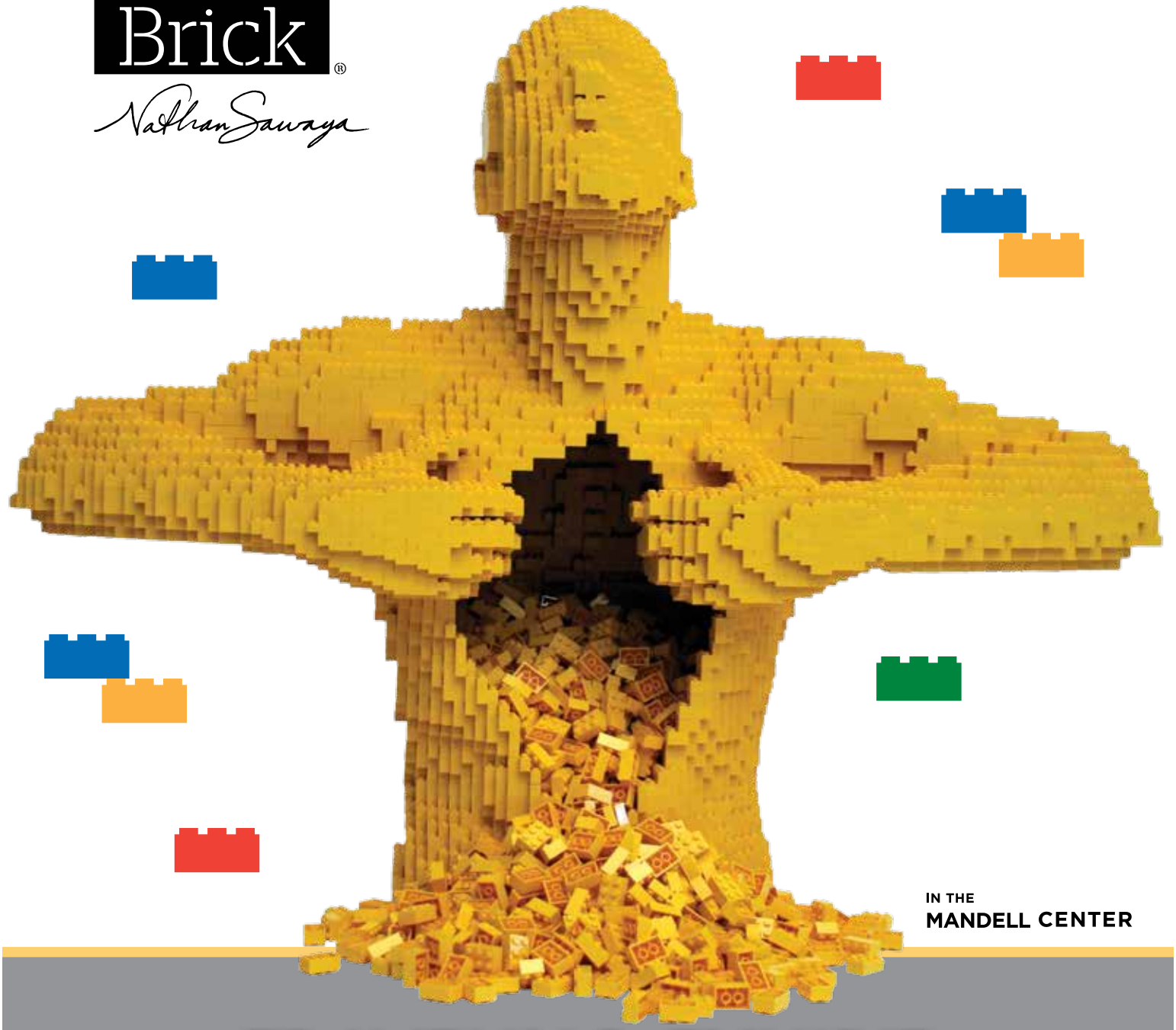
The Art of the Brick®

Nathan Sawaya

THE FRANKLIN INSTITUTE



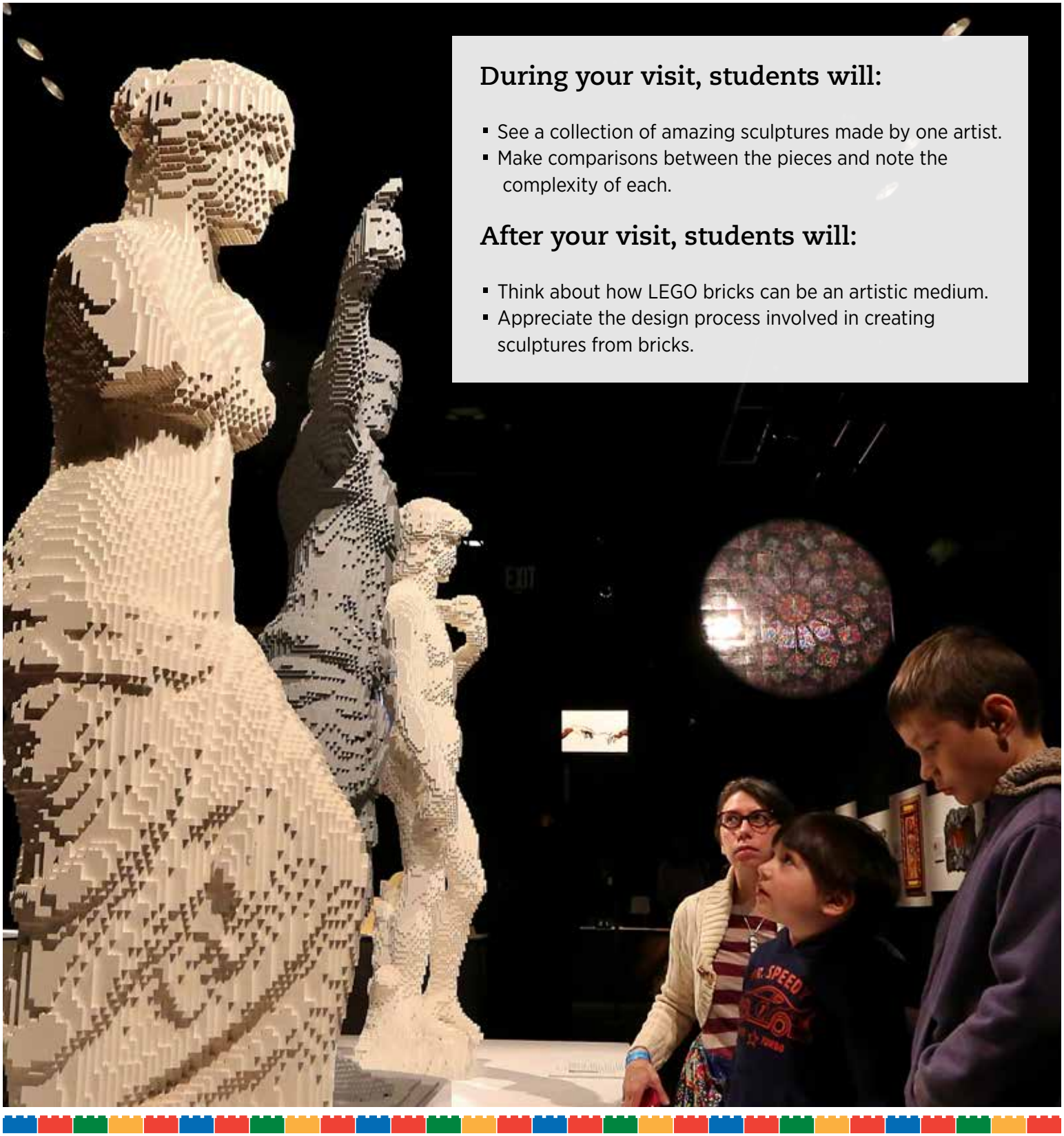
IN THE
MANDELL CENTER

TRAVELING EXHIBIT

K-12 EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

How does an artist choose a subject?
How can LEGO bricks become a medium for artistic expression?
What inspires you?

The Art of the Brick exhibit invites you and your students to consider these questions as you visit the galleries and discover the art of bricks.



During your visit, students will:

- See a collection of amazing sculptures made by one artist.
- Make comparisons between the pieces and note the complexity of each.

After your visit, students will:

- Think about how LEGO bricks can be an artistic medium.
- Appreciate the design process involved in creating sculptures from bricks.

Quick Tips

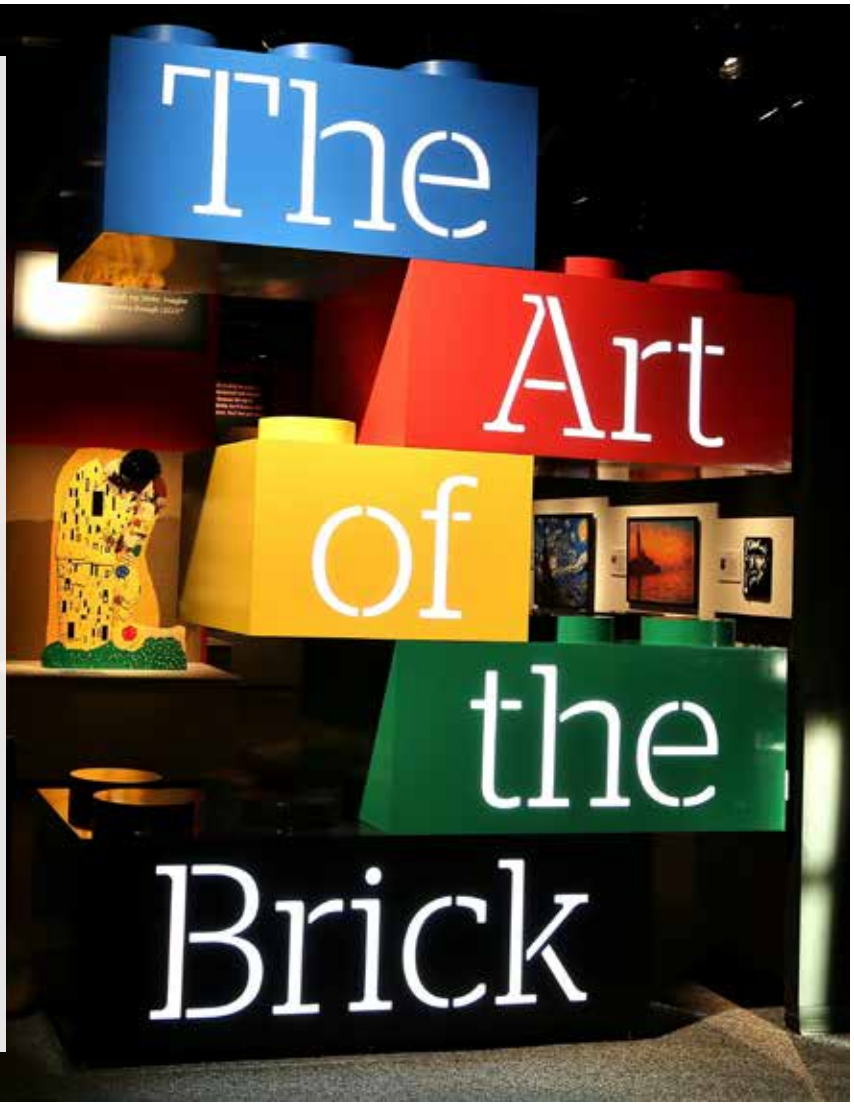
- The exhibit is located on the upper level of the Mandell Center. To enter the exhibit, you will walk up the ramp from the main Bartol Atrium.
- On average, most groups will spend about 45 minutes in the exhibit, if carefully examining all of the displays. There is no re-entry allowed. Restrooms are located near the exhibit entrance in the Bartol Atrium. There are no restrooms inside the exhibit.
- No food or beverages are allowed in any of the exhibit galleries.

About the Exhibit

"These works are very personal to me, since they reflect my growth as an artist as I strove to discover my creative identity."
—Nathan Sawaya

The Franklin Institute is pleased to host *The Art of the Brick* in the Mandell Center.

The exhibit invites you to explore a collection of over 100 sculptures made from more than a million LEGO bricks, all from the mind of famed contemporary artist Nathan Sawaya. This collection of sculptures includes a variety of Sawaya's original concepts as well as some more familiar concepts such as a 20-foot-long Tyrannosaurus Rex made from over 80,000 LEGO bricks! Also on display are interpretations of historic works such as Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*, Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, and Edvard Munch's *The Scream*—all made entirely of LEGO bricks!



About the Artist

Nathan Sawaya is an acclaimed New York-based artist who creates awe-inspiring artwork out of a toy. His art focuses on large-scale sculptures using only LEGO bricks. Sawaya was the first artist to ever take LEGO into the art world and his touring exhibition, *The Art of the Brick*, has entertained and inspired millions of art lovers and enthusiasts from Australia, Taiwan, Singapore, China, and around the world. CNN heralded, "*The Art of the Brick* is one of the top 10 must-see exhibits in the world!"

Originally from Oregon, Sawaya's childhood dreams were always fun and creative. He drew cartoons, wrote stories, perfected magic tricks, and, of course, also played with LEGO. His days were filled with imagination. When it came time for college, Sawaya moved to New York City, attended New York University and became a lawyer. But after years of million-dollar mergers and corporate acquisitions on Park Avenue, Sawaya realized he would rather be sitting on the floor creating art, than sitting in a board room negotiating contracts. He walked away from the law and took an artistic risk on LEGO. Now Sawaya is an author, speaker, and one of the most popular, award-winning contemporary artists of our time.

How to Prepare

Students should know that the sculptures on display are not to be touched. While the artist does use glue to secure the pieces, they can still break. Please make sure students know not to touch the artwork.

Chaperones and students should know that museum encourages conversation around the displays and children should ask questions and discuss what they see. Museum etiquette suggests that the conversation be kept to an appropriate indoor volume level.

Running through the exhibit is not allowed. Designate a meeting location within the exhibit when you arrive in case someone gets separated. Please do not congregate at the entrance/exit, however, so as to enable other guests to enter and exit easily.

There are no restrooms inside the exhibit and there is no re-entry allowed, so plan ahead and use the restrooms in the main Bartol Atrium before entering.

Fast Facts!

The name “LEGO” is an abbreviation of the two Danish words “leg godt,” which means “play well.”

Founded in 1932, the LEGO Group is owned by Kjeld Kirk Kristiansen, a grandchild of the family business’ father.

In 1999, Fortune magazine named the LEGO brick one of the “Products of the Century.”

All of the LEGO bricks used in the exhibit are standard bricks which you can buy in toy stores. There’s nothing special about the bricks—just the artist’s imagination.

The number of bricks in a sculpture varies by size, but a life-size human form typically has 15,000-25,000 bricks.

Likewise, the amount of time it takes to build a sculpture varies with size, but a life-size human form typically takes about two to three weeks.

Try This!

CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGES

The best way to extend the learning experience after a field-trip to see *The Art of the Brick* is to provide students with challenges using LEGO bricks or similar construction sets.

Here are a few ideas to try, or you could just allow students to use their imaginations and design whatever they like.

ABSTRACT ART
Use LEGO bricks to design and create an abstract sculpture.

STILL LIFE
Provide students with a photo of an object or a painting and challenge them to copy the original in bricks. For younger students, use a simple object. For older students, use a more sophisticated model.

TALLEST TOWER
Provide groups with the same set of bricks and challenge them to see who can build the tallest free-standing tower.

MARBLE MAZE
Challenge groups to build segments of a maze and then tilt it to see if a marble will roll from entrance to exit. Have the groups connect their segments to form one giant maze.

PATTERN MISMATCH
Have small groups design a pattern of colors, shapes, and sizes. Then, have them deliberately insert mistakes in the pattern. Finally, have the groups trade constructions and see if they can find the mistakes.

Try This!

VOCABULARY WORD SEARCH

E O A P P H L K C O V C L H X
L V I E O E U I X T N O A Y A
G N B D G R R M S M E N W P I
N W R O U C D C A B B S O C U
A X I R L T U N G N L T L M T
I X C E P L S O I E U R L S G
R S K A P X W M W A E U E X E
T Q S T E R A U Q S R C Y D A
A L U K S A M T I B T T D G L
H R U A S O N I D J R I R E P
E Y T O E E T E M C F O U F R
T J L I P E L D L W K N N L M
S I Y R S P S W I M M E R J I
A K E N P T L D C D R E S S S
C S N A C K I D L W P S W R K

Find each word in the grid.

Apple
Artist
Blue
Bricks
Circle
Construction
Dinosaur
Dress
Human
LEGO
Mask
Raindrop
Red
Sculpture
Serpent
Square
Studio
Swimmer
Triangle
Yellow

The Art of the Brick
Suggested Resources for K-12 Classrooms and Libraries

The Art of the Brick: A Life in LEGO
by Nathan Sawaya
ISBN 1593275889

The Art of LEGO Design:
Creative Ways to Build Amazing Models
by Jordan Schwartz
ISBN 1593275536

Beautiful LEGO
by Mike Doyle
ISBN 1593275080

LEGO Play Book:
Ideas to Bring Your Bricks to Life
by Daniel Lipkowitz
ISBN 1465414126

LEGO Chain Reactions:
Design and Build Amazing Moving Machines
by Pat Murphy
ISBN 0545703301

The LEGO Ideas Book
by Daniel Lipkowitz
ISBN 0756686067

Recommended Websites

About the Artist – Nathan Sawaya
brickartist.com/about

LEGO Education
www.legoeducation.us

LEGO History Timeline
www.lego.com/en-us/aboutus/lego-group/the_lego_history

Curricular Standards

The Art of the Brick exhibit can help students achieve learning objectives as called for by the national standards.

Next Generation Science Standards

K-2 & 3-5: Engineering Design
MS & HS: Engineering, Technology, & Applications of Science

National Science Education Standards

K-12 E: Science & Technology

National Core Arts Standards—Visual Arts

K-12 – AS7: Perceive & analyze artistic work
K-12 – AS8: Interpret intent & meaning in artistic work
K-12 – AS10: Synthesize & relate knowledge & personal experiences to make art
K-12 – AS11: Relate artistic ideas & works with societal, cultural, & historical context to deepen understanding

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