

Educator Guide

In June 2011, Gallery Crawl headed to Ever Gold Gallery in San Francisco to talk with Aaron Terry about his solo exhibition, *Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life*. 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.KOED.org/gallerycrawl. Information about taking your students to the galleries can be found at the bottom of this guide.

Exhibition *Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life*

Location Ever Gold Gallery, 441 O'Farrell St. San Francisco, California 94102 [Google Map](#)

Grades 6 - 12

Standards Addressed Artistic Perception, Creative Expression, Aesthetic Valuing

*** NOTE: Preview Gallery Crawl video content before sharing it with your students.**

The Exhibition

In this episode of Gallery Crawl, Aaron Terry discusses his solo exhibition, **Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life**. Terry combines photography, installation, and costume to document the life of his alter-ego, the Urban Yeti, a creature that has its origins in Terry's childhood in rural Upstate New York.

By donning his hand-sewn costumes and inserting his alter-ego into both urban and natural settings, Terry explores his own mixed feelings about urban life and experiments with the creation of myth and collective storytelling. Each photograph evokes a different side of the Yeti's interaction with society, whether on the rooftops of San Francisco or in secluded woodlands. The show also features the costumes themselves and a felt-and-wood structure with smaller Yetis cavorting in a jungle cave.

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. 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 Ever Gold Gallery.

➤ Discover Your Alter Ego

Like installation artist Aaron Terry, many artists invent alter egos or alternative identities as part of the artistic process. Artists may instill their alter egos with hopes, dreams, concerns, questions or fears that they might want to personally address. In the exhibition *Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life*, Aaron Terry combines photography, costumes and installation to record and document the life of his alter ego, the Urban Yetti, which Terry links back to his upbringing in rural upstate New York.

Invite students to discover, create and sculpt their own alter ego characters. By collecting and using found and recycled materials such as newspaper, shredded paper, plastic wrap, cardboard boxes and tubes, packaging tape, fabric, etc., students can design and build their own alter ego characters. Encourage discussion prior to the art making process by asking the following questions:

- Imagine you could be anyone or anything. Who or what would it be?
- Where would you live?
- Where would you go?
- What would you eat?
- What time of day would you sleep?
- How would you behave or act? Would you be shy, outgoing, confident, afraid, withdrawn, etc.?
- Would you follow the rules or would you misbehave?
- What language would you speak and what would it sound like?
- Would you be a social or would you prefer to be alone?
- Do your alter ego and your everyday self share characteristics?

When students have an understanding of their alter ego character, invite them to sketch their ideas. Remind them to consider size, posture (if their character is standing, sitting, squatting), and details such as skin, fur, clothing, etc. Ask them to outline what materials they will use for the characteristics of their alter ego. For example, what will they use to build the body, arms, fingers, etc. Remind them to include a name for their alter ego.

Next, begin the building and sculpting process. Invite students to gather their materials and start by building the main structure or foundation. The sculpting process may take several hours and can be simplified and shortened for younger students. When the alter ego sculptures are complete, encourage students to add details with fabric, fur, paint or other miscellaneous mixed media/found items.

To extend learning, find a location to install the alter ego characters. This could be on school grounds or in a common area such as a cafeteria, hall or lawn. For older students, consider displaying the installation in a nearby park. Feature the characters in activities that they

would normally do in that location, and how they might act or behave. Finally, invite students to document the characters through photography or video, and capture the interactions that may happen with spectators and onlookers.

➤ **Create a Double Portrait**

Invite students to create two self portraits, one as they are, and the other as their alter ego. Encourage discussion about who your alter ego might be. What distinguishes it from your everyday self? What does it look like and what does it do? Encourage students to take risks and be creative! Using photography, painting or drawing, first create your everyday character and then, using the same materials, your alter ego character.

Display your alter ego characters in the classroom and discuss them with the class. Leave space next to the art for students to later post their everyday identity portraits. Invite classmates to guess the identity of the alter ego portraits by placing a name below the art. After students have guessed the identities, ask students to post the everyday portraits next to their alter ego portraits. Compare and discuss the differences and similarities.

Encourage reflection by asking students to write about their alter ego in a journal or notebook. They should create an explanation of their alter ego as if they were describing it to a friend. Ask the following questions:

- How is it similar or different from you?
- Does your alter ego represent characteristics that you regard as private or public?
- Does it possess characteristics that you hope to achieve someday?
- How does it tell your story or complete your character?

➤ **Pictures Tell a Story**

In the exhibition, *Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life*, Aaron Terry transforms a gallery space into an installation where viewers become part of a massive common story. With costumes, photography and alter ego development, Terry encourages us to position ourselves within the context of the story, sharing thoughts and ideas of our own as they relate to the Urban Yeti myth. The following activity will encourage students to create and build a story as a group based on inspiration from one image.

Gather 15 to 20 photographs, using original photos or images from magazines or newspapers. Divide the class into groups of 3 to 4 students, giving each group up to 4 pictures. Ask them to select one photo that will provide inspiration to begin a mythical story.

Looking at the photo, invite each group to construct the first paragraph of the story through group discussion and suggestion. When all the first paragraphs are complete, send the story to another group which reads the first paragraph and adds another. The process is repeated until the story is complete, and all of the groups have contributed. All of the groups will then gather to hear the stories read out loud by one student in each group. After reading the stories, invite students to view the photograph that inspired them. Encourage a discussion about the relationship between the image, story and their connection to the myth.

➤ **Surprise Your Classmates**

Invite students to bring to class something that is personal to them, but is not known to others. The item should be something that suggests another side of them, therefore, suggesting an alter ego character.

➤ **Creating Personal Stories**

Invite students to create a mythological story! Start by assigning animal characters that represent people they know. This can include family members, friends, acquaintances, teachers, people in their community, etc. This process can remain private. No one but the student needs to know which animal represents a particular person. Ask students to write a short story starring their animal characters. Encourage students to be creative, infusing their characters with supernatural powers, bizarre behaviors or unexplainable actions.

When the writing is complete, invite students to read and discuss the stories as a group. To extend learning, encourage students to add illustrations to their stories using colored pencils, crayons, or markers.

Visiting the Gallery

The *Resistance to the Indignities of Modern Life* exhibition is on view at Ever Gold Gallery in San Francisco, CA. The exhibition will be on view through June 30, 2011. For gallery hours, location and public transportation, visit the gallery Web site listed below.

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

Ever Gold Gallery Web site

<http://evergoldgallery.com/>

Aaron Terry Web site

<http://www.aaroneliahterry.com/>

Aaron Terry Web site about the Urban Yeti

<http://www.urbanyetti.com/>

Alter Ego article in Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alter_ego

Yeti article in Wikipedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yeti>



a monthly video of the coolest art
in northern california's hottest galleries

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education network

The following KQED Spark & Gallery Crawl documentaries and educator's guides may be used for compare/contrast purposes, and to extend learning about contemporary art:

KQED Spark documentary and educator guide about artist [Caleb Duarte](#)

KQED Spark documentary and educator guide about artist [Natalie Jeremijenko](#)

KQED Gallery Crawl video and educator guide: [The Gleaners](#)

KQED Gallery Crawl video and educator guide: [Landscaping](#)

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.