



Phyllida Barlow. *Eleven Columns*, 2023. Installation view, MOCA Toronto. © Phyllida Barlow. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth. Photo by Laura Findlay.

**Phyllida
Barlow**
Eleven Columns

Liz Magor
The Separation

Educator Resource

Recommended for Grade 6–12

Museum
Of
**Contemporary
Art**

Toronto Canada

September 7, 2023–February 4, 2024

Phyllida Barlow

Eleven Columns

Overview For more than six decades, British artist Phyllida Barlow took inspiration from her surroundings to create imposing installations that can be at once menacing and playful. She created anti-monumental sculptures from inexpensive, low-grade materials such as cardboard, fabric, plywood, polystyrene, scrim, and cement. These constructions were often painted in industrial or vibrant colours, the seams of their construction left at times visible, revealing the means of their making.

Barlow passed away in early 2023, at which point she was working closely with MOCA on a site-specific installation. Having visited the building some years earlier, Barlow was taken by its industrial vigour and, in particular, the arresting columns paced throughout the museum's Ground Floor.

Ontario Curriculum Connections –Visual Art–

Grade 6 – 8

- D1. Creating and Presenting
- D2. Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
- D3. Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts

Grade 9 – 12

- A. Creating and Presenting
- B. Reflecting, Responding and Analysing
- C. Foundations

Science

- Grade 6-8
- Understanding Structures and Mechanisms

Key Ideas

-  Materials used in sculpture, consumerism, the environment.
-  Nature vs artifice.
-  Narratives and lives of objects.
-  Connections to MOCA's architecture.



Liz Magor

The Separation



Overview Liz Magor is one of Canada's most influential artists. Her practice focuses on the possibilities of sculpture as a narrative form. Attentive to the physicality of an object, she casts and organizes found material so that intense narratives of dependency and desire can emerge. At once sarcastic and sympathetic, Magor's sculptures spark questions about our belief and emotional investment in the material world.

This solo exhibition at MOCA emphasizes the tensions in her work, playing rough against refined, flimsy against sturdy, fashionable against passé, and custom-made against mass-produced. Across the second floor will be varying moments of suspense: objects intercepting one another as they slip, tumble or fall from safety and grace.

Titled *The Separation*, Magor's presentation of newly commissioned and recent works refers to changing values and shifting fates. Borrowing from the complexity of sculpture, the exhibition also invites the viewer to look and relook at their familiar surroundings.

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Guiding Questions

Eleven Columns and *The Separation* are separate exhibitions, but have a lot in common, like their use of non-traditional materials. **What similarities and differences did you notice between these two exhibitions?**

Both artists used MOCA's unique exhibition space to complement their artwork. *Eleven Columns* as a sculpture is in conversation with MOCA's large pillars, while *The Separation* built lighting structures to appear to be part of MOCA's infrastructure. **How do these connections to the exhibition space impact your viewing experience?**

When arranging these sculptures, the curators encourage the viewer to walk around each work, viewing them from all sides. **How did you feel weaving through *Eleven Columns*? How did you feel walking around the boxes in *The Separation*?**



Key Ideas

Installation art. Designed for specific spaces, installations are a type of sculpture that are typically larger in size, mixed-media, and are temporary constructions. Both *Eleven Columns* and *The Separation* are examples of installations.

Monument. These are types of structures that are culturally relevant to a group of people. They tend to be structures that were built to commemorate an event or individual, or is historical. These can be statues, buildings, or spaces.

Found object: Found object art begins with something that has been found, not originally created by the artist, that is either presented as art or transformed into art by an artist. This may be natural object or a man-made object, or can even be a piece of something.

Casting and mould-making: This is a way artists can make three-dimensional copies of an object through a process that uses positive and negative space. The exterior of an object is covered in a material like plaster and the original object is then removed, leaving a negative space. This is the mould. The artist then pours a liquid material into the mould until it hardens and adopts the form of the original object. This is the cast. This is one of the ways Liz Magor makes her sculptures.





Discussion | Grade 9 – 12

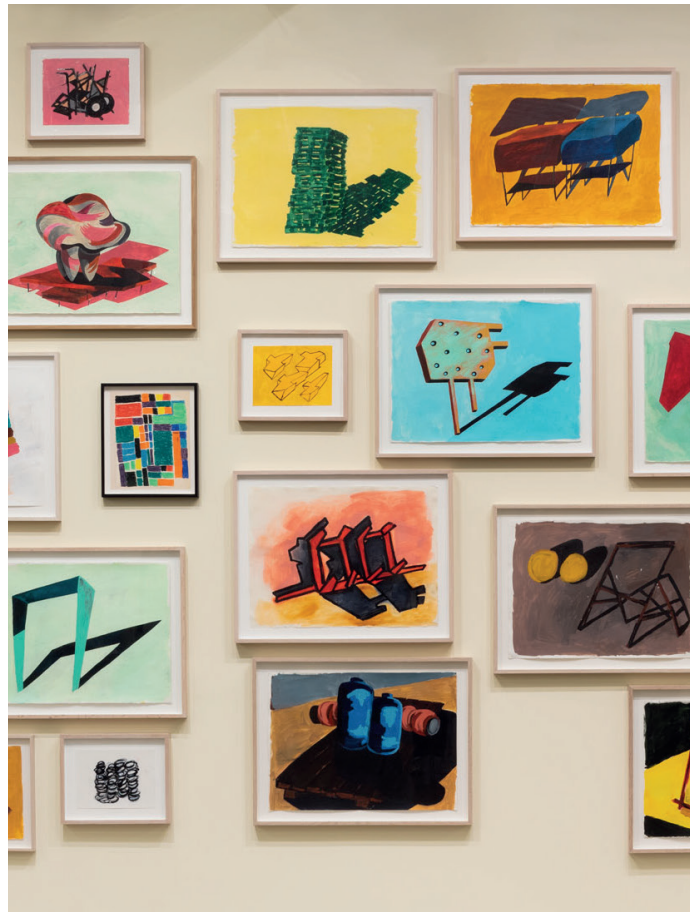
Both exhibits are playful in the way they use space to influence the way viewers experience the exhibit. Using low cost and found materials students will create their very own imagined spaces and places. This activity responds to the sculptural works of Phyllida Barlow and Liz Magor.

Begin with a visit to MOCA and have a class discussion about the experiences in both exhibits, then in your classroom, allow students to make their own sculptural works.

Imagine a space.

What does it feel like to walk around it? Do you feel tiny? Giant? Do you walk in a straight line or does your path curve around?

What is the space used for? Is it a playground? A home? An art museum? How does that change the way the space is used?



Activity: Imagined Spaces and Places Grade 9 – 12

Materials: paper mâché, cardboard, popsicle sticks, wooden dowels, toothpicks, cardboard rolls, paper, tape, hot glue, found objects.

Using the art materials provided, each student may create their own imagined place. The space or place could be totally imaginary, could be an art gallery or be architectural. This project can be adapted for younger grades by making it focus on a playground or tree fort, or adapted for older grades through a focus on architecture and physics.

This project is open-ended with a focus on imagination and creativity. Both Magor and Barlow's work is playful, rebellious and fun, and students should be encouraged to do the same.

Reflection

Students may share their sculpture, the space it represents and how the viewer may experience it.

