

Roni Horn

Teaching Resource

Roni Horn / May 20 – August 20, 2017

About Roni Horn

Over nearly four decades, American artist Roni Horn (born 1955) has created a rich body of work that encompasses sculpture, drawing, collage, photography, and artist's books. In all areas of her work, Horn draws inspiration from nature and language. Among others, American poets Emily Dickinson and Wallace Stevens and the German writer Franz Kafka have inspired Horn, who uses excerpts of their writings for titles of her works in various media. Horn has turned to literature throughout her career as a way to indicate these writers' influence and to catalogue the work in a point in time.

Cast-Glass Sculptures

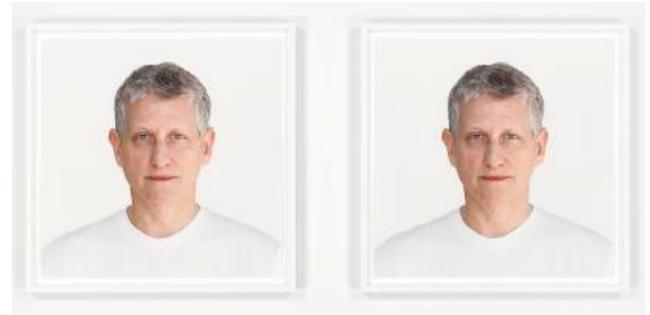
Roni Horn's solid, cast-glass cylinders on display at the Nasher are a sculptural feat. Created through a labor- and time-intensive process, the works require up to eight days to pour and ten months to cool. Horn worked closely with industrial glass-makers to create glass with an immaculate surface and pure hues. From above, the glass is smooth and transparent, resembling a pool of colored water. From the sides, a frosted texture shows where the glass (in its molten state) touched the mold, and provides a semi-opaque contrast to the fire-polished top. The installation of these sculptures stands like a landscape in its own right. Viewer's perspectives change as they move around the gallery and light illuminates and brings each glass body to life in different ways at different times of day.

- **Head to either the north or south end of the gallery and look back out at the cast-glass sculptures, trying to get a full view of the entire installation.**
- **Make a sketch of the whole installation as you see it. Then, imagine these sculptures as part of a landscape and draw a world, landscape, or environment around the sculptures.**

Poetry and Literature

The seven works (one sculpture consists of a pair of glass cylinders) Horn on view in this installation have subtitles from literary genres as diverse as poetry, food writing, historical diary entries, and epic westerns. These titles are not meant to describe the sculptures, but instead point to Horn's interest in literature and poetry.

- **After having completed the activity above, walk through the Roni Horn installation imagining that you are moving through your imagined landscape. Try to envision as many details as you can while you walk.**
- **On the front or back of your landscape drawing, compose a poem that describes what it was like to walk through your landscape.**



Roni Horn, *Dead Owl*, v.3, 2014-15. Courtesy the Artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Genevieve Hanson.



Roni Horn, *Roni Horn Installation View*

Exhibition view of Roni Horn at the DePont Museum, Tilburg, Netherlands, January 23-May 29, 2016. Photograph: Stefan Altenburger Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Roni Horn

Place

Place holds special significance in Roni Horn's work. During frequent visits to Iceland, Horn developed a photographic process that captured subtle alterations in light, wind, cloud cover and other meteorological and environmental changes in order to represent a scene in its essence. In the series *To Place*, pictured above, one can see landscapes as events in themselves, visibly changing to the attentive viewer.

- For this exhibition, the Nasher removed two rows of the building's unique roof panels. How does the increase of natural light change your experience in this gallery? How might the space change at night?



Roni Horn, from *To Place*, ongoing series. Collection of the artist. © Roni Horn.

You Are the Weather

Much like her fascination with how landscapes can be animated by subtle changes in the weather, Roni Horn is also interested in showing the way that human faces and bodies can change in subtle and dramatic ways. Influenced by French philosopher Simone Weil's writings on attention as a spiritual and aesthetic practice, Horn's *You Are the Weather* shows that even in a single person, differences, changes, and transformations are always taking place.

- Reflect on your own life experiences. Think of something you do regularly—going to school, birthdays, holidays, anything you do repeatedly. Make a list showing how this experience stays the same and how it changes each time you experience it.
- Consider how this repeated but variable experience is similar to the cycle of weather we experience throughout a year.



Roni Horn, *You are the Weather*, (detail), 1994-95, installation view, Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, 1996.

Suggested Curriculum Connections (TEKS)

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

English Language Arts Electives: Creative Writing | §110.52. Creative Writing Pages, (b) (1) (A) and (B)