

Educator Guide

In April 2009, Gallery Crawl headed to Oakland to see the exhibitions **Resound** by Carl Auge at Rowan Morrison Gallery, and **Natural Selection** featuring Josh Keyes and Vaughn Bell at Swarm Gallery. This guide provides resources for educators to support the utilization of this online virtual visit to the gallery to teach about contemporary art. The Gallery Crawl video can be found at www.KQED.org/gallerycrawl. Information about taking your students to the galleries can be found at the bottom of this guide.

Exhibitions *Resound* and *Natural Selection*

Location Rowan Morrison Gallery, Oakland [Google Map](#)
Swarm Gallery and Studios, Oakland [Google Map](#)

Grades 6 - 12

Standards Addressed Artistic Perception, Creative Expression, Aesthetic Valuing

The Exhibitions

Resound at Rowan Morrison Gallery features paintings by Carl Auge, who works with found images and architectural studies to create large-scale images of urban landscapes that are layered with meaning, both on the surface and in viewers' own interpretations. Landmarks, monuments, and visual representations of sound are inspirations for his work. Auge manipulates his subjects to create what he calls a visualization of sound. He places everyday objects such as guitar amplifiers in urban environments, and often incorporates landmarks that are almost, but not quite, recognizable. Layering oil paint in an abstract manner, Auge's landscapes are at once familiar and foreign.

Natural Selection at Swarm Gallery features artists Vaughn Bell and Josh Keyes. Bell's installations involve both living and fabricated natural objects and convey an environmentalist message while giving urban viewers a break from the concrete jungle by offering an outdoor experience inside the gallery. Bell's work bounces between conceptual, performance, and installation art and reflects the Seattle-based artist's interests in ecology and public space. For the **Natural Selection** exhibition, she contributed three separate projects. One allowed viewers to adopt a miniature biosphere housed in the type of plastic bubble container you might find in a toy quarter machine. Another installation called **Surrogate Mountain** features several small-scale replicas of Mt. Ranier, an important landmark for residents of Seattle. Bell's anchor work in the exhibition was another biosphere inside a house-shaped, plexi-glass box. Viewers are invited to put their heads inside the biosphere for a bug's eye view of the miniature environment.

Josh Keyes's paintings are reminiscent of natural history museum dioramas in their isolation of wild animals' imagined environments. Incorporating images of man-made objects such as crumbling monuments marked with graffiti, the paintings hint at the natural world's possibly dystopian future. Keyes is based in Portland, and his paintings use specific imagery that is both personally significant to Keyes, as well as societally relevant.

In Swarm Gallery's project room, artist Reenie Charrière presents **Washed Up**, a collection of plastic-based litter that washed ashore at the Oakland Estuary. Charrière also recorded the sight and sounds of the estuary's tide on video and projected it in the space to create a multi-sensory installation.

Teaching with Gallery Crawl

Using video in the classroom can breathe life and meaning into any lesson. In the arts, video can be particularly effective for introducing large concepts, aspects of the creative process, and key arts-related vocabulary to introduce students to discipline-based and concept-based study. Using media in the classroom helps connect students with artists and promotes critical viewing skills and media awareness. For more information about using media in the classroom download KQED's [Media Tips](#) teaching tool (a direct link is provided in the resource section of this guide).

Using a Gallery Crawl video in the classroom allows student to virtually view a local art exhibit, while listening to firsthand information about exhibitions from curators, gallerists, and artists. In order to present Gallery Crawl to your entire class, you will need a projector and computer with the capacity to stream video. Alternatively, assign students to watch the video on their own or in groups. Gallery Crawl is also available as a free video podcast on iTunes and YouTube. After soliciting student responses to the video, continue the lesson by implementing hands-on or discussion activities to deepen the impact of the media – ideas are provided in this guide.

Making the Most of your Virtual Visit

The following activity ideas may be used in the classroom after viewing the Gallery Crawl Video, **and/or** after a school tour of Rowan Morrison Gallery or Swarm Gallery.

➤ Visualizations of Sound

In this episode of Gallery Crawl, Carl Auge discusses his work as a visualization of sound. Many artists cite music as a major influence in their work including painters such as Jackson Pollock who listened to Jazz music while creating his famous abstract expressionist drip paintings, and local artist Mike Henderson, who splits his time between painting and playing for his Blues band. Choose a selection of music (instrumental works best) to play for your class and invite them to spend 10 - 30 minutes practicing their listening skills while spontaneously drawing or painting a visual representation of the sounds they hear. For students who may have trouble thinking of what to draw or paint, encourage them to work abstractly like Pollock or even scribble to the beat of the music. Once the listening and art-making session is complete, hang each student's piece at the front of the room and discuss the similarities and differences between each one. For older students, this project could be implemented on a longer-term level where students choose their own piece of music and spend class time planning and executing their artworks.

➤ Color Temperature (Modeling form with color temperature and systems):

Carl Auge works as a teaching artist and developed the following lesson plan for his classroom. *OBJECTIVE:* Gaining an understanding of visual harmony achieved through control of color temperature. The lesson provides a valuable means for expanding notions of mass and weight, as value, light and shadow, contrast, and modeling are described entirely by use of color. Students will sense color as a tool that can further portray meaning (content) in their art practice.

LESSON VOCABULARY:

Color Temperature - Either warm or cool, the temperature of a color depends on the light and adjacent color.

Analogous Color System - Two to Four Colors adjacent to each other on the color wheel.

Split Complimentary Color System - One color and at least one other that is a step away from it's opposite on the color wheel.

MATERIALS: Color Pencils, Pastels, or Paint

LESSON: Using two color systems to depict forms within the still life. Choosing a Split Complimentary Color System with two colors, orange and blue - green, we begin with a line drawing with the darkest value (Blue - Green). We then look for mid-tone areas, notably those with soft edges, and work orange into them. We then find the hardest edges, those which occur at junctions of greatest value difference. Here, the Blue - Green will describe the darkest value, and white will remain as the lightest. The result is a drawing with a sense of cool light. This same middle value (orange) occurs in the next drawing, which features an Analogous Color System. We use the same procedure of seeking edges and shadows, using a dark earth tone to begin the line drawing. Yellow will describe the second lightest value step, and white, again, the lightest. Burnt Umber (a darker orange) is the darkest value. The result is a drawing one step lighter and darker than the last, and with a sense of warm light.

CLOSING: What is more interesting about the work - the imagery/subject matter itself, or the way it has been described? Viewing work samples from the class, we will inquire into the lesson experience, and have a conversation about future possibilities for color in relation to students' content.

➤ **Discussion Topic**

Vaughn Bell is interested in ecology and public space. Discuss the ways in which "place" affects the how a work of art is seen. How would students' perceptions of Bell's Surrogate Mountains be perceived if she was walking them around town, versus displaying them in a gallery? Consider how a museum or gallery setting differs from a natural environment. Locate one example of each and ask students to compare them, beginning with descriptions of each place and progressing to specifics.

➤ **What is Conceptual Art?**

Show students 2 or 3 different images of conceptual artwork and initiate a compare and contrast conversation. Possible works might include:

- "OneTree(s)" project (See [Natalie Jeremijenko](#) story on Spark)
- Works by [Vaughn Bell](#)
- Works by [Paul Kos](#)
- Works by John Baldessari
- Works by Ana Mendiata
- Works by Bruce Nauman
- Works by Michael Heizer
- Works by Andy Goldsworthy
- Works by Mel Chin

Discuss:

1. What the different works communicate - what are the concepts behind them?
2. How are these concepts communicated?
3. What material(s) are they made from?
4. What does the material(s) have to do with the concept?

➤ **Adopt-a-Biosphere**

Vaughn Bell's adoptable biospheres can be easily recreated in your classroom. Consider collaborating with your science department colleagues to create mini-environments using moss, bark, soil, and leaves. Students can either create their own biospheres to care for, or teachers can provide them along with instructions about how to care for them. If housed in a plastic container like Vaughn Bell's biospheres, the lids can be carefully removed and sprayed with water every day or two. The biospheres should be exposed to indirect light, and students should be careful not to jiggle them around too much as it will disrupt growth. In addition to creating a home for their biosphere as an art project using things like paper leaf cut-outs to shade the biospheres, students can choose from the following activities to document their biosphere care process:

- Keeping a daily or weekly "biosphere journal" with written observations.
- Drawing (using color) the biospheres every day or week documenting changes in gesture, shape and color.
- Charting the biospheres' development in a table, mapping changes in height, or alternatively using simple graphs for each plant that show the changes over time.
- Taking weekly photographs of the biospheres.

To close this lesson, invite students to share their experiences and documentation with the class.

Visiting the Galleries

Both Rowan Morrison Gallery and Swarm Gallery are located in Oakland, CA. Carl Auge's **Resound** exhibit will be on view through August 22nd, 2009 and Josh Keyes and Vaughn Bell's **Natural Selection** exhibit will be on display through September 13th, 2009. For gallery hours and public transportation information, visit the galleries' Web sites listed below.

Resources to extend learning about the exhibits, art forms, and featured artists

Rowan Morrison Gallery <http://www.rowanmorrison.com/>

Carl Auge's Web site <http://carlauge.NeoImages.net>

Swarm Gallery <http://swarmgallery.com/>

Vaughn Bell's Web site <http://www.vaughnbell.net/>

Josh Keyes's Web site <http://www.joshkeyes.com/>

The following KQED Spark documentaries and educator guides may be used for compare/contrast purposes and to extend learning about contemporary art:

KQED Spark documentary about environmental artists [Jim Denevan and Chris Drury](#).

KQED Spark documentary about artist and environmental engineer [Natalie Jeremijenko](#).

KQED Spark documentary about painter [Christopher Brown](#).

KQED Spark documentary about painter [Mike Henderson](#).

Visit the KQED Spark Web site for additional Educator Guides and videos about local contemporary artists at www.KQED.org/spark. Also available are educator resources on media literacy and production, using video in the classroom, standards-based arts instruction, program development, and more. For more information about KQED's Arts Education resources, send an email to ArtsEd@KQED.org or call 800.723.3566.

Direct Links

- Gallery Crawl: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/gallerycrawl/>
- KQED "Media Tips" Tool: <http://www.kqed.org/assets/pdf/arts/programs/spark/video.pdf>
- Chris Drury Spark video <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4291>
- Jim Denevan Spark video <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4472>
- Natalie Jeremijenko Spark video <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=4691>
- Christopher Brown Spark video <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=7680>
- Mike Henderson Spark video <http://www.kqed.org/arts/programs/spark/profile.jsp?essid=17526>
- Google Map, Rowan Morrison Gallery
http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=330+40th+Street++Oakland,+California,+94609&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=33.764224,55.546875&ie=UTF8&ll=37.829633,-122.257233&spn=0.00822,0.013561&z=16&iwloc=A
- Google Map, Swarm Gallery
http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=swarm+gallery+oakland&sll=37.829633,-122.257233&sspn=0.00822,0.013561&g=330+40th+Street++Oakland,+California,+94609&ie=UTF8&ll=37.82226,-122.278862&spn=0.122309,0.21183&z=12&iwloc=A