

## Educator Guide

In April 2008, Gallery Crawl visited Bedford Gallery in Walnut Creek, California to see **The Art of Diorama**, an exhibition of artwork by mostly California artists that falls under the category of diorama. This guide provides resources for educators to support the utilization of this online virtual visit to the gallery to teach about **The Art of Diorama**. The Gallery Crawl video can be found at [www.KQED.org/gallerycrawl](http://www.KQED.org/gallerycrawl). Information about taking your students to the gallery can be found at the bottom of this guide.

**Exhibit** *The Art of Diorama*

**Location** Bedford Gallery, Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA [Google Map](#)

**Grades** K - 12

**Standards Addressed** Artistic Perception, Creative Expression, Aesthetic Valuing

### The Exhibit

According to Bedford Gallery Curator of Exhibitions, Carrie Lederer,\* “many artists in **The Art of Diorama** [exhibition] revealed that at a very early age they were captivated by the enchanting allure of the diorama—from a cherished dollhouse or prized train set, to visits to a natural history museum. Humans have an instinctual need to re-create our lives, our environment, our dreams—combining fact and fiction, art and science—and the diorama is a perfect playing field at any age. When peering into the magical realm of a diorama, time stops, sounds diminish, and the viewer enters a surreal record of reality.”

“The Bedford’s exhibition **The Art of Diorama**, presents twenty-two artists who transform an enclosed area—ranging in size from a matchbox to a small room—using sculpture, painting, video, and photography. The artists construct life-like environments or habitats blending real and imagined elements to capture a single and arrested moment in time. **The Art of Diorama** is a diverse show that will encourage people to interact with and in their surroundings, or simply peer into captivating miniature worlds.”

### The Art Form

In her notes about the exhibition, Lederer continues, “Our passionate and unlimited attraction to the diorama can be witnessed across many cultures and dating back to the ancient times. In 2,500 B.C, small models of environments constructed with wood and delicately painted, were found in Egyptian tombs, and the custom of creating ornate Christmas crèches were common in the Middle Ages. The word “diorama” is derived from the Greek *dia* (through) and *horama* (to see), and was originally coined by the father of modern photography, Louis Daguerre in 1822. The Daguerre dioramas were a new and grand theatrical form of entertainment for audiences in Paris and London. Around the same time, Carl Akeley was creating what is considered to be the first natural history diorama. Today, the tradition and practice continue with dioramas in our natural history museums, in *Day of the Dead* altars, at Disneyland’s *Small World*, and even in the virtual world of *Sim City*.”

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\* Text courtesy Bedford Gallery staff: Curator of Exhibitions Carrie Lederer, Community Arts Specialist Anne Trinca, Programs Assistants Melanie Chang and Erik Mortenson, and Bedford Gallery Intern Sara Schumacher.

## Teaching with Gallery Crawl

Using video in the classroom can breathe life and meaning into almost 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 faraway places and promotes critical viewing skills and media awareness. For more information about using media in the classroom download KQED's [Media Matters](#) 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 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 it on their own or in groups. 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 the Bedford Gallery.

- ❖ Take a closer look at one of the dioramas featured in the exhibition – either in person, or by pausing the Gallery Crawl video on one of the images. \*\*Discuss the idea of storytelling and ask questions – What is going on here? Tell me a story about this diorama. Make your self small and enter into this diorama where would you like to be? What would you be doing? What sounds would you hear? Is there someplace you wouldn't like to be? What would happen if this scene came to life?
- ❖ Invite students to research one of the twenty-two artists represented in **The Art of the Diorama** and present their findings to the class. Ask students to create a work of art inspired by the artist they've chosen to research, and ask them to discuss it in their presentation. A list of artists can be found on the Bedford Gallery's Web site.
- ❖ \*\*Have students collect "found objects" that represent the bedroom, classroom, or environment of their dreams. Collect shoeboxes, fabric scraps, toy figurines, and other small objects for students to use in their creations. Make sure glue, scissors, and tape are also available. Alternatively, invite students to think "outside of the box" and find inspiration in the artwork featured in the Gallery Crawl video – their diorama could take the form of a photograph, assemblage, or sculpture.
- ❖ After students create their own dioramas, invite them to create a gallery exhibition in the classroom. Form groups and assign one aspect of the exhibition to each group – assignments could include exhibition layout, school-wide promotion for the exhibition, and creation of exhibition notes with information about each artist. If video equipment is available, take this exercise further by having students create their own version of a Gallery Crawl video.

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\*\* Activities adapted from Bedford Gallery student workshop notes developed by Susan W. Becker

## Visiting the Gallery

The Bedford Gallery is located within the Leshner Arts Center in downtown Walnut Creek, CA. The **Art of the Diorama** exhibit will be on view through June 8, 2008. For gallery hours and public transportation information, visit [www.bedfordgallery.org](http://www.bedfordgallery.org).

If possible, take your students on a field trip to Bedford Gallery and participate in a school tour led by the gallery's docents. Students will have the opportunity to create their own dioramas in a workshop led by an artist or docent. Contact the gallery for more information.

## Resources to extend learning about the exhibit and featured artists

Bedford Gallery [www.bedfordgallery.org](http://www.bedfordgallery.org)

The gallery's Web site includes a listing of artists featured in **The Art of the Diorama**. The gallery also has an extensive Docent Notes document available that includes a summary of each artist, and more information about the history of diorama. It can be purchased for \$7.

KQED Spark documentary about artist [Tracey Snelling](#)  
Snelling's work is included in **The Art of the Diorama**.

KQED Spark documentary about artist Stephanie Syjuco  
Stephanie Syjuco's work is included in **The Art of the Diorama**. This short documentary will be available for streaming online in May, 2008 and will include an Educator Guide.

KQED Arts & Culture review of diorama artist [Joseph Cornell](#)'s 2007 exhibition at [SFMOMA](#).  
Joseph Cornell is one of the best-known American artists working in the form of assemblage and diorama.

KQED Arts & Culture review of a 2007 [Jeremy Mora](#) exhibition at Mark Wolfe Contemporary Art gallery.  
Jeremy Mora's work is featured in **The Art of the Diorama**.

Visit the KQED Spark Web site for additional Educator Guides and videos about local contemporary artists at [www.KQED.org/spark](http://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](mailto:ArtsEd@KQED.org) or call 800.723.3566.

### Direct Links

- Gallery Crawl: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/gallerycrawl/>
- KQED "Media Matters" Tool: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/spark/education/video.pdf>
- Tracey Snelling Video: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/people/spark/profile.jsp?id=5840>
- Joseph Cornell Review: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/visualarts/index.jsp?id=20183>
- Jeremy Mora Review: <http://www.kqed.org/arts/visualarts/index.jsp?id=14224>
- Google Map to Bedford Gallery:  
<http://maps.google.com/maps?f=q&hl=en&geocode=&q=1601+Civic+Drive,+Walnut+Creek,+CA+94596&jsv=107&sl=37.0625,-95.677068&ssp=31.646818,59.414063&ie=UTF8&ll=37.902389,-122.063019&spn=0.007687,0.014505&z=16&iwloc=addr>
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: <http://www.sfmoma.org>