Contents

4  Introduction

6  Focus Exhibition:  
*i'm yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*

8  Teaching Artist Bios

10 Activities and Prompts

32 Space for Writing and Sketching
WallTalk is a multidisciplinary arts-engagement program for Boston middle and high school students that encourages creative thinking, open discussion, and individual connections with contemporary art through the creation of their own writing, visual art, and performance work. Centering on ICA/Boston exhibitions, the program takes place over the course of a school year and consists of multiple visits in which students observe, question, interpret, and respond creatively to the art and issues of our time. Usually, these visits take place in the museum and classrooms. This year, our Teaching Artists brought the museum and the arts to virtual classrooms.

The events of this year—the global COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest—heightened the need for students to explore complex ideas and express themselves creatively. WallTalk engages young people with contemporary art and provides them with a supportive environment for creative expression.

At the ICA, we believe that robust arts education is critical to building future artists, audiences, thinkers, and leaders and to creating greater equity for young people. We offer a wide range of opportunities for teens to connect with art, artists, and one another through their schools or on their own. We know that museums have a unique role to play in the landscape of arts education, giving people direct experiences with art, convening people to discuss ideas, and acting as centers of community-based learning and social change.
During the 2020–2021 school year, the ICA collaborated with more than 300 students from five partner schools: Boston Collegiate Charter School, Charlestown High School, Excel High School, Rafael Hernández School, and Snowden International School at Copley.

This year’s program would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of many individuals and organizations. The ICA extends our most sincere thanks to the Nathaniel Saltonstall Arts Fund for their long-standing support of the WallTalk program, as well as the Wagner Foundation and the many other foundations and government, corporate, and individual partners who allow us to do what we do. I am grateful for the many teachers and administrators at our partner schools who contribute time, energy, and enthusiasm to the program. I also extend my deepest appreciation to the ICA Education staff: Education Department Coordinator Lenny Schnier; Teaching Artists Dzidzor, Rimi Mallick, and Mary Teuscher; and most especially Jessie Magyar, School and Family Programs Manager. A final, heartfelt thank-you to all the young people who opened themselves up to art, to ideas, and to us.

Betsy Gibbons
Director of Teen Programs
Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston
Beyond these Walls
Focus Exhibition: *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*

All the activities in this book were inspired by works in the 2020–2021 ICA exhibition *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*. This exhibition, which borrows its title from a Henry Taylor painting in the ICA collection, invites people to create a personal connection with works of art, to make them their own. It groups together works of art that address topics such as ideas of home and history, social and material transformation, and frames of identity. It aims to spark wonder, encourage questions, challenge assumptions, and provide space for reflection.

In any other year, WallTalk would have brought young people into the ICA to experience, respond to, and engage with art. But this year was not like other years. Instead of engaging within the physical walls of the ICA, our Teaching Artists brought the art to the young people. We focused in on the other “walls,” physical and metaphorical, that represent the challenges we faced this year, to inspire creativity, art-making, and writing rooted in identity, self-care, and community. This WallTalk Artist Activity Book includes a selection of the activities and prompts created and facilitated by our Teaching Artists this year. Art has always offered spaces for people to reflect, respond, express, communicate, and make meaning. We hope this book can help offer that space for you.

Henry Taylor, *i’m yours*, 2015. Acrylic on canvas, 73 ¼ × 74 ¼ inches (185.7 × 188.6 cm). Acquired through the generosity of the Acquisitions Circle. © Henry Taylor


Simone Leigh, *Cupboard IX*, 2019. Stoneware, steel, and raffia, 78 × 60 × 80 inches (198.1 × 152.4 × 203.2 cm). Acquired through the generosity of Bridgitt and Bruce Evans and Fotene Demoulas and Tom Coté. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Simone Leigh
Dzidzor (Jee-Jaw) is an African folklorist, performing artist, author, and curator. Dzidzor’s style of call-and-response combines traditional storytelling in Afro-folklore and Poetry Slam through a sonic experience. Dzidzor is moved by the responsibility to alarm the power/abundance in the midst of bodies while creating a practice of care and freedom through creativity. Dzidzor is the founder of Black Cotton Club and partners with Grubstreet, ICA/Boston, and Boston Public Schools to teach creative empowerment workshops in Boston.

www.dzidzor.com
Instagram: @dzidzorazaglo
Facebook: www.facebook.com/dzidzorazaglo

Mary Teuscher (she/her) is a dancer/choreographer focused on inclusion and community. A former GED teacher, Mary is committed to education justice and the idea that access to high-quality arts education is a human right. Her love of movement has taken her all over the Americas: first to San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she trained with Andanza and Bread and Puppet Theater, and later to Salvador, Brazil, to study with Rosangela Silvestre. Locally, Mary
has performed in works at AS220, the RISD Museum, Movement Research NYC, Providence Fringe Fest, Outside the Box, Boston Conservatory, and the Boston Center for the Arts. As a dancemaker sheexplores connection, emotions, physical abandon, make-believe, false binaries, and the use of imagination as a neuromuscular force. Mary also loves to write poems, draw, paint, cook, take photos, create collections of found objects, invent unusual musical instruments, and dream up expansive and unwieldy public art projects. She holds a master's in teaching from Brown University.

www.maryteuscherprojects.com

Rimi Mallick (she/her) is an animator, visual artist, and educator, working and living in the Greater Boston area. She graduated with a BFA in animation from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2018. She works mostly in digital 2D animation and stop-motion. She also enjoys hand-making books and hand lettering as part of her artistic practice. She has been a lead teacher for animation in the MassArt Saturday Studios program since 2018 and in the 2020 MassArt Summer Youth Programs, sharing her love and knowledge of animation with middle school and high school students every week. She has also led Visual Arts workshops as an ICA WallTalk teaching artist since Fall 2020. Her focus as an educator is to design lessons that use affordable and accessible materials, so that students can make art and animate beyond the classroom. She is currently working on her Masters in Art Education from Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

www.rimimallick.com
Art Conversations

By Rimi

I invite you to look at and talk about art and consider how it connects to us and our times. Join me in these “conversations” as we encounter themes of transformation, identity, community, history, and home.

Materials:
Writing/drawing tool
Notebook or paper

Conversations with Our Past or Future Selves


For this conversation, look at Firelei Baez’s Man Without a Country (aka anthropophagist wading in the Artibonite River) (2014-15). The artist uses pages from books written on the island of Hispaniola (which holds Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and other found maps as the base for her work. She transforms these pages by drawing female figures inspired by Dominican folklore creatures called “ciguapas” and other silhouettes and patterns. She also covers the faces of the men who are mentioned in the original books, who most likely colonized the islands or benefitted from its colonization.
People from Spain and France colonized this place by settling among and establishing control over its indigenous people. The work is a conversation between the past and the present about identities and culture. The artist is aiming to provide multiple perspectives on how to understand identities, history, and cultures that are born out of the African, Caribbean, and Latin American diaspora.

This inspired me to connect with the theme on a personal level. I want to invite you to do the same. How would I have a conversation with my past or future self? What would I say? Would it be to change something in my life or change how I see things? Respond with words, drawing, or in other ways in the space below.
What Is Inside and Outside in Our Times?

For this theme, we looked at Rania Matar's work *Orly and Ruth* (2020). The photograph places the outside and the sisters, who are inside, on the same plane. This photograph is part of a series the artist created during the pandemic. Our meaning of what is outside and what is inside has changed a lot. Our home has turned into our school, our hangout place for virtual meetings with friends, our gym, etc. during this time. How do we get inspired by Matar and visually represent our outside and inside? What is our outside vs. our inside in these times? What does “outside” mean to us now after a year of being “inside”? How will we move from this time into the future, with all these new ways of seeing life?

How would you represent your outside and inside worlds? Respond with words, drawing, or in other ways in the space below.
An Encounter with Art in This Time: I’m My Own
By Dzidzor

Inspired by the ICA exhibition *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*, this activity asks: What does it mean to encounter art in our times? And how have you encountered art during these times?
https://www.icaboston.org/exhibitions/im-yours-encounters-art-our-times

Materials:
Phone w/ camera and/or video camera
Paper
Pen/pencil

Directions:
The exhibition *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times* celebrates the experience of engaging with art in person. 2020 was a year that transformed how everyone experienced art, from concerts to museums. This activity challenges you to create art that expresses your experience during quarantine. Everybody has experienced their own perspective of being quarantined, COVID-19, family, music, protest, politics, loneliness, and more. *i’m yours:*
Encounters with Art in Our Times is a response to the experiences of this year, presenting art that helps frame and reflect our own experiences.

1. Choose one thing that you've learned about yourself in the midst of quarantine.

2. Record a two-minute video that narrates what you've learned about yourself from your family.
   a. Your video could be a dance, drawing, voice-over, poem, etc.
   b. You can add pictures, still shots, a selfie, etc.
   c. Think about these questions as you make your video: What do you want us to feel? What do you want us to know? What is the ultimate message in your video?
   d. Be sure to give a trigger warning at the beginning of your video if it will include any sensitive information/topics: sexual abuse, domestic violence, excessive drug and alcohol use, etc.
How Do You Dance with a Wall?
By Mary

This activity was inspired by the ICA exhibition *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*. What are the walls, both physical and metaphorical, that represent the challenges you face today? How do you move with a wall?

**Materials:**
A wall inside your home
Loose clothing that you can move in
Music you like
A camera, phone, or computer that records videos (optional)

**Directions:**
1. Do some stretches and run around a bit to wake up your body.

2. Next, find a wall in your home that has a little bit of floor space in front of it.

3. Get to know the wall.
   a. Go up close and smell it.

   b. Put your face against the wall. What is the temperature?

   c. Push the wall with your hands, then your feet. How does it feel different in relation to both types of pushing?

   d. How many different ways can you move while keeping one part of your body always connected to the wall?

   e. How would you move if you could push through the wall?

   f. What other ways can you interact with the wall besides pushing?
List them here:

g. Can you describe what is on the other side (real or imagined)?

4. Next, after you have done some experimenting with your body, decide on three frozen pictures, or “statues,” of you with the wall. This is a moment in time where you are interacting with the wall but we take a still picture in our imagination, so it’s like you are frozen in that position. Draw your three statues below.

5. Memorize or write down your three frozen pictures.

6. Decide which fits first, second, and last. And then invent ways to connect the frozen pictures with movement, in real life. Try them out with your body. Play a few different songs to see what feels right. Sometimes sound helps me invent movement better than silence. Sometimes silence helps more. You decide.

7. You will have two transition moments.
(Ex: picture one + spin + picture two + jump + picture three)

8. Start to do your “movement sentence” of statues and transition movements faster and faster, until it feels more like a dance and less like stop-motion animation.

9. Pick a costume and makeup, and set up lighting if you can. Film your performance with your phone or computer! If you need ideas for how to do DIY/at-home stage lighting, you can contact Mary through her website listed in the front of this booklet. You can also search on Google.
Transformation through Animation!

By Rimi

Things have changed so much around us in the past year, and we have transformed with them. As an animator, I have realized that my art practice allows me to directly explore this theme of transformation, through animation. I wanted to bring some of that to you through a flipbook activity.

Prompt: I would like to invite you to think about transformation and draw what comes to mind. It could be something abstract like shapes/lines/forms transforming. It could be something literal with visual representation (example: how your home has transformed from just home to more roles as a space). You could also focus on this activity as a meditation practice, redrawing the same image on every page of the flipbook and then observe how each drawing is different from the previous and the next, always transforming.

Materials:
Memo pad
Pencil (or any drawing utensil)
Tape

Directions:
1. For a video demonstration of this activity please visit www.rimimallick.com/art-activities OR scan this QR code on your mobile device.

2. Secure the glued spine of the memo pad by covering it with tape.

3. Start animating by drawing on the last page.
4. Flip the next page over it to see your last drawing as a reference for your next drawing.

5. Gradually alter your drawings with each page to see your drawings transform into an animation!

6. You can quickly flip through your book to see the animation.

7. If you would like to see your animation digitally, you can also use the free application Stop Motion Studio to record your animation.
This project was inspired by Cornelia Parker's *Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson)* (1999). Looking at the sculpture, imagine what it would feel like to be the sculpture. What would it be like to be Cornelia Parker? What is something you see every day that you would like to transform?
Materials:
The internet
Pen/pencil
Paper
A smartphone

Directions:
1. Cornelia Parker uses material she finds in the world around her to make art. Scan this QR code to watch a YouTube video about Cornelia Parker.

2. Next, look at the sculpture image above, *Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson)*. This was made from burned wood Parker found near her home in London. How does the sculpture make you feel? Keep that in mind and chose one of the topics below:
   a. Write a poem where the first line uses the word “fire” or “history.”
   b. Write a poem as if you were a piece of wood in the sculpture. What does it feel like to transform? What was your journey from being destroyed by a fire to being created into a sculpture and then displayed in the ICA?
   c. Write a poem about something you see every day that you would like to transform. Consider: Why do you want to transform it? How would you do this?

3. Do a free write to get all your thoughts out on the topic you chose. Set a timer and don't pick up your pen for three minutes, write out all the images, phrases, and ideas that connect to the topic you chose. If you like, you can try this with another topic as well and see which free write you like more and decide that way.

4. Go back to your free write and choose the parts you like the best. Rewrite this into a new poem. If you feel stuck you can use a tanka poem structure to
fit your ideas into syllables. The format for this is five–seven–five–seven–seven. In other words, there are five syllables in line one, seven syllables in line two, five syllables in line three, and seven syllables in lines four and five.

Example:
I saw a goddess
She lived in the sea and air
She swam through all times
She was breathing the whole world
She was drinking the whole world

5. After you have written something out, walk away and don’t look at it for at least two hours.

6. Come back and read it aloud to a friend or family member or pet or plant or to yourself. Do you like it? If not, redraft, rearrange, and mess with the parts that don’t feel quite right. You can treat each line you wrote like a puzzle piece. Where does it fit?

7. Finally, you can record yourself reading your poem aloud by using the voice memo/recorder app on a phone. This is a nice way to see how the words sound out loud. How do they feel on your tongue? On your teeth? How does your voice connect to your heart when you share these thoughts? Listen to the voice memo/recording of yourself reading. Do you still want to change what you wrote?
Get Out Your Head
By Dzidzor

Scan the QR code above to listen to “Getoutchoohead” by Dzidzor

This activity is a self-care practice. This explores the limitations we place on ourselves and walks us through the freedom of choosing.

How often are we battling with the voices in our heads? How often are we trying to silence the voices that limit our creativity? This activity creates a space for writers to explore their minds and fight back against oppression in their daily lives through writing. This activity will urge writers to analyze the root of the voices that “live” in our heads and bring them to the forefront in their work. This activity uses the pedagogical and political principles specific to the popular education method developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and later expanded in Augusto Boal’s work in Theatre of the Oppressed.

Materials:
Paper
Pencil / pen
Directions:
P symbolizes you, the protagonist character in your story.

1. Around the P, list thoughts that have hindered you from showing up as your best self.

2. When you're done writing, take a second to breathe.

3. Consider this writing prompt: How can we care for ourselves in the moments that these thoughts come up for us?
Six-Sided Breathing

By Mary

This activity was inspired by Tara Donovan's *Untitled (Pins)* (2003) as well as the work of Peter Levine, creator of Somatic Experiencing. This exercise uses breathing as a way to relax our bodies and take a brief break from screen time.

**Materials:**
Your lungs
A place to sit
Pillow or chair
Tea bag (optional)
Hot water (optional)
Cell phone, tablet, or computer (optional)

**Directions:**
1. Find a place where you feel safe to close your eyes.

2. If you like, use the tea bag from the art kit. You can let it steep in a cup of hot water and the steam will smell nice.
3. Sit on a pillow so that your hips are tipped forward just a little bit. This will help your spine and your central nervous system relax. You can sit in a chair with both feet on the floor, or you can sit on the ground with your legs crossed.

4. Sit up very tall, imagining your head is a helium balloon; relax your shoulders by imagining there is heavy, wet sand pouring onto them.

5. You can use this QR code to find my SoundCloud, where I talk you through the prompts you can follow when you close your eyes:

![QR Code](image)

6. And, here are the directions if you prefer to read:
   a. Close your eyes. Take six deep breaths: each breath will move in the six directions of a cube: above, below, right, left, front, and back. If you want to put one hand on your heart and one on your stomach you can feel your lungs moving, and that may help you focus. Also, it just feels cool.
   
   b. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy up out of the top of your head, then relax back down to your center as you exhale.
   
   c. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy out of your right side, then relax back into your center as you exhale.
   
   d. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy out of your left side, then relax back into your center as you exhale.
   
   e. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy out of the front of your chest, stomach, and ribs, then relax back into your center as you exhale.
   
   f. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy out of the back of your body, your shoulder blades, your spine, and the back of your ribs, then relax back into your center as you exhale.
   
   g. Breathe in and imagine you are sending energy down to the ground through the bottoms of your legs or your feet, press your energy out against the floor, and then relax back into your center, feeling the breath lift back up.

7. Okay, now close your eyes! And do the whole thing . . .
Lessons for Writers

By Dzidzor

This exercise was inspired by Zadie Smith’s “Dance Lessons for Writers,” in the book *Feel Free*. Smith highlights the lessons that she learned from dancers such as Beyoncé, Prince, Michael and Janet Jackson, and more. In this activity, you will choose a subject and, using imagination and creativity, write your own version of lessons to writers.

**Materials:**
Paper
Pencil/pen or phone/computer

**Directions:**
1. Choose one of the following;
   - Influencers
   - Teachers
   - Clowns
   - Plants
   - Water
   - God
   - Gods
   - Poets
   - Rappers
   - Visual Artists
   - Sonic Artists
   - Preachers
   - Trees
   - Dancers
   - Makeup Artists

2. Go to YouTube and search for the subject you picked. Watch a couple of videos.

3. Write down things that stick out to you about the subject.
   (Ex: Plants need water to grow.)

4. What is this subject teaching you? Write out seven lessons that the subject is teaching you, based on the videos you watched and what you know about the subject. (Ex: *Waiting is a part of the inspiration of creativity. Plants teach me about the importance of patience.*)
Puppet Animation

By Rimi

Sometimes we need a little starter to move into our creative zone. If you feel that you're in need of something like that, we have included a paper puppet template for you to cut out and animate with. You can record your animation on your mobile device or tablet with the Stop Motion Studio application.

Materials:
- Paper puppet template (see page 35)
- Paper fasteners (optional)
- Drawing and/or coloring tools

Directions:
So many things are possible with this template!

For a visual demonstration of this activity please visit www.rimimallick.com/art-activities OR scan this QR code on your mobile device.

1. You can use all the parts or make your own character using desired shapes (and even reshape them with scissors or by tearing the paper).

2. The template is printed on cardstock, so you can customize it with colors (crayons, colored pencils, etc.).

3. You can also use the paper fasteners to keep the joints together while you animate.

4. If you would like more people to participate in this activity, you can photocopy/trace the template to make more templates. It is a great activity that can be personalized for all ages!
This project was inspired by the many portraits in the ICA exhibition *i’m yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times*. In thinking about identity, there are many ways you can create a self-portrait. Make a playlist that uses an arrangement of sounds and lyrics to tell a message about who you are.
Artwork by students from Excel High School
**Materials:**
The internet
Your imagination
Something to listen to music on (we used a phone or a computer)
A mirror
Pen and paper

**Directions**
1. Open up your favorite music app, YouTube, or just an empty notebook. You are going to make a list.

2. Next, go to a mirror, or take a selfie. We don't have to see your eyes or even your face! Use this portrait image to decide how you want to define yourself in this moment in time. You make the rules; you tell the story. Think about the bell hooks quote featured in i’m yours: “There is power in looking.”

3. Next, collect twelve or more songs that feel important to you. You can go through old playlists you may have, check your IG stories archive, or follow suggestions on YouTube that may help your memory. Try to connect each song to a part of who you are. Each song tells us how you see yourself.

4. After you have your twelve songs, try to put them into three groups: beginning, middle, and end. Or, if you want to use the hints below, you can go through the songs one by one and arrange them that way. Depending on the app you use, you can usually drag and drop all the songs in a new order. You can also just write your list down or type it out.

5. For your BEGINNING songs, consider: How would you introduce yourself to us? How do you want to start off? Big & Loud or Slow Build? Here you could also use songs from your past/kid songs, oldies that maybe your parents sing, a song with your name in it, a song from a place you used to live, a song in another language.

6. For your BEGINNING songs it also may be useful to think about time of day or seasons. What are songs you listen to in the morning? What songs sound like springtime? Consider how the song feels in your body. What are songs that sound or feel like something bursting open? Songs that sound like something starting to grow or unfurl?
7. For your MIDDLE songs consider: What is really the center of your identity? Here you could include a song with no words. A song you always sing along to on the radio, a song someone sent you that you love, a song with a music video you love, or a song you cannot resist dancing to. Now that we are sitting down and getting to know you, are there any songs from video games or movies you like? Do you make beats or sing? Add your own music in the mix!

8. For the last four, or ENDING, songs on your playlist, think about what you want the listener to experience before their ears go back to hearing everyday sounds. What is your newest favorite song? A song by the newest artist you found? How do you want us to feel when we say goodbye to you? What is your style of leaving a party or an event? Do you sneak out, or do you make a big loud display? Do you give someone a hug, or do you high-five? What song feels like a hug? What song feels like a high five?

Optional: Can you make a cover for your Self-Portrait Album or paint a picture using colors that reflect the tone and temperature of the songs you chose?
Space for writing and sketching
Paper Puppet Template by Rimi (see activity on page 27)
Lead support for Teen Programs provided by Wagner Foundation.

WallTalk is supported, in part, by the Nathaniel Saltonstall Arts Fund.

Additional support is provided by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation; the Rowland Foundation, Inc.; The Corkin Family; the Rosalie Thorne McKenna Foundation; the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation; Vertex; the Cabot Family Charitable Trust; the William E. Schrafft and Bertha E. Schrafft Charitable Trust; The Willow Tree Fund; the Robert Lehman Foundation; the Jean Gaulin Foundation; and Santander.

Converse is committed to supporting movements for positive social change and amplifying youth voices as they build the future they believe in.

**i'm yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times** is organized by Jeffrey De Blois, Assistant Curator and Publications Manager; Ruth Erickson, Mannion Family Curator; Anni Pullagura, Curatorial Assistant; and Eva Respini, Barbara Lee Chief Curator.

Support for **i'm yours: Encounters with Art in Our Times** is provided by First Republic Bank.

Additional support is generously provided by Lori and Dennis Baldwin and The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation; Ed Berman and Kate McDonough; Clark and Susana Bernard; Kate and Chuck Britzis; Paul and Katie Buttenwieser; Stephanie and John Connaughton; Karen and Brian Conway; Steve Corkin and Dan Maddalena; Jean-François and Nathalie Ducrest; Bridgitt and Bruce Evans; the Ewald Family Foundation; Sandra and Gerald Fineberg; James and Audrey Foster; Hilary and Geoffrey Grove; Vivien and Alan Hassenfeld and the Hassenfeld Family Foundation; Jodi and Hal Hess; Marina Kalb and David Feinberg; Barbara Lee; Tristin and Martin Mannion; Aedie and John McEvoy; Ted Pappendick and Erica Gervais Pappendick; The Red Elm Tree Charitable Foundation; Charles and Fran Rodgers; Mark and Marie Schwartz; Kambiz and Nazgol Shahbazi; Kim Sinatra; Charlotte and Herbert S. Wagner III; and anonymous donors.