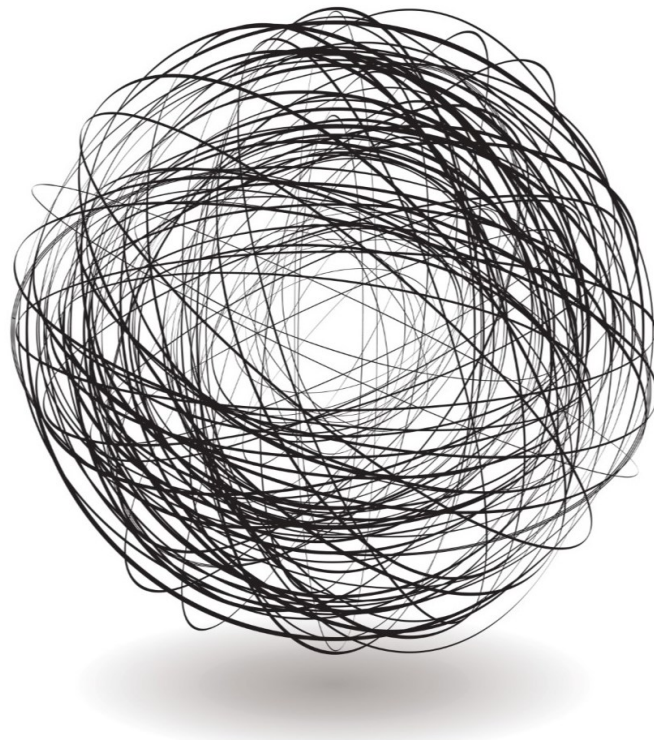


# To Draw is to Observe, Reflect and Innovate

A Guide for Understanding the Exhibition



# draw

The Gallery at TCA  
700 W. Rio Salado Parkway | Tempe, AZ 85281  
480-350-2867



Artist Kyllan Maney at work.

# draw

*the art of curiosity and innovation*

May 25-Sept. 1, 2018

*This interactive exhibition celebrates a wide variety of creative media, styles and techniques that incorporate drawing and/or mark making. The “draw” experience includes fine art displays by local artists, exploration stations for doodling and art making, live artist demonstrations and multiple workshop opportunities for all ages.*

*Dear Reader:*

*We hope this guide will provide you with some easy-to-use tools to enhance your experiences with visual art.*

*Over the years, we’ve noticed that people can be both attracted to and intimidated by art at the same time. We’ve found that asking questions that start “informal conversations” is one of the best ways to put people at ease.*

*Sure, some art is beautiful and easy to approach, while other art can be challenging and not so easy to digest. Just like a book, visual art can be appealing, serious and yes, even ugly. Some art confirms, celebrates and expands how we understand ourselves. Other art opens pathways through which we can explore other viewpoints. You as a viewer (reader) also bring a variety of thoughts and personal preferences into the experience. With practice and some new tools on your belt, you’ll find that those seemingly complicated layers of meaning and context can be peeled back and explored. It’s just knowing where to look and why.*

*Sincerely,*

*Mary Erickson, Ph.D. (TCA Docent) and  
Michelle Nichols Dock (Visual Arts Curator)*



# Inquiry Strategy with Tactical Questions

The following 4-question strategy is an easy to use tool for investigating the layers of context and meaning in visual art.

## What Can I See? Facts about the artwork.

- Subject Matter
- Design Elements & Principles
- Technical Features
- Function
- Reproduction versus Original
- Care/Condition



## What Else Can I Learn? Contextual facts.

- Artists' Lives
- Physical Environments
- Cultural Context
- Artworlds (Art Experience)



## What Does It Mean? Conclusions about meanings.

Conclusions about meanings.

- Personal & Cultural Viewpoints
- Artists' Intentions
- Art Specialists' Understandings



## How Does It Compare? Conclusions about connections among artworks.

Conclusions about connections among artworks.

- Style
- Art Influence (From Other Art)
- Themes



# Hints for Asking Good Questions

Hints for a well-rounded conversation: You'll often learn more from open-ended questions than close-ended questions.

A **closed-ended question** is answered with a one-word response such as yes or no or another single word. *Example:* Is this an oil or acrylic painting?

*Closed-ended questions* start with verbs like “Is? Do? and Can?”

An **open-ended question** requires more explanation.

*Example:* How is painting in oil different from painting with acrylics?

*Open-ended questions* start with “Why? and How?”

Some words can be used for **both types of questions** such as:

What?

Who?

Where?

When?

Both open and close-ended questions are valuable. The construction and phrasing of a question shapes the kind of information you can expect to receive.

**For Practice:** Write down 3 open-ended questions. Pretend you are meeting someone for the first time. You need to ask questions to get to know that person better.

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_



# What Can I See?

## Tips for looking carefully at an Artwork



**Subject Matter:** Some artworks have subject matter and others do not. Subject matter refers to anything real or imaginary that is shown in an artwork (such as people, places and things).

**Elements of Design:** Traditional elements in Western art include: (“D” represents “dimensional.”)

### ***2D Elements***

line  
shape  
value (light and dark)  
color

### ***3D Elements***

form or mass  
space  
texture

### ***4D Elements/Time***

sequence  
duration

**Design Principles:** Ways artists organize elements of design to create interesting and unified compositions. Some Traditional Principles include:

Balance	Variation	Focal Point	Pattern
Harmony	Repetition	Movement	Transition
Emphasis/Focal Point	Rhythm	Direction	Proportion
Contrast			

**Technical Features:** Careful viewing of an artwork usually reveals evidence of how it was made. (Indicators might include art making tools, materials and processes.)

**Function:** Artists make artworks that serve a great many functions such as:

Capturing the beauty of nature	Memorializing an important event
Celebrating or criticizing a person, event or group	Exploring visual possibilities
Sharing a vision	Promoting a belief or cause
Celebrating the artist's heritage	Making the ordinary extraordinary
Stimulating action	Many more

# What Can I See?

## Practice looking carefully at an Artwork

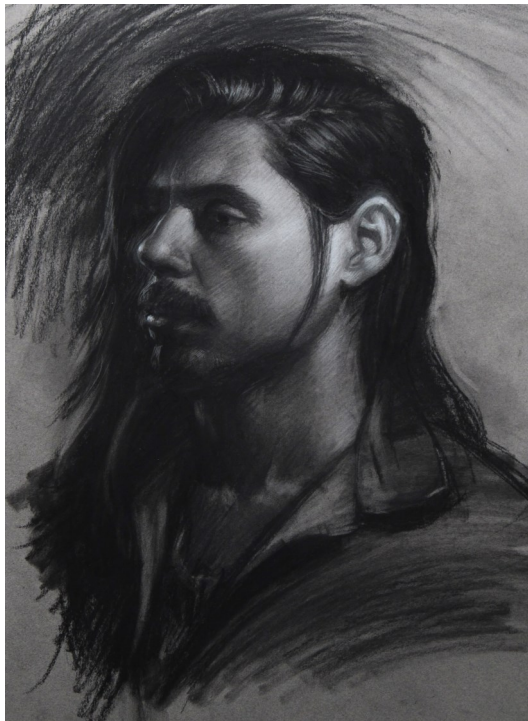


**Reproduction Vs Original:** Some reproductions can look pretty different from the originals. Common differences between originals and reproductions are:

- |               |          |                 |            |
|---------------|----------|-----------------|------------|
| Size          | Colors   | Surface Texture | Luminosity |
| Angle of View | Lighting | Other           |            |

**Care/Condition:** The condition of artworks can deteriorate over time for many reasons, among them:

- |                                 |                          |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Perishable or fragile materials | Damage in storage        |
| Matting, mounting, or framing   | Temperature and humidity |
| Accidents                       | Vandalism                |



### Sample Questions:

See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what you see.”

Matthew Dickson, Tempe, AZ  
*Eric*, charcoal and chalk on toned paper  
26”x20”

Does the drawing show the sitter in profile, full face or 3/4 view?

How are the lines depicting the head different from the lines around the head?

How can you tell that this is a charcoal drawing?

Do you think this is a portrait of a particular person? Why or why not?

How do you think viewing the actual drawing might be different from viewing the reproduction in this guide?

Charcoal can easily smudge. How can museums protect artwork that’s fragile?

## Now You Try! *What Can I See?*



Carolyn Lavender  
*Bear-Bear 2*  
graphite, acrylic on prepared  
paper  
17" x 17"

**Look at this next piece by Carolyn Lavender. List 3 quick descriptions about what you see:**

(Example: "large sculpture, depicts a woman and is made of bronze.")

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your observations, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.**

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

# What Can I Learn?

## Tips for investigating an Artist's Background



**Artist's Life:** The personal lives of artists can affect their work, including such factors as:

Family

Work

Education

Travel

Personal life experiences

Other

**Physical Environment:** The physical world, both natural and human made) can inspire their work:

Natural environment (plants, animals, climate, landforms, etc.)

Constructed environment (buildings, roads, bridges, vehicles, furniture, consumer goods, etc.)

**Culture:** Artists can draw ideas for their work from their cultures:

Values and beliefs

Hobbies and entertainment

Politics

Economic situation

Language

Heritage and/or ethnicity

Other

**Art Experience (Artworld):** Artists get ideas and support from other people involved in art, through:

Art education/Apprenticeships

Insights from specialists in the art form (ceramics , painting, etc.)

Representation by art galleries

Contact with art patrons and collectors

Acknowledgement through art awards, prizes, grants, commissions.

Art included in museum collections

# What Can I Learn?

## Practice investigating an Artist's Background



**Mary Shindell** is a Westerner. She was born in Oklahoma where she rode a horse before she was five. She went to public schools in Mesa. Her interests are broad ranging from botany to the geology and topography of the Earth and other planets.

Shindell received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Arizona State University. She has been an artist in the schools in Nebraska and other parts of the country and has also taught at the university level. Carolyn Lavender (pg. 7) was her student. Shindell helped found a small artist coop in Phoenix, called Gallery 515. Today, she shares a studio with several other artists in Phoenix.

After living and working in other parts of the country, Shindell returned to Arizona, where she and her husband, a medical doctor and furniture maker, raised four sons. Their home is near the desert. They enjoy taking walks, sometimes under a night sky. She writes: *“The subject of my work is the environment in which I live. .... The contrast of space and detail is what attracts me to the landscape format. The Sonoran Desert has defined me as an artist and as an individual.”*

*Inflection Point II: Variant II: Pluto, Grand Canyon, Agave parryi, Opuntia polyacantha, Lomatium leptocarpus, Pinus pungens, Erysimum capitatum*, digital drawing composited with graphite and ink drawing on Arches Aquarelle, archival ink jet print, edition of 10, 42X42”, 2017

**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about “what I can learn.”

- 1) In what geographical environments has Mary Shindell lived and worked?
- 2) How does her home and family recreation enhance Shindell’s fascination with the desert?
- 3) How has Shindell engaged with others in the artworld (teachers, students, and other artists) to enrich her own and others’ art experience?
- 4) What disciplines outside art have captured Shindell’s attention?



## Now You Try! **What Else I Can Learn?**



**Brainstorm and list 5 interesting facts about Mary Shindell's Background.**

*\*You may want to consult pg. 9 and/or a media article and/or Internet references about the artist.)*

- a \_\_\_\_\_
- b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_
- d \_\_\_\_\_
- e \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your research, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork/artist.**

- a \_\_\_\_\_
- b \_\_\_\_\_
- c \_\_\_\_\_



# What Does It Mean?

## Tips for interpreting an Artwork



**Artist's Intention:** Artists decide how they want their artworks to look. Their intentions may be:

Personal or private	Traditional	Practical	Boundary breaking
Unconventional	Evolving	Emotional	Spontaneous
Experimental	Deliberate		
Focused on collector, patron, funder or other viewer			Other

**Art Specialists' Understandings:** The considered opinions of art specialists (experts) direct viewers' attention to aspects of artworks that they judge to be worthy of that attention. Art specialists may include:

Artists	Art Teachers	Museum Curators	Art Critics
Art Historians	Master Craftspeople	Ceremonial Leaders	Guild Members
Tribal elders	Others		

**Cultural Understandings:** A viewer's cultural understanding draws upon a set of ideas, beliefs and standards shared broadly within a culture. These are learned, not by special effort and instruction, but simply through growing up as a member of a culture. Unexamined expectations might include:

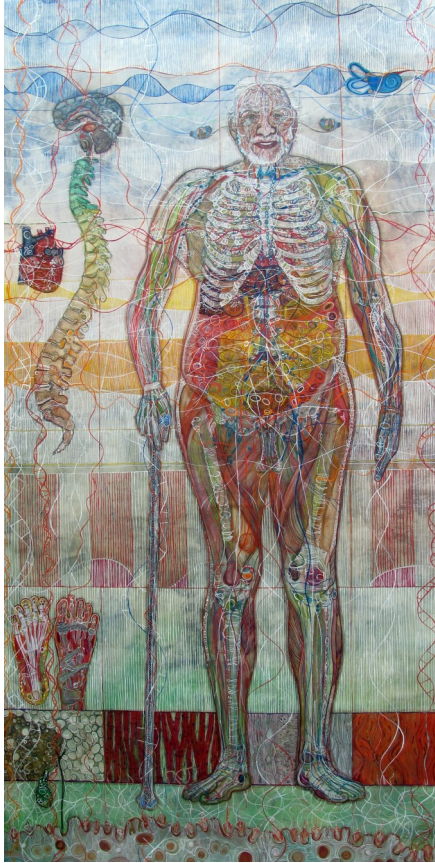
High price	Obvious meaning	Difficult to make	Easily recognizable
Familiar	Other		

**Your Own Viewpoint:** Your responses to artworks are affected by:

conscious thoughts	unconscious reactions	personal preferences
careful viewing	thoughtful reflection	relevant information
free association	previous art experience	and more

# What Does It Mean?

## Practice interpreting an Artwork



Monica Aissa Martinez was born in El Paso, Texas. Her father was a psychologist; her mother, a speech and hearing clinician. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas at El Paso and an Master of Fine Arts from New Mexico State University, Las Cruces. She has a long interest in anatomy and yoga and takes inspiration from artists like Leonardo Da Vinci. She has exhibited throughout the United States and is adjunct professor at Phoenix College.

Martinez writes *"The body is like a landscape of intricate structures, complex and full of variety. It's a whole organization, made up of systems and connecting parts. .... I am interested in both the physical and the subtle body. I am drawn to the language of myth and symbol .... I use line, shape, space and color to represent complex connections between body, mind and connecting spirit."*

Martinez started a series of works studying the human brain largely because her father was recently diagnosed with early dementia/ Alzheimer's disease. The work depicted here is a life size portrait of her father. In addition to his portrait, she is working on anatomical drawings of the brain and brain cells such as neurons and glia at a microscopic level.

A catalog entry in Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art's 2015 exhibition, *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now*, describes Martinez's works: *"At one level, there are rich organic forms representing organs; at another, lines suggesting the circulation of blood. Next, the work is colonized by colorful shapes evoking cells, and striations that combine the literal physicality of muscle tissue with a powerful sense of movement between the forms. Viewed up close, the works are abstractions of vibrant color and shape. But pull back, and they become elegant illustrations of Martinez's holistic interpretation of the world and her place in it."*

*Portrait of Roberto, A Patrilineal Study*, mixed media (graphite, Prisma Pencil, gouache, ink, casein and collage on paper), 45" x 86"

**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about "what it means."

- 1) What does Monica Aissa Martinez intend to express in her anatomical work?
- 2) How have art experts interpreted Martinez's anatomical works?
- 3) How do you think cultural expectations about the naked body, gender and aging might influence one's interpretation of *Portrait of Roberto, A Patrilineal Study*?

## Now You Try! **What Does It Mean?**



*Monica Aissa Martinez*

*The Little Brain*

mixed media (graphite, gouache, ink, casein  
and gesso on Mylar)

13" x 13"

**Look at this work by Monica Aissa Martinez. Brainstorm and list 5 ideas about what the artwork is about.**

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

d \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, based on your interpretation, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about this artwork.**

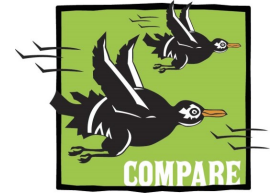
a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_

# How Do They Compare?

## Tips for gathering insights by comparing Artworks



**Style:** Style is a set of distinctive qualities ("family resemblance") that are shared by more than one artwork. Artists develop their own style and incorporate aspects of the styles of artists from their own or other times and cultures.

Artist's style

Style of art movement or period

Cultural style

**Art Influence:** Most artists are influenced by artists who worked before them, though some self-taught artists, called "outsider artists," work in isolation, largely unaware of the work of other artists. Art influences can include:

Technical and aesthetic achievements by other artists

Other artists' ideas, innovations, commitments

Traditional or historical art ideas to follow, extend or break away from

**Theme:** Some broad, cross-cultural themes have been the focus of many artists throughout history and across the globe:

People and nature

Cultural pride

Conquest

Overcoming obstacles

Strength of family

Love

Fantasy

Social order

Harmony

Chaos

Revisiting history

Heroic adventure

Religious devotion

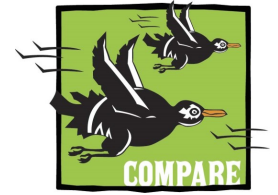
Status

Many more



# How Do They Compare?

## Practice gathering insights by comparing Artworks by Laura Tanner Graham



*Decorative Borders*, ink on hand-cut Mylar  
30"x40"x6," 2017



*Info-Red | Infra-Structure*, ink drawing on  
hand-cut Mylar, 18"x18"x6," 2017

Originally from New Orleans, Laura Tanner Graham currently lives in Tucson, where she is Assistant Professor in the School of Art at the University of Arizona.

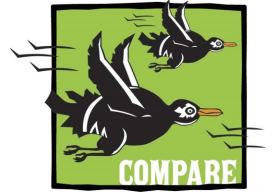
Tanner Graham writes: *"With each drawing, I create a continuous narrative that chronicles the Western struggle with diversity in the face of white fragility."*

*"My most recent body of work began with the start of the presidential primaries. The months before and after the election managed to uncover many unresolved battles in America's complicated history – contentious race relations, sexism, nativism, and an ever-growing wage gap. .... Sourcing from period-specific textiles, turn-of-the-century advertisements, campaign posters, and found family photographs, the collaged images create a singular narrative composition that documents the cyclical and systemic nature of marginalization in America. The drawings capitalize on America's propensity for nostalgia, luring the viewer in to confronting these injustices through the detached lens of that which has already happened."*

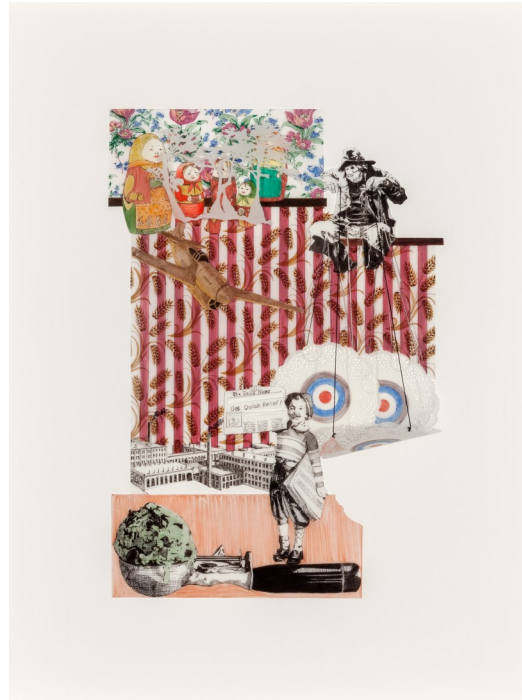
**Sample Questions:** See below how an easy conversation about an art piece can begin just by asking and answering questions about "how they compare."

- 1) How would you describe the style of Laura Tanner Graham's work? (organization of colors, lines and patterns, choice of subject matter etc.)
- 2) What historical visual objects have been incorporated into Tanner Graham's work?
- 3) How do Tanner Graham's pieces reflect the theme of the *Draw* exhibition (refer to pg. 2).

# Now You Try! How Do They Compare?



Mary Shindell, *Inflection Point II: Variant I: Pluto, Grand Canyon, Pinus pungens, Agave parryi, Lomatium leptocarpus, Erysimum capitatum, Opuntia polyacantha*; drawing, graphite, ink, pastel, Prisma on Rives BFK, 42" x42," 2017



Laura Tanner Graham, *Affect | Effect*, ink drawing and thread on hand-cut Mylar, 14"x16"x6," 2017

**List 3 highlights (your favorite visual features and/or information) about the artworks.**

---

---

---

**Now, compare these highlights with other artworks by the same artists.**

List 2 similarities among the artworks:

---

---

List 2 differences among the artworks:

---

---

**Now, based on your comparisons, write 3 questions you could ask a friend about these artworks.**

a \_\_\_\_\_

b \_\_\_\_\_

c \_\_\_\_\_



# Follow Up Activity

## Mind Maps

This secondary level drawing activity is introduced with artworks reproduced in this guide.

### OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to distinguish their own personal responses to an artwork from the responses of art experts.

**VA.RE.9.7:** Compare and explain the difference between an evaluation of an artwork based on articulated personal criteria and an evaluation of an artwork based on a set of criteria established by art specialists.

Students will be able to make a drawing that communicates a process (how they think).

**VA.CR.2.7c:** Apply visual organizational strategies to design and produce artwork of art, design, or media that clearly communicates information or ideas.

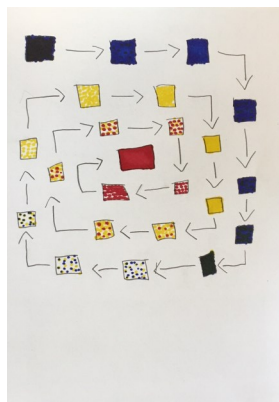
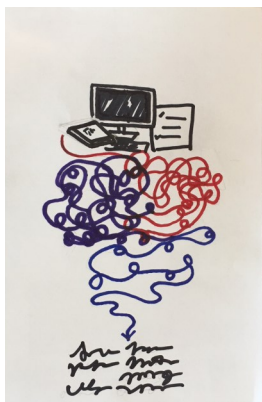
### VIEWING ACTIVITIES

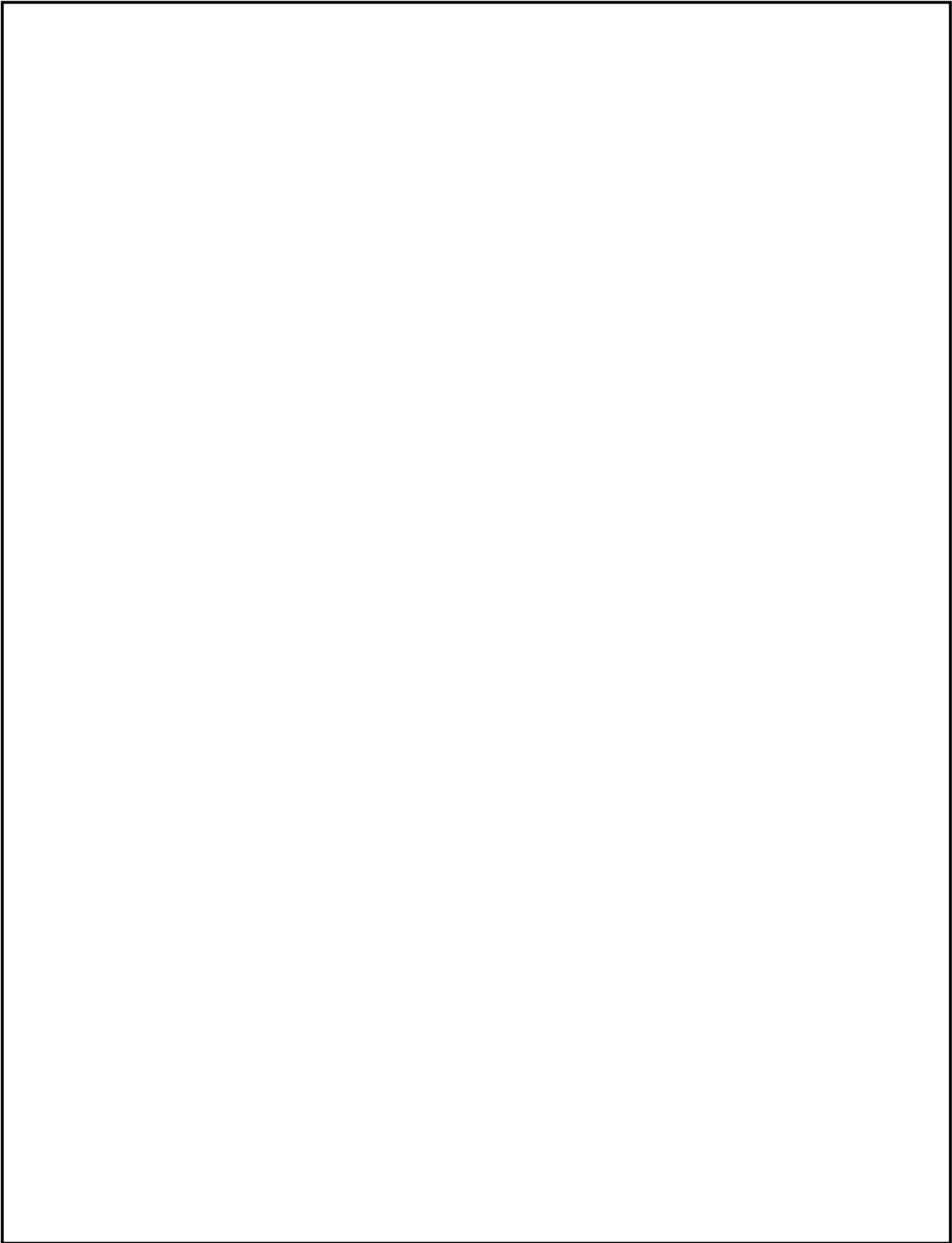
Explain that people respond differently to the same artwork because of their own life experiences and preferences (likes and dislikes). Ask students to look carefully at one or both of Monica Aissa Martinez's pieces (quoted in italics on pages 12 and 13) and write a few words that express their first impressions of the work. Slowly read Martinez's statement and a curator's comments quoted on page 12, while students continue to look carefully at the work. Ask students to identify features of the work they noticed only after hearing from experts. Lead a discussion of how students' responses may have evolved based on the insights of experts.

### MAKING ACTIVITIES

Read quotations from artists Mary Shindell, Monica Aissa Martinez, and Laura Tanner Graham (pages 9, 12 and 15) about what's on their minds when they make their drawings. Show the three mind maps below, drawn by students who were asked to draw how they get ideas for art or how they think about art. Ask students to describe how each drawing shows a different way of thinking when compared with the other two mind maps.

Give each student a blank Mind Map (pg. 17) and colored markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Ask students to draw what they might think about (or how they think) when they make art. Ask what kind of line/s express how they think: straight, jagged, jumpy, twisted, smooth, ragged, etc.





**My Mind Map**