

TEACHER'S NOTES

EXHIBITION: *RONI HORN AKA RONI HORN*



You are the Weather (detail), 1995, 36 gelatin silver prints and 64, chromogenic prints, Each 10 1/2 x 8 1/2 in. (26.7 x 21.6 cm), Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth © Roni Horn

About the Artist:

- Born: New York 1955, lives and works in New York and Reykjavik
- Education: BFA (Rhode Island School of Design), 1975 and MFA (Yale), 1978

Vocabulary:

- Identity (n) – the individual characteristics by which a thing or person is recognized or known
- Androgyny (n) – showing characteristics of both genders, male and female, or of indeterminate sex
- Iceland (n) – a volcanic island in the North Atlantic near the Arctic Circle
- Fluid (adj) – capable of flowing and changing shape; variable; amorphous
- Minimal (adj) – extreme simplification of form and color; reductive
- Perception (n) – process of using the senses to acquire information about the surrounding environment

Discussion Questions:

- For Roni Horn identity is fluid and ever-changing. Can you identify where she explores this concept? Find the work, *You are the Weather*. What can you conclude about this subjects' identity?
- Roni Horn is particularly interested in the visitor's experience of her work. You might consider her strategies of artistic pairing, repeating, and reflecting to be her means of getting you to look closer as you move through the exhibition. Find instances of these techniques and discuss how the idea of doubles and reflections might affect your perception of these works. Can you locate other cues?
- Roni Horn works in a variety of media: glass, metal, rubber, paper, pigment, photography. Which of her works are concerned with water? Which works have watery, undulating surfaces?



Still Water (The River Thames, for Example) (detail), 1999, Series of 15 color-offset lithographs of photographs with footnotes on uncoated paper, Courtesy: The artist and Hauser & Wirth Zürich London © Roni Horn



Roni Horn, *Dead Owl*, 1998, Iris prints, 29 x 29 inches each, Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth Zürich London © Roni Horn

Post-Visit Questions:

- For Roni Horn identity is ever-changing, never fixed. She affirms that who we are is in part a product of the places we've been, experiences we've had, and memories we keep. What forces or external influences have helped make you the person you are today? Who are you?
- The visitor is an integral part of Horn's work. Reflect on your experience of walking through the exhibition. What techniques did the artist use to make you slow down and look closer?
- Which of Roni Horn's works references weather? What do you suppose is her fascination with weather?

Activities:

English Language Arts

Write a poem or a short reflective story beginning with the line "This is me" or "This is you."

Performing Arts

Roni Horn says, "Everyone has a story about the weather." Recount a story and act it out.

Visual Arts

PreK-6: Take similarly cropped pictures of a parent and child or two children. Cut them apart and reassemble to form a new face.

6-12: Create a "team" abstract landscape. First, create a grid and assign each student a place in the grid. The part of the landscape the student designs in that space has to (a) function on its own and (b) connect or speak to adjacent works.

Social Studies

What examples can you find of unlike civilizations coming together? What typically is the result of such a pairing? What are some advantages and disadvantages of colonization, depending on the point of view you're exploring?

Science

Investigate why Iceland is considered a "young" landscape. What does Roni mean when she says the continent is actively changing?

How exactly does an ant farm work? What can we learn from the ants' behavior?

References:

ICA Boston (February – June 2010). Download the exhibition brochure and watch related videos:

<http://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/exhibit/horn/video/>

PBS Art21 series: Roni Horn: <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/horn/index.html>

Tate Modern Museum: *Roni Horn AKA Roni Horn* exhibition (February – May 2009):

<http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/ronihorn/explore.shtm>

Roni Horn Interview in the *Journal of Contemporary Art* (Basel: 1995): <http://www.jca-online.com/horn.html>

Watnasafn/Library of Water (May 2007):

http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2007/vatnasafn_library_of_water