



Exhibition Resources

April 2–July 26, 2009

WELCOME TO THE WEXNER CENTER

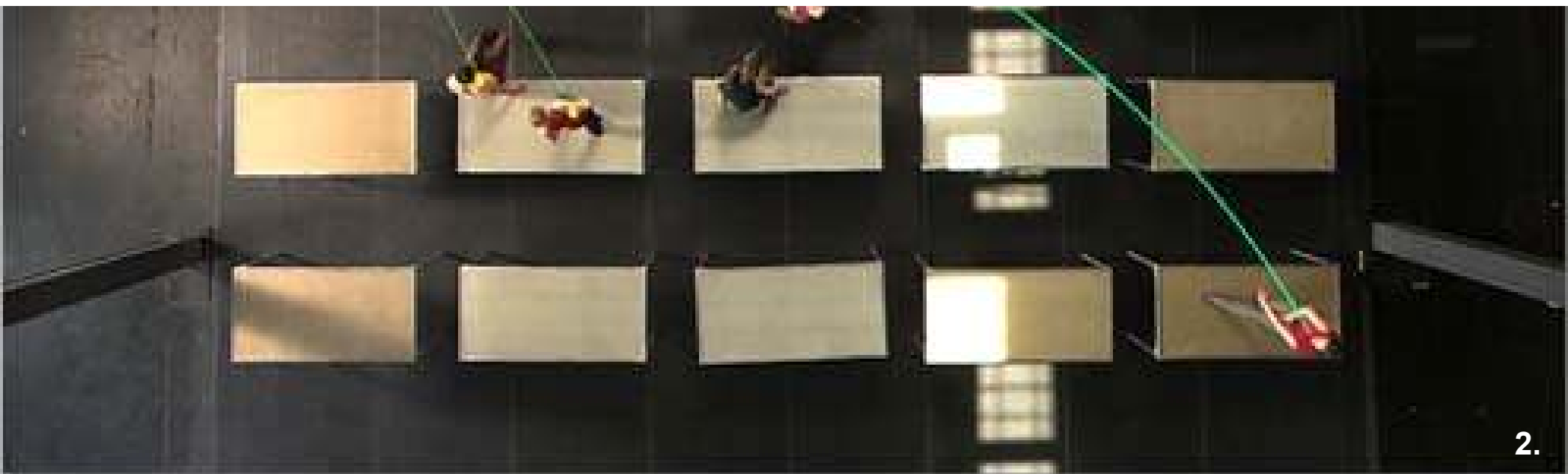
TEACHER RESOURCE

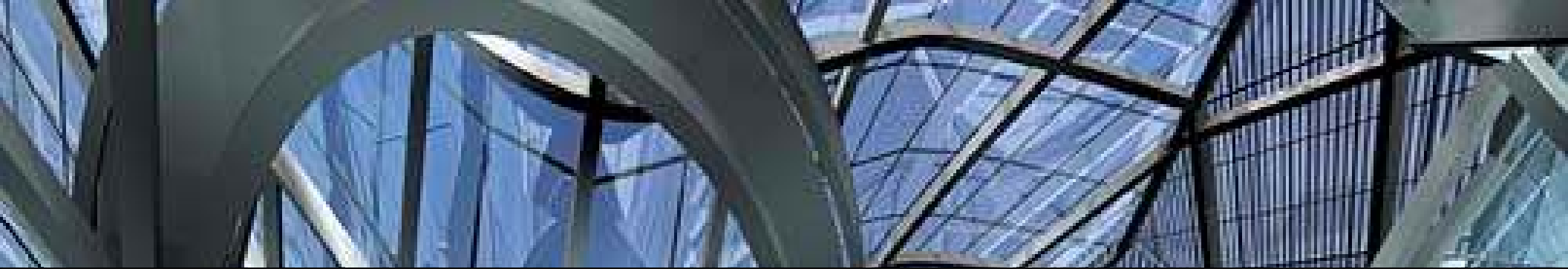
WE ARE PLEASED TO WELCOME YOU AND YOUR STUDENTS TO THE WEXNER CENTER. HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO HELP MAKE YOUR EXPERIENCE GREAT.

PLEASE PROVIDE NAMETAGS FOR YOUR STUDENTS. OUR DOCENTS CARE ABOUT WHAT STUDENTS, AS INDIVIDUALS, HAVE TO SAY AND WANT TO CALL ON THEM BY NAME.

PLEASE SEPARATE YOUR STUDENTS INTO GROUPS OF 8–10 BEFORE YOU ARRIVE. THE LESS TIME WE SPEND ORGANIZING GROUPS, THE MORE TIME YOUR STUDENTS HAVE TO EXPLORE THE GALLERIES. ONE CHAPERONE MUST ACCOMPANY EACH GROUP OF 10.

TAKE A MOMENT TO LOOK OVER THE TEACHER RESOURCE MATERIALS. THE INFORMATION CAN BE USED TO CREATE MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOUR STUDENTS' CLASSROOM AND WEXNER CENTER EXPERIENCES. SOME INCLUDED RESOURCES ARE GEARED TOWARD YOUNG AUDIENCES, WHILE OTHERS ARE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR OLDER STUDENTS. USE YOUR DISCRETION AND BE CREATIVE AS YOU DETERMINE WHAT TO SHARE AND EXPLORE WITH YOUR CLASS.





PREPARE

EXPLORE THE IDEA OF VISITING AN ARTS CENTER WITH YOUR STUDENTS.

HAVE THEY EVER BEEN TO AN ART MUSEUM? WHAT DID THEY SEE THERE? WHAT DO THEY EXPECT TO SEE AT THE WEXNER CENTER? BELIEVE IT OR NOT, OUR DOCENTS HAVE BEEN ASKED “WHERE ARE THE DINOSAUR BONES AT THIS MUSEUM?” BY YOUNG VISITORS ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. HELP YOUR STUDENTS TO BECOME MENTALLY PREPARED FOR THEIR TIME WITH US.

GALLERY RULES

- **WE CAN'T TOUCH THE ART. WHY?** WE ALL HAVE OILS AND SALTS ON OUR SKIN THAT CAN DAMAGE THE SURFACE OF THE ART. THE DAMAGE MAY NOT APPEAR IMMEDIATELY—BUT IT'S THERE, AND IT'S DIFFICULT TO REPAIR.
- **WE CAN'T LEAN ON WALLS OR PEDESTALS AND CAN'T TOUCH THE CLEAR COVERS THAT PROTECT THE ART. WHY?** MANY OF THE PEDESTALS ARE NOT BOLTED DOWN AND MANY OF THE WALLS ARE NOT LOAD BEARING. DELICATE PIECES CAN TAKE A TUMBLE OR BECOME DAMAGED WITH THE SLIGHTEST BUMP.
- **PENS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE GALLERIES BUT PENCILS ARE.** PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOUR STUDENTS WILL COMPLETE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DURING THEIR VISIT.
- **CAMERAS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE GALLERIES.**
- **CELL PHONE CONVERSATIONS, TEXTING, AND CELL PHOTOS ARE PROHIBITED IN THE GALLERIES.**
- **ALL BACKPACKS, COATS, AND UMBRELLAS MUST BE EITHER LEFT AT THE COAT CHECK OR LEFT IN MERSHON LOBBY.**
- **FOOD AND DRINK ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE GALLERIES.**

Catch Air: Robin Rhode

Raised in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, and now based in Berlin, Robin Rhode has emerged in the last decade as a highly influential artist. From an acute personal perspective shaped by South Africa's history of racial discrimination, he highlights the push and pull between the liberating force of the individual's imagination and the confines of media-driven stereotypes.

In many of his best-known projects, Rhode draws crude, life-size outlines of everyday objects on house facades or city streets and interacts with them as if they were the actual physical objects. Here, he'll chart his development with some 20 key examples of wide ranging work: photographic storyboards, animations, films, and performances shown in video documentation. In some he focuses on street activities such as gambling, drinking, or theft. Others stage sequences in which he appears as an imaginary sports superstar, music performer, or magician. Eager to engage the Wexner Center's architecture, Rhode is also developing an installation specifically for our lower lobby. There and throughout the show, you see how the artist gives a radical twist to techniques such as illusionism and site specificity, reenergizing them as fresh and potent tools.

Glossary:

Apartheid: A South African policy of racial segregation that was put into place by the minority National Party in 1948. Apartheid laws favored whites over blacks and those of mixed origins politically, economically, and socially. These policies ended with the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994.

Personal Narrative: A method of expressing a story or information about your life or experiences.

Storyboard: A storyboard tells a story visually, using panels. A comic book can be thought of as a storyboard of sorts.

Context: The details or info surrounding an image, idea, or situation that help to create meaning.

Symbol: An object or image that is loaded with meaning. Something visible that represents ideas that are invisible.



Ways of Seeing

People can look at works of art in a variety of ways. During your visit, you may look at the works of Robin Rhode and wonder, “How’d he do that?” while someone else may wonder, “Why’d he do that?” Both of these ways of wondering are perfectly valid and important methods of thinking about art. Below are some discussion/investigation prompts designed to prepare your students for a “why?” discussion in *Catch Air: Robin Rhode*.

Through the Lens

Personal experience can often greatly inspire and affect an artist’s work. When this is the case, it can help to try to step into the artist’s shoes as you look. Knowing about the artist’s life and experiences provides *context* for looking at his work. How can your students actively prepare to do this for Robin Rhode?

If you lived in South Africa during the time of apartheid policies, how would you have been affected? How would your friends have been affected?

What does *identity* mean, and how is it formed? What kinds of things impact who we are?

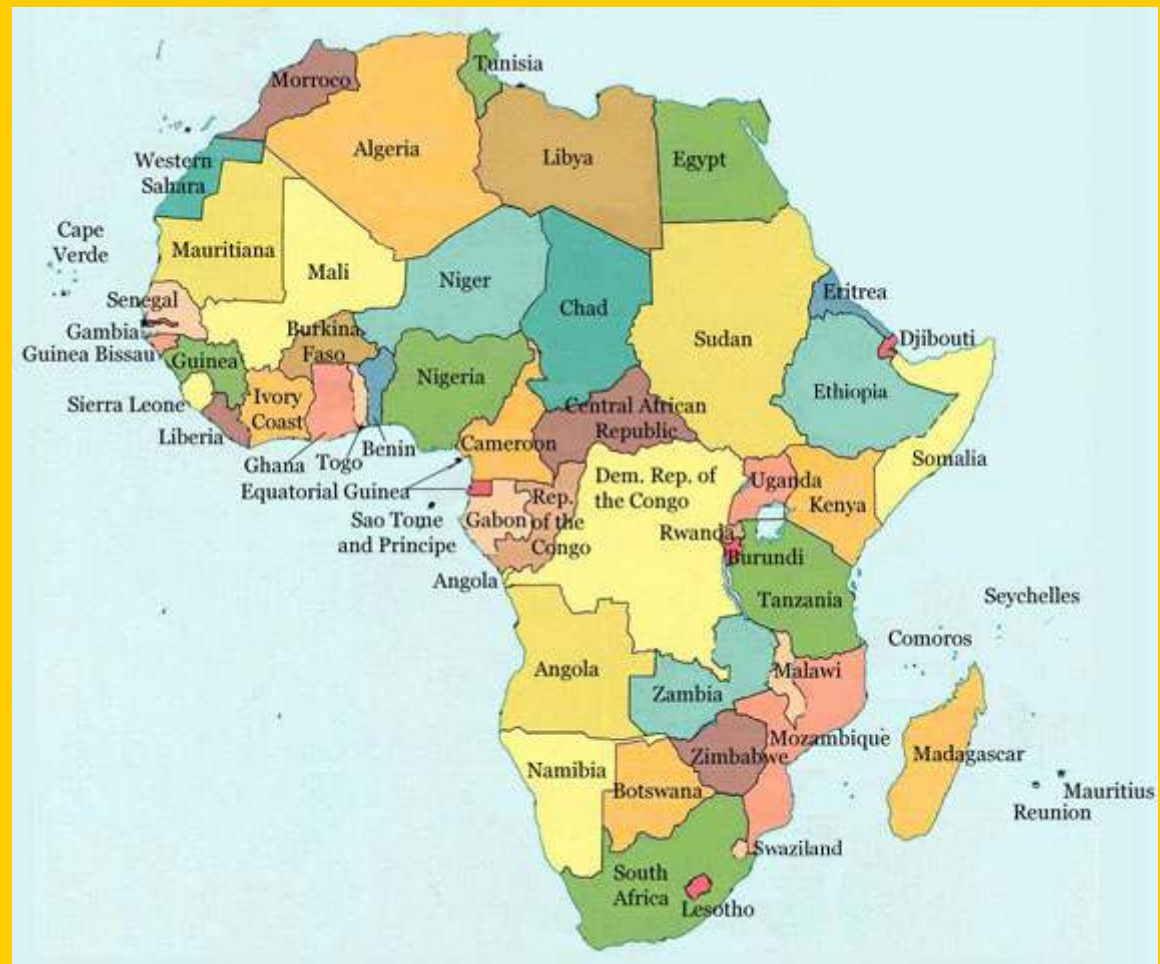
What does *stereotype* mean? What kinds of stereotypes exist? Have you ever been stereotyped?

What is *mass media*, and how does it affect how we view the world and other people?

What is the role or purpose for art? Can art serve more than one purpose?

What does *social commentary* mean?

Tip: Ask your docent about the physical *context* in which Robin Rhodes creates his work. Why might that be important?



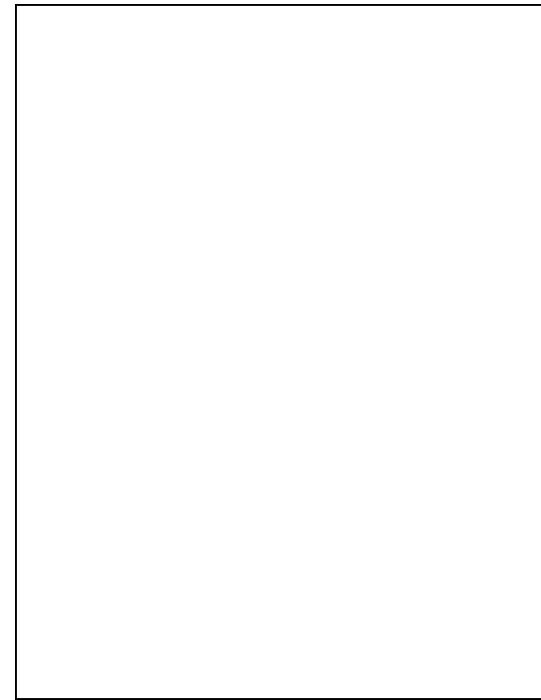
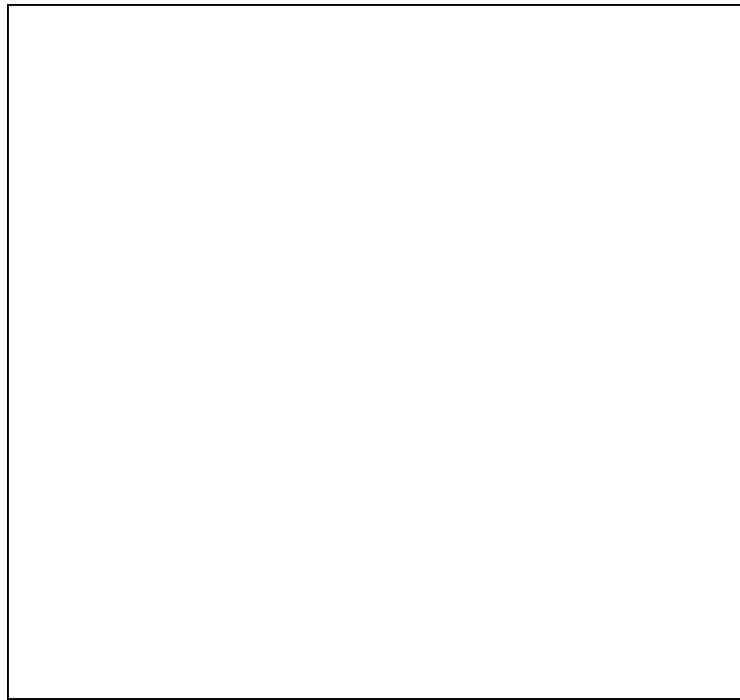
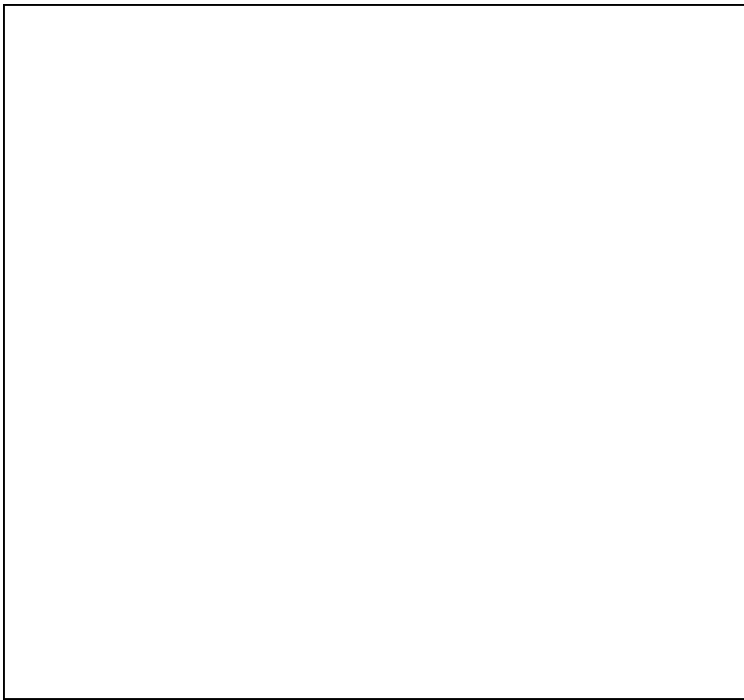
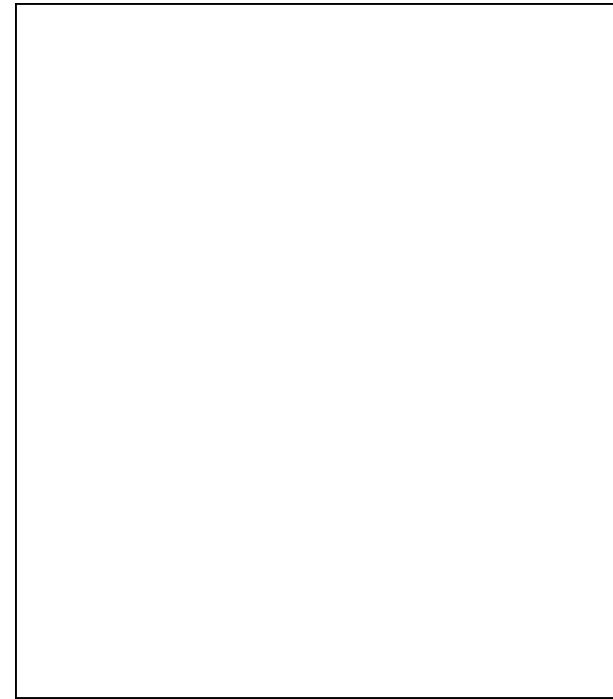
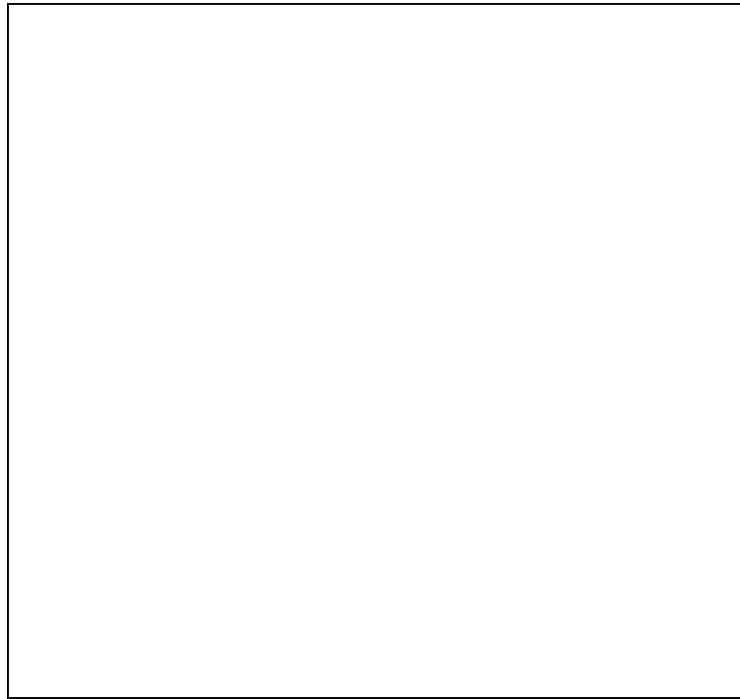
Check This Out

Interview with Robin Rhode: *(copy and paste into your web browser)*
<http://wexarts.org/wexblog/?p=1777>

The Apartheid Museum
<http://www.apartheidmuseum.org/>

Robin Rhode’s gallery
<http://www.perryrubenstein.com/artists/robin-rhode/>

Article in the *Guardian* newspaper (UK)
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/sep/20/streetart.art>



Post-visit: How can your students tell their stories visually? Think of some of the symbols and styles used in Rhode's work. What activities could you do before creating the actual visual piece that could help your students to dig deeper? Could you partner with an educator from another discipline to create a broader experience?

COOP HIMMELB(L)AU: Beyond the Blue

The innovative approach of COOP HIMMELB(L)AU permeates buildings, ideas about urban planning, and even the name of this influential Viennese architectural firm.

"Coop" signals the firm's identity as a cooperative. "Himmelb(l)au" offers the double meanings of "sky blue" (with the "l") and "sky building" (without). Launched in May 1968, COOP HIMMELB(L)AU has never yielded the radical fervor of its founding moment and consistently rejected preconceived notions of design across 40 years of exquisite, experimental plans and constructions. Among its recent projects are the double cone structure of the new BMW center (BMW Welt) in Munich, the eye-catching addition to the Akron Art Museum, and the dramatic headquarters for the European Central Bank in Frankfurt.

The Wexner Center is proud to host the U.S. debut of this exhibition from MAK in Vienna, one of the world's leading museums of contemporary art and design. In it, you'll have the opportunity to study several projects in depth in large-scale models and to survey small models of many more projects displayed on an oversize model table. Recalling an urban landscape plan, this display strategy evokes the firm's belief in architecture's need to address spatial possibilities, while also reflecting design principal Wolf Prix's passionate critique of contemporary urban planning.

Glossary:

Avant-garde: This term refers to people, projects, or ideas that are experimental, unconventional, or innovative. They may be the first of their kind.

Design Problem: Relating to architecture, it's the process of planning, conceiving, or dreaming up a structure that will successfully fit the requirements set forth by the client and the architect.

Open Architecture: In the case of COOP HIMMELB(L)AU, open architecture refers to the design of the building space. Many spaces are left versatile and "open" to allow the occupants to determine how they will be used.



Breaking Boundaries

The process:

The creative process of the “principals” or leaders of COOP HIMMELB(L)AU (including cofounder Wolf D. Prix) can be considered unusual in the field of architecture. They engage in an intense conversation about the design problem and eventually begin to rapidly sketch their vision for the structure. They try to remain as true to their original sketch as possible, for they feel that the passion and emotion that inspired the original design will translate to the completed building.

Listen to your inner voice:

Our initial reaction to places and spaces is often very telling. Unfortunately, we can forget to listen to our gut. Architects (and most other artists, for that matter) create an environment or provoke mood through their work. Encourage your students to listen to their gut as they walk into the Wexner Center and experience its architecture. Ask them to do the same as they look at works in the gallery and imagine what it would be like to step into a COOP HIMMELB(L)AU building. That inner voice plays a major role in how we experience the world—and our docents will want to know what your voices are saying!

Resources:

COOP Himmelb(l)au website:
<http://www.coop-himmelblau.at/>

Exhibition catalogue (available online or at the Wexner Center Store:
COOP HIMMELB(L)AU: Beyond the Blue

Article about COOP HIMMELB(L)AU in *Architecture Week*:
http://www.architectureweek.com/2008/0416/building_1-1.html

YouTube SketchUp rendering of COOP HIMMELB(L)AU’s Falkestrasse building: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJe4MrrD_-c

YouTube visual tour of the Akron Art Museum
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAsIXtI8qM>

Along with architecture, urban planning is a major focus for COOP. Urban planning is essentially the design of cities: the layout, use of space, circulation, etc. The firm strives to rethink the way we design cities and buildings in a way that is unclouded by conventions. Ask your students to rethink their spaces:

Design a better classroom

Design a better school building

Design a better neighborhood

Design a better Columbus

Most important, ask them to explain their choices and justify why their plans are better.



William Forsythe: Transfigurations

See the first presentation in this country of a significant body of vanguard American choreographer William Forsythe's gallery-based video and installation projects.

Forsythe, who received the 2002 Wexner Prize, has revolutionized classical ballet for our time with his bold, contemporary works, and he's widely viewed as the greatest innovator in his field since George Balanchine. Since launching the Forsythe Company in 2004 (after the closure of the Frankfurt Ballet, his longtime base of operations), Forsythe has been extending his choreographic thinking into new forms such as installations for gallery and public spaces, video, digital media, and publications. For Forsythe, these projects are part of a larger sphere of interest he terms "choreographic objects." In *Transfigurations*, you'll see how the dance maker and performer, developing his concepts through working from the body, is now projecting his ideas into new mediums and new ways of presentation.



Resources:

An essay by William Forsythe on "choreographic objects"
<http://www.wexarts.org/ex/forsythe/>

William Forsythe's dance company's web site:
<http://www.theforsythecompany.de/>

OSU and William Forsythe's online, interactive project: Synchronous Objects:
<http://synchronousobjects.osu.edu/>

Online interview with William Forsythe:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/forsythe_transcript.shtml

Ballet.co web site about Forsythe:
http://www.ballet.co.uk/magazines/yr_01/nov01/

Let's Move.

Like COOP HIMMELB(L)AU in architectural and urban design, William Forsythe is driven to constantly rethink the way that his field—choreography and dance—can be viewed and created. For Forsythe, ballet doesn't simply mean *Swan Lake* and choreography doesn't mean strictly prescribed and set movements.

Imagine the internal senses that are used to create or preplan anything. As you solve a geometry problem you may “see” or move through the problem in your mind. As you alter a recipe you may internally “taste” your way through the process, imagining your results before you add a single ingredient.

With “choreographed objects,” Forsythe makes this transition between the senses and movement visible. The “objects” are a physical manifestation of the internal investigations, visualizations, or processes that can take place before a series of movements. Because we can all see these physical objects, we can each come to our own conclusion about what the movements will or should look like. We are all invited to participate in the creative process and are given an alternative vehicle to explore the ideas of William Forsythe.

In other words...

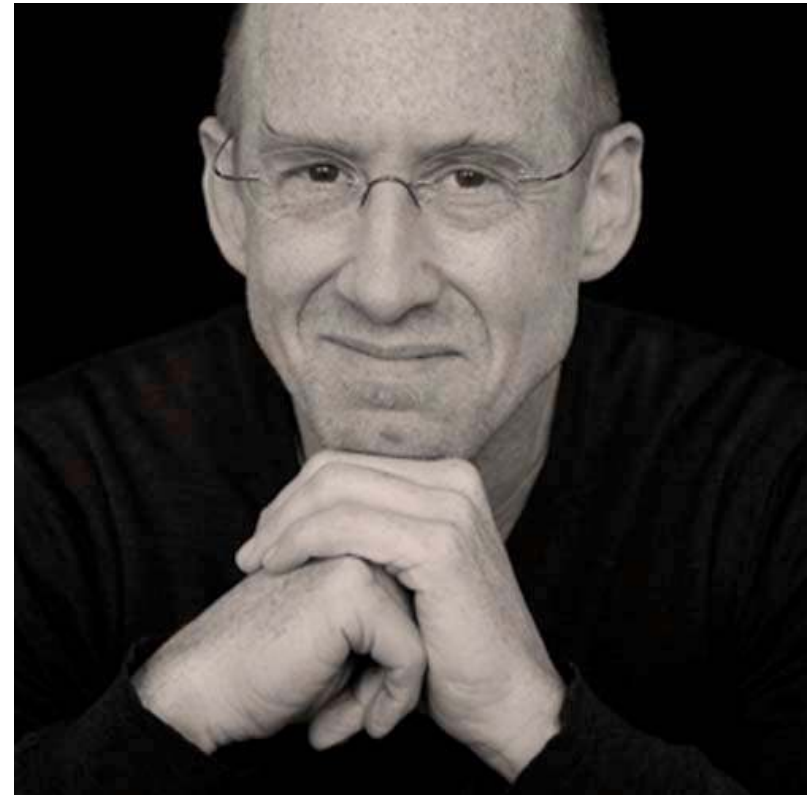
Check out these videos of Forsythe posted on YouTube. In this series of clips, he leads the viewer through methods of visualizing objects and lines to inspire movements. Try some with your students:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sjqI9IfMqCo&feature=related>

Again, with feeling...

Visual artists use line and “movement” to create emotion in their works. Dancers also use movement and “lines” to create emotion. One of Forsythe's pieces, *Monster Partiture*, was inspired by the illness and death of his wife. You can learn more about this during your visit.

How can you inspire your students to tell their stories or express an idea through movement? To begin, maybe ask them to draw a single emotion on paper with their eyes closed. How can these lines be translated into movement?



Artists as Problem Solvers

Each of the artists represented in the Wexner Center's galleries is, essentially, a problem solver. Robin Rhode wanted to find a way to tell us his story through images. COOP HIMMELB(L)AU and William Forsythe also communicate with the people who experience their works. They just happen to use different tools: glass, metal, concrete, paper, and the human body. What other disciplines require creative problem solving?

How can you instill the practice of creative problem solving in your students?

How can the processes of Robin Rhode, COOP HIMMELB(L)AU, and William Forsythe inspire problem-solving methods in the classroom?

(Your docent is a great resource to help you find out more about the artists' creative processes.)

What does the creative process look like? How do you know when creativity is happening?

Do you think it is more effective when students identify the problem that needs to be solved or when you, the teacher, present them with a problem? Why?

Is creativity really even important outside the art studio? Why?

Image Checklist:

- Cover:** Robin Rhode, *Wheel of Steel* (detail), 2006
- Page 2:** Image from *Synchronous Objects* web project
- Page 3:** COOP HIMMELB(L)AU, Musée des Confluences, interior, 2001–2009
- Page 4:** Robin Rhode, *Brick Face* (detail), 2008
- Page 7:** COOP HIMMELB(L)AU, drawing for High School #9, 2002–2008
- Page 8:** Wolf Prix
- Page 9:** Image from *Monster Partiture* performance
- Page 10:** William Forsythe

Check out our web site for information on upcoming programs and events related to our spring/summer exhibitions. You may also find information on programs designed for educators and their students. Head to wexarts.org/learn or call (614) 292-6493.