

Art and Activism

Learn about **Art and Activism** by completing the following sections:

#1

Relate

In this section, learn more about **Art and Activism** by making connections to your own life.

#2

Investigate

In this section, learn more about **Art and Activism** by investigating art that incorporates activism.

#3

Create

In this section, share what you have learned about **Art and Activism** by creating your own art and caption label.

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#2

PART 1 – Creating art is a form of activism. Artists have been creating art as a form of activism throughout history. Artists can educate others about the different social issues affecting communities through their art. Let's *analyze* art that incorporates activism by noticing the communities and social issues represented in the art. Take a moment to look closely at this sculpture from the Autry Museum of the American West. A sculpture is a *three-dimensional* work of art made by an artist out of materials that are used in an interesting way.



Glossary

Analyze: to study or examine carefully

Three-dimensional: an object that is solid rather than flat and can be measured in three different directions, usually length, width, and height

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#2

PART 2 – After looking closely at the sculpture, describe what you see in the sculpture by writing the answers to the questions in the chart on a piece of paper or in the space below.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY DESCRIPTION
What colors do you see in the sculpture?	
What do you think the first color you noticed <i>represents</i> ?	
What do you think the second color you noticed represents?	
What do you think the third color you noticed represents?	
What do you think the fourth color you noticed represents?	
What shapes do you see?	
Many sculptures are made of materials like bronze or wood. This sculpture is made of everyday materials. What materials do you think this sculpture is made of?	
What do you think the materials represent?	
What else do you notice in the sculpture?	

Represents: to serve as a sign or symbol

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PART 4 – Prove or disprove your hypothesis by reading the caption label and the artist’s quote below. The caption label gives more information about the sculpture while the artist’s quote describes the sculpture in the artist’s own words.

Caption Label

Continuum Basket: Flora

2016

Gerald Clarke Jr. (Cahuilla)

Aluminum cans and metal satellite dish

Inspired by the designs from historic *Cahuilla* baskets in the Autry’s collection, Clarke used the blue and green colors of agave and yucca, two important desert plants. He also intends this sculpture, created with crushed cans, to shed light on environmental and social issues that affect Cahuilla people today.

Artist’s Quote by Gerald Clarke Jr.

“I wanted some natural colors that corresponded with plant life or with water, things associated with plant life... My family here at Cahuilla, we come from a long line of basket makers. Primarily it was women who made the baskets. I wanted to recognize that tradition, the beauty, the complexity of the tradition, but I’m an artist, I’m a sculptor, and I wanted to do it my own way... Alcoholism and diabetes have had major effects on my life personally, and I know I’m certainly not alone... How long do you have to do something before it’s considered traditional? Do we have a tradition of alcoholism now? Do we have a tradition of diabetes? I would say yes.”

Glossary

Cahuilla: a Native American community that has been living in the desert and mountain regions of Southern California for thousands of years

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PART 5 – Now that you have learned more about the story that the artist is telling through the sculpture, answer the questions in the chart about the sculpture, caption label, and artist’s quote. Write your answers on a piece of paper or in the space below

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	YOUR ANSWERS
What is the title of the sculpture? Look for the title in the caption label.	
What year was the sculpture created? Look for the date in the caption label.	
Who is the artist? Look for the artist’s name in the caption label and the artist’s quote.	
What materials was the sculpture made out of? Look for the materials in the caption label.	
What did the different colors in the sculpture represent? Look in the caption label and the artist’s quote.	
Which communities are represented in the sculpture, caption label, and artist’s quote?	
Which social issues are represented in the sculpture, caption label, and artist’s quote?	

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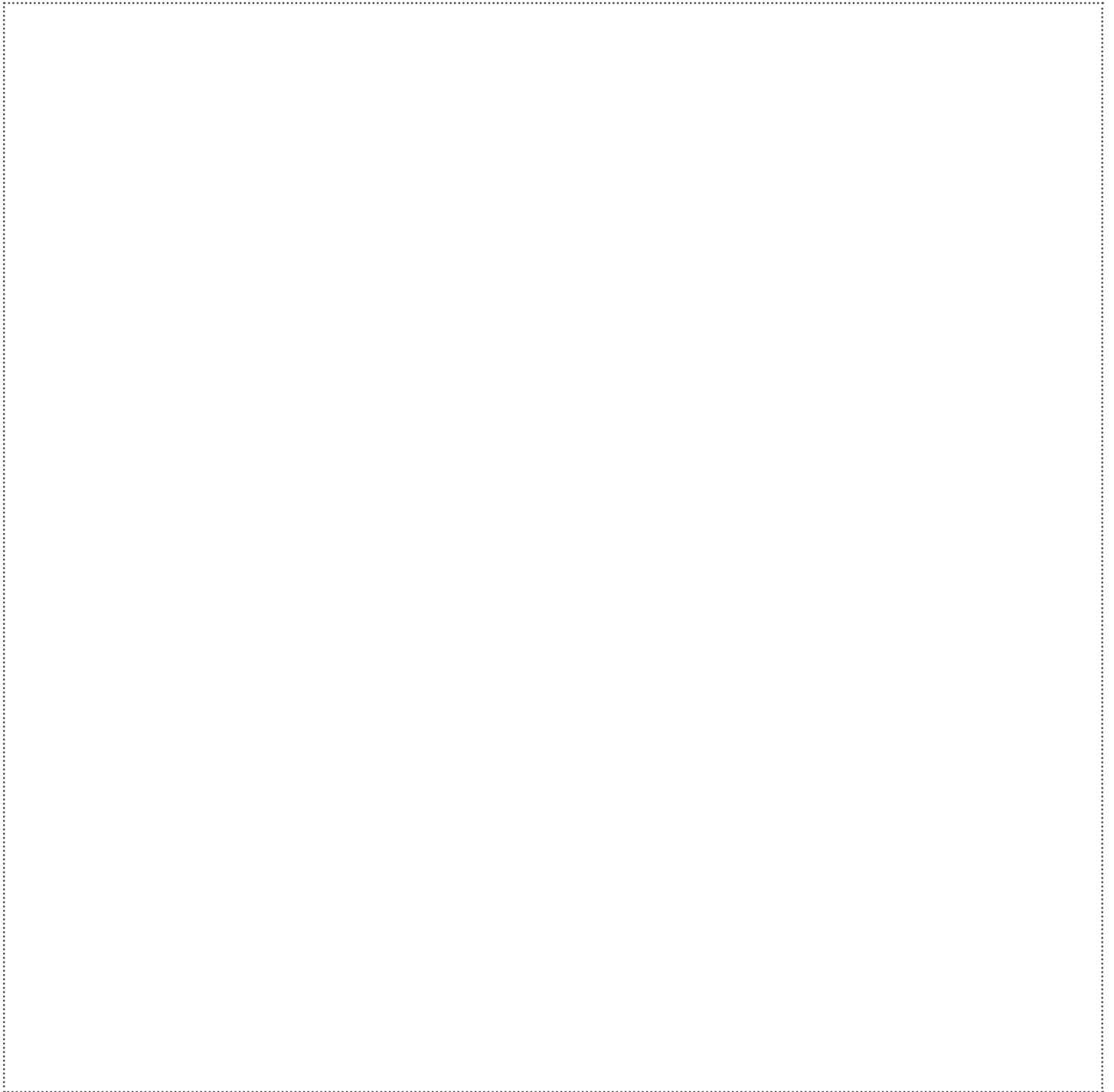
PART 1 – Now it is your turn to become involved in activism through art. Using materials found in your home and in nature, make a sculpture that educates others about the social issues that affect your communities. Plan your sculpture before creating it by answering the questions in the chart. Write your answers on a piece of paper or in the space below.

QUESTIONS	ANSWER EXAMPLES	MY PLAN
<p>What materials will you use to create your sculpture?</p>	<p>Buttons Cans Cotton balls Crayons/markers Cups Food items Glue Paint Paper Paper towel rolls Pencils/pens Popsicle sticks Rocks Sticks Tape Other materials</p>	
<p>Which community/communities will you represent in your sculpture? Pick from the list of communities that you created in Section 1.</p>		
<p>Which social issues that affect your community/communities will you represent in your sculpture? Pick from the list of social issues that you created in Section 1.</p>		
<p>What animals, people, places, plants, shapes, and/or things will you include in your sculpture?</p>		
<p>Which colors will you use in your sculpture? What will the colors represent?</p>		
<p>What will your sculpture look like? Make a sketch (a simple and quick drawing) of what your sculpture will look like.</p>		

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#3

PART 2 – Create your sculpture using your plan.



Resources

This activity was inspired by the Autry Classroom Curators partnership with Sonia Hanson of Maywood Center for Enriched Studies.

Image

Sculpture by Gerald Clarke, *Continuum Basket: Flora*, 2016. Autry Museum; 2016.22.1

Do you want to see the sculpture you created on our Instagram or Twitter?

Ask an adult to send a photograph of the sculpture you made along with your name, your age, and the title of your sculpture to outreach@theautry.org for a chance to be featured on our social media! Accepting work from artists of all ages. Must be 18-years or older to submit.