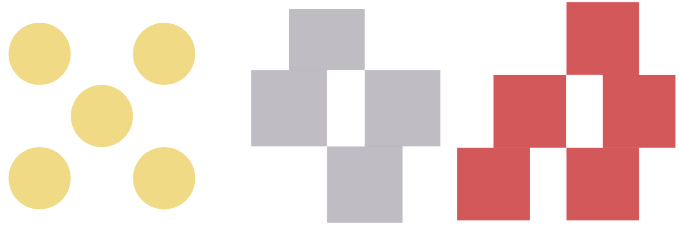


# CIVICS IN 3D

An arc for exploring 3 dimensions of civic life through art



This thinking arc offers a tour through the Arts as Civic Commons (ArtC) framework. (If possible, watch the ArtC Framework video before using the arc.)

**LOOK** Look closely at the work of art. What do you notice? Make lots of observations.

**THINK** What thoughts do you have about the work?

Now let's think about the work through a civic lens by using the ArtC framework. The framework focuses on three dimensions of civic life that we can explore through art: Identities, systems, and visions. The following steps introduce each of these dimensions in turn.



## IDENTITIES

How might this work connect to the identities of individuals or groups? How might our own identities connect with, or not connect with, the work?

- Identity has to do with the personal qualities or characteristics that make us who we are. We all have multiple interacting identities. Our sense of identity can come from within ourselves—the characteristics we think define us; and it can come from outside ourselves—the characteristics other people think define us. Our identities also shape how we perceive other people and groups. Identity characteristics are often connected to ‘demographic’ characteristics, such as age, sex and gender, race, ethnicity, heritage, religion, and sexual orientation. Identities can also be based on interests, hobbies, and passions. Thus, people may refer to themselves as musicians, gamers, or poets in addition to male or female, middle aged or twenty-something, and Latinx, Asian, Black, or Native/Indigenous Australian. As some of these examples show, identities can be visible or invisible to others.



What civically related systems might this work connect to?

- A **system** is a collection of elements that interact or influence each other to produce certain outcomes or serve certain purposes. Some systems are easily visible, like a public transportation system or a system of trash recycling. Other systems can have parts that are less obviously visible, like systems of justice and injustice, or systems of community support or community neglect.
- **Civically related systems** are systems that affect people's lives as members of a community. These systems can include physical parts, for example in the way a healthcare system might include nurses and hospitals and medicines. They can also include less tangible parts, such as access to health insurance, laws and policies that determine who does and does not get the benefits of certain systems.



What civic visions might this work encourage you to imagine? What does it make you want to see in the future?

- Visions are imagined scenarios of how things could be different.
- Civic visions focus on public or community life. They are imagined scenarios of how we could interact with one another differently, in any kind of group—large or small; local or global. Often when systems are unjust or unsatisfactory, they become a powerful motivation for us to envision how our shared public or community life could be different in the future. Civic visions can be hopeful landscapes or more worrying scenarios. Whichever way they lean, civic visions invite us to see beyond the current condition and think about how else things could be.

## REFLECT

What new thoughts do you have about the artwork?  
What new thoughts do you have about the idea of civic life?

Do you have any new observations or questions?

# Facilitator Notes

## CIVICS IN 3D

### BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- If possible, watch the ArtC Framework video before using the arc. You may also want to read the three ArtC mini-essays on the three dimensions of the framework
- Read through the entire thinking arc and envision how you will structure the experience for students. The thinking arc can take a while to teach—perhaps an hour or more, depending on how deeply you dive into each step—so consider breaking the experience into two or more class sessions.
- Choose an artwork that might connect to one or more civic themes - themes related to how we live together and how we aspire to live together. Civic themes may include issues such as climate and environmental change, migration, economic and other inequalities, the effects of colonialism, gender and sexuality issues, race/racism, or any theme that addresses values, social conventions, power dynamics, institutions and systems that shape every level of community life, from the local to the global. The civic dimension of the artwork can be explicit, or implicit. Don't worry too much about finding the 'perfect' work; you'll discover that a wide range of works can work. The depth of student discussion at each step is as important as the work itself.
- If possible, mentally run through the thinking arc yourself first before using it with students. Imagine how you would respond to each of the questions. Even if you just do this quickly, it will give you a feel for the demands of the experience, and you might find that your own responses can be a useful model for students. For instance, at the 'Identities' step, you might help students understand what to do by sharing how you respond to the question—that is, by mentioning an identity you think the work is about or is addressing, along with an aspect of your own identity that feels connected.

### FACILITATING THE ROUTINE

- If possible, begin by showing the ArtC framework video to your students, then explain that the Civic in 3D thinking arc will bring the ideas in the video to life.
- Give students plenty of time to make careful observations of the work, and to discuss their thoughts about it. You might decide that viewing the video and doing the LOOK and THINK steps is enough for one class session. If the artwork you chose invites prolonged close looking, feel free to add structure to the LOOK step by using one or more of the close looking strategies in the Viewing Moves resource.
- Students' responses to some of the questions in the arc might be personal. This is particularly true of the IDENTITIES step, which asks students to consider their own identities. If you typically use explicit classroom norms for safe and respectful discussion, this is a good time to remind students of the norms. If using norms isn't part of your practice, take other appropriate steps to make sure students feel comfortable.
- Be prepared to give examples to students at each step. (Having done this thinking arc beforehand will help.) Feel free to have students do the steps in different configurations: For example, you might do the SEE and THINK steps as a whole class, then break into small groups to do the IDENTITIES step, then reconvene as a whole class to do the SYSTEMS and VISIONS steps. If you want to add more structure to the discussions, see the Dialogue Moves resource for ideas.