

IN LIVING COLOR

Curated by the Teen Art Group

Educator Handout: Grades 7-12

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The Teen Art Group was founded in 2018 at University Galleries by director and chief curator Kendra Paitz, with support from the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation–Mirza Arts and Culture Fund. Each academic year, up to fifteen students from Bloomington High School participate in professional development activities, take field trips, and curate an exhibition. The 2021–2022 cohort was led by Kendra Paitz; Monica Estabrook, Bloomington High School art teacher; and Tanya Scott, University Galleries' curator of education.

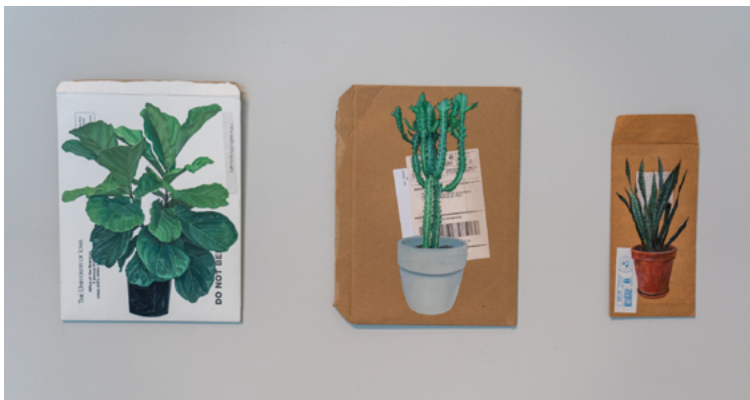
In Living Color presents works by artists the students learned about during the program. First, the students identified issues they were most concerned with, including gender, environment, outer space, anime, portraiture, abstraction, family, and racial issues. Then, the program leaders presented relevant artists and the group discussed. Originally, the group planned to select one artist to invite for a solo exhibition, but as they researched the artists and thought about relationships among the works, they decided to invite several artists to participate in a group exhibition. The Teen Art Group selected each of the works, determined the exhibition layout, decided the exhibition title, and conducted an interview with artist Selina Trepp.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

[Aaron Caldwell](#), [Jess T. Dugan](#), [Fidencio Fifield-Perez](#), [Jin Lee](#), [Melissa Oresky](#), [Rashod Taylor](#), and [Selina Trepp](#).

VOCABULARY

- **Context:** the situation in which something occurs
- **Curate:** the process of selecting, organizing, and displaying artworks, images, and/or objects to convey meaning
- **Mediums:** artmaking materials such as graphite, acrylic, digital photography, or ceramic
- **Mixed-media:** artwork made up of multiple mediums (see works by [Melissa Oresky](#), [Aaron Caldwell](#), and [Selina Trepp](#))
- **Multimedia:** artwork that combines components of visual, digital, audio, and/or performance arts
- **Subject matter:** what is depicted in an artwork or image—such as nature, architecture, people, or objects
- **Substrate:** the surface on which something is painted—such as paper, canvas, or wood



Fidencio Fifield-Perez, left to right:
dacament num. 14, 2018.
dacament num. 20, 2021.
dacament num. 1, 2017.

Acrylic on envelopes. Courtesy of the artist.



Jin Lee, *Train View Series*, 2014-present. Archival pigment prints. Courtesy of the artist.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RESPOND - VA:Re8

Documenting relationships between people, places, and spaces is a common theme throughout the exhibition *In Living Color*. Two examples include Fidencio-Fifield Perez's [dacaments](#) and Jin Lee's [Train View Series](#).

- As a [DACA](#) (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient, Fidencio Fifield-Perez is obligated to maintain a detailed account of personal records. Selections from his archive of envelopes, amassed over the course of many years, become the [substrates](#) for his series *dacaments*. These painted portraits of collected, propagated, and gifted plants reference Fifield-Perez's connections with people and places, while also emphasizing how his citizenship status impacts his ability to establish roots in a given place. Learn more [here](#).
- In *Train View Series*, photographer Jin Lee captures fleeting moments—graffiti-tagged industrial buildings, the changing colors of the landscape over time, and serendipitous encounters with passersby—during her regular commutes between Chicago and Bloomington/Normal.

As a class, analyze these two bodies of work. Look closely for details that suggest connections between the artists and their subjects. Consider how the following inform your analysis of the works: scale, display style, and [context](#) in which they were created.

CONNECT - VA:Cn10

Instruct students to create a series of artworks in response to Lee's *Train View Series* and Fifield-Perez's *dacaments*. Provide students the following prompts to consider when brainstorming ideas for the [subject matter](#) of their series.

- Make a list of spaces, places, people, things, and experiences that hold personal significance.
- Within what historical, social, or political [contexts](#) are they situated? For example, Fifield-Perez's *dacaments* were created after DACA passed in 2012—a policy that allowed some immigrants to live, study, and work in the United States. The same year marked a record number of immigrants forcibly [removed](#) from the U.S.
- Search photos and videos on your phone or social media for recurring spaces, places, people, objects, colors, shapes, textures, and sounds. From what perspectives were the images and videos taken? At what time of day?
- What [medium\(s\)](#)—such as photography, video, digital drawing, collage, sculpture, printmaking, [mixed-media](#), stop-motion animation, or [multimedia](#)—might best convey your relationship(s) with these subject(s)?

Provide multiple opportunities throughout the creative process for students to engage in constructive critique with peers. Encourage students to reflect on and revise their work based on feedback and their personal artistic vision.

PRESENT - VA:Pr5

Guide students in preparing their work for presentation. Prompt students to consider:

- What works will they choose to display? Should they include all artworks or a selection of works from their series?
- How would they like to present their work—such as a book, video projection, physical or digital timeline, map, or multimedia installation?
- What are the display needs for their work—such as mounting, stretching, framing, wiring, hanging, pedestals, or digital devices?

Work collaboratively to [curate](#) an exhibition of students' work.

- Discuss possibilities for physical or digital exhibition spaces.
- Consider how the arrangement, placement, and spacing of artworks will work together to convey meaning to viewers. For example, *Train View* is arranged in parallel rows on a table facing the Amtrak station. The top and bottom rows of photographs are regularly rotated to reference the directional movement of train tracks.

Lead students in writing supplementary resources—such as labels, artist statements, and/or an exhibition narrative—to accompany their work.

- Consider inviting a local museum or gallery educator to lead a professional development session for students on preparing artwork for presentation and curating exhibitions.

- Educator resources are available on the exhibition [webpage](#).

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