

With Love, From Brent

JUL. 23 - OCT. 15, 2017

CURRICULUM GUIDE



Exhibit Description

L. Brent Kington is best known for his whimsical toys and tabletop and large-scale kinetic sculptures. Less well known is the collection of jewelry he created over the course of his life. These jewelry pieces were gifts for his wife, mother, daughter and sister-in-law and often referenced his sculpture.

L. Brent Kington: Biography

L. Brent Kington is credited with re-introducing metal craft as an art form in the United States. Kington was born in 1934 in Topeka, Kansas. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, in 1957 and was married to his wife, Diana, in 1959. After receiving his master's degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield, MI, in 1961, Kington began as a Professor of Metalsmithing at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (SIU). During his tenure at SIU, Kington established this country's only accredited Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts program in blacksmithing. Kington was a founding member and President of the Society of North American Goldsmiths and a former Director of the Artist-Blacksmiths Association of North America (ABANA). His work has been featured in over 370 national and international exhibitions, including 22 solo exhibitions. The traveling exhibition, *L. Brent Kington: Mystic Metalsmith* (2007 - 2011), which followed the artist's forty-year progression from whimsical cast silver toys to kinetic sculpture, was accompanied by a catalog published by the Illinois State Museum Society. He received numerous awards and honors, including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society of American Goldsmiths in 2011. Kington's influence still resonates today through the hundreds of working artists he taught personally and through those who still make their way through the program he founded at SIU. Brent Kington passed away in February of 2013 and is survived by his wife, Diana, his children, Tod and Brooke, as well as numerous family members, friends and colleagues.

Tennessee Visual Art Standard

STANDARD 2: Students will use knowledge of structures and functions.

Learning Objectives

The learner will...

KINDERGARTEN - 2ND GRADE

(2.3) understand and apply purpose in art.

(2.4) understand and apply context in art.

3RD GRADE - 5TH GRADE

(2.5) evaluate purpose in art.

(2.7) evaluate context in art.

6TH GRADE - 8TH GRADE

(2.4) compare and contrast organizational structures in works of art.

HIGH SCHOOL

(2.2) Critique organizational components (structures) and expressive qualities (functions) in a work of art.

Before Your Visit

KINDERGARTEN - 2ND GRADE

Before your visit to the Museum, introduce students to the life and work of L. Brent Kington. Discuss Kington's bio, his influence on metal craft in the United States and some of his better-known sculpture series, i.e. his toys, weather vanes and *Icarus* series. View images together as a class and for each series, create a list of words that describe the materials, colors, lines, shapes and function or purpose.

3RD GRADE - 5TH GRADE

Before your visit to the Museum, introduce students to the life and work of L. Brent Kington. Discuss Kington's bio, his influence on metal craft in the United States and some of his better-known sculpture series, i.e. his toys, weather vanes and *Icarus* series. For each series, view images together as a class and have students create their own list of words to describe what they see – i.e. material, color, line, shape, function, etc. Discuss the lists of descriptors as a class.

6TH GRADE - 8TH GRADE

Before your visit to the Museum, introduce students to the life and work of L. Brent Kington. Discuss Kington's bio, his influence on metal craft in the United States and some of his better-known sculpture series, i.e. his toys, weather vanes and *Icarus* series. View images together as a class, then have students choose one image and write a paragraph describing what they see. Students should describe the use of space, line, color and shape.

HIGH SCHOOL

Before your visit to the Museum, introduce students to the life and work of L. Brent Kington. Discuss Kington's bio, his influence on metal craft in the United States and some of his better-known sculpture series, i.e. his toys, weather vanes and *Icarus* series. View images together as a class. Have students choose one image to write a short essay, answering the following questions: What is it? How was it made? Why was it made? What do you think of it? Emphasize that there are no correct or incorrect answers. Answers should be based solely on visual observations from the image.

During Your Visit

TOUR

Guided tours are available for groups of 10 or more on Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10:30AM until 4PM and Sundays from 12:30PM until 4PM. All guided tours must be scheduled a minimum of two weeks in advance. Basic tours include a guided tour of the changing exhibitions, the permanent collection and the grounds. The total length of a tour is 45 minutes without a metalworking demonstration, 1.5 hours with one metalworking demonstration and 2 hours with additional demonstrations and/or hands-on activities. Due to special limitations, guided tours are limited to 60 attendees. Please contact the Education Coordinator, Lori Gipson, for additional information at 901.774.6380.

ACTIVITY SHEET

Groups may print the attached worksheet for an additional activity to complete at the Museum. Additional activity sheets are available from the Museum upon request.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Demonstrations cannot be scheduled without a guided tour. Demonstrations allow for up to 20 participants per demonstration. Larger groups will be divided.

Forging (30 minutes): Resident blacksmiths demonstrate basic forging techniques, including tapering, bending, twisting and hand-punching a hole as they make a steel hook.

Casting (30 minutes): Learn how various types of molds are created and then watch as molten metal is poured into a mold to make a cast.

Bladesmithing (45 minutes): Two artists create a sword or dagger form using traditional blacksmithing team-striking methods. The demonstration can also explore the tales of Beowulf.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

Hands-on activities may be scheduled without a guided tour, in which case general admission is included in the cost of the activity. There is a 10-person minimum to schedule a hands-on activity.

Art Tiles

Casting is the simplest and most direct way of producing a finished shape from metal. Each participant draws a design in a pre-made sand mold, called a scratch block, using a “stylus” tool. Molten metal is then poured into the molds. When the metal has cooled participants have a custom 4” x 4” art tile. FEE: \$35 per person. Additional fees may apply to larger groups.

Copper Bracelets

Students will use hammers and stamps to add their names, symbols or texture to a piece of copper, which will be formed to fit the student’s wrist. FEE: \$10 per person.

Chasing Repoussé Copper Tiles

Chasing repoussé is a metalworking technique in which a malleable metal is ornamented or shaped to create a design in low relief.

Students will make their own low relief, 2D drawings in copper using a stylus tool to create patterns and textures on metal. FEE: \$10 per person.

After Your Visit

KINDERGARTEN - 2ND GRADE

After your visit to the Museum, reflect on why L. Brent Kington created the jewelry in the exhibit – they were gifts for his loved ones. Then have students create their own Bottle Cap Brooch, just like the brooches in the exhibit. Students can choose whatever design or materials they wish to decorate their bottle cap, i.e. markers, beads, stickers, etc. Simply attach a pin to the back with hot glue. Encourage students to give their Bottle Cap Brooch to a family member or friend.

3RD GRADE - 5TH GRADE

After your visit to the Museum, reflect on why L. Brent Kington created the jewelry in the exhibit – they were gifts for his loved ones. Then have students create their own Bottle Cap Brooch, just like the brooches in the exhibit. Students can choose whatever design or materials they wish to decorate their bottle cap, i.e. markers, beads, stickers, etc. Simply attach a pin to the back with hot glue. Encourage students to give their bottle cap brooch to a family member or friend.

6TH GRADE - 8TH GRADE

After your visit to the Museum, reflect on why L. Brent Kington created the jewelry in the exhibit – they were gifts for his loved ones. How does the purpose of the jewelry differ from the purpose of some of the sculpture you viewed before your visit? Have students write a short paragraph comparing one piece from the exhibit to a sculpture they viewed before the exhibit. Students should describe similarities and differences in material, line, shape, color, purpose or function.

HIGH SCHOOL

After your visit to the Museum, reflect on why Kington created the jewelry in the exhibit. Have students create a project proposal for a piece of jewelry they will give as a gift. The jewelry piece can be any type they choose and should reference a sculpture of their choosing – their own sculpture or that of any artist they choose. Students should note the material and method for creating their piece, as well as describe the visual references to their chosen sculpture. Proposals should include a sketch of their jewelry piece and should be presented to the class. Allow for critique from other students.

Vocabulary

ADORN – to make something more beautiful

ALLOY – two or more metallic elements combined

BROOCH – a piece of jewelry fastened to clothing with a hinged pin or catch

FIGURE – a human or bodily shape

JEWELRY – an ornament for personal adornment

NECKLACE – a chain of links, beads or jewels worn around the neck

PENDANT – ornament that hangs from a chain worn around the neck

PORTRAIT – image of a person, especially the face and upper body

PROFILE – the outline of something as seen from the side

SELF-PORTRAIT – a portrait an artist produces of himself or herself