



THE ART TRUCK

This guide is designed to prepare your students for a meaningful Art Truck experience. A basic understanding of the artists and key concepts addressed in their artwork prior to the Art Truck's visit will heighten your students' enthusiasm and greatly enhance their appreciation of this unique opportunity.

Included in this guide is an introduction to this year's Art Truck exhibit, ***Festooning: Enter the Beehive***, by artist **Maria Molteni**, as well as three lesson plans that will help you reinforce important ideas in the classroom before and after your Art Truck visit. One of the lesson plans is most appropriate for students in grades K-6, while two of the lesson plans are most appropriate for students in grades 7-12.

Ask Your Students:

- What are the advantages of displaying artwork in a mobile exhibition?
- How does participatory art provide opportunities for learning together?
- What can bees teach us about communication, collaboration and community?

INTRODUCTION

INSTALLATION ART

The space in which we view a work of art can influence the way we understand it. Normally, artwork is viewed in a museum setting. Here the context has changed. Rather than traveling to a gallery to see artworks, the gallery has the ability to travel to you. This section will help your students understand the nature of installation art in the context of this year's installation, *Festooning: Enter the Beehive*.

How is viewing art in a truck different from visiting a museum? Does it change the way you see and understand the art?

Q What is installation art?

A Installation art is created specifically for one location and is intended to transform perceptions of the space in which it is located. In the case of *Festooning: Enter the Beehive*, the installation transforms the interior of the Art Truck into a human-scale beehive.

Q How is the installation experience different from the traditional art museum experience?

A The visitor cannot view the same work at a later time in a different location. Once the installation is taken down, it will never again be re-constructed in exactly the same way. Installations are site specific; that is, they are conceived and created for a specific space. Another exhibition space would require the artist to re-think the materials, configuration, and even the message of the installation.

Unlike more traditional displays, installation art is meant to immerse the viewer in a transformed environment. However, installations can vary widely in the experience they present. For example, you may encounter a multitude of visual stimuli into a fictional world, or the experience may be much subtler in its change to a particular environment. You may be asked to participate, or just observe. Installations can include an array of materials from found objects to new media, including video or sound. Often, experiences of installation art are focused on the viewer's interpretation of the experience, rather than solely on the artist's intention or materials.

In *Festooning: Enter the Beehive*, viewers are encouraged to participate in playful ways, make connections between

different subjects, and think about the applications of bee-haviors to their own lives. Upon entering the Art Truck, viewers encounter 3D elements such as hanging rope honeycomb and interactive (bee-free) beehive boxes, as well as 2D elements such as a painted mural and an area to contribute drawings. Viewers learn about the concept of the "festoon," an interdisciplinary term used to describe energized systems made up of individual parts. Participants take away a greater understanding of our communal power, a motivation to engage responsibly with other species, and the ability to make cultural and conceptual connections between seemingly separate fields of study.

Q Where do artists obtain their materials?

A Contemporary installation artists utilize a wide variety of materials depending on their concept. The artist may collect, create or purchase these materials. Keep in mind that an artist's materials often help communicate meaning. In the case of this installation, Molteni layers images and physical objects as a foundation for her progressive models of education and engagement. By using various playful materials in her installation, Molteni emphasizes the diverse applications of the "festoon" concept and asks visitors to incorporate their own creativity as an essential component of the installation.

Q Do artists know exactly what their installations are going to look like before they arrive at the exhibition site?

A They usually have a general idea, but often the pieces evolve as the artist begins to work within the actual

exhibition space. The nature of the space itself will prompt changes and revisions in the artist's original idea. Other considerations that may impact the final result include safety, cost and meeting deadlines.

Q Do installation artists assemble their work by themselves, or do they have assistance?

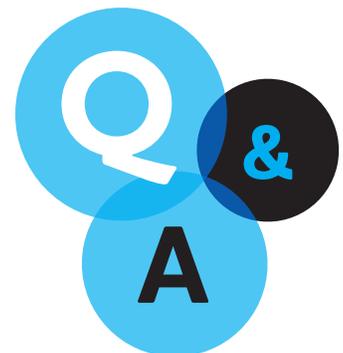
A Installations are sometimes so multifaceted and complex that they require a fabrication team to assist the artist. For this installation, Molteni prepared some of the artwork in advance, but traveled to Utah to create the vast majority of her installation on-site.

Q Should an installation be perceived as one artwork or many?

A It depends on the installation. In the case of *Festooning: Enter the Beehive*, the interior of the truck conveys a unified concept made up of multiple integrated features.

Q What happens to the installation art after the exhibition is over?

A Unlike traditional works of art, installations are disassembled when their time is done. Materials are thrown away, recycled, or re-used in future installations.



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE ARTIST

MARIA MOLteni

Maria Molteni migrated from Nashville to New England to study painting in 2002, but followed in the footsteps of her Grandmother, a one room schoolhouse teacher, and her Great-Grandmother, a dedicated quilter, beekeeper and strawberry farmer. Molteni is currently a multimedia and performing artist, beekeeper, educator and community organizer in Boston, MA. From fiber to found-object sculpture, puppetry to pedagogy, movement to publication, she employs tactile and tactical processes to encourage participation over spectatorship. Prioritizing experimentation, research and social engagement through play, she fosters interdisciplinary learning experiences beyond the studio. She loves to collaborate with creatures of all kinds.



In 2013, Molteni cofounded Festooning The Inflatable Beehive with collaborator Colette Aliman. As part of this project, Molteni designed teaching models based on honeybee communities and the absurd and flexible concept of the Festoon, by which individual parts link to form energized systems. Using grassroots & DIY creative projects as tools, Molteni's work has been replicated internationally by organizers and educators alike. In the last two years, she's worked with over 200 youth & teens from 12 Boston neighborhoods as an Artist in Residence for the MFA Boston & the City of Boston. Together they realized elaborate museum & public installations that address social justice in the context of community basketball and the global textile industry. The New Craft Artists in Action (NCAA) collective, which Molteni founded in 2010, was invited to share their work with the Congressional Maker Caucus on Capitol Hill in 2016.

Molteni has completed Fellowships at Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT), Elsewhere Living Museum (Greensboro, NC), Zamboanga Hace (Philippines), Mildred's Lane (Beach Lake, PA), PS1 MoMA Studios (LIC, NY), the Berwick Research Institute's Bumpkin Island Art Encampment (Boston Harbor, MA) and sübSamsøn (Boston, MA). She has exhibited in many local and regional spaces—such as Space Gallery, Grin Gallery, Harvard's Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Fuller Craft Museum and ICA Boston—as well as nationally and internationally—at NGBK Gallery (Berlin), Global Committee (Brooklyn, NY), The Residential (Des Moines, IA), Université Laval (Québec City), Otis College of Art and Design (LA, CA), Center for Craft, Creativity and Design (Asheville, NC), UMOCA (SLC, UT) and the Mattress Factory (Pittsburgh, PA).

LINKS

Maria Molteni

mariamolteni.com

festooning.wordpress.com *

molteninetworks.tumblr.com

*Find directions for a DIY honey battery, videos of community beekeepers' stories and more!

INTRODUCTION

THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

Contemporary life offers artists a never-ending source of ideas, materials and processes that are open for sampling, recycling and exchange. The following discussion will help your students understand that the artistic process – which often includes creative thinking, research, experimentation, collaboration, choice of materials, and manipulation of materials – can be as important and meaningful as the completed work.

INFLUENCES

Molteni’s interdisciplinary practice draws upon multiple influences, from beekeeping to athletics, craft, ecology and more. Inspired by her passion for the sea, for example, she has created collaborative performances that investigate island lore and the ocean’s mysterious ecosystems. Her artworks are rooted in both the cosmic and the practical, derived from a sense of spiritual conviction together with an understanding of everyday functionality.

MATERIALS & PROCESSES

Just as a poet carefully chooses words to create meaning, an artist carefully chooses materials and processes to convey ideas. Shalini Patel shares: “Self-described as a ‘neo(n) catholic,’ there is an almost religious aspect to [Molteni’s] methodology, a part-formalist, part-social interventionist approach that is channeled through a humble resourcefulness and keen awareness of the current conditions that request for a dialogue to occur at all. From her giant iridescent inflatables to her crocheted basketball nets hung on abandoned hoops, her multi-faceted projects result in objects that are never static and instead serve as catalysts for new models of engagement.”

Using a wide range of materials, Molteni develops projects centered on interdisciplinary thinking and social engagement. “From fiber to found-object sculpture, textile to movement, performance to publication, she employs processes per their ability to manifest elaborate conceptual orchestration and formal satisfaction.”

How do these different materials fit into the artist’s ideas about engaging a community?

Quotations from: maria-molteni.squarespace.com/bio



WHAT IS A FESTOON?

Festoon // NOUN

1. a fabric suspended, draped, and bound at intervals to form graceful loops or scalloped folds // a decorative representation of this, as in architectural work.
2. a lacework of bees hanging together, leg-to-leg, between the frames of comb. Some say bees can only produce wax from the festooning position.

In a beehive, honeycomb segments hang like rounded curtains from either beehive top-bars or frames placed by a beekeeper or simply limbs of a tree. Before the modern day filing cabinet-style beehive was invented in 1852 by Reverend Langstroth in Massachusetts, the traditional woven skep was used, a basket placed open-end down with no internal structure.

The way that scalloped chunks of honeycomb drape inside the skep beehive mirrors the ways bees string their bodies together between frames of comb to build cells. In the beekeeping world, this practice is called festooning. The root of the word FESTOON comes from *Feast or *Festival and refers to an abundance of material that is so plenty it falls off the table. Decorative, scalloped festooning may run along the edge of a wall, doorway, or table. The festoon was also seen in historic works of art and architecture. The word has come to serve as an interdisciplinary term to describe this structural motif. Beyond beekeeping, it refers to the manner in which teeth attach to gums, strings of islands sit in the ocean, electrical wiring hangs, and party flags adorn a room.

Left: Examples of Festooning

LESSON 1

'BRIDGING BEES' COLLABORATIVE MOBILE GRADES K-6

INTENTIONS

Students collaboratively create a three-dimensional, hanging mobile using pipe cleaners, wire and fishing line. After group discussion to develop an understanding of the element of line, each student chooses a line type that represents what a bee looks like or the mood a bee conveys to them, and then make it out of pipe cleaners bent into shape. Students learn that they can use line in three-dimensional space, the same way they would in a two-dimensional drawing or painting.

GOALS

- To gain understanding of the ability to use Line as a compositional tool.
- To demonstrate knowledge of different types of Line beginning with Curvy, Horizontal, Vertical, Zigzag and Diagonal.
- To demonstrate the ability to create a Line type of their own that expresses their own personality or the personality they would like their art to convey.
- To develop an appreciation of the characteristics of Line Quality, and be able to identify Line Quality in drawings and the outside world.
- To increase awareness of creative expression through Line.

CONVERSATIONS

We can use the Elements of Art as tools to create a strong composition in any form of visual art. Understanding Line Quality is a form of communicating the intent of the artist when creating art and deciphering the intent of the artist when viewing art. Our environment is full of soft lines. Once we start to see lines in our outside world, we can understand how to best represent them in our art and how we want to use them for emphasis. Once we recognize Line types, we can begin to design our own that convey a message we want to share in our art. Working together as artists is an important step in creating any type of community-based art.

ACTIVITY

Because this is a group effort, we can all make the bees and work on balancing the festooning bees together! The arms of the mobile can be made by a smaller group, while the bees can be contributed by all of the students. Some students might work quickly, producing more bees, while some students make take their time with one bee. This is a great time to assess each student's artistic process.

1. Make wire arms that connect to form the mobile's frame: *15 minutes*
2. Make individual bees out of pipe cleaners: *10-15 minutes*
3. Glue googly eyes (or buttons) onto bees: *3-5 minutes per bee*
4. Connect bees to the arms of the mobile, being careful to distribute weight evenly. This can be done with fishing line, pipe cleaners, or just by wiring them together: *30-40 minutes (depending on how many bees you would like to festoon together)*
5. Hang the mobile in a place overhead where it won't be disturbed but will be clearly visible!

MATERIALS

Baling Wire
25 ft. 16 guage galvanized steel

Pipe Cleaners

Googly Eyes and Buttons

Glue

Fishing Line
15 ft. 50 lb.



LESSON 2

RECIPE FOR A COMMUNITY GRADES 7-12

INTENTIONS

Students will create an original “recipe” for a strong community by detailing steps necessary to achieve their community ideal.

BACKDROP

A festoon is a system made up of linked individual parts, and the concept can be applied as a way to explore how key elements come together to form something much stronger. The way in which bees link together to form a festoon and collaborate within their hive is similar to how humans form a community. Thinking of a healthy community as an energetic system of linked parts allows us to break down the larger concept into smaller pieces that are key to its success. This practice of dividing a goal into stages can be found in many aspects of life; we use it when building Ikea furniture or baking a cake. Sets of instructions, like recipes, help us to better understand a finished product or idea by involving us in the process of creation. This lesson asks students to create a recipe for a community.

CONVERSATIONS

- What does community mean to you? What communities are you a part of?
- What does the structure of a healthy community look like to you? How can communities be set up to function at their best?
- What factors help a community flourish, and how can an individual encourage this growth?
- How do the various characteristics of your community come together to shape its success?

ACTIVITY

First, each student will brainstorm information to use when creating their recipe. Have students start with a piece of paper divided into two columns. On the left-hand side, instruct them to write a list of attributes of a strong community, however they choose to define “community.” For instance: belonging, communication, safety, political representation, or sense of heritage. Instruct them to stick to characteristics rather than actions; these are their “ingredients.”

When students have completed the first column with at least eight nouns, they should next think about how they might bring about these characteristics in a community. Have students use the right-hand column to document specific action steps that could be taken in a community to work toward these goals. For example, communication could be strengthened by creating spaces for people to listen to one another’s ideas, such as starting a book club. The right-hand column should now have a list of actions that could be taken that correspond to the community ingredients listed in the left-hand column; these are the individual recipe steps.

Now that students have brainstormed, hand out a copy of the honeycomb-shaped recipe template to each student. Students will create their final recipe by inserting their brainstormed “ingredients” and “steps” into the honeycombs, cutting out the shapes, and arranging them together to give their recipe structure. Encourage students to use both words and drawing or collage to visually represent their ideas within the honeycomb shapes. When they have completed their honeycomb pairs, they should cut out the pairs and glue them together on a new sheet of thick paper. This is to encourage them to think about how the aspects of a healthy community can best be arranged to support each other. *Do their ingredient-action step pairs fit neatly into each honeycomb pair, or not? In what ways do their various community actions and characteristics build upon each other to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts? How can students create a unique visual arrangement in a way that reflects the relationships between their community ingredients and action steps?*

MATERIALS

- Scratch Paper
- Pencils
- Honeycomb Recipe Template
Link at: utahmoca.org/art-truck
- Magazines for collage
- Scissors
- Glue
- Thick paper / cardstock



LESSON 3

HEX HUNT GRADES 7-12

INTENTIONS

Students will explore the function and prevalence of hexagonal shapes and patterns in natural and human-made structures.

BACKDROP

Hexagonal patterns occur frequently in nature because of their geometric strength and efficiency. Bees carefully build hexagonal cells of honeycomb, which require them to use less energy, time and wax than other regular shapes (see the sidebar for *resources about the mathematical genius of bees*). Soap bubbles, the compound eyes of insects, fractures in igneous rocks, and quartz prisms are all examples of hexagonal structures. These patterns are also utilized in human-made architecture and objects (*biomimicry* is the imitation of nature to solve human challenges in technology and design). From hexagonal quilted Band-Aids to hexagon-patterned chain link fences, the hexagon can be found everywhere in the details of our lives.

CONVERSATIONS

- Why is the hexagon the most efficient choice for honeybees?
- How can humans benefit from hexagonal design?
- Where do hexagonal shapes appear in both natural and human-made structures?
- Where in your life do you encounter hexagonal patterns?

ACTIVITY

Using cameras, have students take photographs of various examples of hexagonal patterning in their environment. Encourage students to search in nature, architecture, design, fashion, technology, and other structures and objects they find in their homes, school and community.

Have students upload these images to a class Tumblr account, or other online gallery platform. Electronically display the students' collective examples. As a class, discuss the photographed objects and structures and their various functions.

How easy or difficult was it to find hexagons in your environment? What similarities and differences do you notice among the items that were photographed? How do these photographs reveal diverse ways humans have utilized the functionality and beauty of the hexagon?



MATERIALS

Smartphones or digital cameras

Access to online gallery platform such as Tumblr

LINKS

Maria Molteni

"Urban Hex"
festooning.wordpress.com/urban-hex

TED-Ed

"Why Do Honeybees Love Hexagons?"
www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEzlsjAqADA

NPR

"What Is It About Bees And Hexagons?"
www.npr.org/sections/krulwich/2013/05/13/183704091/what-is-it-about-bees-and-hexagons

Nautilus

"Why Nature Prefers Hexagons"
<http://nautil.us/issue/35/boundaries/why-nature-prefers-hexagons>

RESOURCES



UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION CORE CURRICULUM

Visual Arts – Grades 3-6

Core Standard 2,
Objective 1

- Analyze and reflect on works of art by their elements (line, shape, color, form, texture, space, and value) and principles (e.g., balance, emphasis, and pattern).

Core Standard 3,
Objectives 1 and 2

- Explore possible content and purposes in significant works of art.
- Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for artworks.

Core Standard 4,
Objective 3

- Recognize the connection of visual art to all learning.

Secondary Fine Arts – Visual Arts; Art History and Criticism

Core Standard 1 Visual Arts
- Making,
Objectives 1 and 2

- Understand techniques and processes in a variety of media.
- Explore how works of art are organized using art elements and principles.

Core Standard 2 Visual
Arts - Perceiving,
Objectives 1 and 2

- Critique works of art.
- Evaluate works of art.

Core Standard 3 Visual
Arts - Expressing,
Objective 1

- Perceive content in works of art.

Core Standard 4 Visual
Arts - Contextualizing,
Objectives 1, 2 and 3

- Align works of art according to history, geography, and personal experience.
- Synthesize visual art with other educational subjects.
- Evaluate the impact of visual art on life outside school.

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HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT

The Utah Museum of Contemporary Art provides the Art Truck free-of-charge for a wide variety of educational and charitable purposes. To schedule an Art Truck visit, please contact Karen Southam at:

**karen.southam@
utahmoca.org.**