

PRE-VISIT ART PACK & CURRICULUM GUIDE

MARS STORIES TOUR



Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick, *The Blue Scorpion / Dust Storm* (detail), 2010
Archival digital print, Courtesy of the Artists

Students become detectives, scientists, and historians as they observe and interpret stories of arrival, exploration, the West, and Mars. In the studios, students create images that relate plausible, albeit fictional, stories of the past, present, or future.

CONNECTS TO

- Social Studies
- History
- Science
- World Cultures

BAM's SCHOOL TOUR PROGRAM GOALS

- Students will actively participate in the experience discussing the artwork, using art vocabulary and making meaningful, personal connections. Discussions will be associated with the information in the Pre-Visit Art Pack.
- Students will experience a studio activity that reinforces the concepts and/or techniques discussed/viewed in the galleries resulting in a tangible, personally meaningful understanding of the artwork.
- Students will leave the museum knowing that it is a fun, enjoyable place to learn. The docents will help them understand that they do not need an art authority to tell them how to enjoy and what to appreciate about art.

The Boise Art Museum's education philosophy encourages the examination and discussion of the visual arts through a holistic approach to art education. Programs support the development of critical thinking skills, visual analysis, exploration and understanding of art techniques as well as the investigation of cultural contexts, art as a form of communication, and multidisciplinary connections. In its touring program, BAM uses arts-based, student-centered, guided-discovery techniques and inquiry strategies that encourage teaching directly from the object and encompass aspects of many education philosophies.

VOCABULARY AND OBJECTIVES

MARS STORIES TOUR

Exploration	Traveling through a place in order to find out about it.
Fiction	Books and stories about imaginary people and events. (Non-fiction is the opposite, books and stories about real people and events.)
Infinity	A space, amount, period of time, or distance without limits or an end.
Medium	A specific kind of artistic technique or means of expression as determined by the materials used or the creative methods involved: <i>the medium of lithography</i> . The materials used in a specific artistic technique: <i>oils as a medium</i> .
Media	The plural of medium.
Narrative	A description of events in a story.

IN THIS TOUR STUDENTS WILL

- Compare and contrast the artwork and narrative elements of two exhibitions, *Mars Revisited* and *How the West Was Sewn*.
- Explore the concept of exploration as it relates to the West and Mars.
- Participate in gallery activities that engage the students in storytelling.
- Apply what they have learned in the galleries about storytelling and different points of view to create a landscape that tells a story.

ABOUT KAHN AND SELESNICK

Collaborators for over 25 years, Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick are known for their fascinating fictionalized histories of real events. In their body of work *The Apollo Prophecies*, the artists chronicled a fanciful trip to the moon. In their more recent series *Mars Adrift on the Hourglass Sea* and its sequel *Mars Revisited*, they portray a fabricated account of the exploits of two women after their arrival in the Martian landscape. In a series of narrative images, these space-age travelers evoke a science fiction drama as well as a meditation on time and space, regeneration and cycles of change.

ABOUT LISA KOKIN

For the past two decades, California artist Lisa Kokin has been at the forefront of emerging new art forms: the artist's book and hand-stitched art. In a process of deconstruction and transformation, she utilizes book spines, covers and pages, disguising and weaving them into colorful wall installations. She repurposes discarded materials. Kokin's botanical forms make reference to the origins of books as trees or plant fibers. In *How the West was Sewn*, Kokin looks to Wild West themes popularized in classic films and pulp fiction, then purposefully uses the feminine-associated practice of sewing to express ideas about the romanticized violence of the Old West.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: ART TALK

MARS STORIES TOUR

Please view the two reproductions (Pre-Tour Images) with your class and lead a discussion using the following questions as guidelines. There are no “right” answers. The questions are meant to guide the group discussion. Students will revisit and discuss the original works at BAM. The vocabulary in this packet will aid discussion.

Research and experience have shown that students feel more comfortable when they can connect with something familiar once they arrive at the Museum. The students are excited to find “their” works of art while they are at BAM. They enjoy sharing their insights from the classroom discussion with the docent and making valuable comparisons between the textbook-like reproductions and the original works of art.

Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick
The Blue Scorpion / Dust Storm, 2010
Archival digital print
Courtesy of the Artists

Take a minute and look closely at this image.

- What objects or details do you see in the image?
- What do you think it would be like to be standing in this place? What evidence do you see that makes you think that?
- Do you think the storm is approaching or leaving? Why?

Mars is half the size of Earth, and there are sometimes dust storms that affect the entire planet.

- Have you ever seen a storm cloud like this? What happened when the storm arrived? What would you do if you saw a storm like this?
- Where do you think the two people are going? Why?

The artists Kahn and Selesnick worked with images from NASA and researched the atmosphere of Mars. They also traveled to different locations in the United States, including Idaho’s Craters of the Moon National Monument. They combined the photographs they took at those locations with photographs from Mars to create these images.

- Why do you think the artists decided to use actual photographs from Mars and Craters of the Moon?
- How do you think this artwork would be different if the artists created it all on a computer? Why?

Lisa Kokin
Cowboy #3 (Rooster), 2013
Vintage lace and mixed media
42” x23”
Courtesy of the artist

Artist Lisa Kokin responds to stories of the West through her artwork.

- Can you tell what this artwork is made out of, just by looking at it? What materials do you recognize? (lace, fabric, zippers)
- How many different pieces of lace do you think Lisa Kokin used?
- What do you see when you look at this artwork? Does the title ***Cowboy #3 (Rooster)*** change what you see? How?
- If you made artwork out of old lace and zippers what would you make? Why?

The two images may also be accessed through our website, www.boiseartmuseum.org under Education – BAM Teachers – Pre-Visit Art Packs – Mars Stories

PRE-VISIT IMAGE

MARS STORIES TOUR



Nicholas Kahn and Richard Selesnick
The Blue Scorpion / Dust Storm, 2010
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PRE-VISIT IMAGE

MARS STORIES TOUR



Lisa Kokin
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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

MARS STORIES TOUR

Language Arts:

- Have students list adjectives and verbs related to sewing and stitching terms. Students can use a thesaurus, dictionary, or the Internet to help. Then have students write a poem about Lisa Kokin's process.
- Show an image from *Mars Revisited* by Kahn and Selesnick and have students write short stories describing what is happening in the scene.
- Have students work in pairs to practice descriptive language. One student will describe a work of art from *Mars Revisited* and the other will draw what they imagine is being described. Afterwards, have each student compare their drawing to the original artwork. Then students can change roles and work with a new image.
- Have students explore cowboy poetry. Discovery Education has a lesson plan on their website. <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/teachers/free-lesson-plans/cowboys.cfm>

Math:

- Have students research the strength of gravity on Mars and calculate how much they would weigh on Mars. Extend this by having students convert their weight to kilograms.
- Have students use ratios to compare Earth and Mars, including mass, circumference, distance to the Sun, etc.
- Have students research the formulas related to aeronautics. Challenge students to solve space related equations like the amount of fuel required to make it to Mars.
- Have students examine lace and doilies, noting pattern and symmetry. Students can then create their own lace pattern using rulers, compasses, and grid paper.

Social Studies / History / Geography:

- Have each student create a timeline of space exploration or the Space Race, including five to ten events they feel are the most important. Afterwards have students compare their timelines.
- Have students map the countries that have sent missions into space. Use a globe to give students a sense of place. Have students include countries that have ambitions to send missions into space and predict which country will be the next to make it.
- Have students research the history of lace, its use, and the evolution from hand-crafted to machined lace.
- Have students look at maps of the United States and discuss the concept of the West. What does "The West" mean to them? Then have students compare historical and contemporary maps of the West. How has the definition of the West changed?

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

MARS STORIES TOUR

Science:

- Have students research the topic of rockets. Watch *October Sky*, and learn more about the story of Homer Hickam, Jr. Students can then research the history of NASA and Mars rovers and explorers. Then have students create or design their own rockets or rovers.
- Artists Kahn and Selesnick depict a parachute landing on Mars. Have students use the scientific process and explore the physics of parachutes and the atmosphere of Mars. Would parachutes work on Mars?
- Have students research the history, chemistry, and mechanics behind book construction and conservation. Why do some books yellow? Why do the spines crack? How do we preserve paper?
- Have students research how the invention of the 'iron horse' or steam engine changed life in the West for cowboys. What inventions have impacted students' lives?

Technology:

- Have students use Excel graphs to chart the distance from Earth, the Sun, and Mars to different planets. As an extension, have students calculate how long it would take to reach Mars.
- Have students research artists who use the book form or parts of books in their work and create a PowerPoint presentation showing examples. Use this as an opportunity to discuss the importance of citing sources as well as artists' rights and copyright law.
- Have students use digital cameras or camera phones to take a photo "on location", then have students use a program like Photoshop to manipulate the photograph and change objects or the background. This can be related to the West or Mars.

Arts:

- Have students create a play based on images from Kahn and Selesnick's exhibition *Mars Revisited*.
- Students can create a soundtrack to accompany a work of art or a selection of artwork from Lisa Kokin or Kahn and Selesnick's exhibitions.
- Have students use old books or found objects to create artwork inspired by the exhibitions they saw at the Boise Art Museum. For example, students can create reductive poems, whiting out all the words on a page that they do not wish to use and leaving those they want to include in their poems.

WEBSITES

MARS STORIES TOUR

For Teachers

<http://www.kahnselesnick.com> – Kahn and Selesnick’s website.

<http://www.lisakokin.com/index.html> – Lisa Kokin’s website, which includes a video of the artist at work.

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/classroom/pdfs/MSIP-MarsActivities.pdf> – Mars activities on NASA’s website.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFJuXnN6Dts> – Shows Kahn and Selesnick’s process of creating art.

http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/educ/lesson-view.cfm?LS_ID=1592 – A lesson plan about creating lava flows, similar to those Kahn and Selesnick saw at Idaho’s *Craters of the Moon National Monument*.

http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/lesson_plans/ - Idaho Public Television lesson plans about the Old West.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/20/mars-adrift-on-the-hourgl_n_1810643.html - Article about the first Mars exhibition by Kahn and Selesnick.

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/participate/marsforeducators/soi/> - NASA lesson plan for creating a community on Mars based on Mars Rover Curiosity’s mission.

For Teachers and Students

<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/HowToBindBook.pdf> - Step by step instructions for simple book binding.

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/participate/funzone/> - Games to help students learn about Mars.

<http://beamartian.jpl.nasa.gov/welcome> - Be a Martian, a NASA virtual exploration of Mars.

<http://www.google.com/mars/> - Google map of mars identifying regions, spacecraft, craters, etc.

<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-old-west> - History Channel, 10 Things You Didn’t Know about the Old West.

<http://www.kidsastronomy.com/mars.htm> - Information about Mars for students.

<http://mrnussbaum.com/space/mars/> - Two National Geographic videos about Mars.

<http://mars.jpl.nasa.gov/multimedia/videos/> - Learn about the rovers that explore Mars.

<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/science/space-sci/exploration/mars-rovers-sci/> - 3 min video exploring the landscape of Mars.

<http://idahoptv.org/sciencetrek/> - Idaho Public Television’s *Science Trek* featuring Mars.

MAKE-IT ACTIVITY

MARS STORIES TOUR

*To extend the museum experience
and connect the tour to your curriculum,
consider using or adapting this lesson plan suggestion*

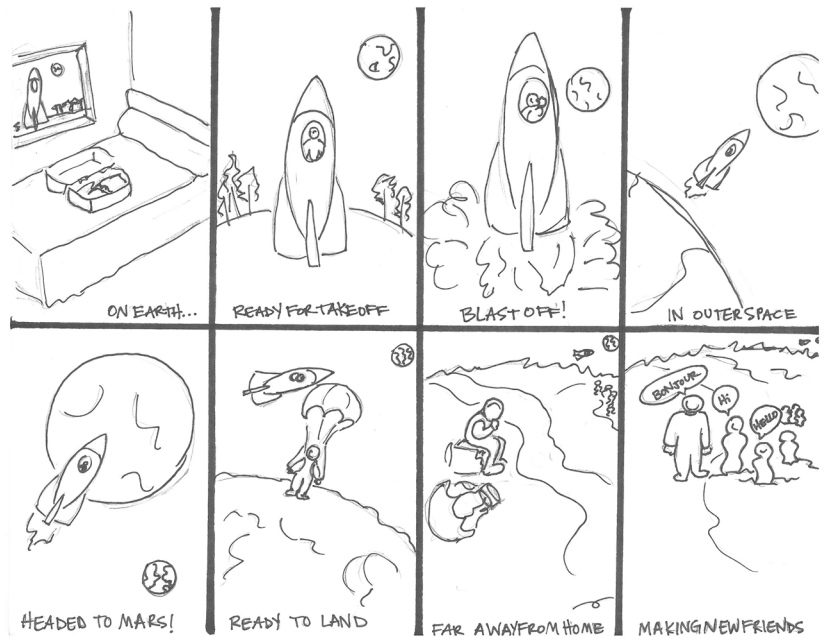
MARS OR WESTERN STORY STRIP

Introduction

In this Make-It! Activity, students will extend what they have learned about Mars, The West, and Craters of the Moon National Monument by creating a comic strip illustrating an imaginative narrative of a trip to Mars or to the Old West.

Materials

Large Drawing Paper
Construction Paper
Ruler
Scissors
Glue
Pencils
Crayons
Markers



Instructions

- Before students start drawing, have the class brainstorm what they think they would find on Mars or in the Old West. Write these ideas on the board, so students can refer back to them.
- Ask students to consider how they would travel to Mars or the Old West, what they would see, who they would meet, and how would they feel.
- Give each student a piece of large drawing paper.
- Have students fold their paper to create eight sections. Using a ruler, students should trace the folded lines with a black marker to enhance the look of their comic strip.
- If students want to add text to their strip, have them add a one inch fold (long ways) to the top and bottom of the paper.
- Ask students to illustrate a trip in space to Mars or a trip in time to the Old West, using each box for one scene of the story.
- Students can use construction paper to add colored backgrounds, if they wish.
- When students begin to illustrate their story, have them sketch lightly with pencil first and then add thick black outlines lines later.

EXTENSION: When students are finished have them share with each other.

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MARS STORIES TOUR

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