

The Modern



ART ASSIGNMENT

MILTON AVERY AND JULIE BOZZI

REDUCTION AND COLLECTION

In conjunction with Milton Avery and Julie Bozzi, artists included in the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth's permanent collection, the Museum's education department and Ariana Rojas are pleased to present this Art Assignment packet for high school students, middle school students, and educators. This is a supplement to experiencing the art in the galleries and offers background information on the artists and works, as well as ideas to consider while engaging in the project.

Milton Avery (1885–1965) is recognized as an important and influential twentieth-century American artist, but his entry into the art world was somewhat unconventional.

Avery's work spanned and, to some extent, became the link between two significant movements in the United States in the twentieth century, American Impressionism and Abstract Expressionism, with both having an impact on his oeuvre. Through his close association with some of the younger key artists of Abstract Expressionism, Avery's early work played an influential role in how the movement later developed and unfolded.

Never affiliated with any particular group or tendency, Avery followed his own artistic inclination. With his steadfast adherence to representation and the innovative ways in which he balanced color and form within his compositions, he often appeared to be running counter to the prevailing trends of the time.

Julie Bozzi (b. 1943) earned both her Bachelor of Arts and Master of Fine Arts degrees from the University of California, Davis, and also studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine in 1975. Her work explores the culture of convenience prevalent in the United States by examining suburban roadsides. Turning our attention to what is often overlooked, Bozzi crafts meticulous paintings of banal suburban settings. At a scale rarely exceeding four by ten inches, her horizontal landscapes are painted on the side of the road in the tradition of plein air painting. Bozzi completes each work over the course of several days, creating a sense of condensed time and presence in an ever-distracted world. Her work frequently features scenes from California and Texas.

Bozzi is also known for her work *American Food*, which addresses the vernacular American experience. This project combines aspects of Pop art, postmodernism, still life, and Americana while underscoring the universal human impulse to collect and categorize. More than 20 years after its making, the work endures as a witty and visually engaging statement about American consumerism and its culture of abundance.

Please watch and read the selected videos and texts about Avery, Bozzi, and ideas related to their practices. These resources can provide context about the art assignment as you go through the activities.

Edith Devaney, "Tuesday Evenings with the Modern Lecture Series," Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, 2021

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=el7zpJ7yaj4>

Colette Copeland, "Flat, Bright and Bold: The Avery Family Style," *Glasstire*, January 11, 2022

<https://glasstire.com/2022/01/11/flat-bright-bold-the-avery-family-style/>

Hilton Kramer, "The Summer of '57 With Milton Avery, Gottlieb, Rothko," *Observer*, May 13, 2002

<https://observer.com/2002/05/the-summer-of-57-with-milton-avery-gottlieb-rothko>

Eli Hill, "Overshadowed for Years, Milton Avery Became an Icon of American Painting," *Artsy*, August 23, 2018

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-overshadowed-years-milton-avery-icon-american-painting>

Video, "Julie Bozzi," Hiram Butler Gallery, 2014

<https://vimeo.com/106508803>

Video, "Behind the Scenes: Julie Bozzi, *American Food*," Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth YouTube channel, 2019

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0Zp_fZGaps

Demie Kim, "7 Artist Recipes, from Dalí's Avocado Toast to Ed Ruscha's Cactus Omelette," *Artsy*, November 22, 2016

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-7-artist-recipes-dalis-avocado-toast-ruschas-cactus-omelette>

Stefanie Waldek, "9 Recipes from Famous Artists That You Can Make at Home," *Galerie*, April 24, 2020

<https://galeriemagazine.com/famous-artist-recipes/>

Alina Cohen, "Why Pop Artists Were Obsessed with Food," *Artsy*, November 3, 2018

<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-lichtenstein-thiebaud-pop-artists-obsessed-food>

Joanna Fantozzi and Talia Lakritz, "The candy everyone was obsessed with the decade you were born," *Insider.com*, February 13, 2021

<https://www.insider.com/popular-candy-by-year-2017-12>

ART ASSIGNMENT

PART 1: REDUCTION

Milton Avery's keen interest in color had a breakthrough in innovation and harmony in the 1940s. He began to lighten, flatten, and layer his pigments onto the canvas, creating a luminosity across closely related planes of different tones, with each color modulated to complement the adjacent hue rather than to provide contrast. This, along with a simultaneous simplification of form, replaced traditional perspective in his work with a more subtle intimation of depth and atmosphere, both of which he evoked with color.

As first seen in the 1944 paintings, and exemplified by *Seated Girl with Dog*, this tendency continued and intensified in his work throughout the 1940s and then into the 1950s, when the colors softened and his use of non-associative (or unnatural) colors became less apparent. By scratching into the surface of the thin paint, Avery also added a sense of texture and reduced the illusion of depth.

This breakthrough established Avery as a leading American colorist who would significantly influence the next generation of American painters who now understood the possibility of employing color to create a sense of the sublime.



Milton Avery
Seated Girl with Dog, 1944
Oil on canvas
44 x 32 inches
Collection Friends of the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, State University of New York.
Gift from the Estate of Roy R. Neuberger
© 2021 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2021

Avery and his partner, the artist Sally Michel, became known as welcoming hosts, regularly inviting artists to their modest apartment to spend the evening discussing art and sometimes reading poetry and books aloud. Mark Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb, in particular, were daily visitors, always eager to see Avery's most recent work.

Avery was known as a man of few words and an observer rather than a participant. It was not unusual for him to sketch quietly during such gatherings—the people, the room and its objects—and to include the motifs later in paintings depicting figures and still lifes, imbuing the everyday with a sense of poetry. Famously prolific, Avery would regularly complete a painting every day, and his work ethic, as well as his compositions and subjects, was an inspiration to his younger artistic friends.

Imagine you are hosting friends to spend an evening together sharing conversation and dinner. What would you serve your guests to celebrate the end of another school year? As you observe various moments of the setting throughout the evening, think about ways you could imbue the everyday with a sense of poetry, as Avery did.

Review the following image examples as you consider what to include in your compositions.

Does the raking light on a bowl and cup fall onto another object on the table?



Milton Avery
Still-life (Blue Bowl with Nuts), 1945
Oil on canvas
25 1/8 x 30 inches
Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Gift of Mrs. Herbert Cameron Morris, 1946
© 2021 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2021

Does a serving dish of hors d'oeuvres awaiting interaction intrigue you?



Milton Avery
Hors d'Oeuvres, 1943
Oil on canvas
28 x 36 inches
Private Collection

© 2021 Milton Avery Trust / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2021

Should a grilled cheese sandwich be plated and served on a cast iron skillet?



Ariana Rojas
Untitled, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
11 x 14 inches

Did a still life accidentally emerge as you were rearranging space?



Ariana Rojas
Untitled, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
14 x 18 inches

Does the empty skillet mark a return to the kitchen for unfulfilled appetites?



PAINTING RESPONSE

Now that you have imagined your dinner setting with friends, let's make a work based on objects and people present.

In the spirit of Avery's style, use the previous image examples and compose a scene from your imagined dinner setting.

If you need some inspiration as a starting point, think about an object or group of objects that might be arranged on this empty table next to the seated figure.



Remember to try and be innovative with color, simplify forms, and flatten the pictorial plane in your compositions.

Please enjoy and experiment freely.

ART ASSIGNMENT

PART 2: A COLLECTION

Julie Bozzi's *American Food*, 1980–92, was acquired by the Modern for the permanent collection in 2019. Bozzi's sculptural installation consists of an oak cabinet with 13 drawers, 12 of which contain miniature reproductions of American food products, each carefully handmade by the artist and displayed under glass, like scientific specimens from a natural history museum.

The food items are categorized into distinct genres, including cereals, snack cakes, and breakfast meats, which are indexed in the 13th drawer. In its inaugural installation, the 12 drawers containing the food models were mounted on the wall and paired with framed drawings that act as graphic keys to their contents.

Bozzi, a longtime resident of Fort Worth, began her research for *American Food* in 1975 and created the work between 1980 and 1992. The miniature food facsimiles, meticulously crafted from wood, plaster, clay, paint, and other materials, represent standardized commercial American food products, from donuts to Ding-Dongs, along with "Americanized" versions of ethnic cuisines. Working in the pre-internet era, Bozzi conducted her research using methods akin to an anthropologist or explorer, collecting source material from menus, grocery stores, food stands, advertisements, and oral interviews during cross-country road trips.

Please review the following image excerpts from Julie Bozzie's *American Food* installation from 2019 at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.



Julie Bozzi
Classic Snack Cakes from American Food, 1980–92 (installation view)
Gouache on paper and oil and acrylic low-fire white clay and plaster mounted on enameled wood case
Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase
© Julie Bozzi



Julie Bozzi
Classic Snack Cakes from American Food, 1991
 Gouache on paper
 17 x 22 inches
 Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase
 © Julie Bozzi



Julie Bozzi
Classic Snack Cakes from American Food, 1991
Oil and acrylic on low-fire white clay and plaster mounted on enameled wood base
27 x 50 x 22 inches
Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase
© Julie Bozzi



Julie Bozzi
***American Food*, 1980–1992**
Cabinet: Oak cabinet with twelve drawers and one index tray
Drawings: Various media on paper
Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase
© Julie Bozzi

FOOD ITEM RESPONSE

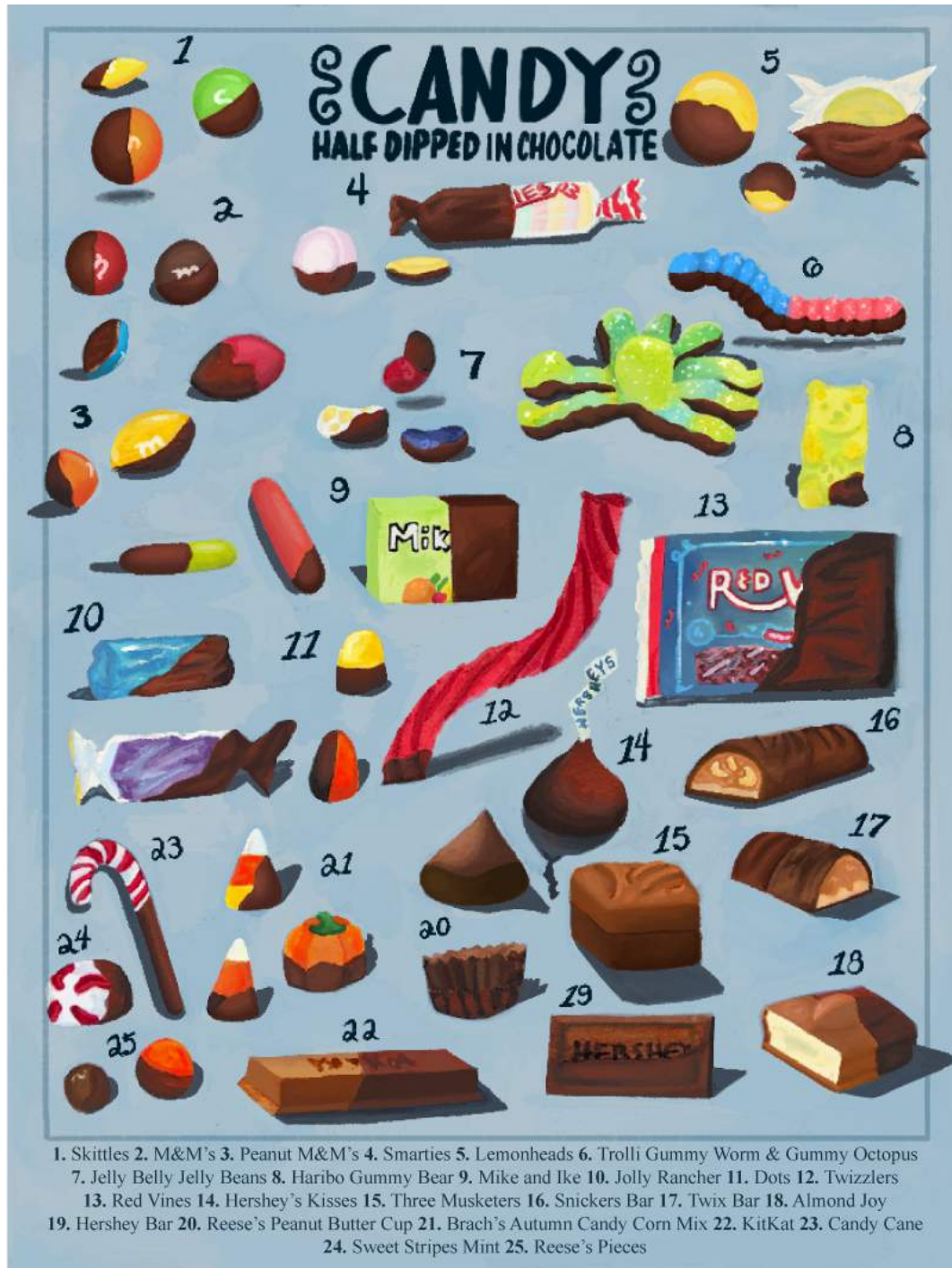
Think about some of the standardized food items you've consumed in your lifetime. As a child, did the visual variety of colors, shapes, and sizes serve as that introductory lure? The aesthetic value of branding/packaging seems be equally, if not more, important to the food item itself. Predominantly artificial and mass produced, candy can remind us of some qualities of Pop art.

To begin Part 2 of this Art Assignment, make an abundant list of candy that you've eaten in the last year and/or some that you hope to try in the future.

If you need some inspiration for a starting point, please review the state-by-state data table for the most consumed Halloween candy in each US state.

State	Top Candy	Pounds	2nd Place	Pounds	3rd Place	Pounds
AL	Starburst	109827	Skittles	103827	Candy Corn	89727
AK	Sour Patch Kids	4782	Twix	4572	Milky Way	3892
AZ	Hot Tamales	770928	Hershey Kisses	742948	Snickers	698271
AR	Jolly Ranchers	211337	Butterfinger	187494	Skittles	72474
CA	Reese's Cups	1209299	Skittles	1197262	M&M's	1097535
CO	Hershey Kisses	119050	Twix	115797	Milky Way	98412
CT	Almond Joy	2873	Milky Way	2198	M&M's	1872
DE	Skittles	19827	Life Savers	15628	Sour Patch Kids	9827
FL	Reese's Cups	578292	Skittles	510928	Starburst	380827
GA	Swedish Fish	136319	Jolly Ranchers	112734	Reese's Cups	83787
HI	Hershey's Mini Bars	25827	Skittles	24827	Butterfinger	19827
ID	Starburst	82366	Snickers	64838	Candy Corn	36833
IL	Sour Patch Kids	162272	Kit Kat	126533	Starburst	112073
IN	Starburst	92026	Hot Tamales	90196	Jolly Ranchers	69387
IA	M&M's	64031	Reese's Cups	55593	Candy Corn	45325
KS	Reese's Cups	215638	M&M's	201837	Sour Patch Kids	191020
KY	Reese's Cups	69826	Swedish Fish	54728	Hot Tamales	35928
LA	Lemonheads	115789	Reese's Cups	98726	Blow Pops	84627
ME	Sour Patch Kids	58378	Starburst	46829	Candy Corn	11929
MD	Hershey Kisses	34827	Reese's Cups	33849	Hershey's Mini Bars	24817
MA	Sour Patch Kids	65683	Butterfinger	68380	Dubble Bubble Gum	44194
MI	Starburst	110748	Candy Corn	98736	Skittles	95689
MN	Tootsie Pops	181827	Skittles	168726	Hot Tamales	130827

State	Top Candy	Pounds	2nd Place	Pounds	3rd Place	Pounds
MS	3 Musketeers	92736	Snickers	89723	Butterfinger	76830
MO	Milky Way	44827	Almond Joy	38721	Hot Tamales	37643
MT	Dubble Bubble Gum	28736	Twix	24827	M&M's	20927
NE	Sour Patch Kids	92823	Salt Water Taffy	81918	Twix	32418
NV	Hershey Kisses	293248	Hot Tamales	259565	Candy Corn	202645
NH	M&M's	65782	Starburst	55377	Jolly Ranchers	33772
NJ	M&M's	141782	Tootsie Pops	137992	Skittles	130098
NM	Jolly Ranchers	75447	Candy Corn	70898	Hershey's Mini Bars	56230
NY	Sour Patch Kids	138750	Hot Tamales	129337	Candy Corn	60508
NC	Reese's Cups	83928	Snickers	78625	M&M's	75262
ND	Hot Tamales	58726	Jolly Ranchers	52839	Candy Corn	38726
OH	Blow Pops	157827	M&M's	148727	Starburst	132890
OK	Skittles	19232	Dubble Bubble Gum	14990	Snickers	12109
OR	M&M's	82842	Reese's Cups	75551	Candy Corn	55718
PA	Hershey's Mini Bars	239081	M&M's	215637	Skittles	199727
RI	Twix	15627	M&M's	13291	Candy Corn	9827
SC	Butterfinger	112879	Skittles	108764	Candy Corn	80927
SD	Starburst	23670	Jolly Ranchers	22901	Candy Corn	12829
TN	Tootsie Pops	54829	Skittles	49837	Salt Water Taffy	31082
TX	Starburst	916491	Reese's Cups	880526	Sour Patch Kids	610116
UT	Tootsie Pops	405662	Jolly Ranchers	294759	Candy Corn	239846
VT	Skittles	31702	M&M's	23292	Milky Way	18880
VA	Hot Tamales	155272	Snickers	152839	Tootsie Pops	102847
DC	M&M's	25772	Tootsie Pops	22789	Blow Pops	17846
WA	Tootsie Pops	186570	Salt Water Taffy	163264	Skittles	85315
WV	Hershey's Mini Bars	35930	Blow Pops	34899	Hershey's Mini Bars	29822
WI	Butterfinger	103827	Starburst	101827	Hot Tamales	78920
WY	Reese's Cups	24746	Salt Water Taffy	22938	Dubble Bubble Gum	17820



Ariana Rojas
 Untitled, 2022
 Gouache and ink on paper
 8.5 x 11 inches

Now that you've selected some candy, let's make a work based on your list.

In the spirit of Julie Bozzi's *Classic Snack Cakes* from the *American Food* series, compose an arrangement of candy on a piece of paper. Feel free to use pencil, ink, gouache, watercolor, or work digitally, if preferred.

As you begin your composition, here are some questions to consider:

- Will you include the candy with or without the wrapper?
- Is the candy intact or half eaten?
- Do you think any of the candy can be improved, aesthetically (its look) or gustatorily (its taste)?
- Does chocolate dipped in chocolate sound excessive or insufficient?
- Are you using pre-existing candy, inventing new ones, or forming hybrids?
- Will you place the text next to each food item or include a key/legend on the bottom?

Please enjoy and experiment freely.

Thank you for participating in this Art Assignment by the Modern's education department and Ariana Rojas.

Ariana Rojas is a 2022 graduate of Young Women's Leadership Academy in Fort Worth, Texas. During her years at YWLA, she was a member of the YWLA CREATES Team. Rojas has received many awards and honors, including placement in the Safe City Art Competition, Visual Arts Scholastic Event, and first place award for the Jubilee Theatre Cover Art Contest.

If you have any questions about this Art Assignment, please contact Assistant Curator of Education (Academic Programs) Jesse Morgan Barnett at jbarnett@themodern.org.