

Educator Resources: Stories in Art

The following resources are designed to prepare for and extend a classroom visit to the Ackland Art Museum. The experiences are intended to support classroom curriculum and learning standards, while allowing for students to express their ideas through a variety of formats – writing, discussion, research, and art making. Activities and conversation starters can be modified per grade level and discipline.

Introduction

Artists sometimes tell stories in their works of art. By looking carefully at artworks, students will learn how to “read” these stories. People, gestures, facial expressions, clothing, colors, and weather are some of the clues artists use to tell their stories.

Pre-Visit Experiences

- Looking Closely

As a class, look closely at Richard Westall’s *The Sword of Damocles*, 1812 or Burk Uzzle’s *Half Car at Strip Mall, Washington, D.C., 1967*, 1967 (see image and artwork information on pages 5-7). Consider the following:

- Look closely at this image and describe what you see.
- What do you think this work of art is about?
- If this work of art was a book, what genre, or category, would it belong in?
- Describe the setting and the characters. What do you think the plot of this story?
- Where would you find more information about this work of art using the visual clues that you see?

Possible extension: Have students write a paragraph or a story using a work of art from the Ackland or another museum as a writing prompt.

- What’s your story?

Using one of the prompts below, have students write about a personal experience. What happened first? What happened next? What happened last? Make sure to include lots of details! Tell the same story in pictures. Draw what happened first, next, and last. Remember to include the details from your written story.

Write about...

- Your favorite memory.
 - A time when you helped a friend or family member.
 - A time when you were scared.
 - Your first day of school.
 - The funniest thing you ever saw.
- Complete a K-W-L chart (see page 4) to help students confirm what they know about art. The prompts include: “What I already know about art.”, “What I want to know about art.”, and “What I learned about art.”
 - Review the Museum rules with students and chaperones.

Post Visit experiences

- After your Museum Visit
 - Have students share one thing they remembered from the Museum. (Note: This activity can be done on the bus back to school and allows for students to be accountable for their learning and arts experience.)
 - Back in the classroom, have students think about their Museum experiences and respond through writing or drawing.
 - ✓ Describe your visit to Ackland Art Museum.
 - ✓ What happened first? Next? Last?
 - ✓ What was your favorite part?
 - Review the pre-visit experience K-W-L chart to see which predictions were true and what new ideas students learned.
 - Create a class mural about the trip by passing around a large sheet of paper so students can write or sketch their impressions of the trip.
- Portrait as Biography
Create a portrait of yourself that includes at least 4 symbols that tell something important about you. Remember to ask yourself, what story are you trying to tell about yourself?
- Pictures into words
Practice creating a story from looking at a picture. Have students look through magazines, newspapers, or books (i.e. *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg) to find a picture that interests them. Students will then create a story based on the visual clues in the image. Emphasize descriptive writing and the story should include an introduction and a conclusion.

Additional Web Resources:

- Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill: <https://ackland.org/collections/>
- North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh: <https://ncartmuseum.org>
- Metropolitan Museum, New York: www.metmuseum.org/art/collection or www.metmuseum.org/toah/
- "Looking to Write, Writing to Look," Philadelphia Museum of Art: www.philamuseum.org/booklets/12_70_160_1.html

North Carolina Standards for English Language Arts

- K.W.1 – 3.W.1 Text Types and Purpose (Opinion)
- K.W.2 – 3.W.2 Text Types and Purpose (Informative/Explanatory)
- K.W.3 – 3.W.3 Text Types and Purpose (Narrative)

- K-3.SL.1-3 Comprehension and Collaboration
- K-3.SL.4, 6 Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

North Carolina Standards for Visual Art

- K.V.1 – 3.V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively.
- K.V.2 – 3.V.1 Apply creative and critical thinking skills to artistic expression.
- K.CX.1. – 3.V.1 Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.
- K.CX.2 – 3.CX.2 Understand the interdisciplinary connections and life applications of the visual arts.

NAME _____

KWL Chart

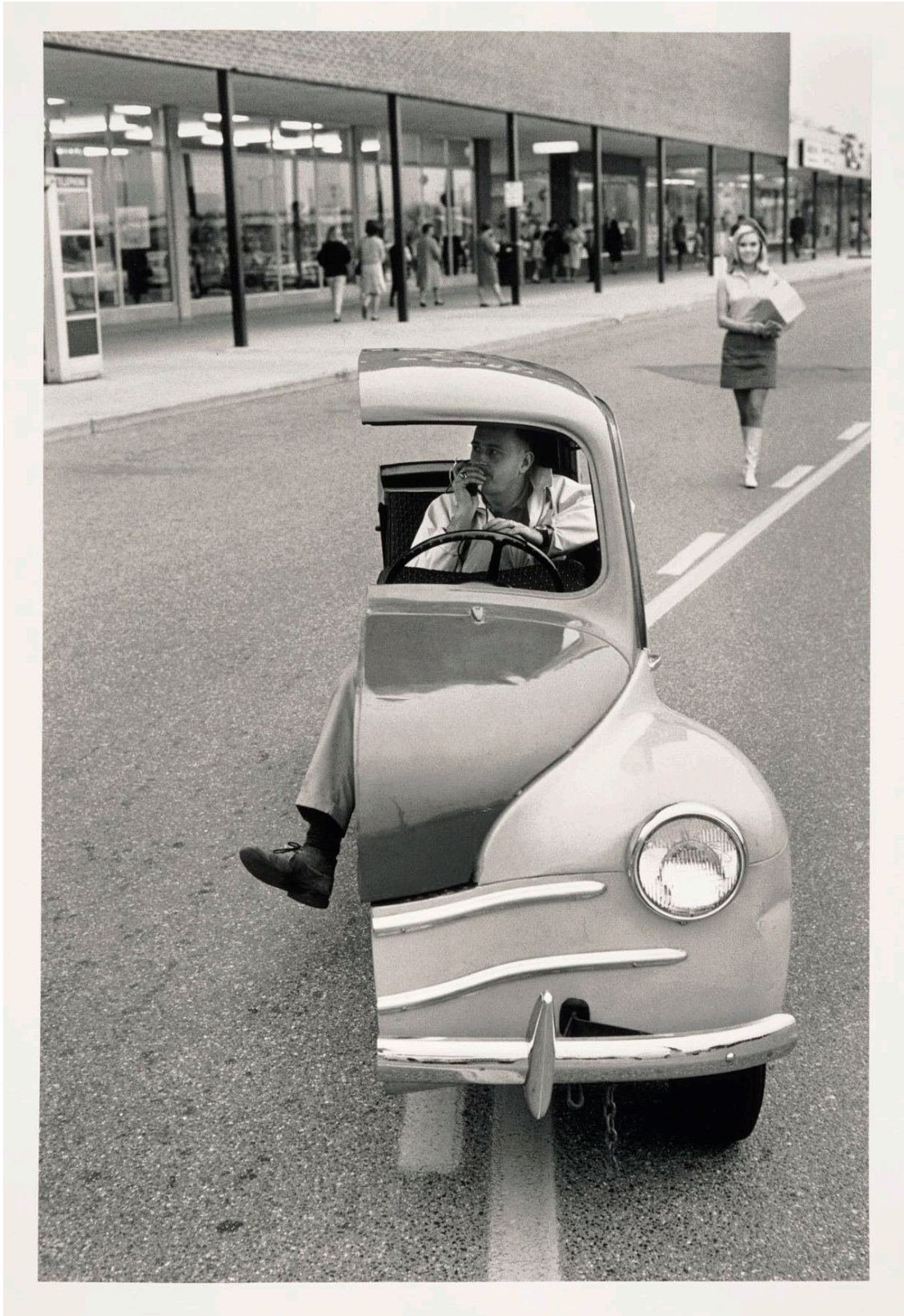
Before Your Visit

After Your Visit

What I <u>know</u> about art.	What I <u>want</u> to know about art.	What I <u>learned</u> about art.



Richard Westall (British, 1765–1836); *The Sword of Damocles*, 1812; Oil on canvas; 51 3/16 x 40 9/16 x 3 1/4 in.; Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Ackland Fund, 79.10.1



Burk Uzzle (American, born 1938); *Half Car at Strip Mall, Washington, D.C.*, 1967, 1967; Gelatin silver print; Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Anonymous Gift, 2008.3.40

Richard Westall (British, 1765–1836)

The Sword of Damocles, 1812

Oil on canvas

51 3/16 x 40 9/16 x 3 1/4 in.

Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ackland Fund, 79.10.1



In the nineteenth century, educated Europeans read the story of the sword of Damocles in ancient accounts from Greece and Rome. In the story, Dionysius, having seized power in the Sicilian city of Syracuse, overheard the young Damocles envying his wealth and power. In response, Dionysius offered to change places with him. As Damocles sat feasting in the palace, he happened to glance up and was terrified to see a sharp sword dangling by a single hair, high over his head. Dionysius explained, "I came to power by violence and I have many enemies. This sword is only a symbol of the danger that I face every day."

Westall stages this moment of the story in a space filled with neoclassical objects and architecture. Look, for instance, at the large fluted column directly behind the figure of Dionysius. Notice the carved frieze that runs along the wall just below the ceiling in the background. Westall even includes a still life, or carefully studied group of vessels in the center of the painting. By including precisely rendered objects and architectural elements that mimic those of ancient Rome, Westall infuses his painting with a neoclassical style, popular during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Source: Ackland Art Museum Curatorial files

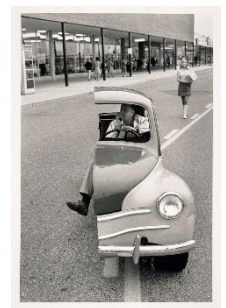
Burk Uzzle (American, born 1938)

Half Car at Strip Mall, Washington, D.C., 1967, 1967

Gelatin silver print

Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,

Anonymous Gift, 2008.3.40



Burk Uzzle was born and raised in Raleigh, North Carolina and started taking pictures at age 10. He never went to college, but moved to New York and was hired as the youngest photographer for Life magazine in the 1960s. Burk is best known for his iconic images of the Civil Rights Movement and the Woodstock Music Festival. He now lives and photographs in Wilson, NC.

Artist website: www.burkuzzle.com