Art Along The Rivers
A Bicentennial Celebration
Art at the Confluence

This section highlights a selection of objects from the exhibition that illustrate the ways artists utilized the geography of the region and the subsequent trade routes in their making processes. The objects also speak to the diverse confluence of people whose art and stories have shaped this region.
Consider and Discuss

In what ways have rivers shaped what is now the United States?

What are the positives of a confluence or mingling of varied peoples and cultures?

What are potential negatives or consequences that may come with a confluence of people?

What does it mean to come together in a place? What is potentially gained? What is potentially lost?

How have artists and artwork shaped our understanding of historical events? What has potentially been left out?
Questions for Looking

Describe this object. Point out as many details as you can.

This figure is made of flint clay. What do you notice about the color and the surface of this object?

Closely observe the posture and pose of this figure. What words would you use to describe the figure’s pose? What do you observe about the posture or pose that helps you to imagine what this figure might be doing?

This work of art was created 800-900 years ago. What are some of the pros and cons of having it available in a museum today?
Questions for Looking

(These questions can be used when discussing either Eastman painting.)

If you could step inside this painting, what might you hear?

What wildlife do you imagine you would see?

What time of day does it appear to be?

What time of year?

As a follow up to each of the questions above, ask What do you see that makes you say that?

Seth Eastman, American, 1808–1875; View 100 Miles Above St. Louis: Indian Hunter, #38, 1847/48/49; watercolor; 4 5/16 x 7 inches; Saint Louis Art Museum, Funds given by Jane and Warren Shapleigh, Mr. and Mrs. G. Gordon Hertslet, Mr. William Pagenstecher and the Garden Club of St. Louis 101:1970
Questions for Looking

(These questions can be used when discussing either Eastman painting.)

What would you bring with you on an adventure in this place?

What activities would you do if you were in this place?

Where do you imagine the artist was positioned when creating this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?

What are some reasons why Seth Eastman might have chosen to paint this place?

Artists make choices about what to include or leave out. What might be left out of this scene?
Questions for Looking

What is going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can you find?

What stands out to you at first glance?

Set a timer for 60 seconds. Look at the painting for the whole 60 seconds. Let your eyes wander over the entire picture. What do you discover as you look at the painting for a longer period-of-time?

What are you curious about as you look at this painting?

What questions would you like to ask the artist about it?
Compare and Contrast

What similarities do you notice in these two watercolor drawings?

What differences do you observe?

What is something you wonder about as you look at these images?

Why do you imagine the artist chose to paint these figures without a background?

What might change about these images if the figures were shown in specific settings?

What details do you notice in the garments? In the other items the figures have on?

What stands out to you most?

What more can you find?
Questions for Looking

What do you notice about this garment?

What stands out to you about the colors? Patterns? Materials?

What more can you find?

Have you seen a garment similar to this before?

• In what ways was it similar?
• In what ways did it differ?

Wazhazhe (Osage) artist; Wedding Coat, Plume Hat, 1900s; Epaulet Pair, c.1830; coat: cloth and metal, hat: feathers and cloth, epaulets: velvet, thread and gold; overall: 77 x 42 inches; Denver Art Museum: Native Arts Acquisition Fund, Gift of Mrs. Harry English 2021.80-82a,b; Photography courtesy Denver Art Museum
Questions for Looking

What is going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can you find?

If you could ask the artist who created this a question, what would you like to ask him?

This is a work of art that documents and records history. What events would you choose to include in a work of art about your own life?

Mató-Tópe, Mandan, c.1784–1837; Robe, c.1835; hide, pigment, hair, and quills; 78 3/4 x 90 15/16 inches; Bernisches Historisches Museum, Bern 2021.95
Art on Display

This section explores the surprising confluence and variety of works of art collected and exhibited in the St. Louis region during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It focuses primarily on the diverse stories and works of art that shaped the 1904 World’s Fair and highlights the Fair’s dualities, that both celebrated innovation and reinforced damaging stereotypes.
Consider and Discuss

What has value to you? How do you determine that?

Who decides what is valuable in a community or society?

Who decides what is worth persevering? What factors do you think are important to consider when deciding what to preserve?

What is a museum? What different types of museums can you think of?

What are some reasons that people or communities might find museums valuable? What are some potential conflicts between museums and communities?

What are some goals that you associate with an art museum? What other places have you seen art displayed?

How do objects tell stories? Who decides what stories are told and how to present the information?

In what ways might museums or exhibitions reinforce stereotypes? In what ways might exhibitions or museums help foster greater understanding and appreciation for different ways of living?
Questions for Looking

Look closely at this work of art. What do you wonder about?

What might you learn about the person who is the subject of this sculpture by looking closely?

If you were able to travel back in time and watch this sculptor at work, what questions would you ask her?

Imagine if the figure’s arms and hands were visible. Strike a pose that reveals ways the arms and hands could enhance the figure’s pose. Why did you choose this particular movement?

Imagine the artist had sculpted the entire body of James Peck Thomas. If you’re comfortable, demonstrate how the figure would stand, walk, or dance. What do you see that informs your ideas?

Edmonia Lewis, American, 1844–1907; Bust of James Peck Thomas, 1874; marble; 22 x 18 x 10 inches; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH. R. T. Miller Jr. Fund 2021.155
Questions for Looking

If this image were the inspiration for a story, what type of story would it be? What do you see that makes you say that?

Imagine drifting in a boat through this scene.

How would you describe your surroundings?

Write a letter home and describe what you see, hear, and smell around you in this scene.

How does this space make you feel?

What emotions arise while you are looking closely? What do you see that makes you say that?
Questions for Looking

Imagine sitting in the location of this painting.

• What would the air feel like?
• What sounds would you hear?
• What would you smell?

What activities would you engage in if you were in this place?

If you could insert one thing into this landscape, what would it be and why?

Sketch an image of your addition to this landscape.

Winslow Homer, American, 1836–1910; Early Morning After a Storm at Sea, 1900–1903; oil on canvas; 30 1/4 x 50 inches; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift J. H. Wade 2021.182
Look closely at this work of art. Let your eyes wander up and down and side to side.

Select one of the words below that you feel connects to the artwork. Or choose your own.

- Shiny
- joyful
- dreamy
- complex
- detailed
- textured
- stiff
- soft
- whimsical
- fun
- heavy
- loud
- wild
- peaceful
- solemn
- story
- bold
- gentle
- imaginary
- musical
- rhythmic
- quiet
- lonely
- warm
- cold
- mellow
- lively
- vivid
- colorful
- abstract
- realistic
- slick
- rough
- mysterious
- care
- labor
- curious
- memory
- fuzzy
- home
- course
- smooth
- patterns
- happy

What do you see that inspired your word?
Write a poem inspired by the painting and the word you chose.

As you look at this painting, what do you imagine will happen next? Write a very short story or draw a picture to describe what will happen next.
Questions for Looking

After looking closely at this basket, what questions would you ask of the artist who made it?

Imagine you were an ant eagerly exploring this object. What would the materials feel like under your feet?

• What sounds would you hear as you explore?
• What else would you discover?

Imagine being able to peek inside the basket. What do you imagine it would look like on the inside?

This basket is about the size of a school backpack. If it were your basket, what is something you would put inside?

• Write a list of items you might keep in this basket or sketch the items you would include.
Questions for Looking

Set a timer for 60 seconds. Look closely at these two images for one minute. What do you notice?

Zoom in on the images using the zoom function. As you look even closer, what more do you discover?

What do you wonder about the materials or the process for making these objects?

The artists who created these artworks incorporated intricate patterns and weaving techniques. Think about fabric or cloth that you have or wear. What types of patterns do they have?

If you could create your own pattern for a cloth, what would you include?

Draw your pattern.

Filipino artist, Philippines; Man’s Backpack, before 1904; rattan and peel; 20 5/8 x 12 x 9 5/8 inches; Loaned by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA, Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (also known as the Philadelphia Civic Center Museum), 2003 2021.181

Visayan artist, Philippines; Cloth, late 19th century; pineapple fiber, silk, and cotton; 14 3/4 x 74 7/16 inches; Loaned by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA, Gift of Philadelphia University, 2016 2021.176
Questions for Looking

When looking at these objects, what stands out to you the most?

Compare and contrast these two baskets. Describe what is similar about them. Then, describe what is different.

What would you like to learn about these baskets?

Pala’wan artist, Philippines; Baskets, before 1904; rattan and nito; left basket: 9 x 10 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches, right basket: 9 11/16 x 11 1/8 x 11 inches; Loaned by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, PA, Gift of the Philadelphia Commercial Museum (also known as the Philadelphia Civic Center Museum), 2003 2021.179-.180
Questions for Looking

Select either the full view of the artwork or the detail image to explore in depth.

Write a caption for the image you chose to view that describes what is going on and what message you find in this work of art.

What do you see that supports your caption?

Stephanie Syjuco, American (born Philippines), born 1974; Block Out the Sun, 2019; pigment prints, mounted on aluminum; approximate case dimensions: 36 x 84 x 48 inches, image (individual prints): 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist, Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco and RYAN LEE Gallery, New York 2021.185.1-.30; © Stephanie Syjuco
Art in Production

“Art in Production” presents a selection of objects that were chosen specifically for the ways in which they utilized the region’s natural resources and tell stories about creativity and design. By sparking dialogues among disparate materials and industries, from clay to metals, textiles, and portraiture, the continuities and changes that have shaped the region’s products over centuries become apparent.
Consider and Discuss

Why are objects that were considered functional in the past now considered art?

Who determines what is considered “valuable”? What might influence notions of value? Who or what is left out of these conversations?

What can we learn about a place or community by looking at the art that is made there?

How does an object represent changes taking place in the time it was made?

What relationships can you find between art and the economy?
Prompts for Looking

Look closely at these objects. Pay special attention to visual details that might provide clues into the materials from which they were made and the process for creating them. What did you discover?

Drawing is a great way to discover more as you look at a work of art. Create a contour line drawing of one of these bricks. A contour line drawing is a continuous line where your pencil is touching the paper at all times. Let your hand and eyes follow the shapes, lines, and details of the brick.

For an extra challenge, try to draw while only looking at the brick and not at your piece of paper. See if you can keep from peeking at your page. What more did you discover as you drew?
Looking Prompts

List as many adjectives as you can think of to describe this artwork.

Choose 6-8 adjectives from your list and compose a poem.

Imagine a setting for this work of art. Draw a picture of it in this environment.

Consider the scale of this stoneware vessel. How big do you imagine it is? What do you see that makes you say that? In what ways might your experience of the vessel change if it were a different size?

Imagine if you could hold it in your hand. Imagine if it were as tall as you. (See image caption for actual size.)

Dan Anderson, American, born 1945; European Water Tank, 1996; stoneware; 28 x 18 1/2 inches; Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Thomas Alexander and Laura Rogers 1121:2010a,b; © Dan Anderson
Choose one of these three objects. Imagine you are an art detective who has found this object and would like to discover more about it. Draw a detailed sketch of your object.

What do you notice about the materials that the object is made with?

Write notes around your page to describe what you have discovered.

What do you wonder about this object?
Looking Prompts

Spend time looking at each of these photographs. What do you notice about the facial expressions in each of the photographs?

What do you notice about the poses of the people in the photographs?

What else do you notice as you compare these photographs?

What clues do you see in the photographs that might help you discover a bit more about these people?

Imagine two or more of the people photographed in these images were to meet.

• What do you imagine they might talk about?
• What do you imagine they might do next, after they met?
• Write a short story about their meeting.

Thomas M. Easterly, American, 1809–1882; Keokuk, or the Watchful Fox, 1847; hand-colored daguerreotype; 5 x 4 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.54

Thomas M. Easterly, American, 1809–1882; Thomas Forsyth, Mountain Spy and Guide, 1847; daguerreotype; 5 x 4 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.55

Thomas M. Easterly, American, 1809–1882; Robert J. Wilkinson, Barber of the Southern Hotel, c.1860; daguerreotype; 4 x 3 1/2 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.56

Thomas M. Easterly, American, 1809–1882; Unidentified Mother and Small Son, c.1850; hand-colored daguerreotype; 4 x 3 1/2 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.57
Looking Prompts

Begin by looking at one section of this quilt for at least 10 seconds. Then slowly scan different areas of the quilt. What do you notice? What aspects of the quilt command your attention or excite your eyes?

If this quilt were a dance, how do you imagine it would move?

- Would the movements be quick or slow?
- Free-form or choreographed?
- If you feel comfortable, create this dance with your body.

Select one color patch on the quilt.

Trace the path of similar patches by looking all around the quilt design. If each patch were a card for a matching game, would you be able to find matches?

Imagine each square on the quilt functioning as a window.

- What might you find when looking through them?
- If you could climb through one of the windows, where would you land?
Methodist
Eliza Church St. Louis
Worked at X X X X
School Brunswick Charter
County: Missouri
February 19, 1838
by Susan Bush

Susan Bush
Looking Prompts

If you were asked to describe this textile to a friend, what aspects would you focus on?

What do you imagine the inside of this building might look like?
• Draw a picture of the inside of the building.
• Or write a story to describe your adventures exploring inside this building and what you found or who you met.

This embroidery square was stitched by eleven-year-old Susan Bushey, who created scenes she remembered from her hometown of St. Louis while she was away at boarding school.

If you were to create your own embroidery square, what would you include? Draw a design for your square.
Looking Prompts

If you could choose only one word to describe this object, what would it be?

• What do you see that inspired your word?

• What more can you discover?

Parlor Cook Stove’s like these were used to cook food and to heat homes. What clues can you find that help you to understand how it functioned?

What comparisons can you make between this stove and contemporary stoves or heating devices?

If you were able to use this stove to cook or bake, what would you want to make?

Made by Excelsior Stove Works, St. Louis, Missouri, 1849–1943; Parlor Cook Stove, No. 7, c.1860-69; cast iron; 39 x 28 x 22 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.189
Art Communities

This resource section highlights a few of the artist personalities that defined artist communities in the confluence region, focusing specifically on artists who worked with the People’s Art Center and the Black Artists Group, as well as folk or outsider artists working at similar times. This section celebrates the local knowledge preserved by communities in the confluence region. By viewing these works as a group, they become members of one overarching community of makers compelled by their shared need to express their worlds through an artistic object. Every one of them speaks both to their local communities and to a broader national dialogue.
Consider and Discuss

As a class, explore the concept of community.

What do you think of when you hear the word community?

Create a class definition of “community.”

What does it mean to be a member of a community?

What brings people together in a community?

What might lead someone to join or identify with a community?

To be a community, must members like each other?

What might lead artists to create together in a community?

What are some different communities that you have been a part of (e.g. sports teams, school communities, neighborhoods)?
Using the name of the sculpture, *Gorilla*, create an acrostic poem about this artwork as you look at it. An acrostic poem uses each letter of a word as the beginning for a line in the poem. For example, here is an acrostic poem using the word *cat*:

- **Careful**
- **Agile**
- **Timid**

What word would you use to describe the pose of this gorilla?

What are some other possible poses the artist could have chosen? Create these poses with your body if you are comfortable. Or draw them.

Why do you imagine the artist might have chosen to carve the gorilla in this pose?

Imagine if this gorilla were made from a different material.

- What would happen if it were made from stone?
- How about if it were made from metal?
- What if it were made from fabric and stuffed like a stuffed animal?

What material would you use if you were to make your own gorilla?
Looking Prompts

What is a feeling that comes to you as you look at this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

Write a list of adjectives to describe what you see in this work of art.

Imagine the space where this person in this drawing may be sitting. Consider what they may be seeing or hearing.

Draft a story from the point of view of the figure.
  • What’s the setting?
  • What happened just before this moment?
  • Predict what might happen next in this story.
  • Assign a title to your story and add characters if necessary.

Spencer Thornton Banks, American, 1912–1983; Drawing from Adult Sketch Class, People's Art Center, 1947; red and black chalk on paper; sheet: 25 3/8 x 19 1/8 inches; George B. Vashon Museum 2021.4; © Estate of Spencer Thornton Banks
Looking Prompts

Explore the shapes of this painting. On a paper, draw different shapes that you find in the painting.

- Notice simple shapes.
- Notice complex shapes.
- What happens when you combine shapes?

Explore positive space by finding the objects that appear in the front or feel the most dominant in the composition.

Explore negative space, what shapes appear to be in the background, or are created in the space around those in the front?

Take the shapes that you have found and drawn on your paper. Cut them out. Trace them to create more of these shapes and then cut out these additional shapes. Arrange them in different patterns to create your own designs inspired by this painting. Add color to your image if you would like.

Claps, pats, foot taps, and other sounds can be created with our bodies and can be organized in a way that creates music. Look at this painting for 30 seconds. Then translate the rhythms and patterns of the artist’s design into your own sounds.

What shapes inspired your choices?
Looking Prompts

What do you notice about the colors in this painting?

How do you imagine the painting would feel to you if the artist used warm colors, such as reds and yellows?

What do you imagine the painting would feel like if the artist used only black and white?

If the painting were hung upside down, how would your observations change?

What associations come to mind when you look at this painting?

What sounds do you imagine this painting would make?

What movements might you see if this painting were to come to life?

If only one element had the ability to move in this painting, what part would move? Why?
Looking Prompts

Use Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to explore this painting *(link to VTS resource section)*:

- What’s going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

What aspects of the painting help us understand its mood?

As a class, build a list of things that you find in this image, such as colors, shapes, and imagery.

Using the list created collaboratively as a class, build a narrative (individually or as a group) inspired by the elements discovered from the painting.

Oliver Lee Jackson, American, born 1935; *Painting II*, 1969, 1969; oil-based pigments and mixed media on canvas; 66 1/2 x 66 1/2 inches; Courtesy of the artist 2021.12; © Oliver Lee Jackson
Looking Prompts

When looking at these two sculptures, what do you notice first?

If you could create a home for these two birds, where would it be and why?

If you were able to observe the birds in the same location, would they interact with one another or remain separate?

Describe their movements within the location you have imagined. What can you find in the artwork to support your answers?

If you could spend a day with one of these birds, what might you learn?

Imagine it was able to fly. Where would it travel? Draw a map of its travels.

What clues can you discover to possibly help identify what type of bird this might be?

- Compare the clues you discovered with images and information about birds that you can find in research resources such as books or websites. You may want to begin by exploring this All About Birds Online guide.

Frederick "Fritz" Baurichter, American (born Germany), 1850–1937; *Hummingbird*, c.1904-10; painted wood; bird only: 3 3/4 x 5 1/4 x 6 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.51

Frederick "Fritz" Baurichter, American (born Germany), 1850–1937; *Rooster*, c.1904-10; painted wood; 13 x 11 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches; Courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis 2021.50
Looking Prompts

What might the pose suggest about the figure’s mood?

What might be the figure’s next movement?

What visual clues help identify this well-known figure in U.S. history?

Imagine the figure begins to speak. What might his first words be?

What would you want to ask them? Write a list of questions.

Imagine how he might respond.

• What in the work of art gives you clues to how he might respond?
• With a partner or small group, act out or write the conversation.

Fred E. Myers, American, 1910–1950; Lincoln, 1929; wood (railroad tie); 26 1/2 x 10 1/4 x 9 inches; University Museum, Southern Illinois University Carbondale 2021.39
Art as Advocate

Artworks in this section advocate by drawing attention to politics, people, and places. Some have communicated support for political policies or promoted recognition of people from marginalized groups. Others have countered social injustices or investigated relationships between humans and nature. All speak boldly in the hopes of effecting change.
Consider and Discuss

How can artwork accomplish a goal, solve a problem, or make a statement?

In what ways do artists advocate through art?

How do artists and objects advocate for political, social, or environmental viewpoints?

What is the relationship between art and activism? In what ways can you creatively advocate for change?
Imagine you are sitting or standing on the raft with the people pictured. Where would you like to be on the raft? What might you see if you look in different directions? What do you imagine it would feel like to be on the raft?

Now, imagine you are on the end of the raft facing the people we see in the painting. Explore with your senses.

• What do you see?
• What can you hear?
• What do you smell?
• What does the weather feel like on your skin?

As you gaze across the flat surface of the water, what do you notice?

As a follow up to the questions above, ask What do you see that makes you say that?

If you could ask any of the people in this scene a question, who would you ask and what would you like to ask them?
Looking Prompts

What’s going on in this sculpture?
What do you see that makes you say that?
What more can you find?

Consider each figure in the sculpture:

• What do you notice about their pose?
• How would you describe their facial expression?
• What is one word you would use to describe their mood or emotion?

What do you wonder about as you look at this sculpture?

John Rogers, American, 1829–1904; *The Slave Auction*, 1859; painted plaster; 13 1/4 x 9 inches; Albany Institute of History & Art, gift of Mrs. Ledyard Cogswell, Jr., from the Benjamin Walworth Arnold Collection 2021.205
Questions for Looking

What do you see as you look at this photograph?

What do you think about that?

What does it make you wonder about?
Looking Prompts

Look closely at this work of art. What do you discover as you look?

Write a list of 10 nouns or adjectives that describe what you see.

What details emerge as you continue to look?

How would the impact of this image change if it were very small? Or if it were very large?

What if you were to change the background?

What else do you notice about the composition of this image?
Looking Prompts

Before reading any information about this artwork, look closely at the image.

If you were the artist, what title would you give it? What about it makes you choose that title?

If you were asked to choose a song to go along with this image, what song would you choose?

What more can you find as you look at this image?
Looking Prompts

Compare and contrast these three images.

What is similar about each of the landscapes? What is different?

If you could choose one of these images to teleport into, which one would you choose?

• What caused you to choose that one?
• Where would you want to land in the image?
• What would you want to have with you if you were in this landscape?