sculpture major, earning both a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Fine Arts degrees from Arizona State University. Today, he works with his partner Koryn Woodward Wasson on large public art installations, arts education programs like Camp Dreamtree with Scottsdale Arts and their own studio brand called Fireweather Studio.

In the fall of 2019, Valle presented his thesis show, *Mars Made: Retroforms Cactus Garden Experience*, for his Master's degree at ASU. The work was also part of a project called "Five Senses in Space" from the university's Interplanetary Initiative program. The project aimed to create interactive displays for visitors that speculated a future in which humans lived and worked on Mars. Valle was given the opportunity to learn first-hand about the Red Planet and research studies on space exploration and habitation from scientists at the School Earth and Space Exploration.

The resulting work was Valle's presentation of a hypothetical story about the 23rd Century and "an artist's reaction to a once in a lifetime opportunity to visit and experience the Martian environment." The original installation included the 3D Mars landscape view (courtesy of NASA), a futuristic underground Saguaro cactus garden and a home/work "pod trailer." For the *EXPLORE* exhibition, Valle brought together elements from that show and additional graphic elements for the Tempe Center for the Arts' sculpture garden space.

The combined work creates a vision of a what a human work site and living spaces on Mars could be imagined-through an artist's eyes.

#fireweatherstudio



Follow Up Activity

Crossroads: We are where past and present meet

OBJECTIVES (7th grade visual arts performance standards)

Students will be able to practice and improve their skills with various materials in planning and producing a mixed media artwork.

VA.CR.2.7a: Demonstrate persistence in developing skills with various materials, methods, and approaches in creating works of art or design.

Students will be able to use contrast and gradation to balance visual elements in their artwork.

VA.CR.2.7c: Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce artwork of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

ACTIVITIES

Review the work of Granville Carroll in the **EXPLORE: go boldy** exhibition. He says that he looks “*into the depths and mysteries of the cosmos to understand [his] origins and to reconstruct a new origin story for the future.*” Discuss how we all carry our past with us as we explore our futures. Ask students to think back to their childhoods remembering whatever people, places, things, feelings or ideas they imagine will be important to them throughout their lives.

Artists in the exhibition, each in their own way, is exploring possible futures. Each has mastered skills with their materials, from fibers to photography, from graphite to recycled cast-offs.

ASSIGNMENT:

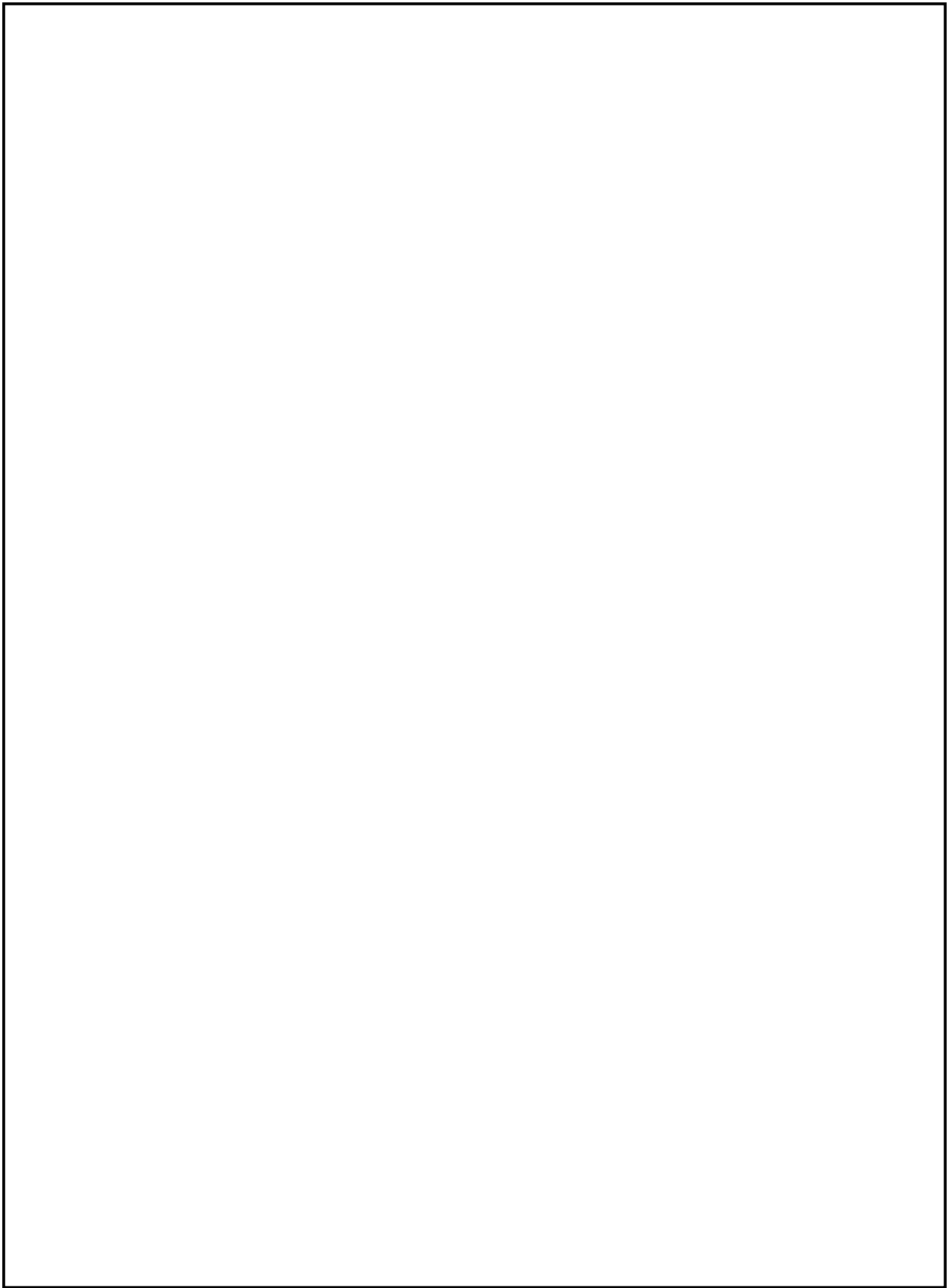
Begin your exploration by discovering what you can do with several media, for example, colored markers, pastels, wax crayons and colored pencils.

Practice developing your skills with the materials you will use in your artwork. Sketch plans that show how you are at the crossroad between your past and your future.

Will your crossroad show people, places, or things; words; or maybe just lines, shapes, colors, values and/or textures.

Whatever you choose to include in your artwork, balance the visual elements using contrast and gradation.





Title: _____ Artist Name: _____