CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS: ART RESEARCH & EXPLORATION

After this lesson you will be able to:
• Identify ways artists work within limits and constraints to create artworks

Suggested Materials:
• sketchbook, paper, pencil or any other material you like to use for sketching and taking notes

THINK
What do you know already? Answer the following questions and prompts to begin exploring ideas.
• A constraint is defined as a limitation or restriction. List three examples of constraints.
• What are the challenges and advantages of working on art outside of art class?
• Describe a time that you have had to work within limits to come up with a creative solution.

LEARN
How do artists find opportunities within limitations? Study works by the following artists and answer these reflection questions:
• Explain this quote by Phil Hansen in your own words: “We need to first be limited in order to become limitless.”
• How would Phil Hansen’s quote relate to the artists featured in this assignment? Use one artist’s work as an example to explain your answer.
• Which of the artworks was most interesting to you? What information in the description of the artwork surprised you?

ARTWORK:

Artist: Jennifer Bartlett
Title: In the Garden
Media: drawing, painting, and mixed media
Date: 1979-1980
Description: *In the Garden* is a series of over 200 drawings in many different materials that feature the same subject: a single view of the garden behind a villa in France where Bartlett stayed for several months. “By working with a limited motif, producing one or two drawings a day, she freed her energies for a relentless and fascinating exploration of media, forms and compositional effects.” NY Times, 6/1981
ARTWORK:

**Artwork 1:**
- **Artist:** Christoph Neiman
- **Title:** Abstract Sunday
- **Media:** everyday object and drawing
- **Date:** 2016
- **Description:** “For years, Christoph Niemann spent every Sunday conducting a drawing experiment. The artist would sit down with a blank piece of paper and a random, everyday object. He never knew what he was going to draw—only that his drawing would include whatever object was in front of him. And so he would turn pennies into scoops of ice cream. Or bananas into horse legs. Or highlighters into light sabers. The visual puns… are a reminder that even the brightest creative minds face challenges when making consistently great work.” – Wired Magazine, 12/2016

**Artwork 2:**
- **Artist:** Yeesookyung
- **Title:** The Moon and The Other Side of the Moon
- **Media:** glue, broken pottery, gold paint
- **Date:** 2012 and 2014
- **Description:** “The Translated Vase series consists of sculptures reconstructed from discarded ceramic fragments. Skillful ceramic masters reproduce traditional Korean ceramics, and the vases with minor defects are destroyed to keep the rarity and value of the surviving masterpieces. I piece these destroyed pots back together in the manner of three-dimensional jigsaw puzzles, covering the cracks in gold. From the moment of destruction, I obtain a chance to intervene and fabricate new narratives with my own translation.”

**TRY**

*Complete one of the following artist exploration activities to explore media and techniques*

- Brainstorm how the artworks you have studied could inspire your own creation. List, sketch, or photograph your ideas answering these questions:
  - Look at Yeesookyung’s work. What is something broken or that you could take apart and reassemble in a new way?
  - Look at Christoph Neimann’s work. What are some everyday objects in your house that would be transformed with the addition of a few details?
  - Look at Jennifer Bartlett’s work. Describe a view from a window or into a room that you see every day. In what ways would this view change in 24 hours? In a week? In a month?

**SHOW**

*Present the ideas you have completed in the previous artist exploration activities by choosing one of these methods:*

- A combination of sketches and notes in your journal
- A PowerPoint of images and captions
- A recorded video of your discoveries and responses