

HIGH DESERT MUSEUM

from home

Art and Our Stories

AUDIENCE

All ages

MATERIALS

Any art materials such as paper, pencils, paints, canvas, fabric, clay or natural objects

DESCRIPTION

In this activity you will learn about one of the works of art in the High Desert Museum's collection and create your own art piece, recording your memories during this time.

FOR EDUCATORS

Activity is aligned with these standards:

Oregon Visual Art Standard

Anchor Standard 1: Creating – Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Creative ideas develop out of life experiences and are explored utilizing inquiry methods including observation, research and experimentation.

Oregon State Social Studies Standards

Historical Thinking

5.22: Summarize how different kinds of historical sources are used to explain events in the past.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While visiting the High Desert Museum, you may have noticed a striking piece of artwork in the foyer near the entrance of the permanent exhibition *By Hand Through Memory*. *Blanket Stories: Talking Stick, Works Progress, Steward* was created by Portland-based artist Marie Watt for the Museum's 2016 exhibition *Art for a Nation: Inspiration from the Great Depression*.

In the spirit of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Museum commissioned Watt to create two sculptures for the exhibition: one from wood and one from blankets. Visit [Marie Watt's Blanket Stories: Talking Stick, Works Progress, Steward](http://www.mariewattstudio.com/projects/works-progress/elements/) (www.mariewattstudio.com/projects/works-progress/elements/) to view the blankets and the stories associated with them.



Marie Watt's work is concerned with the intersection of history, community and storytelling. Each blanket has a story that the original owner wrote on a tag, which hangs from the blanket.

For example, on one tag a quilt contributor chose to share about a memory of a special person in her life: "Grandma never wasted a thing! I've seen her wash off a partially used ice cube and put it back in the freezer for future use. Every scrap of fabric was used and re-used and when it could be used no more, it would find its final resting place somewhere in a patchwork quilt."

1. Marie Watt said in a 2017 interview, "I'm interested in how blankets are objects that we take for granted but that can have extraordinary histories."

Works of art have memories, stories and histories associated with them. Borrowing from *Blanket Stories*, how can you record your own memories and stories through art?



ACTIVITY

1. Create art. Consider thinking of an important place, story or memory as inspiration for your work. It may be art made from fabric, paper, clay, natural objects or found materials.
2. Use the template provided to create a tag for your artwork in order to preserve the stories and memories of the piece you created. You may print a tag or re-create one using supplies you already have.
3. On the tag, record what inspired you to create the piece of art, what you were thinking about as you made it, or what the day was like when you created it. There are no limits here: You are simply recording any kind of story or memory.
4. You may choose to display the tag along with your art, like Marie Watt does in *Blanket Stories*.
5. Optional: We would love to see your creations and stories. Send the High Desert Museum a picture of your piece of art and tag: email info@highdesertmuseum.org.
6. When your art is no longer on display and moves into storage, store the tag with it. In 20 or 50 years, you'll be able to remember your thoughts, memories and stories from the time you created the piece.

Attach this tag to your artistic contribution

Provenance

Your Name

City / State

Date

Artwork story (What inspired you to make this art? How are you feeling during this moment in history?)

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES

[Marie Watt Studio](http://www.mariewattstudio.com) (www.mariewattstudio.com)

[NAEYC- Inspired By Museums—Both Outside and Inside the Classroom](http://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/apr2016/inspired-museums-outside-and-inside-classroom)
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[Smithsonian: Fun Stuff for Kids and Teens](https://www.si.edu/kids) (https://www.si.edu/kids)

[Smithsonian: #ColorOurCollections 2018](https://library.si.edu/2018ColorOurCollections) (https://library.si.edu/2018ColorOurCollections)