

## Teacher Resource Sheet

### ICA Collection: *Entangled in the Everyday*

On view: March 17, 2018 – Aug 25, 2019



Please Note: Nari Ward's *Savior* and Rineke Dijkstra's *Almerisa* series are no longer on view as part of this exhibition.

#### About the Exhibition:

From ancient Egyptian tomb paintings to European genre scene paintings, portrayals of everyday life have a longstanding role in the history of art. Artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have continued and expanded upon this tradition. With *ICA Collection: Entangled in the Everyday*, the ICA highlights a diverse range of twenty contemporary artists who directly reference the everyday through materials, process, and subject matter.

#### Everyday Things

Exhibited artists transform common materials into sometimes-unrecognizable forms. In her 2008 work *Nebulous*, artist [Tara Donovan](#) uses cellulose adhesive tape to create an expansive cloud or fog-like form on the museum's floor.

[Senga Nengudi](#) anthropomorphizes worn pantyhose in *R.S.V.P. Reverie—"B" Suite* (1977/2011). Conversing with these two works is [Nari Ward](#)'s 1996 *Savior* (image 2), a sculpture reflecting on the marginalization of homeless communities, with a shopping cart as its base and found materials including a ladder, wheel, plastic garbage bags, cloth, bottles, and clocks.

#### Everyday Actions

Artists on view knot, wrap, and tie as part of their creative process. [Lynda Benglis](#)'s *Sierra* from 1974 is one of several knot sculptures the artist created during this time. Made from materials such as aluminum and cotton bunting, this seemingly simplistic wall relief suggests an abstracted representation of the human body.

*Banisteriopsis II* (1965-66/2010) (image 3) by fiber artist [Sheila Hicks](#) is a freestanding sculpture of repeating piles of wrapped, compacted yellow linen. Together with Zoë Paul's 2017 *Untitled*—a wool weaving on a found fridge grill—and [Faith Wilding](#)'s 1972/1995 *Crocheted Environment*, all four artists challenge traditional notions of what defines art, all while using everyday, accessible actions.

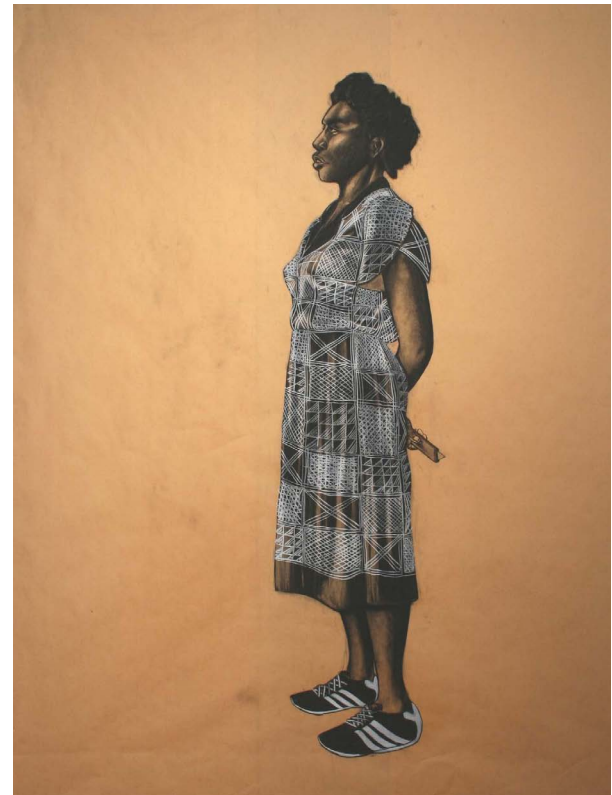


Image 1

#### Everyday People

Several examples of portraiture from the ICA collection exemplify how many contemporary artists choose to highlight ordinary—and arguably unremarkable—individuals with their work. Boston School photographer Philip-Lorca diCorcia's 1987 photograph *Igor* shows a man riding a New York City subway holding a goldfish. This work neatly lends itself for comparison with [Sanya Kantarovsky](#)'s 2016 *Violet* (image 4) painting, which also portrays a man, this time holding a dog, on what appears to be a train. Also included is [Robert Pruitt](#)'s large-scale drawing *Woman with X-Patterned Dress (After Bill Traylor)* (image 1), made in 2007. Drawn without a background, the figure floats on butcher paper. Like the other portraits, the narrative here is also ambiguous, but seemingly more sinister. Behind the woman's back she holds a box cutter, with the blade extended.



Image 2



Image 3



Image 4

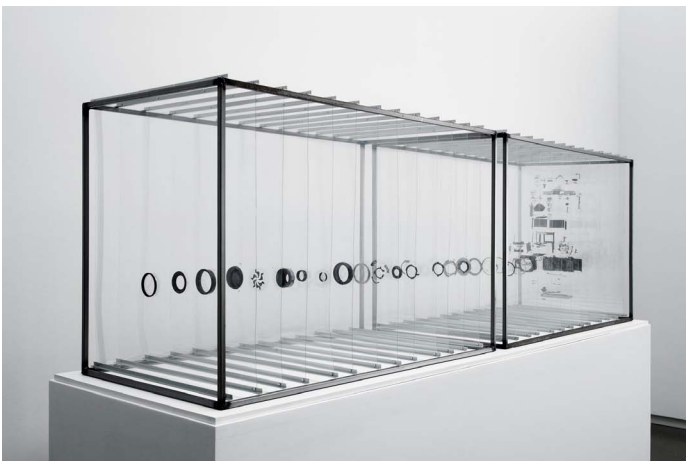


Image 5

1. Robert Pruitt, *Woman with X-Patterned Dress (After Bill Traylor)*, 2007.  
 Conte on butcher paper. Gift of Kimberly and James Pallotta.  
 Courtesy the artist and Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Seattle. © Robert Pruitt

2. Nari Ward, *Savior*, 1996.  
 Shopping cart, plastic garbage bags, cloth, bottles, metal fence, earth, wheel, mirror, chair, and clocks. Purchased through the generosity of an anonymous donor. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. © Nari Ward

3. Sheila Hicks, *Banisteriopsis II*, 1965–66/2010.  
 Linen and wool. Gift of the artist in honor of Jenelle Porter. Photo by Charles Mayer Photography. © Sheila Hicks

4. Sanya Kantarovsky, *Violet*, 2016.  
 Oil on linen. Promised gift of Karen Swett Conway and Brian Conway. Courtesy the Stuart Shave Modern Art. © Sanya Kantarovsky

5. Damián Ortega, *Olympus*, 2009.  
 Metal, plastic, and sectioned camera. Gift of Mark and Marie Schwartz. Courtesy the artist and kurimanzutto, Mexico City. © Damian Ortega

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#### Discuss:

Why do artists choose to portray the everyday? Why do artists choose to incorporate everyday objects and actions in their art making? What messages might they be trying to communicate to audiences viewing their artwork? How do everyday people, places, and things inspire you?

Artist Sanya Kantarovsky has said that he is “most interested in ... seeing and noticing.”<sup>1</sup> Why do you think this is important to him and his identity as an artist? For who else—fictional or real, past or present—is “seeing and noticing” important? How so?

In her artist statement Senga Nengudi writes “I find different ways to use materials others consider useless or insignificant providing proof that the disregarded and disenfranchised may also have the resilience and reformative ability to find their poetic selves.”<sup>2</sup> What other “disregarded and disenfranchised” people, things, or places do you think the artist may be referencing? How have other historical figures made similar statements through their actions or words?

What can we learn from a person's body language? Photographer Rineke Dijkstra, who has several photographs included in *ICA Collection: Entangled in the Everyday*, has said “I never have a fixed idea when I photograph someone. Of course I have a preconceived notion of the background, and the light, but never the person. I don't like to give too many directions. For me it's important that a pose arises sort of unconsciously or naturally.”<sup>3</sup> How does this statement influence the way you view and interpret her photographs? Would your interpretation of her work change if you knew the poses were more choreographed? In what way?

#### Connect:

**History + Social Studies:** In *DeLuxe*, artist Ellen Gallagher asks viewers to question twentieth century beauty advertisements targeting African-American women. A critical analysis of this work can connect with curricular studies of historical and present day social justice, racism and civil rights, and media literacy.

**English Language Arts:** Consider the everyday figures portrayed in the portraits of Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Rineke Dijkstra, Sanya Kantarovsky, and Robert Pruitt as characters in a narrative of the everyday, connecting to a lesson on fiction or poetry writing.

**Science:** When discussing his work, artist Damián Ortega, whose sculpture *Olympus* (image 5) is included in *ICA Collection: Entangled in the Everyday*, says “I guess my technique is a technique that belongs to underdevelopment. You recycle objects, you regenerate them and give them a new life.”<sup>4</sup> Nari Ward, Zoë Paul, and Senga Nengudi also each incorporate recycled materials into their work. Connect these ideas with lessons on consumerism, recycling, waste and environmental impact.

**Math:** Consider Tara Donovan's *Nebulous* in a geometry lesson related to organic shapes or three dimensional space calculations.

**Performing Arts:** Senga Nengudi's art has been directly influenced by her background as a dancer and choreographer, and her nylon mesh sculptures are frequently activated through performance. Study and discuss *R.S.V.P. Reverie—“B” Suite* and connect with students' movement, dance, or performance.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.spikeartmagazine.com/en/articles/studio-sanya-kantarovsky-0>

<sup>2</sup><http://sengasenga.com/statement.html>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/interviews/rineke-dijkstra-guggenheim-sfmoma/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/visit-damian-ortega>

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### Read:

#### For Younger Students

Denos, Julia. *Windows*. Illustrated by E.B. Goodale, Candlewick Press, 2017.

*The story of a young boy who takes an evening walk with his dog and in doing so notices all the everyday occurrences around his neighborhood.*

Portis, Antoinette. *Not a Box*. HarperCollins, 2006.

*A simple story about creativity and seeing more in everyday objects.*

Springman, I.C. *More*. Illustrated by Brian Lies, HMH Books for Young Readers, 2012.

*A fictional story of collecting and over accumulating.*

#### For Educators and Older Students

“Trash Transformed.” *Scholastic Art*, vol. 44, no. 6, April/May 2014.

*This article, written for middle and high school students, talks about [Tara Donovan](#)'s work.*

### Watch and Listen:

[Liz Deschenes](#), video by ICA Boston

[Nari Ward—A Segue Into History](#), video by ICA Boston

[Lynda Benglis](#), videos by Art21

[Ellen Gallagher](#), videos by Art21

[Damián Ortega](#), videos by Art21

### Visit the ICA:

The ICA offers guided museum tours for pre-K–12 groups year-round.

Group leaders may also choose to complement their guided tour with an optional hands-on workshop in the Bank of America Art Lab.

Self-guided visits to the ICA are offered for grades 9–12.

For more information about group visits to the ICA, visit [www.icaboston.org/tours](http://www.icaboston.org/tours) or email [tours@icaboston.org](mailto:tours@icaboston.org).