

ASHLEY JUDE JONAS

Not Knowing

Educator Handout Grades 7-12

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Not Knowing features recent work by artist, educator, and independent curator [Ashley Jude Jonas](#). Comprised of installation, assemblage, photographs, drawings, and found objects, this exhibition is the most comprehensive for the artist to date. Jonas's multidisciplinary practice is informed by close looking and domestic spaces, particularly her own experiences in her unconventional childhood home in Key West, Florida. In the months following the coronavirus (COVID-19) stay-at-home orders, Jonas began to re-examine the finite nature of beauty in her surroundings. In her work, Jonas embraces the uncertainties of life by observing and documenting intimate moments that might otherwise be overlooked.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ashley Jude Jonas's work has been exhibited at Riffe Gallery, Columbus, Ohio; Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana; Undercurrent, Brooklyn; The Clay Studio, Philadelphia; and The Neon Heater, Findlay, Ohio; among others. From 2014 to 2020, Jonas co-directed and curated at [The Blue House](#), an alternative artist-run space operated within her home. The artist has an M.F.A. from University of Colorado at Boulder and a B.F.A. from University of Florida. She lives in Dayton, Ohio, where she teaches at the University of Dayton.

subjective frame

- Look closely at the materials used in [Jonas's work](#). Why do you think she chose to use these materials and what do they remind you of?
- How does Jonas's work make you feel? What about the work makes you feel this way?
- Jonas draws inspiration from her childhood home, saying that it was "a place where she discovered the value of wonder." During your childhood, did a specific location nurture your curiosity or sense of wonder?

cultural frame

- Select an [artwork](#) to analyze. What do you know about the time, place, and culture in which the work was created based on what you see? In what ways do the titles provide you with additional context?
- What does Jonas's artwork tell you about her as a person? As an artist?
- What themes do you find across Jonas's work? What about the artworks makes you draw these conclusions?

structural frame

- Choose an [artwork](#) in the exhibition to focus on. What images, objects, and materials do you see in this artwork? Describe how Jonas has arranged these elements to create a sense of balance (for example, light vs dark, bright vs dull, and hard vs soft).
- Describe the different methods and materials Jonas has used to construct her work. How are the materials and processes similar and how are they different?



Ashley Jude Jonas, *Seeing self in sun*, 2020. Mixed-media sculpture. Courtesy of the artist.

VOCABULARY

ASSEMBLAGE

found objects arranged or combined to create an artwork

CONTEMPORARY

something that belongs to the present or current time

CONTEXT

the situation in which something happens

FORMAL QUALITIES

refers to elements and principles of design such as line, shape, color, balance, movement, contrast, and unity

INTUITIVE

reacting based on one's feelings in the moment

MEDIUM

art-making material

MIXED-MEDIA

art created with a variety of materials

SUBJECT MATTER

what is being depicted in an image or artwork

SUBJECTIVE

something that is open to interpretation; up to the viewer to decide

ZINE

a small, generally homemade magazine

EVENTS

- Virtual exhibition tours are available for classes, community groups, and individuals by appointment. Contact galler@illinoisstate.edu or (309) 438-5487 to schedule.
- [*appreciate your patience #1*](#), a free zine produced by the artist, will be available for the duration of the exhibition.
- A free online artist lecture will be held March 26 at 5 pm. Registration available via University Galleries' Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts.
- Educator resources, activities for children and youth, and art lesson videos are available on the exhibition [web page](#).
- An exhibition video tour will be available in April via University Galleries' [Vimeo](#).
- April 17 at 1:00 p.m. Art Around You with CDM. Participants (ages 7-10) can register for this free program at childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

You can find [University Galleries](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#), and sign up to receive email updates through the [newsletter](#). Please contact galler@illinoisstate.edu or call (309) 438-5487 if you need to arrange an accommodation to participate in any events related to this exhibition.



ART-MAKING ACTIVITIES

- Before viewing works in the series [*Death Drawings*](#), ask students to imagine what mediums, formal qualities, and subject matter they think Jonas used in these artworks based on the title. Then analyze individual works in the series. How do the works compare with what they imagined based on the title? If each work were about a specific person, what do they think each person valued? What do they think their personality was like based on what they see? In small groups, describe how Jonas arranged the objects and images to tell a story, then share as a whole class. Afterwards, introduce that students will create an assemblage in response to their memories with a loved one. Encourage students to consider what objects, images, colors, and places remind them of this person. How might they arrange these elements to tell a story about a time they shared together, or to revisit a story the person often told?
- Analyze Jonas's mixed-media sculptures, [*All these window days*](#), [*Holding it. Having it. Safety.*](#), and [*Seeing self in sun*](#) as a class or in small groups. Ask students to consider where they think each object came from, what they associate with these objects, and what they think the work is about based on their observations. Then instruct students to design an assemblage out of found objects, images, and materials they gathered prior to this lesson. After completing their work, ask students to consider what challenges they faced throughout the creative process and how their responses to Jonas's work have changed after working with similar processes and materials.
- To stay present and open to the element of chance, Jonas tends to work intuitively throughout her creative process. As a class, discuss ways this is evident throughout her work in [*Not Knowing*](#). Then engage students in making an artwork without a preconceived plan. Afterwards, encourage students to reflect on how this process felt in comparison to developing a concept before creating an artwork.
- Jonas created her zine, [*appreciate your patience #1*](#), by arranging gifted and found objects with handwritten text. The work addresses appreciation for not only one's own patience, but the patience displayed by those around them. In response to this work, ask students to interview someone that has shown them patience and understanding. Encourage students to gather found objects, images, and materials that relate to their interviewee's personality, interests, and values. Then have students write a poem or short statement by hand about a time they demonstrated patience toward someone else. Instruct students to organize their found objects, images, and handwritten text in a collage. Then photograph or scan the collage and print in color before folding it into a [zine](#). Consider encouraging students to send the zine back to the individual they interviewed or leave a few copies in public places for others to discover and to enjoy.