

# TEACHER GUIDE



**HAPPY!**

**On View October 27, 2019 – July 5, 2020**

**MUSEUM ON THE MOVE:  
BRINGING THE MUSEUM TO YOUR  
VIRTUAL CLASSROOM**



Dear Educators,

We are thrilled to welcome you to the *Happy!* Exhibition Virtual Tour, which can be viewed by clicking this link <https://nsuartmuseum.org/exhibitions/currently-on-view/>.

As many of us are going virtual, classrooms included, we are adapting our Museum on The Move program to help ease the transition, and give students the opportunity to access our museum from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

The *Happy!* Exhibition focuses on contemporary artists who address the pursuit of happiness as life's goal. The artworks take the viewer on a journey through a range of emotions working towards happiness. Through a variety of media from painting, sculpture, installation, video, and more, this exhibit appeals to the senses and encourages interaction.

This teacher guide serves to prepare you and your students for an engaging virtual visit to the exhibition and provides activities and lessons that can be adapted for the virtual classroom. For example, discussion activities can be done over video chat services or as discussion posts on any e-learning platform. These activities will introduce the themes and concepts set out in the exhibition.

We hope you and your students enjoy your virtual visit!

NSU Art Museum  
Education Department

## ABOUT MUSEUM ON THE MOVE

Museum on the Move (MOTM) is NSU Art Museum's innovative educational program that provides free school group visits for Broward County students. During interactive exhibition tours, students engage in dynamic dialogue with Museum educators, while exercising their creative, analytical, critical, and observational skills.

This interdisciplinary art program provides:

- FREE admission (for up to 100 students per visit)
- FREE transportation (for qualifying schools)
- FREE annual museum educator memberships
- FREE interactive docent-led tours of exhibitions
- FREE STEAM-based art activities in the galleries
- FREE sketchbooks

For more information and to schedule your class visit, contact [moagroupsales@moafl.org](mailto:moagroupsales@moafl.org) or call 954-262-0204. To learn more, visit: [nsuartmuseum.org](https://nsuartmuseum.org)



## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Happy!* is an exhibition of contemporary works produced by artists who aim to engage the viewer emotionally. As in life, sorrow and happiness are intertwined in their works. *Happy!* is organized by NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale and is curated by Bonnie Clearwater, the Museum's Director and Chief Curator, who states, "Many of these artists acknowledge that making art is an essential means for them to work out their own trauma and frustrations, and they suggest that art can provide viewers with a sense of well-being that will help them cope with life's challenges."

*Happy!* includes works dating from the mid-twentieth century to today. Among the earliest in the exhibition is a 1956 abstraction by Mark Rothko. Rothko's thoughts about how art can evoke emotions provide the underlying theme of the exhibition. In a lecture delivered in 1958, Rothko declared that his paintings encompassed all emotions, and that he introduced "wit...play," and "hope" into his work to make the "tragic concept" of the human condition "more endurable."

This exhibition looks at the use of archetypal images of happiness, such as the smile, clouds, gifts, babies, and celebrations. Several artists in the exhibition convey the power of music, dance, prayer, and positive psychology in their work, while others address the implications of gift-giving, healing, and play. The exhibition also explores the bliss associated with Paradise before the Fall, infancy, and spiritual or meditative states. Although the artists included here have not necessarily discovered the meaning of happiness, their works convey and thus generously share their pursuit of this elusive state with the world.

For more information about the exhibition visit:

<https://nsuartmuseum.org/exhibition/happy/>

## Teacher Guide Activities

The activities in this guide can be adapted to fit the age group of your students. Each activity is based on an artist in the *Happy!* exhibit. Feel free to use this guide as a starting point for your classroom.

**Age Group:** Middle School (6-8) and High School (9-12)

**Description:** Artists have drawn on their personal emotions and life experiences as a source of inspiration throughout art history. Students will discuss how a variety of emotions are expressed through the creation of art, and how art-making has granted artists and viewers alike, a sense of well-being in good times and bad. Through conversation, we may question our own definitions of art and consider how popular culture can be infused into art to make a connection with the viewer.

### Learning Objectives:

- Students will compare and contrast artworks made in different time periods.
- Students will observe and think about the emotions being expressed by the artists in the selected artworks from the *Happy!* exhibition.
- Students will build an understanding of the art-making process by creating plans for artworks of their own.

### Essential Questions:

- In what ways do artists of the past influence artists today?
  - What elements of “traditional art” are used in the exhibition and how are the artworks then made relatable to a younger audience?
  - What is the impact of including images from popular culture?
  - How might the response to these artworks change over time? Why?
- How do artists address and consider their viewers and their relationships to the artwork?
  - What is their process of creating the artwork?
  - What are the artist’s concerns?
  - What is the artist’s purpose in creating this artwork?

### Standards:

- **VA.68.H.1.1** Describe social, ecological, economic, religious, and/or political conditions reflected in works of art.
- **VA.68.C.1.2** Use visual evidence and prior knowledge to reflect on multiple interpretations of works of art.
- **VA.912.H.1.1** Analyze the impact of social, ecological, economic, religious, and/or political issues on the function or meaning of the artwork.
- **VA.912.C.1.8** Explain the development of meaning and procedural choices throughout the creative process to defend artistic intention.
- **VA.912.H.1.2** Analyze the various functions of audience etiquette to formulate guidelines for conduct in different art venues.

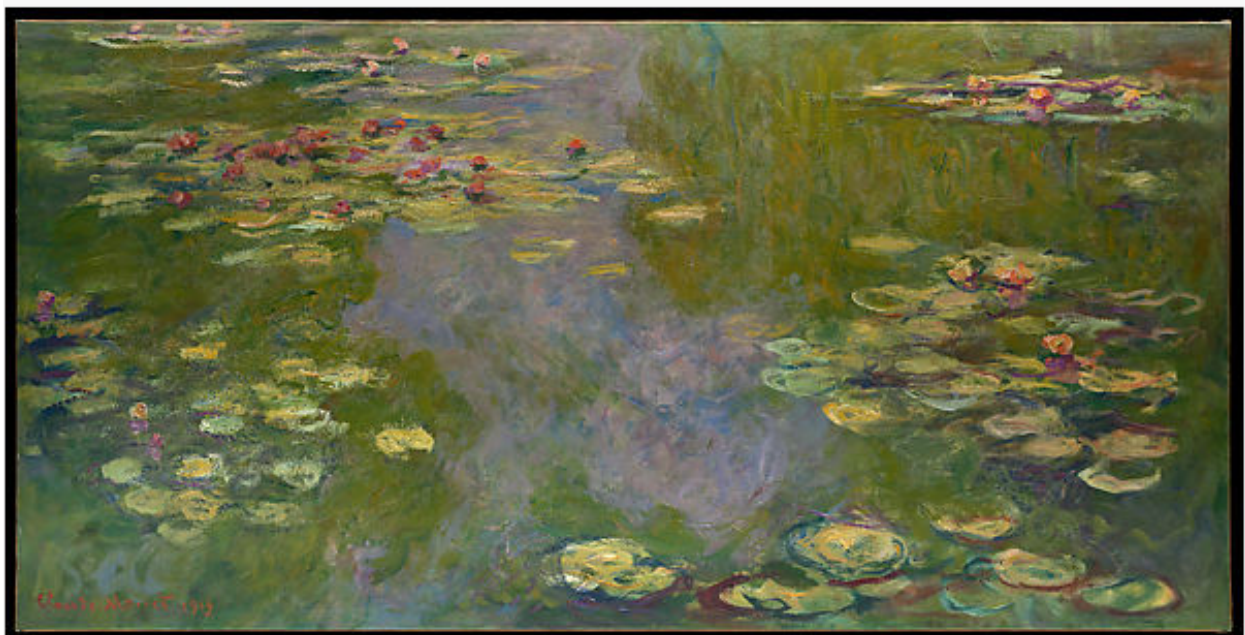
## COMPARE AND CONTRAST DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

**Suggestion:** Complete the compare and contrast chart before sharing information about the artists with the students, to avoid any preconceived notions about meaning or intention.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Divide a sheet of paper into three columns. Label the left column 'Monet', the middle column 'Similarities', and the right column 'FriendsWithYou'.

Show students Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*. Give students 3-5 minutes to make observations, jotting down visual qualities and adjectives to describe the painting, under the Monet column. There are no right or wrong answers, students should just write whatever comes to mind in observing the painting.



**Claude Monet** (b. 1840, Paris, France; d. 1926, Giverny, France). *Water Lilies*. 1919. Oil on canvas. 39 3/4 x 78 3/4 inches. Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1998, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/438008>

Next, show students *A Beautiful Place* by FriendsWithYou. Repeat the process, jotting down observations in the right-hand column.



**FriendsWithYou** (art collaborative founded 2002, Miami, FL; active in Los Angeles, CA).  
*A Beautiful Place*. 2019. Oil stick and oil pastel on raw un-stretched canvas. 97 x 121 inches. Courtesy of FriendsWithYou

Then, show both artworks side-by-side and have students jot down similarities between the two artworks.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**FriendsWithYou** is an art collaborative comprised of Samuel Borkson and Arturo Sandoval III that was founded in Miami in 2002. Together, they create experiences for their viewers that are immersive and interactive, working in a variety of media including painting, sculpture, large-scale experiential installations, live performances, virtual reality, and animation. FriendsWithYou aims to spread the positive message of Magic, Luck, and Friendship™ by bringing communities together and drawing on recognizable symbols to tap into a variety of emotions.

**Claude Monet** (1840-1926) played an important role in the Impressionist art movement, which aimed to capture scenes of everyday life. Monet often chose to paint landscapes and the leisure activities of Parisians en plein-air, meaning he would sketch and paint outside, in front of his subjects. At the end of his life, Monet's efforts were spent painting mural-sized canvases of the water-lily pond on his property. These paintings were abstract expressions of the colors and textures he saw before him. Monet's contributions to art history continue to influence artists today.

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MONET & FRIENDSWITHYOU

1. Describe the qualities observed in Monet's *Water Lilies*.
2. In what ways did Monet's painting inspire FriendsWithYou's *A Beautiful Place*?
3. Describe the mood of each painting? What elements of art (shape, color, and space) give you that impression?
4. Monet's *Water Lilies* and FriendsWithYou's *A Beautiful Place* were created 100 years apart. How did FriendsWithYou make their historically-inspired painting relevant to today's audience?
5. What emotions come up when viewing *A Beautiful Place*? Do these feelings align with the artists' goal of spreading their positive message of Magic, Luck, and Friendship™? Explain.

## CHARACTERS REIMAGINED ACTIVITY

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**KAWS**, born as Brian Donnelly in New Jersey in 1974, began his career as a graffiti artist in New York in the early 1990s, an interest that started for him in elementary school. After graduating from the School of Visual Arts in New York, he began working as a freelance artist in animation for Disney. In the late 1990s, KAWS would go on to create his first toy, 'COMPANION', after a visit to Japan, leading to international popularity. He is well known for his large-scale sculptures and installations, as well as paintings, prints, limited-edition toys, and brand collaborations. The artist currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

### INSTRUCTIONS

KAWS took inspiration from popular cartoon characters, and created his own cast of characters that he calls "COMPANIONS." On view in *Happy!* is KAWS's *COMPANION (PASSING THROUGH)*, pictured below. For this activity, students will choose a cartoon character from popular culture. They will write down characteristics of the character, noting the emotions and reactions the character is meant to draw from the public. For example, KAWS used shades of gray, a figure slumped with its hands over its eyes, and the head of skull and crossbones. The shades of gray may represent gloom or sadness, while the gesture could represent despair.

Students will redesign the character of their choosing, creating one of opposing personality and mood. They will make a list of characteristics and emotions that their character would evoke if it were made into a large-scale statue or collectable toy. Once their ideas are solidified, students will sketch and color their character.



**KAWS** (b.1974, Jersey City, NJ; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY). *COMPANION (PASSING THROUGH)*. 2011. Painted bronze. 48 x 25 x27 inches. Collection of the Artist © KAWS



## MINIMALIST PORTRAIT ACTIVITY

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Felix Gonzalez-Torres**, born in Cuba in 1957, draws on traditions of Minimalism and Conceptual art in his interactive art installations that address themes of memory, love, loss, identity, and sickness. Gonzalez-Torres was involved in many social and political causes as an openly gay man, deeply affected by the AIDS epidemic. He was part of an art collective called Group Material that worked together to educate the community and incite cultural activism. He is best known for his solo works created with everyday materials and objects like candy, stacks of paper, and lightbulbs.

### INSTRUCTIONS

For this activity, introduce students to Felix Gonzalez-Torres's candy spills. These are piles of wrapped hard candy, typically placed against the corner of a wall or a post in museums and galleries. The work *"Untitled" (Portrait of Dad)*, on view at NSU Art Museum, is a candy spill. This particular candy spill represents the loss of the artist's father. Viewers are encouraged to take a piece of candy from the pile, which has the same starting weight as the person it represents. The exhibitor also has the option to replenish the candy. Discuss with students how they can interpret the taking of the candy and the idea that it is a portrait of someone. What ideas come up? How does it make the viewer feel?

Following the discussion, students will create a proposal or plan for their own artwork. Have students think about a person (living or dead) to whom they would like to dedicate a Minimalist artwork. As the artist, the student will decide the materials used and the shape the artwork will take on, keeping the person in mind. Students will sketch their idea for the artwork and write up the details and explain their choices.



**Felix Gonzalez-Torres** (b. 1957, Guáimaro, Cuba; d. 1996, Miami, FL). *"Untitled" (Portrait of Dad)*. 1991. White candies individually wrapped in cellophane, endless supply, Courtesy of Rosa & Carlos de la Cruz, Key Biscayne, FL © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For any questions regarding this guide for the *Happy!* exhibition, contact our Education Department.

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Major funding for Museum on the Move is provided by The Jerry Taylor & Nancy Bryant Foundation, The Amaturio Family Foundation, Inc., Lillian S. Wells Foundation Inc., David and Susan Samrick Foundation, Paddock Family Foundation, Wege Foundation, Wells Fargo, Beaux Arts, and Friends of NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale.



Presenting sponsors of the exhibition are Dr. David and Linda Frankel and David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation. Additional support is provided by Funding Arts Broward, Inc. Hotel partner, The Dalmar Hotel.

Exhibitions and programs at NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale are made possible in part by a challenge grant from the David and Francie Horvitz Family Foundation. Funding is also provided by the City of Fort Lauderdale, AutoNation, Community Foundation of Broward, Funding Arts Broward, Broward County Board of County Commissioners as recommended by the Broward Cultural Council and Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau, the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture. NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

