

The Modern



BEING THERE ART ASSIGNMENT 3

ORIT RAFF & GABRIEL OROZCO

This activity packet was designed in conjunction with the photographic approaches of Orit Raff and Gabriel Orozco, artists featured in past exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. It is intended for high school students.

“It is not altogether wrong to say that there is no such thing as a bad photograph—only less interesting, less relevant, less mysterious ones.” —Susan Sontag

“I had this notion of what I called a democratic way of looking around, that nothing was more or less important.” —William Eggleston

Orit Raff was included in *Framing Desire*, on view from February 21 to August 23, 2015, and curated by Andrea Karnes, senior curator at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Orit Raff was born in Jerusalem in 1970, and she lives and works in Tel Aviv.

Raff creates spare photographs, installations, and video works that suggest intimacy, the private self, and memories of our earliest experiences. The artist favors the implicit over the explicit. She follows traces and signs of a place or time with her camera, wishing to give life to a frozen memory and to construct a narrative from vague fragments left behind as a present absence—the marking of furniture in an abandoned space, signs engraved on school desks, or ice accumulations in an empty household refrigerator.

The starkness of Raff’s imagery links her work with Minimalism, but her references to common everyday life and objects also suggest a Pop sensibility.

Gabriel Orozco was included in *México Inside Out: Themes in Art Since 1990*, on view from September 15, 2013 to January 5, 2014, and curated by Andrea Karnes, senior curator at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Gabrielle Orozco was born in Mexico in 1962 and lives and works in Mexico City, Tokyo, Paris, and New York.

Working through drawing, photography, sculpture, and installation, Orozco draws from everyday materials and circumstances from his own encounters and routines. Playing with ideas of accessibility, his work seeks to discover creative associations between aspects of life often overlooked or ignored. Since the beginning of his career, Orozco’s nomadic lifestyle has affected both the production and aesthetic of his work. His lack of a primary “home base” lent a fluid aspect to his productions, with diverse materials and themes marked by a conceptual openness to spontaneity and circumstance. It is difficult to describe Orozco’s work in terms of a physical outcome—the artist has more of an interest in questions rather than statements, and he emphasizes the potential within mutating materials, forms, and meanings.

Please watch and read the selected videos and texts about Orit Raff, Gabriel Orozco, and using photography to document the mundane. These resources will provide you with context about their art before you begin working on the activities.

Resources:

****If hyperlinks are disabled in your browser, please copy and paste the URLs directly into your search bar.***

Orit Raff, text by Johanna Burton for the exhibition *Approaching Saturation*, Houston Center for Photography, 2000
<https://oritraff.com/assets/Texts/approaching-saturation.pdf>

Gabriel Orozco, text by Giovanni Aloï for *Whitehot Magazine* on the exhibition *Everyday Poetics* at Tate Modern, 2011
<https://whitehotmagazine.com/articles/2011-gabriel-orozco-tate-modern/2237>

Gabriel Orozco, Art21 video, "On Photography"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xA4CMvglhjk>

William Eggleston: Photographer by Reiner Holzemer (extended trailer)
<https://vimeo.com/72117559>



Orit Raff, *Untitled (Shirt)*, 1997
Chromogenic print. 46 ½ × 38 ½ inches. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,
Museum purchase, The Friends of Art Endowment Fund. © Orit Raff



Orit Raff, *Untitled (Bathtub)*, 1998
Chromogenic print. 46 ½ × 38 ½ inches. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,
Museum purchase, The Friends of Art Endowment Fund. © Orit Raff



Orit Raff, *Untitled (Light under door)*, 1998
Chromogenic print. 38 ½ × 46 ½ inches. Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth,
Museum purchase, The Friends of Art Endowment Fund. © Orit Raff

Image Response: An Ordinary Object

Wander around the interior of your home.

Note objects or architectural details in your living spaces that might otherwise be overlooked.

These objects or architectural details might be considered boring until you attempt to elevate them through photographic composition.

Do you see cracks on a door jamb, painted light switches, sprawling cords and electric outlets, a surface stain, someone's sock, a pile of clothes or dishes, the garage door light, toothpaste in the sink, leftover meals, accumulating soap scum, a body imprint on the bed or sofa, a bug in a spider web, dust collecting on an uneven bookshelf, the beginning of a mustache, a folded towel, etc.?

Focus on the details as closely as you can.

Remember how close Orit Raff was to her subject in her compositions.

How close could you be to a scratched sofa cushion, a baby drawing on their leg, grandpa's stomach with stickers, or the imprint of a nap?

Please review the following supplemental images as examples.

Experiment freely.









Image Response: A Found Object

Wander around the exterior of your home and neighborhood, if you feel safe and comfortable doing so.

Look for objects that seem out of place or slightly peculiar as you browse through your surroundings.

Some of what you notice may be ready to document without needing any modification. Other objects might encourage you to make little tweaks and adjustments.

Think about the ways in which Gabriel Orozco would find objects on the street and slightly intervene for his photographic compositions.



Gabriel Orozco, *Pinched Ball (Pelota pochada)*, 1993



Gabriel Orozco, *Tortillas y Ladrillos (Tortillas and Bricks)*, 1990



Gabriel Orozco, *Nubes de Espuma*, 2014



Gabriel Orozco, *Ball on Water (Pelota en agua)*, 1994

As you wander outside, what have you become visually alert to?

Do you see bird poop on the passenger window of a parked car, a cavity inside a bush, remnants of Christmas lights still hanging, rotting fruit, candy on the cement, something colorful in a dark window, etc.?

Do these found objects need any intervention or manipulation from you?

Are you satisfied with keeping them undisturbed?

Would viewers be able to recognize your decision?

Please review these supplemental images as examples.

Experiment freely.







I hope these activities helped you reconsider how photography can elevate objects and details of the everyday.

Sometimes a photograph of an object can become more interesting than the object itself.

Thank you for participating in these exercises about Orit Raff and Gabriel Orozco.

If you would like to share your results, please fill out the photo release form and send it along with your files to jbarnett@themodern.org.

Please save the file as either a JPG or PDF and include First and Last name_Modern_3.

For example,
JesseBarnett_Modern_3.pdf
JesseBarnett_Modern_3.jpg

If you have any questions about the packet, instructions, or file sharing, please don't hesitate contacting me.

Take care out/in there.

Jesse Morgan Barnett
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