

Re: Collection

April 1 to September 7, 2014



TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET



museum of arts and design

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museum of arts and design

WELCOME

Dear Educator,

We are delighted that you have scheduled a visit to Re: Collection. When you and your students visit the Museum of Arts and Design, you will be given an informative tour of the exhibition with a museum educator, followed by an inspiring art-making project in the museum's MADlab. To make your museum experience more enriching and meaningful, we strongly encourage you to use this packet as a resource, and work with your students in the classroom before and after your museum visit.

This packet includes topics for discussion and hands-on activities intended to introduce the key themes and concepts of the exhibition. Writing, storytelling and art projects have been suggested so that you can explore ideas from the exhibition in ways that relate directly to your students' lives and experiences.

Please feel free to adapt and build on these materials and to use this packet in any way that you wish.

We look forward to welcoming you and your students to the Museum of Arts and Design.

Sincerely,

Nakeisha Gumbs
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Lessons written by Kristen Scarola, Museum Educator, in collaboration with the Museum of Arts and Design Education Department. Special thanks to Irene Kim and Leila Zobgy for their input and assistance gathering and formatting information.

THE MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN has been functioning as an international resource center for craft, arts and design since 1956. Through its collections, exhibitions, programs and publications, the Museum serves as a forum for critical debate concerning the nature of craftsmanship and the engagement with the process that links materials, techniques, forms, patterns and concepts in all creative work.

HOW DOES A MUSEUM WORK?

ADMINISTRATION: The team led by the Director of the Museum determines the programs, plans and philosophy of the Museum. It also raises funds to realize the Museum's goals and works directly with the Board of Governors, which guides the Museum's functions.

CURATORIAL: This is the team, led by the Chief Curator, that works together to decide which exhibits will be shown, how they will look, what artwork is to be included, and how they are to be interpreted.

EXHIBITION DESIGNERS: This team makes galleries look inviting to visitors and help to show the objects.

REGISTRATION: Led by the Registrar, this team arranges the safe handling of art to be placed in an exhibition and maintains the permanent collections acquired by a museum.

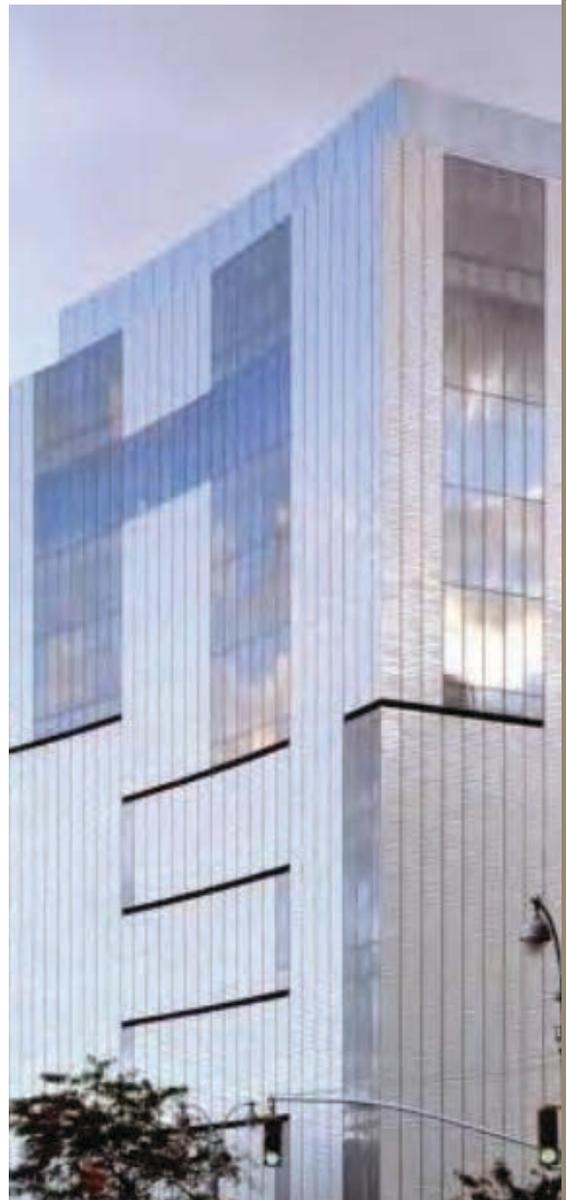
EDUCATION: This team provides the interactive interpretation of the objects on view through the educational programs designed for children, adults and families who visit the Museum.

DOCENTS: This team gives tours to engage visitors to learn from the exhibitions.

FACILITY MAINTENANCE: This is the team that allows the day-to-day operations of a museum to continue: from the lights being turned on, to the safety of all who enter the building.

SECURITY GUARDS: This is the team most often seen in a museum, because its main task is to protect the artwork from harm so that in the future people will be able to see the same objects as seen in a museum today.

Museums are places where we can learn about the past, present, and future of the world around us. The diversity of knowledge is endless when the habit of museum exploration is formed at an early age. We look forward to welcoming your group into our galleries.



HELPFUL HINTS FOR YOUR MUSEUM VISIT:

While visiting the exhibition try to use all your senses. Notice the way the pieces are displayed. Are there any specific groupings of pieces you can distinguish? If you enjoy looking at one piece more than others can you explain why?

Here are some questions and suggestions to think about as you move around the exhibition:

I. What can be objectively observed?

- a. What is the physical description? Measurement, weight, materials used, articulation of materials...
- b. What iconography, if any, is used? Designs, words, diagrams...
- c. What are the object's formal design characteristics? Lines, shapes, forms, color, texture...

II. What would it be like to interact with this piece of art? How would you handle, lift, display it?

- a. How would the piece of art feel, move, and sound?
- b. What does the piece do? Does the piece have a function? How would the figures move if they were alive?
- c. What is our emotional response to this beaded figure? Fear, joy, indifference, curiosity, revulsion, excitement...

III. What is in the mind of the artist? What are the viewers thinking and feeling? Use creative imagining and free association.

- a. Review all of the above information and consider what was going on in the world when the work was produced to develop possible interpretations of the piece. (Theories and hypotheses)
- b. Do the figures tell a story? Does the piece have underlying political or social meaning? (Understanding and visual thinking)
- c. Develop a program to investigate the questions posed by the material evidence. (Program of research)

IV. Brainstorm about an event or situation that is happening in your life at the moment which you could animate into one scene which could be made into your very own figurative sculpture. (Design themes)

Re: Collection

April 1 to September 7, 2014

The vision of a curator shapes the identity of a museum. Re:Collection surveys the curatorial vision of Chief Curator Emeritus David McFadden who oversaw the acquisition of over 2,000 objects during his 16 year tenure at the Museum of Arts and Design.

WHY DO MUSEUMS COLLECT?

Museums function as institutions that hold precious objects. As libraries collect books, museums collect objects. The objects that can be works of art, have historical value, be of scientific significance, or culturally meaningful. Beyond displaying the objects, curators strive to create understanding about the objects and provide context for their viewers. One way curators help visitors to understand more about the objects on view is by the way in which they arrange the objects.

In *Re: Collection* the objects are arranged by themes:

- Nature
- History
- Memory
- Politics
- Transformation

OBJECTS TELL STORIES

McFadden explains, "So all of the works in the show tell a story of what they are made of and why they are made and who made them. There are multiple narratives going on." When exploring the works with your students, guide them towards seeking out the story of each artwork. Similar to studying a text, close looking can provide you with most of the information that you need to find meaning within the artwork.

Classroom Conversation:

- How does the material tell the story of the object?
- Why was the object made?
- Who made the object?

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

STUDENTS AS COLLECTORS

Collecting is an important developmental activity through which young children begin to assert their identity. Cognitively, children develop their ability to sort, arrange, and catalog. Socially, children create relationships over shared interests and learn to care for objects they deem significant. As children begin to move towards elementary school, collections inspire students to learn and research their interests. By encouraging collecting, educators, help students to become self-directed learners. There are those students that can list all of the stats of baseball players that they've learned through their cards! Along with baseball cards, common collectable items include post cards, books, seashells, earrings, video games, pins, model trains, photos, shoes, music, etc.

Classroom Conversation:

- What do you collect?
- Why is your collection important to you?
- How do you take care of the objects you collect?

CREATE A MUSEUM IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Curators are highly specialized experts in their field. In this activity, your students will use their own expertise to curate an exhibition. To prepare your students for considering how museums and artists collect, invite them to curate a collection and design a mini-gallery that tells their own personal story.

- What is your vision?
- What kind of objects do you want to show?
- What do you want to teach visitors through the

EXTENSION

Write a personal narrative based on the objects shown in your exhibition.

MEET A CURATOR

Ron Labaco, curator at the Museum of Arts and Design, worked closely with David McFadden on creating *Re: Collection*.

What led you to becoming a curator?

I have always been acutely aware of my surrounding environment, even from an early age, which I attribute in part to having been born and raised as a minority of Filipino heritage in a predominantly white, conservative, upper-middle-class community in Southern California. This sense of “otherness” made me examine how I was different from my friends, which included their homes and furnishings. What I might have perceived as a disadvantage growing up clearly became an advantage later in life. My interest in the objects around me, combined with a circuitous career path that included studying science and painting, and working in contemporary art galleries and a neuroscience research laboratory—not at the same time, of course!—contributed to a unique perspective that somehow came together as a museum curator.

What is your curatorial area of expertise? Why did you choose to focus on that area?

My curatorial area of expertise is design and decorative arts. I am drawn to objects—whether functional or not—that have a high degree of craftsmanship and/or conceptual integrity. I fell into this field by chance, but I can pinpoint the very instant that I wanted to pursue it as a profession. I have always been a sucker for tag sales and thrift stores, and one day, when I was working as a neuroscience lab assistant and before my formal graduate work in decorative arts, I came across a \$12 chair in a thrift shop that looked familiar, so I bought it. As I walked it to my car, two people offered to buy it from me. I suppose that at that moment I realized that I had an instinct for good design. The chair ended up being a vintage Charles and Ray Eames molded plywood lounge chair from about 1950, and I still have it today as a reminder to trust my instinct and to take chances.

What do you like most about your job?

The objects, the connections, their context, and the challenge of presenting material that I find fascinating to an uninitiated audience in an engaging way. One of the most fulfilling things about curating the “Out of Hand” exhibition is when I’ve seen grandparents with their grandchildren touring the show, both generations captivated by the work.

Do you collect anything? If so what (could be art related or not—or both!)?

I used to be obsessive about collecting. Due to my interest in ceramics, at one point I had seven dinnerware services from the mid-20th century. You know it’s a sickness when I wouldn’t use any of it, relying on my everyday IKEA plates instead. But not anymore. I find that now that I’m surrounded by artwork every day, I don’t have the need to collect things further. In retrospect I see my collecting strategy as a way of learning about decorative arts and design. For example, in a business trip to Japan several years ago I became enthralled by the Japanese tea ceremony, and have been acquiring both antique and contemporary utensils. Ok, so I do admit that I still collect, but don’t tell anyone.



(2010.43, Jennifer Trask, *Intrinsecus*)

NATURE

NATURE has inspired artists from the very beginnings of creative expression. Through examining Jennifer Trask's installation, students will learn how collecting and arranging objects can help us to intimately understand their significance to us and the spaces that they occupy.

LOOK AND DISCUSS

Take a moment to look closely at the image.

Start the Conversation (k-8)

- What do you see?
- What materials did the artist use to create this artwork?
 - Which materials are **manmade**? Which objects can be found in nature?
- What is happening inside the frame? Outside?
- What do you think the artist is showing us?

Continue the Conversation (3-8)

- What natural elements can be found on the frame?
- In what ways have the natural objects been manipulated by the artist?

Dig Deeper (6-8)

- What is the significance of the frame in *Intrinsecus*?
- Describe the interplay of the frame and the objects that are within and surrounding the frame.

THINK ABOUT

Cabinet of Curiosities *Victorian Curios*, also known as a *Wunderkammer* and *cabinets of curiosities*, were spaces where collectors would display wondrous objects. A phenomenon in Europe from the 16th Century through the 19th Century, curios were the pre-cursor to museums. Collectors would gather extraordinary objects (some of them fake), such as taxidermied animals, precious stones, coins, mathematical instruments, medical diagrams, manuscripts, antiquities, paintings, sculptures, and other art objects. Often the contents were organized thematically, but were meant to display the interplay between art, science, and culture.

In her artist statement, Jennifer Trask remarks:

Stylistically my work is influenced by the instrumentation and aesthetics of early sciences as well as the actual methodologies of collection and display...I am...fascinated by the Wunderkammer and Victorian Curios - the displays of odd exotic items in vitrines intended for the 'salon' and meant to impress viewers with one's passion for, and command of, nature itself. (Artist Statement, attached to May 18, 2004 letter from Jennifer Trask to Karen Ostrom, Assistant Registrar)

Looking at *Intrinsecus*, what do you think Trask is passionate about? How do art, science, and culture intersect in her artwork?

EXTEND

Learn about curios and research them online. Some famous collectors include Rudolph II, Francesco I, Frederick III, and Peter the Great. (Links are also available on page 19 of this packet.)

- What did the collectors gather?
- How were the objects categorized?
- How were they displayed?
- Find contemporary examples of Cabinets of Curiosity.

DO

Cabinet of Curiosity: What kinds of objects fascinate you? Pique your interest? What is something that you are passionate about and want to display for others to see? Maybe you think that what you like is rather simple or mundane. How can you dig deeper into your interests, so that they can become passions?

Create a visual collection to show your passion. Use images that you can find in magazines or online.

- Seek out multiples of the object.
- Look for variety. How does your object vary in design and use?
- Can this object be found in different cultures or environments?
- In the past, collectors included manuscripts. Look for newspaper articles about your object.

MATERIALS:

Scissors, glue, oak tag, images, markers

- 1) Fold your oak tag into thirds, allowing the paper to stand-up when displayed.
- 2) Cut out your objects.
- 3) Arrange your collection of objects in a way that will "impress viewers" and glue them to the oak tag.
- 4) Optional: Draw shelves and create labels.
- 5) Display your "cabinet" with your classmates. In what ways does your collection intersect with the collections of your classmates?

VARIATION

Cabinets of curiosity were created long before computer technology and the internet. Make a 21st Century cabinet of curiosity online by compiling images on a webpage. How does the experience of collecting actual objects differ from compiling information and images online?



Gonçalo Mabunda, *The Hope Throne* (2008)

HISTORY

Artists reflect upon and document **HISTORY** in their work. Through exploring *The Hope Throne*, students will closely consider design principles while peeling away the layers to understand why Mabunda created a chair that, while calling upon hope, illustrates the destructiveness of war.

LOOK AND DISCUSS

What is the artist showing the viewers?

Start the Conversation (k-8)

- Imagine that you could run your hands over this sculpture. What textures would you feel? What parts might be smooth? Rough? Notice where there is space.
- What could this sculpture be used for?
- What **found objects** did the artist collect?
- This sculpture is called *The Hope Throne*. What lesson might the artist be trying to teach though it?

Continue the Conversation (3-8)

- Choose one word to describe *The Hope Throne*.
 - Generate a list of words.
 - Find evidence to support one of the descriptor words. Example: "*The Hope Throne* looks dingy because of the rusty surface."
 - Debate the various words the students have chosen to describe the sculpture. Example: "Student A used the word old, but maybe the objects are newer and were treated badly or exposed to harsh conditions."

Dig Deeper (6-8)

The artist employed design principles to help convey his message. Explore the design.

- **Movement:** Notice the lines that form the sculpture. How do they direct your eye to exploring the artwork?
- Describe the **repetitive** elements in sculpture. How might the repetitive elements tell us the story of the artwork?
- In what ways does the artist create **contrast**?
- Focus in on the boot. How does the location of the boot play a part in the **balance** of the piece? Find areas of symmetry, asymmetry, and balance in the sculpture.

THINK ABOUT

Mozambique was engaged in a brutal fifteen-year civil war from 1977 - 1992. *The Hope Throne* tells a story of healing from tragedy using the very implements that were used in inflicting pain and death on others. Weapons were buried to use as protection in the future. As the years went by civilians would find the weapons accidentally, sometimes while farming.

A church sponsored a collection of the weapons and other military equipment, so that artists could create art using the objects.

- Mabunda did not cover the sculpture with paint or a lacquer, but shows the weapons as they were found. Why do you think he chose to leave the surface raw?
- This sculpture is made of weapons, yet it is called *The Hope Throne*. How does it show hope?

DO

In this activity, students will use design principles to create a throne that has historical significance.

- 1) **THINK:** Consider a time in history that has particular significance to you.
 - ▶ Brainstorm a series of words to describe that moment in history.
 - ▶ What found objects could you collect and incorporate into your sculpture?
- 2) **SKETCH:** Make several (at least three) sketches of the throne.
 - ▶ Who is the throne being made for?
 - ▶ What will the overall shape of the throne be?
 - ▶ How will the throne be assembled?
- 3) **DESIGN:** Make a final diagram. Use your previous sketches to help. Consider design principles as you work:
 - ▶ Establish emphasis.
 - ▶ Create a sense of movement.
 - ▶ Make a pattern or use repetition.
 - ▶ Instill your design with rhythm.
 - ▶ Create contrast.
 - ▶ Establish unity.
- 4) **PROTOTYPE:** Create a model of your throne in three dimensions.
Suggested Materials: tape, scissors, cardboard, newspaper, air-dry clay, fabric scraps, boxes, Styrofoam, straws
- 5) **TEST:** Present the prototype. Describe the throne's design and significance to you.
 - ▶ Does the design tell the story of the object?



(2006.22a-f, Paul Villinski, *Pilot*)

MEMORY

Paul Villinski collected the gloves that are predominantly featured in *Pilot* from the streets of New York City. This lesson will help you to guide students in thinking about how an object can represent a **MEMORY**.

LOOK AND DISCUSS

Closely examine the sculpture.

Start the Conversation (k-8)

- What is happening in this sculpture?
- What objects did the artist collect to create this sculpture?
- Look closely at the gloves. What similarities do you notice? Differences?
- How did the artist construct this sculpture?

Continue the Conversation (3-8)

- Notice the condition of the gloves and chair. How do you think the artist acquired the objects used to create the sculpture?
- How does the worn quality of the objects tell a story about the artwork?
- What story could the artist be telling us?

Dig Deeper (6-8)

- What would you title this artwork? Why?

THINK ABOUT

About his series of artworks that use gloves as a primary element Vilinski says:

*Lost gloves? The city is full of them. Having read this, you will see them everywhere. Do they stand in for the people who wore them? Instantly you wonder: whose was this - their sex and age and body type - their laugh? What work was done? You begin to construct entire identities, for the gloves are replete with **memory**, with personal history.*
(<http://www.paulvillinski.com/artwork/glove.html>)

Each glove in *Pilot* was worn and used by someone before the artist found it on the street. Imagine a lost glove. Who did the glove belong to? What does it look like? How was the glove used? How did it get lost? What happened after it was lost?

DO

CREATIVE WRITING:

"Have you ever had a flying dream, one in which you gently float upward, and, moving at a leisurely rate, take a tour of the trees and rooftops of your neighborhood? Have you flown in your sleep, relaxed and comfortable, to the clouds overhead, passing along slowly enough to study your environs in detail from this bird's eye view, coming to see and understand this plot of earth in a new light?"

(http://www.paulvillinski.com/press/files/pdf/reviews_dreamer.pdf)

Write and illustrate a story about flying.



(2006.42, Terese Agnew, Portrait of a Textile Worker)

POLITICS

Through their work, artists have a powerful platform to voice their **POLITICS**. Students will explore Agnew's creative process and learn how the artist engaged others to participate in her cause.

LOOK AND DISCUSS

Look closely at the artwork. You may be fooled by the reproduction above. You are not looking at a photograph or painting, but a **textile** and it is very large, 94.5 x 109.75 inches! While you can't see the small details that are creating the bigger picture, look for the story the artist is telling through her work.

Start the Conversation (k-8)

- What is happening in this artwork?
- Who is the subject (or main character) of this artwork? What is she doing?
- How do you think she is feeling right now? What do you see that tells you that?
- What story might the artist be telling through this artwork?

Continue the Conversation (3-8)

- Notice the colors the artist used in this artwork. Describe the **color palette**.
- Notice the **shadows** and the **highlights**. What do the highlights draw your attention to?

Dig Deeper (6-8)

- Describe the mood, or emotion, of this artwork. Give evidence to your answer.
- Imagine what a clothing factory would be like. What would you hear? Smell? Feel? In what ways does *Portrait of a Textile Worker* match what you imagine? In what ways is it different?
 - Research clothing factories and sweat shops to learn more about the conditions laborers work under. The textile worker that Agnew's piece works in a factory in Bangladesh.
- The artist collected thousands of clothing labels, arranged them to create the image, and stitched them together to create the final piece. In what ways is the artist's process similar to the textile worker? In what ways is it different?

THINK ABOUT

THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Sometimes inspiration to create comes in unlikely situations. Agnew's inspiration to create this artwork came to her while shopping. "I noticed huge signs everywhere--Calvin Klein, Liz Claiborne, Kathy Lee, and so on. They were all proper names. I'd recently met two garment workers and realized that by contrast, their identity was rarely thought of and often deliberately hidden. That anonymity could be undone by assembling a view of one worker using the well-known names on the apparel she produced."

- ▶ When have you been inspired to create?

Once Agnew had the initial idea for her artwork, she had to take steps to turn her idea into a reality. Agnew considered how almost no one ever thinks about textile workers who are essential in the production of our clothing and often work in deplorable conditions. For resources, she turned to National Labor Committee and selected a photograph taken by labor activist Charles Kernaghan. This photo became the **source** for her textile piece.

- ▶ What informs the art that you create?

DO

A **mosaic** is a design or picture made from assembling small pieces in an arrangement. Historically, mosaics are made from tiles. Agnew's piece can be considered a mosaic because she stitched small swatches of fabric together to form the image.

Materials:

paper, scissors, glue, construction paper (or, if available, fabric scraps in many colors)

1. Sketch a simple design. (Think of a coloring book format.)
2. Cut your construction paper into approximately half-inch tiles.
3. Tile, or arrange, the squares on to your sketch. You may need to trim some of the squares to fit into the smaller spaces.
4. Glue each square into place.



(1997.6.56, Verena Sieber-Fuchs, Firecracker Necklace)

TRANSFORMATION

Through changing the way an object is used, artists **TRANSFORM** the object to have new significance and meaning. Students will consider how the Verena Sieber-Fuchs applied the elements of art and design principles to making a necklace created out of very unexpected materials.

LOOK AND DISCUSS

Take a moment to look closely at the image.

Start the Conversation (k-8)

- What colors do you notice? How are the colors arranged on the necklace?
- Describe the shape of the necklace.
- Imagine that you are wearing the necklace. How would it feel?
- If this necklace were an animal (or part of an animal), what would it be?
- What do you think the artist collected to make this necklace? What do you see that tells you that?

Continue the Conversation (3-8)

- Look for **repetition** and **pattern** in the necklace. How is the repetition varied?
- How does the artist use **contrast**?
- How do you think the necklace was constructed?
- In what ways could the wearer manipulate or change its shape?

Dig Deeper (6-8)

- How are firecrackers typically used? What words would you use to describe them?
- How does that compare to the way that the firecrackers are used in the necklace?
- How has the artist **transformed** firecrackers into something new?
- Would you wear this necklace? Why or why not?

THINK ABOUT

Generate a list of words that you associate with firecrackers. See how many words you can add to your list. How is your list similar to your classmates? How is it different?

Most of us communicate through words both spoken and written, but there are other ways of expressing our thoughts, ideas, and perspectives. In her artist statement, Verena Sieber-Fuchs says, "I make jewelry, I put it in the world, and I let people react. My work is my language and expression."

What do you think Sieber-Fuchs means in her statement? In what ways do you communicate without words? What are the limitations of words and language? In what ways is language powerful? What are the limitations of communicating without words?

Look again at *Firecracker Necklace* what narratives might be embedded in the object? How is the artist communicating a story with the materials she uses for creating the object? How can you extend the narrative as you connect with the object?

DO

JEWELRY DESIGN

Verena Sieber-Fuchs reappropriates all kinds of materials for creating jewelry: onions, magazine cutouts, candy wrappers, popsicle sticks, and much more. Select an object that you will transform into a necklace.

Materials:

Sketching paper and pencil, wire, necklace clasp, scissors

- 1) Plan a design of your necklace.
 - Think about the **color palette**. How many colors will you use?
 - What will be the shape of your necklace?
 - What kind of **texture** will the necklace have?
 - Will there be elements that repeat or create a pattern?
 - How will you create **depth** in your design?
 - Will you need other materials besides your repurposed objects to make this necklace? If so, what?
- 2) Sketch your design.
 - Who will wear the necklace?
 - In what ways will you have to manipulate the objects to become a necklace?
- 3) Create your necklace by stringing the objects together.
- 4) Display: In museums, jewelry is typically shown like any other artwork: inside a case. The viewer is left to imagine how the piece might look when worn. Sometimes, museums will show the jewelry and beside it show a photograph or video of it being worn to provide **context**. How will you display your necklace?

WEBOGRAPHY

Terese Agnew

For video about her inspiration and collaborative process:

http://www.craftinamerica.org/artists_fiber/

Website dedicated entirely to Portrait of a Textile Worker:

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

Goncalo Mabunda

http://www.jackbellgallery.com/artists/29-Gon_alo-Mabunda/overview

<http://www.perimeter-artanddesign.com/mabunda/mabunda-uk.html>

Verena Sieber Fuchs

<http://www.verenasieberfuchs.ch/>

Jennifer Trask

www.jennifertrask.com

About Cabinets of Curiosity:

<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2004/papers/gundestrup/gundestrup.html>

<http://www.medic.org/highlights/cabinet-curiosities>

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rupr/hd_rupr.htm

<http://www.masumiyetmuzesi.org/?Language=ENG>

Paul Villinski

<http://www.paulvillinski.com>

http://www.paulvillinski.com/press/files/pdf/reviews_dreamer.pdf