

**Aspen Art Museum**  
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# Educator Notes



Ryan Gander, *Magnus Opus*, 2013. © Ryan Gander. Courtesy the artist and Ishikawa Collection. Image: Martin Argyroglo

**Ryan Gander:  
Make every show  
like it's your last**

November 20, 2015–February 7, 2016

## About the artist

Ryan Gander is a conceptual artist who playfully and rigorously creates works that place the familiar and the unfamiliar in dialogue through various media such as painting, sculpture, film, photography, and installation. He was born in 1976, in Chester, England, and currently lives and works in London and Suffolk, England. He studied at Manchester Metropolitan University, the Jan van Eyck Academie, and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in the Netherlands.

## About the exhibition

The Aspen Art Museum's presentation of Ryan Gander's *Make every show like it's your last*—part of an international, multi-venue tour—is the artist's first solo museum exhibition in the United States. The show brings together diverse biographical, narrative, and conceptual elements that reflect Gander's interest in the circumstances of art production as well as our perception of objects. Encompassing Galleries 4, 5, and 6, all of the works that comprise *Make every show like it's your last* exemplify Gander's transdisciplinary practice, navigating the complexity of culture with humor and experimentation.

Works in the show include a series of sculptures representing a simple shelter made by the artist's four-year-old daughter using objects from around the house, now cast in marble resin. Gander's sculptural practice also playfully challenges us to "look again" through the work *Two hundred and sixty six degrees below every kind of zero* (2014), a life-size fiberglass replica of a black, helium-filled balloon that appears as though it is floating against the ceiling of the gallery. Not confined to working in any singular medium, the exhibition also includes examples of his work in video, mixed media, and installation. Throughout Gander's practice, he interacts with the everyday in unexpected ways, inviting a heightened awareness to the ways we notice the world in which we live.



Ryan Gander, *I is... (iv)*, 2013. © Ryan Gander. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery. Image: Patrick Quayle



Ryan Gander, *C++*, 2013. Image © Ryan Gander. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery. Image: Martin Argyroglo

## Questions for discussion

- I Gander is comfortable working in any material that he believes will best help him to express an idea. Why do you think he would make sculptures based on soft objects out of hard materials?
- I What do you think the eyes in *Magnus Opus* have seen before seeing you? How can art help us look at our lives in a new way?
- I Gander celebrates all types of creativity, imagination, and inspiration. Where do you find inspiration?

## Suggested activities

### Focus on Color

Gather an array of color paints, disposable or plastic palettes, paintbrushes, and heavy-duty white paper.

Discuss the artwork *C++* (2013). Explain to students how each palette represents a series of portraits by the artist painted from memory of individuals he has met during his life. Ask: why do you think he chose to display the palettes instead of the actual paintings?

Have students paint a portrait of a friend or family member who is important to them. Provide a tray of different colored paints for students to share and encourage them to mix and create new colors on their individual palettes. Like the artist, students will hold on to their painted portraits. Collect the palettes and display them on the walls. Engage the students in a discussion around what they can deduce about their important person based on the colors they've used.

### Nontraditional Inspiration

Gather pencils, paint, paintbrushes, cardstock, scissors, glue, and one large sheet of white paper to cover the wall.

In *Bad Language (The iconography and abstraction of tactics explored)* (2015), Gander finds inspiration from an unlikely source—car and RV decals—and incorporates their shape and design into his artwork.

Have students choose their own nontraditional graphic as inspiration, either by taking a walk or looking through magazines. As they draw out and paint their abstract shapes, set up a large white sheet of paper on the wall for a collaborative group mural. Encourage students to let their shapes flow off the edge of the paper as they cut and glue to the white base.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email [education@aspennartmuseum.org](mailto:education@aspennartmuseum.org)

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