

GEORGIA HISTORY UP CLOSE



Learn about artist Kristin Leachman and her painting “Longleaf 2.” Questions for looking and art-making projects can be adapted to suit different grade-level standards.

Engage in slow looking and art-making with these classroom resources. You can view these works of art in the museum, online or on a classroom poster.

Kristin Leachman (American, born 1966), “Longleaf 2,” 2021. Oil on canvas on panel, 54 × 72 inches. Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia; Museum purchase with funds provided by the Dorothy Alexander Roush Museum Acquisition Endowment and Lucy Minogue Rowland. 2022.306.

QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING

- Look closely at this work of art. What do you notice?
- What colors or shapes do you see? Do they remind you of something you have seen before?
- How does the work of art change when you look at it up close versus from far away?
- How does the artist show texture (the feel of a surface) in this work?
- Do you think this work of art is abstract? What makes it abstract? How do you define abstract art?
- Read about the artist and her work on the back of this resource. Look at the painting again. How have your observations and thoughts about the work changed?
- What would you smell or hear if you stood this close to a pine tree?
- Can a work of art show something that looks like real life and something that doesn't at the same time?
- Leachman uses natural earth pigments in her paintings. How can an artist's choice of medium add a layer of meaning to their work?

ART-MAKING: MAGNIFIED DRAWING

Choose an object (any object) and examine it closely using a magnifying glass. Find a detail that catches your eye, like a textured patch or a repeating pattern. Using a drawing pencil or colored pencils, sketch your detail on paper. How can line and color communicate texture without showing the whole picture? If a viewer only saw this detail, would they recognize the original object? Once your magnified drawing is complete, sketch the entire object. Now compare the two: how does scale change the way you see and feel about it? Which version feels more dynamic or visually interesting?

ART-MAKING: CYCLES OF CREATION

Kristin Leachman was drawn to the practice of controlled burning in Georgia's longleaf pine forests. Controlled burning is a land stewardship technique Indigenous communities have used for generations. Intentional fires clear away dead growth, return nutrients to the soil and make space for new life to grow. The longleaf pine has even evolved to depend on it, requiring frequent low-intensity fires to regenerate. Fire, in this context, is not an end but part of a cycle. Using any drawing or painting materials, create an artwork that holds both sides of this cycle at once: destruction and regrowth. How can you communicate feeling or emotion through color and line?

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kristin Leachman is an American artist who explores ecological history through abstract art. **Abstract art** uses color, shape and line to create new or unexpected perspectives of what we see. In her "Fifty Forests" project, Leachman presents hyper-magnified, large-scale paintings that show the texture and patterns of tree bark found across the United States.

Georgia Standards of Excellence

Elementary: VA(K-5).CN.1, VA(K-5).CR.1, VA(K-5).CR.3, VA(K-5).RE.1, SS2G2d
Secondary: VA8.CN.1/VAHSVA.CN.1, VA8.CN.3/VAHSVA.CN.3, VA8.RE.1/VAHSVA.
RE.1, VA8.CR.1/VAHSVA.CR.1, VA8.CR.3/VAHSVA.CR.3

ABOUT THE WORK

"Longleaf 2" is one of a series of six paintings Leachman made based on Georgia's longleaf pine forests. This painting highlights the longleaf pine tree's gray, brown and orange bark along with its unique pattern of scales. This series of works evokes the history of the Apalachee and Lower Creek Tribes. These Indigenous communities lived in Georgia's longleaf pine forests before the U.S. government forced them to move after 1830. In this work, Leachman combines the history of humans with the history of their landscape, encouraging us to think in terms of ecological history. She also wanted to capture the phenomenon of controlled burns in Georgia's longleaf pine forests. This routine burning promotes growth and regeneration, prompting us to reflect on the symbolism of devastation and renewal.