

Before you begin...

Make a list of the words that come to mind when you think of art. Afterwards, take a look at your list. Now do the same thing, only this time, make a list of the words that come to mind when you think of artists. What sort of list did you create?

Now consider this...

Too often, art is considered only for its decorative quality. Some people write it off as a luxury of life.

Green is a show that attempts to counter this perspective. Art *can* have an impact, if people let it, but it is left to the responsibility and open-mindedness of both the artist and the viewer. The work you will see as you walk through the gallery seeks to do this. It's subject? The environment.



A Little Bit of Art History...

Andy Goldsworthy was born in England in 1956. Since the 1970s he has been using found objects from nature to create installations as well as site specific works of art. To the left is his *Stone River*, constructed on the campus of Stanford University in 2001. In the end, his site specific works are left to hold their own against the whims of nature.

Think About It...

An artist's choice of materials is a part of their visual language. What is Goldsworthy saying by using the materials he does? What do you think Goldsworthy is attempting to communicate to his audience? Sometimes it's easier to start by asking yourself smaller questions. Investigate the materials themselves. Are they hard or soft? Are they big or small? Are they strong or weak?

Then begin to ask yourself broader questions. Are his materials easily affected by outside forces? Let your questions lead you to the content, the meaning, of the work.

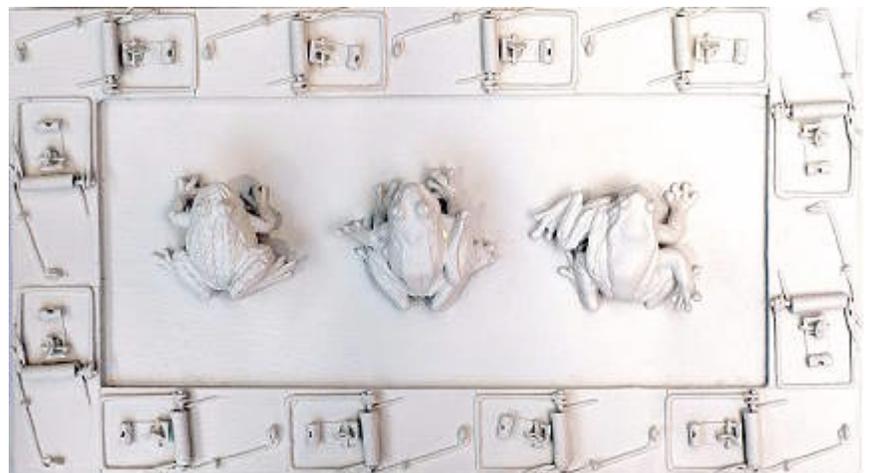
Investigate...

Take a look at Susan Kirby's *White Rats*. Make a list of the things you notice about the piece. What do you notice about the frogs?

Susan Kirby is using frogs as her subject matter for a reason. All of her choices are apart of her visual language. Why do you think she chose to use frogs? Think about it. Make a list of the words that come to mind when you think of frogs.

After making your list, look it over. Did you think about where frogs live?

Don't forget to consider every part of the work. Why do you think she incorporates traps along the frame of her piece?



What does it mean?

If it helps, read Susan Kirby's statement, then think about it again! We are all a part of the earth and the environment. In some way then, we all directly or indirectly influence each other! How are humans changing the environment? What does this mean for the creatures we share it with?

Susan Kirby says that she sees the deformities of amphibians as a warning that isn't getting much attention. What is she trying to tell us about the future and about ourselves?



Investigate...

Take a look at Carrie Dickason's *Drift*. What grabs your attention first? How does your eye move across the piece? Where does it seem to be coming from? When looking at art, ask yourself these types of questions! Be a conscious viewer!

Compare this piece to the other pieces in the gallery. This is one of the few pieces that is not contained by the four boundaries of a frame or a square format. Why do you think this might be significant?

What does it mean?

Does the sight of this piece remind you of anything? On one level, Dickason specifically makes a reference to water and its movement. How does her use of this medium work to recreate the experience of nature and water? What is the importance of the use of water itself?

Make a list of the words that come to mind when you think of water, then look over it. What type of words did your list include? Did you consider the nature of water itself?

On another level, the context of the piece creates a meaning of its own. The fact that this piece is not bound by a frame or square changes the way it interacts with the space around it. Think about it! This means that the space between and around the materials is just as important to the piece as the materials themselves!

There must be something significant about the way the space around this piece, including the walls, light, and floor, work to create the piece. What might this mean in the context of the artist's message? Think about other works that you have seen as you have walked around. Think about the context of the show.

Investigate...

Take a look at David Edgar's *Rainbow-Headed-Handletail*. Make a list of the things you notice about the piece.

David Edgar is using a recycled detergent bottle as his medium. Art is a language! It just uses a different vocabulary. What is David Edgar trying to say?

What does it mean?

Break it down. What has Edgar done by using a recyclable detergent bottle to make this sculpture? Where would the detergent bottle have gone if he had not made this sculpture? How does the choice in medium create meaning? It just goes to show you the possibilities that come with art!

Before you leave this piece, also consider the other reasons the detergent bottle may have been used. Consider the idea of a plastic fish. Maybe it will help to think back to what we talked about in Susan Kirby's piece. Edgar has changed the nature of the fish. How have humans changed the nature of their environment?

