

CONSTANT CARNIVAL

In the Learning Center

The Haas Brothers in Context Jeila Gueramian: Let's Step Inside

At the Katonah Museum of Art

March 13 - June 26, 2022

Dear educators,

We are delighted to welcome you and your students into the imaginative worlds of the Haas Brothers and Jeila Gueramian. On view in our main galleries are approximately 30 artworks by the Haas Brothers that will delight your students with a unique range of materials, engaging personalities, humor, and provocative ideas. Complementing the Haas Brothers' work are a selection of historical and contemporary pieces that explore similar ideas of surrealism, fantasy, humor, and other concepts aligned with the tradition of the "carnavalesque." Like the spirit of carnivalesque, in which hierarchies are upended and free expression is celebrated, the Haas Brothers' work challenges the viewer to think anew about social norms, rigid art concepts, and ordinary creatures and forms. Instead, we are invited into a world of unexpected ideas, where the lines between furniture and sculpture are blurred, where real and fantastical creatures are mixed up, colors come alive, scale is startling, and materials become a curiosity. On tours of this exhibition, we will investigate the strategies used by artists to draw us into their imaginative worlds and reflect on the status quo.

In addition, the work of Jeila Gueramian takes over our Learning Center space with an immersive installation created with a combination of repurposed textiles, crocheted and knit pieces in the form of vines, plants and insects, and kinetic and illuminated elements.

Class visits to the Katonah Museum provide a unique learning experience for students. While having the powerful experience of viewing original works of art, students will use artworks as visual text to:

- Practice close observation, and detailed description
- Use critical and creative thinking to interpret what they see
- Listen to each other and make connections between concepts
- Support ideas using evidence and acquired vocabulary
- Integrate acquired knowledge and classroom content into discussions

Included in this packet are materials to help prepare your students for their visit. Please share with all classroom teachers. They can also be downloaded from our website: www.katonahmuseum.org under "Learn—Educators"

- Curator's introduction to the exhibition
- Two images from the exhibition with questions for discussion
- Pre-visit activities: *Imagine the Creature*; *Creative Furniture*; and *Turn the World Upside Down*
- Glossary, Resources, and Connections to Common Core Standards



Look for this light bulb to indicate ideas for older students! This packet is designed with upper elementary school students in mind; please adjust for your grade level. Please call 914-232-9555, ext. 2969 to discuss the specifics of your tour. Thank you for choosing the KMA for your class visit.

Margaret Adasko
Curator of Education

UPCOMING PROGRAMS TO NOTE ON YOUR CALENDAR:

- **Create and Connect Adult Art Workshops:** Creative Textiles with Jeila Gueramian: Thursday, April 28, 5:30-7:30 PM; Creative Clay with the Clay Arts Center: Thursday, June 9, 5:30-7:30PM
- **Haas Brothers in Conversation (Virtual):** Thursday, May 12, 7:30-8:30. Free
- **Family Day: Fantastical Worlds:** Saturday, May 14, 11:30am-4:00pm

Constant Carnival: The Haas Brothers in Context

Curated by Emily Handlin

Intro Text:

Now that everything is a constant Carnival, there is no Carnival anymore
Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, 1862



The Haas Brothers
COURTESY: R & Company / PHOTOGRAPH: Joe Kramm

Constant Carnival: The Haas Brothers in Context explores the work of contemporary artists Simon and Nikolai Haas (b. 1984) within the art historical tradition of the carnivalesque. The exhibition is the first to put the Haas Brothers' imaginative creations in dialogue with artworks spanning the 16th to the 21st centuries.

In medieval Europe, the festival of Carnival—like modern day Mardi Gras—was a time of liberation and inversion. Carnival leveled hierarchies, encouraged free expression, and celebrated behaviors and bodily functions that were usually viewed as shameful. Although the Carnival tradition eventually went into decline, its transgressive spirit—the carnivalesque—has survived through art.

The carnivalesque animates both the Haas Brothers' innovative sculptural objects, which blur the boundaries between craft, design, and contemporary art, and the historical, modern, and contemporary works on view. Yet, while all of these artworks use humor or grotesquery to challenge social norms and power structures, they also propose alternative modes of being and living. They help us to envision a future in which “everything is a constant Carnival.”

Section Text: The World Turned Upside Down

Carnival was a topsy-turvy utopia, a “world turned upside down” that collapsed distinctions between the upper and lower classes, people and animals, men and women, and the sacred and the profane.

Over the past decade, the Haas Brothers have developed an artistic practice that channels this carnivalesque spirit. Their gleeful, anthropomorphic sculptures upend traditional rules of artmaking and explore aesthetic themes related to science fiction, nature, psychedelia, and sensuality. Despite the wide range of materials and processes they employ—from bronze to beadwork, from ceramic to stone—their works all speak the same language, a vernacular, as they describe it, “that favors humor, happiness and human impulse.” Through their practice, the artists have crafted a utopian realm free from convention or hierarchy, populated by whimsical creatures that transcend binaries of gender and sexuality.

This exhibition puts the Haas Brothers' creations in conversation with works of art that feature similarly surprising combinations and transformations, from 16th century prints to Surrealist drawings. Like the Haas Brothers—and like Carnival itself—the artists represented here compel us to reconsider our own reality by turning the familiar world upside down.



Artwork for Discussion: Sparking Imagination

DESCRIBE: What are we looking at?

What parts remind you of a real animal? Which parts don't seem quite right?

Consider the colors, patterns, number of legs and other parts of this creature.

How do we feel about this creature compared to the real animal it resembles?

IMAGINE: Imagine if this creature came to life.

How would it sound?

How would it move?

Where does he live? Describe his environment.

What does he like to eat?

What's his purpose in the world?

Describe the personality of this creature. How would you feel if you encountered one of these?

WONDER: The Haas Brothers have used their imagination to create a different kind of creature.

Why did they create something that does not copy reality?

Why do you think they made those differences?

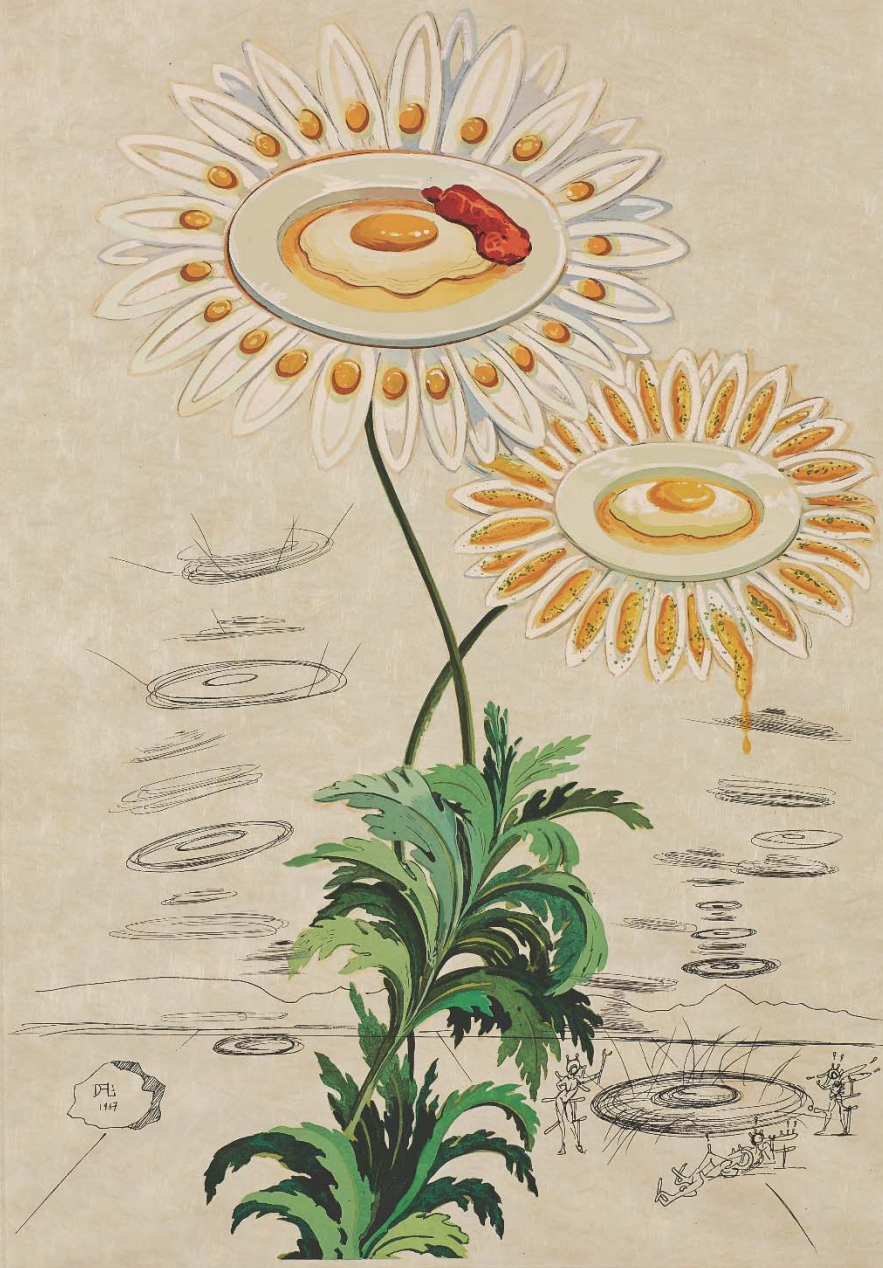
How does it make you feel to view this artwork?

What steps do you think the artists took when creating this sculpture?

Haas Brothers, *Gator Tots*, 2019

Glass beads, wire, mixed fiber stuffing, 54 x 12 x 88 inches

Courtesy of the artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. © The Haas Brothers



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147

102
775

Handwritten signature or initials in the bottom right corner.

Artwork for Discussion: Surrealism & Imagination

Describe what you see in this artwork:

Look at the shapes, lines, colors

Name the elements you see

Describe some of the details

What **surprises** you about this?

What parts look like something real and what looks imagined?

How has the artist combined the real and imaginary ideas together?

Think about the **strategies** and **techniques** the artist used to surprise us:

Incorporating un-related images

Unexpected combinations

Illustrating unreal images in a “realistic” style

To create this artwork, the artist Salvador Dalí, a **Surrealist** artist, painted in watercolor directly on original prints by the Belgian artist and botanist Pierre-Joseph Redouté. The image is full of humorous and unexpected combinations, such as the chrysanthemum flower turned into a serving of fried eggs and bacon.



P.J. Redoute, *Chrysanthemum* #22, 1833.
The Most Beautiful Flowers Bookplate

What other imaginative elements could you add to this floral illustration?

Surrealism: An artistic and literary movement led by French poet André Breton from 1924 through World War II. Surrealists wanted to free their minds of rational thought, to write or paint the ideas that were buried deep in their minds. These artists did not wish their work to make simple, logical sense. Many of the artworks look like scenes from a dream (or nightmare) and include imaginary creatures or real-life creatures shown in unnatural ways.



Find a traditional illustration, or a magazine or newspaper illustration. Use your imagination to begin drawing onto it. Challenge yourself to think like a surrealist artist, creating a work that does not make logical sense, or that resembles a dream-like image.

Salvador Dalí (Spanish, 1904-89)

Chrysanthemum frutescens (Marguerite Daisy) from the series *Flordali (Flora Dalinae)*, 1968

Color etching with drypoint on paper, 22 x 15 inches.

Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine, Given in loving memory of Raymond E. Boucher, '45 by his family 2018.12.13

© 2021 Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Artists Rights Society

Pre-Visit Activity: Imagine the Creature

The Haas Brothers use their imagination to create sculptural creatures that burst with whimsy, humor, and personality. Look at the partial creatures seen below and use your imagination to complete the creature. When you come to the Museum you can see what the real sculptures look like!



Credits: The Haas Brothers, *Tallmala Harris*, 2020. Mongolian long pile faux fur, cast bronze. 115 ½ x 40 x 20 inches. Courtesy of the artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. ©The Haas Brothers. The Haas Brothers. *Worm-man Miller*, 2019. Glass beads, wire, wood, mixed fiber stuffing. 31 ¼ x 13 ½ x 16 ½ inches. Courtesy of the artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. ©The Haas Brothers. The Haas Brothers. *Blue Reed*, 2019. Glass beads, wire, wood, mixed fiber stuffing. 27 ½ x 18 x 22 inches. Courtesy of the artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. ©The Haas Brothers. The Haas Brothers. *Dodi Eye-ed*, 2017. Brass hex tiles, hand blown glass, electrical lighting. 43 ½ x 21 x 19 ½ inches. Courtesy of Thomas Rom. ©The Haas Brothers

Pre-Visit Activity: (Humorous) Creative Furniture



The Haas Brothers started as furniture designers. As their art practiced evolved, their works became more and more sculptural and artistic and less functional. Look at this work, titled *She's So Ducky*. In what ways is it functional furniture and in what ways is it imaginative?

Look around your home or school for a piece of furniture. First draw the furniture as you see it, then create a new imaginative version that is still functional, but also creative. Give it a clever title too.

The Haas Brothers, *She's So Ducky*, 2018. Velveteen, walnut, glass, electrical lighting. 54 x 67 x 26 inches. Courtesy of the artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York. ©The Haas Brothers

Observation Furniture Drawing

Creative Furniture Design



Pre-Visit Activity: Turn the World Upside Down

In this artwork, the artist Antonio Frasconi illustrates a familiar situation that has been reversed, like playing a game of opposites. Think about the every-day version of this scene. Who should be sleeping in the bed?

Think of another usual situation, such as:

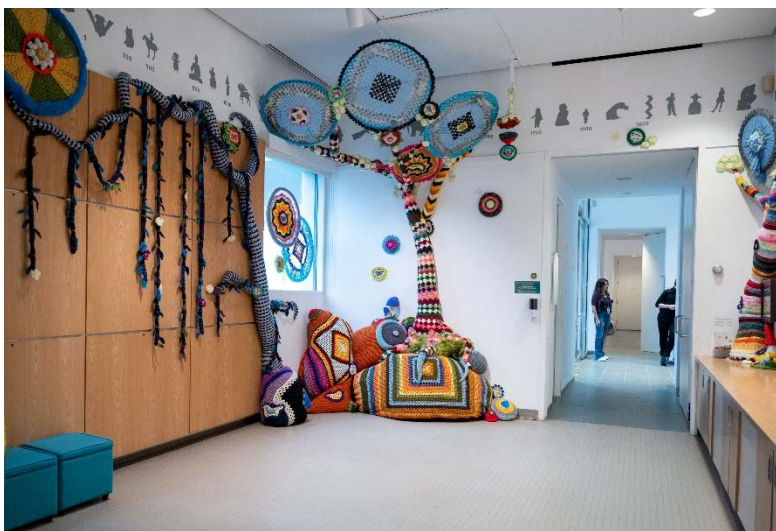
- walking a dog
- feeding the ducks
- a pet hamster
- squirrel in a tree
- riding a horse

Then reverse it and create an illustration below.



Antonio Frasconi, *In the Dog House* from the series *The World Upside Down*, 1952. Woodcut. 11 5/8 x 9 3/8 inches. Philadelphia Museum of Art

Title:



In the Learning Center:

Jeila Gueramian *Let's Step Inside*, 2022

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artist

Photographed by Margaret Fox

Experience a magical environment created by artist Jeila Gueramian. Full of whimsical creatures and surprising elements hand-crafted from recycled textiles and kinetic components, the site-specific installation will entice visitors to inspect, discover, and engage with the playful creations around them.

The subject matter of *Let's Step Inside* is about growth and change, moving us out of these last constrictive, dark years and into a lighter, positive future. For the nook area you can help the installation “grow” by adding butterflies and flowers.

Jeila Gueramian is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in Brooklyn and Wassaic, New York. Born in Los Angeles, she attended Otis Parsons School of Design and has a background in costume, prop, and art design.



Artist's Statement

I like to inspire exploration. I create alternate worlds and invite people to lose themselves in them: awaken their senses, feel like a kid, be in the moment, laugh or be a little scared, stop and ask a question, get involved in a fantasy, believe in the magical.

The found materials I use whether from my past or someone else's past are a catalyst point. These items often have a sense of comfort and help us recognize things that may have been a part of our childhood or past. This helps transport the viewer back to a time and place and feel those feelings all over again.

** You can view a complimentary installation at the Katonah Village Library, opening early April.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Learn more: <http://www.jeila.com/>

Watch videos about Jeila's work: <http://www.jeila.com/statement>

GLOSSARY

Your Museum Visit:

Museum: An institution or building where works of art, scientific specimens, or other objects of value are cared for, studied, and displayed.

Collection: An accumulation of objects gathered for study, comparison, or exhibition or as a hobby.

Docent: A person who is a knowledgeable guide, especially one who conducts visitors through a museum and leads a discussion on the exhibitions.

Art Terms and ideas:

Accretion: The process of growth by gradual layer or buildup.

Anthropomorphic: The attribution of human characteristics or behaviors to an animal, object, or god.

Biomorphic: Resembling or suggesting the forms of living organisms such as plants and the human body.

Carnavalesque: A term coined by Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin in 1965. Carnavalesque refers to the literary and art historical tradition, like modern day Mardi Gras, in which established rules and hierarchies are upended, free expression is encouraged, and the grotesque, forbidden, and humorous are celebrated.

Contemporary art: The art of today, produced by artists who are living in the 21st Century. Contemporary art provides an opportunity to reflect on present-day society and issues relevant to ourselves and the world around us.

Composition: The plan, placement, or arrangement of individual elements in a work of art.

Elements of Art: The basic components used by the artist when producing works of art



Line: A continuous mark between points. Line defines space, and may create an outline or contour, define a silhouette, create patterns, or movement, and the illusion of mass or volume. Lines can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, straight, curved, jagged, thick, thin, etc.

Shape: A flat, two-dimensional area enclosed by line.



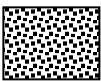
Geometric shapes such as circle, square, or triangle that can be measured with a ruler or compass.



Organic shapes do not have specific names; they are free-form and often resemble forms found in nature.



Color: The hue produced when light reflects off a surface. Color is an important element of art that can affect mood, feeling, balance, energy, and memory.



Texture: The characteristic surface of a material; how it feels to the touch, or the visual appearance of texture on a 2D surface.

Exquisite Corpse: Based on an old game favored by Surrealists, artists create collaborative imaginative figures.

Typically, a piece of paper is folded into sections and passed around; the challenge is that each artist must work on one particular segment without having seen the others. The results are often monstrous, or at least mismatched.

Hex Shape: A shape with six, equal sides.

Humor: Something's or someone's ability to make people laugh or be amused. Usually, this is done by involving things that are funny or absurd.

Installation art: A genre of art characterized by immersive, large-scale, three-dimensional, mixed-media constructions, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period of time.

Mixed- Media: The integrated use of different media or materials, especially within the arts

Pattern: A series of lines, shapes, or pictures that create a repeated design.

Pun: A pun is a joke that makes a play on words, typically by using words that sound similar but have different meanings. It can also use different meanings of the same word to make the saying funny.

Scale: The size of an object relative to something else, or the relative size of an object in a work of art in relation to the whole work of art.

Sculpture: A three-dimensional work of art; can be seen from multiple sides.

Social Commentary: Social commentary is the act of expressing an opinion on the nature of society. It is most often done with the idea of implementing or promoting change.

Surrealism: An artistic and literary movement led by French poet André Breton from 1924 through World War II. Surrealists wanted to free their minds of rational thought, to write or paint the ideas that were buried deep in their minds. These artists did not wish their work to make simple, logical sense. Many of the artworks look like scenes from a dream (or nightmare) and include imaginary creatures or real-life creatures shown in unnatural ways.

Three-dimensional (3-D): Refers to artwork that has mass which includes height, width and depth, such as a wire sculpture that may be viewed by walking around it.

Visual text: Visual literacy is the ability to interpret, negotiate, and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image (visual text), extending the meaning of literacy, which commonly signifies interpretation of a written or printed text.

Woodcut Print: An ancient relief printing technique in which the artist carves into a block of wood, removing the negative space around the image. What is left will then receive the ink and be used to create the printed image.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE HAAS BROTHERS

Online Articles and Websites

Joyce Lovelace, "A Right-Brained Bunch," *American Craft*, 2018. <http://www.thehaasbrothers.com/american-craft/?color=3>

Shonquis Moreno, "Twin Piques," *Nuovo*, 2015. <http://www.thehaasbrothers.com/hsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Chronicle-Haas-Brothers2.pdf>

Caroline Roux, "The Haas Brothers," *The Design Edit*, 2020. <https://thedesignedit.com/the-haas-brothers/>
Photographer Todd Selby: <https://theselby.com/gallery/the-haas-brothers-artists-and-their-team-at-their-studio-in-los-angeles/>

Videos

Meet the Artist: The Haas Brothers - Hirshhorn Museum, May 29, 2019. 46:17 minutes. <https://hirshhorn.si.edu/explore/artist-talk-the-haas-brothers>

This YouTube is short and informative:

The Haas Brothers: Ferngully, March 26, 2019. 5.25 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLpVyX-5qVk>

Visit the Haas Brothers' studio to see how Accretions are made:

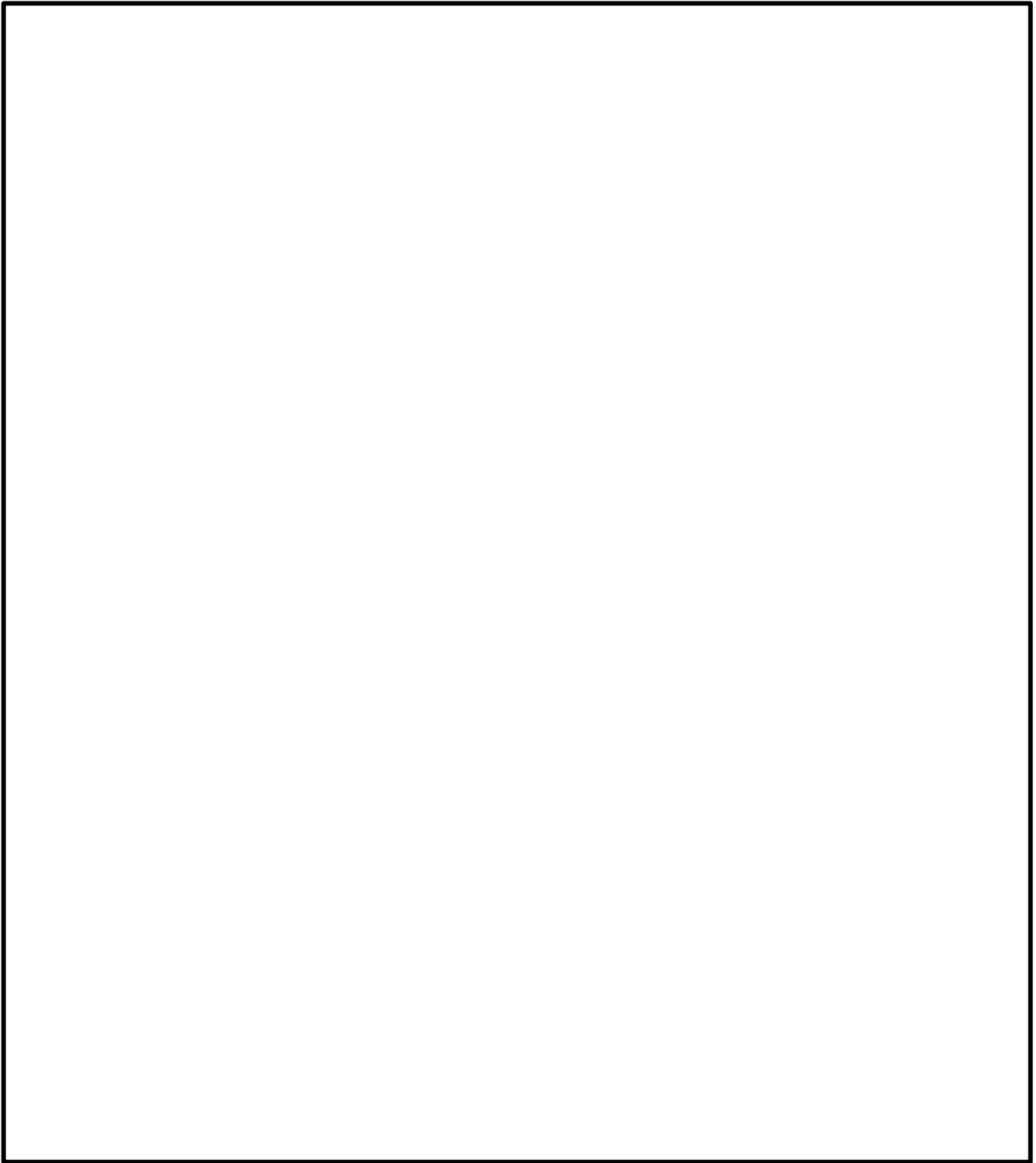
Haas Brothers' Accretion Vase Production Process, May 19, 2017. 3.03 minutes. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ic92CA4Q2c>

Jeila Gueramian:

See Videos; <http://www.jeila.com/statement>

Post-Visit: Reflecting on your experience

Respond through illustration and writing: Draw a memorable moment from your visit to the exhibition, **Constant Carnival: The Haas Brothers in Context**. Consider a favorite artwork, something that surprised you, something you learned, or a drawing of what you and your classmates experienced on your visit.



Name: _____

Date: _____

Writing suggestions Inspired by The Haas Brothers in Context

Monster Characters: Use one of the creatures you saw on your visit, or the creatures you made as your art activity on the tour for one of these writing suggestions:

- Pair up 2 monsters and create a dialogue or scene between them
- Create a “what if” story about one of the creatures you encountered or created
- Use the attached worksheets to create a persona poem
- Pick a style of writing from the list below and follow the prompt

Pick one style of writing to create a written work in response to your visit

- **Persuasive writing:** Write a short essay that convinces the reader to visit this exhibition. Include reasons for why one should attend that are based on facts and information from your experience. Include descriptions, details, and personal opinions.
- **Realistic fiction:** Create a believable, but not true, story that is connected to your Museum visit. Use a detail from an artwork or from your experience visiting the museum as a starting point for your fiction piece. Use as many realistic details as possible from the exhibition and your visit in your writing.
- **Personal narrative:** Write about one moment from your visit to the museum that was especially memorable, with as much detail and specific information as possible.
- **Informational text:** Write a journalistic report on the visit to the museum. Include facts and information as well as descriptions of the experience.
- **Compare & Contrast:** Pick two artworks that you saw in the exhibition. Describe similarities and differences. Consider how it was made. What story it might tell. Why the artist may have created it.

Persona Poem Activity – worksheet 1.

Developed by KMA writer-in-resident, Pamela Hart

Name _____

Remember back to one of the artworks you saw on your visit to KMA. Pretend you are the artwork's character as you fill in the boxes.

What's your artwork's name, age?	Where do you hang out? Who's with you?
What are some of your favorite activities?	What's a big adventure in your life? How does that make you feel?

Name _____ Artwork title _____

1) Read over Worksheets 1

2) Think Carefully about your artwork

3) Consider these strategies:

- Pretend you are the character. Describe your look (or physical appearance) and personality
- Think about your character’s life, friends, family.
- Describe an experience, activity, memory, event.
- Include your feelings and emotions.

Write 8 sentences below as if you are the artwork character.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____



POST VISIT: EXQUISITE CORPSE GAME

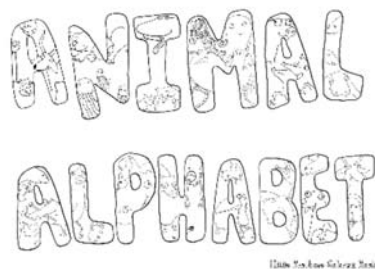
Create a fantastical creature through a game that artists have played for many years. Surrealist artists played this game to get unpredictable results far stranger than an individual could make on their own.

- **Take a piece of paper and fold it into four equal parts.**
- **Draw or collage on the top section of the paper** to create the head of an imaginary character. Use whatever materials you have around you.
- **Fold your image back to conceal it.** Extend the lines of your character's neck over the edge of the fold so that your collaborator will know how to connect their image to yours.
- **Pass the paper on to a friend or family member.** Keep your image hidden and have them add a body to your figure in the middle section of the page.
- **Repeat!** Pass the paper to a third person, concealing the first two sections of the page, and have them add the legs. Then hide that section and pass to a fourth person to add the feet. Remember to draw lines over the fold into each new section so the following person knows where to start.
- **Unfold the page and reveal your collaborative image.**

Adapted from the Museum of Modern Art.

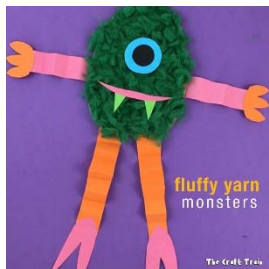
Follow up art activity suggestions:

Monster and Yarn activities:



Check out the alphabet coloring book designed by the Haas Brothers.
Free Download.

<https://www.thehaasbrothers.shop/books-1/animal-alphabet-coloring-book>



<https://www.thecrafttrain.com/fluffy-yarn-monsters/>



<https://frugalfun4boys.com/silly-monster-craft-for-kids/>



<https://www.artycraftykids.com/craft/yarn-wrapped-monster-craft/>



<https://brooklynfarmgirl.com/20-crazy-easy-monster-crafts-for-kids/>



<https://picklebums.com/yarn-painting/>