

Hello from Art + Practice!

Thank you for scheduling your upcoming field trip to Art + Practice's exhibition space. A+P is excited to welcome your class for a self-guided tour of the exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

In preparation for your visit, A+P highly suggests that you review the following gallery rules, general information about A+P's exhibition space and provided educational resources prior to your visit. This will insure that you will be prepared to guide your students through the suggested activities. If you have any questions, please email A+P at [education@artandpractice.org](mailto:education@artandpractice.org) or call (323) 337-6887.

We look forward to welcoming your class to A+P soon.

Sincerely,

**ART + PRACTICE**

# Teacher Resource Guide

# ART + PRACTICE

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*

## GALLERY RULES

1. No food or drink allowed. If students bring their lunches, they can leave their food/drinks with A+P at the front gallery desk.
2. Please do not touch the artworks on display. (unless permitted or approved by A+P's staff)
3. Visitors must keep a 3 foot distance from the artworks.
4. No running or skipping in the gallery.
5. Backpacks and large bags are not permitted in the gallery. Students can leave their belongings with A+P at the front gallery desk.
6. No pens allowed, only pencils; which A+P will provide students with for the tour.
7. No flash photography permitted.
8. Visitors should use inside voices while in the gallery.
9. Limited use of cell phones, kindly requested.



Students from View Park Elementary visit *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*. Los Angeles. 12 May 2017. Photo by Natalie Hon.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Duration

Self-guided tours typically range between 45 minutes-1 hour.

### Group Size and Chaperones Count

Groups of 30 are highly encouraged. Adult to student ratio should be 1:10.

### Teacher Resource Guide

This packet contains tools and activities for you to facilitate with your students during and after your visit to A+P. This packet is meant to integrate into your curriculum and incorporate the California State Content standards.

Please follow the directions listed in this packet, and ask an A+P staff member if you have any questions before or during your visit. We'll be happy to help.

### Student Handouts

This packet corresponds to a student handout, which A+P will have printed and ready for your students upon arrival to the exhibition space, along with clipboards and sharpened pencils.

### Bathroom Code

A+P has women's and men's restrooms onsite. The code for entry is **52022**.

## INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET

1. Tour Agenda
2. List of California State Content Standards applied to the tour's activities
3. Exhibition description, artist bio and facts
4. Tour activities (1-6)
5. Recommend Post Visit Activity
6. Artworks' descriptions

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: K - 5th Grades

## TOUR AGENDA

1. Review the gallery rules with students. (page 02)
2. Provide students with background information about the artist Senga Nengudi and the exhibition. (5 mins., page 04)
3. Introduce activity 01. Discuss with students the key vocabulary words and *Essential Question*. Facilitate a group discussion. (11 mins., page 05)
4. Introduce activity 02. Direct students to complete the *Exquisite Corpse* activity listed in their handouts. (11 mins., page 05-06)
5. Introduce activity 03. Direct student to complete the See, Think, Wonder activity. Facilitate a group discussion. (18 mins., page 06)
6. Introduce activity 04. Direct students to select an artwork of their choosing and complete the sentences listed in their handout. Facilitate a group discussion. (13 mins., page 07)
7. Introduce activity 05. Direct students to complete the Art Detective activity. Facilitate a group discussion. (10 mins., page 07)

## CALIFORNIA STATE CONTENT STANDARDS

While carrying out the following activities in this packet, please keep in mind the following California State Contents Standards:

### KINDERGARTEN

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.4** Give reasons why they like a particular work of art they made, using appropriate art vocabulary.

### GRADE 1

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text.

**VAPA STANDARD 5.3** Identify and sort pictures into categories according to the elements of art emphasized in the works (e.g., color, line, shape/form, texture).

### GRADE 2

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.4** Use appropriate vocabulary of art to describe the successful use of an element of art in a work of art.

### GRADE 3

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

**VAPA STANDARD 5.1** Describe how costumes contribute to the meaning of a dance.

### GRADE 4

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

**VAPA STANDARD 5.4** Read biographies and stories about artists and summarize the readings in short reports, telling how the artists mirrored or affected their time period or culture.

### GRADE 5

**ELA STANDARD 4.3a** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

**VAPA STANDARD 5.1** Identify how selected principles of design are used in a work of art and how they affect personal responses to and evaluation of the work of art.

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: K - 5th Grades

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AND ARTIST

Read the following summaries to the students:

### ABOUT HEAD BACK AND HIGH: SENGA NENGUDI, PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976-2017)

In the 1970s, Senga Nengudi emerged as one of the most inventive artists bringing together abstract sculpture and performance art. Today she continues to construct poetic environments out of pantyhose, sand, air conditioning parts, and other items salvaged from everyday use. In Nengudi's hands, these materials take on symbolic meanings that relate to the resilience and vulnerability of the human body and to the forces, both social and psychological, that shape our experiences of the world.

Nengudi grew up in Los Angeles, where she trained in sculpture and dance. After living in Tokyo and New York City, she returned to L.A. and began to experiment with pliable, portable, and inexpensive materials. She also explored movement and sound, often in collaboration with other artists. Together with David Hammons, Maren Hassinger, Barbara McCullough, Franklin Parker, Houstin Conwill, Ulysses Jenkins, and RoHo, Nengudi formed Studio Z, a loosely structured group of Black artists, dancers, and musicians at the forefront of conceptual and action art.

This exhibition brings together extraordinary examples of Nengudi's early and recent sculpture, presenting them alongside performance photographs from her breakthrough moment of the mid-1970s. The exhibition explores the ethics of friendship and collective creation that has infused Nengudi's artistic practice across her career, including



Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

videos documenting early and recent collaborations with Maren Hassinger, David Hammons, Cheryl Banks-Smith, and Lawrence "Butch" Morris. Hassinger's work is the subject of an exhibition that recently closed at Art + Practice and will be on view at The Baltimore Museum of Art July 18–November 25, 2018.

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2017)* is curated by Christopher Bedford, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art, and BMA Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann.



### ABOUT SENGA NENGUDI

Born in Chicago in 1943 and raised in Los Angeles, Senga Nengudi trained in art and dance and earned an MFA in sculpture at California State University. Her touring solo exhibition, *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures*, originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. Her work has also been the subject of many solo exhibitions and group exhibitions.

Based in Colorado Springs, Nengudi is an advocate for cultural literacy and access to arts education. From 1998 to 2008, she was a lecturer at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. In 2016, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Colorado College and a United States Artists Fellowship. She is a recipient of the 2010 Women's Caucus on Art Lifetime Achievement Award, 2005–2006 Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and 2005–2006 Louis Tiffany Foundation Biennial Competition Award. Nengudi is represented by Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London.

Senga Nengudi. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ron Pollard.

### ARTIST FACTS

1. Unlike many artists who are interested in creating artwork that is permanent and lasts forever, Senga Nengudi is interested in creating work that is temporary or ephemeral.

2. Nengudi developed many friendships with fellow artists who gave her permission to be herself and explore her thoughts without any boundaries. Artist Maren Hassinger is one of those people. Nengudi and Hassinger have been working for

decades, collaborating with each other to make new works of art and explore ideas concerned with identity, performance and the body.

3. Nengudi was born with the name Sue Irons. The different names she uses in her artistic practice all have a personal thread related to them. Other Nengudi pseudonyms include: Harriet Chin, Propecia Lee and Lily B. Moor.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: K - 5th Grades

### ACTIVITY 01 | ESSENTIAL QUESTION (DOK Level 1: Recall)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students explore their notions of friendship and apply them to Senga Nengudi's artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976.

**ACTIVITY:** *Essential Question*

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Ask students, "what is friendship"? Allow 2-3 students to respond. Introduce and read out loud the *Essential Question*: "How do Senga Nengudi's artworks communicate ideas of collaboration and friendship?"

2. Introduction, Part 02 (2-3 minutes)

Introduce the key vocabulary words: collaboration and friendship. Ask students to define what the words mean in their own words.

### KEY VOCABULARY

**Collaboration** - the action of working with someone to produce or create something.

**Friendship**- having a good relationship with someone, who we call a friend. People in a friendship have respect and affection for each other.

3. Individual Exploration (5 minutes)

Direct group to Nengudi's artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976. Mention that many of Nengudi's performance works include 'R.S.V.P.' in the titles. State that Nengudi wants to invite her viewers to become involved in the artworks. Further explain to students that as a performer and/or installer, the artwork is physically touched. The viewer, however, has to keep a safe distance from the work. Mention that Nengudi wants her viewer to respond to the material's vulnerability (being able to be easily hurt).



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

Ask students to identify ways Nengudi directly collaborates with viewers. Note the following examples:

1. The title of the artwork directly invites you by using the word 'RSVP', a traditional form of process in which a person can respond to an invitation.

2. Nengudi is physically and mentally inviting collaborators to become part of the piece.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students are able to develop their own ideas of what friendship means and explore how Senga Nengudi's artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976 explores ideas of friendship and how Nengudi extends her friendship with the audience.

### ACTIVITY 02 | EXQUISITE CORPSE (DOK Level: 2 Skill Concept)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students work on a collaborative *Exquisite Corpse* poem or drawing centered around the theme of friendship and collaboration.

**ACTIVITY:** *Exquisite Corpse*

1. Introduction (3-4 minutes)

Introduce activity #02. Tell students that *Exquisite Corpse* is a collaborative approach to artmaking. Describe that the idea behind *Exquisite Corpse* is that either words or images are collectively assembled by different artists and authors. This activity demonstrates how collaboration reveals new ideas and inspirations.

Tell students that "corpse" has a double meaning in French - not only does it mean "dead body", but it also means "body". Explain to students that they will create their own collaborative *Exquisite Corpse* poems or drawings. Mention that they should think about how they wish to collaborate (i.e. How can they finish their sentences or drawings to prepare their collaborators for continuing the poem/drawing?) Students should give the next collaborator a little clue. Such as small lines leading to the next section is highly suggested.

Ask students to find two collaborators.

(Activity #02 continued on next page)

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: K - 5th Grades

### ACTIVITY 02 | EXQUISITE CORPSE (Continued)

#### 2. Group Activity (7 minutes)

##### If they decide to write a poem:

Ask students to fold their paper “hot dog style” with three folds. Tell students that they should think of their poem as a “body”. The components of a body are the head, torso and legs.

- Student A begins their first line and passes the paper to his or her left.
- Student B reads the last word written by Student A and writes his or her line. He or she then passes the paper to the left.
- Student C student reads the last word written and writes his or her line. He or she then opens up the paper and reads the full poem.

##### If they decide to create a drawing:

Ask students to fold their paper “hamburger style” with three folds. Remind students about the components of a body. Tell them that the components of the body are the head, torso and legs.

- Student A draws a head and passes the paper to his or her left.
- Student B draws a torso. He or she then passes the paper to the left.
- Student C student draws the legs. He or she then opens up the paper and shares with his or her collaborators the finished drawing.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students complete the head, body and legs of a poem or drawing in which they collaborate with two other students in their group.

### ACTIVITY 03 | SEE, THINK, WONDER (DOK Level 3: Strategic Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Using See, Think, Wonder as a platform to foster critical thinking. Students should develop their own initial drawn responses to the artwork titled *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017.

**ACTIVITY:** See, Think, Wonder

#### 1. Introduction (2 minutes)

Direct students to locate the artwork titled *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017.

#### 2. Individual Exploration (4 minutes per section, 12 minutes total)

Guide students to either write or draw what they see, think and wonder about the artwork.

**Note:** The teacher should act as the facilitator, meaning that the teacher is responsible for asking students questions about *A.C.Q. (III)*, helping them identify opinions about the artwork. Also, confirm that students are not jumping to conclusions about *A.C.Q. (III)*. Students should only either write or draw what they see, think and wonder in the appropriate sections of their handouts.

#### 3. Group Discussion (4 minutes)

Ask students to come back together for a discussion. Ask students about their observations, inquiring about what they saw, thought and wondered about *A.C.Q. (III)*.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students will automatically become engaged in *A.C.Q. (III)*. The teacher should encourage students to not write or draw anything first. Students should initially spend time just observing the artwork.



Senga Nengudi, *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976.  
Black and white photograph. Framed: 30 1/2 x 40 1/2 x 1 3/4 inches. Image courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: K - 5th Grades

### ACTIVITY 04 | SENTENCE STARTERS (DOK Level 3: Strategic Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use sentence starters to formulate descriptions about an artwork being shown and develop their own responses of an artwork that they pick. The students' ideas will be shared in small or whole group discussions.

**ACTIVITY:** Sentence Starters

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Direct students to roam the gallery and select an artwork of their choosing. Remind students about the key vocabulary words: collaboration and friendship. Ask students to use the following sentence starters to help them talk about an artwork of their choosing.

2. Individual Exploration (10 minutes)

Direct students to fill in the blanks to the following sentences by either writing or drawing in the space provided:

- What I like most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This artwork reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This artwork surprises me because \_\_\_\_\_ .

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students grasp main concepts of highlighted artworks in the exhibition and use appropriate vocabulary to write descriptive sentences.

### ACTIVITY 05 | ART DETECTIVE (DOK Level 4: Extended Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students use the gallery as a "scavenger hunt" to identify the various found objects Senga Nengudi uses in her sculptures and performances.

**ACTIVITY:** Art Detective

1. Individual Exploration (7 minutes)

Direct students to roam the gallery and identify what materials they see and don't see incorporated in the artworks.

2. Group Discussion (2-3 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a class. Ask 2-3 students what materials they identified in the gallery. Ask 2-3 students which materials, from their list, did not belong.

#### EXAMPLES



**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students are able to identify each of the items listed in the scavenger hunt and describe how Senga Nengudi uses them in her works of art.

### ACTIVITY 06 | POST VISIT (Level 4: Extended Reasoning)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will apply Senga Nengudi's ideas of friendship and collaboration to an artistic activity inspired by their visit to Art + Practice's exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

**ACTIVITY:** Post visit hands on project

#### 1. Collaborative Project:

A+P will provide students with a postcard template to create an 'R.S.V.P.' note of their own. Direct students to draw on the front of the provided postcard template, and write an R.S.V.P. to a friend or family member on the back of the postcard. Students should be encouraged to invite their friend or family member to collaborate on an artistic project.

Direct students to mail their postcard to their chosen friend or family member.



**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students connect knowledge of Senga Nengudi's R.S.V.P. artworks and create an rsvp of their own for a friend or family member to collaborate on an postcard together.



SELECT WORKS | *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P'*



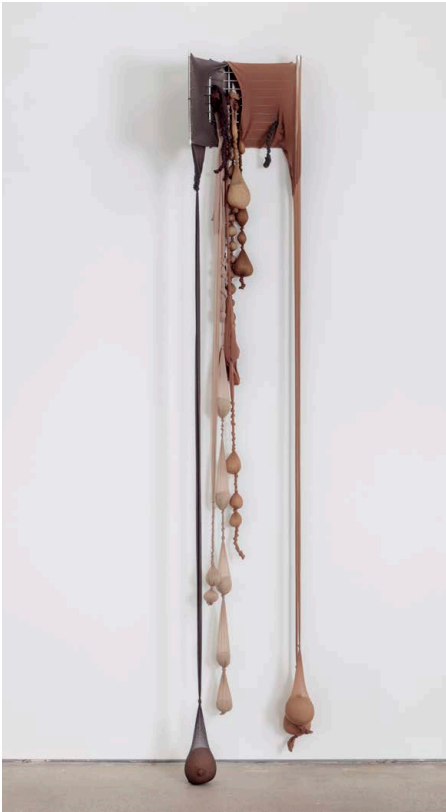
Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** For *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, the photograph captures Senga Nengudi in her studio, stretching her sculpture out into space. The artist's act of stretching the pantyhose captures a "ritual-like" performance, in which she tests the strength of the material itself. This act touches upon Nengudi's curiosity regarding people's physical response to objects. As a performer or installer, the artwork is physically touched, but the viewer has to keep a safe distance from the work. Nengudi wants her viewer to respond to the material's vulnerability.

**Use of photography:** Senga Nengudi uses photography as a way to capture her performance work. Nengudi talks about how most artists want to create work that lasts forever, but that she is more interested in work that is "temporary". For Nengudi, photography encapsulates the lack of permanence in her artistic practice and makes it permanent.

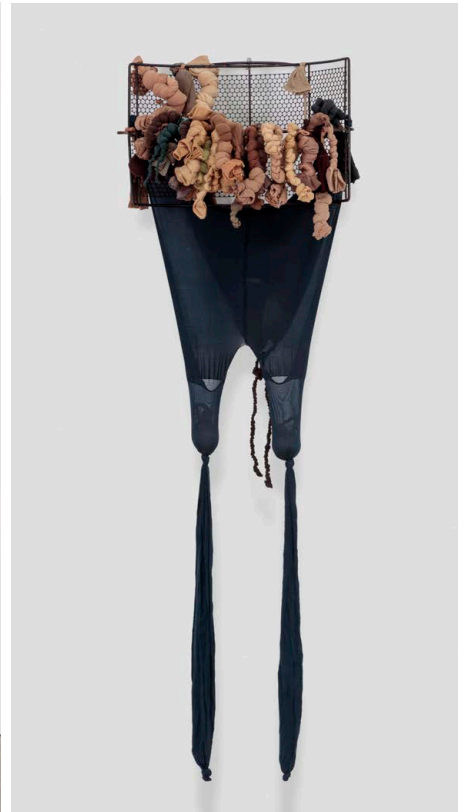
**'R.S.V.P.' title:** Many of Senga Nengudi's performance works include 'R.S.V.P.' in the titles. Nengudi incorporates the word as a way to invite her viewers to become involved in the artworks. R.S.V.P stands for "répondez s'il vous plaît" (in French) and "respond please" (in English).



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Senga Nengudi, *Insides Out, Spring 1977*, 1977. Nylon mesh, metal sand. 12 x 120 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of Craig Robins. (2) Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator parts, nylon pantyhose. 132 x 96 inches. Photo courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London. (3) Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P. Reverie - A*, 2011. Nylon mesh, sand, found wire object. 54 x 25 x 8 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Hudgins Family, New York.

## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** After giving birth to her first child, Senga Nengudi began incorporating pantyhose as a material in her sculptures. This series of her sculptures is called 'R.S.V.P.'

**Application of the Material:** Nengudi twists, knots and pulls pantyhose that she has saved and collected. The material's elasticity and limited fascinate Nengudi as a metaphor for the human body. In Nengudi's words "From tender, tight beginnings to sagging... the body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape."

**Artwork's Representational Meaning:** In Nengudi's opinion, pantyhose represent intimacy. By incorporating the material in Nengudi's artworks suggest beauty rituals and the daily effort involved in performing the traditional female role. Often worn during a job interview, party or meeting, pantyhose embody the stress or events that the pantyhose is worn. Nengudi has collected pantyhose from friends and thrift stores because the pantyhose contain the residue of stress, leftover from the person who wore the pantyhose before.

# HEAD BACK AND HIGH SENGA NENGUDI

PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976–2017)

student handout

name:

date:



## ← WHO IS SENGA NENGUDI?

Senga Nengudi is an African-American artist. She was born in Chicago, IL in 1943, but grew up in Los Angeles. Senga is an important performance artist and sculptor. In the 1970s and 80s, Senga formed an artist group with her friends called Studio Z. The artists helped each other with their projects and performances. Today, Senga lives in Colorado Springs, CO.

## VOCABULARY

**Collaboration:** The action of working with someone to produce or create something.

**Friendship:** Having a good relationship with someone, who we call a friend. People in a friendship have respect and affection for each other.

## ACTIVITY 01 | ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Find *Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.* (see image). →  
Consider: What is friendship? In what ways do you collaborate or play with friends? Write or draw an example below:

DRAW HERE



Senga Nengudi. *Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

WRITE HERE ↓

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## FUN FACT!

R.S.V.P. comes from the French phrase “répondez s’il vous plaît,” meaning “please respond”.

## ACTIVITY 02 | EXQUISITE CORPSE

Identify two friends in your group to write a poem or make a drawing! Determine who will go first, second and third. The first person will draw or write the "head"; the second person will draw or write the "body"; and the third person will write or draw the "legs". Add your part to the Exquisite Corpse and pass the paper to your collaborator on your left.



FOLD HERE!

FOLD HERE!

WRITE!

Once upon a time

-OR-

DRAW!



## ACTIVITY 03 | SEE, THINK, WONDER

View [A.C.Q. \(III\)](#), 2016-2017 and write or draw what you *See*, *Think* and *Wonder* about the work (see image):

SEE



THINK

WONDER

ABOVE: Senga Nengudi. *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator parts, nylon pantyhose. 132 x 96 inches. Courtesy of the artist; Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; and Lévy Gorvy, New York, London.

# ACTIVITY 04 | SENTENCE STARTERS

Feel free to walk around the gallery! Identify a work of art. Use the following sentence starters to help you write or draw about Senga Nengudi's ideas behind her art!

## HINT:

The name of the artwork can be found next to it on the wall

WRITE HERE

OR

DRAW HERE

1. What I like the most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ (write in title)

is... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. This artwork reminds me of... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. This artwork surprises me because... \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

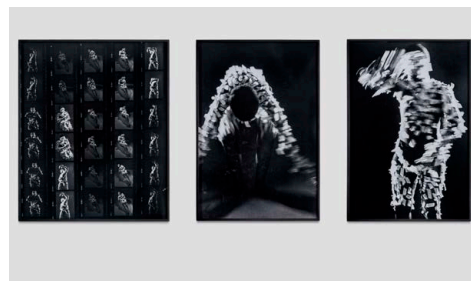
\_\_\_\_\_



Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.



Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (I)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator and air conditioner parts, fan, nylon pantyhose, sand. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.



Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

# ACTIVITY 05 | ART DETECTIVE

**CIRCLE** the materials below that you see used in the artworks. **CROSS OUT** any materials that you do not see in Senga Nengudi's art.





Hello from Art + Practice!

Thank you for scheduling your upcoming field trip to Art + Practice's exhibition space. A+P is excited to welcome your class for a self-guided tour of the exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

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**ART + PRACTICE**



# Teacher Resource Guide

# ART + PRACTICE

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*

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Students from View Park Elementary visit *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*. Los Angeles. 12 May 2017. Photo by Natalie Hon.

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# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 6th - 8th Grades

## TOUR AGENDA

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4. Introduce activity 02. Direct students to view *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P'* and complete the activity listed in their handout. Facilitate a group discussion. (14 mins., page 05-06)
5. Introduce activity 03. Direct students to select an artwork of their choosing and complete the sentences listed in their handout. (17 mins., page 06-07)
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## CALIFORNIA STATE CONTENT STANDARDS

While carrying out the following activities in this packet, please keep in mind the following California State Content's Standards:

### GRADE 6

**ELA STANDARD 7.3a** Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

**ELA STANDARD 1** Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.1** Construct and describe plausible interpretations of what they perceive in works of art.

### GRADE 7

**ELA STANDARD 7.3a** Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

**ELA STANDARD 1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.3** Take an active part in a small-group discussion about the artistic value of specific works of art, with a wide range of the viewpoints of peers being considered.

### GRADE 8

**ELA STANDARD 7.3a** Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

**ELA STANDARD 1** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.3** Construct an interpretation of a work of art based on the form and content of the work.

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 6th - 8th Grades

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AND ARTIST

Read the following summaries to the students:

### ABOUT *HEAD BACK AND HIGH: SENGA NENGUDI, PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976-2017)*

In the 1970s, Senga Nengudi emerged as one of the most inventive artists bringing together abstract sculpture and performance art. Today she continues to construct poetic environments out of pantyhose, sand, air conditioning parts, and other items salvaged from everyday use. In Nengudi's hands, these materials take on symbolic meanings that relate to the resilience and vulnerability of the human body and to the forces, both social and psychological, that shape our experiences of the world.

Nengudi grew up in Los Angeles, where she trained in sculpture and dance. After living in Tokyo and New York City, she returned to L.A. and began to experiment with pliable, portable, and inexpensive materials. She also explored movement and sound, often in collaboration with other artists. Together with David Hammons, Maren Hassinger, Barbara McCullough, Franklin Parker, Houstin Conwill, Ulysses Jenkins, and RoHo, Nengudi formed Studio Z, a loosely structured group of Black artists, dancers, and musicians at the forefront of conceptual and action art.

This exhibition brings together extraordinary examples of Nengudi's early and recent sculpture, presenting them alongside performance photographs from her breakthrough moment of the mid-1970s. The exhibition explores the ethics of friendship and collective creation that has infused Nengudi's artistic practice across her career, including



Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

videos documenting early and recent collaborations with Maren Hassinger, David Hammons, Cheryl Banks-Smith, and Lawrence "Butch" Morris. Hassinger's work is the subject of an exhibition that recently closed at Art + Practice and will be on view at The Baltimore Museum of Art July 18–November 25, 2018.

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2017)* is curated by Christopher Bedford, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art, and BMA Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann.



### ABOUT SENGA NENGUDI

Born in Chicago in 1943 and raised in Los Angeles, Senga Nengudi trained in art and dance and earned an MFA in sculpture at California State University. Her touring solo exhibition, *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures*, originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. Her work has also been the subject of many solo exhibitions and group exhibitions.

Based in Colorado Springs, Nengudi is an advocate for cultural literacy and access to arts education. From 1998 to 2008, she was a lecturer at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. In 2016, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Colorado College and a United States Artists Fellowship. She is a recipient of the 2010 Women's Caucus on Art Lifetime Achievement Award, 2005–2006 Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and 2005–2006 Louis Tiffany Foundation Biennial Competition Award. Nengudi is represented by Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London.

Senga Nengudi. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ron Pollard.

### ARTIST FACTS

1. Unlike many artists who are interested in creating artwork that is permanent and lasts forever, Senga Nengudi is interested in creating work that is temporary or ephemeral.

2. Nengudi developed many friendships with fellow artists who gave her permission to be herself and explore her thoughts without any boundaries. Artist Maren Hassinger is one of those people. Nengudi and Hassinger have been working for

decades, collaborating with each other to make new works of art and explore ideas concerned with identity, performance and the body.

3. Nengudi was born with the name Sue Irons. The different names she uses in her artistic practice all have a personal thread related to them. Other Nengudi pseudonyms include: Harriet Chin, Propecia Lee and Lily B. Moor.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 6th - 8th Grades

### ACTIVITY 01 | ESSENTIAL QUESTION (DOK Level 1: Recall)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students examine ways which a persona can create thought provoking ideas such as in the case of artist Senga Nengudi.

**ACTIVITY:** *Essential Question*

1. Introduction (5 minutes)

Ask students, "what is a persona"? Allow 2-3 students to respond. Restate the student definitions and read out loud definition provided by A+P (see below).

### PERSONA DEFINED

**Persona** - the aspect of someone's character that is presented to or interpreted by others. A role or character adopted by an author or an actor.

Mention that Nengudi was born with the legal name Sue Ellen Irons. State that Nengudi changed her name in her early 30s to question herself and the way society is forced to name people. Make it known to the students that Nengudi wants her viewers to question her origin through her name.

Let students know that Nengudi also has different personas. Read aloud that Nengudi states:

*In Black culture naming has great significance. We have been "called out of our names" so much that controlling that aspect of our lives with a B'rer Rabbit sensibility is important. Each name has personal significance. But more importantly I wanted to explore the fact that many of us fall into the trap of what an artist's work "should" look like related to their ethnicity. An ethnic name attached to an artwork assumes us into an unconscious shorthand way of understanding the style or subject matter with expectations of what the style and subject matter should be.*

2. Individual Exploration (7 minutes)

Ask students the Essential Question: "What associations or assumptions do you think people make about you because of your name?" Direct students to write their responses in the space provided in their handout.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students examine ways which a persona can create thought provoking ideas such as in the case of Senga Nengudi.

### ACTIVITY 02 | SEE, THINK, WONDER (DOK Level 3: Strategic Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Using *See, Think, Wonder* as a platform to foster critical thinking. Students should develop their own initial drawn responses to the artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976.

**ACTIVITY:** *See, Think, Wonder*

1. Introduction (2 minutes)

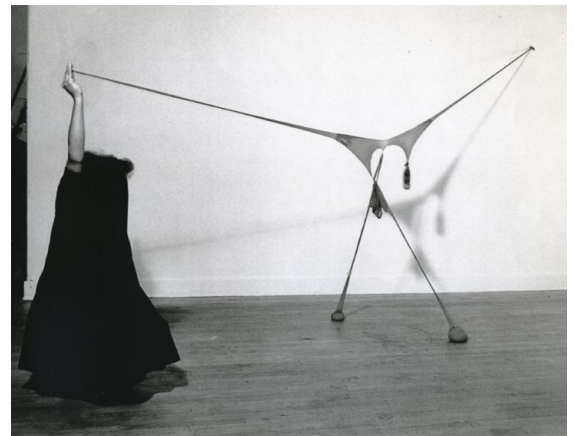
Direct students to locate the artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1978. →

2. Individual Exploration (4 minutes per section, 12 minutes total)

Guide students to write what they see, think and wonder about the artwork.

**Note:** The teacher should act as the facilitator, meaning that the teacher is responsible for asking students questions about *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, helping them identify opinions about the artwork. Also, confirm that students are not jumping to conclusions about *Studio Performance 'R.S.V.P.'*. Students should only write what they see, think and wonder in the appropriate sections of their handouts.

Activity #02 continued on next page →



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 6th - 8th Grades

### ACTIVITY 02 | SEE, THINK, WONDER (DOK Level 3: Strategic Thinking)

#### 3. Group Discussion (4 minutes)

Ask students to come back together for a group discussion. Ask students about their observations, inquiring about what they saw, thought and wondered about *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students will automatically become engaged in *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*. The teacher should encourage students to not write anything first. Students should initially spend time just observing the artwork.

### ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS (Level 2: Skill/Concept)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will use sentence starters to formulate descriptions about an artwork being shown and develop their own responses to an artwork of their choosing. The students' ideas will be shared in small or whole group discussions.

#### ACTIVITY: Sentence Starters

##### 1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Direct students to roam the gallery and select an artwork of their choosing. Remind students about the key vocabulary words: *ephemeral* and *persona*. Ask students to use the following sentence starters to help them talk about an artwork of their choosing.

##### 2. Individual Exploration, Part #01 (7 minutes)

Direct students to fill in the blanks to the following sentences by writing in the space provided:

- What I like most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.
- This artwork reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_.
- This artwork surprises me because \_\_\_\_\_.

##### 3. Individual Exploration, Part #02 (7 minutes)

Direct students to roam the gallery and select a photograph in the gallery (see below examples). Introduce the word *ephemeral*, stating A+P's definition (listed below). Ask students to examine the artwork (minimum 1 minute) and consider the word *ephemeral* as they view the photograph of their choosing. Ask students to complete the following sentences:

- The piece titled \_\_\_\_\_ is ephemeral because it \_\_\_\_\_.
- Explain another way you see this artwork being ephemeral? \_\_\_\_\_.
- How do you think the meaning of this work of art has changed overtime? \_\_\_\_\_.

## EPHEMERAL DEFINED

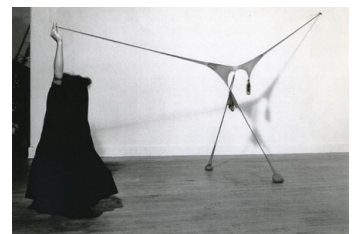
**Ephemeral** - a work of art that only occurs once and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery. Ephemeral work is often presented through photographic documentation.



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw.; Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila; and Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 6th - 8th Grades

### ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS (CONTINUED)

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students grasp main concepts of the artworks in the exhibition and use appropriate vocabulary to write descriptive sentences.

### ACTIVITY 04 | DISCOVERING YOUR PERSONA (DOK Level 1: Strategic Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students develop a persona that is inspired by the personas established in all of Senga Nengudi's many mediums (i.e. writing, art, etc.).

**ACTIVITY:** Discovering Your Persona

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a group. Guide students to image a persona for themselves. Ask students to think about how their names have meaning or an origin. Ask students, do their names influence or affect how they interact with the world? If so, how and not? Ask students, *How do you believe viewers would interpret Senga Nengudi's works if she had kept her name "Sue Ellen Irons" for her visual art?*

2. Individual Exploration (10 minutes)

With their persona in mind, ask students to write a short description in their handout.

As students are working on describing their personas, encourage students to think about the qualities they have. For example: are their personas more outgoing, if they are typically shy? Does their persona like pie if they prefer tres leches cake, etc? What types of art do their personas create? Do their personas rap? Sing? Create short stories? How old are they? Do they have a superpower?

Encourage students to develop artistic personas that are inclined to create works of art that are out of their comfort zone.

3. Group Discussion (7 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a group. Ask 2-3 students to share with the class their personas.

Ask students think of any other artists, writers, actors, dancers or musicians that have an established persona as well? Ask 2-3 students to name artists they can think of. See examples below for reference:

#### EXAMPLES



Donald Glover / Childish Gambino



Dana Elaine Owens / Queen Latifah



Bruno Mars / Peter Gene Hernandez

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Understanding the complexities within names, their origins and meanings, students are able to imagine and develop a persona for themselves.

### ACTIVITY 05 | POST VISIT (Level 4: Extended Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will apply Senga Nengudi's ideas of friendship and collaboration to an artistic activity inspired by their visit to Art + Practice's exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

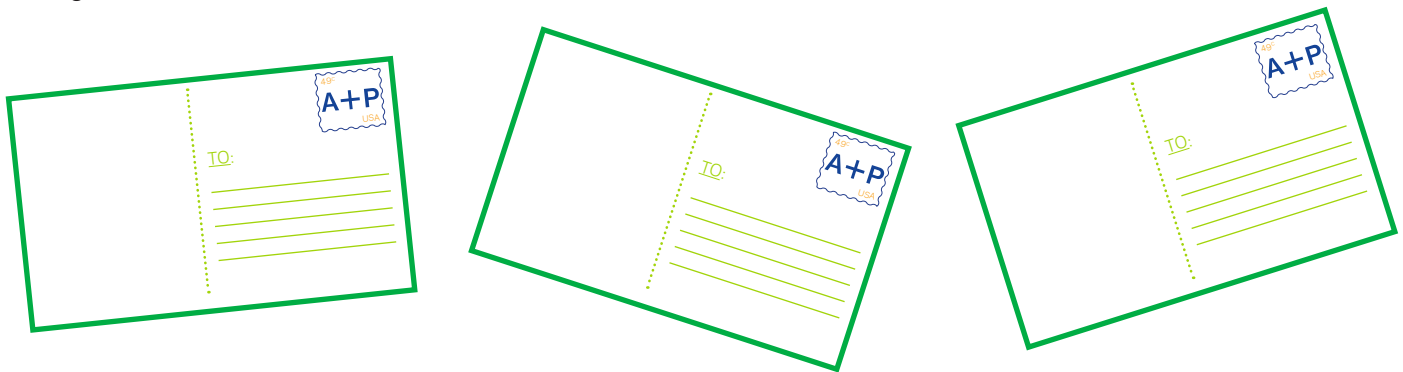
**ACTIVITY:** Post visit hands on project

#### 1. Collaborative Project:

A+P will provide students with a postcard template. Direct students to write on the postcard, directing their correspondence to their made up persona. Encourage student to think about how they can develop their persona - do they have a name? What are their interests?

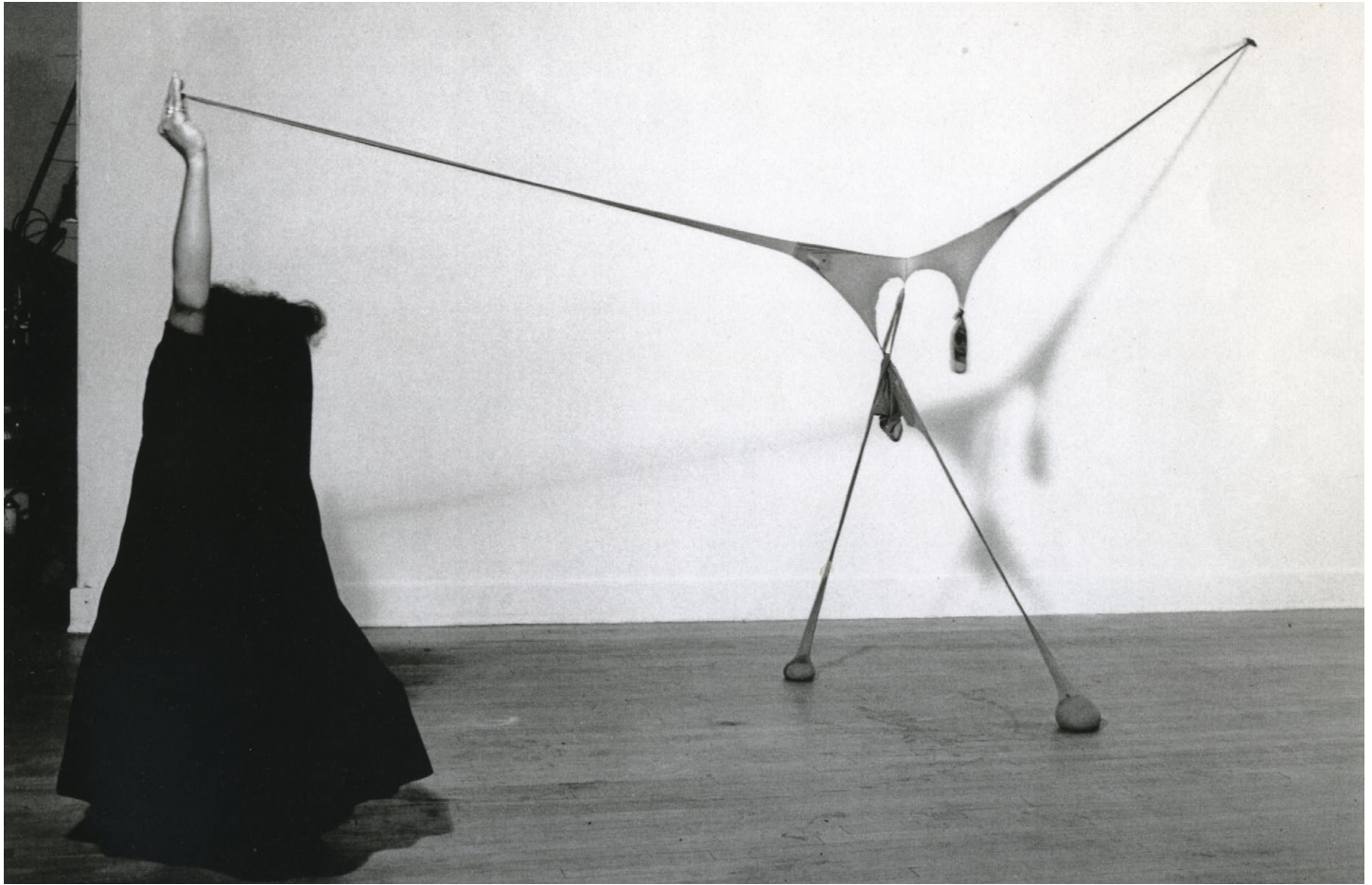
Encourage students to take it a step further by drawing an image on the front of their postcard. Ask students to embody their persona, using different materials (i.e. paint, pencils, pens, etc.) that they would naturally gravitate towards, capturing the essence of their persona in mind.

Direct students to mail their postcard to a friend or family member, asking that friend or family member to respond to their message.



**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students connect and further their exploration regarding notions of creating a persona and write a postcard to their made up persona, inviting them to collaborate on a drawing on the back of the postcard.

SELECT WORKS | *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P'*



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

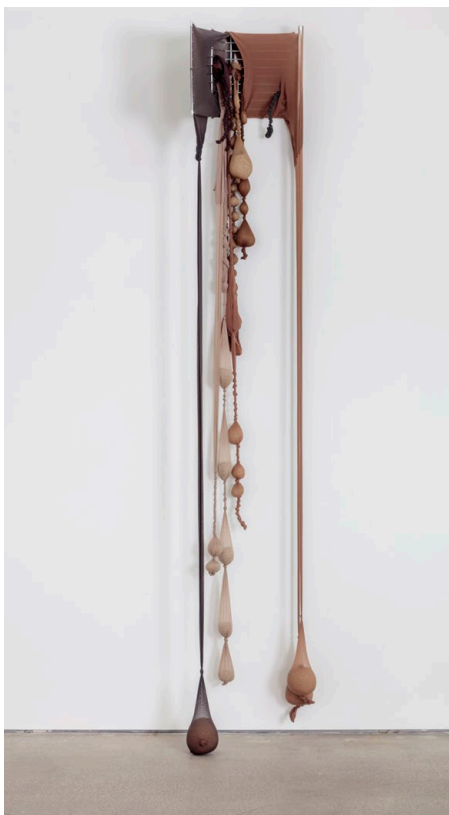
## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** For *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, the photograph captures Senga Nengudi in her studio, stretching her sculpture out into space. The artist's act of stretching the pantyhose captures a "ritual-like" performance, in which she tests the strength of the material itself. This act touches upon Nengudi's curiosity regarding people's physical response to objects. As a performer or installer, the artwork is physically touched, but the viewer has to keep a safe distance from the work. Nengudi wants her viewer to respond to the material's vulnerability.

**Use of photography:** Senga Nengudi uses photography as a way to capture her performance work. Nengudi talks about how most artists want to create work that lasts forever, but that she is more interested in work that is "temporary". For Nengudi, photography encapsulates the lack of permanence in her artistic practice and makes it permanent.

**'R.S.V.P.' title:** Many of Senga Nengudi's performance works include 'R.S.V.P.' in the titles. Nengudi incorporates the word as a way to invite her viewers to become involved in the artworks. R.S.V.P stands for "répondez s'il vous plaît" (in French) and "respond please" (in English).

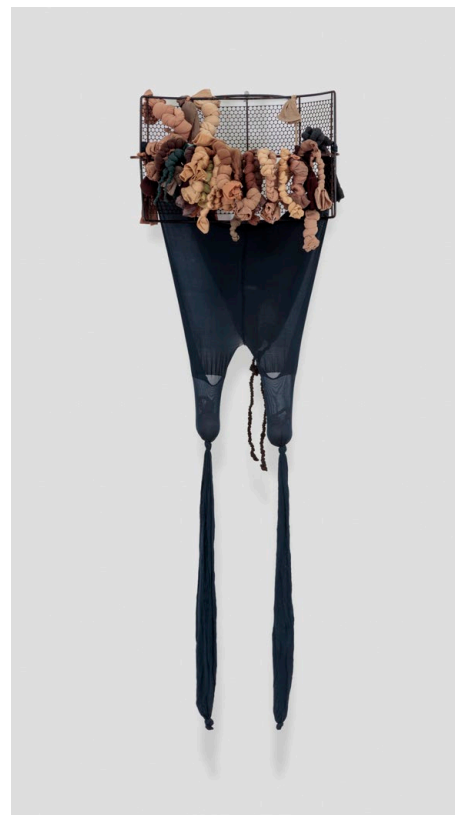




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(1) Senga Nengudi, *Insides Out, Spring 1977, 1977*. Nylon mesh, metal sand. 12 x 120 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of Craig Robins. (2) Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator parts, nylon pantyhose. 132 x 96 inches. Photo courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London. (3) Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P. Reverie - A*, 2011. Nylon mesh, sand, found wire object. 54 x 25 x 8 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Hudgins Family, New York.

## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** After giving birth to her first child, Senga Nengudi began incorporating pantyhose as a material in her sculptures. This series of her sculptures is called 'R.S.V.P.'

**Application of the Material:** Nengudi twists, knots and pulls pantyhose that she has saved and collected. The material's elasticity and limitations fascinates Nengudi as a metaphor for the human body. In Nengudi's words "From tender, tight beginnings to sagging... the body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape."

**Artwork's Representational Meaning:** In Nengudi's opinion, pantyhose represent intimacy. By incorporating the material in Nengudi's artworks suggest beauty rituals and the daily effort involved in performing the traditional female role. Often worn during a job interview, party or meeting, pantyhose embody the stress or events that the pantyhose is worn. Nengudi has collected pantyhose from friends and thrift stores because the pantyhose contain the residue of stress, leftover from the person who wore the pantyhose before.

# HEAD BACK AND HIGH SENGA NENGUDI

PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976–2017)

student handout

name:

date:



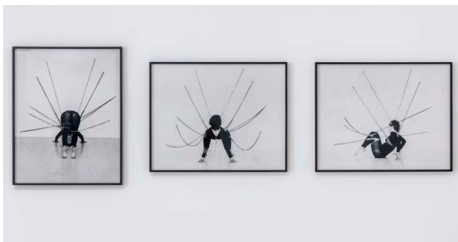
## ← WHO IS SENGA NENGUDI?

Senga Nengudi is an African-American artist. She was born in Chicago, IL in 1943, but grew up in Los Angeles. Senga is an important performance artist and sculptor. In the 1970s and 80s, Senga formed an artist group with her friends called Studio Z. The artists helped each other with their projects and performances. Today, Senga lives in Colorado Springs, CO.

## VOCABULARY

**Ephemeral:** A work of art that only occurs once and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery. Ephemeral work is often presented through photographic or video documentation.

**Persona:** The aspect of someone's character that is presented to or interpreted by others. A role or character adopted by an artist, author or actor.



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(1) Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.  
(2) Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (I)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator and air conditioner parts, fan, nylon pantyhose, sand. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.  
(3) Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## ACTIVITY 01 | ESSENTIAL QUESTION

**THINK!!!** What associations or assumptions do you think people make about you because of your name? Do you know the origin of your name? Do you know what your name means? Write your thoughts below:

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## ACTIVITY 02 | SEE, THINK, WONDER

View *Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Write what you *See*, *Think* and *Wonder* about the artwork below:



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

SEE

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THINK

WONDER

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## ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS

**Walk around the gallery!** Pick an artwork that stands out to you. Use the following sentence starters to help you write about the artwork that you selected, considering how Senga Nengudi incorporates ideas in her artistic practice. (On the next page, see examples of artworks on view in A+P's exhibition space for reference.)

1. What I like the most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ is... \_\_\_\_\_

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**HINT:**

The name of the artwork can be found next to it on the wall.

## ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS (CONTINUED)

2. This artwork reminds me of... \_\_\_\_\_

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2. This artwork surprises me because... \_\_\_\_\_

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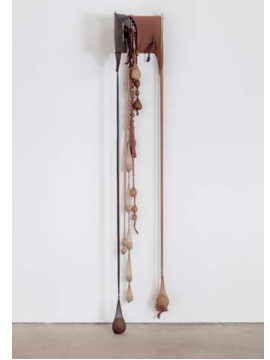
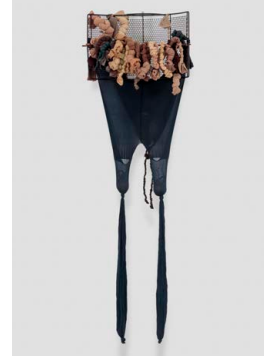
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**RIGHT ABOVE:** Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P Reverie - A*, 2011. Nylon mesh, sand, found wire object. 54 x 25 x 8 inches. Courtesy of the Collection of the Hudgins Family, New York. **RIGHT BELOW:** Senga Nengudi, *Insides Out, Spring 1977, 1977*. Nylon mesh, metal, sand. 12 x 120 inches. Courtesy of the Collection of Craig Robbins.

**CHOOSE** a photograph in the gallery and examine it. A+P recommends spending a whole minute really looking at the work before beginning the following activity (see images below for reference).

1. The piece titled \_\_\_\_\_ is ephemeral because... \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Explain another way you see this piece as being ephemeral: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. How do you think the meaning of this work of art has changed over time? \_\_\_\_\_

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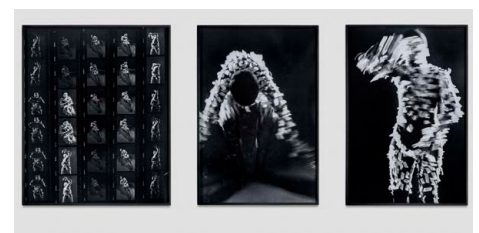
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**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw.; Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson.; and Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. All images courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## ACTIVITY 04 | DISCOVERING YOUR PERSONA

**GUESS WHAT?!** Senga Nengudi was born with the name Sue Ellen Irons. She legally changed her name to Senga Nengudi in her early 30s with the idea that she wanted to question her identity and the ways in which society constructs identity through naming people. By changing her name, Nengudi wants her viewers to question her origin. What is her ethnic background? Where did her family originate from?

1. When you read the last name "Nengudi", what do you believe her ethnic background is? Where does the last name, like Nengudi, make you think her family originated from? How do you believe viewers would interpret Nengudi's artwork if she had kept her name as "Sue Ellens Irons" for her visual art?



Senga Nengudi. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ron Pollard.

2. Consider a persona for yourself. What would your persona's name be? What kind of work would you create? Write a short description below:

### FUN FACT!

Senga Nengudi uses different names for the artworks that she produces in other mediums. When writing poetry, Nengudi calls herself Lily Bea Moor. When she paints, she calls herself Harriet Chin. When she makes photographs, she is Propecia Leigh.



Hello from Art + Practice!

Thank you for scheduling your upcoming field trip to Art + Practice's exhibition space. A+P is excited to welcome your class for a self-guided tour of the exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

In preparation for your visit, A+P highly suggests that you review the following gallery rules, general information about A+P's exhibition space and provided educational resources prior to your visit. This will insure that you will be prepared to guide your students through the suggested activities. If you have any questions, please email A+P at [education@artandpractice.org](mailto:education@artandpractice.org) or call (323) 337-6887.

We look forward to welcoming your class to A+P soon.

Sincerely,

**ART + PRACTICE**

# Teacher Resource Guide

# ART + PRACTICE

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*

## GALLERY RULES

1. No food or drink allowed. If students bring their lunches, they can leave their food/drinks with A+P at the front gallery desk.
2. Please do not touch the artworks on display. (unless permitted or approved by A+P's staff)
3. Visitors must keep a 3 foot distance from the artworks.
4. No running or skipping in the gallery.
5. Backpacks and large bags are not permitted in the gallery. Students can leave their belongings with A+P at the front gallery desk.
6. No pens allowed, only pencils; which A+P will provide students with for the tour.
7. No flash photography permitted.
8. Visitors should use inside voices while in the gallery.
9. Limited use of cell phones, kindly requested.



Students from View Park Elementary visit *Spiral Play: Loving in the '80s*. Los Angeles. 12 May 2017. Photo by Natalie Hon.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Duration

Self-guided tours typically range between 45 minutes-1 hour.

### Group Size and Chaperones Count

Groups of 30 are highly encouraged. Adult to student ratio should be 1:10.

### Teacher Resource Guide

This packet contains tools and activities for you to facilitate with your students during and after your visit to A+P. This packet is meant to integrate into your curriculum and incorporate the California State Content Standards.

Please follow the directions listed in this packet, and ask an A+P staff member if you have any questions before or during your visit. We'll be happy to help.

### Student Handouts

This packet corresponds to a student handout, which A+P will have printed and ready for your students upon arrival to the exhibition space, along with clipboards and sharpened pencils.

### Bathroom Code

A+P has women's and men's restrooms onsite. The code for entry is **52022**.

## INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET

1. Tour Agenda
2. List of California State Content Standards applied to the tour's activities
3. Exhibition description, artist bio and facts
4. Tour activities (1-4)
5. Recommend Post Visit Activity
6. Artworks' descriptions



# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 9th - 12th Grades

## TOUR AGENDA

1. Review the gallery rules with students. (page 02)
2. Provide students with background information about artist Senga Nengudi and the exhibition. (5 mins., page 04)
3. Introduce activity 01 and the key vocabulary words. Ask students to define what “permanence” and “ephemeral” means, facilitating a group discussion. (6 mins., page 05)
4. Introduce activity 02. Direct students to view *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P'* and complete the activity listed in their handouts. Facilitate a group discussion. (18 mins., page 05)
5. Introduce activity 03. Direct students to identify two artworks of their choosing and locate *Performance Piece*. Facilitate a group discussion. (30 mins., page 06)
6. Introduce activity 04. Direct students to first watch a video in the back video room and complete the activity listed in their handouts. Afterwards, ask students to identify a sculptural work in the gallery and complete the activity listed in their handouts. (28 mins., page 06-07)

## CALIFORNIA STATE CONTENT STANDARDS

While carrying out the following activities in this packet, please keep in mind the following California State Content Standards:

### GRADES 11-12

**ELA STANDARD 7.3a** Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

**VAPA STANDARD 4.2** Compare the ways in which the meaning of a specific work of art has been affected over time because of changes in interpretation and context.

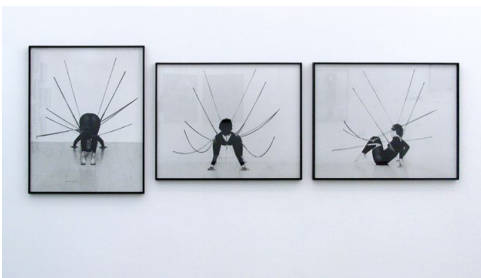
**VAPA STANDARD 4.5** Employ the conventions of art criticism in writing and speaking about works of art.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

While at Art + Practice consider and keep in mind the following learning objective:

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

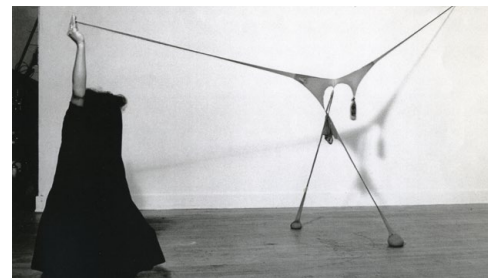
Within the context of the exhibition presented at Art + Practice titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*, students will be able to identify a central idea and/or theme based on their analysis of a text that references Senga Nengudi's artworks.



Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.



Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (I)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator and air conditioner parts, fan, nylon pantyhose, sand. Overall dimensions variable. Image courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York and Lévy Gorvy, New York, London.



Senga Nengudi, *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 9th - 12th Grades

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AND ARTIST

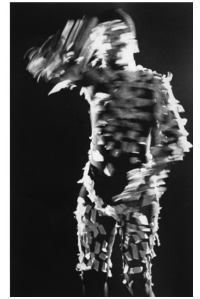
Read the following summaries to the students:

### ABOUT HEAD BACK AND HIGH: SENGA NENGUDI, PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976-2017)

In the 1970s, Senga Nengudi emerged as one of the most inventive artists bringing together abstract sculpture and performance art. Today she continues to construct poetic environments out of panty hose, sand, air conditioning parts, and other items salvaged from everyday use. In Nengudi's hands, these materials take on symbolic meanings that relate to the resilience and vulnerability of the human body and to the forces, both social and psychological, that shape our experiences of the world.

Nengudi grew up in Los Angeles, where she trained in sculpture and dance. After living in Tokyo and New York City, she returned to L.A. and began to experiment with pliable, portable, and inexpensive materials. She also explored movement and sound, often in collaboration with other artists. Together with David Hammons, Maren Hassinger, Barbara McCullough, Franklin Parker, Houstin Conwill, Ulysses Jenkins, and RoHo, Nengudi formed Studio Z, a loosely structured group of Black artists, dancers, and musicians at the forefront of conceptual and action art.

This exhibition brings together extraordinary examples of Nengudi's early and recent sculpture, presenting them alongside performance photographs from her breakthrough moment of the mid-1970s. The exhibition explores the ethics of friendship and collective creation that has infused Nengudi's artistic practice across her career, including



Senga Nengudi, *Masking It*, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

videos documenting early and recent collaborations with Maren Hassinger, David Hammons, Cheryl Banks-Smith, and Lawrence "Butch" Morris. Hassinger's work is the subject of an exhibition that recently closed at Art + Practice and will be on view at The Baltimore Museum of Art July 18–November 25, 2018.

*Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976–2017)* is curated by Christopher Bedford, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of The Baltimore Museum of Art, and BMA Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art Cecilia Wichmann.



### ABOUT SENGA NENGUDI

Born in Chicago in 1943 and raised in Los Angeles, Senga Nengudi trained in art and dance and earned an MFA in sculpture at California State University. Her touring solo exhibition, *Senga Nengudi: Improvisational Gestures*, originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. Her work has also been the subject of many solo exhibitions and group exhibitions.

Based in Colorado Springs, Nengudi is an advocate for cultural literacy and access to arts education. From 1998 to 2008, she was a lecturer at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. In 2016, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Colorado College and a United States Artists Fellowship. She is a recipient of the 2010 Women's Caucus on Art Lifetime Achievement Award, 2005–2006 Anonymous Was A Woman Award, and 2005–2006 Louis Tiffany Foundation Biennial Competition Award. Nengudi is represented by Thomas Erben Gallery, New York, and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London.

Senga Nengudi. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Ron Pollard.

### ARTIST FACTS

1. Unlike many artists who are interested in creating artwork that is permanent and lasts forever, Senga Nengudi is interested in creating work that is temporary or ephemeral.

2. Nengudi developed many friendships with fellow artists who gave her permission to be herself and explore her thoughts without any boundaries. Artist Maren Hassinger is one of those people. Nengudi and Hassinger have been working for

decades, collaborating with each other to make new works of art and explore ideas concerned with identity, performance and the body.

3. Nengudi was born with the name Sue Irons. The different names she uses in her artistic practice all have a personal thread related to them. Other Nengudi pseudonyms include: Harriet Chin, Propecia Lee and Lily B. Moor.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 9th - 12th Grades

### ACTIVITY 01 | T-CHART (DOK Level: 1 Recall)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students develop a clear understanding of Senga Nengudi works that are ephemeral and permanent.

**ACTIVITY:** T-Chart

1. Introduction (1-2 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a class.

2. Group Discussion (4 minutes)

Ask students to define what “ephemeral” means. Allow 1-2 students to respond, and ask all students to write down their definitions in their handouts. Read out loud definition provided by A+P (see below).

Ask students to define what “permanence” means. Allow 1-2 students to respond. Ask students to write down their definitions in their handouts. Read out loud definition provided by A+P (see below).

### KEY VOCABULARY

**Ephemeral** - A work of art that only occurs once (i.e. like a happening) and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery. Ephemeral work is often presented through photographic documentation.

**Permanence** - the state or quality of lasting or remaining unchanged indefinitely.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students are able to formulate clear understandings of the words ephemeral and permanence.

### ACTIVITY 02 | SEE, THINK, WONDER (DOK Level 2: Skill/Concept)

**OBJECTIVE:** Using *See, Think, Wonder* as a platform to foster critical thinking. Students should develop their own initial drawn responses to the artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976.

**ACTIVITY:** *See, Think, Wonder*

1. Introduction (2 minutes)

Direct students to locate the artwork titled *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, 1976. →

2. Individual Exploration (4 minutes per section, 12 minutes total)

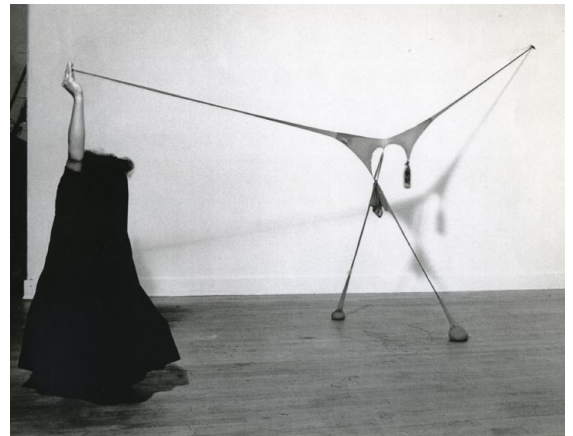
Guide students to write what they see, think and wonder about the artwork.

**Note:** The teacher should act as the facilitator, meaning that the teacher is responsible for asking students questions about *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, helping them identify opinions about the artwork. Also, confirm that students are not jumping to conclusions about *Studio Performance 'R.S.V.P.'*. Students should only write what they see, think and wonder in the appropriate sections of their handouts.

3. Group Discussion (4 minutes)

Ask students to come back together for a group discussion. Ask students about their observations, inquiring about what they saw, thought and wondered about *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students will automatically become engaged in *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*. The teacher should encourage students to not write anything first. Students should initially spend time just observing the artwork.



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 9th - 12th Grades

### ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS (DOK Level 3: Strategic Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students grasp main concepts of highlighted artworks in the exhibition and use appropriate vocabulary to write descriptive sentences.

**ACTIVITY:** *Sentence Starters*

1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Introduce activity 03, *Sentence Starters*. Direct students to roam the gallery and identify two artworks of their choosing to focus on.

2. Individual Exploration 01 (1.0 minutes)

Direct students to answer the following questions on their handouts for the two artworks that they selected:

- What I like the most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_
- This artwork reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_
- This artwork is ephemeral/permanent because \_\_\_\_\_

3. Individual Exploration 02 (10 minutes)

Direct students to locate *Performance Piece, 1978*. →

Read aloud the following text, in Nengudi words

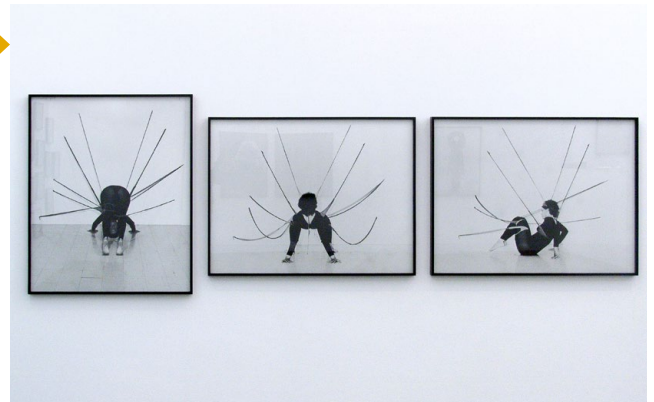
*"From tender, tight beginnings to sagging... the body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape."*

Ask students to follow the prompt in their handout and write their responses.

4. Group Discussion (7 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a group. Allow 2-3 students to share their responses to the following questions:

1. Describe below how Senga Nengudi uses pantyhose as a metaphor for the human body \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The pantyhose can also represent \_\_\_\_\_.



Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students grasp main concepts of highlighted artworks in the exhibition and use appropriate vocabulary to write descriptive sentences.

### ACTIVITY 04 | PERMANENCE + EPHEMERAL (DOK Level 4: Extended Thinking)

**OBJECTIVE:** Students are able to describe how Senga Nengudi creates elements that are ephemeral versus elements that are permanent.

**ACTIVITY:** Permanence + Ephemeral

Activity 04 continued on next page →

## TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE: 9th - 12th Grades

### ACTIVITY 04 | PERMANENCE + EPHEMERAL (CONTINUED)

#### 1. Introduction (2-3 minutes)

Ask students to gather as a group. Ask students to revisit their definitions for “permanence” and “ephemeral”, written in their handouts. Allow 1-2 students to respond, identifying the differences between what is permanent vs. ephemeral.

Read aloud:

“Senga Nengudi is interested in creating artworks that are ephemeral, meaning that she often creates works of art that only occur once (i.e. a performance). To capture her ephemeral works, making them permanent, Nengudi utilizes photography as a tool to capture her performances.”

#### 2. Individual Exploration 01 (1.5 minutes)

Direct students to watch a video in the back video room and write about its documentation. As students watch the videos, ask them to consider the following:

- What is captured in the video?
- What elements of the video work are ephemeral and what are permanent?

#### 3. Individual Exploration 02 (10 minutes)

Ask students to identify a sculpture in the gallery. Ask students to describe how they think their selected sculpture has changed over time? Direct students to write their thoughts in the space provided in their handouts.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students are able to synthesize their knowledge of the permanence and ephemerality in Senga Nengudi’s work.

### POST VISIT ACTIVITY (DOK Level 4: Extended Thinking)

#### POST VISIT

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will apply Senga Nengudi’s ideas of ephemeral and permanence to an artistic activity inspired by their visit to Art + Practice’s exhibition titled *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*.

**ACTIVITY:** Hands on project

#### 1. Hands on project:

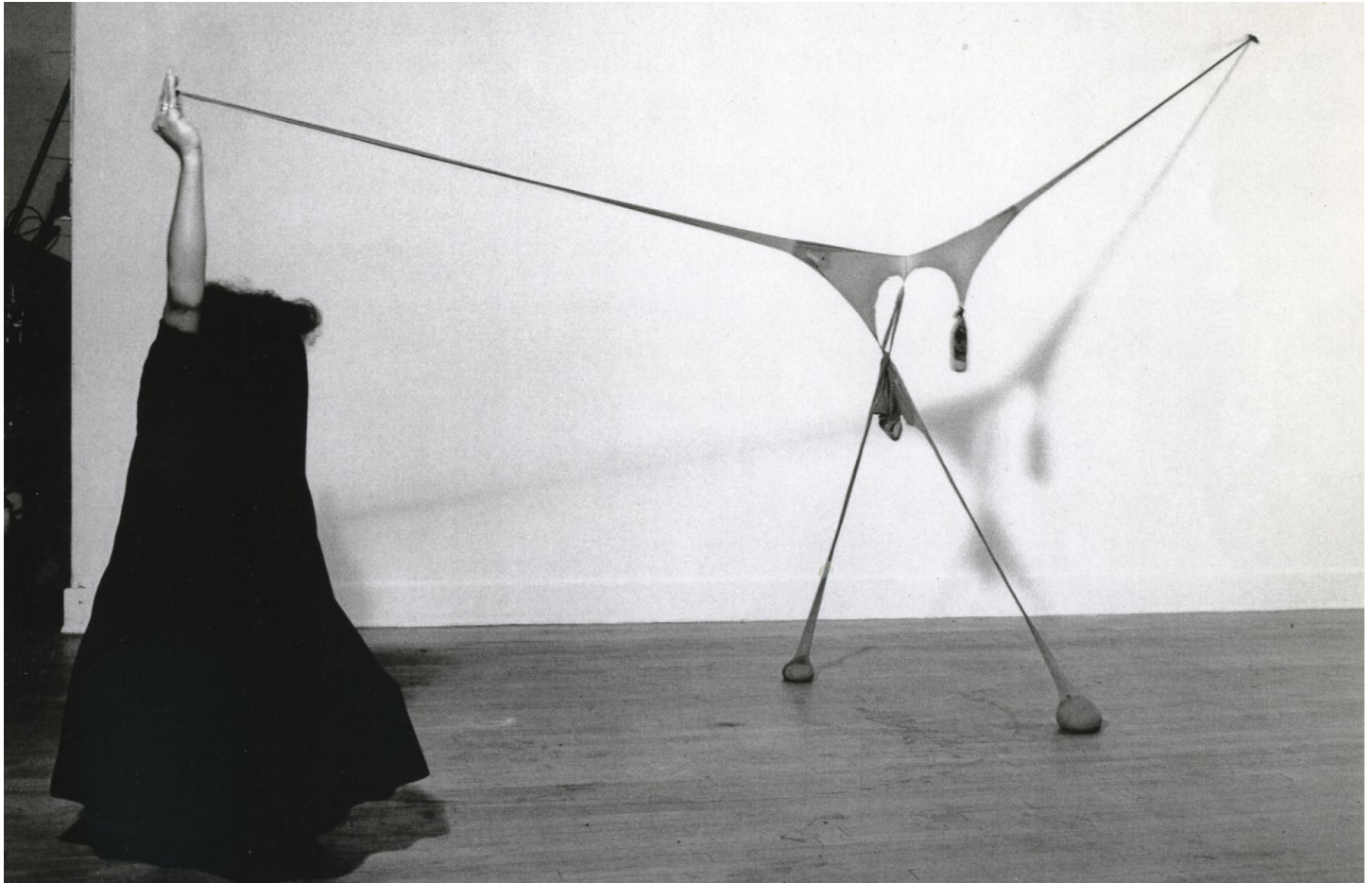
Encourage students to create their own ephemeral videos, using social media as a tool for artistic communication (i.e. SnapChat, Instagram and/or Facebook). Prompt students to create a quick movement and have a friend record it into a video/boomrang/snap. Ask students to apply the following hashtags to their posted video: #senganengudi, #artandpractice, #headbackandhigh, #leimertpark.

**EVIDENCE OF LEARNING:** Students create a performance video emphasizing the ephemeral aspects of social media posts inspired by Senga Nengudi.



Installation view, *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-2017)*. Art + Practice, June 23-August 25, 2018. Photo by Joshua White/JW Pictures.

SELECT WORKS | *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P'*



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** For *Studio Performance with 'R.S.V.P.'*, the photograph captures Senga Nengudi in her studio, stretching her sculpture out into space. The artist's act of stretching the pantyhose captures a "ritual-like" performance, in which she tests the strength of the material itself. This act touches upon Nengudi's curiosity regarding people's physical response to objects. As a performer or installer, the artwork is physically touched, but the viewer has to keep a safe distance from the work. Nengudi wants her viewer to respond to the material's vulnerability.

**Use of photography:** Senga Nengudi uses photography as a way to capture her performance work. Nengudi talks about how most artists want to create work that lasts forever, but that she is more interested in work that is "temporary". For Nengudi, photography encapsulates the lack of permanence in her artistic practice and makes it permanent.

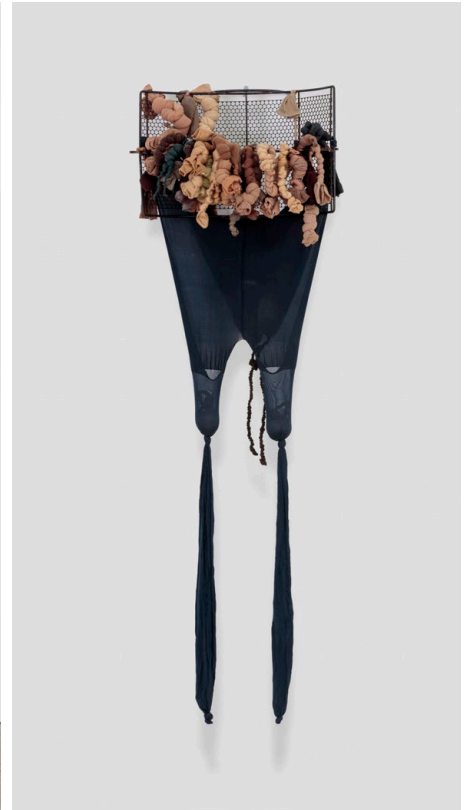
**'R.S.V.P.' title:** Many of Senga Nengudi's performance works include 'R.S.V.P.' in the titles. Nengudi incorporates the word as a way to invite her viewers to become involved in the artworks. R.S.V.P stands for "répondez s'il vous plaît" (in French) and "respond please" (in English).



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Senga Nengudi, *Insides Out, Spring 1977, 1977*. Nylon mesh, metal sand. 12 x 120 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of Craig Robins. (2) Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (III)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator parts, nylon pantyhose. 132 x 96 inches. Photo courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York and Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York, London. (3) Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P. Reverie - A*, 2011. Nylon mesh, sand, found wire object. 54 x 25 x 8 inches. Photo courtesy of the Collection of the Hudgins Family, New York.

## DESCRIPTION

**Background:** After giving birth to her first child, Senga Nengudi began incorporating pantyhose as a material in her sculptures. This series of her sculptures is called 'R.S.V.P.'

**Application of the Material:** Nengudi twists, knots and pulls pantyhose that she has saved and collected. The material's elasticity and limitations fascinates Nengudi as a metaphor for the human body. In Nengudi's words "From tender, tight beginnings to sagging... the body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape."

**Artwork's Representational Meaning:** In Nengudi's opinion, pantyhose represent intimacy. By incorporating the material in Nengudi's artworks suggest beauty rituals and the daily effort involved in performing the traditional female role. Often worn during a job interview, party or meeting, pantyhose embody the stress or events that the pantyhose is worn. Nengudi has collected pantyhose from friends and thrift stores because the pantyhose contain the residue of stress, leftover from the person who wore the pantyhose before.

# HEAD BACK AND HIGH SENGA NENGUDI

PERFORMANCE OBJECTS (1976–2017)

student handout

name:

date:



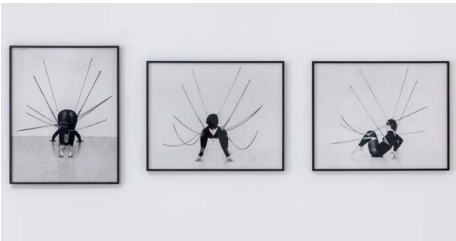
## ← WHO IS SENGA NENGUDI?

Senga Nengudi is an African-American artist. She was born in Chicago, IL in 1943, but grew up in Los Angeles. Senga is an important performance artist and sculptor. In the 1970s and 80s, Senga formed an artist group with her friends called Studio Z. The artists helped each other with their projects and performances. Today, Senga lives in Colorado Springs, CO.

## VOCABULARY

**Ephemeral:** A work of art that only occurs once and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery. Ephemeral work is often presented through photographic or video documentation.

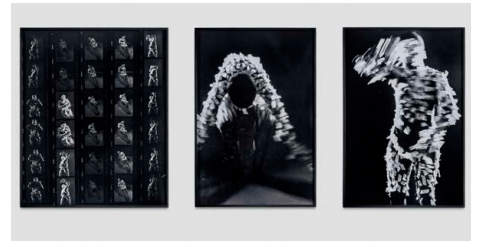
**Permanence:** The state or quality of lasting or remaining unchanged indefinitely.



(1)



(2)



(3)

(1) Senga Nengudi, Performance Piece, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.  
(2) Senga Nengudi, A.C.Q. (I), 2016-2017. Refrigerator and air conditioner parts, fan, nylon pantyhose, sand. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.  
(3) Senga Nengudi, Masking It, 1978-1979. Silver gelatin prints. Photographer: Adam Avila. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## ACTIVITY 01 | T-CHART

During your class discussion write down the definition of each word in your own words.

EPHEMERAL

PERMANENCE

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## ACTIVITY 02 | SEE, THINK, WONDER

View *Studio Performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Write what you See, Think and Wonder about the artwork below:



Senga Nengudi. *Studio performance with R.S.V.P.*, 1976. Black and white photograph. Photographer: Ken Peterson. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

SEE

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THINK

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WONDER

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## ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS

Walk around the gallery! Pick an artwork that stands out to you (see examples on the next page). Use the following sentence starters to help you write about the artwork of your choosing, considering how Senga Nengudi incorporates ideas in her artistic practice. **NOTE:** Please do not select *Performance Piece* as your artwork of choice!

1. What I like the most about the artwork titled \_\_\_\_\_ is... \_\_\_\_\_

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**HINT:**

The name of the artwork can be found next to it on the wall!

## ACTIVITY 03 | SENTENCE STARTERS (CONTINUED)

2. This artwork reminds me of... \_\_\_\_\_

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3. This artwork is **EPHEMERAL**/**PERMANENT** (circle one) because... \_\_\_\_\_

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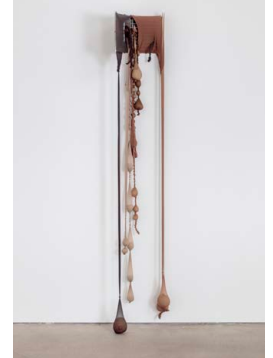
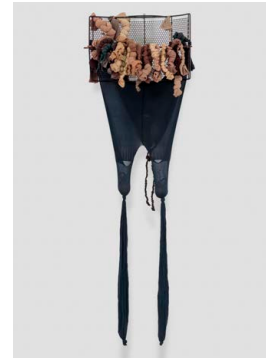
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**RIGHT ABOVE:** Senga Nengudi, *R.S.V.P Reverie - A*, 2011. Nylon mesh, sand, found wire object. 54 x 25 x 8 inches. Courtesy of the Collection of the Hudgins Family, New York. **RIGHT BELOW:** Senga Nengudi, *Insides Out, Spring 1977, 1977*. Nylon mesh, metal, sand. 12 x 120 inches. Courtesy of the Collection of Craig Robbins.



Walk over to *Performance Piece* (see image). Consider the following statement from Senga Nengudi:

***“From tender, tight beginnings to sagging...the body can only stand so much push and pull until it gives way, never to resume its original shape”***

1. Describe below how Nengudi uses pantyhose as a metaphor for the human body.

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2. The pantyhose can also represent... \_\_\_\_\_

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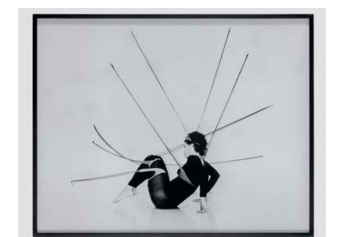
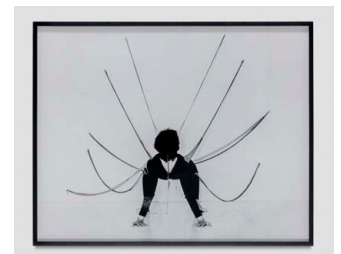
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Senga Nengudi, *Performance Piece*, 1978. Black and white photographs. Photographer: Harmon Outlaw. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## ACTIVITY 04 | PERMANENT VS. EPHEMERAL

Senga Nengudi is interested in works that are ephemeral, meaning that she often creates works of art that only occur once (like a performance).

**CONSIDER:** Watch a video of your choice in the back room and write below about the documentation. What is captured in the video? What elements of the video work are ephemeral and what are permanent?



Installation view, *Head Back and High: Senga Nengudi, Performance Objects (1976-1989)*. Art + Practice, June 23-August 25, 2018. Photo by Joshua White/JW Pictures.

Now find a sculptural work in the gallery. How do you believe the work has changed over time?



Senga Nengudi, *A.C.Q. (I)*, 2016-2017. Refrigerator and air conditioner parts, fan, nylon pantyhose, sand. Courtesy of Lévy Gorvy Gallery, New York and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

### FUN FACT:

Senga Nengudi is more interested in work that is temporary. For Nengudi, photography encapsulates the lack of permanence in her artistic practice.

