





LEARNING TOOLKIT



This toolkit encourages deep dives into UMFA artworks via four entry points: how art relates to our personal lives, connects to our studies, teaches us about foundational art elements, and conveys big ideas. Whether you use this in the galleries or in your classroom with the “slideshow” of larger images toward the end of this document, we hope educators find these questions helpful and can take inspiration from them for possible classroom discussion topics, writing prompts, group exploration, or art-making—regardless of discipline.

These categories are:

-  **Personal Connections**
-  **Classroom Connections**
-  **Elemental Connections**
-  **Thematic Connections**



Right | Chakaia Booker, American, *Discarded Memories*, 2008, tire, wood, metal, paint. Purchased with funds from the UMFA Young Benefactors and the Phyllis Cannon Wattis Endowment Fund, UMFA 2009.15.1A,B.



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Personal Connections

Art can stir emotions—positive, negative, and anything in between. Whatever your response, your feelings about a work of art are valid and worth exploring. Most museum-goers spend just a few seconds in front of a single work, but we encourage you to look slowly as you spend time with a group of artworks or gallery before exploring the questions below.

- What's one work with which you feel a personal connection? Why?
- In three words, how does that artwork make you feel?
- If you could talk to an artist who created one of these pieces, who would it be? What would you ask or say?
- Complete the following sentences about the group or gallery:
 - What I find most **interesting** about this is...
 - What I find most **complicated** about this is...
 - What this made me **think differently** about is....
- If you made a playlist for these artworks, what are three songs you'd include? Why?
- What's something you'd like to learn more about because of this selection of works? Why?



Left | Mexico, Colima region (300 B.C.E–300 C.E.), *Seated Male Figure*, earthenware. Purchased with funds from Friends of the Art Museum, UMFA1985.004.



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Classroom Connections

Whether you're studying math, science, art, or the humanities, you can find surprising connections between your coursework and the work in this exhibition.

Questions for individuals, pairs, or groups:

- List three words you'd use to describe this gallery or selection of artwork.
- What are recurrent threads you notice? These could be themes, ideas, images, symbols, patterns, colors, etc.
- What is one thread or element that connects to your class coursework? How does it connect? Depending on your field, this could be tricky—creative leaps are encouraged!
- What's one work of art here that represents the connection you see? How does it do that?
- How could you apply your current coursework to the art you're viewing? For example, a creative writing student might write a poem about a painting, a history student might research a social movement that informed an artist's perspective, a biology student might analyze the environment within a landscape, etc.

Left | James T. Harwood, American, *Preparation for dinner*, 1891–1892, oil on canvas. Transferred from the collection of the A. Ray Olpin University Union and conserved with funds from the Ann K. Stewart Docent and Volunteer Conservation Fund, UMFA2003.14.1.

Right | Abraham Susenier, Dutch, *Still Life with a Lobster, Römer, Oysters, Grapes, and a Knife*, circa 1660s, oil on canvas. Purchased with funds from the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation, conserved with funds from the Ann K. Stewart Docent and Volunteer Conservation Fund, UMFA2003.34.1.





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Elemental Connections

Whether you're an artist yourself or someone who doesn't spend a lot of time with art, the elements of art give us a way of thinking about how a work was created and what it comprises. These include: line, shape, color, form, texture, space, and value.

- Which artist uses **lines** in the most interesting ways? How would you describe the feeling of those lines? (Organized, chaotic, simple, etc.?)
- Choose a work of art that utilizes interesting **shapes**. Can you sketch the work using only the basic shapes you identify?
- Scan a group of works, taking in the many **colors** the artists used. Which color catches your eye more than any other? Why does it stand out? What feeling does it convey?
- Find a work with interesting **textures**. How would you describe the textures to someone who wasn't looking at the piece?
- Identify a 3D work and consider **form**. How would this piece be different if it were a drawing or painting instead? What would the viewer miss? How would it change the way you think about the piece?

Left | Anton Mauve, Dutch, *The Fagot Gatherer*, circa 1860, oil on panel. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. C. Jay Parkinson, UMFA1996.43.1.

Right | Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (British, born 1977), *Periphery*, 2013, oil on canvas. Purchased with funds from The Phyllis Cannon Wattis Endowment Fund, UMFA2013.3.1.





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Thematic Connections

Museum galleries or groups of artworks might be organized with specific themes in mind. Sometimes these are explicitly stated in the title or description. Other times, they might be implicit or less obvious. Here are some questions related to themes we might find in any given grouping:

- What might this art help you understand about **identity**? Your own? Other people's?
- What might this art tell us about **power**? Who has it? Who doesn't? What is it?
- What might it tell us about **memory**? What do we remember as individuals? What do we remember collectively? Who decides what our culture remembers or forgets?
- How does it connect to what's happening in our world right now, this **present moment**? What is the connection you see?
- What is a theme **you** identify? What makes you think that? There's no wrong answer here!



Right | Yoruba, Nigeria, *King's Hat*, mid-20th century, detail, cloth, basketry framework, glass beads, The Owen D. Mort Jr. Collection of African Art, UMFA2008.32.31.

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Additional information

Need additional information about works of art featured here or within the collection? Please visit our [searchable public database](https://umfa.utah.edu/collections) (<https://umfa.utah.edu/collections>) or email **Ashley.farmer@umfa.utah.edu** who can assist you.



Left | Chinese, Qianlong period (1736-1795), Q'ing Dynasty (1644-1911), *Imperial Vase with Red Bats and Clouds*, porcelain, promised gift of Bert G. Clift, UMFA2014.4.34.



Chakaia Booker, American, *Discarded Memories*, 2008, tire, wood, metal, paint. Purchased with funds from the UMFA Young Benefactors and the Phyllis Cannon Wattis Endowment Fund, UMFA 2009.15.1A,B.



Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (British, born 1977), *Periphery*, 2013, oil on canvas. Purchased with funds from The Phyllis Cannon Wattis Endowment Fund, UMFA2013.3.1.



Yoruba, Nigeria, *King's Hat*, mid-20th century, cloth, basketry framework, glass beads, The Owen D. Mort Jr. Collection of African Art, UMFA2008.32.31.



James T. Harwood, circa 1880–1940, *Preparation for dinner*, 1891–1892, oil on canvas. Transferred from the collection of the A. Ray Olpin University Union and conserved with funds from the Ann K. Stewart Docent and Volunteer Conservation Fund, UMFA2003.14.1.



Chinese, Qianlong period (1736-1795), Q'ing Dynasty (1644-1911), *Imperial Vase with Red Bats and Clouds*, porcelain, promised gift of Bert G. Clift, UMFA2014.4.34.



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