

Creating a Collection: Raymond and Patsy Nasher

Teacher's Introduction

About this Resource

This classroom resource is designed to connect Art 1 level students with primary source texts that offer opportunities for critical thinking and interdisciplinary connections with works in the Nasher collection. We suggest you invite students to first read the text and then discuss what they read in pairs or small groups before completing the interactive component. **The information on this page is provided to offer teachers a broader context to guide student discussion. The following pages may be printed and given directly to students.**



Raymond and Patsy Nasher at home with a pre-Columbian sculpture, late 1960s

Introduction

The Nasher Collection features over 320 sculptures from the late nineteenth century to the present including iconic works by artists such as Auguste Rodin, Henri Matisse, Constantin Brancusi, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, Henry Moore, Alexander Calder and Jeff Koons. The value of the collection, however, is much greater than the sum of its art historical parts. The Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection also represents two lifetimes dedicated to the belief that art is an essential part of everyday life that should be shared with everyone.

Further Research on Collecting

Documentary Film: *Herb and Dorothy (2008)*. Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vma2T5luy08>

Essay: Walter Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library, A Talk about Book Collecting*
http://art.yale.edu/file_columns/0000/2138/benjamin.pdf

Essay: Richard Rubin, *Amass Appeal; What's the Deal With Collecting?*
http://www.aarp.org/entertainment/arts-leisure/info-01-2008/amass_appeal.html

Essay: Sherry Turkle, *Evocative Objects; Things We Think With* (Introduction)
<https://llk.media.mit.edu/courses/readings/Turkle-EO-intro.pdf>

Suggested Curriculum Connections (TEKS)

Implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Fine Arts: | §117.301. Art, Level I (b) (4)

Fine Arts Critical Evaluation: | §117.52. Art, Level I (c) (3) and (4)

Psychology: | §113.45 (b) (1) (c) (6)

Learn More at the Nasher

You can learn more about The Nasher collection and see what's currently on view by visiting the "Art" section of the Nasher website. Discover more resources and lessons in the "Learn" section, or book a guided or self-guided tour in the "Visit" section. www.nashersculpturecenter.org

Creating a Collection: Raymond and Patsy Nasher

Read

For Raymond and Patsy Nasher, collecting art was a labor of love. Their collection began with the desire to surround their family with beautiful, meaningful objects, and to share them with others. Here are some statements Raymond and Patsy made about collecting.

"We didn't collect the art. The art collected us." *Patsy Nasher*

"I'm a great believer that from an esthetic and environmental point of view, employees enjoy much greater productivity in an environment in which art plays a major function....If you're interested in art, you look at the world around you and see things differently, with clearer eyes and greater sensitivity." *Raymond Nasher*

"We felt strongly that it had to be art that we wanted to live with, so the works really had to become members of the family. It wasn't a question of the quality of the work or formal considerations about art in general, but what it meant to us. Each piece has a story behind it." *Raymond Nasher*

"[Patsy] had a naturally inherent genius for distinguishing between excellent, good, mediocre, and poor works of art, and the confidence to make decisions for herself. While I was doing the business, she traveled to all of the openings in New York, got to know all of the gallery people, and many of the artists." *Raymond Nasher*

The Nashers often met with artists and sometimes commissioned or requested works especially for their collection. They became interested in Henry Moore's *Working Model for Two Piece No. 2 (Vertebrae)* when they saw a model for it in his studio. Patsy also had special portraits of herself and her three daughters made by Andy Warhol.



Raymond and Patsy Nasher with Henry Moore, 1967



Patsy Nasher with Andy Warhol, c. 1970

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Discuss

What do you collect and why? Think about the first object or item in your collection. Describe that object and how you acquired it.

Raymond and Patsy often moved their collection around the house to change the relationships between the works of art and see them in different contexts. Consider the objects in your bedroom. Do you enjoy rearranging your things? How does it feel when you've completed the task?



Jean Arp's *Torso with Buds*, the first modern sculpture in the collection



Nasher home, c. 2000. Note *Torso with Buds* near the front entrance.



Nasher Sculpture Center Garden featuring works from the Nasher Collection

Nasher Sculpture Center

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Curate

In groups of two, spend 10-15 minutes looking at the [Nasher permanent collection online](#). Choose 5 artworks to make up your own mini collection. Make your choices based on a theme or a physical quality the artworks share. Create a list of these works and discuss the reason you chose them with your partner.

Theme

List of Artworks

Next, consider how you would arrange your collection in the Nasher Sculpture Center garden. Using the map below, draw pictures of the sculptures in your collection in the spaces that seem the most fitting.