

# Prisoner Express

## Art & Music Packet Spring 2026

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### Introduction

Welcome to the Spring '26 Art and Music packet. I wonder how you experience the spring season in your current residence. Some of you rarely see the outdoors. There is a deep change in the everyday experience of life after a long cold winter. Every day is different – plants flower and trees start growing leaves. The hillsides shimmer in various shades of green changing before our eyes. Birds, insects, reptiles, and mammals are reproducing and on the move. All these changes can inspire people to reflect and create. I would be interested to know if prison life can completely dull the experience of spring, and if not how signs of spring show up for you. More daylight and warmer days are the obvious signs of spring. How else does it show up in your perceptions?

This is Gary. I have asked a few PE volunteers and student staff to put together some materials to educate and inspire the artist that lives within us all. Art is one way we can express our experience without words, perhaps without logical thinking. It can portray feelings through an image. A picture is worth 1,000 words. Pictures tell stories, yet without words. Pictures create feelings and feelings create stories, and stories are made up of words. Perhaps reading some of the writings in this packet will help you draw a picture that tells a story without words.

Yet again stories made of words can cause us to feel emotions and our emotions can lead us to drawing pictures. In this issue there is a songwriting component that you can use to reverse engineer the previous assignment and it will give you a chance to write a song to create a

mood or emotion. Perhaps in a future issue people can take images and use them to write songs and others can read lyrics of the songs you write and draw a picture from the song.

At the heart of Prisoner Express is the belief in the healing power of meaningful activity. It is our goal to provide you with things to do that feel rich, interesting, and take you into a creative world where the drabness of your physical surroundings is obscured by the brilliance cultivated by your creative mind. This is no easy task and I welcome your suggestions on how we do this using art.

Often these packets have a stronger focus on the how-to “practical” aspect of art, but this edition asks you to go inside more rather than providing exercises on perspective or shadows. (Though there is some instructional material within these pages).

The packet begins with our long-time contributor Treacy exploring the power of dreams and how dreams can inspire art in **ARTknows: “Dream I Am.”** Dreams, whether you are an artist or not, whether you are in prison or not, are a dimension of existence we really don't understand. Time is warped in dreams. Anything can happen in dreams. Is it the events or the feelings they create that are the important part of the dream? I love when I can remember a dream. Usually the ones I remember have a disturbing aspect to them. I am not sure what any of it means, but I figure dreams are the way unresolved experiences rise into my awareness. I don't work too much in trying to understand the reason for the stories and images in my dreams, but rather I work more with the feelings the dreams leave me with. Usually themes of loss, frustration, being stuck, seem to be ones that cause me to wake up and be glad it was only a dream. Some folks can have their future revealed through dreams. In this packet, Treacy explores how some well-known artists incorporate the dream world into their art. I am curious to hear your responses to this section. Dreams don't care whether you are in prison or not. They come as they are. No matter our social status, we can

benefit from exploring the messages we are trying to give ourselves through dreams.

After Treacy, the packet moves to the **Art Beyond Cornell (ABC) Newsletter**. Art Beyond Cornell (ABC) is a group of students, not necessarily art students, who are interested in turning their focus outside of campus life to explore art and creativity in the world. I am glad they have chosen to work with PE and all of you. As they mention, many of the group will come by the library to look at the art you submit, and they have organized shows of art received by Prisoner Express. They also contribute to this packet by assembling a wide sampling of art history, news, and instruction to help expand your art world horizon. If you have any suggestions on how the ABC club could best provide you with valuable instruction, let me know and I will pass it on to the club.

Amy, a student employee of Durland Alternatives Library and Prisoner Express, has supplied two contributions to the packet. The first is a **PE Bulletin Board Update**. She has been updating our bulletin board/story wall outside the library. It is composed of your art, journal entries, poetry, and letters of appreciation for the work of our volunteers. Often people walking through the halls of our building stop to read your letters and explore your art. We are constantly updating the wall (4ft wide by 16ft long), so that current writers and artists are on display, yet we also keep some pieces up for extended periods of time. It is a curated ever-changing exhibit reflecting the ways in which you all participate in our programming.

Amy also loves singing and songwriting. She has taken some classic songs and used them to show you samples of songwriting styles. Of course it is a much more detailed study than we can provide in a few pages. The point though is not for you to be an expert in songwriting styles, but rather to give you a little supportive push to write some lyrics of your own. Back to a picture being worth a thousand words. Now it is your time to use those words to paint a picture. Amy plans to be in town this summer and will help us keep PE moving along during the months when most of our volunteers and student staff are gone. You can make her summer all the better by sharing some of the lyrics you are inspired to pen after reading her **Introduction to Songwriting**.

In our previous Arts packet we invited zine submissions from all of you. We were impressed by many of the zines we received. Here are the

thoughts from the organizer of the Zine Project: *My name is Naomi and I'm one of the people behind the Prisoner Zine Project (some of you may know me as a former coordinator of the art program)! I wanted to extend a huge thank you to everyone who has sent a zine for the collection here at the library. We're slowly working out the best way to sort, store, and share them -- so thanks also for your patience as we figure out what makes the most sense. I can tell you already that we've received some truly fantastic, thought-provoking, and creative work, as always. It is a delight to see what you all can do. Keep making zines and please stay tuned for what is coming next!*

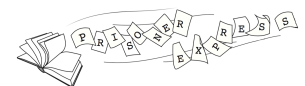
This packet is meant to inspire your creative abilities. Don't worry about being good, rather just start where you are. So much of the packet is assembled using color photos of the art, but we do not have the funds to print in color so we have to share them with you in black and white. Even so, you can still get a sense of the art shown.

I have been involved in this project for 20+ years. Believe me when I tell you that practice leads to improvement. You don't need to be attached to the results when you are starting out. Set aside some amount of time each day to practice art or write a song. Be gentle with yourself. Don't put down your efforts because someone can do it better. None of this is meant to be a contest. It is true that some folks are gifted in ways and they can draw and write well with ease. I am not one of those folks, so I don't know what the genetic component is that lets some folks excel. Sometimes practice can unleash abilities that would be hidden if we didn't work to develop them. I hope you will play around with some of the creative assignments in these pages, and even if you don't share them with us, drop us a line to let us know what you'd like to see covered in future Art packets. Do you want more info on music and songwriting? If yes, what would it look like? Thank you for joining us in this adventure in creativity.

*Gary*

**Durland Alternatives Library**  
**Home of Prisoner Express**

<https://alternativeslibrary.org>



## ARTknows: “Dream I am”

Welcome to Spring 2026 Artknows! This edition will focus on dreams and art. There has been much art created under the influence of dreaming throughout art history. Thinking of how much time we spend sleeping, this is probably a good thing. It is estimated that by the end of a person’s life, most people will have spent 50,000 hours dreaming. That is six years of your life spent among nighttime revelry, dreaming of phantoms that may disturb, delight, and confuse you.



.....”night after night, with calm incuriousness we open the door into that ghostly underworld and hold insane revels with fantastic spectres, weep burning tears for empty griefs, stain our souls with useless crimes, or fly with freezing blood from the grasp of an unnamed dread; and with the morning, saunter serenely back from these wild adventures into the warm precincts of the cheerful day, unmoved, unstartled, and forgetting. “ Such was what Elizabeth Bisland wrote in her book *Dreams and their Mysteries*.

Or else, we are like the Welsh comedian Tommy Cooper who said “*Last night I dreamed I ate a ten-pound marshmallow and when I woke up, my pillow was gone!*”

Carl Jung, the Swiss psychologist, was big on dreaming. He said dreams are “a product of nature that enables us to know the truth about ourselves.” Furthermore, “dreams provide true pictures because our conscious minds do not create them – nor try to control them.”

Giotto – Fresco of St. Francis and “The Dream of Pope Innocent III.” Giotto was an Italian painter living from 1267-1337. He is known for the Giotto chapel which has a series of frescos (paintings that are done directly on the wall using the stucco material mixed with pigment.) “The Dream of Pope Innocent III” shows him dreaming that St. Francis is holding up the church. It represents Pope Innocent in authorizing the Franciscan order of priests, and by doing so, the Pope saved the Catholic Church. This is one of the first paintings ever of a dream.

I have often asked prisoners who attended my art classes in prisons, why they wanted to be in the art class. A frequent answer was, “I want to better myself...” That was the controlled narrative - better suited for the parole board or one’s mom. When I answered, “yea, but really, why?” I usually got a more truthful answer – “I want to make money drawing pictures for others, the guys in the class are the best tattoo artists,” and so on.

Another question I often asked my class was – “Do you ever think of yourself not as an inmate?” The most frequent answer to this was, “When I am sleeping.” Dreams of being elsewhere. Is this what dreams are often about – being somewhere you are not? Do you ever

dream you are exactly where you are sleeping? Or dreaming you are sleeping? No – your dreams always place you doing something else and rarely in the room of sleep.

**Try this:** Instead of writing down possible dreams, create a drawing of the dreams you have. It is a challenge to most artists to make tangible in painting/drawing that which is as elusive as a dream. You can create it as a totally different image, like an image projected on a wall - as in Goya's "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters" (above).

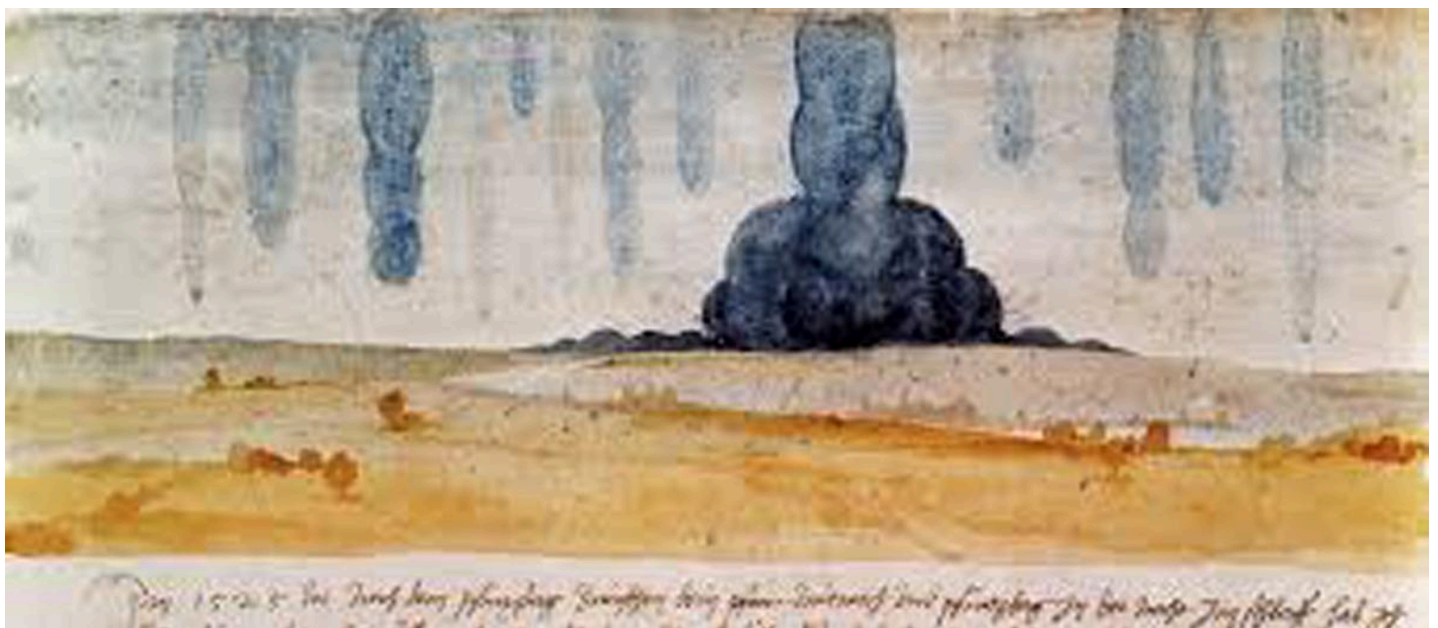


Francisco Goya was a 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish painter and printmaker. He created a series of aquatints (a method of etching) in response to what he saw happening in society – particularly the Spanish Inquisition.

*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* is a literal depiction of the treacherous lengths of human irrationality, and the implications of excessive illogicality without the counterbalance of reason.

This work is considered, if not direct, a critique of the Spanish Inquisition, superstition, and the oppressive, irrational society of late 18th-century Spain.

Earlier than Goya is Albrecht Durer and his work "Dream Vision" (below). Durer is considered one of the first artists to paint his own dream. In this piece, Durer used watercolor to capture a terrifying, apocalyptic landscape that he saw in his dream. An upside-down nuclear mushroom?

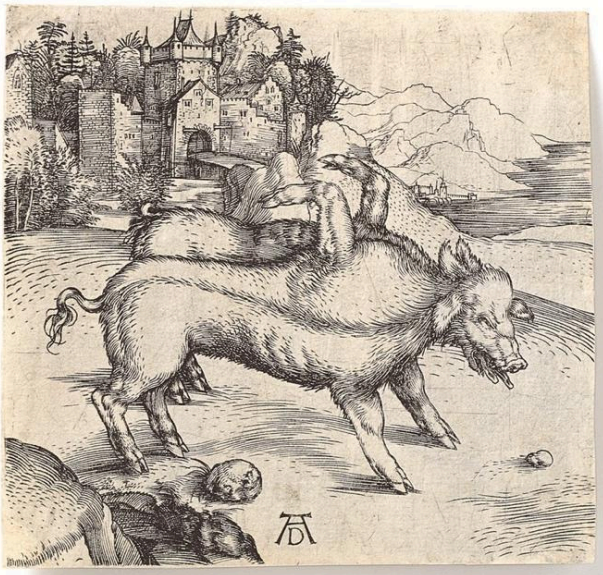


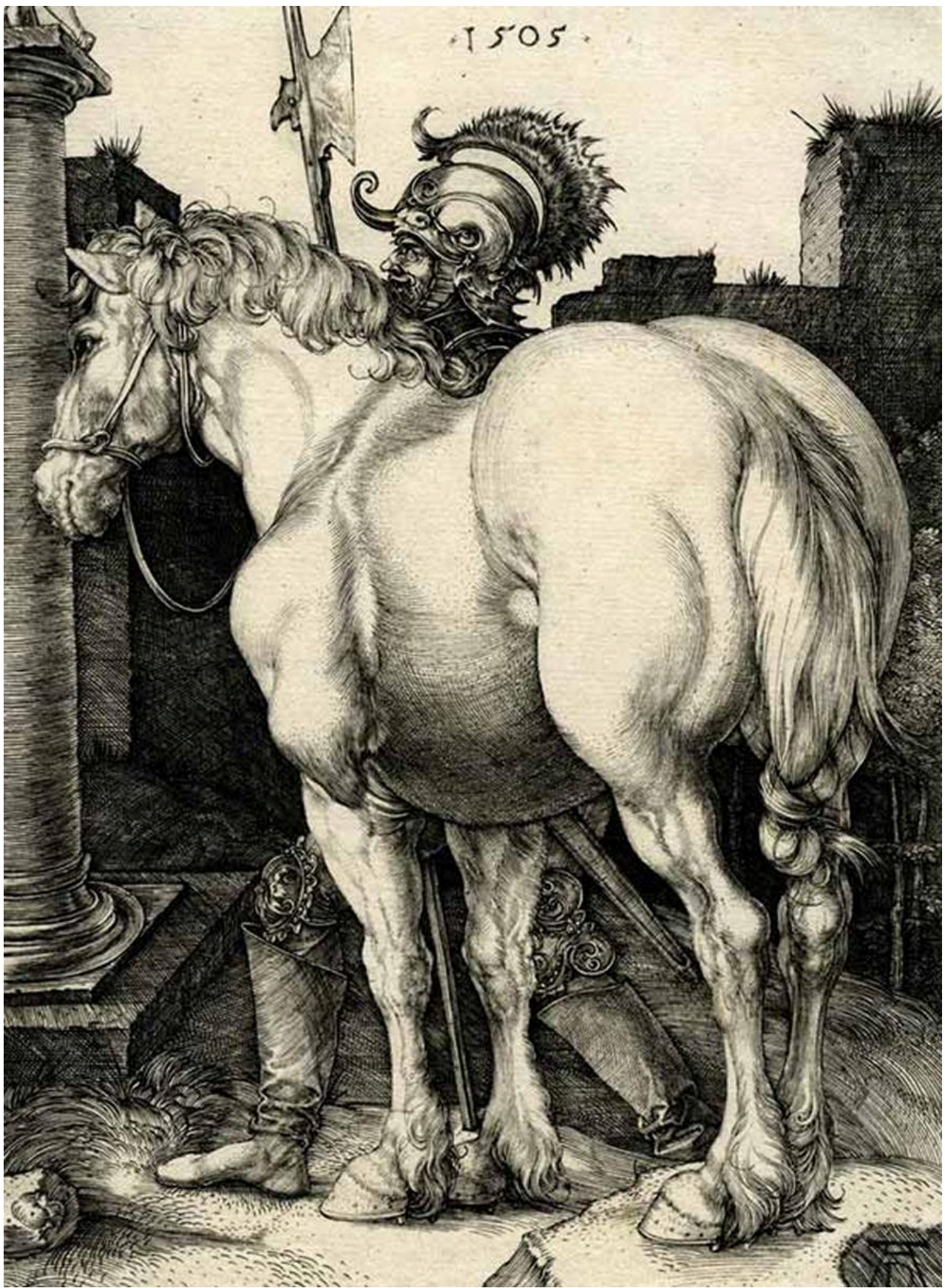
**Francisco Goya:** 1746-1828. As said above, Goya was a Spanish Romantic painter and printmaker. He is considered the most important Spanish artist of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. I particularly like his late period with his Black Paintings. He did these paintings by applying oil on the plaster walls of his house. During this late period Goya was disillusioned by the political and social developments of Spain and lived in near isolation. His most constant companion was a young maid who was probably his lover.



“Witches’ Sabbath” or “The Great He-Goat” are names given to this oil mural by Goya. It depicts a Witches’ Sabbath and evokes themes of violence, intimidation, aging and death. Satan is in the form of a goat in moonlit silhouette sitting over a coven of terrified old witches. This painting is one of the fourteen Black Paintings. This painting is seen by art historians as a satire on the credulity of age, a condemnation of superstition and the witch trials of the Spanish Inquisition. Its themes are related to the earlier etching, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*.

**Albrecht Durer:** 1471-1528. Durer was a gifted and versatile German artist. He was a painter, draftsman, and writer, although his greatest impact on the world is as a printmaker. He developed woodcuts and revolutionized printmaking to be seen as an independent medium, making printmaking as important as painting. While not dreams, there is an other-worldliness about Durer’s woodcuts and watercolors:





**Try this:** I posted this image of Durer’s woodcut (above) large enough on the page so that you can use it to practice copying – try developing how he recreates such wonderful forms. That horse is what a drawing teacher would say is “volumetric” – full of volume.

The following painters are not listed chronologically, but are artists that have created works inspired by dreams.



**Alfredo Castañeda** (Mexico City, 1938–2010, Madrid) was one of the most prolific and impactful champions of the Surrealist movement in Latin America and in the later twentieth century. While training as an architect at the National University of Mexico, he studied with Mattias Goeritz, whose work inspired him to expand his art practice to include painting. Castañeda had practiced drawing since childhood, but he was further encouraged by an encounter with René Magritte's work. Marked by introspection, psychological investigation, whimsy, and an acutely self-aware sense of humor, Castañeda's paintings have a magical realist quality and high degree of visual finish. Many scenes feature trompe l'oeil effects that call into question the artist's trustworthiness as a narrator, as what is depicted in the paintings is often at odds with the absurdities of what the artist chooses to represent. Themes of family, self, identity, and journey are all at the forefront of this striking artist's visual vocabulary.

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**Arturo Rivera** (Mexico City, 1945–2020)

Rivera was born in Mexico City in 1945. He studied painting in Mexico City (1963–68) and silk-screen process and photo-silk screen process at the City Lit Art School in London. Another printmaker. He lived for eight years in New York City where he worked as a kitchen helper, construction worker and as a worker in a paint factory to support his painting. In 1979, artist Max Zimmerman saw Rivera's work at the Latin American Institute on Madison Street and invited him to Munich to teach as an assistant teacher. After a year of intensive work and studies he returned to Mexico. In 1982 his work was featured in a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico.



The Sleeping Woman by Arturo Rivera. Graphite and watercolor.

Notice the eye at the top. This eye suggests the inner vision of dreaming.

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**Charles Ephraim Burchfield** (April 9, 1893 – January 10, 1967) was an American painter and visionary artist known for his passionate watercolors of nature scenes and townscapes.

Burchfield was deeply influenced by dreams, the subconscious, and a spiritual connection to nature. He meticulously recorded over a hundred dreams in his voluminous journals, which often served as inspiration for his fantastical, emotive landscapes. His art aimed to make internal emotions—like fear, joy, or awe—and sensory experiences, such as the sound of insects or wind, to make them visible through a unique, symbolic style.

Burchfield often painted nature not as it appeared, but as it felt in his imagination, creating "transcendental experiences" where trees might look menacing or light might seem musical. He sought to express the "inner life" of nature.

**Try this:** take an element of nature - like wind, rain, snow, or trees - and create a drawing that reflects how you feel using imagery of that element.



Memory of a dream – watercolor, Burchfield

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**Frida Kahlo (1907 – 1954)** was a Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits and works inspired by the nature and artifacts of Mexico. The painting below, *The Dream*, also known as *The Bed*, features a skeleton (symbolizing death) wrapped in dynamite above a sleeping woman, mirroring a papier-mâché skeleton Kahlo kept on her own bed canopy. The piece reflects her profound awareness of mortality and physical suffering.

The year it was painted was also marked by her remarriage to Diego Rivera and the assassination of her former lover Leon Trotsky. The painting is noted for its psychological intensity and signature surrealist imagery.

Diego said the Juda skeleton that Frida kept on the canopy of her bed was Frida's lover, but Frida said it's just an amusing reminder of people's mortality. In her painting, both Frida and the skeleton are lying on the bed on their sides with their heads on two pillows. While Frida is sound asleep, the skeleton is awake and watching. Because the skeleton is also wired with explosives, it can go off and explode at any time. On Frida's body, green plants are a symbol of life and rebirth. The background clouds are light and airy and it seems the bed is floating in the sky.



**Jacob Lawrence** (1917 - 2000) was one of the most important artists of the 20th century, widely renowned for his modernist depictions of everyday life as well as epic narratives of African American history and historical figures. Born in 1917 in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Lawrence moved with his family to Harlem in 1930, where he came into contact with some of the greatest artistic and intellectual minds of his generation. In the previous decade, Harlem had experienced the remarkably creative period known as the Harlem Renaissance, and the neighborhood was still the focal point of African-American culture. Before he was twenty years old, Lawrence had developed a powerful, concise style that expressed all of the vibrancy and pathos of the neighborhood and its occupants.

In his painting, *Dream No. 2* Jacob Lawrence was inspired by the women in his Harlem neighborhood. Like his own mother, they worked hard to support their families and survived on very little money. In this painting, a girl rests on a chair in front of two large windows. In one window, a tall elegant lady stands with a bouquet of flowers and in the other, a bride and groom dance and throw confetti. Windows and doorways were focal points of New York's brownstone neighborhoods, creating a link to life on the streets outside. But the bride and groom are clearly in a landscape beyond the city, and in this sense the windows become screens onto which the young woman projects her dreams.





**Javier Silva Meinel** (born 1947, Peru)

A native of Lima, Peru, Javier Silva-Meinel is one of Peru's leading contemporary photographers. Since the 1970s, his work has concentrated on the indigenous populations of Peru's Sierra and Amazon regions. The religious and mystical aspects of their lives, as well as the sacredness of their practices and the role that indigenous culture plays in Peru fascinates him.

"Face with Fish" (above) features an indigenous Shipibo-Conibo woman from Pucallpa. It depicts the woman with silvery fish over her eyes, symbolizing a surreal mythological merger of humans with nature creating a dreamlike relationship. The fish also symbolizes the indigenous dependence upon the eco system of the river for their survival.



**Maggie Taylor** (born 1961, United States) is an artist who works with digital images. She won the Santa Fe Center for Photography's Project Competition in 2004. Her work has been widely exhibited in the United States and Europe and is represented within the permanent collections of several galleries and museums. Her work does not necessarily depict dreams. But because her photos bring together strange elements not connecting to each other in any logical fashion – it is like a dream. You know, those dreams where nothing makes sense? Her photos are very surreal.

Above: "Thinking About the Past" by Maggie Taylor.

**Seiji Togo** (1897 - 1978) was a Japanese painter known for his depiction of the female form. He painted in the western style of oils and developed a Japanese school of surrealism. Surrealism developed in Paris in 1924 by André Breton. This art movement is an intellectual and artistic movement aiming to unlock the unconscious mind by merging dreams with reality. Characterized by illogical, dreamlike imagery, and bizarre scenes. Again, this characterization is like Maggie Taylor's composite photos.

Below: "Surrealistic Stroll" by Seiji Togo.



In the beginning of this ARTknows newsletter, Carl Jung was mentioned, referring to his analytic interest in dreams. Of course, we can't end without a nod to Sigmund Freud, the father of interpreting dreams. Jung and Freud were colleagues, but later became rivals. For Freud, a dream is an ultra-condense collage of thoughts. His theory of dreams makes a crucial distinction between the manifest content – the dream as we remember it – and the latent content or what the dream meant. Freud's aim was to bring out the wishes hidden in the latent content.

(If dreams are like a collage, then how is a zine different from an image like one of Maggie Taylor's?)

One of Freud's most famous patients was Sergei Pankejeff and, in particular, Pankejeff's dream. That dream, "Wolf man's dream," is one of the most famous dreams in the history of psychoanalysis.

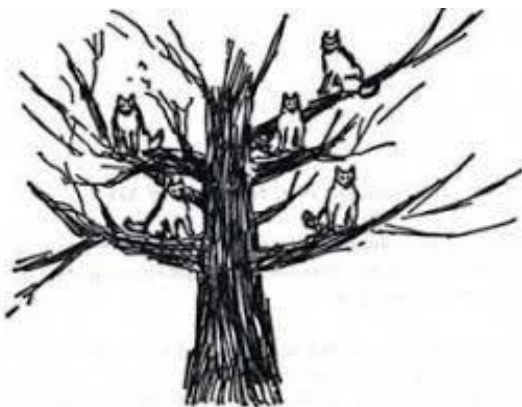
Here is how Pankejeff described it to Freud: "I dreamt that it was night and that I was lying in bed. Suddenly, the window opened of its own accord, and I was terrified to see that some white wolves were sitting on a big walnut tree in front of the window. There were six or seven of them. The wolves were quite white, and had big tails and had their ears pricked like dogs when they pay attention to something. In great terror, evidently of being eaten up by the wolves, I screamed, and woke up."



So how did Freud interpret the dream? Well, of course, he might have said Pankejeff witnessed something in his childhood, perhaps sexual, that terrified him. In analyzing the dream, Freud would have asked Pankejeff a series of questions, specifically about the details of the dream. In imagining yourself as Freud, what questions would you have asked Pankejeff?

Actually, in exploring all the images presented in this ARTknows, what would be your questions for each of the artists?

The initial drawing that Pankejeff made of his dream:



Thank you to all who have written letters in response to these ARTknows newsletters! I hope they give you a glimpse of art history!

Happy dreams! Happy drawing!

Treacy

# Art Beyond Cornell (ABC) Newsletter

Hello Friends,

We hope this newsletter finds you well. We are Art Beyond Cornell (ABC), a student organization at Cornell University whose mission is to create avenues of self-expression, communication, and growth for incarcerated youth. We are an organization of undergraduate students hailing from diverse backgrounds and academic fields of study, united by a shared passion for social justice and prison reform.

ABC members volunteer every week at a youth prison in Tompkins County, New York. Every visit involves doing an art project with participants in the prison. Through these projects, ABC members engage with incarcerated youth and encourage creative self-expression. ABC also volunteers with Prisoner Express by responding to the letters and artwork that participants in the program send back to Ithaca.

Last December, ABC hosted a gallery in collaboration with Prisoner Express at Cornell, where we exhibited your artwork for members of the Ithaca community. Your artwork was incredibly moving, and it resonated strongly with everyone who attended. Visitors also had the opportunity to write responses to your artwork, and many participated. We are incredibly thankful for the art you sent to us to make the gallery such a success. Pictured below and above right are photos from the gallery!



We are incredibly grateful to have this newsletter read by you. Inside, you'll discover a combination of art history, drawing exercises, and creative prompts to inspire artistic engagement.

ABC aims to continue our partnership with Prisoner Express by both responding to your artwork, letters, and poems, as well as creating future art newsletters. We always appreciate feedback about what you liked best and what content you would like to see in future additions of the newsletter.

We're grateful to create alongside you and look forward to your reply. Thank you, and please enjoy!

*Art Beyond Cornell*

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## Bits of Global Art History

### 19th Century American Painters

John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) was an American artist renowned for his portraits of prominent figures of his time, with works that reflect the breadth of the international travels he undertook over the course of his life. Here, he depicts a Spanish dancer in the midst of a performance, accompanied by seated musicians in the background. Characterized by its dynamic movement, muted color palette, and dramatic use of light, the painting is considered to be one of Sargent's masterpieces. The painting is now on view at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, Massachusetts.



John Singer Sargent, *El Jaleo*, 1882, oil on canvas.

*Yosemite Valley* (at right) depicts a view of the Sierra Nevada mountain range in California. Painted by Albert Bierstadt (1830–1902), the work belongs to the Hudson River School of painting, a broader art movement pioneered by a group of American artists who traveled west in the 19th century to survey the land and encourage further westward expansion. Landscapes painted by Hudson River School artists were often idealized and glamorized, with many artists believing that the form of natural American landscape was a direct reflection of God's influence on the continent. This painting is currently exhibited at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum in Ithaca, New York.



Albert Bierstadt, *Yosemite Valley*, 1859, oil on canvas.

*The Gross Clinic* (pictured on the following page) is a work by American realist painter Thomas Eakins (1844–1916) depicting a surgery carried out by Dr. Samuel D. Gross. Dr. Gross is depicted in the midst of lecturing to students at Jefferson Medical College, explaining how to treat a patient with inflammation of the femur bone, a condition called osteomyelitis. Unlike the fantastic depiction of *Yosemite Valley*, Eakins portrayed this scene with techniques associated with the art movement of Realism, avoiding exaggerating the elements of the painting. Eakins includes himself in the portrait, sitting in the audience on the right hand side next to the tunnel railing. This painting is currently on view at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Thomas Eakins, *The Gross Clinic*, 1875, oil on canvas.

### Art Prompts:

1. Create a drawing that captures movement and energy, like the dancer Sargent depicted mid-performance in *El Jaleo*. Try to use strong contrasts of light and dark to emphasize the motion of the scene, just like Sargent.
2. Draw a landscape that feels grand and dramatic, just like Bierdstadt. Try to focus on scale by including large natural elements (e.g., mountains, cliffs, sky) and something small (e.g., a person, animal, or tree).
3. Draw a scene that depicts an important moment from your life. Try arranging the figures of your scene so that the central action and event stands out, just like in *The Gross Clinic*.

## Vietnam, Southeast Asia

The Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary is a cluster of ancient temple ruins in central Vietnam that was built by the Champa civilization between the 4th and 13th centuries. The complex is dedicated primarily to Hindu deities, like Shiva. The temples at Mỹ Sơn are constructed mainly of red brick and decorated with gods, mythological scenes, and symbolic patterns. Today, Mỹ Sơn is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in Quảng Nam Province, Vietnam, and it is recognized as one of the most important surviving examples of ancient Southeast Asian temple architecture.



Mỹ Sơn Sanctuary, Cham civilization, c. 4th-13th century, brick and sandstone.

*The Snail Seller* depicts a group of women preparing snails for consumption. This process involved removing the snails from their shells; they were soaked in rice water and water infused with pepper and then cooked with ginger and lemongrass. This painting was made by Nguyễn Phan Chánh (1892-1984), a Vietnamese artist who often painted on silk instead of canvas or paper. Chánh's work often depicted modern native scenes as part of a broader political critique of French colonial rule and Vietnam's struggle for independence. This painting is currently in a private collection.



Nguyễn Phan Chánh, *The Snail Sellers*, c. 1930s, ink and color on silk.

The Kiến Trung Palace is a building located in the Imperial City of Huế in Central Vietnam. It was the residence of the last two emperors of the Nguyễn dynasty. Built in 1913 after a previous demolition in the 19th century, the palace was destroyed again in 1947 during the Indochina Wars. In 2019, restoration of the palace began, and it was rebuilt in 2023 and now open to the public. The palace has a long south-facing side decorated with colorful ceramic details and a mix of Vietnamese and French architectural elements. Each floor has thirteen red window and door openings made from deep red lacquered wood panels.



Kien Trung Palace, Nguyễn Dynasty, early 20th century.

### Art Prompts:

1. Draw an architectural space that is meaningful to you. Think about important things in your life, and add people or objects to the composition that have meaning to you.
2. Draw a scene of everyday life focused on cooking or eating. Try flattening the background using muted colors or simple shapes so the figures and their actions become the focus of the composition, just like in *The Snail Sellers*.
3. Sketch a landscape or a building with two distinct colors. Think about what color combinations appear well together, and what parts of your building or landscape should be represented with these colors.

### Brazil, South America

This sculpture of Isaih (below) is the first of twelve sculptures depicting the apostles. This series of sculptures was created by Brazilian artist Aleijadinho (1738-1814) between 1800 and 1805, and currently adorn the Sanctuary of Bom Jesus de Matosinhos. Isaiah is depicted with a full beard and thick hair, wearing a tunic, and with his right hand pointing to the scroll that appears in his left hand. These figures are representative of Brazil's colonial-era Catholic devotion, with some analysts interpreting the statutes as a call for freedom of Brazilian slaves and independence from Portugal.

Aleijadinho, Isaiah, The Twelve Apostles, 18th century, soapstone.



*Abaporu* is a painting by Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973) that shows a landscape featuring an elongated figure with oversized hands and feet seated beside a small cactus and the sun. The image became one of the most important symbols of the Anthropophagy (Cannibalist) movement in Brazil, which encouraged artists to “consume” European artistic influences and transform them into a uniquely Brazilian art style. The figure’s exaggerated proportions challenged traditional European standards of representation. Today, *Abaporu* is widely regarded as one of the most important works of Brazilian art. The painting is now on view at the Latin American Art Museum of Buenos Aires, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Tarsila do Amaral, *Abaporu*, 1928, oil on canvas.

*Operários* (Workers) is another painting by Brazilian artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973) depicting a sea of faces in front of a factory, with smoke escaping out of the factory’s industrial chimneys. This work is representative of the rapid process of industrialization that occurred in Brazil in the 1920s and 30s, where workers of all ethnicities came from all over Brazil to settle in industrial centers. This work is

a departure from that of Tarsila’s earlier modernist work, with the artist choosing to become a more socially-focused artist, focusing on depicting injustices in early 20th century Brazil. The painting is now on view in the Artistic-Cultural Collection of the Government Palaces of the State of São Paulo, in São Paulo, Brazil.

Tarsila do Amaral, *Operários*, 1933, oil on canvas.



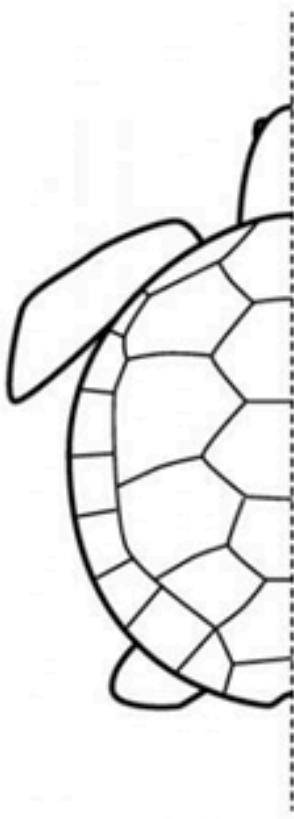
### Art Prompts:

1. Draw a sculptural figure that represents an important idea, belief, or leader from your life. Try to focus on expressive gestures to communicate your message. Think about how posture, clothing, or hand movement can show meaning without words.
2. Draw a human figure in a surreal or exaggerated manner, similar to *Abaporu*. Think about how making parts of the figure larger, smaller, or isolated changes the way the viewer interprets the identity of your figure.
3. Think about a community of people in a shared space and create a drawing that depicts this community. Think about the important aspects of this community, and make sure to encapsulate these aspects in the figures you depict and the landscape or area you choose to place these figures.

# Drawing Games

## Individual Drawing Game

**Symmetry Drawing:** Complete the other side of the drawing, and color in the image.



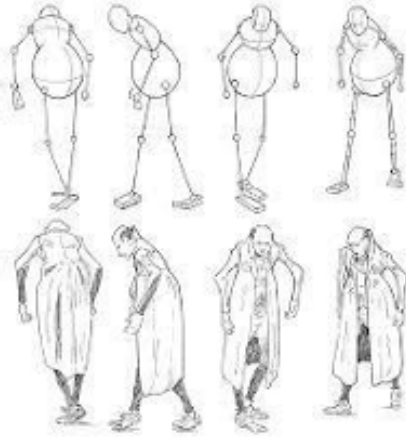
## Group Drawing Game

**Exquisite Corpse:** This art game, invented by artists from the Surrealist Movement, involves dividing a piece of paper into three or four equal parts. Each participant will each take a turn drawing the head, body, and legs of a person. After each turn, make sure to continue drawing a bit of your addition onto the other side of the folded paper, so the next person knows where to start. After all players are finished, unfold the piece of paper to reveal the person you all collectively made!

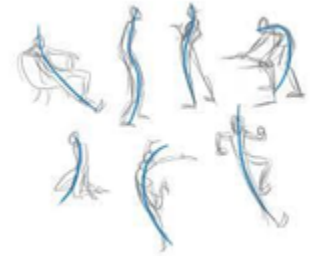


# Comic Book / Dynamic Figure Drawing

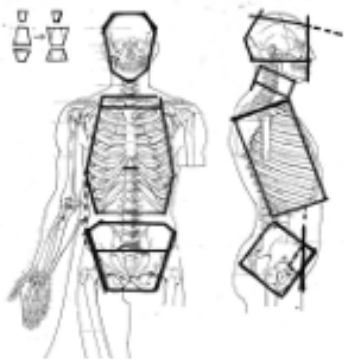
Have you ever wondered how comic book artists are able to draw figures quickly and confidently? This is not an accident of talent alone, but the result of a disciplined understanding of the body's architecture. Artists like Burne Hogarth rely on drawing techniques that break the body down into simple structures and fundamental proportions. In this activity, you will learn the proportional canon and how to use it to sketch the human figure with more confidence and control.



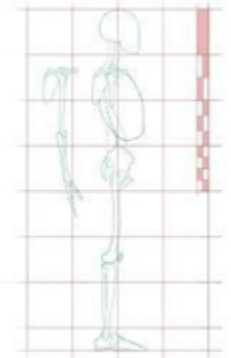
**Step 1:** The Line of Action → represents the spine and the overall motion of the body using a singular line. Think of this as the original gesture that everything else is building on.



**Step 2:** Block 3 Important Masses → block in the head, ribcage, and pelvis, keeping close attention to the tilt of all three.



**Step 3:** Proportions → human bodies follow very similar proportions. The full length of the human body is 7-8 heads long. Major landmarks include the chest, which typically is 2 heads from the top. The pelvis, where the legs begin, starts four heads down. The knees are six heads down, and the bottom of the figure is where the feet are.

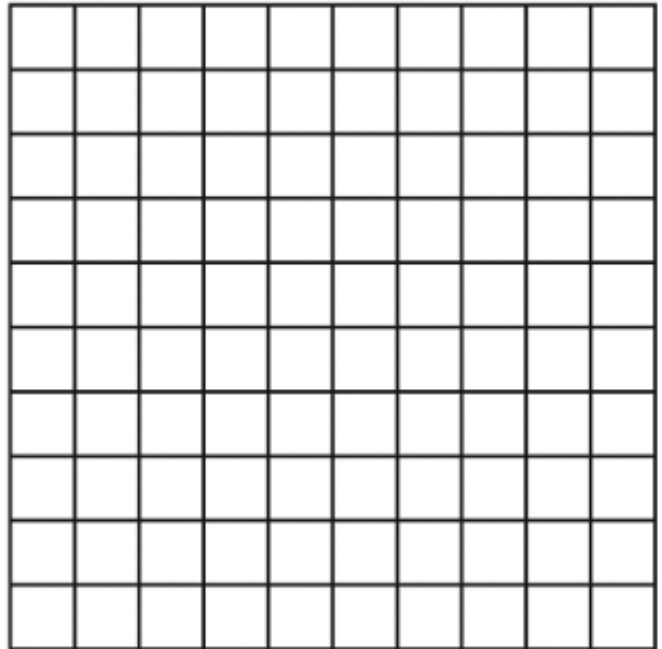
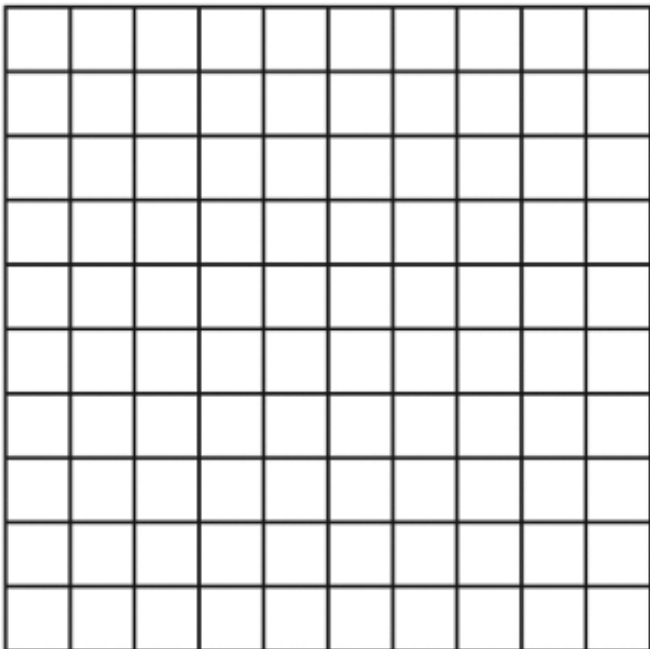
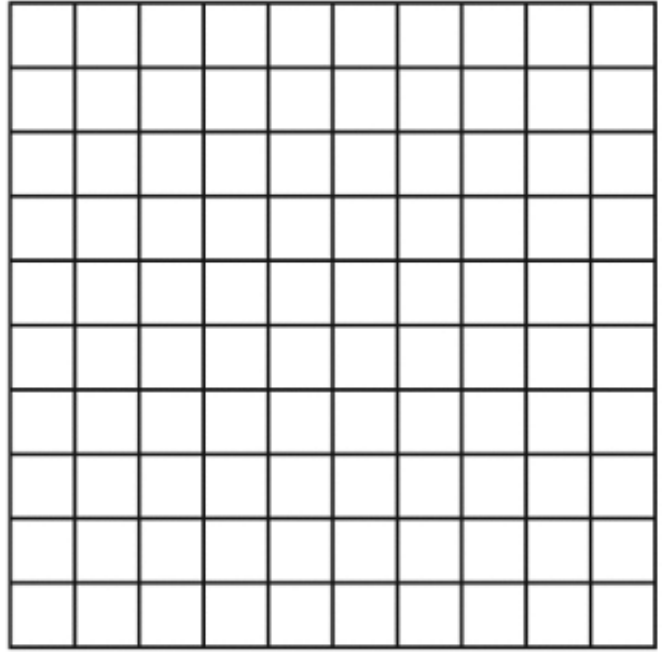
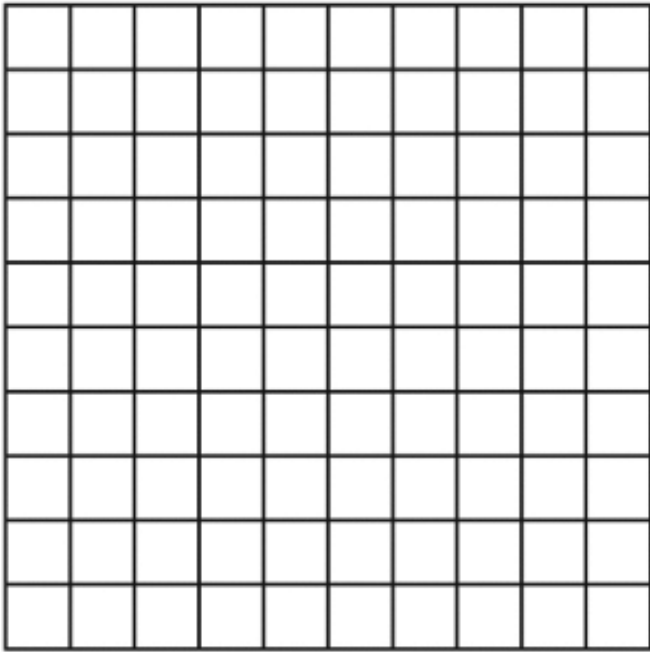


**Step 4:** Limbs → now that your basic structure is done, you can add limbs! The upper arms and thighs can be drawn as cylinders, and the lower limbs can be tapered (getting thinner as they approach the hands and feet). The joints between the upper and low parts of the limbs are represented with circles.



**Step 5:** Secondary details → now that your proportions are in line, you can add details such as muscle and clothing.

## Grids for Practice!



## Incarcerated Artist Spotlight: Fulton Leroy Washington, a.k.a Mr. Wash



Fulton Leroy Washington was arrested in 1997 on a non-violent drug offense. His arrest came as part of the “The War on Drugs,” a campaign to reduce the amount of illegal drug use in the country. The policies led to increased law enforcement, the establishment of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and mandatory minimum sentencing for drug related offenses. The mandatory minimum sentence Washington served was life in prison, however, in 2016, Washington’s sentence was commuted by President Barack Obama.

While serving his life sentence, Washington began drawing and painting. His first subjects were his fellow inmates, depicting them in idyllic landscapes, dressed in civilian clothing. By using a photorealistic technique, Fulton often captured psychological turmoil that his subjects experienced within the incarceration system, often symbolized with the addition of large tear drops to the portraits. Washington also took commissions while incarcerated, often depicting celebrities and politicians. One of the most famous works Washington completed while incarcerated was *Emancipation Proclamation* (2014), originally modeled after Francis Bicknell Carpenter’s work titled *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln* (1864). In this work, Fulton paints himself surrounded by staff from the Obama Administration. Fulton is seated across from Obama himself as the President grants Fulton clemency. This work was predictive, as Obama would grant Fulton clemency two years later.



Fulton Leroy Washington, *Emancipation Proclamation*, 2014, oil on canvas.

Since Fulton’s sentence was commuted, his art has been featured in numerous galleries across the United States, including in the exhibition *Shattered Glass* at Jeffrey Deitch Gallery in Los Angeles and Miami Art Basel 2021, and in the *Black American Portraits* exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). Fulton has also received the Mohn award for public recognition.

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## Incarcerated Artist Spotlight: Gil Batle



Gil Batle served 20 years in California prisons for fraud and forgery. While incarcerated, he served as a tattoo artist for his fellow inmates, which earned him respect and recognition. According to Batle, “The prison ‘artist’ was a commodity.. He was like a magician...Even the toughest convicts were in awe at the artists’ skills...I was that commodity...The ability to draw, my age and the fact that I was good at faking it (toughness) to make it.. Call it performance art... is how I was able to survive

behind those walls.. Nothing I'm proud of...but funny when I think of it now...I did tattoos in the joint." Batle drew every day, often taking commissions from fellow inmates. For example, Batle was requested to draw inmates into family photos in which they were absent.



Gil Batle, *Untitled (Work in Five Parts)*, 2019. Ink and graphite on paper.

After release, he transitioned to other forms of visual art. After moving to the Philippines to rebuild his life, he began to improve his drawing skills. While living there, Batle began experimenting with an unlikely medium: ostrich eggs. Using these eggs, he carves depictions of scenes and people he encountered while in prison on ostrich eggs. His work has been displayed in galleries across the country.

### Reflection Questions

1. Look closely at *Emancipation Proclamation*. What do you notice about the background, and why did the artist include those details? What does it add to the story the artist is conveying?
2. Is there a scene from history that applies to your life?
3. Why do you think Batle chose ostrich eggs as an artistic medium?



4. What scenes would you depict based on your own experiences?

**Project Idea:** Think of scenes or people you've encountered in your daily life to draw. What stands out to you? What sorts of mediums do you have access to?

### Conclusion

This is the end of the ABC Art Newsletter. We hope you enjoyed learning about art history and contemporary artists who were formerly incarcerated, as well as doing the art activities. If you made art inspired by this packet, feel free to share it with us! We would love to see and respond to your work. Again, let us know what historical or contemporary artists and activities you would like to see in the future so we can include them the next time.

Sincerely,

*Art Beyond Cornell*

## PE Bulletin Board Update

Hi everyone, my name is Amy! I work with Gloria to keep the Art program running. Some of you may have gotten a letter from me in the past talking about how much your art means to us at PE, and I wanted to show you all what we've been up to recently!

We have a large display board right outside the library where we post a lot of your art for people to see. I've been updating it and adding art to make it feel more recent. Your art is beautiful and a lot of people stop by to look at it, even if they aren't planning to come into the library. Just like many of you look forward to receiving our art packets, we look forward to getting sent your art. All of it matters, whether it's happy or sad, silly or serious, small or large... We love it all and try to find ways to let it be seen!

If someone at PE has ever brightened up your day, or given you some creative inspiration, please think about sending us more artwork. Your art helps keep the program alive—we use it to make collages, boards, and even send it to local art shows!

Your creativity and love for PE is the best way to keep us going— the more awesome creativity we see from you, the more people want to be involved in helping us share your stories! Everything helps— even telling people around you about what we do makes a positive impact.

Here's a look at some of what I've been working on. These boards are full of your art, writing, and testimonials that have come in! Thank you all for participating over the years—we really appreciate it and would love to hear even more from you. Don't be a stranger, please reach out and get your creative juices flowing!



*Amy #1195*

# Intro to Songwriting

Hi everyone, Amy again! I study music and I love it— it's so helpful when trying to figure out how you're feeling. Every person has a story, so every person has a song. What's yours?

Music keeps me hopeful, and I hope that a lot of you can say the same. The great thing about music is that you could be listening to the exact same song at the exact same time as someone else and they might not think of it the same way you do. Everyone's different, even when what's in front of us is the same.

I'd like to hop right in and try to teach everyone a little bit about music. I hope that with the music packet I'm working on, you all have fun and get to be creative in a way that feels good. The great thing is that music is everywhere! Even if it isn't recorded, you can make a song with just your imagination and some time. I know that coming up with lyrics can be hard, so to help you all start out I want to break down some songs and how they get their stories across. Please feel free to send submissions all throughout the summer— I'm planning on working on this project for a few months!.

Before I start, there are a few terms that I will be using throughout this packet that I'd like to define so everyone can be on the same page, even with no music experience.

- The **melody** of the song is the main music line— it's what you would usually sing along to if the song got stuck in your head! Having a strong melody means that your rhythm and the notes it uses are catchy.
- A **verse** is a part of the song that has the same melody but changing lyrics every time you come across it.
- A **chorus** is similar to a verse, but it can have a different melody and has the same lyrics when you come across it. Sometimes, people say that a song has a "pre-chorus" and/or a "post-chorus." This just means that there is a part of the song that sounds similar to the chorus and keeps its energy going. It is not different enough to be a verse or a bridge, but still not the main chorus itself.
- A **bridge** is not always used in songwriting, but it can help make the song feel smoother by coming in between a verse and a chorus. It is usually somewhere in between the sound of the verse and chorus, and helps lead us through the song!

Many songs we listen to follow a verse-chorus format, which usually just means hopping between the verse of the song and the chorus. Sometimes there are exceptions, but for now we're going to focus on following this layout. There are a lot of different patterns in music that sometimes we don't realize when we listen. When you see the lyrics on the page it can be easier to see them! A great example of this is "I Want to Hold Your Hand" written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney and recorded by The Beatles in 1963. Here are the lyrics:

[Verse 1] Oh, yeah, I'll tell you somethin'  
I think you'll understand  
When I say that somethin'  
I want to hold your hand

[Chorus 1] I want to hold your hand  
I want to hold your hand

[Verse 2] Oh, please, say to me  
You'll let me be your man  
And please, say to me  
You'll let me hold your hand  
You'll let me hold your hand  
I want to hold your hand

[Bridge] And when I touch you  
I feel happy inside  
It's such a feelin' that my love  
I can't hide  
I can't hide  
I can't hide

[Verse 3] Yeah, you got that somethin'  
I think you'll understand  
When I say that somethin'  
I want to hold your hand

[Chorus 2] I want to hold your hand  
I want to hold your hand

[Bridge 2] And when I touch you  
I feel happy inside  
It's such a feelin' that my love  
I can't hide  
I can't hide  
I can't hide

[Verse 4] Yeah, you got that somethin'  
I think you'll understand  
When I feel that somethin'  
I want to hold your hand

[Chorus] I want to hold your hand  
I want to hold your hand  
I want to hold your hand

This song has a pretty repetitive structure! The lyrics are simple and repeat a lot. What makes this song special is that it has a verse which comes up very frequently, and a very short chorus that ties the song together. This is a very popular song—I bet it has something to do with the repeating pattern of lyrics making the song catchy and easy to learn by ear!

Another song that uses verses and choruses in a pretty straight-forward way is “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” by Cyndi Lauper (1983). Originally written in 1979 by Robert Hazard, Cyndi Lauper slightly updated the lyrics to effectively turn the song on its head, highlighting the misogyny present in the previously male-centered lyrics.

Upbeat, energetic, and well-loved, this song is a real treat to think about! In addition to a verse and chorus, it has a refrain and post-chorus. A **refrain** is a line that repeats all throughout the song, usually the title. Having a refrain can be helpful for writing a catchy song because it gets the main point across in a fun way. I’ll put the lyrics below as an example!

[Verse 1] I come home, in the mornin' light  
My mother says, "When you gonna live your life right?"  
Oh momma dear, we're not the fortunate ones

[Refrain] And girls, they wanna have fun  
Oh girls just wanna have fun

[Verse 2] The phone rings, in the middle of the night  
My father yells, "What you gonna do with your life?"  
Oh daddy dear, you know you're still number one

[Refrain] But girls, they wanna have fun  
Oh girls just wanna have

[Chorus] That's all they really want  
Some fun  
When the workin' day is done  
Oh girls, they wanna have fun  
Oh girls just wanna have fun

[Post Chorus] Girls, they want  
Wanna have fun, girls  
Wanna have

[Verse 3] Some boys take a beautiful girl

And hide her away from the rest o' the world  
I wanna be the one to walk in the sun

[Refrain] Oh girls, they wanna have fun  
Oh girls just wanna have

[Chorus] That's all they really want  
Is some fun  
When the workin' day is done  
Oh girls, they wanna have fun  
Oh girls just wanna have fun

[Post-Chorus] Girls, they want  
Wanna have fun, girls  
Wanna have

[Outro] They just want, they just wanna (girls)  
They just want, they just wanna (girls just wanna have fun)  
Oh girls, girls just wanna have fun (Just want, they just wanna)  
They just wanna, they just wanna (girls)  
They just want, they just wanna (girls just wanna have fun)  
Oh girls, girls just wanna have fun  
When the workin' day is done  
When the workin' day is done  
Oh, when the workin' day is done  
Oh, girls, girls just wanna have fun  
Everybody  
Huh, huh  
They just want, they just wanna (girls)  
They just want, they just wanna (girls just wanna have fun)  
Oh, girls, girls just wanna have fun (They just wanna, they just wanna) when the workin'  
When the working day is done (they just want, they just wanna)  
Oh, when the working day is done (girls, girls just wanna have fun)  
Oh girls, girls just wanna have fun

The last song I want to highlight here is “Dynamite” written by David Stewart and Jessica Agombar, recorded and performed by BTS (2020). This song is a lot more recent and shows that verse-chorus form is followed even across genres and decades. K-pop has been a really vibrant community for a long time, but this song was actually BTS’s first no. 1 single on the Billboard Top 100! It’s a feel-good song, and shows that even if the sounds of songs change, we still rely on basic rules to make sure that listeners can have a good time listening to them. Here are the lyrics!

[Intro] So watch me bring the fire  
(everyone knows this song, right?)  
And set the night alight (let's go,  
hey!)

[Verse 1] Shoes on, get up in the morn'  
Cup of milk, let's rock and roll  
(uh-huh, whoo)  
King Kong, kick the drum  
Rolling on like a rolling stone  
(whoa-whoa-whoa-oh)  
Sing-song when I'm walking  
home  
Jump up to the top, LeBron (okay,  
okay)  
Ding-dong, call me on my phone  
Ice tea, and a game of ping-pong  
(let's go, hey, ay)

[Pre-Chorus] This is getting heavy, can you hear  
the bass boom? I'm ready  
(whoo-hoo)  
Life is sweet as honey, yeah, this beat  
cha-ching like money, huh  
Disco overload, I'm into that, I'm  
good to go  
I'm diamond, you know I glow up  
Everybody, let's go

[Chorus] 'Cause I, I, I'm in the stars tonight  
So watch me bring the fire, and set  
the night alight (hey, set the night  
alight)  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite,  
whoa-oh-oh (whoo)

[Verse 2] Bring a friend, join the crowd,  
whoever wanna come along (oh)  
Word up, talk the talk, just move like  
we off the wall (wall)  
Day or night, the sky's alight, so we  
dance to the break of dawn (hey)  
Ladies and gentlemen, I got the  
medicine  
So you should keep ya eyes on the  
ball, huh (oh-ay)

[Pre-Chorus] This is getting heavy, can you hear  
the bass boom? I'm ready  
(whoo-hoo)  
Life is sweet as honey, yeah, this beat  
cha-ching like money, huh  
Disco overload, I'm into that, I'm  
good to go (whoa-whoa-oh)  
I'm diamond, you know I glow up  
Oh, let's go

[Chorus] 'Cause I, I, I'm in the stars tonight

(whoo)  
So watch me bring the fire, and set  
the night alight (hey, set the night  
alight)  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite,  
whoa-oh-oh (whoo)

[Post-Chorus] Dyn-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na,  
na-na-na, life is dynamite  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na,  
na-na-na, life is dynamite  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul (ay, whoo)  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite,  
whoa-oh-oh (let's go)

[Bridge] Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, ay  
(clap, clap)  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, ay  
(come on)  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, yeah  
Light it up like dynamite (let me hear  
you)  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, yeah  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, yeah  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na, na-na, ay  
(okay)  
Light it up like dynamite

[Chorus] 'Cause I, I, I'm in the stars tonight  
(yeah)  
So watch me bring the fire, and set  
the night alight (come on, hey)  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite (let's  
go)  
So watch me bring the fire, and set  
the night alight (oh)  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite,  
whoa-oh-oh (light it up like dynamite)

[Post-Chorus] Dyn-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na,  
na-na-na, life is dynamite (life is  
dynamite)  
Dyn-na-na-na, na-na-na-na-na,  
na-na-na, life is dynamite (oh)  
Shining through the city with a little  
funk and soul  
So I'ma light it up like dynamite,  
whoa-oh-oh (whoo)

Now that we've gone through some examples of songs through the ages (did you notice we started in the 60s and ended up in 2020?), I want to invite YOU to send me your own lyrics! My challenge for you is to choose one of the songs above and try to write your own lyrics following the format of the song- the lyrics don't have to fit the beat of the original, but an example of what I mean is if the song you chose has a 10-line chorus, your song should also have a 10-line chorus.

I want to give you all a chance to be your most creative selves, so I've made a few themes. These themes are meant to inspire you into making fun lyrics, and to make this project even more of a "choose your own adventure." Choose one theme per song you write, and feel free to send me as many songs as you'd like! I'll be here all summer and would love to read anything you've written. If you have songs that you love the lyrics of, feel free to send those my way too! Learning about music brightens my day, and is a great way to connect with you all.

### Theme Options:

- **Dreams:** This theme is for those of you who want to focus on what happens when we sleep. Dreams are personal journeys, and this is meant to focus on what happens over the course of a night's rest. Be as wacky and creative as you want!
- **Love:** This is for people who are all about connection. Whatever kind of love you want to talk about, whether it's the kind for family, friends, lovers, or community, is welcome under this theme!

- **Nature:** If you're writing about nature, I want you to explore the feelings that the idea of the outdoors make you feel. Are you a brave explorer? Scared of bugs? Amazed by the colors and sunshine? Let me know!

- **Interacting Colors:** "Interacting Colors" is definitely the most abstract theme I've got for you all. If you choose this theme, I want you to use your words like a paint brush and tell me how you imagine colors would interact. Do they mix, or do they separate themselves? Would you imagine the colors like paint, people, or something else? Everything is valid!

I hope you all have a lot of fun looking through these songs and writing your own lyrics. It is really fun writing out your emotions in different ways, especially if you're used to writing letters or journal entries not meant for others to see. When you do this, I think it might help to think about your favorite songs and the stories they're telling you. Do they get told from start to finish, or do the songs jump around the details? Are the stories easy to pick out, or do you have to think about it to really understand? How do your favorite songs make you feel, and what do you think helps them do that?

I'm really excited to hear what you come up with!

Happy writing,

*Amy #1195*

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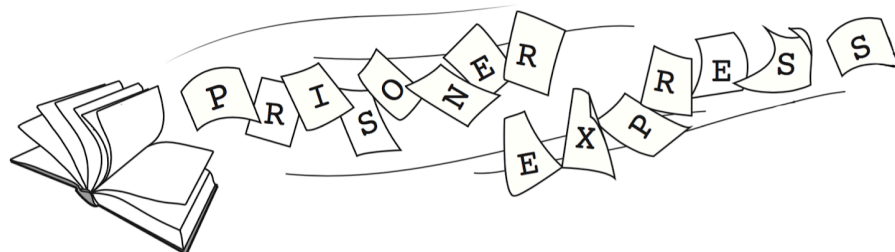
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