The guide is designed to prepare your students for a meaningful Art Truck experience. A basic understanding of the artist, his style, and aesthetic approaches 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 by artist Peter Everett, as well as three lesson plans that will help your students navigate through the Art Truck. These lessons explore themes of utopia, human settlement and geography, physical environments, and notions of home. All three lessons are designed so that you can adapt them to students in grades K-12.

Provocative Questions

• How is our response to an artwork affected by how and where it is displayed?
• Can the artist’s creative process be as important as the finished work?
• How do history and popular culture influence contemporary art?
Q What is installation art?  
A Installation art is often created specifically for one location, has three-dimensional components, and is intended to transform perceptions of the space in which it is located.

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. Why? Because installations are site specific; that is, they are conceived and created for a specific exhibition space. Another exhibition space would require the artist to re-think the materials, configuration, and even the message of the installation. 

Also, unlike more traditional displays, installation art is meant to immerse the viewer in a transformed environment that evokes our emotions and senses. 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 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. 

For example, in this particular truck installation the viewer is called upon to examine their own self-presence and the resulting effect of peering into and across a large glass dodecahedron. What do you notice about the effect? What ideas do you think the artist is trying to communicate? 

Q Do installation artists assemble their work by themselves, or do they have assistance?  
A Installations are sometimes so multifaceted and complex, they require a fabrication team to assist the artist. Peter has 5 assistants working with him on this installation.

Q Where do artists obtain their materials?  
A Contemporary installation artists utilize a wide variety of materials depending on their concept. These can include everyday ordinary objects, personal belongings, recycled materials, technological gadgets, or fabricated objects. Artist may collect, create or purchase these materials. Keep in mind that an artist’s materials often communicate meaning, and sometimes the way in which they gather materials can be a meaningful part of the artwork too.

Q Should an installation be perceived as one artwork or many?  
A It depends on the installation. In the case of this Art Truck installation the inside and outside of the truck work in conjunction with one another to communicate different aspects of the artist’s exploration. These could be seen as both personal and historical.

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. Some of the materials are thrown away. Others are recycled. Yet other materials are re-used in future installations.
INTRODUCTION
About the Art and the Artist

PETER EVERETT
Peter Everett is currently an Associate Professor of painting and drawing at Brigham Young University. Peter states, “I do paint, but I usually just consider myself an artist that uses the materials most appropriate to what I am exploring, whether that be paint, sculptural objects, computers, rapid prototypes, etc.”

Peter’s installation is in part a reflection on his own life experiences. Peter was born in Provo, Utah but explains, “Growing up my family moved frequently—sometimes 2-3 times a year. I saw a lot of moving trucks and like how they are associated with change, hope for new beginnings, and a better existence—feelings similar to those driving utopian cities and cultures. I wanted to make the outside of the Art Truck to look like a U Haul truck…the ones with pictures of a particular city on them, but to make the city my fictitious utopian city—familiar but strange. So the truck literally becomes a moving truck exploring the moving target of utopian drive and its various manifestations—kind of like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.”

Peter is further interested in notions of utopia that intersect with his religious belief system. As a member of the Mormon faith, his heritage echoes principles that are seen in utopian societies such as a drive for perfection, a sense of community, and safety. Peter’s artistic process also included an exploration of the American tradition of utopian societies including the Shakers, the Oneida Community, Fourierists, the Ephrata Community, and Branch Davidians among others (computerized renderings of structures from these societies can be seen on the 2 large screens inside the truck).

As an artist, Peter has always been interested in geometry and its applications throughout history. Geometric principles have been utilized in artistic practice from the Ancient Greeks to the Great Masters, through Modernism and of course in contemporary practice. In this installation Peter has chosen to focus on a twelve-sided shape known as a dodecahedron, a geometric figure among the Platonic Solids. The Platonic Solids were conceptualized in many disciplines throughout history such as physics, philosophy and even theology. Plato believed that these solids were a framework in which all elements of the natural world and the cosmos could be explained. Aristotle later theorized that the dodecahedron represents Aether: the heavens, the immaterial, the invisible, and unknowable. In this way the dodecahedron can represent the idea of a utopia as literally “no place.” Geometric principles also play an important role in Peter’s architectural renderings.

DISCUSSION TOPIC
A utopia is commonly defined as an ideal or perfect place or state, often in terms of political and social function.

Sir Thomas Moore who wrote a novel about an imaginary perfect society knew that his Utopia could not in fact exist in the real world. He cleverly named this society Utopia, in Greek literally meaning, “no place.” Historically, many attempts at utopian societies have failed in their aim for perfection because they often present some aspect of impossibility.

For younger students, ask them to brainstorm an imaginary world where everything is perfect.

What would that mean to them?

Who would live there and how would everyone get along?

Would there be rules?

What aspects of their ideas could only exist in an imaginary world?

INFLUENTIAL ART
Peter draws inspiration from artists both past and present. After traveling to Europe, Peter became interested in the tradition of designing cities meant to be ideal or perfect in mathematical terms. In the artworks of late Gothic/Proto-Renaissance Italian painters such as Duccio di Buoninsegna, Cimabue, Piera della Francesca, and Fra Angelico, the influence of architecture, geometry and notions of place are evident. Contemporary artists have also influenced Peter’s, such as Sarah Sze, Sol LeWitt and Benjamin Edwards, all of whom create work that echo Peter’s concerns.
INTRODUCTION
About the Art and the Artist

THE ARTISTIC PROCESS
The following discussion will help your students understand that the artistic process – research, creative thinking, collaboration, choice of materials, and manipulation of these materials – can be as important and meaningful as the completed work.

Research & Biography
The work of many artists is often autobiographical. This may include research into one’s own culture as well as others that may have had similar interests and practices. Peter’s work reflects his investigation into subjects such as art history, geometry, sociology, philosophy, and theology. Contemporary life and our access to information offers up a never-ending source of ideas, processes and artistic identities that are open for sampling, recycling and exchange.

Media
Just as a poet carefully chooses his words to create meaning, an artist carefully chooses his materials to convey ideas and thoughts. For the dodecahedron, Peter used ¼ inch tempered one-way glass mirrors encased in a wooden frame. A one-way mirror is partially reflective and partially transparent. When one side of the mirror is brightly lit, and the other dark, it allows viewing from the darkened side but not vice versa. Thus, the viewer can see reflections inside of the brightly lit dodecahedron, but never a reflection of themselves in the dark space outside. Inside the dodecahedron is a rapid prototype model of a city that is made of a fragile starch. It rotates on a base with a small motor. Do you see any signs that Peter’s utopia is falling apart? Why might Peter have chosen materials that would not last?

Now, notice the 2 television monitors on either side of the truck. Each screen has a series of computerized architectural renderings from utopian experiments. Why do you think the artist chose to create these images instead of photographs? Do we know something about the artist that may have influenced this choice? Notice their movement in relation to the city inside the dodecahedron.

What do you notice about the materials used on the outside of the truck? Have they served a purpose in helping this truck look like something familiar? How is this related to the artist’s concept?

Assembling the Installation
Often contemporary artists work with the help of others. For this installation Peter worked with 5 assistants. The design, weight (over 500 lbs.), and size of the dodecahedron meant that it could only be assembled after all the parts were in the truck. Peter also had help from the engineering department at his college to fabricate the model city you see inside of the dodecahedron.

Are there other elements in this installation that Peter may have not made himself? Who might have been involved? Lastly, no artist can work without doing some troubleshooting along the way. What considerations may Peter have had because the artwork would be mobile?

ART ANALYSIS-
UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU SEE

1 The outside of the truck may look familiar to you? What does this make you think of? What do you notice about the image of the city? Is there imagery that could symbolize something? What about the words?

2 Inside the truck you will see a very large dodecahedron. Peter has created this shape out of twelve pieces of glass with a wooden frame. Inside of the dodecahedron there is a starch mold made through a rapid prototyping process. How do these object point to what you already know about the artist? Are the effect, color and style important to the message of the work? How does the dodecahedron relate to the other works around it?

3 As you enter the truck you will see 2 large television screens. What do you notice about the images on them? Do we know something about the artist that may have influenced this choice? Notice their movement in relation to the city inside the dodecahedron.

What do you notice about the materials used on the outside of the truck? Have they served a purpose in helping this truck look like something familiar? How is this related to the artist’s concept?

Rapid Prototype:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rapid_prototyping

Dodecahedron:

www.peter-everett.com
LESSON 1
Defining Home

INTENTIONS
Students will discuss what defines a home, and create a list or visual representation of the people, places and things that they believe define home.

BACKDROP
The notion of home can be defined through many different factors such as people (community), places, things, feelings, religion, culture, and family, among others. This definition changes for people from different cultures and places. For example, some Chinese people believe that the orientation of a building on the landscape can lead to an improved life. The Amish look to their style of dress as a way to strengthen their group identity. Many Native American cultures believe that a respectful relationship with animals and the earth is key to harmony.

When we look at various cultures, we often find that people are continually striving to improve their lives. In utopian societies, people were often striving for perfection in one way or another. For Peter, the U Haul moving truck is a symbol of positive change and is associated with hopes for a new and better place.

CONVERSATIONS
What are the different ways in which you define home?
What are the people, places and things that would make your home ideal?
For Peter’s family, when they moved they took all their belongings with them to inhabit their new space. Do your belongings make you feel more comfortable at home? What if you were unable to take your belongings with you to a new place?

Are there aspects of your home that you would wish to change? Imagine one of your definitions of home wasn’t part of your home anymore, for example “PEOPLE”. How would this change your sense of home?

ACTIVITY
• Have students create a grid on a large piece of paper with several columns. Each column can contain a different heading for an aspect of home. For example, your columns may read PEOPLE (Family & Community), PLACES, THINGS, PRACTICES, EMOTIONS, or CULTURE.

• Depending on the age group, you may want to simplify or expand on these categories. Have students list things that define home in each column.

• You can also ask students to rate which of these categories are most important to them. What if you could only choose the 3 most important things? What would they be?

• Give students the option to draw parts of this project in their columns.

• Ask students to compare or share with the group and discuss their similarities and differences.

LINKS:
Book: Houses and Homes by Anne Morris
Artist-Sarah Sze: http://www.sarahsze.com
Artist-Gordon Matta Clark: http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/collections/collection-online/show-full/bio/?artist_name=Gordon%20Matta-Clark

MATERIALS
Large paper, (colored) pencils
INTENTIONS
Students will explore heritage and personal geography by creating a map that tracks physical movement as well as cultural and family practices.

BACKDROP
Peter Everett’s installation focuses on themes of utopia, geographical movement, and social and cultural practices. A utopia is a community that is defined as perfect, often in terms of social and political conditions. As humans have changed geographical locations, their lifestyles, practices, cultures, and traditions often change too. Although not all people set out to construct a new and perfect society, they are often moving towards the promise of something better.

Creating a map can be a way for a person or a group of people to define their surroundings in a thematic way. Maps can also define cultural and social practices by helping us understand the environments where people live. In this project you will be creating a map of your own personal geography.

CONVERSATIONS
Ask a family member or friend if they have ever moved, and why they moved. Ask a family member how their life might have changed when they moved from one place to another. How does one’s worldview shift as a result of location? Have you ever moved and made changes to your lifestyles based on your new environment? Where do you see yourself in the future?

ACTIVITY
• Ask students to survey members of their family to find out where they were born, where their parent(s) were born, and what country their ancestors may have come from. Students can also include any places they have moved in their lifetime. These places can include movement across countries or even movement from one neighborhood to another. Ask students to choose 3 of these significant places.

• Have students print or appropriate physical maps that include these 3 places. Google Maps may be a great place to find & print maps.

• Using the 11x17 paper as your base ask students to collage the 3 maps onto the paper in a way that represents movement. This may be based on the geographical location, or they could be oriented in a chronological way to represent movement.

• Students can then emphasize each location by labeling it with words, photographs, or drawings. Ask students to focus on some element of change that may have occurred in this place.

• Ask students to visually connect their 3 locations to illustrate their movement from one place to another. For example this could be a line representing the path of travel from location to location.

• Students can share their experiences with the class by comparing and contrasting.

MATERIALS
Printed/drawn maps, glue sticks, scissors, markers, drawings or photographs of family, 11x17 heavy weight paper.

LINKS:
Artist-Kathy Predergast: http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/artnow/kathy_predergast/default.shtm
Artist-Marlene Creates: http://www.marlenecreates.ca/works.html
LESSON 3
Designing Utopia—Your Ideal World

INTENTIONS
Students will create a design for their own personal utopian society by exploring how architectural spaces and/or outdoor spaces can be a reflection of their identities. You can choose to do either a 2-D or 3-D model. You can also opt to do this project as a class creating one city as your model from cardboard boxes.

BACKDROP
A utopia can be defined as a perfect community—perfect in architecture, social practices, and even environment. However, utopian communities are often imaginary since their perfection is hard to achieve.

Inside the Art Truck you can see that Peter Everett’s installation has several examples of buildings. What do you notice about the different buildings that you see? Do they tell you anything about the people and environment? What do the materials tell us about who may have lived there and how they lived?

Architecture is often a reflection of a community and its ideals. The style of your utopian city and its design, patterns, textures and colors will be a reflection of you. Examine different models of architecture that include geometric shapes like Egyptian pyramids, modern day urban buildings, and Pueblo Indian dwellings.

Don’t forget to add people to your model; utopian communities are all about how people interact in their environment. Remember, a utopia is an ideal place but not always a realistic one—so try adding fantastical elements to your rendering. The sky is the limit!

CONVERSATIONS
What is your ideal imaginary world?
What would life be like in your model? Where would the people live and how would they interact? Would there be leaders in your community? How about rules?
How do the materials that you choose reflect your personality?
Are there aspects of your model that are really cool & exciting but impossible in the real world?
How does your space reflect your ideas or lifestyle?

ACTIVITY
• Students can choose to do a drawing of their utopian community or build a 3-D Model.
• Ask students to sketch ideas first. Encourage them to use their imaginations—buildings made of clouds, trees made of popsicles, or streets made of chocolate? Choose appropriate examples depending on the student’s grade.
• Ask students how their environment and its design reflect their hopes, dreams and desires? How is their community designed to ensure a perfect world?

MATERIALS
2-D: Paper, colored pencils or markers, rulers.

3-D: boxes (appx. shoe sized), cardstock, colored pencils, scissors, glue sticks, paint, various mixed media materials to embellish (fabric, pipe cleaners, tissue paper, etc).

LINKS:
Artist—Michael Landy:
http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/landy/

Artist—Benjamin Edwards:
http://www.benjaminedwards.net/

Book:
Houses and Homes by Anne Morris
SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILY FUN

After visiting the Art Truck, students and their families can make a record of art in unexpected places through photography, drawing, and writing.

Ask them to share their discoveries with us by sending ideas, comments, and images to: elly.baldwin@utahmoca.org

HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT

The Utah Museum of Contemporary Art makes the Art Truck available free-of-charge for a wide variety of educational and charitable purposes. To schedule an Art Truck visit, please contact elly.baldwin@utahmoca.org.

Utah State Office of Education Core Curriculum Links

Visual Arts – Grades 3-6
Core Standard 1, Objective 2
• Predict the processes and techniques needed to make a work of art.

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.

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.

Core Standard 2 Visual Arts – Perceiving, Objectives 1 and 2
• Critique works of art.

Core Standard 3 Visual Arts – Expressing, Objectives 1 and 2
• Connect various kinds of art with particular cultures, times, or places.

Core Standard 4 Visual Arts – Contextualizing, Objectives 1, 2 and 3
• Evaluate works of art.
• Perceive content in works of art.
• 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.

Additional Art Truck Sponsors

CHASE • BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART • HEARST FOUNDATION • BROWNING KIMBALL
• BEN & JERRY’S • GARDNER FOUNDATION