

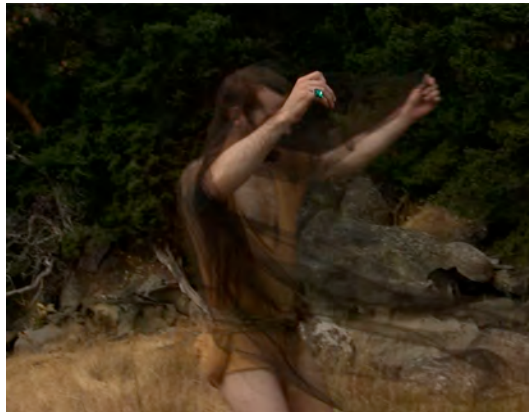


TEACHER'S GUIDE

Black Hole is Also SuperNova:
Kara Uzelman, Paul Kajander, Colleen Brown

Migration / Immigrant Stories:
Elizabeth Russell

Richmond Art Gallery's 4th Annual Artist Trading Cards Exhibition



Paul Kajander, *We are like the worms who have dim eyes and can hardly see the stars at all*, video still



Elizabeth Russell with *Curtain*, pencil and charcoal



2008 ATC Exhibition at the Richmond Art Gallery

Please use this guide to prepare students and parents for your trip to the Richmond Art Gallery. Discussion of the contents of this guide is encouraged to ensure your students get the most out of their Art Gallery experience.

Included is Gallery Etiquette, background information on the artists, basic concepts and processes covered on your Gallery visit, and resources for further exploration.

More images and information on our exhibitions and programs are available at: www.richmondartgallery.org

If you have any questions or comments regarding your School Art Workshop, please contact:

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PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT TO THE GALLERY

Our educational programs complement the exhibitions to help develop visual literacy and educate visitors about contemporary art practices. The *RAG School Art Program* has been developed for students and teachers to experience contemporary art in person.

The goal of the School Art Program is to **learn about contemporary art** and **Art Gallery etiquette**, **practice visual art skills**, and to **develop visual literacy**.

FAQs



WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY ART?

Contemporary art is a term used to describe **art of the present era**. Contemporary means “of the times”, so the artwork often comments on **current issues and ideas** or is made with **new and innovative materials or techniques**.

IS THAT ARTIST STILL ALIVE?

Children often ask this question, as most of the artists they study are from history. The Richmond Art Gallery only **shows works from living artists** who are currently active in their professional practice.

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE SO CAREFUL IN AN ART GALLERY?

Touching artworks often damages it, as fingers will leave oils and dirt on the artwork that eats away at it over time. By walking too close to artworks on the walls or floor, we may accidentally knock the work or cause it to fall. Please help us preserve the art!

Picking up Student Works

Most artworks take time to dry, especially paintings and prints. Please discuss arrangements with the Instructor at your workshop when you can come back to pick up the students' projects.

Parking

Free parking is available at the Richmond Cultural Centre parking lot and the Minoru Arenas parking lot. If you are unable to find parking, you can park across the street at the Richmond Centre Mall for free for up to 3 hours.

Washrooms

Washrooms are located in the Cultural Centre rotunda (behind the front desk), and there is one unisex stall located in the art studio.

Taking Photos

Please note that photography is not allowed in the Art Gallery, or in the Cultural Centre. Parents and teachers may only take photos inside the Studio Art Classroom.

PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION: WHAT YOU WILL SEE

Migration / Immigrant Stories by Vancouver Island-based artist Elizabeth Russell is an installation of drawings, photographs and paintings exploring the experiences of migrants and immigrants. As research for the exhibition, Russell interviewed and worked with Richmond new immigrants to collect their personal stories about their travels and life in a new country. Russell's works explore the early transitional stages newcomers experience as they move to and live in a new country. Using everyday objects as symbols, Russell draws various objects to develop narratives about how these objects reference starting over, making do, and survival in a new land.

Elizabeth Russell is an interdisciplinary artist whose practice involves the creation of site-specific works for alternative spaces and galleries. She is a sessional instructor at North Island College in Courtenay, where she resides. Russell received her BFA from Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver and her MA from Chelsea College of Art in London, England. She has exhibited throughout BC and Europe.

Black Hole is Also SuperNova is a group show curated by Vanessa Kwan, with works by artists Kara Uzelman, Paul Kajander and Colleen Brown. The artists have produced individual sculptural installations using a variety of materials including video, drawings, found objects, and sculpture. Similar to Russell, the artists treat the objects within their artwork as symbols or cultural products, yet question what each object may mean or represent. Though a shared interest in each other's art processes, the exhibition took shape alongside open-ended conversations with each other and the curator. The artists developed works relating to the theme of the title, yet take different approaches to how objects and images are looked at, considered, and discarded in our lives. Through experimentation of materials and ideas, the completed installation of several works are a playful consideration of the artistic process.

Kara Uzelman has developed process-based, site-specific sculpture based on her interest in the historical and imagined narratives inherent in the objects that surround her. She received her BFA from Emily Carr Institute and currently resides in Berlin.

Colleen Brown is an artist and writer living in Vancouver. She received her BFA from Emily Carr Institute and is currently working on her MFA at Bard College. Her works have been exhibited in BC and Quebec.

Paul Kajander is a cross-disciplinary artist working in Vancouver. He has exhibited in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Tokyo. He is currently the Director of the Helen Pitt Gallery ARC in Vancouver.

Vanessa Kwan is a Vancouver based artist and writer. She has exhibited throughout BC and is currently working on a public art commission for the City of Vancouver.

The Fourth Annual Artist Trading Card Exhibition features thousands of individual works from local, national and international artists who responded to the Open-Call for entries. All works received have been exhibited, and will be available for trade at the end of the exhibition. Artist Trading Cards (ATCs) are miniature works of art measuring 2 ½" x 3 ½" that are made for trading. They can be made from any materials and incorporate any theme, making them an inclusive and democratic art form. Participants ranging from ages three – ninety-three each submitted nine ATCs. A wide variety of artistic techniques have been used, including painting, drawing, photography, digital prints, assemblage, collage, printmaking, and textile arts. The social aspect of trading with other artists is a large part of ATCs, as the cards are not just a piece of artwork but also an event where artists share ideas and works.

IN THE GALLERY : WHAT YOU WILL DO

TOUR:

As students are led through the exhibit, we will discuss the artists and their particular style of working. We will also look at the exhibition as a whole and how the artists' works relate to one another.

The tour will focus on:

- Introducing students to the various art materials and techniques the artists used.
- Encouraging students to think about subject matter and inspiration for creating art, and the ways artists express an idea or issue.
- Introducing the basics of developing visual literacy (colour, composition, etc.).
- Discussing how the artworks involve the audience either through interaction or by encouraging exploration of meaning.

EXHIBITION-BASED WORKSHOPS:

Preschool – Kindergarten: Pack Your Suitcase

Students will use shape and object recognition to develop images that they will “pack” into a paper suitcase. Drawing, colouring, and collage will all be incorporated into this art project, where students must consider what types of objects they would take with them if they were moving to another place.



Primary Grades: Charcoal Drawings



Explore mark-making with charcoal! Using a variety of techniques and drawing tools, students will learn about shading, line, and texture while practicing drawing from observation. Using Russell's large-scale charcoal drawings as inspiration, various objects will be set up in small displays for students to draw from. Each object will take on a new meaning, as they become a symbol of what you would take with you if moving to a new place.

Intermediate Grades : Experimental Drawings

Explore mark making with a variety of tools and drawing materials. Stations will be set up for students to experiment with a wide variety of drawing materials, including creating their own drawing tools from found objects. After explorations on the types of marks an artist can make to depict shadows, light, and form, students develop their own narrative drawings using charcoal, graphite, conte and ink.



BACKGROUND : PROCESS-BASED ART

All the artworks in these exhibitions have something in common, the idea of process being an important element of artwork. Many times we forget about the fun of making art and become too focused on making something “perfect” or a beautiful object. There are many contemporary artists working today who feel that the process of making art is just as important (if not more so) than the final product. Whether this process is working with a community group (i.e. Russell interviewing community members to inspire ideas for her work), or working collaboratively with other artists (i.e. the artists and curator in “Black Hole is also Supernova” who shared ideas about how the entire exhibition should develop), the artists are more focused on the ideas and sharing that takes place when planning an exhibition of artworks. In the case of Artist Trading Cards, they are solely made for trading with others so that the process of interacting with other artists is just as important as the card you make.

Process-based art has its roots in the art of the early 20th century, where artists were rejecting traditional paintings and sculpture and were looking for a way to make work that had more of a **social connection** both with the audience of art and with other artists. Installation art first appeared in the 1960’s and 1970’s as artists started to abandon traditional art processes and materials for unconventional materials from everyday life. Inspired by artists such as Marcel Duchamp (1887 – 1968) who used everyday objects as art, artists started to focus more on the **process of art making** and **reacting to the space in which the artwork will be viewed**.

Other art movements in the 1960s, such as Fluxus, focused on the process of making, sharing, and exploration across disciplines. Fluxus was an international network of artists, composers, and designers noted for artistic experimentation combined with social and political activism. Fluxus as a movement included a strong current of anti-commercialism in favour of a **do-it-yourself aesthetic and artist-centered creative practice**. A common theme was the **delight in spontaneity and humour**, and the **value in simplicity over complexity**. Their activities resulted in many events or performances, often called “Aktions”, which promoted positive **social and community connections through collaboration or interaction**. The idea of focusing on art as a process rather than an object for sale was of prime importance to this art movement.

Fluxus continues to influence many artists today, as seen in the Richmond Art Gallery’s current exhibitions. Artist Trading Cards are considered by many to be a sub-genre of the Fluxus Mail Art movement, which used the postal service to distribute artworks freely among artists. The process of making and trading ATCs is just as important as the card as an art object, as well as promoting social interaction. Elizabeth Russell involved the community in the generation for her works, taking their personal stories as inspiration for artworks. She continues this involvement with the community by offering free drawing workshops before and during the exhibition. All the artists in *Black Hole is Also Supernova* focus on the process of making art and using objects or images from everyday life. Their works employ humour and experimentation to develop works that focus on the stories behind objects and how we as an audience create meaning of what we view.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY: ARTIST TRADING CARDS

Artist Trading Cards can be done with almost any materials you have on hand. You can try painting, drawing, collage, clay, weavings, small books, prints, stamps, etc. The ATC project can be focused on a particular theme, or can connect to another school classroom you exchange art with. Due to the small size, ATCs as an art project can continue all year long to be done in between large projects, or when students have spare time in class. The possibilities are endless!

Preparations:

Teachers may want to have a list of themes or materials for students to get started on. Themes can coincide with other class projects, focus on specific colours/shapes, or vary throughout the year with deadlines for specific themes posted throughout the year.

Ensure students know the guidelines of Artist Trading Cards:

- Size must be 2 ½" x 3 ½"
- The name or signature of the artist should be included on the back of each ATC. When trading with people from other cities or countries, it is recommended to include your city so that others know where the cards came from.
- ATCs are generally original works, but some people trade digital prints or editions of prints. Prints are acceptable as long as they are a small edition.
- ATCs are never sold, but are traded as a means to make art accessible to a broad audience and to encourage interaction.

Procedure:

After going through the ATC Guidelines, select a theme or material to begin ATCs. Students work on one or a series of cards.

Plan a trading session either within class, or through mail (see Resources page). If organizing an in-class trade, ensure each student has made enough cards to trade one with each person in class.

Trading sessions also follow basic guidelines, which are followed at most trading sessions you attend in any city or country:

- It is bad etiquette to refuse a trade with someone because you do not like his or her cards. Some people will only trade original cards for other originals, but make this clear before you start.
- Never trade cards that are not yours, you only trade your own creations.
- ATCs are not for sale, but barter can sometimes be made (i.e. 2 cards for 1, especially if trading an original for a digital prints)

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Web Resources:

Art in Your Pocket – www.cedarseed.com/air/atc.html

Artist Trading Cards – the site of ATC originator m Vanci Stirnemann - www.artist-trading-cards.ch

ATCs in the Classroom – www.artjunction.org/atcs.php

Artist Trading Cards Ideas - www.squidoo.com/artist-trading-card-ideas#module10189455

Fluxus Portal – www.fluxus.org

Richmond Art Gallery ATC pages – www.richmondartgallery.org/atcs/atc.php

JOIN US AT THE Richmond Art Gallery FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS:

Artist Trading Cards Trading Sessions – FREE Drop-in:

Bring your pre-made ATCs and join in the trading action!

3rd Wednesday of every month

6:00 – 7:30pm

All Ages / Free

Artist Trading Cards Making Sessions – Drop in for All Ages:

Join us in the Gallery for a chance to make some of your own ATCs

Wednesdays: Sept 23, Oct 7, and Oct 21

1:00-5:00pm

All Ages (Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult) / \$2 fee

Artist Talk: Paul Kajander

Tour and Talk by exhibiting artist.

Friday October 30

5:30-6:30pm / All ages / Free

ATC Exhibition Closing Party and Trading Session

Join us for the largest Trading Session in the Lower Mainland! Bring your ATCs to trade with other artists, including those in the ATC Exhibition.

Friday, October 30

7:00-8:30pm / All Ages / Free

Family Sundays – FREE Drop-in:

The fourth Sunday of every month is a FREE drop-in session for children and families to make an exhibition-related artwork. All supplies provided.

4th Sunday of every month

1:00 – 4:00 pm / All Ages / Free