

OUT OF THE BAG

ART EXPLORATION TORRIE GROENING: THE SENSES AT HOME



Top left: *Studio Tests of the Senses - Sight*, Torrie Groening, 1999. Bottom left: *Studio Tests of the Senses - Touch*, Torrie Groening, 1999.
Right: *Studio Tests of the Senses - Nature*, Torrie Groening, 1999.

ART EXPLORATION

TORRIE GROENING: THE SENSES AT HOME

INTRODUCTION

Using Torrie Groening's artwork as inspiration, young artists can explore materials around their home that speak to the senses and create their own artworks.

OBJECTIVE

This guide provides information and activity lesson plans to inspire students to learn more about art-making through the work of Torrie Groening. The highlighted artworks are in the Burnaby Art Gallery's Permanent Collection and are part of a larger series of the artist's printed work that focuses on senses. Through observation and experimentation, students will use their own senses in unusual and unique ways outside a classroom or gallery setting.

AGE GROUP

Grades 3-7

PROGRAM LENGTH

90-120 minutes

CURRICULAR TIES

- » Explore artistic expressions of themselves and community through creative processes.
- » People connect to others and share ideas through the arts.
- » Creative expression develops our unique identity and voice.
- » Inquiry through the arts creates opportunities for risk taking.
- » Creative experiences involve an interplay between exploration, inquiry and purposeful choice.
- » Explore identity, place, culture and belonging through arts experiences.
- » Explore elements, processes, materials and techniques of the arts.

ARTWORKS

1. *Studio Tests of the Senses - Nature* EC2019.5.1
2. *Studio Tests of the Senses - Sight* 2019.19.3
3. *Studio Tests of the Senses - Touch* 2019.19.4

ARTIST BIO

Torrie Groening has exhibited her work in group and solo shows in Canada and the U.S. After a decade living in San Francisco, Groening returned to Vancouver where she continues to work today. Her work is in several public gallery and museum collections including the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Surrey Art Gallery and the Simon Fraser University Gallery. Her involvement in printmaking has included roles as a teacher, a master printer, collector and owner of a print gallery in Canada. More recently, in San Francisco, her work has incorporated traditional digital printmaking techniques, painting and new digital technology.

QUERIES

- » What are the 5 senses? Taste, touch, smell, hearing, sight.
- » How has Groening worked with the theme of the senses?
- » Describe the objects that are used in each image.
- » How do you think Groening decided on the objects shown?
- » How are the three artworks different or the same?
- » Is there anything strange or funny about these works?

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ART ACTIVITY 1



Found Sculpture

Materials:

White sheets of paper
Coloring implements: markers,
coloured pencils, crayons, etc.
Pencil

Found objects
Cloth
Coloured construction paper (optional)
Tape

An interesting part of Groening's artwork is the subject matter and the way it's organized. For this activity, choose one of Groening's artworks as the inspiration to create your own sculptural **composition** related to the senses.

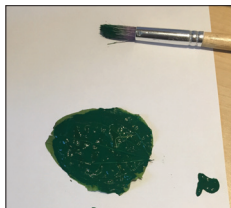
- » Start by choosing one of Groening's artworks to focus on and gather materials that relate to that sense from around the house. For example, if touch is chosen, find as many objects in the image as possible. Maybe you can find objects that are similar to those featured in Groening's work, as well as new or different objects. For sight, materials could include brightly coloured crayons, red fabric, a shiny metal object or a piece of wood.
- » If there is a material or object you think of that you are unable to find, such as a butterfly or a red flower, use coloured pencils or markers to draw it on a piece of paper and then cut it out.
- » Next find a flat working surface and begin to arrange the parts of the sculpture. If possible, work on a table backing onto a wall to help support the background.
- » Look at how Groening used the background and table surfaces: what colours and types of background would best suit your sculpture? Some suggestions are coloured construction paper, fabric or a piece of clothing. These can be taped to the wall or draped across the table.
- » Begin arranging the objects as you like. Groening's work gives examples of how sculpture can be arranged, but use your own ideas too. Certain materials can also suggest possibilities: a cup might be filled up with coloured crumpled paper. Or a pipe cleaner might be wrapped around a fork. Scotch tape can be used to help hold objects in place.
- » Once your composition is complete, take a picture of it. How does the photo look compared to the sculpture? Are there similarities to Groening's work?



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ART ACTIVITY 2



Leaf Printing

Materials:

White sheets of paper (11x14 inches approx.)

Tempera or acrylic paint + paintbrush

Natural materials (leaves, grasses, pinecones etc.)

Scrap paper

Water container

Much of Torrie Groening's art practice involves printmaking. The works shown above - *Studio Tests of the Senses* - are a type of print called a **serigraph** — a **screenprinting** process in which inks are pressed through a screen onto paper. Groening's work *Studio Tests of the Senses - Nature*, features many materials from nature: an oyster shell, tulips, a butterfly, and a wave. For this art activity you will make a nature print.

- » Collect available natural materials such as leaves or grasses or pinecones. Try not to take anything from a live plant or tree!
- » Lay a large piece of scrap paper or newsprint on a flat surface and then lay your materials out on it.
- » Choose a paint colour and apply a thin layer of paint on one side of a leaf or natural object. Start with lighter colours and then darker colours.
- » While the paint is still wet, carefully place the leaf, painted-side down, on a white sheet of paper. Cover the leaf with a scrap piece of paper and press and rub evenly over the surface.
- » Pull off the scrap paper and then the leaf to reveal a leaf print. With the same painted leaf, try reprinting multiple times to see lighter prints.
- » Once dry, repeat this process with different natural materials to build up your composition. Experiment with different colours or use only one colour and see the different textures of each material. If you use a bumpy object like a pinecone, try painting one side and rolling it across the white paper to create texture or a pattern.



TERMS

Composition Arrangement or placement of objects or visual elements in an artwork.

Screenprint/Silkscreen An image printed onto paper or other surface by forcing ink through a pattern cut into a piece of cloth stretched across a frame.

Serigraph A type of screenprint.

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