

BAM | BOISE ART MUSEUM

PRE-VISIT ART PACK & CURRICULUM GUIDE

JAMES CASTLE: AT HOME IN IDAHO



James Castle, *Farmyard with Totem Forms*, undated
Charcoal, soot, and wash on found paper
Gift of Boise Cascade Corporation, Boise Art Museum Permanent Collection

Students will discuss the ways in which Idaho artist James Castle (1899—1977) expressed his ideas about place and community through drawings and constructions.

CONNECTS TO

- Idaho History
- Communication
- Place
- Expression
- Recycling

BAM's SCHOOL TOUR PROGRAM GOALS

- Students will actively participate by 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 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 appreciate 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.

TOUR CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

Please follow the checklist below in preparation for your tour

BEFORE YOUR TOUR

WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

- ☐ DO THE PRE-VISIT ART TALK and review the VOCABULARY words with your students
- ☐ SHARE THE MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.
- ☐ MAKE LARGE NAMETAGS for students with their first names only.

WITH YOUR CHAPERONS:

- ☐ DESIGNATE YOUR ADULT CHAPERONS. A maximum of **four chaperons are admitted with the group for free.** Chaperons have specific responsibilities and are admitted with the students free of charge. Additional adults pay regular admission and are considered regular visitors in the Museum. (The teacher is counted as one of the four chaperons.)
- ☐ ASK CHAPERONS not to bring infants, younger children, or other siblings.
- ☐ REVIEW THE CHAPERON GUIDELINES with your designated chaperons.
- ☐ PRINT THE CHAPERON PASSES and HAVE YOUR PAYMENT PREPARED for any additional adults. Checks can be made payable to the Boise Art Museum or BAM. We are unable to make change, so please have the exact amount prepared if you are paying with cash. (Often teachers split the admission among all adults to cover the cost. Schools or individuals may pay for the additional adults.) **General admission is \$6; admission for seniors (62+) \$4, and full-time college students is \$3.**
- ☐ PREVIEW THE EXHIBITION with the *Free Teacher Preview Pass* included with your confirmation letter.

A NOTE TO HELP WITH CHAPERON SELECTION: All students will receive **Free Return Tickets** at the end of the visit. These tickets allow the student and one guest, to return and visit the Museum for free at a later date. Parents who indicate that they would like to be chaperons after you have designated the maximum limit of four (4) should be encouraged to return with their student at a later date using the **Free Return Ticket**.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- ☐ ARRIVE AT THE REAR EDUCATION ENTRANCE facing Julia Davis Park and the Rose Garden. Do not enter through the front of the museum. Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled time, as your docents can only let you into the Museum at your indicated tour time. Do not ring the delivery buzzer.
- ☐ DIVIDE YOUR CLASS INTO TWO GROUPS (of approximately 15 students) for their tour.
- ☐ IDENTIFY YOUR CHAPERONS for the docent and MAKE THE PAYMENT for additional adults
- ☐ LEAVE LARGE FIRST AID KITS AND BAGS at the Education Entrance. First aid kits and bags must be smaller than 11" X 15" and must be worn on the front of your body. BAM has multiple first aid kits on site.
- ☐ REMEMBER: The Museum has no indoor or outdoor lunch facilities. Tour groups may bring their lunches and enjoy Julia Davis Park or visit the restaurants at BODO or nearby Boise State University.

AFTER YOUR TOUR

- ☐ FILL OUT THE EVALUATION CARD that you receive from your tour guides. Your constructive criticism helps us continue to tailor our programs to suit your needs.
- ☐ DO THE MAKE IT! ACTIVITY or use related ideas listed in CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS to connect the tour to your classroom curricula.

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MUSEUM MANNERS FOR STUDENTS

Please share and discuss these MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.

Remembering to follow these manners on your tour at the Boise Art Museum will help keep the artwork safe and make sure everyone has a good experience on the tour.

- **Empty your mouth.** Food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the museum galleries.
 - **Stay at least 12” away** from the artwork and the walls.
 - **Keep your voices down** while discussing the artwork.
 - **Sit on the floor** during group discussions so everyone can see.
 - **Use indoor behavior**, running and jumping should be left for outdoors.
 - **Leave pens, markers and other writing/art materials at school**, in your backpack or on the bus.
 - **Pay attention and be a tour guide later.** At the end of the tour, your docent will give your teacher *Free Return Tickets* for each student. These tickets allow you and one guest to return and visit the Museum for free. When you return, you can take your guests on a tour using what you learned.
 - **Have fun** and enjoy your visit to the Boise Art Museum.
-

CHAPERON GUIDELINES

Please share and discuss this information with your chaperons.

Agreeing to be a chaperon for the Boise Art Museum’s School Tour Program means that you understand the following policies and agree to participate when asked by the docent.

- **Chaperons should not bring infants, younger children, or siblings** with them on the tour.
- Keep students with the group and encouraging students to **stay at least 12” away from the artwork and walls**.
- Make sure students **sit (not lay) on the floor, keep their hands and feet to themselves** and stay at least 12” away from the walls and artwork.
- Help students to **pay attention and participate** by staying engaged with the group and the tour.
- **Encourage student participation.** If you feel you have a relevant response to the docent’s questions, please share, but allow your comment to complement the students’ ideas.
- The docent may call on you to **help during the studio project**. Pay attention to the instructions and help all students with the process.
- **Additional adults pay regular admission** and are considered independent visitors apart from the school tour. Additional adults are not required to participate in chaperon responsibilities.
- **Cameras, large purses, backpacks, coats and umbrellas should be left on the bus** or stored by the back exit until the end of the visit.
- **Turn your cell phone off.** The use of cell phones is not permitted in the Museum galleries.

CHAPERON PASSES

BAM offers FREE admission to four (4) adult chaperons with every pre-scheduled tour group. Additional adults must pay regular admission and are considered independent visitors to the Museum. **PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE BEFORE ARRIVING AT BAM FOR YOUR TOUR.** Designate your four chaperons and have your payment prepared. When you arrive at BAM, please identify your four designated chaperons for the docents. Chaperons must agree to help supervise groups, follow the Museum Manners and participate in the tour activities when asked.

TOUR CHAPERON 1 _____

(TEACHER)

The Boise Art Museum's School Tour Program provides FREE admission to 4 adult chaperons with every group of students. Accepting the responsibilities of being a tour chaperon means that you understand and agree to do the following:

- Accompany their groups at all times while they are touring the Museum.
- Help the docent keep students with the group and at least 12" away from the artwork and walls.
- Assist the students and continue to supervise while in the studios.

Please do not bring infants, siblings or younger children with you as this diverts your attention from the group.

THANK YOU for helping make BAM's School Tour Program safe and enjoyable for everyone.

*This chaperon pass is only valid during a pre-scheduled school tour.
Duplicates are not accepted.*

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TOUR CHAPERON 2 _____

(NAME)

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TOUR CHAPERON 3 _____

(NAME)

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TOUR CHAPERON 4 _____

(NAME)

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Autobiography	The biography (written history) of a person narrated by himself or herself.
Autobiographical Art	Art that expresses or communicates a person's life and history including experiences, memories, family, geography, etc.
Cast-off materials	Any kind of material that has been used in some way and is ready to be discarded. Essentially, recycled material or garbage.
Materials	The matter from which something is made. For example, the <i>materials</i> used to make a cake are flour, eggs, butter, and sugar.
Medium	The material that artists use to create their art. One work of art could be made of one medium or several media.

TOUR OBJECTIVES

Students will...

- Learn that James Castle was an artist who was born and raised in Idaho.
- Compare and contrast works of art made by James Castle
- Explore, through group discussion and responses, the fact that visual symbols can communicate ideas and that those ideas can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on individual life experiences.
- Connect with the artwork in a meaningful, individualized and fun way, allowing them to construct their own knowledge and experience in art.
- Create their own drawings on recycled materials based on their ideas about the people and places around them.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION & THE ARTIST

Construction, Deconstruction, and Abstraction: The Art of James Castle

Since first displaying his art in 1963, the Boise Art Museum has been committed to exhibiting, collecting, and preserving the work of Idaho artist James Castle (1899-1977). His artwork is regularly featured in Permanent Collection exhibitions, and this is the tenth solo show of the artist's work at the Museum. Through gifts and purchases, BAM now has the largest museum collection of Castle's artwork.

Although he never received formal artistic training, Castle's artworks present a sophisticated approach to interpreting his surroundings. Inspired by what he saw during his everyday experiences, he made complex drawings and constructions. Even though James Castle could not hear, and he could not speak, this did not stop him from making art. Many of the compositions are accurate depictions of his environment that reveal his understanding of space and ability to correctly render perspective and proportion. Others are more subtle and dreamlike—stylized readings of the world around him. Still others are completely abstract configurations that give insight into the artist's rich imagination. Featuring drawings, books, and assemblages, this exhibition explores Castle's stylistic versatility and his unique ability to construct, deconstruct, and abstract what he saw.

Organized by the Boise Art Museum. Sponsored by Holland & Hart, LLC.

JAMES CASTLE: AT HOME IN IDAHO

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.

James Castle, ***Farmyard with Totem Forms***, undated

Charcoal, soot, and wash on found paper

Gift of Boise Cascade Corporation, Boise Art Museum Permanent Collection

The artist who made this was James Castle (1899-1977). He was born in Garden Valley, Idaho and lived in Idaho his entire life.

- What do you recognize in this drawing?
- Does it look like a place you’ve seen before?

James Castle created artwork based on the people and places he saw around where he lived.

- What might you be able to learn about the artist by looking at this drawing? Why do you think James Castle chose to draw this place?
- Have you ever drawn something by looking at it? Were you trying to share a message or idea through your work of art? If so, what?

James Castle, ***Construction (Stork)***, undated

found cardboard with string, curling ribbon, red and white washes, soot, and saliva

Purchased with grant funds from the Idaho Commission on the Arts, Boise Art Museum Permanent Collection

- Do you recognize any of the materials in this work of art? If so, what?

In Garden Valley, where James Castle grew up, his house was also a store and post office. He was able to take used packaging papers and boxes that people didn’t want to create this artwork.

- Have you ever used recycled materials or cast-off materials to make artwork? What did you make?
- Why do you think James Castle might have preferred using cast-off materials?

Sometimes James Castle made artwork based on what he saw and sometimes he made artwork from his imagination.

- What does this construction look like to you?
- Which parts look more like a real animal? Which parts do not?

The two images may also be accessed through our website, www.boiseartmuseum.org under Education – BAM Teachers – Pre-Visit Art Packs – [James Castle: At Home in Idaho](#)

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JAMES CASTLE: AT HOME IN IDAHO

Social Studies / History:

- Have your class research and study the earliest documented evidence of writing, beginning with the pictographs written by the Sumerians of Mesopotamia. In small groups, students can research a specific type of early writing and create a multimedia presentation. This information can then be used to compare the different types of early writing to the people who used them to express themselves. Then have students create a class timeline of early pictorial writing (and more traditional writing), documenting the major changes in the ways people have recorded and communicated events and ideas throughout time.
- Encourage your students to think about their own personal history. James Castle drew his surroundings mostly from memory. Have your students draw their childhood home as they remember it (this may still be the home they live in today). Discuss how they might express their feelings about their home through their drawing techniques. Have them write a history of their home.

Language Arts:

- Books can be created by students in all grades. Younger students can write about themselves in simple accordion-style folded books. *Who Am I* books can be interactive with overlapping pages of facts that open to reveal answers. Books can be made to explore basic math or art concepts such as shapes, sizes, colors, opposites, numbers, patterns, coin values, etc. Beginning reader books can be created to explore the alphabet, beginning and ending sounds, short vowels, rhymes, sequences. Lesson plans for creating books can be found here: <http://cdn.dickblick.com/lessonplans/handmade-books/handmade-books-handmade-books.pdf>
- In addition to creating his own books from cast-off materials, James Castle also altered existing books. Have students use books that are going to be donated or thrown away. The covers can be altered as can the interior pages. Books may be themed either to be autobiographical or to correspond with a current unit. Books may be created by individual students or in groups.
- James Castle created many figure drawings throughout his life. Have your class choose one of these figures and write a story about them. Have them think about where they live, what they do with their time, and what their personality might be like.
- An artist's statement is an explanation and summary of what an artist's work is about. James Castle never wrote his own artist's statement. After learning about his life and the artwork he made, have your students write an artist's statement for James Castle.

Math:

- Create a mathematically precise book by focusing on measuring and design. Have students create multiple iterations of the same book to refine the design and measurement calculations. For tutorials and ideas, visit <https://www.bookbindingworkshopsq.com/bookbinding-techniques/>
- Discuss measurements, lines, and angles with your students by creating a perspective drawing. For a lesson plan that correlates to Idaho Education Standards, visit: <https://idahoptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/4visualarts/perspective-drawing/#.W1ita9JKiUk>.

JAMES CASTLE: AT HOME IN IDAHO

Science:

- James Castle rejected traditional art materials that were readily available for purchase in stores. Instead he created his own art materials, using sticks for pencils and soot mixed with saliva for graphite. Have students research how art materials are made. What are the sources of pigments, clays, and pencils? Then have students experiment with a variety of objects to come up with their own materials for creating artwork. Gather some of these materials and conduct color tests.
- Mixed-media artworks and works of art made with hand-made materials are sometimes difficult to preserve and protect because they require different types of care than artwork made with traditional art materials. Have each student research two types of materials commonly used in mixed-media artwork and how they affect each other from an archival/preservation standpoint.

Technology:

- Have students take pictures that demonstrate perspective (or provide them with printed images). Print these out and have them use a ruler and marker to draw their horizon line, vanishing point, and orthogonal lines.
- Have students create an autobiographical presentation. Begin by having a class discussion on different forms of communication and how people express themselves traditionally and non-traditionally (one way would be through sign language). Discuss sounds, gestures, mime, pictures, music, etc. Then have your students create an autobiographical multimedia slide show called "All About Me."
- There are many different ways to communicate. Modern technology has changed the ways in which we do this. Have your students research upcoming technologies that assist those who are deaf and hard of hearing navigate a speaking world.

Arts:

- Have students look around their homes to find cast-off materials to create their own autobiographical art. Have them save mail, magazines, newspapers, letters, catalogs, wrapping paper, and food packaging for a week. Then ask students to think of a memory or an experience to express pictorially. When they have finished, have them present their work to their peers. See if they can determine what the students are trying to communicate through their art. Ask students why they chose that particular event/memory to communicate information about themselves in their autobiographical works of art.
- Provide your students with a notebook (or encourage them to make their own!). Have students take their notebook with them throughout the week and draw what they see. They should complete at least one drawing a day. These drawings can be of the same place but from different perspectives or completely different places.

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For Teachers

https://brooklynrail.org/2011/11/art_books/james-castle-show-and-store — Book review on *James Castle: Show and Store* that offers insights to how Castle has been perceived and his legacy in the art world.

<http://www.math.nus.edu.sg/aslaksen/projects/kh2-urops.pdf> — *Perspective in Mathematics and Art* is an article from the National University of Singapore outlining the history and theory of perspective drawing.

<https://idahoptv.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/4visualarts/perspective-drawing/#.W1ita9JKiUk> — Lesson plan detailing teaching perspective drawing that correlates with Idaho Education Standards.

For Teachers and Students

jamescastle.com — the official site of James Castle, the James Castle Collection and Archive serves as a resource to find accurate information on the artist, his process, and his legacy.

<https://www.jamescastlehouse.org/> — The James Castle House is run by the Boise City Department of Arts & History Cultural Sites program. They offer tours of the James Castle House and have several videos on his work and the renovations that occurred.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/art-james-castle-180952980/> — Article from Smithsonian.com that delves into the ways in which Castle interacted with the world.

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/328.html> — Article from the Philadelphia Museum of Art detailing their retrospective exhibition.

https://designobserver.com/feature/hunter_gatherer_james_castle/38582 — *Hunter/Gatherer: James Castle* details Castle's legacy in the art world and provides detailed images of some of his work.

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/james-castle-house-art> — *The Art of James Castle, Created with Spit, Scraps, and Soot* offers an additional look at Castle's process and life story.

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history-basics/tools-understanding-art/v/how-one-point-linear-perspective-works> — Khan Academy video on how one-point linear perspective works in art.

<https://helpx.adobe.com/illustrator/using/perspective-drawing.html> — Article outlining the basics of perspective drawing on Adobe Illustrator. This article assumes a basic knowledge of the program.

<https://www.instructables.com/id/Recycled-Material-Composition-Book/> — Article with images on how to create a journal out of recycled materials.

JAMES CASTLE: AT HOME IN IDAHO

Teachers

Francoise Barbe-Gall. *How to Talk to Children About Art*. Chicago Review Press, November 1, 2005. ISBN—13: 978-1556525803.

Frank Thomason. *Boise (Images of America)*. Arcadia Publishing, April 13, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0738559896.

Pre-K to 2nd

Melanie Fales. *A Life Told Through Pictures*. Boise Art Museum, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-9648326-3-3.

Virginia Lee Burton. *The Little House*. HMH Books for Young Readers, March 16, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0547131047.

Carson Ellis. *Home*. Candlewick, February 24, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0763665296.

Jean Davies Okimoto. *A Place for Grace*. Sasquatch Books, February 1, 1996. ISBN-13: 978-1570610691.

Donna Jo Napoli. *Hands & Hearts: With 15 Words in American Sign Language*. Harry N. Abrams, May 13, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1419710223.

Sheena McFeely. *Shay & Ivy: Beyond the Kingdom*. The Mansfield Press, May 15, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0996278508.

Susan Hood. *Ada's Violin: The Story of the Recycled Orchestra of Paraguay*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, May 3, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1481430951.

3rd to 6th

Laura C. Martin. *Recycled Crafts Box*. Storey Publishing, LLC, March 1, 20014. ISBN-13: 978-1580175227.

Marne Ventura. *Amazing Recycled Projects You Can Create (Imagine It, Build It)*. Capstone Press, August 1, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1491442920.

Sharon Kish. *A River of Hands*. Second Story Press, January 1, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-1896764368.

Sheena McFeely. *Shay & Ivy: Beyond the Kingdom*. The Mansfield Press, May 15, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0996278508.

Young Adult / Adult

Patty Wongpakdee. *Art Without Waste: 500 Upcycled & Earth-Friendly Designs*. Rockport Publishers, October 1, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-1631590313.

Frank Thomason. *Boise (Images of America)*. Arcadia Publishing, April 13, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0738559896.

Tim Cresswell. *Place: An Introduction (Short Introductions to Geography)*. Wiley-Blackwell, December 3, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0470655627.

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

Creature Constructions

Introduction

James Castle created work cut from materials he found readily available around his home. He drew on these items but also cut them apart and created constructions of animals and figures. Instruct your students to create their own creature constructions using found materials.



Materials

- Recycled materials
- String
- Glue
- Scissors
- Charcoal
- Animal reference images

Instructions

- Have students look through the animal reference photos provided to choose the animal they would like to create.
- Keeping the color and patterns of their chosen animal in mind, have students gather similarly colored recycled papers and packages.
- Encourage students to cut and place their materials so that they resemble their desired creature. Keep in mind that they can add several layers to add depth.
- Using glue and string, secure all of the layers together.

EXTENSION:

Practice research, writing, and public speaking skills

Have students research and write a short summary of their creature. They can share these facts and their creation in front of the class.