TEACHER GUIDE
Getting Started with Contemporary Art

Artists working today often push the boundaries of traditional media like painting and sculpture. This guide is part of a series designed for high school teachers to use in conjunction with a visit to the Hammer Museum, where students might encounter a range of contemporary art forms. Use the information and discussion prompts below while engaging with video art during your visit or in preparation for your visit using images available on the Hammer website. The post-visit activity is designed to extend student learning in the classroom after your visit.

VIDEO ART

Video art, introduced in the early 1960s, uses videotape or digital video (and sometimes audio) to communicate a concept.

Key Concepts
• Motion over time: The viewer witnesses the artwork change over time, as in a moving picture
• Defying narrative: Video art doesn’t have to adhere to linear plots or storylines
• Accessibility: Video recording devices are portable and more immediately user-friendly

Discussion Prompts
1. How is video art similar to the movies you watch? How is it different?
2. How would it feel to watch something without a traditional narrative (e.g., lacks plot, characters, climax, or resolution)?
3. How is the experience of watching video art different from looking at art that doesn’t move, like a painting?

Post-Visit Activity
Have students work in teams of 3–4 to create a collaborative video about an issue affecting their community or the global community (climate change, the refugee crisis, poverty, hunger). The video can represent the issue, offer a solution to the issue, or interpret the issue. Direct your students to:

1. Research the issue.
2. Determine what is important to communicate about the issue, particularly through moving images.
3. Consider:
   • What will be in motion, people or things? How slow or fast will they be moving?
   • Will it have sound (either speech or audio)?
   • How will you challenge traditional storytelling?
4. Create a storyboard for your video.
5. Record your video on an iPad or smart phone.

For more guides in this series visit hammer.ucla.edu/teachers.