

ENVISION COMMUNITY

New Museum Educator Resources provide families and educators with activities to learn about contemporary art and ideas at home and in learning spaces for kids and youths.



In his exhibition, **“My Beating Heart/ Mi corazón latiente,”** artist **Pepón Osorio** (b. 1955, Santurce, San Juan, Puerto Rico) presents sculptures and installations that represent his work with Latinx and working-class communities and address the social, political, and cultural issues impacting their daily lives. Osorio’s encompassing environments arise from long-term collaborations informed by his background in theater and performance as well as his experiences as a child services case worker and professor.

Made in collaboration with students and community members, Osorio’s installation *reForm* recreates a classroom from Fairhill Elementary School in North Philadelphia. The school was shuttered in 2013 along with twenty-two other “failing schools” located predominantly in neighborhoods of color. Osorio worked closely with ten former students, encouraging them to become community advocates and activists. The installation includes classroom furniture and videos of students speaking directly to the school reform commission. The walls are covered with enlarged student essays that express their feelings about the school’s closing, with written feedback and annotations in red.

“...And so what they decided and myself I wanted for it, was that we were going to go into the school that I was going to convince the school reform commission, which was almost an impossible task to take and ask them to give us one of the classrooms that was left behind in this closed down school. So, a little with the help of the fathers and a couple of other people, I convinced the... superintendent... I spent about two months trying to convince him and the people and I went around and finally I gave him a deadline that if they did not allow us to go into the classroom, we were just going to go and get the press. So, the next day I get a phone call and the keys, and we were able to go in...”

- Pepón Osorio in **“Artist Talk: Process as Artistic Practice”**

Watch to learn about Osorio's process of working with former Fairhill Elementary School students and families to create *reForm*.



KEY WORDS

- **community:** 1) a group of people who share things in common, such as attending the same school or living in the same neighborhood; 2) a sense of fellowship and connection to a group of people with shared values, ideas, or experiences
- **collaboration:** working closely with others to achieve a common goal
- **belonging:** a feeling of being in close community with others, and sharing common interests and beliefs
- **identity:** how we think about, define and, describe ourselves, including the communities we're part of and groups in which we find belonging

START WITH ART: *reFORM*



Pepón Osorio, *reForm*, 2014–17. Mixed mediums and video installation. Dimensions variable. Courtesy the artist and PPOW Gallery, New York.

Pepón Osorio's *reForm* is an installation that recreates a former classroom from Fairhill Elementary, a shuttered North Philadelphia school.

1. Looking at the photograph of *reForm*, what furniture and objects do you notice?
 2. Can you identify objects or elements that show signs of a classroom community, a space where people learn and work together?
 3. What makes a classroom a community? Think about your own experiences in classrooms. Think about the communities you belong to.
 4. How does the installation create a sense of connection between community members, the artist, originally an outsider to the community, and you, the viewer?
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MAKE ART FOR KIDS

Let's make a drawing of one or more **community** spaces where we feel a sense of **belonging** and **collaboration**.

Materials

- Paper and pencil
- Drawing media as available, including markers, crayons, oil pastels, colored pencils

Making

1. Think about the different communities in which feel a sense of belonging. This could include family, school, friends, summer camp, sports teams, or other activities.
2. Make a drawing of one or more of these community spaces where you feel most comfortable. Start with a pencil sketch and then add the coloring media of your choice (colored pencils, markers, etc).
3. Your drawing can include the physical place, and some of the people that make it a community. You can also draw yourself in this space.
4. As you draw, reflect on your role in the community and your relationship with others.

MAKE ART FOR YOUTHS

Let's make a drawing reflecting on our definitions of **community**, **belonging**, and **identity**.

Materials

- Paper and pencil
- Drawing media as available, including markers, crayons, oil pastels, colored pencils

Making

1. What does community mean to you? Think about how you define community, include the people and places where you feel a sense of belonging and shared identity.
 2. Write down some reflections or make some quick sketches to generate ideas for a drawing. These can include symbols that represent different aspects of your identity and groups you participate in.
 3. Use your notes and quick sketches to make a more detailed drawing that includes your definition of and reflections on community, belonging, and identity.
 4. As you draw, continue reflecting on your role in different communities, how that helps shape and influence your identity, and how you help shape your communities.
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REFLECTION

- How did reflecting on your communities strengthen your sense of identity or belonging?
- What did you learn or realize about your communities through making the drawing?
- What are some other ways you can depict your participation in different communities?
- How could you collaborate with a community member to make another drawing or artistic expression of your shared community?

Images: Photo: Liz Ligon; Guggenheim Museum, "Artist Talk: Pepón Osorio on Process as Artistic Practice," 13:34, September 14, 20218; "Pepón Osorio: My Beating Heart/ *Mi corazón latiente*," 2023. Exhibition view: New Museum, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni