LILIANA PORTER
OTHER SITUATIONS
On view September 13, 2018 – January 27, 2019

Tejedora, 2017. Fabric, figurine, string on white wooden base.

Educator Resource Guide
Grades K – 12
Dear Educator,

*Other Situations* is a non-linear survey of Porter's work from 1973 to 2018, which explores the conflicting boundaries between reality and fiction, and the ways in which images are circulated and consumed. Organized by SCAD Museum of Art and curated by Humberto Moro, SCAD Curator of Exhibitions, this is the artist's first museum solo show in New York City in more than 25 years. The exhibition highlights the fundamental distinction that Porter creates between the notions of “narrative” and “situation” in contrast to the structures implicit in most stories that suggest a relationship with time, and in which the artist is not interested. In her work, the past and future of an action becomes irrelevant in light of the urgency and absurdity of the problems faced by the figures portrayed. Sometimes paired in conversation or arranged in larger groups, Porter’s characters — a pantheon of cultural figures such as Elvis Presley, Che Guevara, Jesus, Mickey Mouse and Benito Juárez — evokes questions about representation, image dissemination and public life, and are particularly relevant in present times, when the fields of politics, spectacle and celebrity culture collide and merge.

Each of the projects presented here engage particular works of art from the exhibition Liliana Porter: Other Situations. Each activity is designed to engage students in critical thinking, personal reflection, and creative art making. These projects can span multiple sessions in the classroom both before and after your visit to the museum. Each project will outline an objective, materials list, project description, discussion questions, and prompt.

We hope you will use the educational materials provided in this guide as a resource to support different areas of study in the classroom and to help prepare your students for a visit to the museum. To help you plan your lessons and units, we have included contextual information and a classroom project guide with discussion questions and prompts.

We look forward to having you join us for a visit to El Museo del Barrio this season!

The Education Department
El Museo del Barrio
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About the Artist

Born in Argentina in 1941, Liliana Porter, originally educated in printmaking — a discipline that deeply influenced her practice — moved to New York in 1964, where she cofounded the New York Graphic Workshop with artists Luis Camnitzer and José Guillermo Castillo. Since then, Porter has worked in a variety of media including painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, assemblages, video, installation and, more recently, theater. Porter’s art has been exhibited in more than 35 countries in over 450 group shows, and is a part of public and private collections including El Museo del Barrio. Her work has been reviewed in Artforum, Art in America, and Sculpture Magazine, among other publications. In 2013, the Fundación Patricia Phelps de Cisneros published the book Liliana Porter in Conversation with Inés Katzenstein as part of the Conversaciones/Conversations series. Galleries in Europe, Latin America and the United States represent the artist.
Preparing for Your Visit to El Museo del Barrio

The following preparation is intended to support teachers in integrating the exhibition *Liliana Porter: Other Situations* into their curriculum. Use the classroom project guide to extend your discussions in the galleries to the classroom.

**Descriptions:**

**Grades K – 3: Geometry, Ourselves and the World**
In *Other Situations*, viewers see a dialogue between space, the body and geometrical shapes. Students will analyze and compare these geometrical shapes, and identify them in the world around them. Students will also be encouraged to begin asking questions about what they see and identify. This interactive experience will include close observation, group work and creative activities.

**Grades 4 – 8: The Arts and Story Time!**
In *Other Situations* we find a series of miniature sculptures in which tiny characters perform tasks that seem infinitely impossible. Liliana Porter has spoken of her interest in seeing the way in which viewers can humanize and project interiority to inanimate objects. In this interactive activity, students will write a short story and complement it with various visual media and formats to create a collaborative book. Students will be encouraged to participate effectively in conversations with their classmates to express their ideas clearly.

**Grades 9 – 12: From the Portrait to the Self As Subject**
According to psychologist Erik Erikson, adolescents experience a period of “identity crisis” during their teen years. It is a moment of searching for one’s identity, with a strong interaction with the environment, and the people and objects that surround them. It is a stage of experimentation that facilitates the development of the self and the personal perception of what gives meaning to life. Using *Other Situations*, students will reflect on their own identity and the relationship among the people and objects surrounding them. Students will also look closely at Liliana Porter’s work and participate in group discussions, and will become both artists and curators.

*Feel free to come to the museum with the material you create in your classrooms! Send pictures to educationprograms@elmuseo.org, or tag @elmuseo on social media.*
Grades K – 3: Geometry, Ourselves and The World

Before Your Museum Visit

Objective
Using Liliana Porter’s Geometric Shapes, as a starting point, students will identify two or three dimensional shapes and explore them in their own environment. They will then work together to create a geometrical abstract poster from Porter’s Memorabilia.

Geometric Shapes, 1973 (recreated 2008 for Tamayo)

Questions

- What shapes do we see in this photograph?
- What objects do you use every day that look like these shapes?
- Do we see things around us that have the same or similar shape?

**ART-MAKING:** Students will mix and match triangles, squares and circles in different sizes, colors and textures and identify geometrical shapes in the figurines of Liliana Porter’s artwork, working together to create a poster with these shapes.

✓ **Materials:**
  - Large copy of *Memorabilia*
  - Blank canvas (same size as *Memorabilia* copy)
  - Shapes made of different types of colored and textured paper
  - Glue Sticks

✓ **Instructions:**
  - Show *Geometric Shapes* to the students and ask them if they recognize the shapes displayed. Depending on the age of the students, ask if they can identify two or three dimensional shapes.

  - Ask the students if they can identify any real life object that looks like these shapes and invite them to explore the classroom searching for different shapes – it can be “I spy with my little eye...”.

  - On the large copy of *Memorabilia*, the students will mix and match different shapes with the figurines presented on the artwork. The idea is to cover almost the entire image with these shapes.

  - Finally, have students glue these shapes, in the same order and place, to a blank canvas. This way they will create a geometrical abstract poster based on *Memorabilia*.
After Your Museum Visit

Objective

Taking a close look at Porter’s self-portrait, students will discuss what shapes resemble the parts of a human face. Taking a close look at their own, they will then create a self-portrait portrait using different geometrical shapes.


Questions:
- What shapes could represent the parts of a human face?
- What makes you unique? How would you represent this?
- What size, colors and textures would you use for your self-portrait?

**ART-MAKING:** Self-portraits are a great exercise in art exploration and can be created using various materials. Use a variety of shapes in different sizes, colors and textures for the children to create a collage self-portrait.

- **Materials:**
  - Chart Paper
  - Shapes cut out from different textured and colorful paper
  - Glue Sticks
  - Markers

- **Instructions:**
  - Using Porter’s *Untitled (self-portrait with square)*, ask students what they see and discuss the ways in which a self-portrait can be made (photography, painting, drawing, etc.)
  - After talking about the concept of self-portrait, ask the children what shapes they would use to represent the parts of a human face. Have students create their own collage self-portrait with the different geometrical shapes.
Grades 4 – 8: Arts and Story time!

Before Your Museum Visit: Pre-Visit Guide

Objective:
Starting with Porter’s series of labors, students will have a group discussion based on the characters presented. Individually, they will write a short story with special emphasis on the characters description and defined places and actions.
Questions:
- Look at these pieces – Do you see anything they have in common?
- Let’s imagine these the figures in these pieces are characters – how do you think they are feeling and why?

Artworks:
1. Man with Pickaxe, 2012
2. Tejedora, 2017
3. To hold a String, 2015
4. To Fix It, 2016

**ART-MAKING:** Students will choose one piece from the group of tiny characters performing tasks and write a short story. The purpose is to imagine a plot for these inanimate objects and be able to share it through words.

✓ Materials:
- Images of the artworks (See Appendix figure 1)
- Worksheet (See Appendix figure 2):
  a) Initial guide with questions
     i. Who is the main character in the story?
     ii. How is your character feeling? Why is the character feeling this way?
     iii. Are there any other characters? What is their relation with the main?
     iv. When does the story take place?
     v. Where does the story take place?
     vi. Is there a problem to get solved? How does the problem get solved?
  b) Space for title and 5 paragraph writing.

✓ Instructions:
- Show to students images of the miniature sculpture of tiny characters performing tasks. Ask students what is going on in these pictures and what do they have in common.
- From the answers given by the students, start a conversation about the feelings that these characters might be having. Ask the students if they can imagine why they have this emotions and sensations,
and what could be the causes.
- Each student will choose an image as a starting point to write a short story with characters description, and how they relate to the places and actions of the plot. It is important for children to use an initial guide to plan their short story.

After Your Museum Visit: Post-Visit

Objective
After visiting Porter’s exhibition, students have seen how many different mediums and formats can be used to create artwork. They will reflect on how they can visually support literature and work together to create a collaborative book.

Questions
- How would you represent your story visually?
- What materials would you use to tell your story?

Artworks


ART-MAKING: Students will create artwork using different materials (markers, colored papers, cutouts, and other available materials) that tell a short story - ultimately to be put together for a collaborative book!

- Materials:
  - Scissors
  - Glue Sticks
  - Chart Paper
  - Magazines
  - Newspapers
  - Different types of colored paper
  - Different types of textured fabric

- Instructions:
  - Discuss with students what media and 3-D materials where used in the exhibition, you can complement it with some images of the artworks. Ask them what their opinions about the materials used by the artist.
  - Go back to the stories they wrote before visiting the exhibition for them to think about what materials may be the best to use. Using chart paper, allow students to use different materials to narrate their story.
  - The students will put together every page to create a book of stories, and as a group they will have to decide on the title and cover of the book. Scan the book so everyone can take a copy home.
Grade 9-12: From the portrait to the self as subject

Objective
This interactive project will include looking closely at Liliana Porter’s work, and will include critical thinking, group discussions, and a moment to reflect on the ideas surrounding identity and the relationship between the people and the objects that surround them. The activity culminates with a creative project where students work not only as artists, but also as

Self Portrait

- Ask students to explain what images come to mind when they hear the term “self-portrait” and to give examples. Introduce the term of self-portrait as, for example, “a portrait of an artist produced or created by that artist”.

- Discuss the ways in which photography has greatly opened up access to portrait, especially now, when so many people have access to a camera. Discuss the various ways of making a portrait with a camera.

Use the photographic works from the ‘70s (on the next page) characterized by having a strongly conceptual vein. These early confluences of bodies and geometric shapes break down distinctions between the organic and the mathematical, the spiritual and the rational.

i. The artist works both sides of the camera, using herself as a subject and her own body as a generative site as. Simultaneously, she plays up the camera’s status as a recording device to document ideas.

ii. Subtle poetics more explicitly turn into literary references in the series of prints from the late ‘70s referencing Rene Magritte that interrogate images, representation and simulacra influenced by Jorge Luis Borges.
Artworks

1 Untitled (self-portrait with square), 1973.
3 The Magician, 1977.

ART-MAKING: Students will work as artists to make digital self-portraits (“selfie”) with a caption they feel inspires them (from literature, movies or songs).

The self as subject

- Artworks that take the artist as their subject, often expanding upon the traditional self-portrait’s intention to capture the artist’s likeness by exposing his or her body, inner state or minutiae of daily life.

- Use Liliana Porter’s series of photographs from the 2000’s presenting objects of mass consumption that refers to a historical character totally outside of its context. The artist shows us how capitalism commodities everything from political ideology to religion, and turns the sacred into the ridiculously profane. The representation of these heavily mediated individuals, and the questions about image dissemination and public life, become particularly relevant in present times, where the fields of politics, spectacle and celebrity culture collide and merge.
Artworks
1 Mouse Pad Artwork, 2004.
2 Sugar Food/Christ, 2006.
3 Joan of Arc, Elvis, Che, 2011.

[ART-MAKING:] Students will collect personal items and assemble an exhibition of contemporary natural history. Working in small groups, ask students to place their objects (brought from home or items they carry daily) in the way that they would display them as curators of an exhibition. Discuss why these items were made part of the “collection”. What makes them similar, what makes them different? Have students title their exhibition and write a short description. Take “gallery tours” of each of the groups exhibitions so students can hear about each other’s decisions for choosing these items. Photograph the exhibitions and compare them to the way Liliana Porter decides to present her objects.
Appendix

Figure 1: Images of Artwork


*To hold a String (sostener el hilito)*, 2015. Figurine, wooden sphere base, black string wall installation.
Figure 2: Questions for your story

- Who is the main character in the story?
- How is your character feeling? Why is the character feeling this way?
- Are there any other characters? What is their relation with the main?
- When does the story take place?
- Where does the story take place?
- Is there a problem to get solved? How does the problem get solved?

Write your story below. Remember to give it a title!

Title: ___________________________________________
Common Core State Standards for College and Career Readiness

Standards addressed throughout guided visits and classroom project guide:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.R9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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