

REBUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH ART

ARTIST THEASTER GATES

How can an artist transform a community? Theaster Gates, winner of the 2018 Nasher Prize, is working to build positive change by restoring architectural spaces and creating cultural opportunities where people need it most.

Gates began his career making ceramics and creates artworks in a wide variety of media, but he is best known for the movement he started on the South Side of Chicago. His neighborhood, Greater Grand Crossing, had a reputation for high crime rates and decaying buildings. Gates had a vision for what the community could become. He challenged himself: "Can you draw a line around a place and say 'this place matters'? Then jump in the middle of it, roll up your sleeves and keep making things happen until it changes."

Since 2006, Gates has been purchasing abandoned buildings and raising public support to create cultural meeting places. Opened in 2009, the Dorchester Projects now includes a variety of spaces that host community programs. Within this project, The Listening House, The Archive House, and the Black Cinema House offer cultural dinners, art classes, film screenings, and archival magazine, book and record collections for the community to enjoy.



TRY THIS: Take a walk through your neighborhood or school. Make a list of things you see that are good and things that could be improved. Think about how art could be used to create a positive impact in these spaces. Develop an action plan, including sketches, a written proposal and the cost of the project. Present your plan to parents, or school and community leaders and invite them to work with you to make a difference!



Dorchester Projects, 2008-ongoing. The Listening House and the Archive House located on Dorchester Street in the neighborhood of Greater Grand Crossing on the South Side of Chicago. White Cube / Sara Pooley © Theater Gates and White Cube, London, courtesy of the artist.

A Blog You Can't Delete: Notes on Defining a Zine

Kendra Greene and Lisa Huffaker, Zine Queens



Ideally, you have a grievance. Ideally, you have used a corporate photocopier on company time. Probably it is a folio, folded in half, made of paper and staples and enough ink or toner to say what needs to be said, but maybe also there are stickers or thread. It is part pamphlet, part chapbook, part passport, part calling card. Perhaps there is an element of collage. Certainly it rhymes with lean and mean and kerosene, but also libertine and mezzanine, and Pleistocene and soup tureen. It's both to come clean and go-between. It is high art and low art and Thomas Paine and punk rock. It is theses nailed to the church door. It is graffiti you can put in your pocket and liner notes without music and the logbook of a ship still at sea. It is the most beautiful thing you've ever made, this zine. It is a rebellion against anonymity, scarcely bigger than a note passed in class.

CALLING ALL STUDENT ARTISTS Nasher Prize Zine Now Accepting Entries

Students ages 14 – 22 are invited to submit original work inspired by artist Theaster Gates to the 2018 *Student-Centered Zine*. You can draw, write, share original photos, collages or anything else that will lie flat and fit on an 8 1/2" x 5 1/2" page!

Submissions should respond to the following themes: **Space, Community, Identity, Materials, Labor, Collecting or Performance.**

Find links to learn more about Theaster Gates and complete entry information at: nashersculpturecenter.org/engage/student-zine



Celebrate Theaster Gates with us!

Spring Break at the Nasher / March 13 – 18 / 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Open to the public. FREE Admission.

Bring the whole family to investigate big ideas in Theaster Gates's work through interactive resources and activities.

Student-Centered Festival / March 25 / 1 – 4 p.m.

Open to the public. FREE Admission.

Join us at the Nasher to celebrate the launch of our zine and enjoy an afternoon filled with art, interactive projects, and student performances.

Find more programs at nashersculpturecenter.org/art/nasher-prize

THE ORIGINS OF CREATIVITY

Examining Mankind's Earliest Artworks

Have you ever imagined the world before art? Today, we are surrounded by the creative work of artists, from the sculptures in our public spaces to the design of our buildings and possessions to the images we see in print and online. But millions of years ago, our ancestors were just beginning to form ideas about how the objects around them could be more than what they seemed.

Artist Tony Berlant and anthropologist Dr. Thomas Wynn have a special interest in the stone artifacts left behind by ancient people. Together, they selected over 70 objects that show evidence of the earliest creative ideas in the human mind.

Present-day humans, known as *Homo sapiens*, were not the first people to make tools and may not have been the first to make art either. **Handaxes** were probably first made by *Homo erectus*, over 1.5 million years before modern humans existed, and have been found all over the world. Certain handaxes show evidence of being something more than just tools. Whether they are too large to have been used effectively, are made from an especially beautiful stone or were carefully carved around a natural hole or embedded object, these artifacts seem to have been created with artistic intent.

Our ancestors took an interest in found objects that looked like faces or animals too. The **figure stones** collected by ancient people show that they experienced *pareidolia* (seeing patterns in natural objects). This is the same impulse that might cause us to see shapes in the clouds or the man in the moon.

FIRST SCULPTURE: HANDAXE TO FIGURE STONE
On view January 27 – April 28, 2018



A **HANDAXE** is a prehistoric tool made using a stone flaking technique called **knapping**. Most hand axes were likely used to dig for roots, to butcher animals or to chop wood. Some of the oldest handaxes found in eastern Africa were made 1.75 million years ago! This handaxe, from western Africa, is made of a metamorphic stone called "gneiss."

Artist Unknown, Handaxe, Mauritania, ca. 800,000-300,000. Gneiss, 10 1/2 x 5 x 2 in. (26.6 x 12.7 x 5 cm). Tony Berlant Collection.



A **FIGURE STONE** is a naturally occurring stone that resembles a human, an animal or another recognizable shape. Prehistoric people noticed these shapes and would sometimes collect them. This jasperite pebble was found with other early human artifacts at a site over 20 miles away from where this type of stone naturally occurs.

Artist Unknown, Makapansgat Pebble, ca. 2.5 million. Jasperite, 3 x 2 1/2 in. (7.6 x 6.3 cm). University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

STONE SCULPTURE TODAY

Stone is one of the most ancient materials used by humans to make tools and art. Many artists in the modern era still choose to use stone for its beauty, durability and history. The Nasher Collection, which spans the 20th and 21st centuries, includes sculpture made of granite, limestone, marble, schist and slate, each of which has a different appearance and properties.

Artist Scott Burton's *Schist Furniture Group* continues the tradition of stone sculpture that is both useful and beautiful. You can actually use the seats he created when you visit the Nasher!

Artist Alberto Giacometti used marble to create an abstract sculpture that the viewer's mind translates into a human skull, not unlike the figure stones found by our ancestors.

How does each artist's choice of material affect your interpretation of their sculpture?



LEFT: **Scott Burton, Schist Furniture Group (Settee with Two Chairs), 1983-84.** Schist, Settee: 39 x 71 x 47 1/2 in. (99.1 x 180.3 x 120.7 cm.). Two chairs: 43 x 28 x 32 in. (109.2 x 71.1 x 81.3 cm.) and 39 x 27 1/2 x 35 in. (99.1 x 69.8 x 88.9 cm.). RIGHT: **Alberto Giacometti, Head-Skull (Tête-crâne), 1934.** Marble, 7 3/8 x 7 3/4 x 8 1/8 in. (18.7 x 19.7 x 20.6 cm.). Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas.

The Shape of Things

Handaxes were designed by early toolmakers to fit comfortably in a human hand. Today, most of the objects we interact with were designed with the body in mind.

Below are some examples of items meant to fit on or around our bodies. Look around you. **Can you find at least five more to draw in the space below?**



STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

Photographed by Kevin Todora



Want to get involved with student programs at the Nasher this summer? Visit nashersculpturecenter.org/learn/teachers-students

Many thanks to our advisory boards! **Student Advisory Board:** Hannah A., Isabella B., James C., Uriel C., Alyssa D., Madelyn D., Erin D., Grace D., Sophie E., Lucas F., Jaclyn G., Drake H., Gracie H., Kate K., Leah K., Katherine K., Gia K., Parker K., Isabel L., Matthew M., Ricardo M., Bernadette N., Andrew R., Casey S., Ben V. **Teacher Advisory Board:** Stacy Cianciulli, Becky Daniels, Suzuko Davis, Martin Delabano, Annie Foster, Paige Furr, Anita Horton, Sherry Houpt, Jovenne Kybett, Kellie Lawson, Dee Mayes, Brad Ray, Sam Thomas.



So You Want to Be an Artist?

Interview by **DREW RAPPOLD**
Junior at McKinney Boyd High School

This fall, Student Advisory Board member Drew Rappold interviewed artist Francisco Moreno about his path to becoming a painter and the day-to-day life of a working artist.

DREW RAPPOLD: What would you describe your job as?

FRANCISCO MORENO: An independent artist who is working towards completing a large-scale art project.

DR: What did you attend college for?

FM: I attended college initially for architecture, then dropped it to take industrial design and then changed directions again to pursue painting, which I continued with, earning a bachelor's and an eventual master's degree. Out of all of the classes, I found painting to be the most enjoyable. I connected with it and felt a freedom that I didn't find in architecture or design.

DR: I can really relate to this. I commonly find myself wanting to be in art class, and knowing that others have experienced this makes me feel more confident in my decision to pursue art in the long-term. After you finished college did you seek a job immediately?

FM: After I graduated, I had a number of jobs that I took looking for opportunities to grow as a person and an artist. One of the most important jobs I took was as an educator at The Warehouse, teaching with the private collections of Howard Rachofsky and Vernon Faulconer. It was great exposure to some amazing contemporary art and a good place to make connections with other artists and people in the art world. Eventually, I moved towards working on my own art full time. At that stage of my life, it seemed like an opportunity I didn't want to miss.

DR: What has been one of your biggest challenges in recent times?

FM: Working as an independent studio artist, money can be a challenge. I sometimes take jobs involving art, but mostly rely on selling my work to support myself. I'm also challenged by my own standards, meaning that completing a painting to my satisfaction is an ongoing process and I often find things I want to change or redo.

DR: Finally, what is your long-term goal as an artist?

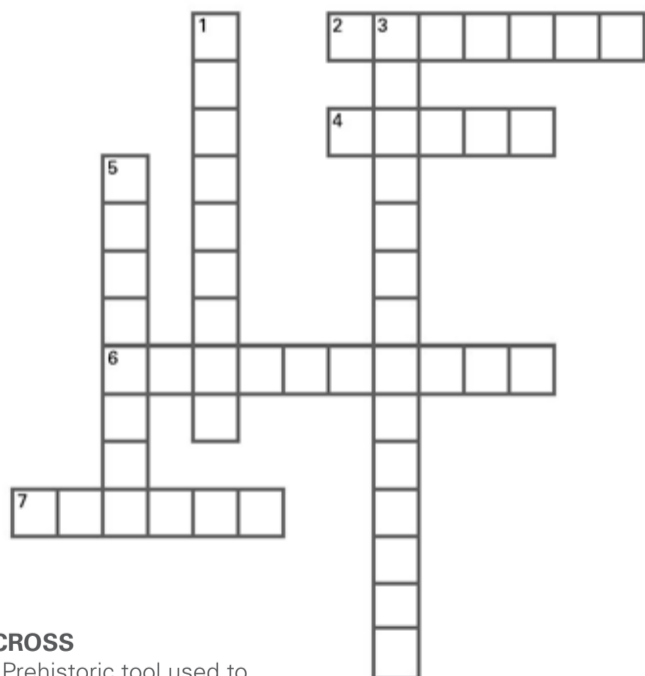
FM: Right now, I'm working towards completing my current project, *The Chapel*, an all-encompassing painting that I will show at Erin Cluley Gallery in April, 2018. The most important thing for me in working towards a goal is to stay disciplined and diligent, especially since I am now working full time as an artist, and creating is my major source of income.

DR: Thanks for your time, Francisco. I've always known that being able to create and having skill are very important, but hadn't realized how much discipline and the ability to consistently make work is what really begins to make one a better artist.

Learn more about careers in the arts at nashersculpturecenter.org/learn/resources

CROSSWORD

Read "The Origins of Creativity" on page 2 to solve the clues in this puzzle



ACROSS

- 2. Prehistoric tool used to dig and chop
- 4. Material used to make early tools and sculptures
- 6. Seeing patterns in natural objects
- 7. _____ stones resemble humans or animals

DOWN

- 1. Three-dimensional work of art
- 3. Artist Tony Berlant worked with _____ Thomas Wynn to plan *First Sculpture*
- 5. Stone flaking technique used to make tools

Ask Anna



Anna Smith, Curator of Education
answers your questions about museums

Dear Anna,

At a museum like the Nasher, how many people are involved in getting an exhibition ready?

-Erin D., Junior, Carroll Senior High School

Dear Erin,

The answer to your question varies depending on the size of the museum! The Nasher has a full-time staff of around 40 people, and nearly everyone is involved with preparing an exhibition for the public. Our curatorial staff travels to meet artists and conducts research to develop exhibition ideas. Once an exhibition is approved by our director and board, a curator chooses the artworks to include, plans the installation and writes the text for wall labels and an exhibition catalogue. A registrar is responsible for keeping track of the artworks we pull from our collection or borrow from other institutions, and a conservator takes care of any artworks that have a condition issue. Art handlers with special training place work in the galleries. Our development team raises funds to support the exhibition, and our marketing and PR teams create materials to promote it. Education develops resources and offers programs to help learners at all levels connect with the museum, and the Visitor Experiences team welcomes guests and helps them have a great visit. It's a team effort!

Do you have question for Anna? Send an e-mail with the subject line "Ask Anna" to asmith@nashersculpturecenter.org.

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